



# IDEASBOX

## BURUNDI

MIDTERM REPORT

**INITIAL RESULTS AND PERSPECTIVES**

# IDEASBOX

A PORTABLE MULTI-MEDIA TOOLKIT READY IN LESS THAN 20 MINUTES!



LWB has developed a major innovation for **access to education, culture and information in humanitarian crises and for vulnerable populations**. The Ideas Box provides tools for teachers, self-education, professional development, artistic creativity and access to critical information. It **empowers children, adults, and communities to reconstruct what has been lost and, beyond, pave foundations for a self-reliant future**.

International aid traditionally aims at addressing immediate pressing needs for food, shelter, health care and clothing. Once these priorities have been met, communities need a way to forge social ties and develop resilience for the struggles that lay ahead.

Designed by the creator Philippe Starck and in partnership with the UN Refugee Agency, the Ideas Box provides a comprehensive response to these needs. The Box itself protects the contents from rain, heat, and dust, and can be packed and unpacked within minutes.

## THE IDEAS BOX, AT A GLANCE

A media center in a kit, the Ideas Box fits on two pallets and can be installed in less than 30 minutes under any conditions. It brings:

- 15 tablets and 4 laptops with a **satellite internet connection**
- 250 paper books and 50 e-readers with thousands of e-books
- MOOC and **stand-alone Internet educational digital contents** including Khan Academy and Wikipedia
- A **cinema module** with a rich film collection
- 5 HD **cameras** for film-making and journalism
- Board games and **video games**
- Arts and crafts materials, puppets and a **theatre workshop**

In February 2014, Libraries Without Borders implemented the first Ideas Box kits in Burundi for Congolese refugees.

[WWW.IDEAS-BOX.ORG](http://WWW.IDEAS-BOX.ORG)

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## Credits:

Data collection: Laurie Decaillon

Data processing & drafting: Florian Le Bris, Guillaume Signorino

Graphic design: Karen Boyer

Images: BSF, Vidéaux

Founding partners .....



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**MAIRIE DE PARIS**

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# SUMMARY

With over 24,000 visits and nearly 3,300 unique registered users, the first two Ideas Box kits deployed in the Kavumu and Musasa refugee camps in Burundi have proved highly successful. Their decisive role in supporting education, child protection, and strengthening community ties as the population takes ownership of the device are undeniable.

The following midterm report summarizes the trends observed during the first six months of deployment in the Musasa and Kavumu camps. The report will mainly focus on the early impacts witnessed on the promotion of quality education, child protection and the strengthening of community ties.

This evaluation, which will rely mainly on qualitative methods, will soon be followed by a long term report based on quantitative approaches that takes advantage of the data-gathering and processing potential of the Ideas Box.



From left to right, starting from the top:

- 1 - Drawing workshop in camp Bwagiriza
- 2 - Readers discovering how e-readers work
- 3 - Tablets and the dozens of educational, creative and gaming applications have encountered a lot of success
- 4 - The box provides a safe space for children in the camps.

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# HIGHLIGHTS

## 6 MONTHS - 2 IDEAS BOX



More than  
**24,000 visits in 3 months**  
for the first 2 Ideas Box kits



A gradual increase in  
**the number and the diversity of its users**



A **triple impact** on  
education, child protection and  
strengthening community ties



A wide array of **activities and resources**



Are gradually being open to  
**local populations**



On average,  
**400 unique visits for each box every day**



A heavy frequentation from  
**children and adolescents**



The user populations have successfully  
**taken ownership of the device**



A **strong complementarity**  
to many of the ongoing programs in the camps

# BACKGROUND



The first 2 Ideas Box kits were deployed in Burundi in February 2014. This Central African nation is host to more than 50,000 refugees, most of them from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## THE HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE IN BURUNDI

After several decades of regional instability and a precarious security situation originating mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), according to the UN Agency for Refugees (UNHCR) Burundi is host to **more than 50,000 refugees** and approximately **80,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs)**, today.

Congolese who have fled ongoing ethnic and political persecution in the provinces of North and South Kivu (Eastern Congo) make up most of the refugee population. They live mostly in four camps spread out throughout Burundi. The latest one—Kavumu camp—opened in May 2013.

