

# LASTING IMPACT: CLEAN WATER FOR LIFE

Gazelle Foundation Impact Report 2021



*“Everybody deserves clean water.”*

– Gilbert Tuhabonye



## **About the Gazelle Foundation**

The Gazelle Foundation brings clean water and transformative change to Burundi, one village at a time.

We built our purpose in our founder’s footsteps: Gilbert Tuhabonye has embraced a life of joy and forgiveness. For Gilbert, the burn scars on his body remain a daily reminder of surviving a horrific genocide in 1993. For the people who know him, Gilbert embodies the power of optimism and perseverance. We believe that regardless of circumstances or obstacles, anyone can make the world a better, more compassionate place

As Gilbert says, water is the number one issue in Africa. Water is everywhere - but it is not clean. Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, and the leading cause of death is from preventable, waterborne diseases.

Clean water is the foundation for improved health, better educational opportunities, safer communities, and economic investment. Most of all, it provides hope to a country mostly forgotten by the world.

All Gazelle Foundation water systems provide clean water, free of charge, for life to all community members - regardless of tribe, ethnicity, or religion - with the aim of fostering long-term peace and stability in the region.

Due to our unique structure and in-country partners, our cost to build water systems is lower than average, and working in a single, small country means it is easy to track the long-term impact.

To date, over 115,000 people have daily access to clean water because of generous supporters of Gazelle Foundation. Gilbert, our dynamic board of directors, and hundreds of volunteers work tirelessly to bring awareness to the needs of the Burundian people while educating our local community about the importance of the global water crisis and the need for humanitarian aid in Burundi.

*The Gazelle Foundation is a certified 501(c)3.*



## Lasting Impact: What does it mean to have clean water to people in Burundi?

Those of us with ready access to safe drinking water often underestimate the foundational nature of clean water. Without it, life grinds to a halt. Drinking, washing, cleaning, and food preparation become unreasonably difficult.

Disease from waterborne contaminants are the leading cause of death in Burundi, one of the poorest countries in the world. Water collection efforts – not to mention illness – cut into critical time for the number one pursuit vital to breaking the cycle of poverty: education.

When a community in Burundi partners with the Gazelle Foundation to build a clean water system, they get more than clean water. They also get improved health, better educational and economic opportunities, safer communities, and hope for a brighter future.

According to the World Health Organization, every dollar invested in clean water yields \$4 - \$12 in economic returns. In Burundi, building water systems provides jobs and stimulates local economies in a country with one of the highest unemployment rates in the world, and where the average family lives on less than \$600 a year.

Because we partner with communities, investing in local materials and local tradespeople, our systems are built to last. Building and maintenance knowledge stays within the community, and our low-tech, sustainable approach leads to systems with longevity and a lasting, lifelong impact.

### **Mission**

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for the people in Burundi Africa by providing access to clean water.

### **Vision**

Our vision is for every man, woman and child in Burundi to have clean water, the highest quality of life, and hope within reach.



## Our Water Systems: Lasting Change

Clean water is foundational to community health and reversing the cycle of poverty. But the systems must work long-term to provide lasting change. Our systems employ a low-tech, sustainable approach to construction that is simple but effective. The systems are built by community members, ensuring that construction and maintenance knowledge stays local. Keeping employment, materials, and knowledge local ensures system success in the short term and in the long run.

We build efficient, effective water systems. Our streamlined approach maximizes efforts and resources to provide tangible, long-term results that directly affect the people of Burundi.

### Each water system we build:

#### **Improves health by reducing or eliminating deadly waterborne diseases.**

The vast majority of Burundians live in rural areas with mountainous terrain. 100% of people living in these areas are affected by waterborne pathogens which lead to typhoid, hepatitis A, schistosomiasis, bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, and death.

However, in areas where we have installed clean water systems, local health centers report a dramatic decrease in diseases and a significant improvement in overall health. In one community, a clinic doctor reported the prevalence of waterborne illnesses decreased from 76% down to 11% with the creation of a Gazelle Foundation water project. The same doctor estimates that the availability of clean water saves the lives of three children per month in his clinic alone.

The care offered at local health clinics has improved dramatically due to the availability of clean water. Improved hygiene is cited as a reason for a decrease in bacterial infections as well. At the completion of a water system, the benefiting population is taught how to wash their hands before and after meals as well as after using the latrine.

