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Back to the land: the long-term challenges of refugee return and reintegration in Burundi

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Introduction

Burundi, a small and densely populated country in the heart of the East African Great Lakes region, has witnessed the return of more than 500,000 refugees over the past decade (UNHCR, 2011). These refugees fled the country during waves of political instability and conflict that mainly emerged after Burundi's independence in 1962.

After the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreements in August 2000 many Burundians started to return voluntarily from exile, and official repatriation movements, facilitated by UNHCR in a joint initiative with the Burundian and Tanzanian government, started in 2002. The majority of former refugees were repatriated from neighbouring country Tanzania, which currently still hosts a relatively small group of 37,000 Burundian refugees, referred to as the 'residual' caseload (UNHCR, 2011).

Most Burundian refugees have physically returned to the country and the residual caseload is expected to return in the coming year. However, as in other countries facing large return movements, return marks rather the beginning of a long road than its ending.

The reintegration of former refugees in Burundi, hereafter referred to as *returnees*, is challenging due to structural problems of demographic pressure, poverty, unemployment, and a lack of infrastructure. In addition, the return of former refugees to Burundi puts additional pressure on the country's scarce resources such as land.

Refugees who fled the country in the early 1970s, the so-called *1972-caseload refugees* who returned mainly since 2008, face the largest reintegration challenges due to the time they spent in exile. Upon return all returnees receive assistance in the form of different food and non-food items from different actors and the Burundian government provides them with two years of free education and three (or in some cases six) months of health care (Haver, Hatungimana, & Tennant, 2009).

The 1972 returnees, as compared to the *1993-caseload refugees* who fled the country in the early 1990s, face additional challenges of social and economic integration, mainly due to their limited access to land. The extent to which this group is able to reintegrate in Burundian society in the long run therefore remains unclear.

As the repatriation of Burundians from Tanzania slowly comes to an end several humanitarian agencies are decreasing their activities and aim for a gradual phase-out. According to studies that were done in Burundi there are no clear differences between returnees and the rest of the Burundian population in terms of assets such as land and housing and access to services such as healthcare and education (see e.g. Terra Group, 2008).

There is general consensus among the humanitarian agencies that the 'crisis' is over and both the Burundian government and international donors are now pushing towards a shift in status for Burundi, from a so called 'post-conflict' country that receives vast amounts of humanitarian aid, to a developing country with a clear vision for long-term development.

The question arises, however, whether or not the repatriation and reintegration of specifically the 1972 returnees has been successful. To what extent has this group been able to reintegrate into Burundian society and what are the challenges that both returnees and the people that did not leave, the so-called *stayees* or *residents* – a term which is often used in Burundi - still

face? And what has been the effect of the large repatriation wave on the population as a whole?

This paper aims to answer these questions by providing an overview of the repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania and by analyzing both the structural and individual factors that hinder the reintegration of mainly the 1972 returnees. The key challenges affecting both the short-term and long-term reintegration of this group in Burundi will be identified in order to draw lessons for other situations of large refugee return.

The first section of this paper will provide a brief overview of the challenges in repatriation and reintegration that were identified in the literature. The second section will provide an introduction to repatriation movements in Burundi. The third section will discuss reintegration in Burundi and will include an overview of government policy, stakeholder perspectives, and returnee's perspectives. The fourth section will describe the current reintegration challenges of the 1972-caseload returnees and the final section will provide a discussion and conclusion.

Note on methodology

A mixed-methods approach was applied to answer the research questions stated above. First, 30 in-depth interviews were conducted to gain insight into the views of key stakeholders. The key stakeholders included representatives from international organizations, international NGOs, national NGOs, and government officials. The majority of the key stakeholders were working for international organizations.

In some cases multiple individuals working for the same organization were interviewed. The opinions expressed by the interviewees do not necessarily reflect the official views of the departments or organizations they are working for. Most of the interviews took place in Bujumbura, whereas some interviews were conducted in Makamba province in southern Burundi.

Second, focus group discussions with returnees and stayees were conducted in two *collines* ('hills') in Makamba province in Burundi. Due to its location and the history of violence in the region, this province has received one of the largest shares of the repatriation movements from Tanzania in the past years (see Map 1, Appendix II). Around one-third of the households in the collines where the fieldwork took place are returnee households (see Table 1, Appendix I). The returnees that participated in the focus group discussions were all 1972 caseload refugees, most of whom came back to Burundi after 2008.

Men and women were split for the focus group discussions, as well as the returnees and stayees. The focus group discussions were complemented with in-depth interviews with the community leader (*chef de colline*), the traditional leader (*Bashingantahe*), and in-depth interviews with teachers or school directors in each colline. To respect the privacy of our participants we do not disclose here the exact location of our research.

Due to the specific location of our research and our small sample size the views of the focus group participants presented in this paper are not representative for the whole population of returnees in Burundi. Both the in-depth stakeholder interviews in Bujumbura and the fieldwork in Makamba province occurred over a two-week period in October 2011.

In addition to the research that was done in the capital Bujumbura and Makamba province the researchers visited a Rural Integrated Village (Village Rural Intégré, or VRI) in the south of Burundi where informal interviews were conducted with residents and the community leader. The research that was done in Burundi is complemented with a literature review on repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

Note on terminology

The current rhetoric in Burundi is that returnees are referred to as *rapatriés* (French translation), and locals are referred to as *résidents* (idem). This terminology implies that repatriates are not local residents, when in fact they are. It also implies a difference in legal rights between residents and repatriates when theoretically these rights should be equal.

This paper has adopted terminology in line with the literature on return migration and repatriation, wherein, return migrants are termed *returnees* and people who are not return migrants are termed *locals* or *stayees*. The term *stayees* is actually close to Kirundi terminology of *Absangwa*, which means literally ‘those who were found by returnees living in the country’.

Reintegration after repatriation: a literature overview

Since the 1990s voluntary repatriation has been the preferred durable solution of UNHCR¹. Repatriation of refugees is a significant part of the peace process that can indicate change to the international community (Black and Gent, 2006; Crisp, 2000). According to international law, repatriation is a voluntary process that should occur in safety and dignity.

Many factors, however, can call into question the degree to which a return is truly voluntary: government pressure to return from the country of asylum or pressure to return from the country of origin to signify peace to the international community are examples of such factors.

Until recently the repatriation process was considered the end of the migration cycle. However, recent work has highlighted that repatriation is often not going ‘home’ (Black and Koser, 1999). Refugees are frequently unable to return to the actual house or community they left (if these still exist) and for those born in exile ‘returning home’ can be their first experience in the country.

Hammond (1999, p. 228) states “whether they return to their birthplace or to a different area within the country of origin that is new to them, they often face intense competition with local residents for resources, social services, employment and educational opportunities”. Repatriation is thus a complex process of starting over for a returnee that is not nearly so black and white as previous notions that depicted repatriation as returning to a previous home and life.

After repatriation the process of readjustment and reintegration in the country of origin begins. UNHCR defines reintegration as “equated with the achievement of a sustainable

¹ The other two durable solutions are local integration and resettlement to a safe third country.

return – in other words the ability of returning refugees to secure the political, economic, [legal] and social conditions needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity” (UNCHR, 2004, p. 6). Further, “reintegration is a process that should result in the disappearance of differences in legal rights and duties between returnees and their compatriots and the equal access of returnees to services, productive assets and opportunities” (UNHCR, 2004, p. 7).

This definition views reintegration as a process by which returnees are made equal to and placed on the same level as the local population, which is a different benchmark than equating reintegration with achievement of the same livelihoods achieved prior to flight or in the country of asylum (Rogge, 1994). The quality of life of the local population may be a dramatic shift from the quality of life in the country of asylum, which may pose difficult for returnees.