Life in the camps is often hard. Refugees are met with many challenges, from daily health issues, to assistance with food and basic necessities and housing, in addition to degraded teaching conditions (a large workforce, shortage of teachers, lack of teaching resources—although that enrollment rates are very high), security risks, geographic isolation, limited (and sometimes inexistent) access to

information technology and communication services, psychosomatic consequences of inactivity, etc. **Approximately 56% of refugees are under 18 years old** and it is estimated that a number of them are skilled in the use of new technologies.

## THE IDEAS BOX PROGRAM IN BURUNDI

In February 2014, Libraries Without Borders deployed two Ideas Box kits in the Kavumu and Musasa refugee camps, home to 4,000 and 7,000 refugees respectively. In July, a third Ideas Box arrived in camp Bwagiriza, a larger camp which hosts 10,000 refugees.

By granting free access to a wide variety of books (in electronic and paper format), films, educational resources, tablets and laptop computers, the Internet, tools for creation (cameras, GPS, arts and crafts materials) and distraction, the Ideas Box aims to meet the educational, psychosocial and informational needs of refugee populations. Furthermore, Ideas Box staff—and external facilitators—employ the device to **organize outreach workshops, literacy and training workshops and**

1. Source: Demographics, International Rescue Committee Burundi, June 2013

**TABLE 1: IDEAS BOX SCHEDULE SAMPLE**

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00 - 9:30 AM	Opening and set up				
9:30 - 11:30 AM	Inventory, maintenance, updates, and weekly follow-up	School groups (elementary) <sup>2</sup>	Literacy and oral expression workshops	School groups (elementary)	Literacy and oral expression workshops
11:30 - 12:30 AM		ICT use (beginners, intermediate level)	Open-access activities: movie screenings, book clubs, etc.	ICT use (beginners, intermediate level)	Awareness workshops: free access to local non-profits & other social actors
1:00 - 3:30 PM	School groups (secondary)	Free access			
3:30 - 4:00 PM	Storage				

2. Many activities are held when hosting school groups: scientific and technical activities, oral expression and reading, use of Khan Academy (math), initiation to new technologies, artistic and creative workshops, etc.

### others aimed at school groups.

The Ideas Box and its modules can be set up while taking into account the space available in different types of shelter settings (building, thatched hut, tent, outdoors, etc.). As a result, in camps like Musasa and Kavumu, the thatched huts that were built specifically to accommodate the Ideas Box allow for different set ups, including film-viewing. The Cinema module is placed in the margin of the hut, allowing users non-stop, undisturbed access to the Library module deployed in the main space. The Box kits in these two camps can host up to 70 people simultaneously.

Access to the Ideas Box device is similar to that of a traditional library: users are required to register, allowing our team to collect individual data from each user. At the moment of their registration, each refugee receives a **membership card** that they must present every time and scan when they visit the Ideas Box or use the resources in any one of the modules. **As a result, the digitized interface of the Ideas Box allows us to monitor individual activity and use of the device.**



# EVALUATION AND PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP PROTOCOL



The trial deployment of the first Ideas Box kits in Burundi has been closely studied by LWB to measure its impact, the degree of integration into camp life and the level of ownership taken by the population.

While taking into account the three main dimensions addressed by the Ideas Box (education, psychosocial and information), **the present evaluation is mainly based on qualitative methods** - through the use of individual interviews, focus groups, participant and non-participant observation and a narrative account.

To these methods can be added a number of tools for quantitative descriptive analysis that draw heavily from the data collected by the Ideas Box, as well as socio-demographic data from the UNHCR and school performance data from the International Rescue Committee (IRC), in charge of running the schools within the camps.

As early as **November 2013**, Libraries Without Borders staff members conducted an exploratory mission of the Musasa and Kavumu camps to :

- 1- Collect raw data prior to the implementation of the projet,

- 2 - Refine its knowledge of the terrain and beneficiaries (through the completion of the first individual and group interviews),

- 3 - And identify the major social, and organizational problems in the camps.

This initial assessment identified young children (3 to 11 years), vulnerable and isolated women and adolescents and unemployed young adults as the main groups that would be specifically targeted by the program.

At that moment, enabling host populations to access the Ideas Box was immediately identified as a key element to the success of the program.