#### **Increases educational access, allowing children to attend school on a more regular basis.**

When access to clean water helps eliminate waterborne illnesses, children are sick less, which allows them to attend school on a more regular basis. With shortened walking distances, they spend less time gathering and carrying water to their homes. Better educational opportunities improves their life-long earning potential. According to the World Bank, returns on education investment are the largest in Africa over any other continent, and each additional year of schooling raises earnings by 11% for boys and 14% for girls.



**Creates shorter, safer walking distances to water.**

Our clean water systems dramatically reduce the distance traveled to access water, from approximately 4 miles to one quarter of a mile, due to the strategic placement of public-access tap stands. This means substantially less time is required to fetch and carry water, a job traditionally done by women and children. It allows children to spend more time in school, and provides women with the time to develop trades or care for home and family. In addition, the shorter distance eliminates the dangers found in treacherous mountainous terrain or near dangerous, untreated water sources three to four hours away.

**Provides jobs and stimulates local economies in a country with one of the highest global unemployment rates.**


On average, we employ 100-110 local workers to help with the water system construction. The workers are residents of the community. Local economies have seen an increase in overall stimulation due to the labor income in addition to locally sourced materials, when available. Workers employed in water system construction report using their earnings on clothing, food, shoes, and sending their children to school. Additionally, people have more time for consistent work and trade development when they aren't caring for sick family members. This alone can begin to reverse the cycle of poverty endemic to these regions of rural Burundi.

**Equitably provides clean water to all, healing divisions, and building common ground.**

Access to water at each tap stand is available to all people at no cost, regardless of tribe, ethnicity, or religion. Of the three main tribes in Burundi – Hutu, Tutsi, and Batwa – the Batwa are the most marginalized, making up just 1% of the total population. They are the poorest of the poor, lacking access to not just water but education, food sources, and health care. The Batwa are often forgotten in terms of their human rights and needs. The Gazelle Foundation chose to build our first water project to serve the Batwa people, as a signal to the country that we would be serving all Burundians, regardless of tribe, and that we aim to foster long-term peace and stability within the country.

**Gives hope to a country mostly forgotten by the world.**

Most people in Burundi live in rural, mountainous regions where access to clean water is extremely limited. Waterborne illnesses are the leading cause of death, and Burundi has the 12th highest child mortality rate in the world. Over 3 million Burundians will require humanitarian aid this year, and by many measures, Burundi is among the poorest countries in the world. Due to certain governmental regulations, Burundi is a difficult country for charities and NGOs to work in, meaning that many needs go unmet.



*The Gazelle Foundation's unique connection to Burundi through our founder, Gilbert Tuhabonye, and our strong relationships with on-the-ground partners, mean that we can effect change in a place where many others cannot. Our focus on Burundi means that it is easier to track the long-term impact of our water systems, developing not only a record of success but a reputation locally as a committed partner.*

# Tangible Results



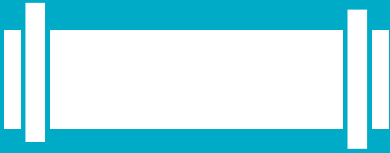
**Water  
Systems Built**

2021:

**4**

Cumulative:

**60**



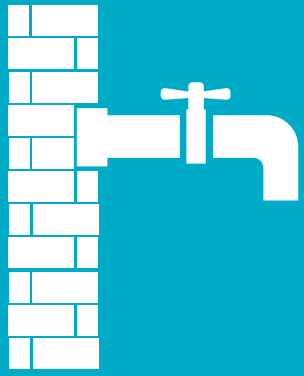
**Miles of  
Clean Water Pipe  
Installed**

2021:

**6.95**  
miles

Cumulative:

**176**  
miles



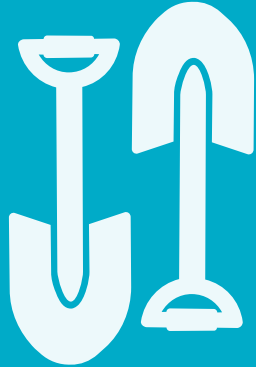
**Tap Stands  
Constructed**

2021:

**21**

Cumulative:

**486**



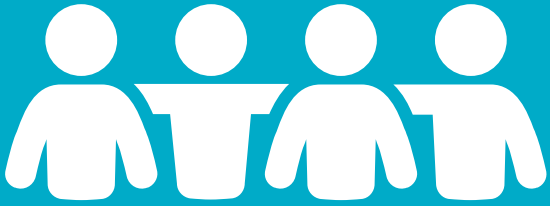
**New Jobs  
Created**

2021:

