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Search for
Common Ground
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TUYAGE • LET'S TALK

Access to information and reinforcement of economic discourse.



Dive into the heart of Tuyage (Let's Talk), an initiative funded by USAID to transform communities throughout Burundi. Spearheaded by Search, Tuyage's mission is clear: to cultivate an enriched information landscape, foster dynamic economic dialogue, encourage citizen engagement, and promote unwavering social cohesion.

Since its inception in 2018, Tuyage has been steadfastly committed to two fundamental objectives, each playing a pivotal role in reshaping Burundi's future. Firstly, the project supports journalists in delivering impartial and high-quality economic information, captivating young minds. Secondly, Tuyage bridges the gap between youth and diverse economic actors, fostering informed dialogue on reconciliation, entrepreneurship, and the emergence of new business opportunities.

Building on these successes, we expanded the scope of the Tuyage project in 2020 to address the specific needs of Burundian women. Recognizing the cultural barriers and societal norms that hinder their economic participation and access to property, we integrated a dedicated component focused on creating an environment conducive to women's economic empowerment. Through a series of communication activities, we challenge gender norms while empowering women with the skills, resources, and invaluable opportunities for their success.

Within these pages, you will discover inspiring stories of women who dared to dream, defying cultural expectations to become true pioneers of entrepreneurship and leadership. From combating gender-based violence to improving access to markets, financing, and mentorship, Tuyage provides these women with a platform conducive to their growth.

However, we acknowledge that women's empowerment cannot be achieved in isolation. That is why we also highlight the exceptional men who stand shoulder to shoulder with women, shattering barriers and staunchly advocating for gender equality.

Together, they are rewriting the narratives of traditional roles, thus paving the way for an inclusive and promising society. Tuyage is not merely an initiative; it is a resounding call to action. We invite you to join us in shaping a Burundi where every voice is heard and valued.

From stigma to success

ADELINE

Empowering Divorced Women Economically: Adeline's Journey to Prosperity

"I felt isolated, fearing judgment. When going to the market, I would rush, avoiding eye contact, afraid that people would discover I was divorced," confides Adeline, under the curious gaze of a crowd around her.

When Adeline left her husband, she held onto what she cherished most: her two children. However, she also carried a new burden—society's stigma on divorced women. With no other support, her family offered her temporary shelter, but their resources dwindled as the number of mouths to feed increased. *"My uncle then gave me a small capital so I could start fresh,"* she reveals.

Determined to carve her path, Adeline ventures into the tomato business, generating modest but consistent profits. Nevertheless, she moves forward alone on this path, burdened by her past. *"I felt inadequate in front of others,"* she confesses, encountering additional obstacles due to the expectations placed on Burundian women. *"In our culture, it is frowned upon for a woman to ride a bicycle,"* Adeline laments. *"So, I had to pay a man to transport my goods to the market, giving up the opportunity to do it myself."*



ADELINE

Fate takes a new turn when Adeline joins the Tuyage project implemented by Search and funded by USAID in the province of Muyinga. She meets others who share her aspirations and challenges through networking sessions for young entrepreneurs organized by Search in collaboration with the Muyinga Youth Association Network (RAJE-Muyinga). Their stories resonate deeply within her, sparking a desire to open up. *"I tried to tell my story, but it remained unfinished. Words failed me. It was still too painful,"* she confides.

Undeterred, Adeline absorbs every detail of the other participants' narratives, assimilating their experiences and nurturing the growing voice within her. This exchange allows her to find inspiration, acquire new skills, and develop business strategies for her venture.

Adeline sets out to expand her business, armed with a simple ledger obtained during the activities. *"I started writing everything down: my plans, every expense, and every profit. It was new to me; before that, everything was done informally. It allowed me to have a clearer view of my income and adjust my business strategy accordingly,"* she explains. Soon, this approach bears fruit, enabling Adeline to save enough to fulfill her dream: *"building a new house,"* she says, looking at her two children standing before her, dressed in their finest clothes.

Today, Adeline is the president of a listening club, where she and 15 other women continue to listen to the stories of women entrepreneurs through radio programs produced by Search via its Ijambo studio, collectively supporting each other's economic projects. Together, they form a support network, pooling their resources and knowledge to help one another.