Since the program began in **February 2014**, **our field staff has provided ongoing monitoring through daily and weekly reports**. These documents break down attendance figures by age and gender, and they also provide narratives outlining:



From left to right, starting from the top: A little girl drawing | Deums, slam poet artist using the Ideas Box to access the Internet in Bwagiriza camp | The Ideas Box before its inauguration in Kavumu camp (where it is set up under a thatched gazebo built by the refugees) | training session for the Ideas Box facilitators, Ruyigi. © BSF 2014

- 1 - The weekly activities organized with the Ideas Box (in terms of cultural mediation, digital and awareness workshops, the use of the Cinema and Library Modules etc.),
- 2 - The coordination with other camp stakeholders,
- 3 - Upcoming activities and the difficulties met.

These reports and the information they provide are continuously examined by the LWB team back in our offices.

A second mission took place in **July 2014** to draft **the first midterm impact assessment of the Ideas Box three months after their deployment**. The study is primarily based on individual and group interviews—focus groups—held with the users and the main target groups (users and non-users), as well as with the Ideas Box facilitators and management team, and the key stakeholders in the camp (community groups, organizations active in the camps and UNHCR staff).

Through the different points of view and the preference for a comparative approach, the main objective of the qualitative interviews was to identify early trends—positive and negative—generated by the Ideas Box within the camps. These were cross-checked by using quantitative (number of users, frequentation numbers, time spent using the Box, etc.) and qualitative (workshop types, weekly narrative reports from the Ideas Box team leader, etc.) data of the use of the Ideas Box.



# EARLY TRENDS



Enrollment in Musasa began right after the arrival of the Ideas Box to the camp. As the line grows longer, children and adults patiently wait their turn. Registrations are important since they grant a membership card and enable LWB to collect valuable data on the use of the Ideas Box.

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**With more than 24,000 visits in 3 months and more than 3,300 registered users, the inhabitants of Musasa and Kavumu camps have quickly taken ownership of the Ideas Box.**

In six months, the first major noticeable trend remains the strong user adherence to the device. In each camp, the Ideas Box has successfully brought together a broad and diverse base of users.

The number of users in possession of a membership card giving access to the device exceeds **3,000** of which 1,030 are in Kavumu, 1,592 in Musasa and 600 in Bwagiriza. Except for very young children (0-4 years) and seniors (60 and over), **all age groups are well represented in the Ideas Box.**

However, the data from the deployment of the third Ideas Box (July 2014) in camp Bwagiriza is currently incomplete. As a result, the data below takes into account only the first two deployments in Kavumu and Musasa. Concerning the latter, only a fraction of user profiles (representing almost half of the total) are currently subject to an electronic record. As a result, the trends shown below for Musasa camp refer only to this sample. These series will

be subject to regular updates as all profiles are entered into the electronic database.

**In both Musasa and Kavumu, total enrollment has increased gradually** after two large peaks of registration when enrollment began (March in Kavumu, June in camp Musasa). In Musasa, a busy camp schedule did not allow for enrollment to begin earlier<sup>3</sup>. However, the events held in Musasa increased the visibility of the program among refugees and provided time to erase doubts among some of the refugees who thought the device would only be for children and those who had already attended school (see Figure 1).

**In both camps, the number of men enrolled significantly exceeds the number of female participants** (all ages), sometimes with a 1:2 ratio.

This disparity can be explained by the fact that women and adolescent girls are often busy with

3. Besides the official visits and World Day celebrations, cultural events (which are rarely offered in the camps) such as the Sustainable development fair organized by the French Institute in Bujumbura allowed to draw a public that often remained far removed from the device.

