

# **Voices of Youth in Post-conflict Burundi: Perspectives on Exclusion, Gender and Conflict**

Post Conflict and Social Development Unit  
Sub-Saharan Africa



## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CNCA	National Commission for Aid Coordination
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGA	Income Generating Activities
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NYP	National Youth Policy
PBF	Peace Building Fund
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
QUIBB	Questionnaire des Indicateurs de Base du Bien Etre
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WDI	World Development Indicators
WDR	World Development Report
YED	Youth Development Enterprise

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## Preface

Understanding male gender issues has taken on increased urgency. More and more news reports portray young men as the main perpetrators of civil unrest in areas of the world as varied as Kenya and Gaza. Until recently, most gender work understandably focused on rectifying the numerous disadvantages faced by women. But increased concern over global security and the role that young men may play in contributing to insecurity is bringing men's issues in development to the fore.

Based on qualitative data, this report examines the situation of youth in post-conflict Burundi today – with a focus on young men. Focused on capturing the 'voices of youth', it attempts to gain insights on the influence of gender norms and expectations in the lives of young Burundians, with the objective of identifying if these may contribute to men's increased frustration and violence. By better understanding these issues, the research hopes to provide insight on how to prevent future conflict as well as how to make youth more productive citizens in Burundi. Given that Burundi has just developed its National Youth Policy in 2008, findings from the research may also serve as an input into the application of the policy and future programming.

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# Executive Summary

## INTRODUCTION

This report examines youth in post-conflict Burundi. The research responds to the nascent but growing body of knowledge on conflict, young men and gender. War and violence have devastated societies and economies throughout Africa with young men being the main perpetrators of this violence. Emerging research has linked young men's involvement in conflict and violence to rigid and binding gender roles in society, which poor young men are unable to fulfill, often leaving them frustrated, humiliated, trapped and vulnerable to influence and exploitation. This research attempts to contribute to this body of knowledge. It looks at youth – and young men in particular – in two countries emerging from years of ethnic conflict, with a view to identifying if gender norms may increase the risk of renewed conflict.

Specific objectives of the research in Burundi were to examine how poor and excluded youth are faring and coping in the country's post-conflict environment; how gender dynamics are playing out in Burundian society and how these may contribute to increased risk of renewed conflict; and what the implications of findings are in terms of future policy and programming. The study takes a special look at youth ex-combatants who are in the process of being reintegrated back into their communities, given that this group has been a focus of a high profile demobilization and reintegration program in Burundi and given that ex-combatants are considered to represent a higher risk to renewed fighting.

Qualitative data collected in Burundi in 2006 forms the basis of the research. The methodology employed was focused on hearing the voices of youth themselves, along the lines of the now recognized approach of 'Voices of Poor'. Data collected captured information on: (1) the socio-economic status and social mobility of youth; (2) the views of youth on education and employment; (3) trends and views of youth on migration; (4) youth perspectives as they pertain to governance, citizenship, peace and conflict; and (5) gender norms and expectations.

In Burundi, the recent decade of civil conflict saw a generation of young people raised during a brutal war, with years of education lost, trauma and loss, whether these young people directly engaged in the conflict or not. This group represents a major portion of the population in Burundi, with 30 percent of Burundians falling within the Government's official definition 'youth', that is those individuals between the ages of 15 – 30 years. Young people constitute the future of Burundi; thus, understanding their current circumstances, their needs and constraints, and their views on peace and security could not only help to mitigate future conflict but also ensure that they become productive citizens in Burundi.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Despite the hardships, suffering and struggles associated with years of conflict and the post-conflict period that has followed, young people remain a positive force in Burundi. Concerns about large groups of 'angry young men' and the risks they may pose to renewed conflict would appear to be unfounded in Burundi today, at least among the general youth population; (although it must be noted that this conclusion does not relate to the overall likelihood of return to conflict in Burundi,

which is beyond the scope of this study, and the potential of small groups of youth returning to violence). Rather, young people, male and female, display remarkable levels of optimism, motivation, perseverance, and resilience– even in the face of adversity, obstacles and their history of conflict. Ex-combatants do not appear to pose a particular risk, perhaps with the exception of the self-demobilized who were not eligible for formal demobilization and reintegration benefits. A window of opportunity thus appears to present itself to take advantage of the energy, vitality and potential of young people, given in particular the overwhelming needs in post-conflict Burundi. A summary of specific findings of the research follows.