Factors influencing returnee reintegration

There are numerous factors that impact the ability of return migrants to reintegrate, including both structural and individual factors. Structural factors include the policies of the government of the country of return toward returnees, the receptiveness of the local government, the attitudes of the local community toward returnees, and the number of people returning simultaneously (Rogge, 1994).

The position of the government is critical in signifying if it is safe for refugees to return and to clarify their rights in return, such as those related to citizenship, property restitution and other rights (Kibreab, 2005). Further, although the government may have an officially welcoming policy towards returnees, the implementation of reintegration policies on the ground may be different. Stefansson (2004) found that although the government of Bosnia was officially welcoming to returnees, in practice authorities and employers privileged those who stayed in terms of housing and jobs. This led to feelings of resentment from returnees (Stefansson, 2004).

The attitude of the local community towards returnees has a great impact on returnees’ ability to reintegrate as well. Locals may feel resentful to refugees for leaving or may feel that they are economically advantaged in the assistance they receive upon return. In Africa, in particular, repatriations occurring in large numbers to areas that are already experiencing chronic poverty and food insecurity can lead to conditions of conflict between returnees and locals and greater vulnerability (Hammond, 1999).

The size of the repatriation movement matters, as larger flows are more difficult for local communities to absorb and place greater stress on scarce resources. Finally, when people are repatriated to areas where they do not have any local connections, they are in effect strangers to the local community. Someone who is well known in the community has a greater potential to be trusted, welcomed back to the community, and supported in return (Eastmond and Ojendal, 1999). Social networks and the community of return thus play a critical role in negotiating the relations between locals and returnees in the reintegration process.

Individual factors that can impact the reintegration experience include the duration of the time in exile, the conditions in exile, age, gender, if one is born in exile, and the social networks of the individual in the country of return (Rogge, 1994). The duration of the time in

exile can determine the ties of the refugee to his or her home community and the number of changes that have occurred within the community of origin.

For refugees who have experienced prolonged exile of 20 years or more, their communities of origin may have completely changed: land can be redistributed to other locals, commercial operations may differ, as well as the government, all of their networks may have moved, and the local culture may have adapted or changed.

The conditions in exile, including camp conditions, language, education, and livelihoods also affect the refugee in the return process. Camp conditions may have created a situation of dependency in which the returnee has lost the essential skills for independence upon return because of restricted or non-existent access to livelihood opportunities (Rogge, 1994). The opposite could also occur, however: camp conditions may have enabled the development of a strong livelihood if refugees were given access to land and resources.

Additionally, the country of exile may have had a different language and education system than the country of origin. Angolan refugees in Zaire, for instance, received French-language education, whereas refugees in Zambia received English-language education. Upon return education was offered in Portuguese (Rogge, 1994). This situation can create further challenges for students upon return.

Moreover, the education offered in camps is often at a higher level than what can be offered in countries of conflict. Upon return, pupils may be at a more advanced level than their peers, creating potential tensions. If the returnees are second-generation refugees, all of these issues may be exacerbated if they do not speak the local languages but the languages learned in the country of asylum.

Finally, an individual's age and gender also affect the ability to reintegrate. The elderly or young may require special assistance in establishing themselves and return may be more traumatic for the elderly who have further memories of the country prior to conflict. Unaccompanied children also require special assistance in their reintegration process and the gender component should be considered as well.

Women and men have different refugee and return experiences. For women who have become the head of the household return can present particular challenges given new family role expectations and different rights afforded to women in the country of return versus the country of asylum.

Types of reintegration

The reintegration process can be divided into four categories: economic, social, legal, and cultural reintegration (Cassarino, 2007). Economic reintegration refers to reinsertion in the labour market, employment, and the creation of a sustainable livelihood. Social reintegration refers to participation in organizations, relationships, education for youth, and acceptance with family and friends. Legal reintegration refers to the establishment of citizenship and rights in the country of return, including the ability to participate in local elections and judicial processes. Cultural reintegration refers to participation in local cultural events and acceptance of norms and values of the society.

Reintegration is a communal process that affects all members of the community as locals and returnees seek to integrate together. Moreover, the different aspects of reintegration require different processes and will occur over different periods of time, which makes the process of reintegration additionally difficult to guide and support.

This leads to an important distinction between short-term and long-term reintegration. The reintegration process differs for each individual, but there is a large discrepancy between the short-term goals of meeting basic needs (food, water, shelter or clothing) and the longer-term goals of self-sufficiency, sustainable employment and community cohesion. Typically, reintegration assistance is provided for a maximum of up to three years, at which time returnees are expected to be reintegrated into their communities. Rogge (1994, p. 34) states full reintegration often takes much longer:

When examining the economic adjustment of immigrants we readily accept that it may take as long as 10 to 15 years i.e. not until the second generation, yet for returnees who have often been much more disrupted and traumatized than other migrants, we expect them to fully re-establish themselves within a much shorter timeframe, if not immediately upon returning.

Social and cultural reintegration may take longer than economic and legal reintegration, particularly for returnees who were in a protracted refugee situation and have lived in another cultural environment for a long period of time. Unfortunately, robust understandings of the differences between short-term and long-term reintegration, of the different forms of reintegration, and of accurate indicators to measure reintegration by are largely absent. This makes it difficult to assess benchmarks that can accurately determine if reintegration has been successful at a given time.

Repatriation in the context of Burundi

Due to the history of conflict and forced migration in Burundi, return movements are not just a recent phenomenon in the country. Burundi has experienced waves of conflict since the early 1960s, which generated large refugee flows. Most Burundian refugees fled to neighbouring countries Tanzania, Rwanda and DRC (Spaan & Van Moppes, 2006). During periods of relative stability many Burundians returned to their country, either permanently or temporarily.

The largest waves of conflict in Burundi took place in 1965, 1972, 1988, 1991, and 1993 (see Table 2, Appendix I). The 1972 and 1993 events generated the largest refugee movements. In 1972 the violent actions of the Burundian military against the Hutu population led to a refugee movement of around 300,000 people, most of whom fled to Tanzania (ICG, 2003; Ngaruku & Nkurunziza, 2005; Watt, 2008).

In 1993 the violence that followed the assassination of president Ndadaye led to an estimated 687,000 refugees, also fleeing largely to Tanzania (ICG, 2003; Ngaruku & Nkurunziza, 2005). In total, around 1.2 million Burundians became displaced. The 1993 violence lasted for almost nine years and generated refugees in small waves after each outburst of violence. By the end of 2002, more than 570,000 Burundians resided in exile, the majority of them in Tanzania and a smaller group in DRC (see Table 3, Appendix I) (UNHCR, 2002a).

Life in exile: Burundian refugees in Tanzania

Three categories of Burundian refugees lived in Tanzania: 1) the 1972-caseload refugees who lived in the Old Settlements, 2) the 1993-caseload refugees who resided in one of the nine refugee camps in north-western Tanzania, and 3) refugees from both the 1972 and 1993 cohort who did not settle in designated refugee areas but integrated into villages in north-western Tanzania or urban areas (Hovil & Kweko, 2009).

The 1972 refugees were mostly Hutu agriculturalists from Burundi's middle and southern provinces Makamba, Bururi, Gitega, Ruyigi, and Muramvya. Most of them took up residence in one of the three Old Settlements of Ulyankulu, Katumba, and Mishamo, which are located in western Tanzania in Urambo District of Tabora Region and Mpanda District of Rukwa Region.