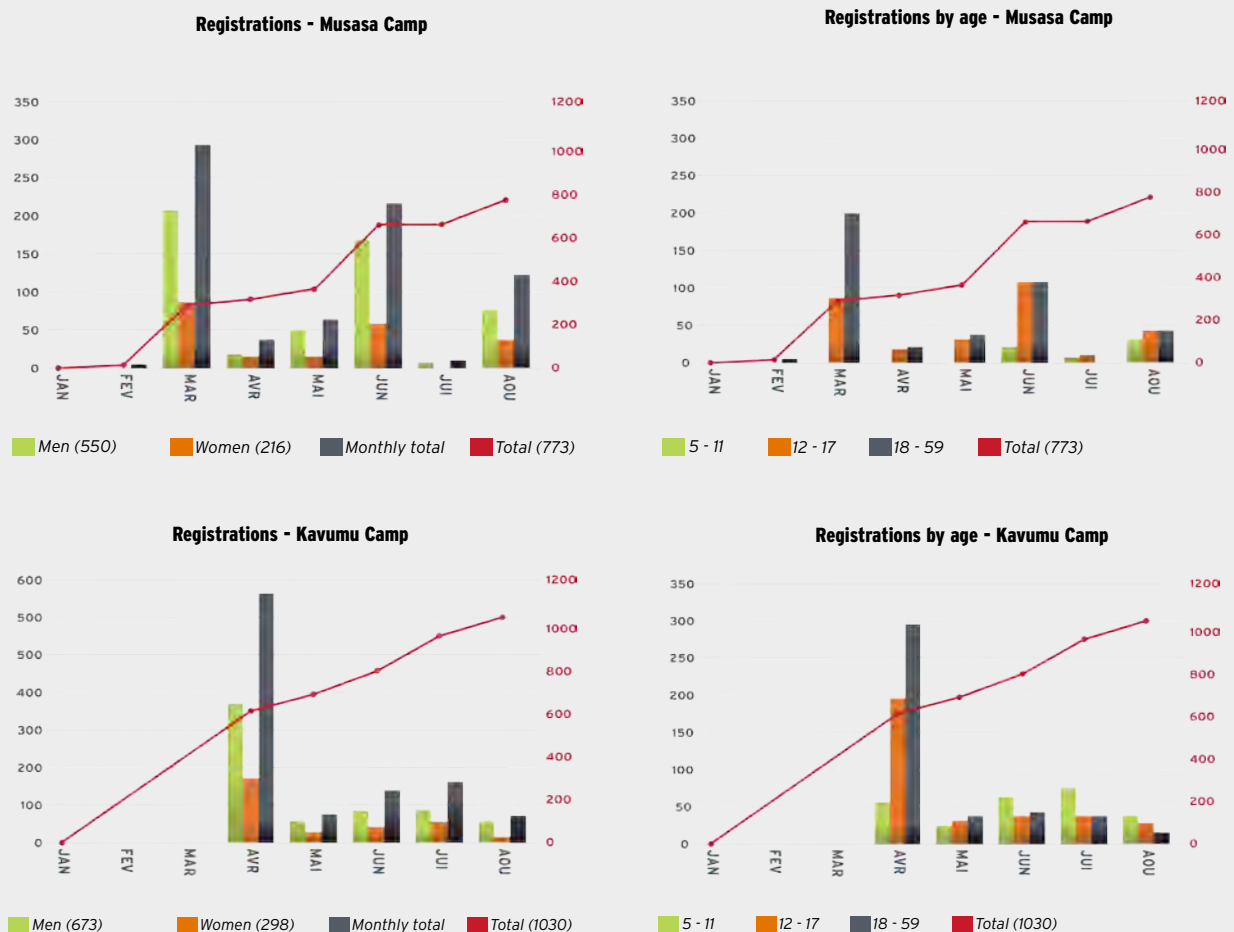
household activities and have little time for other activities. Furthermore, women are often directly concerned by the decisions taken by the management committees that regulate daily life in the camps and by the distribution of food and non-food kits organized by UNHCR which occupy much of their time. Finally, welfare organizations show an increased vulnerability of women in the camps limiting their participation in community activities (single mothers, teenage pregnancies, physical and psychosocial stigmata related to violence in the DRC,

disregard of women's rights, economic dependence, and difficulty adapting to a refugee status that limits their participation in community activities)

Adults (18-59) represent the first Ideas Box user group (54% of enrolled in Musasa, 41% in Kavumu), followed by 12-17 year olds (38% and 31%, respectively).

These trends, which highlight only the number of users registered, must however be compared to the intensity with which each target group uses

**FIGURE 1: MONTHLY INSCRIPTIONS BY AGE AND GENDER**



Note: the left axe indicates the number of monthly registrations by age and gender. The one on the right indicates the total number of registrations (red curve).

the Ideas Box illustrated by their average weekly attendance (for the number of unique weekly visits by age and gender, see Table 2). **Although the number of registered adults outnumber children and adolescents, the latter use the Ideas Box much more frequently.** In Musasa camp, especially, 12-17 year olds account for nearly 60% of weekly visits. Finally, although the differences in participation between men and women are important in each camp, significant differences have been noted: in Kavumu, the difference is relatively higher among

the adult population while in Musasa, disparities in use by gender are much more important among children and adolescents.