- **Conflict has had a devastating impact on Burundi – thus the context for youth development is tough.** In 1998, the incidence of poverty was estimated at 89 percent, more than twice as high as that of 1993. Burundi also has one of the lowest human development indicators in the world: according to the United Nations Human Development Index, Burundi ranks 167 out of 177 countries with life expectancy having declined from 50 years in 1990 to 45 years in 2005. Moreover, whilst political progress and economic reforms have produced visible results in some areas, GDP per capita has not recovered to pre-conflict levels and lags behind other low-income SSA countries. Burundi’s receding GDP has resulted in incomes per capita dropping from US\$200 in 1990 prior to the conflict to US\$106 in 2005. Levels of education, while having recovered to pre-war levels, remains extremely low, and health conditions remain dismal..
- **Youth, like all other Burundians, have suffered the consequences of years of conflict.** Levels of subjective poverty are particularly acute in areas disproportionately affected by the conflict and in rural areas where the agricultural sector has declined, and are less pronounced in urban areas among the migrant population. These dynamics are further influenced by factors unrelated to the conflict such as population growth, climatic change, soil fertility, and landlessness, which in turn impede poverty reduction. Rural youth generally perceive a stronger decline in their conditions than their urban counterparts. Urban youth, especially migrants, perceive a relative improvement in their situation compared with that of the previous generation, regardless of economic category.
- **Young people cite three main options for coping and ameliorating their lives.** **Education** is at the center of family survival strategies and individual socio-economic mobility, across all socio-economic groups and gender. The economic benefits of education are widely considered to occur after having received a certificate and to be of little value prior to this point. **Demand for vocational training** is a second strategy, although it is in short supply in Burundi. This priority reflects a response to the diminishing opportunities in the agricultural sector and is compounded by a widespread recognition of the limited scope for completing secondary education. Finally, **urban migration** – particularly for male youth – is a key strategy for enhancing educational, employment and marriage prospects. That said, there is social resistance to migration in rural areas, which is symbolic of a desire to preserve the deeply entrenched values and attachment to the land.
- **Not surprisingly, employment emerged as a key priority and also a major constraint among youth.** Regardless of strategies employed or opportunities available, the majority of urban and rural youth ultimately face barriers to securing a sustainable livelihood, regardless of their economic category. Youth’s aspirations are consistently linked to securing a job and

establishing a livelihood. Employment is therefore crucial in an environment where the labor market is characterized by mounting demographic pressure, excessive dependence on the declining agricultural sector, an unskilled labor force, lack of job training, and a poorly controlled informal sector.

- **But despite having endured a decade of conflict and now facing day-to-day challenges and struggles for survival, youth display a sense of optimism and perseverance.** Perseverance emerges as the most important personal value across gender and socio-economic category. Burundians consider survival and progress in profoundly individualistic and capitalist terms. Themes of hard work, good planning, foresight, innovation and dynamism resonate from the voices of youth. Indeed, personal character is perceived to be a significant determinant of the socio-economic status and upward social mobility of youth alongside education, parental assets and marriage.
- **Youth also exhibit a strong sense of citizenship, which is an asset for reconstructing the country and facilitating reconciliation and good governance.** Youth expressed clear citizenship values, voicing concern and often anger over issues of governance, accountability and corruption. They expressed profound distrust of politicians and the state and demand to be respected, to be listened to and to be treated fairly and equitably. Youth also had strong views on combating corruption and clientelism. These issues were important to youth across socio-economic categories and educational levels, although more common in Bujumbura.
- **The socioeconomic reintegration of ex-combatants and former child soldiers has been positive overall.** Whilst education levels are low amongst former child soldiers, the difference with their civilian counterparts is not significant. Reintegration of these ex-child soldiers has been positive overall, with more than 90 percent of child soldiers live with their biological families. The social reintegration of ex-combatants (who went through adult programs but are within the youth category, i.e. 18-30 year olds) also appears to have been positive. Ex-combatants reported having been satisfied with reintegration schemes, as well as having been well treated by neighbors and families. Ex-combatants also displayed a strong *esprit de corps*. Both in the urban neighborhoods and the rural collines, ex-combatants know each other well and have strong social relations, which can be beneficial in terms of social capital. There were exceptions, however, including some urban-based ex-combatants and the self-demobilized who were not eligible for demobilization and reintegration benefits.
- **Traditional gender norms and expectations still govern young women's and men's behaviors, but these are adapting somewhat due to poverty and urbanization.** Burundians' lives are profoundly changing under the pressure of poverty and insecurity and amidst modernization and increasingly, urbanization. Against this change, a strong sense of tradition is still embedded within society – with young men expected to be the income earners and protectors of the family and women expected to be the caregivers. Youth in particular are forced to reconcile the old and the new. However, society appears to be shifting somewhat to accommodate this struggle. For example, girls and women are encouraged to study for as long as they can and marital roles within the household are shifting and becoming more flexible. Also, unofficial marriage is increasingly used as an alternative to the official marriage contract. While not a substitute to the traditional wedding requirements, unofficial marriage is perceived

