

Contributing to the sustainability of the national safety net project

Burundi

Program Document
with Belgian Government Funding

UNICEF Burundi - 22 July 2021

Title	Contributing to the sustainability of the safety net project- Merankabandi
Zones of Interventions	Ruyigi, Karusi, Gitega, Kirundo (Burundi)
Beneficiaries	56,090 Households with children below 0-12 years
Objectives	Improve the wellbeing of children and their families in the social safety net project Merankabandi, through the consolidation of sustainability interventions focused on empowerment and ECD community services
Key results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Households have access to financial and social assets to support their livelihood through viable solidarity groups (SG) -Households have generated resources through counselling and investment from (SG) -Parents have provided good parental care for children below 5 -ECD-friendly wellbeing space are available for the community
Duration	9 months (October 2021 - June 2022)
Requested Budget	4,185,312 US dollars
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Background

Burundi is facing humanitarian emergency in some areas while also having to address the structural vulnerability of the poorest households. According to the Multidimensional Overlapping Deprivation Analysis in Burundi led by the Government of Burundi and UNICEF in 2017, 65 per cent of the Burundian population and 69 per cent of children aged 0-17 are poor. This analysis further reveals that 78.2 per cent of children suffer from multidimensional poverty, with an average of 4 deprivations out of 7.¹ According to the national survey on the nutritional situation and food security in Burundi,² 54 per cent of children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition. To address this, the Government of Burundi received a grant from the World Bank’s International Development Association to implement the ‘Social Safety Nets Project for Burundi’ which includes *Merankabandi*, a cash transfer programme with complementary training activities targeting the most vulnerable households in rural areas. These social safety nets provide a social protection base for the most vulnerable and aim to protect families from the consequences of economic shocks, natural disasters and other crises, while lifting them out of poverty.

The *Merankabandi* project operates in the four provinces of Gitega, Karuzi, Kirundo and Ruyigi. These provinces were selected according to the degree of monetary vulnerability and the prevalent rate of chronic malnutrition in children under 12. The project registers a total of 56,090 direct beneficiary households. Within the selected households, women and children are the main beneficiaries of interventions.

Areas of intervention and beneficiaries



- **RUYIGI: 13,515 beneficiaries**
communes of Butaganzwa 2, Butezi, Bweru, Gisuru
 - **GITEGA: 13,786 beneficiaries**
communes of Gitega, Buraza, Bugendana, Itaba
 - **KARUSI: 14,458 beneficiaries**
communes of Gihogazi, Mutumba, Nyabikere, Bugenyuzi
 - **KIRUNDO: 14,331 beneficiaries**
communes of Kirundo, Busoni, Bugabira, Ntega
- Total : 56,090 beneficiaries**

¹ Analysis of Income Poverty and Child Deprivation in Burundi (MODA), UNICEF 2017
<https://www.unicef.org/esa/sites/unicef.org/esa/files/2018-09/UNICEF-Burundi-2017-Child-Poverty.pdf>

² National Survey on the Nutritional Situation and Food Security in Burundi (ENSNSAB-2019)

Rationale for intervention

Identified households benefiting from *Merankabandi* (meaning ‘Be like the others’ in Kirundi), receive unconditional monthly cash transfers of BIF20,000 (US\$10) in 30 months with complementary services (sensitization, training, home visits) on financial literacy, maternal and child health, infant nutrition, and early childhood development. Research shows that linking cash transfers with complementary interventions through a ‘cash plus’ approach not only allows the household to meet its basic needs, but also boost the impact of the assistance for more transformative outcomes for children and families – thus, improving their overall well-being. The combination of cash transfers and complementary services aims to not only empower the households financially, but also provide them with a skillset that enables them to make informed decisions maintain social cohesion in the households, and provide their children with a healthy, safe and enabling environment. This programme thus tackles multiple SDGs, namely SDG 1 : no poverty; SDG 2: zero hunger; SDG 3: health and well-being; SDG 4: quality education; SDG 5: gender equality; SDG 6: water and sanitation and SDG 10: reduced inequalities. More specifically, the ECD component tackles the following targets of specific SDGs: SDG 2.2: ending all forms of malnutrition; SDG 3.2: ending all preventable deaths under 5 years of age; SDG 4.2: equal access to quality pre-primary education; and SDG 16.2: protecting children from abuse and exploitation. In deed the program helps household to increase financial resources and to reinforce human capital especially on health, nutrition with a focus on early childhood period by improving underlying causes. The households improve their consumption and knowledge to adapt their practices and look for services when it is needed. The activities contribute to reduce poverty, tackle hunger, improve the wellbeing, the health, improve the school attending, the gender equality by giving the leadership to women, by giving essential knowledge on access to water sanitation and hygiene, and reduce inequalities amongst community by providing empowerment to the households.

