



“Journeys of Hope”: a story of resilience

“My children never lack fruits to eat!”

Languide Ndikumasabo is a mother of four beautiful children. She lives in Muhanga City/Rwanda. At Forum pour la Memoire Vigilante, we got an opportunity to talk to her and asked her how she is living her life as refugee in Rwanda and how she got there.

“The day I decided to flee Burundi in 2015, I looked in all the rooms of my house. I was confused for I didn't know what to take with me. The road to exile being very long, I could not flee by car for fear of being arrested along the way. When I looked at the beautiful kitchen objects that I had, when I looked at the beautiful clothes, the household appliances of the house, I wanted to take them all to my unknown destination!



But how should I carry them?” Languide said to us with tears in her eyes. “I then decided to leave everything behind me, except one thing!

The morning of my departure for exile, I woke up my children very early and we prepared to leave.

The little children could not cease asking me where we were going, but I told them that we weren't going far and that we would be back very soon. So, the thing I mentioned I did not want to leave behind was my diploma! Indeed, I had worked in a laboratory for fifteen years. I told myself that once I arrived in the land of exile, I could use my diploma as a laboratory technician. But things didn't go as planned. I looked everywhere where I could use my diploma but in vain” Languide mentioned to us in disappointment. “Each time I was told that my diploma must have its equivalence in the host country so that I can work as a laboratory technician. Until now I have not yet received this equivalence after 7 years of exile” our interlocutor noticed in sadness. “I then decided to shift my mind and look for something to do so I could feed my family. I started buying and selling fruits. I leave very early in the morning for the hills to buy the fruit which I then resell at the town market. I first explain to my clients the benefits of taking fruits and I realize they like to buy my fruits” Languide revealed to us this time with a smiling face! “Since I started selling these fruits, I receive small profits that help me meet some needs of my family. In the meantime, my children still have fruit to eat and they are healthy. I remain hopeful that one day I will return to my native country and still be able to use my diploma!”

The life of Languide Ndikumasabo is common to many refugees. She advises her sister refugees to not overlook “the small jobs” as long as they can bring income. She also advises them to avoid relying on NGOs aid which is not sufficient at all, but to work hard so they can attend to the essential needs of their families.

In 2023, Rwanda still hosts 50 thousand Burundian refugees according to the UNHCR records.