Actually, a majority of the refugees in Musasa camp are of Banyamulenge ethnicity. Traditionally, Banyamulenge women and young girls are expected to stay home, take care of the household and raise the children, leaving them with little time to participate in activities outside their homes.

**TABLE 2: AVERAGE WEEKLY FREQUENTATION BY AGE AND GENDER**

<i>Kavumu Camp</i>					<i>Musasa Camp</i>				
	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	TOTAL %		MEN	WOMAN	TOTAL	TOTAL %
<b>0 - 4</b>	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0 - 4</b>	0	1.2	1.2	<b>0.3</b>
<b>5 - 11</b>	64.5	35.3	99.8	<b>28</b>	<b>5 - 11</b>	70.7	19.8	90.5	<b>20.7</b>
<b>12 - 17</b>	111.8	44	155.8	<b>43.8</b>	<b>12 - 17</b>	200.2	64	264.2	<b>60.5</b>
<b>18 - 59</b>	74.5	24	98.5	<b>27.7</b>	<b>18 - 59</b>	49.2	29.3	78.5	<b>18</b>
<b>&gt; 60</b>	2	0	2	<b>0.6</b>	<b>&gt; 60</b>	1.3	0.8	2.2	<b>0.5</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>252.8</b>	<b>103.3</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>321.4</b>	<b>115.2</b>	<b>436.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: since complete series are missing at this point in the evaluation, average weekly attendance is calculated over 13 weeks only in Musasa and only the 4 weeks in May in Kavumu camp.



Above: film viewing at Kavumu camp, © BSF 2014

Below: sustainable development fair in Musasa camp for World Environment Day (June 2014), © BSF 2014



# QUALITATIVE OBSERVATIONS AND PRELIMINARY IMPACTS



Children play on the library module case of the Ideas Box in Kavumu camp, © BSF 2014

Six months after deploying the first 2 Ideas Box kits in Burundi, child protection, education and the strengthening of community ties are emerging as three of the main impact trends.

Impact #1

**CHILD PROTECTION**

Impact #2

**SUPPORTING EDUCATION**

Impact #3

**STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY TIES**



The prolonged and regular use of the Ideas Box by children and adolescents shows one of the major impacts of the device – the provision of an attractive and safe environment – reinforced by the first qualitative observations made on the field.

**The vast majority of adults surveyed have indeed noticed a significant change in child protection since the arrival of the Ideas Box.**

Before its introduction, children were particularly vulnerable outside of school hours. Left to themselves, most spent their time strolling through the camps with no activities to keep them busy, which exposed them to many external risks (sexual violence, trafficking and criminal activities).

Key stakeholders now agree that **the Ideas Box has successfully created a safe space** where children can and want to go after school. Children and adolescents, who represent the most regular users of the Ideas Box, frequently stay at the Ideas Box for hours studying, doing homework, and participating in the educational and recreational activities organized by the staff. The children themselves declare that the comfort and security offered by the Ideas Box largely explains why they are so attractive. Parents have in turn expressed their relief to know that their children are safe and occupied outside school hours.

Another factor, although maybe more anecdotal, shows that many children tended to take money from their parents in order to watch TV in the paying screening rooms that often broadcast films ill-suited to a younger audience. By offering a range of movies and gaming applications for children, the Ideas Box has become an easy and more proper alternative to access these types of media. Several parents have also said that the Ideas Box has reduced tensions within families by reducing the demands of children and facilitating family dialogue.

Finally, the Ideas Box is described as providing a **structural framework for children**, encouraging their accountability, empowerment and development of civic duty. For example, children value their membership card. They have also learned to follow the rules of use of the Ideas Box strictly (washing their hands when entering, waiting their turn to use the books and tablets, and respecting others).

Educational challenges in the refugee camps in Burundi are colossal. Although enrollment rates are often very high in elementary schools, classes are overcrowded with an average of more than 80 students per teacher. Furthermore, textbooks and teaching materials are often lacking or largely obsolete.

While the Ideas Box does not replace schools, it does create a safe learning environment hitherto nonexistent and whose usefulness is widely recognized, allowing children to do their homework and access high-quality educational content.