Fifteen years later, in 1987, the Old Settlements of Mishamo and Katumba together hosted around 110,000 Burundians (Daley, 1991). An unknown number of 1972 refugees settled in local villages in north-western Tanzania or in Tanzania's urban areas such as the capital Dar Es Salaam (see e.g. Sommers, 2001). In the end the three Old Settlements together hosted around 220,000 Burundian refugees.

Most refugee households in the Old Settlements became self-sufficient, which led to a withdrawal of donor support in the 1980s. The regions in which the Old Settlements were created had low population densities and much land available for agriculture. This stimulated local integration and provided a boost to the local economy (Fielden, 2008). Refugees received five hectares of arable land per household upon arrival (Thomson, 2009).

Relationships between the Burundians in the Old Settlements and the local population were however problematic at certain points in time. In the early 1990s the camps were accused of hosting Burundian military units and rebel groups (ICG, 1999). In addition, as tensions rose in the late 2000s because of a slowdown of return movements to Burundi, Burundian refugees were increasingly blamed for insecurity and criminal activity in the area (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009).

Burundians who fled the country in the early 1990s were mainly hosted in refugee camps in Kigoma and Ngora regions in northwestern Tanzania. They were spread over nine refugee camps close to the Burundi-Tanzania border (see Map 2, Appendix II). Camp management was in the hands of UNHCR and the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs. In the early 2000s eight international and national NGOs worked as implementing partners for UNHCR, providing refugees with food aid, health care, education, and legal advice (HRW, 2000).

Even though the 1993 refugees started to return to Burundi after 2000, there were still eight refugee camps operating in 2007 (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009). Between 2006 and 2008 six refugee camps in Tanzania were closed. As opposed to the Old Settlements, the camps received vast amounts of financial and material support for the full duration of their existence. According to one of our stakeholders this was not necessarily a positive aspect of the refugee camps, as it created dependency amongst the refugees, which now affects their reintegration in Burundi.

The Arusha Agreement and return migration

The return of Burundians living in Tanzania that started in the early 2000s was mainly a result of the changing political situation in Burundi. After many fruitless attempts to reconstruct peace, the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was signed in August 2000.

Assistance to refugees and the reintegration of returnees was explicitly mentioned in many parts of the Arusha Agreement. Chapter 1 of Protocol IV (Reconstruction and Development) of the agreement focused specifically on the rehabilitation and resettlement of refugees and all others that were displaced, regrouped and dispersed. One of the aims was to establish a National Commission for the Rehabilitation of Sinistrés (CNRS), whose objectives included:

- (b) To give all returning families, including female- and child-headed families, food aid, material support and assistance with health, education, agriculture and reconstruction until they become self-sufficient;
- (d) To settle all those who believe that they cannot yet return on sites close to home, in order to enable them to go and till their fields initially and return to their land later on;
- (h) To help returnees to recover the property and bank accounts left in Burundi before their exile and whose existence has been duly proven;

(Article 4 of Chapter 1 of Protocol IV; Republic of Burundi, 2000, p. 78)

These ambitious objectives fuelled the hope of those living in exile to return to Burundi and to regain the losses they had suffered. The Arusha Agreement also recognized concerns regarding land for returnees and requested the recovery or compensation of land for all displaced persons. After the signing of the agreement, the first voluntary and spontaneous return movements to Burundi started (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009).

In follow up to the Arusha Agreement, the Burundi government signed a Tripartite Agreement with the Tanzanian government and UNHCR in May 2001 to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania, which started in 2002. In this year more than 50,000 Burundians returned from Tanzania, over 45,000 of which were assisted by UNHCR (2002b). Most of these former refugees returned to Burundi's northern provinces, where the situation was relatively stable at the time.

Despite the progress that was made in Burundi's peace process, the refugee situation in Burundi and, indeed, the whole East African Great Lakes Region, remained complex. The signing of the Arusha Agreement did not signify an abrupt end to violence; in 2002 continued insecurity, particularly in the provinces of Ruyigi and Makamba, led to an outflow of 28,000 refugees to Tanzania.

The security situation therefore continued to be a constraining factor for UNHCRs activities in the country (UNHCR, 2002b). In addition, more than 19,000 Congolese refugees crossed the border to Burundi's northwestern province Cibitoke in response to violence in DRC's Kivu region in 2002 (ibid.). The Arusha Agreement did, however, mark the beginning of a political transition.²

² For a detailed overview on Burundi's road to peace see e.g. Brachet & Wolpe (2005).

Repatriation after 2002

Against the backdrop of this political transition a large repatriation movement took place. Between 2002 and September 2011 more than half a million Burundians, mainly from the neighbouring country Tanzania, were repatriated (see Table 4, Appendix I). Significant groups of Burundians returned from DRC and Rwanda as well with around 14,643 and 7,968 individuals returning, respectively.

These numbers only reflect the returnees who returned to Burundi with the help of UNHCR, but many individuals or families returned on their own as well. These returns escaped the radar of international organizations and local governments and could thus significantly inflate the true number of returnees.³

As Table 4 shows the number of repatriates increased between 2002 and 2004, but decreased again after 2005. Given the expectation that the 2005 elections would motivate former Burundian refugees to return, this slowdown in repatriation, which was partly due to the socio-economic conditions in Burundi and continuing insecurity in some parts of the country, was disappointing to the Tanzanian government (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009).

Increasing reports of land conflicts also spilled over into the refugee settlements in Tanzania, making some former refugees reluctant to return. In 2006 UNHCR changed its repatriation strategy from 'facilitation' to 'promotion'. This strategy involved promotion campaigns for return targeted at Burundian refugees living in the refugee camps in western Tanzania.

The drop in return in 2006 and 2007 was followed by a large increase in 2008. This was mainly the result of the 2008 closing of the Nduta refugee camp in north-western Tanzania by the Tanzanian government as well as an increased focus on return facilitation for long-term refugees by UNHCR (UNHCR, 2009). This was a response to a large-scale naturalization process that was set in motion for the 1972 refugees residing in the Old Settlements.

As proposed by the Tripartite Commission, they were given the option to either return to Burundi or to apply for citizenship in Tanzania. More than 160,000 Burundians applied for Tanzanian citizenship (UNHCR, 2009), which was finally granted to them in 2010. Around 50,000 1972 refugees decided to return to Burundi, of which over 30,000 of them were already repatriated in 2008. A small minority opted for resettlement in third countries.

Due to the high naturalization rates of 1972 refugees this group constituted only 11 per cent of the total number of repatriates between 2002 and 2011. Most of the 1972 refugees returned to the southern provinces of Makamba, Bururi and Rutana, whereas as a total group repatriates returned to the border provinces of Makamba, Ruyigi and Muyinga. Together these provinces received almost 60 percent of all repatriates since 2002 (UNHCR, 2011). Many also returned to the fertile shores of Lake Tanganyika in Bururi, to Kirundo province in the north, and Rutana province in the south.

In 2009, 2010, and 2011, repatriation from Tanzania continued, although at a lower pace. Numbers even dropped to around 1,000 in 2010. After the closing of Nduta refugee camp in 2008, Mtabila remained the only refugee camp for Burundians in Tanzania, and it currently hosts around 37,000 people.

³ UNHCR Burundi put into place a counting system for repatriation in 2002. All statistics from before 2002 are therefore estimates, often based on the statistics of countries of asylum.

Many Burundians who are part of this repatriation ‘residual’ do not want to go home, and international organizations are now articulating their concerns about the future of this group, especially the 1972 cohort who did not apply for naturalization. The Burundian refugees are reluctant to return mainly due to the stories of the reintegration challenges that are faced by the ones that did return (Hovil & Kweko, 2009).

From repatriation to reintegration in Burundi

Now that the majority of Burundian refugees have returned the focus of the actors involved has shifted from repatriation to reintegration. A handful of studies have been completed to evaluate repatriation and the current state of reintegration in Burundi.