**195**

Cumulative:

**4565**



**People Receiving  
Clean Water**

2021:

**4820**

Cumulative:

**115,650**

A young boy with dark skin and short hair is the central focus. He is wearing a grey sweater with red and blue geometric patterns on the shoulders. He is leaning on a thick, horizontal wooden beam with both hands. The background is a blurred rural landscape with green hills and trees under a clear sky. A dark blue, semi-transparent triangular graphic is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

## System Highlights 2021

In 2021, we had the privilege of bringing clean water – and hope – to nearly 5,000 people in four communities. That’s nearly 5,000 new people with daily access to safe, clean water, bringing each of them one step closer to better health, economic stability, and opportunity.





### System #57: Bibande-Bihanga

Constructed Jan - Mar 2021, Bahanga Colline  
5 tap stands  
40 people employed  
650 residents served

This system provides clean water to the community of Bihanga, which is located in mountainous terrain like many of the areas we serve. Previously, this community relied on a contaminated water source several miles away. This system was fully funded by the 2020 Come Together For The Water event. We thank the generous individuals who changed the lives of the people in this community through access to clean water.



### System #58: Kazuga

Constructed March - May 2021, Bahanga Colline  
5 tap stands  
50 people employed  
870 residents served

*"Joy and happiness are everywhere...The people are celebrating with joy! I can't stop watching! Thank you for supporting the Gazelle Foundation. You are making an impact on Burundians."*

— Gilbert Tuhabonye



### System #59: Nyarumangall-Gasenyi

Constructed May - July 2021, Gasenyi Colline  
5 tap stands  
1 wash station  
45 people employed  
1,600 residents served

This system includes a clothes washing station. Built near the collection chamber, this popular feature provides a practical solution for an onerous daily chore, further improving the quality of life for community residents. One of the key components of our work is the handoff of the water system. Upon completion, we turn ownership and stewardship of the system over to the community. The local workers employed to build our systems have the maintenance knowledge that allows for greater long-term viability and sustainability of our systems.

