

Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Center, Uganda

Mr. Paul Bahati Bebin Kithima

Organisation Profile

Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Center was established in 1997 by a group of refugees under the leadership of Reverend Father Michel Lingisi, a Congolese refugee, in response to crises in the African Great Lakes region. Bondeko Center supports impoverished, often traumatized refugees, especially women and children, who reach Kampala the capital city of Uganda without connections or aid. In 2023 more than 1000 refugees participated in our programs. The organisation is officially registered and is headquartered in the capital city of Kampala, in Uganda. It is a well-structured organisation comprising a Management Team and a Board of Directors.

Vision: We envision a future where the skills and capabilities of refugees to support and assist each other are recognized, and human rights, community acceptance, and economic independence are promoted for forcibly displaced people.

Mission: “We want refugees to be self-reliant and enjoy human rights in the communities where they live”.

Nominee Information

Mr. Paul Bahati Bebin Kithima

Video presentation



Gender: Male

Job title: CEO

My name is Paul Kithima, and I am the CEO of Bondeko Refugee Livelihoods Center in Kampala, Uganda. My work at Bondeko is entirely focused on humanitarian action, as Bondeko’s remit in Uganda is to support and empower refugees and asylum seekers to become self-reliant and enjoy human rights where they live. Uganda is host to 1.6 million refugees who have fled mainly from neighbouring African countries. Hundreds of refugees each year find their way to Bondeko, seeking to participate in the skills training and educational programs that Bondeko offers, as well as for emergency support. I lead all aspects of Bondeko’s humanitarian response, from strategy through implementation. As the CEO, I oversee all people management, program identification and implementation, operations, budget and finances, and proposal writing. I represent Bondeko with the local authorities but also at international conferences and with partner organizations and other external stakeholders. I’m accountable to Bondeko’s Board of Directors.

In 2012, I survived persecution and torture in the Democratic Republic of Congo due to my political opinions (as a youth politician at that time) and fled to Uganda for asylum.

A year later, after my recovery, I started working as an outreach volunteer with national and international organizations providing emergency relief and outreach programs for refugees, asylum seekers and survivors of torture and sexual violence in both Kampala and refugee camps.

From 2013 to 2018, I participated in numerous field missions, such as supporting those trying to find missing relatives, distributing clothing through Relief programs, implementing protocols for documentation and investigation of sexual violence, identifying and verifying refugees and asylum seekers, etc.

In 2018, I was chosen by community members to lead Bondeko (an RLO founded in 1997) as my predecessor was about to move to Canada for resettlement.

For the past five years, in addition to being the CEO of Bondeko, I have been responsible for the strategic leadership and operational management of several other organizations, including as Chairperson of Bright Future initiative for the Protection of Children with Disabilities and the CEO of GLOs, The Grassroots Consortium.

I also champion the Localization of humanitarian responses at a global level. In 2022, I was a panelist in the main session on Localization during the UNHCR Global Consultations with NGOs in Geneva and a Speaker during the HC Dialogue on Protection Challenges in December. I was also a panelist in the session on Localization during the 11th African Union Symposium in Nairobi in November 2023 and a panelist during the linked event organized by the World Bank in Geneva during the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2023. Additionally, I participated in the Reference Group, which developed a Joint Multi-Stakeholder Pledge on Advancing Localization in Displacement and Statelessness responses announced at the GRF in December 2023.

I have a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from UNIGOM in the DRC, but it is through my lived experience in a protracted refugee situation and my expertise from the field as a community leader that I have deeper insights in areas such as forced migration, humanitarian aid, advocacy and coordination which can help ICVA make informed decisions and better serve its members and the broader humanitarian community.

As a Board member, I will contribute to ICVA's mission and vision by actively participating in regular board meetings, reviewing and approving strategic plans and providing guidance on the ICVA 2030 strategy.

I will assist in fundraising efforts and make sure ICVA has the necessary resources to carry out its activities effectively.

I will also support mechanisms put in place for monitoring and evaluating ICVA's programs and initiatives to ensure they are achieving their intended impact, and I will always provide feedback on areas for improvement.

Further, I will always raise my voice to champion principled humanitarian action and advocate for addressing the impact of climate change on humanitarian efforts.

I will also advocate for inclusive and community-led approaches to humanitarian action and promote ICVA's efforts to engage in agile collaborative partnerships.

Lastly, I will always make sure my contribution aligns with ICVA's goal of being globally distributed and locally rooted.

Please indicate whether, if elected as a member of the Board, you would be willing to stand for election for

- ***Chair –No***