Inspired by the success of the women in the clubs, two more clubs have emerged in neighboring communities. The impact amplifies, with more and more women turning to Adeline for advice. *"They ask me to teach them how I organize my work. I pass on what I have learned, and many of them have been able to start their businesses,"* Adeline continues with satisfaction.

WHEN PEOPLE REALIZED THE NEED TO COME TOGETHER, WHETHER WOMEN OR MEN, EVERYONE STARTED WORKING FOR DEVELOPMENT.

Now, community members recognize that women can also lead and prosper in various enterprises. *"Attitudes are starting to change. When people realized the need to come together, whether women or men, everyone started working for development."*



Adeline, proud and radiant, displays her fresh tomatoes at the market, symbols of her inspiring journey marked by incredible resilience and the invaluable support of her community. By overcoming the cultural barriers that once hindered her progress, she is now paving the way for a brighter future, filled with promise and opportunity.

From Mourning to Change: The Legacy of Languide and the Muyinga Widows in the Struggle for Women's Emancipation.

In an instant, Languide's radiant smile vanished, her gaze clouded, fixed in the distance as if searching for answers in the vastness of her life's story. Slowly, Languide unraveled the thread of a story marked by her ex-husband's violence, the scars on her body painfully reminding her of that time. She recalled, *"I realized I was living like a slave, sadly imagining my future."*

It was 1995 when a crisis swept through the country, suddenly taking Languide's husband and leaving her widowed with three children. Amid her grief, Languide found strength and solace in the company of other widows, forming a close-knit group of around thirty women. Within this circle, their journey towards empowerment began, catalyzed by a previous USAID project that challenged gender norms by providing them with the means to cultivate coffee—a domain traditionally reserved for men.

However, the scars of past violence ran deep. Languide recalls: *"I struggled to believe in myself and to engage with others."* Nevertheless, driven by unwavering determination, she found the courage to move forward. In 2022, a new opportunity arose when she joined the Tuyage project—an initiative funded by USAID and implemented by Search—which brought together women coffee producers.



LANGUIDE

The project's activities centered around supporting the economic development of Burundian women, particularly in acquiring skills to overcome cultural and social barriers. *"I underwent training on conflict transformation, which pushed me out of my comfort zone, helped me shed my fears, and made me raise my voice loud and clear,"* recounts Languide, her words captivating a group of attentive women and children, eagerly absorbing every word.

The training became a driving force for Languide, empowering her to support other women and encouraging them to rise alongside her. She proudly exclaimed, *"I ran for village elections and was elected in fourth place."*

Through Tuyage, Languide also received training in business management and grants to improve and expand her activities, multiplying her impact. *"We received three additional plots of land and learned to cultivate other vegetables,"* explained Languide, as the familiar sound of a machine making vegetable porridge in the background testified to the prosperity of her agricultural activities.

With the profits generated, Languide supported not only her children but also reinvested in her business, ensuring a better future for herself and her community. Search provided Languide and the women in her community with a radio, allowing them to access programs specifically focused on women's economic development and empowerment. Languide revealed, *"We had the opportunity to write to the host and ask questions,"* highlighting the transformative impact of access to information. *"It helped us break out of our shell."*

The economic development of the widows of Ngozi had a ripple effect within the community. Languide reminisced, *"People saw us wearing nice clothes, building our houses,"* as intrigue and inspiration spread among men and women who aspired to a more prosperous life. The widows became symbols of progress, and many sought their advice.

NOW IT'S THE HUSBANDS WHO ENCOURAGE THEIR WIVES TO JOIN THESE ASSOCIATIONS.

Languide narrated, *"Women asked us how to do the same. We invited them to listen to radio programs. Soon, 15 women's associations were born."* These associations formed a powerful network that enabled women to save and access microcredits, expanding their opportunities. Today, roles are starting to reverse. Languide proudly declared, *"Now it's the husbands who encourage their wives to join these associations."*

Surrounded by the women of Ngozi, their eyes filled with unwavering admiration, Languide knew that her story could inspire them to overcome their obstacles. With conviction, she points out those who would carry on the legacy of a generation of empowered women that she and her fellow widows have helped shape. *"Women are capable of accomplishing anything,"* she asserts, her smile widening more than ever.



Languide stands beside one of the women in her coffee-growing group, beaming with a radiant smile. Despite a challenging past marred by violence, she has emerged as an inspiring role model for her community by defying social norms.