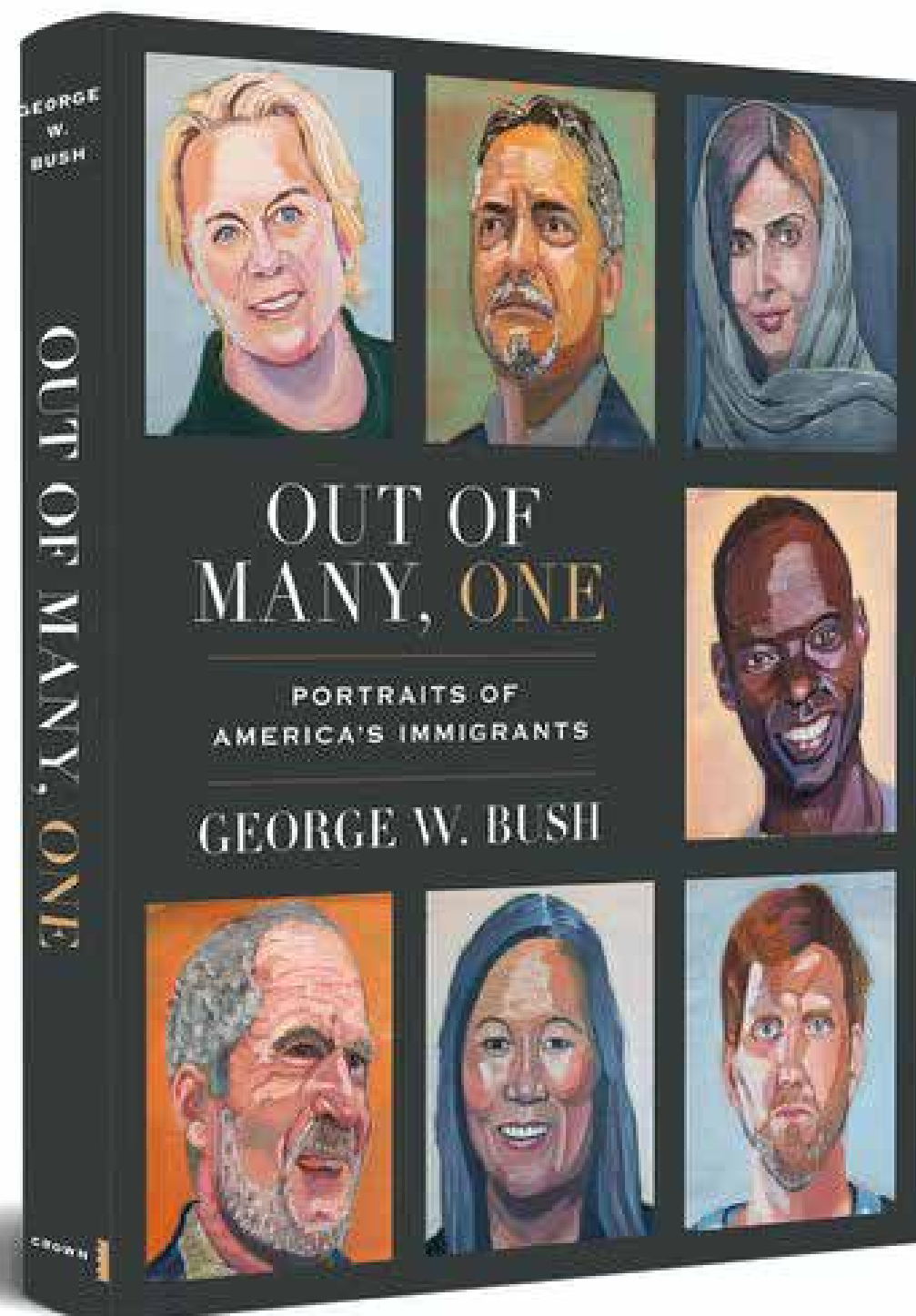


### System #60: Nyarumanga-Rubanga

Constructed July - Oct 2021, Matana Colline  
6 tap stands  
1 wash station  
60 people employed  
1,700 residents served

This system was funded exclusively by our sustaining member community, **AMAZI For Burundi**. It has changed the lives of the **students of Rubanga School**, in addition to supporting the local community.

## Raising Awareness for the Mission



It was a banner year of media coverage for the Gazelle Foundation and our co-founder, Gilbert Tuhabonye. Gilbert's inclusion in President George W. Bush's new book led to appearances on the TODAY Show, which led to a multi-page article in People Magazine. Several local outlets picked up the stories, leading to a surge of interest in the Gazelle Foundation and the mission of providing clean water to those that need it most in Burundi. We added new email subscribers and saw an uptick in website visits and social media followers.

### ***Out of Many, One***

President George W. Bush's book, *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants* features 43 painted portraits and stories of immigrants to the United States – including our co-founder, Gilbert Tuhabonye. He is included alongside several other illustrious immigrants, from Madeleine Albright to Arnold Schwarzenegger to the Bush family's housekeeper, Paula Rendón. Gilbert was blown away by the president's talent and honored to be acknowledged by the former commander-in-chief.

*"It's been a great feeling to see my photo, my portrait right in the gallery in the Bush library, standing among 43. It takes me back to my journey of where I came from and what I've been through to be recognized by the president."* – Gilbert Tuhabonye

[Learn About The Book](#)