The latter rely on both new technologies and innovative teaching methods such as Khan Academy, as well as on the books and manuals available in French and English, on paper and/or electronic format.

Furthermore, specific time slots have been reserved at the request of teachers to accommodate classes. Two or three mornings per week, the Ideas Box is partly reserved for school groups (primary or secondary) accompanied by their teachers and the Ideas Box facilitators.

The variety of tools and resources provided by the Ideas Box enable teachers to improve the

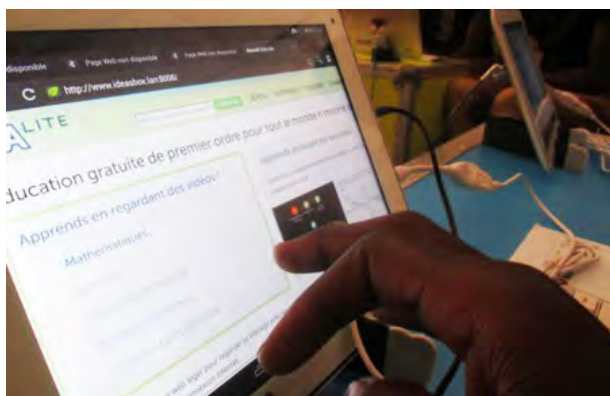


The Ideas Box is equipped with 50 e-readers and offers users several hundred e-books. DR BSF 2014.

overall quality of their lessons, organize multiple simultaneous workshops and offer more individualized support to their students, especially those in academic difficulty.

The testimonies collected during individual and group interviews of teachers reveal, since the introduction of Ideas Box, a significant increase in the attendance and participation of children, as well as their motivation, curiosity and concentration in class.

On numerous occasions, there has been an emphasis on the fact that the Ideas Box is proving an effective tool to attract teachers. The program also opens up new opportunities in terms of teaching: it was repeatedly observed that the different teachers meet regularly in the Ideas Box to gather information and prepare for lessons, and to collectively define new activities that take advantage of the resources provided by the device.



Several educational resources are available in the Ideas Box server including Wikipedia and the offline version of Khan Academy (pictured above) which has been adapted to French by Libraries Without Borders. © BSF 2014



Several teachers bring their class to the Ideas Box and hold their lessons there. Teachers have since observed an increase in the attention span and creativity of their students “[The Box] helps the intellectual life of young people by getting them used to reading, but also by allowing for supervision and gradually despair disappears. As a result, young people and adults receive training to use digital instruments and that will help them in their future lives [outside the camps]” says one of them.

This renewed interest is also found in the volunteer involvement of several teachers to teach classes using the Ideas Box during the summer break and provide academic support to students who request it. It should finally be noted that the teachers themselves carry out the activities in front of their classes, all the while being assisted by facilitators. This enables them to integrate the Ideas Box activities into their lesson plan.

**A quantitative assessment protocol based on the comparison of user students and a representative control group will be set up in September 2014.** to quantify the net impact of the Ideas Box program on the academic performance of pupils and students. The study will run through the school year and will be compared to other research being conducted by Libraries Without Borders. In particular, to the **Khan Academy** trial experimentation tutoring program (accessible through the Ideas Box) in a library in Yaoundé, Cameroon, which has already shown promise after witnessing a significant increase in the academic performance of 454 fifth graders aged 10-11 years old (+14%, or an average of 2.9 points) in just three months.

Finally, in addition to formal education, **the Ideas Box is an ideal space to support children development, and especially of infants.** The Box provides activities and materials that encourage cognitive abilities (communicate with others through drama and theater, drawing, understanding and following instructions, respect general rules of use of the Ideas Box, develop their creativity, etc.) or motor skills (handling a pencil or a book, drawing, navigating through different spaces, etc.). After having noticed the efficacy of the Ideas Box in this aspect, the International Rescue Committee has recently set up a program offering specific early childhood activities for groups of preschoolers.



The Ideas Box serves as a space to organize literacy workshops and raising awareness on hygiene questions or reducing violence. By providing access to countless resources and to the Internet, the quality of the workshops can be improved.

A third noticeable impact of the program has often come up during the observations and interviews: **the essential role played by the Ideas Box as a catalyst and community-building tool within the camp.** Obviously, if we take into account the cyclical effect—the arrival of Ideas Box has created real events in each of the camps and brought along high expectations—several elements point to a high degree of ownership and increased community involvement in the use of the device.