PELAGIE

From conflict to synergy

Blazing Her Own Trail: Pélagie, a Butcher Who Defies the Norm.

In the heart of Ngozi province, Pélagie, a passionate butcher, fearlessly defies traditional gender roles. *"When I first started, people thought I was crazy. Everyone came to watch me with curiosity,"* she reminisces. *"Having grown up watching my father, who was a skilled butcher, this profession naturally came to me,"* Pélagie adds.

Despite the initial skepticism, clients flock to Pélagie's shop. Challenging societal norms, she becomes an inspiration for others. *"Three other women from the community followed in my footsteps,"* proudly declares Pélagie.

However, despite her professional success, Pélagie's confidence is shaken by the tensions within her household. She and her husband struggle to manage their finances, each pursuing their own interests without considering the other. Reflecting on this difficult period, Pélagie confesses, *"It was every man for himself. I was self-sufficient and didn't see the point in listening to my husband."*



PELAGIE

It is during this time that Pélagie joins the Tuyage project, funded by USAID. She participates in conflict transformation activities that deeply resonates with her. *"When the the trainers emphasized that to help the community, we first needed to resolve the problems at home, it struck a chord with me. We learned to identify and manage various conflicts, and I saw the reflection of my own household."*

Back home, Pélagie sits down with her husband. Thanks to the knowledge gained from the training, they resolve their conflicts and discuss the projects they aspire to accomplish together. Slowly but surely, they become a united team, aligning their goals and supporting each other.

Armed with the new skills acquired through Tuyage, such as developing and managing small-scale ventures, Pélagie quickly diversifies her activities. In addition to the butcher shop, she becomes a subcontractor for a coffee factory, manufactures soap, and manages two stores. However, Pélagie attributes her success to the understanding and synergy reestablished between her and her husband.

"We were able to buy two plots of land, two houses, and a motorcycle for my husband. Should he observe any shortages in one of our shops, he takes care of restocking. We truly share our responsibilities. My business has thrived beyond what I hoped for, and I couldn't have done it alone."

With each success, Pélagie's confidence soars, prompting her to take on new challenges. *"Women in our community constantly underestimate themselves, and I was no exception. However, the project motivated me to run for the position of hill chief, and I secured the position of vice-chief. I also preside over 11 associations, each comprising around thirty women."*

I USE MY POSITION TO AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF WOMEN, UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES THEY FACE, SHARE MY EXPERIENCE, AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO FOLLOW ME.

As a leader, Pélagie's primary mission is to uplift other women. *"Why should development be exclusively reserved for men? I use my position to amplify the voice of women, understand the issues they face, share my experience, and inspire others to follow me."*

And Pélagie translates her words into action. *"I focus on empowering widows by providing them with microcredit to start their own businesses, such as banana beer production. My goal is to ensure the active participation of all women in the economic development of our hill, including those who may face marginalization."*

Within the community, as women rise, the shadow of gender-based violence gradually fades away. The Tuyage project plays a crucial role in raising community awareness of the pressing issues of gender inequality through gender-awareness training, positive masculinity, and testimonials from exemplary partners. *"What makes us even prouder is that we have included our husbands in these training sessions, encouraging them to engage actively."*

Today, the movement for change breaks gender barriers as men step forward alongside their wives as true partners in community development. Whereas before, *"men prohibited their wives from participating in women's associations"*, they are now their most fervent allies, encouraging them to join the movement initiated by Pélagie and her companions.



A Fulfilled Mother: How Goudoula Found the Strength to Rebuild Herself.

With a trembling voice, Goudoula confided, *“When I saw people smiling, I thought they were crazy.”* Memories of a distant era flooded her thoughts, when happiness felt like a foreign concept. *“I perceived others as my enemies, and my only concern was the well-being of my children.”*

Trapped in a marriage scarred by violence, Goudoula fought with unwavering resolve to care for her children. *“All their needs rested on my shoulders, while the household resources were in my husband’s hands.”* Despite the risks, she mustered the courage to leave him. *“I lived in constant fear, convinced that one day he would kill me if he ever got the chance.”* The years that followed became an unrelenting battle against another captor—poverty. Necessities, like shoes for her children, felt like unattainable luxuries. Unforeseen expenses, such as medical bills for a sick child, quickly shattered every attempt at saving money. *“I spent sleepless nights wondering how long we could endure.”*