### **Gilbert on TODAY**

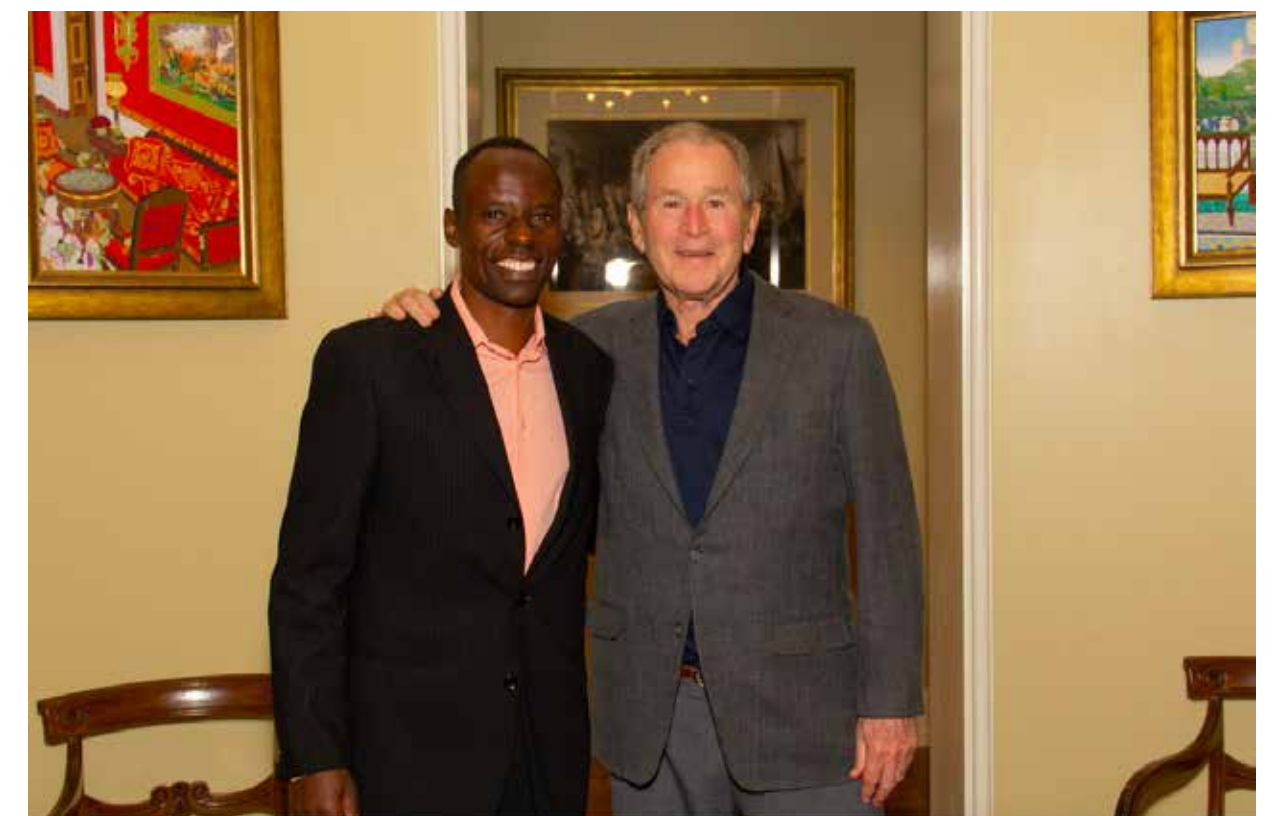
Gilbert's inclusion in President Bush's book led him to reconnect with his daughter Jenna Bush Hager, TODAY Show host and former Gazelle! In an inspirational segment on the show, Jenna and Gilbert discussed his story of hope and faith, of running with joy, and of forgiveness and giving back.

[Watch The TODAY Show Segment](#)

### **People Magazine Feature**

There was a pretend superhero on the cover, but it was the real superhero inside that got us excited! In a multi-page spread in People Magazine, Gilbert discussed his escape from genocide in Burundi, how he lives his life with faith and joy, and about giving clean water to his home country through the Gazelle Foundation.

[Read The Article](#)