as an intermediary step to buy time for young men to accumulate savings for a ceremony and other associated obligations.

→ **Targeted support for youth has been incipient – both from government and non-governmental organizations.** Burundi has thus far seen limited levels of governmental and non-government support for most poor youth, especially in urban areas and assistance targeted at vulnerable female youth. This is understandable given the competing needs of the population during a post-conflict period recovery and reconstruction period that followed a devastating war. The Government, however, is currently developing a National Youth Policy. The new policy is planned to revolve around ten key actions and recommendations, including three of the four priority areas identified by youth in this study: employment, education/vocational training and governance. Other actions are centered on strengthening the coordination of youth activities; incorporating all socio-economic categories of youth and gender aspects into public policies; creating a national center for young volunteers; and disseminating information related to the Pan-African Youth Movement. A noteworthy effort currently being put in place is the UN's Peace Building Fund (PBF) for Burundi, which has established a Youth Enterprise Development Fund.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report proposes an overall approach to youth development and recommends directions in terms of youth policy based on study findings. Given the focus on the 'voices of youth' rather than a comprehensive sectoral diagnostic, these recommendations are not definitive but rather set out directions for youth policy and programming in Burundi.

### Approach to Youth Development

In contemplating how best to both support and capitalize on the potential of young people, this study puts forward a three-pronged approach. *First*, youth represent a full third of the population, given the definition of youth as it stands today of 15 – 30. The conventional concept of 'youth' as being a "transitional period" does not hold and must be re-thought and nuanced for the Burundian context. A youth development approach needs to be differentiated to address different needs and priorities of adolescents, 'youth', and young adults. *Second*, given that youth in Burundi share many of the same constraints and limitations as adults and given the overwhelming needs of the country in this post-conflict phase, policy should be focused on mainstreaming youth within existing development and recovery support. However, targeted youth-specific programs may serve to facilitate the mainstreaming process and may be considered as a potential parallel medium-term measure. Criteria for tailored support should go beyond vulnerability to include, for example, unemployed skilled youth so as to harness existing youth potential. And, *third* community-based organizations, (particularly youth associations and faith-based organizations) as well as local governance mechanisms could be instrumental in empowering youth to exercise citizenship and should form the very foundation of interventions through decentralized community-driven initiatives.

With the above approach in mind and drawing on the 2007 World Development Report on Youth, recommendations are made in the following broad areas: (1) improving the quality and



relevance of education to improve learning for work and life, (2) helping youth find a livelihood, (3) helping young people form families, and (4) empowering youth to exercise citizenship. The MoY has a key role to play in the propagation of youth mainstreaming and programming across the sectors outlined below. It is recommended that the MoY consider the approach outlined in this study whilst developing the NYP and that Technical Assistance is provided to the MoY to ensure the completion and implementation of the Strategy. Furthermore, the GoB as well as the donor community should ensure integration of youth issues in sectoral coordination initiatives through the National Commission for Aid Coordination (CNCA).