Then, in 2022, a glimmer of hope emerged. Goudoula was invited to join the listening club of Project Tuyage, a program funded by USAID and driven by Search. About fifteen women gathered to listen to radio programs that showcased inspiring stories of



GOUDOULA

women entrepreneurs and the adversities they had overcome. Goudoula, filled with apprehension and doubt, initially hesitated. *"I was afraid to share my story, afraid of being judged and ridiculed*

I REALIZED I WASN'T ALONE. OTHERS HAD EXPERIENCED SIMILAR STORIES. IT GAVE ME NEW CONFIDENCE.

by others." However, as she immersed herself in these tales of resilience, a revelation washed over her. *"I realized I wasn't alone. Others had experienced similar stories. It gave me new confidence."* The extinguished flame of hope within her rekindled, nurtured by the strength of these women.

Fueled by newfound determination, Goudoula resolved to confront the shadows that had haunted her for far too long. She summoned the strength to reconnect with her ex-husband. *"I wanted him to see that I held no grudges. Today, even though I have no desire to return to him, I have established a bond that allows him to see our children, and the fear no longer consumes me,"* she declared with a firm resolution. This act, born of her inner transformation, marked a decisive turning point in her journey. Goudoula was no longer held captive by her past.

"I had regained my pride, and from that moment on, I began envisioning the projects I wanted to pursue." Within the club, far beyond the stories that echoed her pain, Goudoula heard tales that served as models of what was possible. *"One woman shared how she had started a tomato business with just 2,500 francs and today had managed to accumulate 500,000 francs,"* Goudoula recounted, her

eyes lighting up. These stories stirred something within her, igniting her ambition to create a better life for herself and her children.

United by a spirit of collaboration, the listening club members triggered a domino effect of success. They pooled their resources through membership fees, creating a network of solidarity and shared aspirations. Together, they paved the way for multiple economic initiatives, offering each woman opportunities for financial growth and independence.

Seizing this opportunity, Goudoula obtained a micro-credit of 25,000 francs to launch her avocado business. Soon, she transformed this modest investment into a thriving business. Proudly revealing a pile of luscious avocados hidden beneath a cloth, she exclaimed, *"I've multiplied my initial investment by five."*

Goudoula watched her children return from school, their faces adorned with broad smiles. She no longer fretted about them going to bed hungry or lacking necessities. *"I can provide them with shoes, buy their school clothes, and take care of them if they fall ill,"* she confided, filled with a new sense of security.

Goudoula's transformation did not go unnoticed within her community. She became a source of inspiration, and a trusted advisor to those seeking guidance and support. *"Thanks to the club, I've been able to share my experience,"* Goudoula continued, a smile illuminating her face. *"Those who know my background are amazed by my transformation. They come to me for advice, and I'm more than happy to help them find strength and peace in their own homes."*



Goudoula, surrounded by her two children, represents a mother's resilience and unconditional love, drawing on her maternal strength to overcome adversity. Once trapped in a marriage marked by violence, Goudoula has courageously fought to rebuild a home where her children can flourish, benefit from constant support and live a life full of possibilities.

Cultivating change: How Marie overcame fear to transform her community.

"I used to feel worthless. Whenever someone spoke to me, I felt tears welling up, and all my thoughts vanished," confides Marie, seated in front of her modest house.

In the province of Gitega, Marie, a coffee farmer, tends to the land she loves, her mind teeming with unexplored ideas trapped within the confines of her fears. *"Fear of others held me captive. I couldn't share my ideas,"* Marie admits, her gaze fixed upon the horizon.

Nevertheless, Marie refuses to be stifled by her fears. Determined to overcome them, she gives life to one of her ideas: ecological toilets that turn waste into organic fertilizer. *"I asked my husband to assist me in building it. Afraid of being seen by people, I concealed it behind my house, away from prying eyes, and worked on it during the night,"* she confides.

Marie's journey takes an unexpected turn when she becomes part of a group of coffee farmers invited to join the Tuyage project, funded by USAID. Gathering each week, these women listen to radio programs broadcasting inspiring stories, celebrating the economic successes of women across Burundi and illuminating the untapped potential within so many others.