After a period of 36 months, the households are expected to be empowered and independent with continuous support through the programme’s sustainability and graduation strategy.

However, not all of the elements in the strategy were planned for in the inception phase of the programme. Therefore, UNICEF’s involvement and support in this regard is particularly relevant and timely. This will ensure the full implementation of the strategy, and strengthen the sustainability of the results achieved so far. As part of its technical assistance to the programme, UNICEF has been guiding the development and finalization of the strategy with the overarching objective of ensuring the successful graduation of the beneficiaries.

This strategy is developed around three areas: (1) the financial empowerment of the households and access to information about opportunities in the community; (2) adoption of good practices in Health, Nutrition and WASH with a focus on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and; (3) the consolidation of ECD-friendly *Hinduringendo Cases*, well-being spaces where the complementary activities take place.

Through this strategy, households are expected to strengthen their capacities to generate sufficient resources and their ability to use the tools and knowledge provided to them even after graduating from the programme. The strategy is also expected to strengthen social cohesion; ensure the continued adoption of good practices especially on ECD given its importance in the holistic development of the child; and wider impact on the society.

With the contribution from the Government of Belgium, UNICEF will implement the previous interventions to support implementation of the graduation strategy and strengthen the sustainability of *Merankabandi*.

Specifically the Belgian contribution will provide a stronger support to the Solidarity Groups (SG), which is the community structure binding households beyond the implementation of the program, and will serve as the central unit for all areas of intervention focused on increased empowerment (including a potential cash support) and strengthened ECD in the community.

This support will also be key in guiding the development of the national scale-up of the *Merankabandi* program, which is currently under discussion and expected to start in 2022.

Response

The issue of sustainability cannot be addressed without considering the available knowledge and resources. The strategy combines both and intends to reinforce the (1) empowerment of the households through the solidarity groups and (2) the knowledge and adoption of good practices especially in ECD.

Thus, the response aims to strengthen the financial capacity and the human capital of the households to give them all chance to capitalize all activities implemented with *Merankabandi* project and to contribute to their overall well-being and empowerment.

The Belgian contribution would allow the Project to ensure a good transition to the empowerment, and to consolidate the ECD component of complementary activities through the delivery of tools and the installation of wellbeing spaces. This intervention will complement UNICEF Nutrition intervention done on field with the community-based approaches on good practices for food diversity and food complementarity. This intervention will also match with Community empowerment trough trainings and economic opportunity provided to the member of solidarity groups.

These activities will constitute a part of the national social transfers program which constitute the standard to develop a basic safety net system in Burundi. All conditions should be set up to guarantee the empowerment of the households after the program and to create a model for the extension of the national program.

The support could be implemented on a period of 9 months depending on the different provincial agendas.

Theory of Change Statement

These outcomes will be achieved through the below theory of change:

If vulnerable households with children have access to support mechanism that could provide them training, innovative tools, and economic opportunities to enhance their income and address key drivers of child poverty and vulnerability,

If complementarity activities to increase knowledge and awareness and adoption of key family practices on nutrition, health and hygiene as well as livelihood behavioural change and support especially on ECD with adequate tools are provided to the beneficiary's households,

And if the Community can have a specific space (ECD child friendly) to organize meetings and training or sensitization session, and available more broadly for all events for the community,

Then (i) the key drivers of vulnerability and poverty of children and their families are holistically addressed and (ii) the development of children under 5 can be insured.

Expected Results

The overall objective of this intervention is to improve the wellbeing of children and their families in the Merankabandi Project through the consolidation of sustainability activities for empowerment and ECD community services. More specifically, the programme aims to:

1. Consolidate the model of social transfers implemented in the country to prepare the national extension
2. Improve the empowerment and the resilience of the households through community system in order to guarantee the sustainability of the social protection interventions
3. Provide ECD services through the community with specific activities in addition to the complementary services.

In terms of the results's achievement the program intends to contribute to the following Outcomes :

Outcome 1: By July 2022, the Merankabandi households have become empowered and more resilient through the strengthening of financial capacity.

Output 1.1 Households have access to financial and social assets to support their livelihood activities through viable SG

- % of the households consider their living standard as at same level or better than the Merankabandi cash transfer period.

