



RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

A summary of FORGE's major victories in its first four years of operation

LIBRARIES: FORGE has built and updated libraries in 4 refugee camps. The Meheba Friendly Library in Meheba Refugee Settlement, Zambia has over 20,000 books and is considered the largest library in any refugee camp in the world. FORGE libraries currently serve over 50,000 people and receive thousands of visitors every year.

COMPUTER TRAINING CENTERS: FORGE has built, equipped, and currently operates computer training centers in 4 refugee camps. The *Laboratoire Informatique Safari* in Mwange Refugee Camp, Zambia is equipped with 10 solar-powered laptops designed for rural settings. FORGE computer centers have trained over 2500 people.

HEALTH EDUCATION & ACCESS SERVICES: FORGE provides education about topics ranging from disease prevention to maternal health. HIV/AIDS education is a significant focus of FORGE's health initiatives. FORGE services also help refugees access existing health care services in camps. These services reach over 5,000 individuals annually.

PRESCHOOLS: FORGE currently operates 3 preschools. In total, these preschools provide early childhood education to 400 refugee children per year who otherwise have no opportunity to attend school.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT & SAFETY: FORGE runs 2 Women's Centers and has created 4 Friendly Corners facilities that in all reach 4,500 women every year and provide shelter to victims of domestic violence, train women in valuable job skills, and provide relevant information on women's rights and proactive methods for achieving gender equality.

REPATRIATION CENTERS: FORGE has established 2 repatriation centers that provide accurate, up-to-date, and myth-dispelling information to refugees who are considering returning home to the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Centers also hold workshops in community development, non-violent communication, and business education, and have served thousands of refugees so far.

REFUGEE RIGHTS: FORGE established the first refugee-run, camp-based refugee advocacy program in Southern Africa. This Refugee Advocacy Initiative assists an average of 140 refugees a month to navigate the UN system and access the services promised to them under refugee law.

ADULT EDUCATION: FORGE runs 2 adult education programs that focus on endowing adults with the skills they will need when they repatriate. Adults choose from classes in English literacy, computer training, handwriting, letter writing, and resume writing. To date, 400 adults have participated.

ARTS & MUSIC PROGRAMS: FORGE operates several community-building arts and music programs designed to help combat post-traumatic stress disorder and ease the psychological stress of being a refugee. The Children's Project in Mwange Camp and Playspace program in Meheba Settlement serve the children of the refugee community through classes in craftmaking and painting. Our Music Education Programs have trained over 200 refugees in various subjects including guitar, keyboard, piano, recorder, and musical theory.

COMMUNITY NEWS PUBLICATIONS: FORGE runs 2 news publications that are published on a monthly and bi-monthly basis. Journalists living in the camps research and write the stories, and design the layout of each issue. Stories focus on updating refugees about repatriation activities, sharing accomplishments of people within the refugee camp community, and reporting on international news.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY: The FORGE Meheba Scholarship Fund provides secondary and tertiary scholarships to promising refugee youth who could otherwise not afford formal schooling. We have provided scholarships to 21 students for secondary school and 8 students for University and vocational school.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN DETAIL

Libraries

As part of an organizational commitment to educational empowerment, FORGE has built and equipped libraries in each of the three camps where FORGE works. Together, these libraries serve more than 50,000 people, and welcome several hundred visitors a day.

FORGE Libraries are equipped with:

- French Books
- Swahili Books
- English Books
- Compact Discs & Compact Disc Players

FORGE Libraries host:

- Courses in Handwriting, Letter Writing, & Resume Writing
- Weekly Movie Viewings
- Reading Groups

The libraries reserve special days for women to come check out books, and place a special emphasis on African writers and African history. The Meheba Friendly Library in the Meheba Settlement is considered the largest library in any refugee camp around the world and has been hailed by the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR) as "a miracle in the middle of the bush."

Computer Technology

In order to equip individuals with the job skills required in an evolving economy, FORGE operates computer training centers in all of its sites. Drawing upon state-of-the-art technology designed specifically for rural settings, these solar-powered computer labs house dozens of laptop computers and offer full schedules of classes ranging from basic computer usage to more advanced programming skills.

Computer Centers provide training in:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- PowerPoint
- Java
- Writing, Editing & Publishing Community Newspapers

In total, FORGE's network of computer centers has trained over 1500 people in less than 3 years. Former students who have repatriated to the Democratic Republic of Congo have already been hired for jobs using the skills they gained at FORGE's computer centers.

Health Education & Access Services

In recognition of the link between health and economic stability, FORGE emphasizes health education and access to services in each site where we work. The main objective of FORGE's health projects is to give individuals the knowledge they need to make healthy life decisions. In Mwanze Camp and Meheba Settlement, women enroll in Women's Health workshops, and in Kala Camp, children participate in after-school health education classes.

