

Transforming Lives


A Journey with RGF  
Bernadette Ndakora's

# story



# Intro.

The 'Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees' project is jointly implemented by the Raising Gabdho Foundation and DanChurch Aid, funded by UNHCR, and with support from OPM. This initiative is dedicated to the protection and revitalization of the environment and its natural resources. Its core objectives include promoting secure access to sustainable energy sources and fostering green livelihoods. The project is structured around three key objectives:



Enhancing access to and adoption of energy-saving technologies.



Promoting environmental conservation and awareness.



Encouraging community engagement and collaboration.

# Context

Uganda currently hosts more than 1.5 million refugees and asylum-seekers, primarily from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Burundi, making it the leading host country for refugees in sub-Saharan Africa. Presently, over 80% of these refugees are located in 13 districts within the Northern and South-Western regions, as well as in the capital city, Kampala, which alone hosts over 130,000 refugees. They reside in settlements, coexisting with the local communities. This inclusive approach, coupled with progressive refugee laws and freedoms, has facilitated the integration of numerous refugees into urban areas, particularly Kampala.

As an increasing number of refugees are compelled to seek opportunities in urban centers for improved social and economic prospects, many grapple with the challenges of making ends meet and providing for their families. Forced migration often results in larger families, primarily composed of youth and the elderly, placing significant economic and social dependency on the youthful breadwinners. However, the urban economy is predominantly monetized, offering limited employment opportunities, with the majority engaged in the informal sector, where livelihoods are precarious, and wages are modest. Consequently, urban refugees face severe challenges in securing their livelihoods and sustaining their existence.



Additionally, a scarcity of financial resources and limited access to goods and services create substantial barriers to meeting basic needs. While this challenge extends to services such as healthcare, accessing essential commodities like cooking fuel presents formidable obstacles in urban settings. With a heavy reliance on wood fuel for domestic cooking, businesses, and commercial ventures, many urban refugee households struggle with surging prices attributed to conservation efforts that restrict unauthorized land clearing and charcoal production. This has led to unprecedented levels of energy poverty, with far-reaching consequences that extend beyond individual households, creating new webs of vulnerability in these fragile communities.

It is against this background that Raising Gabdho Foundation (RGF) has implemented an intervention to address the persistent challenges of energy poverty among vulnerable urban refugees. Through a collaborative approach, RGF aims to enhance self-reliance and mitigate the hardships faced by these displaced populations."



# **Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees:**

## **A Journey of Transformation**

Join us on an inspiring journey through the impactful initiatives of "Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees" – a project implemented by Raising Gabdho Foundation (RGF). As you explore the pages ahead, you'll uncover the powerful ways this project has driven positive change and sustainability in our urban refugee communities.

**1. Cash for Work - Empowering Through Green Jobs:**

Within the heart of urban refugee communities, our project, "Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees," has ignited hope and empowerment. Through green job opportunities, we inspire individuals to embrace eco-friendly income activities, fostering self-sufficiency and resilience.

**2. Supporting SMEs with Clean Energy Solutions:**

Our project actively supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in gaining access to clean energy products. By reducing their energy costs and providing training in clean income solutions, we empower local businesses to thrive and contribute to sustainable growth.

**3. Shaping Future Leaders in Renewable Energy:**

"Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees" invests in the future, offering training to youth in renewable energy production for institutions and households. Through this, we nurture a generation passionate about renewable energy, bridging the gap in accessing maintenance support for acquired products.

**Nurturing Future Environmentalists:**

In our commitment to fostering sustainable change, the "Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees" project has established four dedicated environmental clubs, with two flourishing within local schools. These clubs serve as vibrant hubs for nurturing the passion of young environmentalists, providing them with the knowledge and tools needed to become advocates for our planet's well-being. Beyond the classroom, these enthusiastic young minds collaborate with us to influence their parents and guardians, creating a ripple effect that extends to the wider community. Through education and empowerment, we are sowing the seeds for a generation of eco-conscious leaders who will champion environmental preservation.