The first was commissioned by the United States Department of State in 2008 and concludes that reintegration has been achieved. This study finds that the welfare of returnees is on par with the welfare of stayees and that the health of children that returned is better than the health of other children (Terra Group, 2008). It is important to note that repatriation of the 1972 returnees took place in 2008 and 2009. The research conducted for this report was done in early 2008, thus largely excluding the experiences of the 1972 returnees.

Three additional studies on reintegration in Burundi are forthcoming in early 2012. First, a survey conducted by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) revealed a similar result to that of Terra Group in that returnees were successfully reintegrated and on par with the local population. Due to this result, NRC decided to close its office in Burundi.⁴

In reaction to the preliminary findings of this report, Rema Ministeries, a local NGO in Burundi, conducted its own study on reintegration (Rema Ministeries, 2012). Rema Ministeries utilized a semi-structured interview approach and completed over 200 interviews in areas of high return. They found that returnees still experience challenges of discrimination, language barriers, employment barriers, and land issues. In addition, Rema Ministeries argues that the situation of the Rural Integrated Villages (VRIs), which will be discussed in more detail below, must be further assessed.⁵

The third study on return migration to Burundi was part of a multi-country research project entitled Migration and Development: A World in Motion. This research project, which was conducted by Maastricht Graduate School of Governance and financed by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (IS Academy) involved a nationally representative household survey in Burundi and an urban household survey that took place in Bujumbura. The results mirror those of NRC and Terra Group that returnees have the same livelihood conditions as stayees. No differences were found, for example, in terms of access to land and housing.

None of these studies focussed however in-depth on the 1972 returnees, which are recognized to face the greatest challenges in Burundi. For this group there is still a question as to how successful reintegration has been in Burundi. This study has therefore focused on the reintegration experiences of the 1972 cohort. To assess the success of reintegration, however, it is important to first define the concept of reintegration. What is reintegration? And when is reintegration successful? The following section describes the views on reintegration of the

⁴ Information based on interview with NRC representative in October 2011.

⁵ Information based on interview with Rema Ministeries representative in October 2011

Burundi government, international organizations and our focus group participants, consisting of both returnees and stayees, in Makamba province.

A triangulation of views on reintegration in Burundi

The Arusha Agreement shows that the Burundian government views reintegration first and foremost as the restoration of the ‘status quo’ in Burundi. People should be able to regain the losses they have suffered and should be compensated for these losses if they cannot regain them. The agreement reads, for example: “Specific conditions must be provided for *sinistrés* who believe that they can no longer return to their property, so as to enable them to return to normal socio-professional life” (Protocol IV, Chapter 1, Article 2, p. 77).⁶

The use of the term ‘normal socio-professional life’ indicates a strong longing for the re-establishment of Burundian life as it was before the war. The principle of ‘equity’ plays a large role in the agreement as well. Burundians should be equally treated and no group should be favoured or discriminated against. In the end, all Burundian households should be able to become economically self-sufficient, regardless of their background. This view is highly compatible with the view of UNHCR, which was described in the literature overview and also focuses on equity between returnees and stayees.

The returnees and stayees in our focus group discussions in southern Burundi had different perceptions on reintegration. For the returnees reintegration meant receiving what they were promised in Tanzania: “It is land, food, and all items needed to be self sustaining as it was promised for getting an improved life”. This quote also suggests that the returnees had expected an improvement in their livelihoods upon their return.

For those who stayed, reintegration has a different meaning. One local leader defined reintegration as: “To get used to the behaviours of the host community and give up your old behaviours”. This highlights that returnees are viewed as having different behaviours and should adapt to the norms of the community of return. One resident stated:

They have already reintegrated. They’ve received many items and other items are coming. Organizations say that they only support repatriates and tell others to wait. When they bring iron, it is received by repatriates and the vulnerable only. How do they identify vulnerable? Persons who live for many years in house covered by grasses are not vulnerable?

This perception views reintegration from an economic perspective in terms of equity in material well-being. It is evident that different members of the communities in our sample had differing perspectives on what reintegration is, and if it is occurring.

One returnee stated: “They didn’t give what they had promised, that’s why we are not really reintegrated”. This participant acknowledged that reintegration has not occurred, because they did not receive what they were told they would receive. Another person stated: “In order to achieve a normal life, it will take at least eight years”. This individual views reintegration as a long-term process that has yet to be achieved.

⁶ The term *sinistrés* refers to all people who are displaced, regrouped, dispersed or returned (Republic of Burundi, 2000).

Reintegration support to returnees

To facilitate the start of their reintegration trajectory, returnees receive emergency assistance from international organizations (UNHCR, WFP, FAO, and UNICEF) and the Burundian government upon their arrival (see Table 5, Appendix I). Due to differences between the 1972 and 1993 refugees in terms of their time spent in exile the groups initially received different types of support packages. In 2009 the assistance packages became the same for both groups.

Since the beginning of the repatriation process all 1993 returnees have received a non-food items package from UNHCR including mosquito nets, plastic sheeting, blankets, buckets, etc. These packages are distributed in transit centres where returnees would come directly after having crossed the border. WFP assists with food rations, FAO distributes seeds and UNICEF provides educational items. The transit centres provide the returnees also with medical assistance such as information on HIV/AIDS, distribute documents, and have specific support services for unaccompanied minors.

In 2007 a cash grant of around 40 US Dollars was added to the non-food items for the 1993 refugees (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009). Initially the 1972 refugees only received a limited cash and transport grant (because of the assumption that they were better off than the other group), but the support was equalized in 2009. The 1993 refugees are allowed to take 50kg of personal belongings with them, whereas the 1972 refugees can take up to 100kg.

In 2005 the support for the repatriates was extended to also include the spontaneous refugees. UNHCR implemented an evaluation of the Cash Grant Program to returnees in 2008 (Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant, 2009). This study found that the Cash Grant Program was a critical component of the return packages and provided for increased wellbeing and should therefore be continued.

Additional support provided by UNHCR was the shelter program. This program sought to identify one-third of all returnees per year who were the most vulnerable and to provide them with the materials to build their own houses. Between 2002 and 2010 UNHCR built more than 100,000 houses in Burundi. This shelter program was for returnees who had received land in their communities. For returnees who were landless an initiative called the Rural Integrated Villages were initiated.

Burundi's Rural Integrated Villages (VRIs) initiative

One of the solutions for the reintegration challenges as proposed by Burundi's National Strategy for Socio-Economic Reintegration is the accommodation of landless returnees and other vulnerable people in Burundi's Rural Integrated Villages (VRIs). VRIs, designed by the Burundian government and UN agencies, were to provide a solution for the large population of landless returnees, which are mainly the 1972 refugees.

The strategy of the VRIs is described in the *Programme de Villagisation dans le Cadre du Rapatriement et de la Réintégration au Burundi*, which was published by the Ad Hoc Integrated Commission on Repatriation and Reintegration of the Burundian government in 2008. The strategy of the VRIs is based on two objectives: 1) the short-term objective of reintegration of landless displaced people in Burundi, and 2) the long-term objective of

populating less populated areas and to encourage development in rural areas around the villages, which will enhance access to resources of land and infrastructure for all Burundians.

There are currently 9 VRIs distributed over the three southern provinces Makamba, Rutana and Bururi. The VRIs were built using an inter-agency approach, which included the Burundian government, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, and FAO. UNHCR is responsible for shelter and sanitation, UNICEF provides water, UNDP focuses on infrastructure and social cohesion, and FAO provides support for agricultural development. The Burundian government would provide the land for the VRIs.

