

KILTWALK

Thanks for all of your support in our efforts for the Kiltwalk, we wore our CI T-shirts with pride. I got very emotional at the start line thinking of the young people in Rwanda this money will help.
Dorothy & Albert



kiltwalk for Comfort International

The Kiltwalk is an amazing way to raise funds! We are delighted to have a huge team signed up for the Edinburgh Kiltwalk on the 17th of September from Liberty Church Dunfermline, raising money for Comfort Babies. You can support them at www.totalgiving.co.uk/mypage/libertykiltwalkers

There are also a number of other walkers taking part for Comfort International. If you haven't yet, there is still time to sign up for the Dundee and Edinburgh events! Register at www.thekiltwalk.co.uk/events

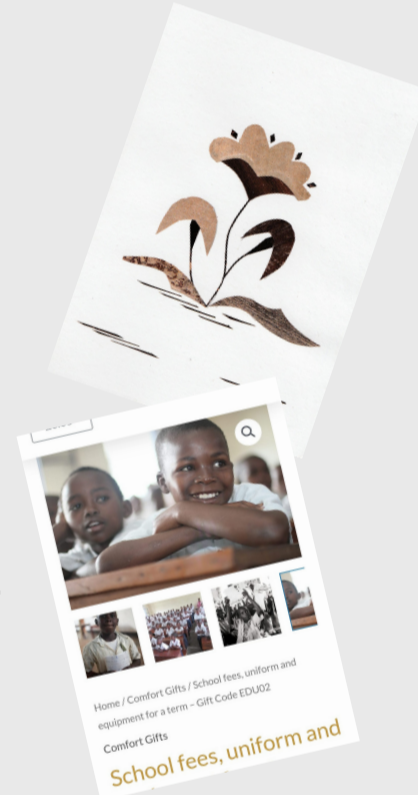
ONLINE SHOP



Buy Comfort Crafts online!

You can now browse our beautiful new online shop and find unique, handmade Rwandan and Congolese crafts, jewellery and cards. You can also purchase Comfort Gifts where your chosen recipient receives a beautiful greetings card and their gift can provide healthcare, education, safe accommodation and much more for those who need it most. Visit shop.comfortinternational.org or get in touch for a catalogue

give a gift and change a life



SUPPORTERS' DAY 2023



The 16th of September will be our annual supporters day for 2023! It is a brilliant opportunity to thank our incredible supporters for their partnership and support over the year, to share what has been going on at Comfort International over the past 12 months and the hopes, dreams and challenges which await us in the next. We'd love you to join us at 9.30 for 10am, and feel free to stay for a light lunch at 1pm. Anyone is welcome, whether you have been with us for decades or are just getting to know our work. Let us know you are coming by getting in touch with us!

Contact Comfort International

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Comfort International

Quarterly News Summer 2023

Building work started on the Comfort Transformation Centre

Feeding Projects Success!

Update from CHR Hospital staff

Emergency appeal information

Comfort Babies graduations

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a little can change a life

WELCOME

Editor: Ailidh Alvim

It's now Summer and the teams are out in Africa, visiting our dear partners and projects we help support. We had a wonderful group from Arbroath Academy to start off with, who were able to help with digging the foundations for the much awaited Comfort Transformation Centre (CTC)! Then the teams from Bishopbriggs Community Church and Sandyhills Parish Church were able to visit the communities they partner in Karongi, reaffirming friendships that go years deep. At the time of writing, the final group have returned from DRC and will see out their time in Rwanda, with small groups also heading to Burundi and South Sudan. How wonderful to visit our friends and partners once again, and be refreshed and encouraged by them.

We are truly delighted to see progress being made on the CTC, and were also greatly encouraged by the feedback from the Feeding Projects in Bisesero where school attendance has risen and malnutrition decreased where children have been receiving nursery and school meals. However, the teams have also been struck by the deterioration of the situation in DRC, where the ongoing conflict is having devastating consequences, with refugee camps as far as the eye can see and awful living conditions. There have also been stories from families in Rwanda affected by the severe flooding earlier this year. We are responding with an emergency appeal, which you can read more about on page 6. We thank you for your ongoing prayers and support.

