



BURUNDI, DRC & RWANDA – Peace in the Great Lakes



As a young Scout leader in Goma, DRC, Gilbert witnessed his own town turning into one of the world's largest refugee camps. Tutsi and Hutu communities fleeing the violence and civil war that erupted in neighbouring Rwanda, discovered that while they were running from one terror, they were arriving into the arms of another.

The volcanic land of Goma could not cope with the influx of tens of thousands of people and conditions quickly deteriorated, disease, hunger and illness killed thousands in the camps and bodies began to pile up. Gilbert and his small Scout group entered the camps and began to help foreign NGOs to bury the bodies, and to manage distributions in the camps. He recruited Scouts from amongst the refugees themselves – not asking their ethnicity – one group mistrusted the other – and so ended up with a strong team of “Rwandans” (not Hutu or Tutsi) who worked together for the following months.

These Scouts, from these modest inter-ethnic beginnings, built a peace network in Rwanda, Burundi and DR Congo, of over 30,000 members trained in peace education and dialogue which lasts to this day.