The design of the VRIs is based on an integrated approach to assistance for vulnerable populations and therefore focuses not only on returnees: the village population consists of eighty percent returnees and twenty percent residents. Residents are households from the area that are considered vulnerable as well. This way the VRIs are not only a tool to accommodate the landless returnees, but also to foster coexistence between the returnees and residents and to stimulate development in general. On average each VRIs hosts around 250 households.

The opinions on the VRIs of the different actors are mixed. Some respondents called the VRIs an outright 'failure' and a 'disaster' due to the high levels of poverty, the shortage of land and the cooperation problems between different implementers. Others stressed that the VRIs have been successful in providing the returnees with 'protection', 'shelter' and other basic needs and that even though it is a work in progress there is no clear alternative.

Without accurate statistics it is not possible at this time to ascertain if the VRIs experience higher instances of poverty or are on par with the rest of the country. Even though the VRIs have provided a short-term solution for the landless returnees in terms of accommodation, the long-term sustainability of the VRIs has to be carefully evaluated in order to draw lessons for future situations of refugee return.

Challenges for long-term reintegration in Burundi

For those returnees who have been able to receive land and settle into their communities there are some lingering reintegration challenges. More than half a million people returned to a country with an estimated population of 8.9 million in a time-span of around 10 years. Some communities in the provinces of Makamba, Ruyigi and Muyinga that received the highest shares of returnees currently face a 50/50 distribution of stayees versus returnees. Reintegration has been influenced by both structural and individual factors of the returnees, which will be discussed in detail in this section.

Structural factors

As stated previously in this paper structural factors that affect reintegration include the policies of the local government, attitudes of the host community, and the conditions of the return. The following four structural factors will be addressed for the Burundi case: land, institutional capacity and insecurity, the attitudes of the host community/social cohesion, and poverty and unemployment. In general, key stakeholders stressed that structural factors have been more inhibiting to reintegration than individual factors in Burundi.

Land

There was consensus amongst all interviewees (stakeholders, returnees and stayees) that land is the most critical issue in Burundi. There is a profound lack of resources, mainly in terms of land, which leads to widespread poverty, especially in the rural areas. These are challenges that are not only faced by the returnees but by the Burundian population as a whole. The provinces that received most returnees have seen an exacerbation of these structural problems for all community members due to return migration.

It is important to note that land is not only critical to livelihoods, but also has important cultural and identity-giving value (Bunte & Monnier, 2011). Land is passed down in Burundi from father to son and this has great traditional importance. For these reasons returnees are not willing to have any piece of land; they feel entitled to their ancestor's land. In the opinions of some returnees in our sample, the locals should move: "They should find lands for residents and let us get back our lands where our ancestors have been buried".

A key aspect of the land problem is the issue of expectations. Returnees were expecting to receive their ancestral land upon return, whereas stayees were expecting that returnees would be accommodated on government land. The government made promises to both groups stating that they would be compensated for their land in the event of land losses.

These promises and expectations were critical in returnees' decisions to return to Burundi and not to naturalize in Tanzania. It is evident that the promises made by the government have not materialized. Neither group was therefore anticipating the eventual solution of land sharing.

In order to resolve land claims and disputes the government of Burundi's official position is that returnees and stayees should share land. There are four stakeholders involved in the process of land sharing. The first is the local administration, which includes the *chef de colline* - elected local government representative - and/or the *Bashingantahe*.

The *Bashingantahe* are the traditional elders whose role is to settle the conflicts between people in the community. They generally adopt the position of the government and encourage locals and returnees to share the land. In the event that they cannot resolve the issues they refer the dispute to the Commission Terres et Autres Biens (CNTB) or a third party mediating NGO.

The CNTB was established in 2006 to adhere to the Arusha Agreement that stated that "all refugees and/or *sinistrés* must be able to recover their property, especially their land" (Protocol IV, Chapter 1, Article 8, p. 80). The CNTB was issued to deal with land and other property related conflicts in Burundi through mediation. In the event that the dispute is settled, the different parties can sign a document that is intended to be legally binding. If the conflict is not settled the parties can go to the national court of Burundi. Around 70 percent of the cases that the CNTB handles now are conflicts with former refugees. Around 80 percent of the conflicts are regarding land.

The third group consists of mediating NGOs such as the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the Burundi Women Lawyers Organization (AFJB) (Theron, 2008). ACCORD has a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CNTB to assist capacity building of the CNTB and the MoU allows for the conflicts mediated by ACCORD to be formalized by the CNTB.

The mediation process provides a voluntary process that takes place in people's communities. ACCORD acknowledges facing capacity issues to meet the demand for their services and also struggles with limited resources. The NRC disengaged from Burundi in November 2011, but ACCORD and AFJB are still active.

The final institution involved in land disputes is the judicial system in Burundi. If someone is not satisfied with the other land dispute mechanisms he or she can take the case to the lower court, or refute a decision in the higher court (Theron, 2008). The justice process is lengthy and expensive, costing US \$2 for an appeal to the lower court and US \$4 for an appeal to the higher court (ibid.). The appeals need to be made in Bujumbura so someone coming from a rural area has to travel to the city.

The key issue for 1972 returnees is that in the court of law they do not have rights to the land as they have been outside of the country for over 30 years and will thus generally lose the court case. The 1986 Land Code of Burundi states, "irrespective of conditions under which the land was taken, occupiers of land and property for 30 years or more were entitled to legal ownership" (Bunte & Monnier, 2011). A new land code is now under construction in Burundi, and is likely to exempt the 1972 returnees from the 30-year rule. The results of this change are to be observed.

The multiple actors involved in land disputes have made the process more convoluted, and a key challenge is the lack of power given to the CNTB. The CNTB does not have the mandate to allocate new land and its decision is not legally binding. Disputes can be taken to the national court after the CNTB decision and then overturned. This has resulted in the situation wherein a returnee and local take a CNTB decision, the returnee establishes his new life on the shared land, and then the decision is overturned by the courts and the returnee is forced from the land and house that he has just built.

The head of the CNTB acknowledges this issue in Burundi between the CNTB and high Court (CNTB Press Release, 16 September, 2011). It is further expressed in the words of one returnee: "The government should control CNTB as they promised, and if not it is creating conflicts between residents and repatriates". The lack of enforcement of CNTB decisions is an ongoing source of conflict between returnees and locals.

The greatest current challenge is that those who have shared land no longer have sufficient land to maintain their livelihoods. One stayee stated: "When the administration has told us that they are coming, we accepted but the plot became insufficient, we need support". According to our key stakeholders the issue of land shortage should be part of a long-term development plan of Burundi and clear policies should be put in place that focus on sustainable solutions.

Institutional capacity and insecurity

Lack of institutional capacity and insecurity are two additional structural factors that impact long-term reintegration in Burundi. The capacity of different institutions, particularly those working on land issues (as mentioned above) and legal matters is currently insufficient. Issues such as bureaucracy and corruption came up frequently and many respondents mentioned that land conflicts often take a long time to be resolved.

Low institutional capacity was also mentioned with respect to the schooling system, which is not well equipped to absorb the additional students, and the healthcare system. According to some of our interviewees low institutional capacity is related to government ownership. Several respondents feel that the Burundian government lacks ownership of the reintegration process and all the structural challenges that influence it.

In addition, stakeholders often mentioned the security situation as a key challenge to Burundi's future. Although the security situation currently appears positive, it is not stable. One stakeholder described it as a 'tipping point' where at any time the situation in Burundi could switch to insecurity. In the event of a decrease in security, refugee flows to Tanzania may be reignited, thus halting the reintegration process.