Output 1.2 Households have generated resources through counselling and investment from SG

- % of the households are able to generate resources through the inputs by the SG

Outcome 2: By July 2022, under five girls and boys of Merankabandi households benefitted from a multisectoral ECD package

Output 2.1 Parents have improved parenting capacities and skills

- % of parents or caregivers provided with parenting education
- % of children under-5 attending an ECD space

Output 2.2 ECD-friendly wellbeing spaces are available for the community

- # of ECD friendly wellbeing spaces are available and accessible

Results matrix (a detailed Logical framework is available in Annex)

OUTCOME 1: By July 2022, the Merankabandi households have become empowered and more resilient through the strengthening of financial capacity.	
Output	Activity
<p>1.Merankabandi Households have access to financial and social assets to support their livelihood through viable solidarity group</p> <p>Indicators: -Number of hills with established network of SG -Number of SG that received financial Technical assistance</p>	<p>1.To develop a governance system and establish a network with different groups within the hills 2.To implement a financial technical assistance to SGs to provide more loans and solidarity assistance 3.To provide learning for the utilization of potential microfinance platform</p>
<p>1.2. Merankabandi Households have generated resources through counselling and investment from GS</p> <p>Indicators: -Number of SG that received the Empowerment Kits -Number of SG that benefited trainings on financial literacy, SG leadership, and investment opportunities</p>	<p>1.To produce of empowerment kits for the running of a SGs and coach tool. 2. To disseminate empowerment kits and coach tools to local leaders /representative of SGs 3.To provide trainings to HH on financial literacy, SG leadership, financing and investment opportunities 4.To connect SGs with referral cases system (Child protection/ GBV) 5.To deliver tablets to connect households with financial services</p>
OUTCOME 2: By July 2022, children under 5 in Merankabandi households have accessed a multi sectoral ECD package of interventions, including access to ECD wellbeing spaces in the community, and parents have increased their parental care skills	
Output	Activity
<p>2.1. Parents have provided good parental care for children below 5</p> <p>Indicators: -Number of parents trained as coach for parental care</p>	<p>1. To provide trainings to coaches for parental care per ECD wellbeing space 2. Sensitization awareness-raising for ECD in the community by the coach for parental care 3To develop Key digital learning</p>
<p>2.2. ECD-friendly wellbeing spaces are available for the community</p> <p>Indicator : Number of ECD friendly wellbeing spaces built by the community and equipped with a local ECD kit Number of children under 5 attending in weel being spaces</p>	<p>1.To elaborate a standard construction able to be built by the community 2.To provide training and coach to promote the model of construction . 3To design local ECD kits based on standard required to implement all ECD activities 4.To produce ECD Kits /or kits elaborated by the parents. 5.Financial support to the building of ECD friendly wellbeing space with local products</p>

Activities

Outcome 1 : By July 2022, Merankabandi households have become empowered and become more resilient through the strengthening of financial capacity.

Output 1.1 Households have access to financial and social asset to support their livelihood activities through viable solidarity group

1.1 Support the solidarity groups (SG) to reinforce households.

A governance system will be developed to identify leaders and establish a network with different groups within the hills (information, hinduringendo space management, promotion of messages, and coaching).

The SG will be gathered around a communal platform which will provide them technical assistance on the sustainability of the activities implemented by the SG and guide them to find financial opportunities. The platform will be progressively managed by representatives of the SG. The platform will provide learning for the utilization of potential microfinance opportunities including micro insurance .

Output 1.2 Households have generated resources through counselling and investment from SG

1.2 Providing Empowerment Kits for the running of SG

The kit will include a serie of briefs on community services available, social services, agricultural focal point, note on solidarity group management, on the development of cooperatives, local microfinance, community insurance opportunities. The kit will be produced and disseminated to local leaders or representatives of groups. These kits will insure the sutsainaibility of the good practices by offering a local reference for regular refresh on knowledge transmitted.

1.3 Training/ awareness-raising

A pack of trainings will be provided for the households on financial literacy/ leadership, on the financing and investment opportunities. Set up training and connecting SG with referral cases system (Child protection/ GBV). Training applications will be utilized for the Ruyigi province. The Province of Ruyigi will be a pilot with the delivery of tablets to connect households with financial services. (Nutri coach for instance) . These training provide suficent knowledge on economic opportunities and on tools available.