MARIE

Gradually, the once-locked box that restrained Marie's ideas opens. "The shows emphasized what women could do. They encouraged us to unite, share our ideas, and actively contribute to the development of our communities," confides Marie. *"Building my ecological toilet was already transcending society's expectations."*

THE SHOWS EMPHASIZED WHAT WOMEN COULD DO. THEY ENCOURAGED US TO UNITE, SHARE OUR IDEAS, AND ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

Thanks to the Tuyage project, Marie also benefits from training in conflict transformation and project management, which strengthens her ability to express, defend and refine her ideas eloquently and confidently. Both the training and the radio broadcasts instill in Marie a newfound confidence, enabling her to share her thoughts with others without fear.

Inspired by her vision, Marie eagerly joins the second edition of the "Nd'umu DG" reality T.V. show, where she competes alongside 300 other women, all presenting their innovative entrepreneurial projects. Marie's ecological toilet project, offering an alternative to chemical fertilizers, captivates the jury panel. The esteemed presence of the President of Burundi, the U.S. Ambassador to Burundi, and Burundian ministers amplifies the significance of the event as they engage with Marie, posing thought-provoking questions. After a challenging competition, Marie emerges as the victor, receiving a grant of 15 million francs. Recognizing the brilliance of her project, the President generously grants her an additional 20 million francs.

Without delay, Marie turns her dreams into tangible achievements. Once confined to the realm of her imagination, her ideas now manifest as realities that shape the world around her. With a judicious utilization of the funds she received, Marie strategically allocates resources to various aspects of her project. Her primary focus lies in enhancing soil fertility, preserving the environment, boosting agricultural productivity, and fostering economic opportunities within the community.

The impact of Marie's endeavors reverberates swiftly. By acquiring a 2.5-hectare plot of land and introducing cattle that not only thrives on her property, but also on land belonging to families who previously had no such resources, she breathes new life into the soil, nurturing its potential. Moreover, Marie's initiatives extend beyond her immediate surroundings. She takes the initiative to construct ecological toilets in several provinces, inspiring others to join her on the path to sustainability.

However, Marie recognizes that progress requires collective effort. *"We must stride forward together,"* she asserts. *"Tuyage has broadened our perspectives, opening up new horizons. And it is with an open heart that we embark on a shared development journey. As previously silenced ideas re-surface, many women will step up to lead diverse projects, demanding national recognition."*

Today, Marie is a role model for her community; she is no longer the shy coffee farmer of yesteryear. Her ideas flow freely, and her voice resonates proudly. She confidently declares: *"I speak and act without fear. I am proud because now I educate women and men on building their toilets. I dream of expanding this project and extending its impact across the territory."*



Tuyage has broadened our perspectives, opening up new horizons. And it is with an open heart that we embark on a shared development journey.



Marie, a visionary of sustainable agriculture, proudly displays her handmade organic fertilizer, a symbol of her transformative journey and unwavering commitment. Thanks to her dedication to ecology, Marie is improving farming practices while preserving the environment.

Redefining gender roles

Léocadie Challenges Societal Norms for Women's Economic Equality.

"A husband is not like an avocado tree where one can harvest money like one harvests avocados. Women also possess the ability to contribute to the economic development of the household," boldly declares Léocadie. For too long, women in her community have been confined by implicit rules and limited opportunities. As a teacher in Muyinga province, Léocadie aspires to equality, not just through words, but through concrete actions.

In her reality, men hold the reins of decision-making and control the finances. *"Men were considered superior. Women did not have the right to venture into entrepreneurship. I used to hand over my entire salary to my husband, who managed it as he pleased. We hardly communicated,"* she recalls.

But everything changed when Léocadie had the opportunity to participate in a town hall meeting organized by Search as part of the Tuyage project, which was funded by USAID. The project aims to empower women economically and unleash their potential to create a sustainable impact in their communities. Through these discussions, Léocadie felt the impenetrable walls of societal expectations crumbling. *"I realized that for the prosperous development of my*



of my community, women are indispensable," Léocadie recalls.

The project opened her eyes to the value of women's contributions and provided her with the tools and knowledge to bring about real change. Indeed, Léocadie benefited from project management training that clarified the contours of this newfound awareness. *"This training enabled me to start my fruit and vegetable business. Thanks to what I have learned, I can now calculate my income, manage my expenses, and develop effective sales strategies,"* she proudly asserts.