Attitudes of the host community and social cohesion

Another critical structural factor for reintegration is the reception of returnees by the local community. Locals in our research provided a mix of receptions to returnees. Some were welcoming and willing to share the land. One returnee described her situation as follows:

For me, I've been received by my neighbour who was a good friend before I went to Tanzania and he supported me for 4 months. After the following 3 months, I got the plot of land but until now there are people who have not yet received their plot of land. Some of them after a long time of patience they have decided to get it by force and have been seriously bitten [hurt] and finally they received a plot of 20 or 50m. But because it is small plot, the cases are in higher court.

This statement highlights the importance of networks as will be discussed further below. Conversely, many returnees in our sample had received a negative reception from the locals. One returnee stated:

My resident received me with a cutter to kill me. Our sharing was very difficult and I got a smaller land...There are some who died being shot at, others were poisoned and others were thrown grenades at.

There was a strong feeling amongst the returnees that they are not accepted by the locals. One man described this as follows: "We are smelling bad to them. In parties, we are isolated and get fewer drinks than others". Another returnee stated: "They insult us; we are ill-treated by the residents. There are some who told us that we shouldn't forget the way we took from Tanzania". This was also expressed in terms of social events:

There is no good relationship; the resident at the bar cannot share with us a bottle of beer. If someone does not visit you when you're sick, and cannot support you when you're in need, we realize that there is no good relationship.

At the same time, some returnees were more forthright to express that the relations between returnees and locals were superficial: "We will never get in good terms with those who unjustly took our lands. Even when we are talking it is only hypocrisy". It was recognized by

both returnees and locals that as soon as a land dispute arises all previous cordiality between community members evaporates. One local stated:

The relations are good but the poverty is dividing us. Our plot of land can't produce enough. When someone is hungry and another one is sufficiently eating, when someone has a good house and another not, when children have no food? How can relationships be good between these people?

Furthermore locals expressed that they felt that returnees received preferential treatment. Returnees were for example supported by UNHCR in the housing project to receive the materials to construct a new house. These houses are made of bricks and have windows and wood doors. This has led to resentment from stayees who have grass houses and cannot afford a brick house. One resident stated:

They've received many items and other items are coming. Organizations say that they only support repatriates and tell others to wait. When they bring iron, it is received by repatriates and the vulnerable only. How do they identify vulnerable? Persons who live for many years in a house coved by grasses are not vulnerable?

Although the returnees have a good house they are suffering from chronic hunger due to a lack of land. The fundamental issues hindering social cohesion are therefore land and poverty. In the communities the returnees and locals are crucially divided over the issue of who has rights to land. Even in cases where people have shared land, there is dissatisfaction amongst many who feel either unhappy with having been forced to share land, or who feel they are entitled to more land than they have been given. This fuels resentment between the groups.

Poverty and unemployment

The issues of poverty and unemployment are linked to problems of population density and land shortage. According to the 2011 Human Development Index, Burundi is the third lowest rated country in the world (UNDP, 2011). Return to conditions of such poverty creates many reintegration challenges for reintegration. The scarcity of resources and direness of the situation is what fuels the land disputes and conflicts. The sharing of land has also increased poverty. One stayee stated:

People faced many challenges; hunger, disease, and it is not easy to get money to pay for health care. Before a person could sell the crops and get money but now it is no longer possible. The poverty is very serious.

The further difficulty is that there are no viable alternatives to agriculture in Burundi. Unemployment rates are high and it is difficult for educated individuals to receive employment. Returnees are frustrated that there are no jobs for those who have completed their education. Both returnees and stayees stressed that there needs to be further opportunities for employment and livelihoods in Burundi.

Individual factors

The fact that individual characteristics affect the reintegration processes of returnees is visible in Burundi when comparing the reintegration challenges of the 1972 and 1993 returnees. The focus of this section is on the reintegration challenges of the 1972 returnees, whom stakeholders agreed have experienced more reintegration challenges.

At the time the official repatriation from Tanzania started the inhabitants of the Old Settlements had been living in Tanzania for 30 years or longer. They were mostly farmers, integrated into the local economy; their children were educated at Tanzanian schools and their social networks were embedded into their host country communities. Many were even second-generation refugees – born and raised in the Old Settlements– with little or no attachment to Burundi. This section will further discuss the individual characteristics of language, education and social networks, which were highlighted during the different interviews.

Language

The primary languages in Tanzania are English and Swahili, versus French and Kirundi in Burundi. The issue of language has affected not only children, but also young adults who were educated in English and Swahili in Tanzania. The challenge of language makes it difficult for people to communicate with locals, and nearly impossible for them to find jobs. For students, language has been a large challenge as well. UNHCR worked with the implementing partner Refugee Education Trust (RET) to provide short-term language training to returning students so that they would be able to learn in Kirundi in local schools.

Initially the program provided two months of language training, but it was recognized that this was insufficient and the training was extended to six months. As of May 2011, RET “has been able to support a total of 92 schools, impacting over 60,000 students directly, and over 300,000 other beneficiaries indirectly through language and teacher training” (Parliament UK, 2011). An evaluation of the program will be conducted in 2012. According to teachers in one of the communities the students have improved their language capacities.

However, according to some stakeholders, many children have dropped out of school because of the language challenges, which is a cause for concern. It is interesting to note that in an effort to accommodate the returnees the government of Burundi added Swahili and English to the official curriculum. This has been a challenge for teachers as they only have one week of education in Swahili. However, there has been an effort by the government to mend the language issue by also teaching the local population.

Education

In addition to the challenge of language, the level of education that was taught in Burundi during the war was at a lower level than the education taught in Tanzania. In addition, the school systems differ. The students who were educated in Tanzania are generally at a higher level than the local children, but are placed in classes according to age. The returnees are often further ahead in the curriculum than the local students.

The teachers that participated in focus groups stated both positives and negatives from this. On the one hand: “The repatriated children are encouraging [the local] children to study well. Their work is wonderful even if they have a cultural problem. They are more intelligent than residents”. On the other hand: “In Tanzania education is well treated and there is no problem of school materials but here it is not the same, so even if they are intelligent, they are declining”. Returnees encourage the education of their peers, but their state of knowledge is declining. Overall, teachers felt that returnee children and local children did get along well in school.

Education was also a key concern of both locals and returnees. Both groups felt that the quality of education offered to children needed to be improved. Another problem of education is that due to poverty parents cannot afford to buy uniforms and schoolbooks, and that children frequently go to school hungry and have a hard time concentrating.

Recently, however, the minister of education has sent out a formal statement that students should not be refused because they have no uniform. Education is now primarily a development issue in Burundi. Although there were great initial language challenges, these have alleviated over time as students integrate further.

Networks and access to services

Social networks can be an asset in the reintegration process. As the 1972 returnees were abroad for over thirty years they often did not return to a social network in Burundi. A few of the older returnees still knew their neighbours from prior to their flight; however, the majority did not have any social connections.

Furthermore, the IS Academy survey in Burundi found that more than 75 percent of returnees did not have any contact with family or friends in Burundi while they were abroad. Returnees have also found that legal reintegration is challenging due to their lack of social networks within the legal system. One returnee stated:

There is a great difference between a resident and a repatriate. Residents know the judges, and we undergo injustice but we can't change anything. This makes us suspect one another because they do not respect us.

This concern was also expressed with respect to the *chef de colline*, whom some returnees felt favoured the locals and did not offer support to the returnees. Overall, there was consensus amongst returnees that they were not supported in institutions, including schools, communities and courts. This was primarily attributed to having been abroad for so long and not having social networks within these institutions.

Conclusion

Burundi has absorbed over 500,000 returnees in the last decades, which stakeholders agree is an immense achievement. The logistics of coordinating such large groups of repatriates alone is a difficult task and overall the process ensured return in safety and dignity. As one of the largest repatriation efforts in recent memory it is important to critically examine the process and assess the lessons learned.

