

The “1972 Burundians” in Kibondo, Tanzania

Background and Curriculum

The CO program for “1972 Burundians” started on May 2, 2007 in Kibondo, Tanzania, where the Processing Center has specially designed CO classrooms and offices for the caseload. IOM Kibondo consulted closely with IOM Nairobi to adapt curricula for the 1972 Burundians and found Nairobi’s Somali Bantu curriculum particularly useful, given the common themes of limited exposure to Western amenities and protracted amount of time spent in camps.

Two of the CO staff have extensive experience working with the 1972 Burundians in camps and were valuable in developing curricula, especially around cultural values, parenting, and gender roles. Special emphasis has been placed in CO classes on gender-based violence as this is a prevalent issue in the camps, and staff has consulted with local partners working in the camps to identify additional special areas of concern. As circumstances permit, CO graduates have been invited to return for an afternoon film and Q&A session on topics such as gender-based violence, parenting, and the environment, to complement and emphasize the information shared in CO.

Feedback from the U.S.

CO staff has had numerous emails from domestic staff in the U.S. offering feedback and tips for CO staff. One agency wrote that this is the “nicest group I have worked with in all my years of resettlement.” Feedback is that they have been well prepared for early self-sufficiency and are highly motivated to work and learn English. This insight has been very valuable as the curriculum continues to be developed and modified. Early feedback also suggested emphasis on personal hygiene; therefore washing soap is now distributed prior to departure, while at the Nairobi Transit Center, staff distributes additional soap, deodorant, and clothing. Staff members have also received emails from the refugees themselves written with the assistance of resettlement caseworkers or volunteers.