### **Local Media Highlight: Spectrum News**

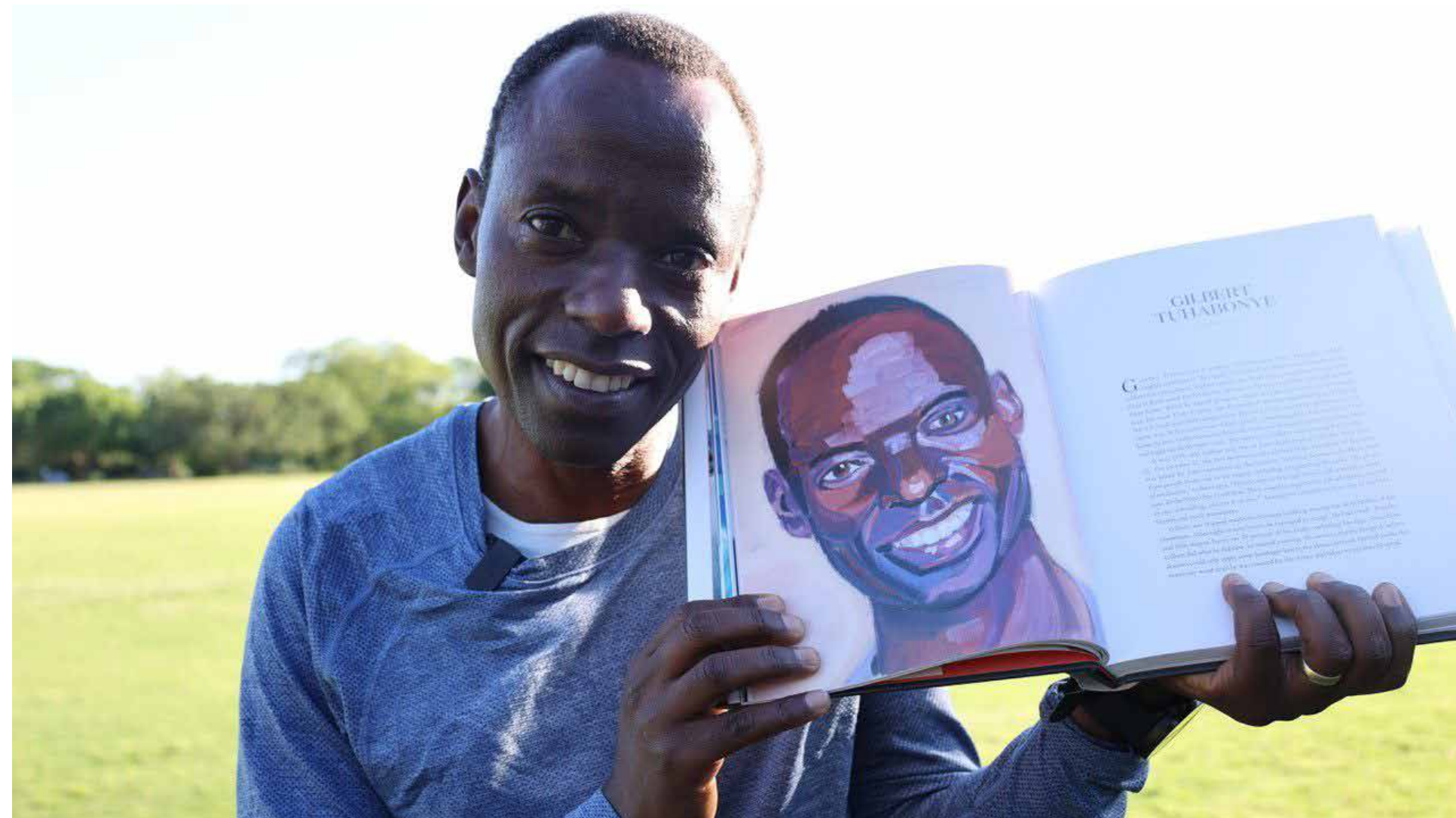
Spectrum News reporter Lakisha Lemons produced a segment for Austin Spectrum channels highlighting Gilbert's story and his inclusion in President Bush's book of portraits. The segment provided a great opportunity to show the story to a local audience.

[\*Watch The Spectrum Segment\*](#)

### **On My Way**

Gilbert had the opportunity to appear on host Lorena Junco Margain's popular On My Way podcast. The two had a wonderful discussion about finding meaning out of tragedy that focused on Gilbert's journey of hope and healing as he built a new life in the United States on the foundations of faith, family, and running.

[\*Learn About The Podcast\*](#)



# An Engaged Community of Supporters

The Gazelle Foundation is fortunate and grateful to have an incredible community of passionate, engaged supporters. From donors to volunteers, we owe so much of our success to their support.

## AMAZI For Burundi Sustaining Members

AMAZI For Burundi is our monthly sustaining member community. Members get the ease and convenience of a monthly membership, and the Gazelle Foundation gets a steady stream of investment in clean water.

For the first time in 2021, we named a water system for our AMAZI For Burundi sustaining members. The Nyarumanga-Rubanga system was been selected as our 2021 AMAZI-funded system. This system – our 60th in Burundi – serves a total of 1,700 area residents, including nearly 650 students at Rubanga School. We thank our incredible community of givers for making this dream a reality.



In 2021, many AMAZIng people participated in our sustaining membership community. We look forward to growing this wonderful group in 2022.

[Learn More About  
AMAZI For Burundi](#)

## Supporter Spotlight

Thousands of supporters have dramatically improved the everyday lives of people in Burundi. Here is just one example, showcasing the passion and creativity of someone making an outsized difference reaching out a hand to help the people who need it most.



## Chess Lessons With Lyla

Elementary-schooler Lyla is working to solve the clean water problem in an innovative way: she offered chess lessons to her fellow peers in order to raise money for water projects in Burundi.

