

# Strengthening livelihoods, education, and child protection for refugee families in Burundi

Grantee: Fundación Street Child España

Location: Burundi, Africa

Grant Cycle: 2025-2028

Type of Grant: three-year program support, Human Welfare & Rights

Website: [street-child.es](http://street-child.es)

Street Child España is an independent Spanish foundation and part of the global Street Child movement, an international organization operating in more than 20 countries across Africa, Asia, and Europe. Established in 2017, the foundation's mission is to ensure that every child is safe, in school, and learning; particularly those affected by extreme poverty or humanitarian crises. Its work focuses on removing barriers to education and implementing rapid, locally led interventions in crisis-affected contexts. Globally, Street Child has reached over 1 million children and 150,000 adults since 2008 through adaptable, locally rooted programming.

Street Child has been active in Burundi since 2016, one of the world's poorest and most fragile contexts, working in collaboration with trusted local partners such as Famille Maintenant, Social Action for Development (SAD) and Spring Communities. Together, they implement integrated interventions that combine education, child protection, and livelihood support, including the award-winning Family Business for Education (FBE) model. This approach empowers vulnerable families, particularly women, to improve household resilience and ensure children's access to and retention in education. The images shown are for illustrative purposes only and not be an exact representation of the supported project Burundi continues to

face deep-rooted structural challenges stemming from a history of inter-ethnic conflict, economic isolation, limited domestic production, and rising inflation driven by external shocks and import dependency. As of 2023, an estimated 72% of the population lives in poverty, with rural communities experiencing the highest levels of deprivation. The humanitarian situation remains critical, with over 1.5 million people requiring assistance.

This fragile context has been further strained by the recent influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Since January 2024, more than 71,000 people have fled escalating violence in eastern DRC and sought refuge in Burundi: over 12,300 refugees have been relocated to the Musenyi site in Rutana Province, an area already characterized by high poverty rates and limited infrastructure. Many others are residing with host families in border communities, often without access to adequate support. Refugees, many of whom arrive with no assets, face substantial barriers to employment and self-reliance, while their children frequently lack access to education due to financial hardship and inadequate learning materials. Despite these challenges, the local economy in Rutana has potential for recovery and resilience in sectors such as agriculture, livestock, artisanal trades, informal commerce, and emerging digital services. With targeted support, particularly

for women, youth, and individuals with specific needs, refugees and vulnerable host community members could transition from aid dependency to self-sufficiency, contributing to local development.

**The Nando and Elsa Peretti Foundation (NaEPF)**

is committed to promoting long-term, structural solutions through locally led approaches that strengthen education, economic empowerment, and protection for vulnerable populations. This commitment is exemplified through support for Street Child España and is complemented by a parallel UNHCR initiative in Burundi Supporting UNHCR operations in the crisis of the influx of displaced persons from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Burundi, which addresses urgent humanitarian needs. While UNHCR focuses on immediate relief, Street Child España emphasizes long-term resilience via grassroots leadership, locally driven economic empowerment, and inclusive education. By addressing different levels of need, urgent versus systemic, these interventions reinforce each other's impact without duplication, aligning with NaEPF's objective of delivering both immediate support and sustainable transformation in fragile contexts.

Specifically, the Street Child España project advances the socio-economic empowerment of refugees and vulnerable host community members in and around the Musenyi refugee camp. It will directly engage 1,065 beneficiaries, including women, survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), persons with disabilities, and children at risk of school dropout, through targeted interventions across three key areas:

1. **Livelihoods:** 300 adults (60% women) will receive entrepreneurship training, start-up grants, and ongoing mentoring to launch small businesses. Beneficiaries will be organized into Village Savings and Loans Associations and linked to microfinance institutions to promote long-term financial inclusion.
2. **Education:** 765 children at risk of dropping out will receive school kits, attendance monitoring, and support from their families' income-generating activities to stay in school.
3. **Child Protection:** local child protection actors will be trained, and gender-sensitive parenting and GBV prevention activities will be delivered to promote children's wellbeing and safety.