As a result, many women's groups have relied on the Ideas Box, documentaries and multimedia resources available **to create or revive discussion groups and raise awareness on diverse topics such as child development or hygiene.**

In Kavumu camp, a young 20-year-old refugee has established a slam poetry group and managed to bring together several other refugees to organize a poetry contest and create the first camp newspaper.

On June 20th - World Refugee Day - six groups of twenty youths gathered to debate topics as diverse as “the importance of education for development” or “the rights of women.” These discussions eventually led to a large-scale collective action such as a reflection on concrete measures to facilitate access to school and to the Ideas Box for disabled people in the camp.

In Kavumu camp, a dozen refugees hosted a “Sustainable Development Fair” in the Ideas Box space.

The success of the Box with refugee communities can also be explained by the presence of books and other content on their country of origin. Facilitators have noted the daily presence of users who wish to re-connect with their country and who spend hours reading books on the history of the Congo and watching documentaries about Congolese artists. LWB is currently looking to motivate these users, who are often of advanced age, to hold storytelling sessions

Refugees equally appreciate contents in Swahili, especially children who do not yet master French. These resources allow everyone to use the Box, regardless of their language proficiency.

These contents often help fuel debates among refugees and tools like Wikipedia allow for verifying information, thus helping fight misinformation in the camps. As a result, the selection of content plays a major role in the impact of the device.

It is particularly interesting to note that the users have taken ownership of the various tools and equipment available in the Box in a gradual manner. This approach was also favored by the Ideas Box team. For example, only paper books were made available at first, before granting access to the other modules, especially the IT module (containing the tablets, e-readers, etc.). Training in mediation and using IT equipment – especially video editing software and cameras – are nonetheless needed and will be implemented in the coming months.

Another noteworthy observation is that no valuable equipment has been stolen in the first six months of implementation, responding to concerns raised about the security of the equipment and their possible degradation at the hands of the users themselves. Only a few pieces of board games



A teenager reading comic books in Musasa. © BSF 2014

and pens have been lost, but the vast majority of interviews with users, refugee representatives and camp stakeholders highlight the strong attachment to the device which is now seen as a public good.

Moreover, in a context of occasional tensions between Burundians and refugee communities (including access to arable land), the Ideas Box exerts a significant attraction on the host population, particularly Burundians living in the vicinity of the camps who wish to attend film screenings, access the Internet, or read books. The gradual opening of the Burundi program to host communities—a decision taken and carried out in connection with the Burundian Ministry of the Interior—met with great success and promoted interaction and dialogue with Congolese refugees in a national context of rising tensions linked to the deteriorating economic conditions and the approach of presidential elections in 2015. The contribution of the program to build peace and reduce tensions between communities will be further researched in the coming months.



Tablets are mainly used to search for information online or develop new skills. © BSF 2014

# CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES



The Ideas Box can be set up in less than 20 minutes indoors or outdoors. It provides a space propitious to learning, creativity and capacity building.

Although the initial results of the trial experimentation are promising, LWB will have to meet two challenges in the coming months: improve the technical sustainability and diversify the Ideas Box user base.

## THE CHALLENGE OF TECHNICAL SUSTAINABILITY

After six months of intensive use and harsh terrain conditions—dust, moisture and difficult transportation—the Ideas Box kits have proven extremely sturdy.

The protective cases have proven tight against weather conditions and repeated handling. The furniture is also very durable and easy to clean. No major equipment failures have been recorded either (hardware or software).

The “backbone” of the Ideas Box (server and electronic circuits) has been tested and configured to optimize their lifespan on the field, depending on external conditions. E-readers are particularly resistant. Only the initial tablet model has been revised for the third Ideas Box due to their sub-optimal processing power compared to the requisites of the Ideas Box

A full audit of the technical sustainability of the Ideas Box in a difficult environment, however, seems

premature. Although the external elements and furniture should not encounter major difficulties, the small electronic equipment is obviously much more exposed because of its heavy use. In order to overcome these intrinsic weaknesses, **LWB is currently developing an automated protocol for replacing electronic equipment (such as tablets).**

## THE CHALLENGE OF DIVERSIFYING USERS

Despite the significant presence and participation of all social groups in the Ideas Box program, significant differences have been observed.

