

# Del Mar Rotarian heading to Burundi

Del Mar Rotarian Dugan Lamoise in December is bound for Burundi – a tiny and impoverished country in East Africa -- to check up on an economic empowerment project she helped fund by securing a Rotary Global Grant.

Dugan and her husband, Philippe, became interested in the country after a presentation at Rotary by a local nonprofit, Burundi Friends International.

The couple saw great potential in the nonprofit group's mission to bring education and economic empowerment to Burundi. Dugan is past chair of the club's International Service Committee; Philippe is a past district governor.

Dugan became the driving force behind a Rotary Global Grant of \$58,350. The grant has allowed a savings program to expand to serve 1,056 Burundian women and youth. The program began as a pilot project serving nearly 300 women farmers launched by Burundi Friends International and Project Concern International.

“By using the Rotary



**Philippe and Dugan Lamoise**

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global network -- which includes local Rotarians in Burundi -- we are delighted to be part of a great team focused on this important project to improve lives and build stronger communities,” Dugan said.

In Burundi, participants in the savings groups meet with trainers weekly to learn financial literacy and

contribute to a group savings fund. Members can borrow off of funds saved at an interest rate set by the membership. Records for the pilot project show a return on savings of 35.6 percent after one year.

The strong returns have enabled women to move from purchasing tomato plants and chickens to

investing in larger gardening projects and goats.

In addition to running the savings groups – “We can help people save the money they have,” BFI Executive Director Julie Marner says -- Burundi Friends International has opened libraries and English clubs. The La Jolla-based charity has served more than 54,000 Burundians.

Bordered by the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania, Burundi was colonized by Germany and Belgium before gaining independence in 1962. Civil wars and ethnic cleansing during the 1970s and 1990s have challenged development in the country, where chronic malnutrition is rampant. Political strife returned to Burundi in 2015.

In 2020, Burundi Friends International will begin retrofitting some of its libraries to create IT centers for STEM education, an initiative funded by a \$125,000 grant from the Patrick McGovern Foundation.

Learn more at [bufri.org](http://bufri.org)