**4. Illuminating Vulnerable Households:**

The project has helped vulnerable households access renewable energy products. This empowerment enables them to manage cooking costs, access clean energy, and reduce the risks associated with traditional household energy sources.

**5. Nourishing Minds and Bodies:**

Our school feeding program ensures that schools have access to improved clean cooking solutions. This not only reduces cooking costs but also minimizes firewood consumption. As a result, children enjoy well-cooked meals while kitchen staff experience improved working conditions.

The impact we've achieved together stands as a testament to the positive change that can be achieved when we unite with a shared vision for the betterment of urban refugee communities. As we move forward, we invite you to be part of this extraordinary journey of transformation through the "Safe Intervention for Urban Refugees" project. Your continued engagement is essential as we expand our reach, making an even greater difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for joining hands with us. Together, we are shaping a brighter, more sustainable future for urban refugees.

## Impact Achieved in 2023:

### **Economic Empowerment:**

Engaged 7 individuals through our "Cash for Work" program, providing sustainable income opportunities within the community.

### **Supporting Local Businesses:**

Supported 15 small and medium enterprises (SMEs), contributing to the growth and sustainability of local businesses.

### **Youth Empowerment in Renewable Energy:**

Empowered 15 youth with comprehensive training in renewable energy product production, preparing them for a sustainable future.

### **Household Transformation:**

Provided access to renewable energy products for 150 households, enabling them to manage cooking costs and transition to cleaner, safer energy sources.

### **Enhancing Education:**

Supported 2 schools with access to institutional cookstoves, ensuring well-cooked meals for students and staff.

### **Nurturing Environmental Stewards:**

Established and supported 4 environmental clubs, cultivating the passion of young environmentalists and empowering them to influence positive change.


**Community Reach:**

Directly impacted the lives of 800 individuals, while indirectly benefiting 7,525 community members, fostering a ripple effect of positive change.

These achievements in 2023 reflect our commitment to creating a more sustainable and resilient community, one step at a time. We extend our gratitude to all who have made this progress possible. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for all.





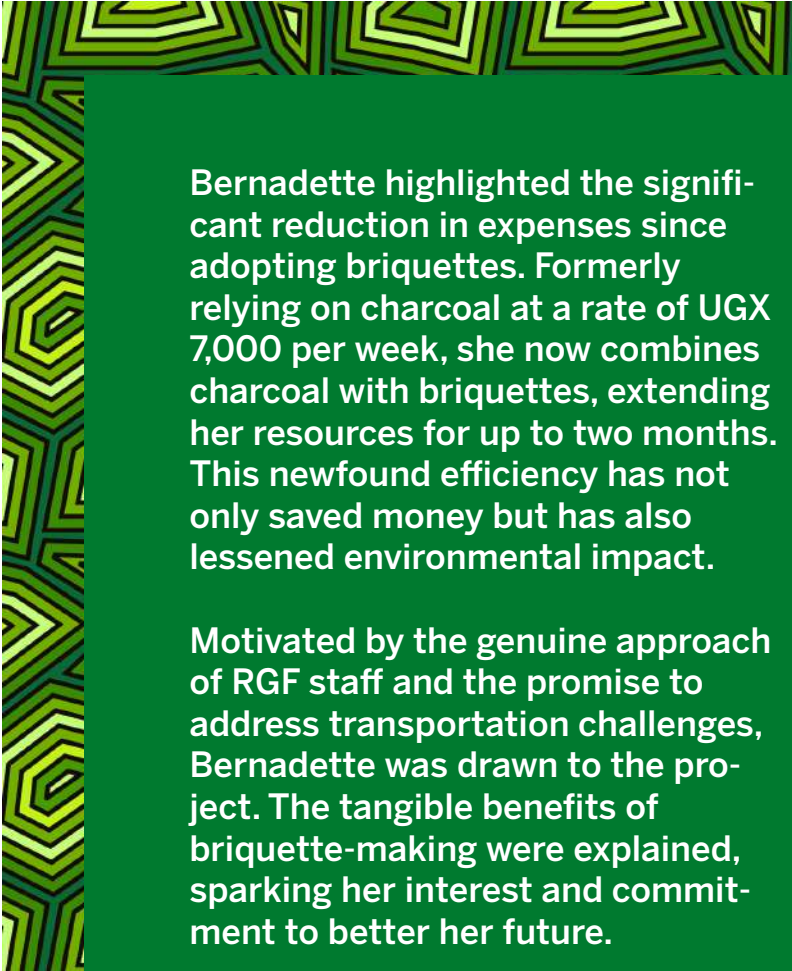


Bernadette Ndakora, a resilient learner from the Raising Gabdo Foundation (RGF shares her transformative journey since joining RGF's training.