Health Education classes focus on:

- HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care
- Sexually-Transmitted Infections
- Family Planning
- First Aid
- Anatomy
- Nutrition
- Sanitation & Hygiene
- Reproductive Health

FORGE partners with the Zambian Prevention Care and Treatment project (ZPCT) to provide HIV/AIDS testing and care services to some of Zambia's most marginalized occupants in the Meheba Settlement.

Preschools

FORGE currently operates 3 preschools in the Meheba Refugee Settlement.

Preschools provide education in:

- Counting & Basic Arithmetic
- Learning Letters
- Learning Basic Nouns (Animals, Food, etc.)
- Singing Songs
- Sharing

Preschools are in high demand, and parents continually encourage FORGE to open additional facilities in new locations.

Women's Empowerment & Safety

FORGE fights for women's health and safety in two primary ways: first, we provide educational opportunities for women that give them the knowledge and skills they need to improve their personal health and lower their risk of domestic violence; second, we create ways to address instances of violence when they occur. FORGE also creates opportunities for women to develop vocational skills, and holds outreach activities to encourage women to participate in all FORGE programs.

FORGE Women's programs provide:

- Shelter for victims of domestic abuse
- Informal counseling services for abuse victims
- Assists victims of abuse file anonymous reports
- Vocational skills in knitting, tailoring, and batik-dyeing
- Courses on maternal health
- Workshops in Family Planning, Human Rights & Reproductive Health

To date, FORGE has welcomed more than 4,500 women to its programs especially for women, and also encourages men to participate in programs relating to Women's Rights, Human Rights, and Reproductive Health.

Repatriation Centers

Because many refugees are preparing to return to the Democratic Republic of Congo, FORGE built and opened two Repatriation Information Centers in 2007.

Repatriation Centers provide information on:

- Current repatriation logistics
- Migration requirements
- Services refugees receive upon arrival

Repatriation Centers provide courses in:

- Non-Violent Communication
- Business Skills
- Community Development

FORGE Project Managers attend regular Repatriation Task Force meetings with UNHCR to communicate updated information to refugees who are thinking of repatriating. Both FORGE Repatriation Centers are active resource and education centers for the 40,000 Congolese refugees who live in Kala and Mwange Camps.

Advocacy

In 2007 FORGE launched its first rights-advocacy project, the Refugee Advocacy Initiative to help connect refugees with the services they need.

The Refugee Advocacy Initiative:

- Helps refugees file reports when they face discrimination
- Conducts workshops on Refugee Rights
- Collaborates with UNHCR to ensure that refugees receive services

Well into its first year of operation, FORGE's Refugee Advocacy Initiative has already filed several hundred reports and assisted many refugees to attain the services afforded them by international law.

Adult Education

When refugees decide to go home, adults will be responsible for rebuilding their war-torn countries. Yet adults have limited access to education within the confines of a refugee camp. FORGE runs programs specifically to provide adults with the skills they need to be productive members of society.

FORGE offers adult education in:

- English
- Letter Writing
- Resume Writing
- Handwriting
- Arithmetic

So far, adult education courses have provided more than 500 adults with new skills.

Arts, Music, and Culture

FORGE recognizes that creative arts are a fundamental tool for overcoming post-traumatic stress disorder and establishing a sense of normalcy in the disrupted lives of refugees. Embracing this position, FORGE operates the only existing arts and music programs in the three camps where it works.

Arts & Music Classes include:

- Children's Painting & Drawing Classes
- Photography Classes
- Guitar Classes
- Piano Classes
- Music Theory Classes

A performance group in Mwange Camp connects dancers with musicians for live performances that draw crowds of hundreds throughout the year. In Kala Camp, a storyteller gathers children every week to narrate stories that originated in

the Congo. FORGE is committed to the enrichment opportunities these arts projects afford refugees who would otherwise have little opportunity for enrichment through the arts and music.

Community News Publications

FORGE publishes Kala News and Journal Mwangi on a monthly and bi-monthly basis. Journalists living in the camps research and write the stories and design the layout of each issue. Stories focus on repatriation activities, share accomplishments of people within the refugee camp community and report on international news.

Participants gain skills in:

- Writing Skills
- Photography Skills
- Computer Skills
- Layout & Design Skills

In addition to providing participants with journalism skills, the community news publications have the benefit of informing the greater Kala Camp and Mwangi Camp communities about local happenings and international affairs. These media tools are especially useful for disseminating news as refugees in both camps prepare for repatriation.

FORGE Meheba Scholarship Fund

The FORGE Meheba Scholarship Project provides educational sponsorships to refugee youth and young adults who are otherwise unable to afford schooling. Believing strongly in the power of education to inspire and empower, the project aims to provide refugees with their right to learn.

Scholarships are available for:

- Middle School Students
- High School Students
- University Students
- Students Pursuing Vocational Education

Scholarships are limited to those students who wish to receive an education but for reasons outside their control cannot meet the financial requirements of the school or institution. The scholarships cover the cost of tuition, school-related expenses such as books, pens, and uniforms, transportation to and from school, and a small amount of pocket money for miscellaneous expenses. To date FORGE has enabled dozens of secondary and university students to continue their education.