SOUTH SUDAN UPDATE

The situation in South Sudan continues to be very difficult. Due to a lack of infrastructure, a great number of people have no access to fresh water or electricity. Children and adults frequent roadsides begging for help, and the hungry and malnourished struggle to stay alive. The cost of food and education is being sharply driven up, which puts a huge strain on project resources. 1kg of beans in South Sudan costs 1.5x more than in Rwanda, which is itself struggling to deal with the rise in prices.



However, a little really can change a life! 11 children from the project are now being fully supported, either following reintegration with their families or foster carers, or by starting up their own business and becoming entirely self sufficient. This is a testimony to the sustainability of the project and the long term effects of sponsorship and support. These children are now officially graduating from the project and other children can be supported in their place.



a little can change a life

HOSPITAL STAFF IN CONGO GIVE UPDATE

The Central Hospital Rusayu, situated in the middle of intense conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is run by a team of dedicated, selfless and skilled staff. Many of these are sponsored and supported through Comfort International. Throughout the year we receive updates on how they are getting on. This year has been particularly challenging. On the back of years of Covid, soaring inflation and skyrocketing prices in the country, the violence in the area of Rusayu has intensified greatly since October 2022. This is reflected in the reports of the staff, and the over-riding emotion is a strong desire for peace in their country. Despite the challenges however, the hospital continues to thrive, providing life-saving medical care for those who would otherwise be completely unable to afford it.



The staff talked about the things they loved most about Congo, including its food, nature and people. They also talked about the challenges they face in their country. Philemon, a nurse, sums it up, "I like Fufu [a dough made from boiled plantains], meat and vegetable garden foods. But at home in Congo, I would like first and foremost to live in safety and peace with my loved ones [...] The recent violence in our area has affected my life. When I see cases of violence coming to our facility to seek medical attention, sometimes they're unaccompanied, abandoned, neglected, and often rejected by their families, so when I see them in such situations I am so touched."



In the report from this Summer, the staff talk about the most interesting cases they have seen recently. They have treated a vast range of maladies; cholera, anaemia, haemorrhage, war wounds and even the birth of the first lot of triplets at the hospital. However, perhaps the most intriguing report comes from Hoseana (above right), who writes, "We had received a case that had been transferred to us being unconscious, it was believed that he was already dead. But the doctors and nurses hooked him up to the monitor and the oxygen concentrator and he came back to life." Christine (above left) adds, "The patient had been brought to death, but thanks to the devices that Comfort International had brought to the CHR and the drugs that had been given to the patient, he is cured and he returned home in good health."



Bahati John (above) concludes, "The security situation where we live is very worrying. It had handicapped our development and shattered the objectives we had. Our development has experienced a bottleneck and has meant that we have hardly made any progress. We ask our sponsors to place us in the hands of Almighty God in communion with us. Pray that those who can influence the restoration of peace in our country can also come to our aid so that peace can return to our region."

COMFORT BABIES GRADUATES



3 mums supported through Comfort Babies in Rwanda have recently graduated from the project and told us of how the project has had an effect on their lives and their hopes and dreams for the future. They all started out in very difficult circumstances, and following years of careful healing and support, they are now looking forward to being able to independently care for themselves and their child(ren). This is the end goal of all the projects – that every individual would find the care and provision they need, and then garner the ability to support themselves.

We wish these women and their families the very best as they start out on this new chapter, and are grateful for the inspiration that they are.

Chamimu (left with daughter Katia) was living with her mother and 3 siblings, and was 17 years old when she was raped and fell pregnant. Being on the Comfort Babies project was about much more than just financial support, and started a journey of healing in her life. 7 years later, she writes to sponsor Kate, saying, “I joined the project hopelessly, without enough for myself and family, worrying very much about the life I was going to face with my baby.” After going back to school, Chamimu was able to learn new skills and start working. She says, “I hope my graduation from Comfort Babies might help another person in need who was like me when I came onto the project in 2016.”