“I love the idea of getting kids involved involved in fundraising for a good cause — its so important,” Lyla’s mom Natascha said.



## Events

### Run For The Water 2021

Though the pandemic continued to throw events everywhere for a loop, we were thrilled to be able to put on the 15th Annual best race in town - in person.



Thousands of people participated in person, and hundreds from around the world participated in our virtual event counterpart, the Global Run For The Water. The race was voted **Best Road Race 2021** by Austin Fit Magazine, and was once again the 10-Mile Champion Event for RRCA.

This was the first year in which **gender inclusivity** was addressed, and a non-binary gender category was added to the event registration page. The value of inclusivity and representation aligns with the Foundation's value to equitably provide clean water to all, healing divisions and building common ground.





### **Austin Gives Miles**

The Gazelle Foundation was fortunate to participate in Austin Gives Miles, the philanthropic program of the Ascension Seton Austin Marathon presented by Under Armour that connects race participants to local non-profit organizations. We have participated in the program for four years, and are one of 25 Official Charity Partners in the program.

Thanks to our incredible volunteers, and donors, the Gazelle Foundation successfully qualified for a \$10,000 grant from the Moody Foundation. 2021 marks the sixth year that the Moody Foundation has matched funds raised by the Official Charities of the Austin Gives Miles program. Their lifetime giving to Austin Gives Miles charities is \$1.2M and growing, and \$30,000 has directly benefited the Gazelle Foundation. Our partnership with the Austin Marathon and the Austin Gives Miles program has a clear and direct impact on our ability to provide clean, accessible water to people in Burundi.

### **Kendra Scott Gives Back**

We partnered with Kendra Scott on Giving Tuesday & Global Running Day as a part of their Kendra Scott Gives Back program, which donates a portion of sales on those days to a partner non-profit. Both days were successful in raising donations and the Gazelle Foundation's profile within the Austin community.

### **Hearth & Soul Book Signing**

Local home goods boutique Hearth & Soul named the Gazelle Foundation as their November non-profit partner. Proceeds from their beautiful Hearth & Soul signature candles sold in November were donated to help us provide clean water to those that need it most.

To celebrate, Hearth & Soul hosted Gilbert Tuhabonye for a book signing and meet & greet. Over 200 people attended the event to visit with Gilbert in the store on November 17, to share his story and sign copies of his book, *This Voice in My Heart*, as well as President George W. Bush's book, *Out of Many, One: Portraits of American Immigrants*, where his incredible story is featured.





### **Gilbert's Anniversary Walk**

October 21, 1993, Gilbert escaped something that most of us can't fathom: genocide. It's rather easy for us to walk into and out of each day without ever thinking how much of a gift, a privilege, and a blessing it is to live this life. Gilbert exemplifies - and shares - that blessing.

In previous years, Gilbert has organized a walk, from Austin's Lady Bird Lake to the Texas State Capitol carrying 30-50 pound water jugs in remembrance of the tragic events of 1993, and to celebrate the strength in resilience, forgiveness, and gratitude. While this year's walk looked a little different, Gilbert still made the same journey with a small, socially distanced group of friends and supporters.

The day holds far too much meaning to go without observance. Gilbert's message isn't one of sorrow or anger; it's one of joy, faith and forgiveness. Driven by a desire to unleash the potential of anyone who seeks it – in running and in life – Gilbert's indomitable spirit moves everyone he meets. He inspires others to believe that they can achieve anything, regardless of the circumstances or obstacles. He is a living reminder that humanity is greater than the sum of all the world's injustices. And he is proof that the work of a few – or even just one – can make this world, our world, a better place.

### **Comedor Dinner**

In October, we hosted a private dinner at Comedor in downtown Austin with the goal of engaging with our wonderful supporters and sharing the mission, vision, and history of the Gazelle Foundation. Over some of the best tacos north of the border, event-goers were treated to inspiring speeches from long-time supporter Elissa Jackson, Board President Pete Rauch, and of course Gilbert himself.

SAVE THE DATE

# Gilbert's Anniversary of Life

OCTOBER 21, 2021





### **GAZELLE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Gilbert Tuhabonye – Chairman  
Peter Rauch – President  
Andi Gillentine – Vice President  
Natalie Brown – Secretary  
Michael Madison – Treasurer  
Paula McCaul  
Adam Reiser  
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