Outcome 2 : By July 2022, children under 5 in Merankabandi households have accessed a multi sectoral ECD package of interventions, including access to ECD wellbeing spaces in the community, and parents have increased their parental care skills

Output 2.1 Parents have provided good parental care for children below 5

2.1 Develop ECD capacities with the community (Training/sensitization)

Train mother / parents and caregivers in the community as a coach for parental care. Provide trainings and awareness-raising for ECD in the community, following the Nurturing Care Framework. Two parents or care givers per ECD space will be trained and will coach parents on ECD, using the Care for Caregivers Care for Child Development and Learning through play training modules.

The ECD Kit will be disseminated to the ECD spaces and will serve the training for ECD coach and C4D malette will be produced and disseminated to the community.

Produce radio programs based on messages developed for the adoption of good parental practices. These messages will be followed by discussion groups among the community to organize local plan for change.

2.2 Produce ECD kits

PPP to produce ECD Kits /or kits elaborated by the parents (test). UNICEF is currently investigating to find possibilities to produce an ECD kit with local product through local organization. The UNICEF Kit from abroad could be a second option if there will be no possibilities.

Output 2.2 - ECD friendly Wellbeing spaces are available for the community

2.3 Establish model for the building of wellbeing spaces by the community (co-creation

Elaborate a standard construction able to be built by the community, provide training and coach some beneficiaries to promote and teaches the model of construction. Two persons by location will be trained and financially supported to build wellbeing space with local products. The model will follow standards to fit with essential family practices. Some few spaces will be adapted for children with specific needs. The spaces will be management by the structure elaborated at the hill level. The spaces will propose a location dedicated for ECD activities and could be utilized by the community following their needs.

Implementation

In coordination with the Merankabandi project, the implementation of the proposed activities will be led by UNICEF Burundi working closely with NGOs. The interventions are expected to be for 9 months starting in October 2021 and ending by June 2022. An NGO lead will be contracted to ensure the technical assistance of the program on the field and will be in charge of the coordination with different partners.

Monitoring and Evaluation

UNICEF will ensure close monitoring of the activities as well as ensure learning throughout the implementation period. The monitoring will also be carried out by social agents working for CSO in implementing the activities. Quantitative and qualitative data will be collected at household level through baseline, midline and endline survey using tablet based real time data collection system (ONA, ODK). Process monitoring data will be collected via RapidPro technology by trained community based ECD agents. Monitoring Data will be visualized and disseminated to partners on a trimestrial basis. A field monitoring build on mixed agents (implementing partners, community, local authorities) will be set up to strengthen local capacities. Analysis will be conducted to evaluate the follow the impacts on the goals expected.

Key success strategies

Capacity development

To achieve the planned results, the project will invest in strengthening the capacities of community structures to lead and engage optimally during implementation. Key capacity development activities include regular training and coaching of community structures and linking with local government structures.

Social and behaviour change communication

The durability of the interventions are based on the ownership by the communication and the maintain of good practices adopted, that's why UNICEF develops all community interventions through the socioecological model which guides the communication for development. All tools and messages are designed in this goal. The SBCC plan of the program will be adjusted to integrate the activities presented above.

Evidence generation and documentation

Achievements and lessons learned from the implementation of the project will be documented using appropriate research channels. In this regard, the project will conduct a follow-up study to provide evidence on the impact of the intervention on the overall wellbeing of the beneficiary communities. The best practices and lessons learned documented will be used to ensure the visibility of results achieved in implementing the project and for developing evidence-based advocacy for the scaling-up of the project interventions.

Innovation

The context of piloting and rolling out the national social safety nets and the cash plus model with solidarity groups and wellbeing spaces will be an innovative approach. Therefore, the project will document the impact of intervention on children benefiting from the safety net program. The program will also introduce a mobile application aiming at providing HHs with on demand information to improve their access to relevant information related to their family wellbeing and livelihoods activities.

Partnership

The success of this project relies on a strong partnership approach involving different stakeholders. In addition to the Government stakeholders, UNICEF will work jointly with World Bank on the livelihood and production to increase income and address monetary poverty. Partnership with Civil Society organization, local organization, traditional leaders, local communication channels (radios, etc.) will be key to succeed implementation of key family practices and achieve positive behaviour change at community level.

