



International Network for School Social Work

<http://internationalnetwork-schoolsocialwork.htmlplanet.com>

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**Healing and Educating the Children of Burundi
Ngabo Leonce, Founder & Director of Sonship**

Burundi is one of the smallest countries in Africa and the poorest in the world with a population of 11,720,081. Since its independence in 1962 Burundi has never had a sustained period of peace and real development. Wars and conflicts have been constant right up to the present, resulting in poverty, social conflict and children becoming abused, abandoned and orphaned. Families have fled the country, leaving their children behind.

After years of political instability, the schools in Burundi are in a shambles. The government schools and many private schools are barely functional. In 2005 the current Government started free primary education, but it still a big challenge for many children to access education. Despite the efforts of the Government, UNHCR and charity organizations, more than half a million children have no access to education, and few children from even well-privileged families have a world-class education.



Sonship is a charity developed by young people who were abandoned, abused and orphaned in the years of the worst struggle 1986 through 1993. They grew up in refugee camps or simply abandoned in cities or forests in extreme poverty. Their mission is to shelter homeless children long-term with volunteer families so they can be fed and able to go to school.

Sonship has established a bilingual school “CAMP KIDS ACADEMY” for 3 to 6 year olds with a plan to extend this through primary, secondary and university level. Capacity at the school is limited to 3 classes. Other children are given assistance to go to public and private schools. Some families are able to pay the fees at Sonship and this income goes to support orphaned children that Sonship enrolls in other schools when we have not space for them here.

We also have a goal of helping at-risk young adults with a small library and a music school. We want to expand our library to 10,000 books.



Staff at Sonship

The School Social Workers are trained and are highly devoted to serving children as they share the same backgrounds, but they are in need of much training, as are the volunteers who are serving with them in assisting and teaching the children. There is no funding to send the workers overseas for training and no opportunity for training staff in Burundi to be effective school social workers. Outside help seems to be the only possibility for getting the staff the expertise they need. Staff need social work knowledge and skills to develop the program at **Sonship** so they can meet the goal of sheltering, nurturing and educating many more orphans and expand the program to all levels of education. **Sonship** welcomes your ideas and assistance in helping to train the staff and make this a better program.



Sonship campus



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Sonship is registered as a non-profit organization in Burundi. The mission and goal is to heal the wounded children (abandoned, abused, orphaned) and offer a free gift of education that none can take away from them.