Lessons Learned

One of the greatest lessons learned from the Burundi repatriations is the importance of access to correct information. Much of the current conflict between returnees and locals at the community level is due to false promises made to each group. The government promised returnees that they would receive their land and be compensated for any land that could not be reinstated, as was stated in the Arusha Agreement.

This information was a critical factor in returnees' decisions to return to Burundi versus naturalizing in Tanzania. Locals, on the other hand, were told that they would also be compensated for any land redistributed to returnees. In a country that is already overpopulated and experiencing land scarcity it is evident that neither of these promises were feasible.

When the repatriations began, locals also had no information that returnees were coming. It is a question as to how they could have been better informed considering the remoteness of communities and that most people do not own a radio. When returnees arrived, locals were not prepared and as these individuals were generally strangers to each other, many locals felt threatened, thus not wanting to accommodate returnees.

Both parties were then informed that they were to share the land, juxtaposing the previous information they had received, and disputes, mainly concerning land, began. Some people accepted to share easily, others accepted to share over time, and some refused. This situation could have been facilitated with better information sharing that would have potentially led to less land disputes and more equitable sharing of land in certain situations.

A second key lesson from Burundi in regards to land is the lack of coordination from the government on land issues and the complexity of too many actors involved in the land issues with limited capacity and power. The CNTB has struggled to complete its tasks in the field and currently faces a lack of credibility due to the courts overturning CNTB rulings. The fact that CNTB decisions can be overturned places 1972 returnees in a situation of risk if more locals decide to go to court to revert the CNTB land sharing arrangements.

In a comprehensive review of Burundi's land situation Bunte and Monnier (2011) stress that Burundi needs to establish a comprehensive land action plan that establishes a functioning and up-to-date land register, clearly defines an approach to the distribution of land titles and establishes fair processes for dispute resolution and appeals. The 1986 Land Act, which is currently under review, will probably be modified to clarify the 30-year law. From the perspective of this research the government should enforce the decisions of the CNTB irrespective of the 30-year land law to ensure that returnees can maintain the land they have received and are not at risk of being displaced again.

A final key learning from Burundi is that an integrated approach is essential to create communities for returnees. However, the success of the VRIs must be questioned, as discussed previously in this paper. The pressing question at this time is to ask: what could have been done differently? In a country with such scarce land, where else could people have been placed?

Currently UNHCR is grappling with this question as there remain 1972 returnees who have yet to find a home and there are 37,000 people in Tanzania to be returned. UNHCR does not

plan to continue with the VRI approach and is exploring options for local governments to take more accountability in providing the landless with plots in their communities. The key question with this approach is how to ensure that local communities are motivated to equitably share land with returnees.

The other option is that returnees can buy land with the cash grant that they receive. However, a large influx of demand on the market for land may inflate prices meaning that the cash grant will not provide enough funds for a sustainable piece of land. These issues are critical to resolving people's livelihoods and solutions are extremely complex. Further research is needed to understand how to best support the landless in an agrarian society with scarce resources, as was the case in Burundi.

Reintegration of the 1972 returnees: from humanitarian aid to development?

There is consensus amongst stakeholders that the 1972 cohort of returnees has faced the greatest challenges in reintegration. For this reason, the 1972 returnees were the focus of this report. The research has demonstrated that three years after returning, the 1972 returnees in our sample continue to face challenges in Burundi. There is a question, however, as to whose responsibility it is now to assist in these challenges.

In terms of humanitarian aid it can be argued that aid has been successfully delivered to the 1972 returnees. UNHCR provided for their return in safety and dignity. They were provided shelter and assistance in their initial return and with time the majority have found land and a home or were accommodated in the VRIs. The shelter programme from UNHCR provided homes for one-third of returnee households overall, and many now have strong brick homes.

The concern, however, is that the nutritional needs of returnees are insufficiently met. Although the quality of their housing is better than the housing of many locals (which also fuels resentment), their children do not have enough to eat. For the most part this is due to insufficient land. Although many locals shared their land with returnees they did not necessarily share half of their land. Therefore, in some communities returnees have less land than locals and it is not enough to produce required amounts of food.

This is a significant problem for establishing social cohesion in the communities. There is a question however as to whose problem this is. It is not a humanitarian aid issue as the levels of malnutrition are not high enough to signify a humanitarian emergency. It is also not the job of UNHCR who has completed its mandate of return in safety and dignity. Is it the role of the Burundian government? If so, what is reasonable to expect from the Burundi government, as it is a new structure establishing its capacity?

In addition to these challenges of economic reintegration and managing structural factors, individual factors of the 1972 returnees have hindered their social and cultural reintegration. In Tanzania, the refugees spoke English and Swahili, and the children were able to attend higher quality schools. The challenges of language still persist after three years in Burundi, although it is recognized that they are improving. Education also continues to be a challenge as students from Tanzania are placed in lower quality classrooms.

Overall, however, the issue of greatest concern is community social cohesion and poverty. The research indicates that social cohesion in the communities in our sample is low, which is

an issue of great concern in a 'post-conflict' environment. Returnees and locals appear to maintain superficial relationships and substantive support is only provided from members of one's own group. The fundamental issue that divides the groups is poverty and land.

This relates to a consensus from stakeholders that Burundi needs to enter its developmental phase. The shift from humanitarian aid to developmental assistance is currently underway in Burundi, with different actors having a mixture of opinions on this issue. For instance, the decision of NRC to withdraw from Burundi has been heavily criticized by some, but simultaneously other stakeholders recognize that as long as Burundi survives on humanitarian aid, the country will not take responsibility for itself.

NRC is a humanitarian agency and it can be argued that humanitarian aid has been successfully delivered and a new era of development needs to begin. The challenge for Burundi, however, is that there are few opportunities for development. The country has few resources, industry potentials and opportunities. This places the entire country in a situation of risk as the current poverty levels are unsustainable. This also raises questions as to if returnees are more vulnerable than locals in terms of long-term reintegration. This is a question that needs to be explored by further research as well.

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Appendix I: Tables

Table 1: Focus group discussions in Makamba province

| Colline | Number of households per colline | Number of returnee households per colline | Perc. of returnee households per colline | Number of focus groups conducted per colline | Number of in-depth interviews conducted per colline |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Colline 1 | 478 | 137 | 29 | 4 | 2 |
| Colline 2 | 585 | 206 | 35 | 4 | 2 |
| Total | 1063 | 343 | M = 32 | 8 | 4 |

Table 2: Key characteristics of civil conflict in Burundi

| Characteristic | 1965 | 1972 | 1988 | 1991 | 1993 |
|---|-----------|------|----------------|------------------------------|------|
| Duration (months) | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 108 |
| Casualties (thousands) | 5 | 200 | 15 | 1 - 3 | 300 |
| International refugees (thousands) | 0 | 300 | 50 | 38 | 687 |
| Ratio of casualties plus refugees over total population (percent) | 0.2 | 14.0 | 1.3 | 0.7 | 17.1 |
| Years from previous conflict | - | 6 | 16 | 3 | 2 |
| Provinces affected | Muram-vya | All | Ngozi, Kirundo | Cibitoke, Bubanza, Bujumbura | All |