Another mother leaving the project, now with a job at a restaurant and skills for the future, is Solange (right), with baby Kendra. She writes, “I was able to learn enough about giving all the love I have for my baby and helped to live free of preventable diseases because of Comfort Babies. I am so grateful because I would not be able to live a better life now if it was not your support. I was struggling emotionally when I joined the project with a lot of stress but now I am full of hope for a better life ahead.”

COMFORT'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY



Next year is Comfort International's 25th anniversary! We are incredibly grateful for 25 years of transformation - both for many lives in Africa, but also for ourselves! We are planning lots of fun-filled events all over the country to celebrate next year but we need your help! If you have a passion for planning and would like to be on our events committee, please contact ailidh@comfortinternational.org.

COMFORT TRANSFORMATION CENTRE BUILDING WORK UNDERWAY

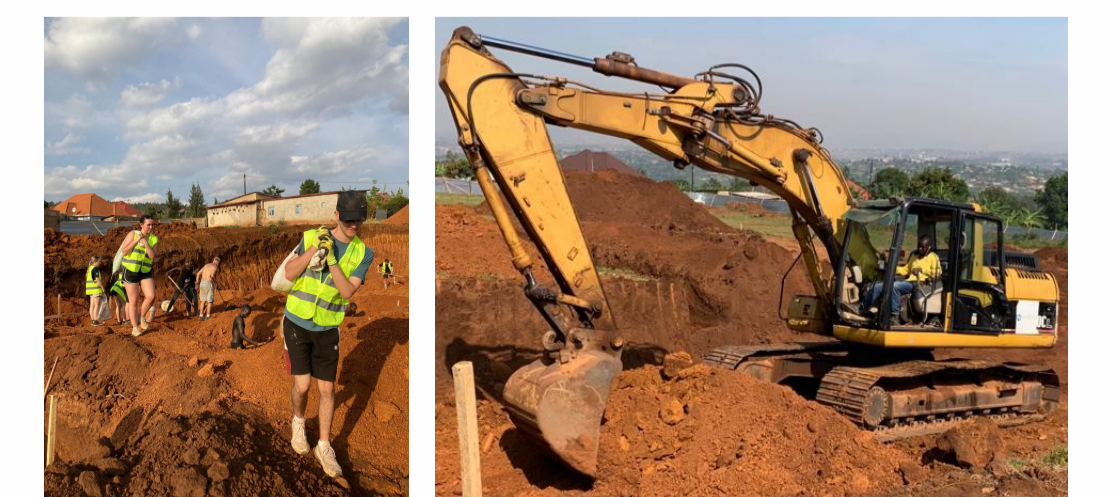


We are delighted to inform you that the building work on the Comfort Transformation Centre (CTC) has finally begun! Despite many setbacks, this incredibly exciting project is now becoming a reality, with foundations being laid in June! We would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing supporters for their continued support over many years, both prayerfully and financially, towards this project which will transform so many lives.



The Comfort Transformation Centre is to be a centre for the Street Kids Rescue and Comfort Babies projects in Rwanda, providing safe accommodation for up to 80 ex-street children, as well as particularly vulnerable mums and their babies. This Centre will allow these young people to grow and mature in a healthy, caring environment, receiving food, clothing, education, health care and a sense of family.

A long slow process of gaining building permissions and warrants followed by years of Covid lockdowns, and then restrictions on access to the site because of road building, have frustrated the project for three and half years since the land was bought. It has been a long struggle but at last we are seeing real progress with the CTC. The foundations have been dug, building regulations checks done and foundations approved, concrete poured and steel bars for support columns bought, lab tested and approved. The visiting groups from Scotland were able to get in on the action, but of course the oversight and skilled labour will be done by the engineers and contractors. It is also wonderful to see some Street Kids Rescue/Friends of Jesus graduates who are now skilled workers involved. Nshimiye Jean Pierre (bottom right) is working with heavy machinery and has been involved in earth moving and shaping. How wonderful to see!