Bernadette embarked on her learning journey with RGF in April 2023, dedicating a month and a half to mastering the art of crafting stoves and making briquettes. She eagerly awaits the certification that acknowledges her newfound skills.

Enthusiastically discussing her skills, Bernadette expressed her eagerness to apply them at RGF and in potential future projects. Though currently facing material constraints, she has already witnessed the positive impact of briquettes in her cooking and generously shares them with friends and neighbors.





Bernadette highlighted the significant reduction in expenses since adopting briquettes. Formerly relying on charcoal at a rate of UGX 7,000 per week, she now combines charcoal with briquettes, extending her resources for up to two months. This newfound efficiency has not only saved money but has also lessened environmental impact.

Motivated by the genuine approach of RGF staff and the promise to address transportation challenges, Bernadette was drawn to the project. The tangible benefits of briquette-making were explained, sparking her interest and commitment to better her future.



Bernadette candidly shared the challenges encountered during training, emphasizing the physical risks associated with handling tools. Despite these hurdles, her determination prevailed. Beyond personal gains, Bernadette has become a beacon of change in her community. She introduced her neighbors to briquette-making, and now, some independently produce briquettes using their hands. The community has embraced this sustainable energy solution, creating a positive ripple effect.

Reflecting on her experience, Bernadette identified two key lessons. Firstly, the design process, emphasizing thorough research, community engagement, and continuous improvement. Secondly, the invaluable skill of briquette-making, enabling her to adapt and address her needs with minimal resources.





**From Challenge to Triumph:**

## **Josette's Culinary Journey with RGF**

Josette Gikundiro is a resilient entrepreneur from Burundi. Her story of transformation through her restaurant business with the support of Raising Gabdo Foundation (RGF) is an inspiration to many.

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Josette, a proud mother of two, runs a restaurant and has been an active participant with RGF for one year. In this interview, she sheds light on the significant impact RGF has had on her business.

Josette expressed her gratitude for the skills acquired from RGF, emphasizing the importance of business management. She learned to track profits, manage income, and strategically allocate funds to improve her business operations.


Beyond business skills, Josette received invaluable products from RGF that revolutionized her restaurant. Initially neglecting customer needs, she faced challenges keeping food warm. RGF provided her with baskets, a pressure cooker, and a stove, addressing these issues.



The impact of these products on Josette's business was profound. The basket kept food warm for extended periods, eliminating the need to discard cold food. The stove, coupled with briquettes, reduced charcoal expenses, resulting in substantial savings. Her restaurant's improved efficiency attracted more customers, and on good days, she now serves up to 70 patrons.

Josette shared the financial benefits of using RGF-provided products. Previously spending UGX 30,000 daily on charcoal, she now spends only UGX 20,000, even with an increased customer base. The savings allowed her to pay rent on time, preventing negotiations or threats from her landlord.







Looking ahead, Josette aspires to expand her restaurant, facing the challenge of limited capital. Despite setbacks during the COVID-19 pandemic, she remains determined to rebuild and sees RGF's support as instrumental in achieving her goals.

Josette expressed a keen interest in purchasing more stoves at full price or even higher, given their significant impact on her business. She regrets not acquiring more initially and envisions their continued role in her restaurant's growth.

Grateful for RGF's unique intervention, Josette recommended expanding their reach to help more entrepreneurs. She acknowledged the transformative impact on her business and believes others could benefit similarly.





Josette's story is a testament to the positive influence organizations like RGF can have on individuals striving for success. Through skill-building, strategic support, and the provision of essential tools, Josette has turned her restaurant into a thriving enterprise, embodying resilience and determination.