Source: Ngaruku & Nkurunziza, 2005

Table 3: Refugees and asylum seekers from Burundi by country of exile: 1993 - 2002

| Country* | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Tanzania | 444,867 | 202,738 | 227,216 | 385,452 | 459,420 | 473,768 | 498,982 | 538,448 | 521,180 | 540,861 |
| DRC | 176,351 | 180,098 | 117,902 | 30,226 | 47,004 | 20,000 | 19,200 | 19,760 | 19,485 | 19,374 |
| South Africa | - | - | - | - | 389 | 601 | 604 | 632 | 1,439 | 1,715 |
| Zambia | - | - | 260 | 330 | 1,746 | 1,474 | 1,629 | 1,796 | 2,417 | 1,583 |
| Rwanda | 250,000 | 6,000 | 3,228 | 9,611 | 6,933 | 1,408 | 1,371 | 957 | 1,670 | 1,554 |
| Other | 164 | 870 | 1,976 | 3,061 | 3,631 | 5,317 | 5,663 | 6,491 | 7,808 | 9,384 |
| Total | 871,382 | 389,706 | 350,582 | 428,680 | 519,123 | 502,568 | 527,449 | 568,084 | 553,999 | 574,471 |

Note. * UNHCR estimates for most industrialized countries

Source: UNHCR, 2002a

Table 4: Repatriation to Burundi by country of exile: 2002 – 2011

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 ^a | Total ^a |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Tanzania | 50,899 | 79,925 | 89,039 | 62,338 | 42,765 | 39,506 | 94,891 | 29,115 | 1,011 | 281 | 489,770 |
| Rwanda | 113 | 106 | 151 | 4,489 | 615 | 111 | 36 | 2,342 | 1 | 4 | 7,968 |
| RDC | 2,142 | 2,142 | 879 | 1,002 | 1,284 | 45 | 6 | 95 | 3,640 | 3,408 | 14,643 |
| Kenya | 78 | 50 | 62 | 23 | 78 | 16 | 6 | 1 | - | 12 | 326 |
| Mozambique | - | 2 | 16 | 17 | 4 | - | 32 | 13 | - | - | 84 |
| South Africa | 16 | 13 | 22 | 58 | 25 | 29 | 47 | 21 | 9 | 13 | 253 |
| Benin | 3 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 64 |
| China | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | 1 |
| Cameroun | - | 12 | 37 | 33 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 8 | - | 6 | 122 |
| Malawi | - | 1 | 1 | 35 | 34 | - | 25 | 154 | 64 | 15 | 329 |
| Uganda | 4 | 1 | 12 | 17 | 18 | - | - | - | 4 | - | 56 |
| Namibia | 9 | 1 | 16 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 17 | 47 |
| Zambia | 9 | 67 | 29 | 32 | 28 | 59 | 16 | 17 | 12 | 10 | 279 |
| Zimbabwe | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | - | - | 4 |
| East African Republic | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | - | - | 3 |
| Congo Braz. | - | 18 | 8 | 20 | 16 | - | - | 2 | - | - | 64 |
| Ivory Coast | 6 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 5 | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 38 |
| Madagascar | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Other | 4 | 17 | 37 | 22 | 23 | 10 | - | - | - | 1 | 114 |
| Total | 53,283 | 82,366 | 90,327 | 68,108 | 44,915 | 39,798 | 95,068 | 31,779 | 4,752 | 3,770 | 514,166 |

Note. ^a Numbers as of September 2011

Source: UNHCR, 2011

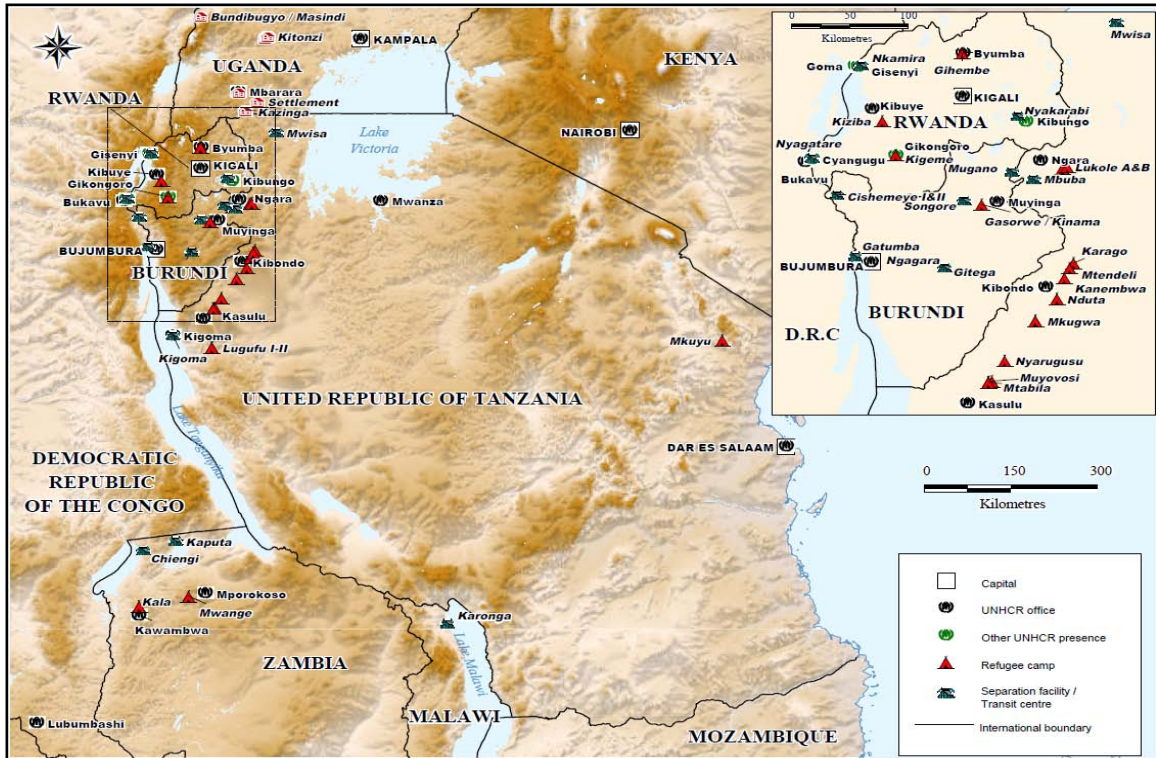
Table 5: Assistance for Burundi returnees

| Refugee group | Year | UNHCR | FAO | UNICEF | WFP | Government |
|--|----------------|---|-------|-------------------|---------------------------|--|
| 1993 cohort of returnees from Tanzania – camp returnees | 2002 | NFI Package* | Seeds | Educational items | 3 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| | 2007 | NFI Package* and cash grant** | Seeds | Educational items | 4 or 6 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| | 2008-current | NFI Package* and cash grant** | Seeds | Educational items | 6 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| 1993 cohort of returnees from Tanzania – spontaneous returnees | 2002 | NFI Package* | Seeds | Educational items | 3 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| | 2005 - current | NFI Package* | Seeds | Educational items | 6 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| 1972 cohort of returnees from Tanzania – Old Settlements returnees | 2008 | Transport-only package**** and limited cash grant** | Seeds | Educational items | 6 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |
| | 2009 | NFI Package* and cash grant** | Seeds | Educational items | 6 Months food ration | Free education and health care for 2 years |

Source: Haver, Hatungimana & Tennant (2009).

Note. * Non-Food-Items (NFI) Package consisted of non-food items including blankets, sleeping mats, fabric for women to use as clothing, soap, plastic sheeting, jerry cans, buckets, a kitchen set, mosquito nets, tools and sanitary materials for women. ** 50,000 BIF per person or 250,000 BIF for a family of five. 50,000 BIF is equal to around 40 US Dollars. *** Also agreed that 1972 cohort returnees were able to bring 100kg of goods upon return as opposed to the normal 50kg of goods.

Map 2: UNHCR in Tanzania: 2003



Source: UNHCR, 2003