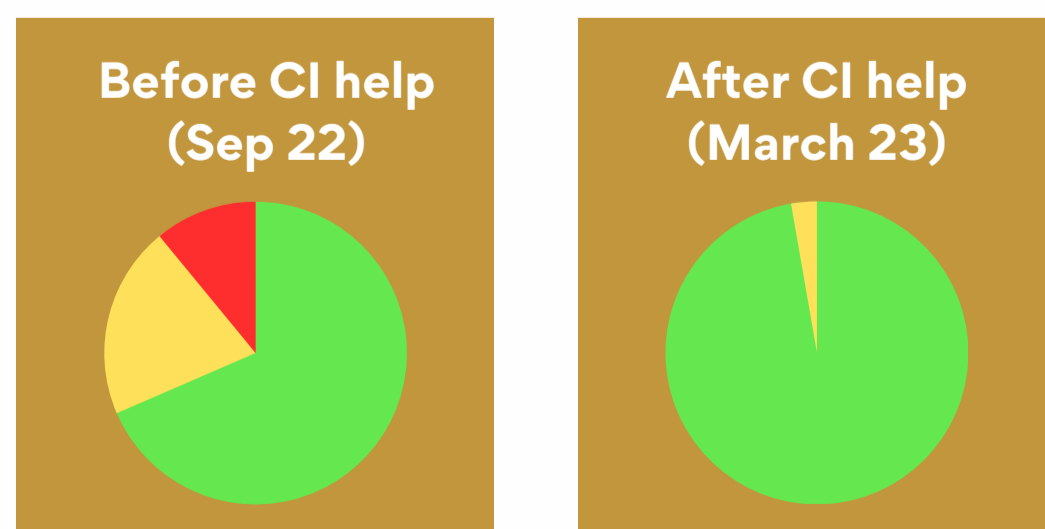
FEEDING PROJECTS SUCCESS

In the Summer of last year Comfort International launched a joint venture with long term partners and friends, Good News International (GNI). It was a bold and ambitious undertaking to fight hunger in some of the poorest areas of Rwanda. The project is made up of two arms; one funding school meals in the area of Bisesero and one providing a nutritious breakfast for nursery children at the highest risk of malnutrition. We have been hearing just how much your donations have been changing lives through these feeding projects



Nursery Nutrition Project

We found that after 5 months of Comfort International support to provide nursery meals, out of 73 children enrolled in the nutrition programme, there are no longer any children on the programme showing severe signs of malnutrition, and the number of children showing any signs of malnutrition has been drastically reduced. The nursery expects that, if this trend continues, then by the end of the school year there should be no children showing any signs of malnutrition.