# Greening Minds: Kibuli Secondary School's Environmental Club Blooms with RGF Support



The Environmental Club at Kibuli Secondary School was established around 2006, experiencing periods of inactivity until 2014. Since then, under the patronage of Kiranda ..., the club has flourished, becoming one of the most active clubs in the school.

The Club primarily focuses on raising awareness about environmental protection and conservation within the school. Notably, the club places a strong emphasis on tree planting and has successfully established a school tree nursery. Seedlings produced are sold to generate income, and parents actively participate during visitation days.

Raising Gabdo Foundation - RGF's Role and Support: Mr. Kiranda acknowledged RGF's pivotal role in the club's success. RGF's support enabled the establishment of the school's tree nursery, and the foundation occasionally provides seedlings for sale during events. Additionally, RGF collaborates with the club to commemorate events such as World Environment Day, actively participating in awareness campaigns.



The club aspires to extend its reach beyond school boundaries, engaging in community outreach with the support of RGF. Mr. Kiranda expressed the club's commitment to addressing the impending shortage of firewood by establishing a woodlot. Plans are underway to secure space outside the school for planting quick-maturing trees to sustain the school's wood fuel needs.

The club boasts a substantial membership of around 346 students, with the most active participants found in the lower classes (senior 1, 2, and 3). Mr. Kiranda credited RGF for cultivating interest and active engagement among club members.

Challenges faced by the Environmental Club include limited space for activities, overgrown trees in the nursery due to space constraints, and scheduling conflicts with academic programs. Despite these challenges, the club perseveres by encouraging teachers with available space to adopt and care for tree seedlings.



Mr. Kiranda expressed his appreciation for RGF's collaboration and recommended continuing the partnership. He suggested that RGF explore opportunities for community involvement, facilitating club activities beyond the school. Furthermore, he envisioned joint initiatives, such as community tree planting and potential involvement in carbon trading.

The club, under Mr. Kiranda's guidance, stands as a beacon for environmental awareness and action, shaping the minds of young students to become stewards of a greener future



**From Charcoal to Dreams:  
Beautiful Living Group's Journey  
with RGF**



In the bustling neighborhood of Kawaala, the Beautiful Living group, comprised of 30 hardworking women, has transformed their lives through the empowering initiatives of the Raising Gadbo Foundation (RGF).

Established in January 2023, Beautiful Living focuses on crafting, sewing, and producing household items like soap and petroleum jelly. Their resilience and entrepreneurial spirit have not only shaped their households but also their community.

In 2022, RGF joined hands with Beautiful Living, introducing them to a world of skills training. RGF's diverse programs in making briquettes, urban farming, baking, and sewing aligned perfectly with the group's interests. The collaboration aimed not only at benefiting the women but also extended to training their non-school going children.



**Revolutionizing Cooking Practices:** The introduction of stoves and briquettes by RGF significantly impacted daily life. The group attested to the substantial reduction in charcoal expenses, allowing them to transition from spending UGX 7,000 weekly to just UGX 2,000 during the briquette availability. The stoves not only economized their cooking but also sped up the process.

“We have gained diverse skills from RGF training that have seen most women here take care of their families and live dignified lives” – Olive, Beautiful Living’s chairperson.

Beautiful Living discovered that the benefits extended beyond household use. Some members incorporated the stoves into their businesses, witnessing cost savings and efficiency. The stoves became valuable assets, aiding a son in a chapatti stall, reducing charcoal consumption and aiding the business.



Looking ahead, Beautiful Living envisions sustained collaboration with RGF. The women hope for continued support in training their children and seek opportunities to expand their ventures. Expressing a desire for a briquette-making machine, the group aims for self-sufficiency. Additionally, they aspire to market their products on a larger scale, with RGF's support in documentation, websites, and even capital infusion.

The Beautiful Living group expressed deep gratitude for the positive changes RGF has brought into their lives. Their dreams and aspirations intertwine with the belief that, with ongoing support, their journey will continue to evolve, proving that empowerment can lead to a beautiful and sustainable future.