In particular, women are relatively less likely to enroll and participate in the program. As noted above, this trend can be explained by the household duties they are in charge of, but also by cultural barriers and persistent social stigmas limiting their participation in the collective activities of the camp.

Greater participation, membership and ownership

remain a challenge so that everyone may benefit from the Ideas Box equally. **Time slots are already being reserved in each camp, and the human resources policy of the management and facilitator teams has evolved significantly with the recruitment of two women in the Bwagiriza camp, one of whom was chosen to be a Box leader.**

Adult men were the first to sign up at the launch of the Box. However, with low levels of schooling—and illiteracy for some of them—most think that the Box

is ill-suited for them. As a result, despite their initial curiosity they have stopped coming. Unlike women, men spend considerable amounts of time outside of the camp during the day, so it is difficult to address this shortcoming. Yet, **information campaigns and more diverse cultural activities** (such as the science fair in June) might help clarify some of these pre-conceived ideas.

## UPCOMING STUDIES

Beyond these preliminary results and observations, the Libraries Without Borders team is currently implementing several comprehensive studies to assess, on a scientific basis, the impact of the Ideas Box program on the following three elements:

### ■ Academic performance

*What impact does the Ideas Box have on the academic achievement of schoolchildren (primary and secondary) as a non-formal education system?*

In the Fall 2014, a quantitative study based on the use of random methods (Randomized Control Trial) trial, will seek to answer this question by comparing the academic performance of students receiving the resources and support educational activities of the Ideas Box, and those students in the traditional school system.

The random allocation of the program will build a representative group of beneficiaries and eliminate any “selection bias.” The evolution of the comparison group will in turn be indicative of that which would have followed in the absence of the program. The differences observed between the two groups will thus measure the net impact of the Ideas Box on the academic performance of students.

### ■ Psychosocial & resilience

*How does the Ideas Box program help reduce the stress level of refugee populations, improve their psychosocial environment and promote the process of resilience?*

This issue will undergo a qualitative assessment based on observation and individual monitoring of a limited

number of users, and will cleave to observe changes in terms of individual psychological development (which necessarily varies according to the social connectedness and personal journey of each person) on the one hand, and in terms of social interaction and propensity for intra-and inter-community dialogue on the other. Such an evaluation will be conducted by a mental health expert in humanitarian contexts.

### ■ Information & communication

*What impact has the availability of new information and communication channels brought to daily life in the camp?*

Combining qualitative and quantitative elements, this study will specifically measure the contribution of the Ideas Box, particularly through its Internet connection, in terms of creating or re-activating networks and external relations in the camp, breaking isolation, and development of economic life in the camp. It will refer to the usage data collected in real time by the device as well as on the development of thematic discussions to consider both the intensity and quality of information flows exchanged and the new economic activities created.

# CONCLUSION



Six months after its launch, the trial experimentation of the Ideas Box program in Burundi for refugee and host communities shows extremely interesting results.

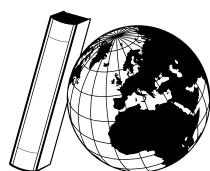
Early trends show a strong growth in enrollment and user diversity. This is confirmed by the qualitative assessments made which show a strong impact of the device on establishment of community ties within the camps. Although adults are more likely to enroll in the Ideas Box, children and adolescents use the Box more frequently and regularly, highlighting landmark contributions in education, either through school activities or support outside of school hours.

Finally, the Ideas Box is unanimously hailed as a safe space helping to reduce the exposure of young people to external risks. Despite these initial positive impacts, many challenges remain in the future, especially in terms of women participation in the activities. Furthermore, extensive long-term studies—already made by LWB—are needed to better quantify the impact of the program on academic performance, on the psychosocial environment and the opening up of refugees.



# REINVENTING LIBRARIES, EMPOWERING PEOPLE FOR DEVELOPMENT.

- Libraries Without Borders (LWB) is a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 by French historian Patrick Weil.
- LWB counts with 40 employees today, an annual budget of \$3 million and more than 200 volunteers in France.
- Our know-how: providing vulnerable populations with the tools to understand the world and be able transform it. We strongly believe that access to information, culture and education are formidable levers of development for both individuals and societies.
- Our organization is present today in France and in more than 20 countries.



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