However, Léocadie knows that her journey toward independence is not solely dependent on her own efforts. She recognizes the importance of her husband's support and, relying on the conflict transformation training she received, takes it upon herself to transform their household. Léocadie explains, *"I shared everything I had learned with my husband. Most importantly, we applied the conflict training in our home."*

The era of silent nights and unilateral financial management is now a thing of the past. *"Today, we pool our salaries together. We collaboratively create a budget based on our priorities, and decisions are made jointly."*

As Léocadie's influence grows within her own family, she extends her wave of change beyond her immediate sphere. *"Inspired by my journey, a woman approached me for help as a mediator. Her husband opposed her participation in income-generating activities,"* she shares. Using her real-life experience, Léocadie succeeded in bridging the gap between spou-

ses, opening their eyes to the countless possibilities that lie ahead.

As part of Tuyage, Léocadie joins a listening club, a haven where women gather to share inspiring stories and support each other. In this club, women from all walks of life attentively listen to radio programs that depict the entrepreneurial journeys of pioneers like Léocadie.

In this haven, a powerful realization emerges: their collective strength far exceeds the sum of their individual ambitions. *"No one can thrive alone,"* adds Léocadie. So, the club encourages mutual support through contributions, which are then shared in the form of microcredits, nurturing the entrepreneurial initiatives of each member.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
DEMONSTRATE SOLIDARITY
AND SERVE AS ROLE
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FOLLOW IN OUR FOOTSTEPS.**

The club's success resonates through the hills of Muyinga, inspiring women from neighboring communities to create their own clubs. A common goal emerges from one hill to another: a collective determination to break free from the limits imposed upon them. Soon, a gathering of all these women is planned. *"The Tuyage project has connected women from different communities. Together, we can demonstrate solidarity and serve as role models for other women, empowering them to follow in our footsteps,"* concludes Léocadie.

"The Tuyage project has connected women from different communities. Together, we can demonstrate solidarity and serve as role models for other women, empowering them to follow in our footsteps," concludes Léocadie.



Love as a foundation

JOSEPH AND CLAUDETTE

Building dreams together: Joseph and Claudette's journey to economic development.

In Gitega, Joseph, a proud photocopy shop owner, stands alongside his wife Claudette, their son, and an employee, declaring with enthusiasm, *"This is ours. We didn't just rent it; we built it with our hands."*

In 2021, Joseph stumbles upon the Tuyage project, a USAID-funded initiative, through captivating radio broadcasts produced by Search via its Ijambo studio. These broadcasts aim to spark discussions around economic issues. Inspired by the project and as the president of a youth association, Joseph eagerly volunteers to participate. As such, he organizes networking activities that bring together economic actors and young people, inspiring them to develop sustainable businesses.

As the exchanges progress, Joseph's interest deepens. He recalls, *"I absorbed everything the youth were learning, and it deeply inspired me."* Determined to embark on this adventure, Joseph finds unwavering support from his wife. Together, they join a listening club created for the Tuyage project, continuing their quest for knowledge and personal growth. They now listen to the broadcasts together, and Joseph quickly realizes that their collaboration shouldn't be



JOSEPH AND CLAUDETTE

limited to the club. *"I understood that progress cannot be achieved without harmony within the couple,"* Joseph acknowledges.

This realization had never seemed necessary to Joseph until now. He admits, *"I used to be the first to contradict my wife whenever she proposed something."* Acknowledging their need for support, the couple actively participates in other networking activities, connecting with couples facing similar challenges or those who have already overcome such obstacles.

"These meetings encouraged us to share our experiences and become aware of the conflicts present in our relationship. Today, I've realized I was living with a void as if I were missing a vital organ. Before moving forward, I needed to rebuild my heart. As we say here, a single head cannot handle everything. I've learned to let my wife, Claudette, take her rightful place."

Empowered by their newfound unity, the couple discusses various economic development possibilities, exploring them together. Ultimately, they decide to create a photocopy business. *"We no longer work solely to meet our needs but to bring our ideas to life through exchanges, enabling us to multiply our*

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projects. We operate in tandem, and Claudette takes the reins of our business when I engage in other endeavors."