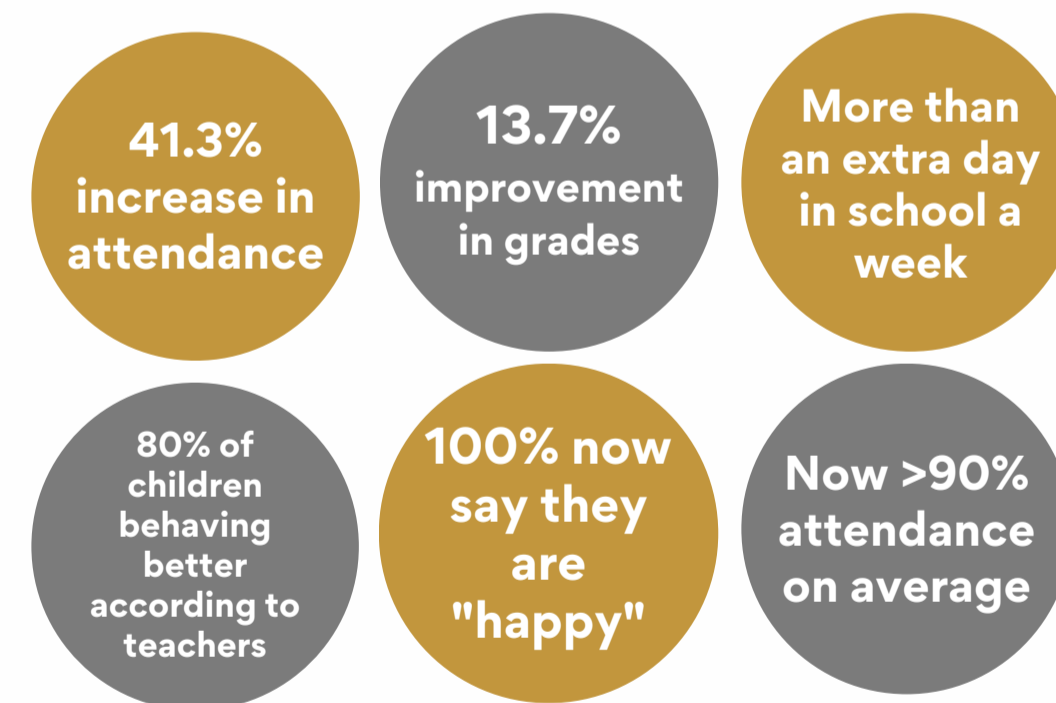


- ♥ No signs of malnutrition
- ♥ Some signs of malnutrition
- ♥ Multiple, severe signs of malnutrition

School Feeding Programme



The Rwandan government subsidises school meals for children, but families are still required to pay a fee set by the school, which can be as low as about £2. However, in an incredibly rural and poor part of the country, Bisesero, some families cannot afford this monthly expense. Comfort has been paying school meals for children, so they don't need to worry about where their next meal is coming from. At the start of the year, GNI took some baseline data from 40 children enrolled on the project. We went back after these children were supported to receive school meals for one term and the results were astounding.



These projects have been incredibly successful at helping transform lives throughout Rwanda. We will now be rolling out funding for nutritional support to a number of projects, including Street Kids Rescue in Rwanda, DRC and Burundi, Children of Liberty, the nutritional wing at Central Hospital Rusayu, and child support in South Sudan, as well as continuing to support nursery nutrition and School Feeding Projects. Get in touch for more information or to request a copy of our report.

CI SUMMER APPEAL

This Summer, Comfort International is splitting its appeal between two urgent and important causes, in two countries where our partners are carrying out life-changing and saving work on a daily basis. Many of you will have been touched by the stories and images of the recent tragic floods which scarred the northern and western provinces of Rwanda. Over 130 people lost their lives and many more lost their homes, farms, land, possessions and livestock.



We support a number of communities in the affected areas through Good News International and were very grateful and relieved to hear that there were no fatalities of project members due to the floods. However, many loved ones were lost and our hearts are broken for our Rwandan brothers and sisters who are grieving at this time. In addition to this, although escaping with their lives, many of the community members suffered devastating losses, especially in terms of crops and livestock. Communities are faced with the real danger of months of hunger with no seeds to plant for the next season. Now begins the long road back, rebuilding that which was taken in such a momentary flash, leaving such destruction. Part of the Summer appeal fund this year will go towards rebuilding homes for those who have lost them, including Jackson of Batsinda SKR project who was staying with his mother when his home was destroyed in the floods, and providing support and resources such as crop seeds for those communities who have lost so much in this disaster.



The second part of our appeal is following a fantastic opportunity in D. R. Congo to build a wonderful new school in Kambize. This is a very poor area of Congo which suffers from intense violence and was also victim to the eruptions of the Nyirongongo volcano. This means that the whole village sits on piles of volcanic rubble, making building incredibly challenging. The school at Kambize was set up a number of years ago for children who had been receiving catch-up lessons from the team at Comfort Congo. There are now over 600 children attending that school, which is little more than some wooden planks set up as walls, with children squeezed onto benches perched on top of volcanic rubble, but their delight at being able to learn is visible for all to see. The Congolese government have been forthcoming with funds and have offered to pay 90% of the cost of a modern, new, 6-classroom school for Kambize, if Comfort International can provide 10% of the funds. The school will cost \$250,000 (about £210,000). Therefore, we need to raise in the region of £21,000 to build this much needed school for the amazingly brave children of Kambize.

Both of these causes are extremely worthy and very urgent. To support, you can head to www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/ci_summer_appeal_2023 - thank you.