Solidarity group

Leveraging on UNICEF's experiences engaging with community-based organisation interventions will support the setup of solidarity groups. . The solidarity group (GS) is formed by people from the same hill and generally made up of 15 to 25 people. It is a savings and loan approach adopted by a group of inhabitants of the same village. The primary objective of this type of village bank is to facilitate access to loans for people who do not have "easy" access to bank loans or microfinance, as well as to enable them

to reach a certain amount. benefit at each “end of cycle”. Members meet once a week at a fixed time and at a fixed location. At each meeting, members make savings contributions, give each other credits and the leader of the day's meeting facilitates a review on the themes already learned or a debate aimed at finding solutions to the challenges observed in their community. This group is formalized by submitting an application for approval to the municipality to form an association. GS members set the minimum weekly contribution amount of their choice, which can be fixed or variable, according to their internal regulations. These groups receive financial literacy training to enable members set personal and financial goals and improve the management of their incomes. UNICEF and partners will equip each group with financial management tools to encourage members contributions and facilitate savings. The saving fund will then be accessible for all members willing to support existing business, meet emergency needs and support vulnerable children.

Budget

The Following budget is indicative and provided in US dollars.

	Costs
Direct Project Output Costs	3,453,000
Outcome 1	1,908,000
Output 1.1	1,300,000
Training to reinforce the SG	
Cash transfert to the SG	
Set up 16 financial coordination platforms	
Technical Assistance (Social protection and resilience)	
Output 1.2	608,000
Formation Business/AGR en casca/complement C4D	
Empowerment Kit	
Digital tabs test+training in Ruyigi	
C4D Technical assistance	
Outcome 2	1,155,000
Output 2.1	450,000
Elaboration and distribution of ECD Kit	
Training/Counseling/Coaching on ECD	
ECD Technical assistance	
Output 2.2	705,000
Training to Build	
Cash support for construction	
Space ++ in Ruyigi and Karuzi	
Spaces Monitoring	
Construction technical Assistance	
Monitoring and evaluation	390,000
Real time Monitoring	
Monitoring by partners and community	
Documentation for the review of tools and strategy	
Effect Analysis	
Others direct Costs	386,736
Salaries, wages and office support contribution	386,736
Planning, monitoring and Evaluation	
Communication and advocacy	
Construction technical support	
Supply technical support	
Operations technical support	
Sub total Directs costs	3,839,736
Indirect costs	345,576
Recovery costs (8%)	307,179
Levy Costs (1%)	38,397
Total	4,185,312

LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Programme outcome indicators	OUTCOME 1: By July 2022, the Merankabandi households have become empowered and more resilient through the strengthening of financial capacity			
N°	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Indicator 1	% of the Merankabandi households that consider their living standard as at same level or better than the Merankabandi cash transfer period	TBC	80%	Baseline, midline & endline survey
Indicator 2	% of the Merankabandi households able to generate resources through the inputs by the SG	TBC	80%	
Programme Output indicators	Output 1.1.: Merankabandi Households have access to financial and social asst to support their livelihood through viable solidarity group			
INDICATOR	DESIGNATION	Number	Target	Baseline, midline & endline survey
Indicator 1.1.1.	Number of hills with established network of SG	247	247	
Indicateur 1.1.2.	Number of SG that received financial top up	0	2000	
Programme Output indicators	Output 1.2.: Merankabandi Households have generated resources through counselling and investment from SG			
INDICATOR	DESIGNATION	Number	Target	Process monitoring via RapidPro technology
Indicator 1.2.1.	Number of SG that received the Empowerment Kits	TBC	2000	
Indicator 1.2.2.	Number of SG that benefited trainings on financial literacy, SG leadership, and investment opportunities	TBC	2000	
Programme Outcome indicators	OUTCOME 2: By July 2022, children under 5 in Merankabandi households have accessed a multi sectoral ECD package of interventions, including access to ECD wellbeing spaces in the community, and parents have increased their parental care skills			
N°	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Means of verification
Indicator 1	% of the Merankabandi Households that have adopted good practices in ECD	TBC	80%	Baseline, midline & endline survey
Indicator 2	% of children that attended ECD spaces	0	80%	
Programme Output indicators	Output 2.1.: Parents have provided good parental care for children below 5			
INDICATOR	DESIGNATION	Number	Target	Process monitoring via RapidPro technology
Indicator 2.1.1.	Number of parents trained as coach for parental care	600	600	
Indicator 2.1.2.	Number of wellbeing spaces equipped with local ECD kits	215	215	
Programme Output indicators	Output 2.2.: ECD-friendly wellbeing spaces are available for the community			
INDICATOR	DESIGNATION	Number	Target	Process monitoring via RapidPro technology
Indicator 2.2.1.	Number of ECD friendly wellbeing spaces built by the community	215	215	