Their business experiences rapid growth. *"We now also supply paper and copies to 14 health centers. The demand is strong. This allowed us to buy land and plan to open other businesses. I could never have achieved this without my wife."*

For Joseph and Claudette, economic success is not solely an individual matter but a result of cooperation between couples. *"While there are many associations for women, what makes Tuyage unique is its emphasis on making couples partners. Unilateral development within a couple can also lead to conflict. Here, we work as a team, hand in hand, to achieve our economic goals."*

Inspired by their personal and financial transformations, Joseph and Claudette aspire to share their knowledge with others. Above all, they want their success to be a catalyst, encouraging other couples to work together and realize their economic aspirations. *"We have established eight additional listening clubs, and soon, we will organize a major forum on women's economic empowerment. We want to inspire others by showcasing what we have been able to accomplish."*



FELICIEEN AND CHANTAL

Dévoiler un potentiel caché : Le pouvoir de la masculinité positive et des ambitions partagées.

"Sometimes, when my neighbors catch me doing household chores, one of them teasingly comments that my wife must have bewitched me," confides Félicien, a dedicated teacher from the province of Kayanza. With a mischievous smile, Félicien playfully responds, *"If that's the case, then it's a wonderful bewitchment,"* as his wife Chantal lovingly gazes at him.

However, Félicien's perspective hasn't always been this enlightened. *"Until recently, I abused what I believed to be my power as the head of the family. I held onto the notion of absolute authority at home, disregarding my wife's opinions in decision-making."*

In 2022, everything changed for Félicien, thanks to the Tuyage project funded by USAID. He eagerly enrolled in a positive masculinity training program that catalyzed his transformation. *"This training had a profound impact on me. I learned that a man's worth does not lie in giving orders, mistreating his wife, or assuming supreme leadership. A true man actively engages in household chores, respects and appreciates his wife, and recognizes her importance within the family."*

Fueled by his newfound knowledge, Félicien became a member of a listening club comprising approximately fifteen men and women who gathered to listen to radio programs and engage in discussions, primarily focusing on women's economic development. These programs fortified his commitment

FÉLICIEN AND CHANTAL

to change and provided practical guidance on implementing gender equality principles within his home.

Motivated by his growth, Félicien encouraged his wife to join him on this transformative journey. *"At home, we continued our conversations on the topics discussed in the programs, brainstorming ways to apply them in their household,"* reflects Chantal. She adds: *"The programs on positive masculinity were particularly influential in our lives."* As Félicien unlearned his old behaviors, new opportunities blossomed for Chantal. *"That's when he began supporting me so we could progress together."*

Emboldened by Félicien's support, Chantal dared to pursue her lifelong dream of learning to sew, a passion stifled by cultural barriers and Félicien's expectations. *"He never allowed me to engage in any activity outside the house before."*

With Félicien's encouragement, Chantal's dreams became shared aspirations not only within their household but also within the community. Indeed, the listening club has identified a new economic opportunity for the community: a sewing institute will soon open its doors, and Chantal was chosen to lead as its director.

Two sewing machines now proudly occupy the family's living room. Félicien admires them, echoing Chantal's sentiments: *"We also aspire to establish our workshop. We share this ambition, this vision of progress."*

Chantal's eyes shine with newfound hope as she declares, *"Previously, these dreams lay dormant within me as if the doors to them had remained shut. Félicien's transformation has flung those doors wide open."*

Sometimes, when my neighbors catch me doing housework, one of them teasingly comments that my wife must have bewitched me. I tell them that if that's the case, it's a wonderful bewitchment.

SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND

Search for Common Ground (Search) is an international organization dedicated to conflict transformation worldwide since 1982. We have a team of over 900 employees, with 95% locally recruited, allowing us to operate in 34 countries. Through strong partnerships with 839 local organizations, we engage a diverse range of participants. Additionally, our impact is amplified by collaborating with 313 radio stations and 26 television channels, enabling us to broadcast media programs in conflict zones and reach 39.3 million people.

The global recognition of our work is exemplified by our nomination for the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.

Our Common Ground Approach (CGA), a proven methodology, prioritizes collaboration over confrontation and violence in conflict resolution.

In Burundi, since 1995, we have been actively working to promote peace and reconciliation by supporting local actors in transitional justice, combating sexual and gender-based violence, preventing youth manipulation, and addressing other critical issues. Notably, Studio Ijambo has played a significant role in transforming the Burundian media landscape by training journalists and producing informative programs focused on solutions.



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