

Adolescent Girl with Disabilities: Kinama Camp, Burundi

Sifa (16 years old)

“When I was in the Congo, I lost my leg. It was infected and they put me in the hospital. I remember overhearing conversations when I was there. They thought I was unconscious, but I could hear them talking, saying that I was ‘lost cause’ and that it was not worth trying to save my life. I used to think about this often and it made me very upset.”

“When I first got connected with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) they advocated for me in many ways. First, they ensured that I got a prosthetic leg. It was so important to me then. I remember that feeling when I could first start to walk around with ease, and it made me feel like I was part of the community again.

“After that, the team from IRC made sure that I could start to go to school again. Since going back to school I have made many friends. I work hard in school. I am a good student and I really enjoy studying. In school, I can work hard and I can prove that despite what they said in the hospital in the Congo, I am not ‘worthless.’ Instead, I am a girl with a lot to share and to offer.

“Over the past year, I have most enjoyed going to awareness sessions. It is important to me that the community sees me as not just a girl without a leg, but as a person with rights and a future. I also really appreciate the materials from IRC, especially sanitary napkins and supplies, because often people forget that girls our age need them. With my new leg and my chance to have an education, I feel safer, smarter and less likely to be taken advantage of.”