### **→ *Learning for Work and Life: Improving the Quality and Relevance of Education***

The report highlights two main points. First, access, relevance and quality of education need to improve – not only to prepare young people for work but also to prepare them for other challenges of life. And second, caution needs to be exercised in the use of technical and vocational education (TVE), which was given priority by Burundians. The unit cost of TVE is expensive thus investments have to be balanced carefully with the resulting potential economic and social benefits. Non-formal education could be important for youth who have missed educational opportunities – including youth ex-combatants. Experience has shown such programs to be effective when equivalency programs are combined with other services in a comprehensive manner, in line with the approach of ‘second-chance’ programs.

### **→ *Helping youth find a livelihood***

Creating a livelihood and finding a job are central for youth to transition to adulthood and establish a family. And yet, limited work opportunities are likely to remain a reality for both youth and adults in the near future. Drawing on international and Africa-specific experience, this report makes the following recommendations: (1) provide support to formal and informal businesses to achieve higher productivity and growth; (2) enhance labor market opportunities for poor youth by opening pathways to jobs through public work schemes; and (3) improve skill profile for out-of-school poor youth through improvement of traditional apprenticeships.

### **→ *Helping young people form families***

One of the most significant stresses confronting youth is the pressure to marry and start a family, yet research has shown that many young men and women are not well prepared for taking these important life-altering steps. With this in mind, the report identifies two priorities. The first is to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services, which have the benefit of helping young people make informed decisions about timing and sequencing of children as well as reducing population growth and addressing HIV/AIDS issues. Ways to improve youth’s access to these health services include: (1) increasing culturally sensitive information on sexual and reproductive health; (2) providing sex-based education to *inter alia* prevent early childbearing; (3) increasing youth-friendly reproductive health services, and (4) strengthening linkages between adolescent sexual and reproductive health with HIV services. A second priority to assist youth in family formation is to teach them parenting and life skills. Skills can be transmitted in different settings, including schools as well as livelihood and employment training programs. But these must be careful to also target parents, teachers, caregivers and the community, who influence decisions taken by youth.

→ *Empowering youth to exercise citizenship*

Given the strong citizenship values demonstrated by young people in Burundi, a last important area of intervention is social accountability. Social accountability approaches are aimed at harnessing citizenship values among the population. They have been used to promote good governance and enhance democratic processes, improve public service delivery and more informed policy design, and empower poor people. Specific mechanisms and approaches include direct citizen participation in governance processes such as, for example, participatory policy and budget formulation; participatory budget review/analysis; participatory public expenditure/input tracking; and participatory performance monitoring and evaluation. These could be put in place specifically for youth or established more broadly in the population among citizens and citizen organizations but with an emphasis on youth.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 War and conflict have devastated societies and economies throughout Africa, including the Great Lakes Region. In Burundi, a civil war lasting from 1993-2005 was the result of political competition in a neo-patrimonial state under extreme pressure and long standing ethnic divisions between Hutu and the Tutsi ethnic groups. The conflict began following the first multiparty elections that brought a Hutu president to power, and was seen as formally ending with the swearing in of Pierre Nkurunziza in August of 2005. Over the 12 year period, 300,000-400,000 people were killed as a result of the conflict.

1.2 In most conflicts—and Burundi is no exception—young men have been the main active participants. Research in recent years has linked men’s violence and involvement in war and conflict to their inability to fulfill male expectations and roles in society, and their corollary sense of marginalization and entrapment. In Rwanda for example, writers and researchers have argued that during the civil war years (1990-94) young men’s sense of frustration and hopelessness, felt as a result of their low economic status, provided the organizers of the genocide with opportunities to entice and coerce tens of thousands of male youth into becoming the so-called “foot soldiers of the genocide” (Mamdani 2001).<sup>1</sup> Research in other parts of Africa has pointed to similar links between gender and conflict. In Liberia and Sierra Leone, young men were exploited for their labor by traditional chiefs and customary law, and as a consequence were unable to marry and transition from youth to adulthood and ‘become a man’; this led to their extreme marginalization (Richards, 2006). These young men were attracted to war through the promise of being able to marry, which would otherwise been out of reach (ibid.). In Kenya, the decline of male livelihoods in rural areas has led to changing gender roles and reduced opportunities for male youth, which has fueled intergenerational and gender conflict (Amuyunza-Nyamongo and Francis 2007), and probably contributed to the recent social violence. Indeed, unrest in places as diverse as Kenya and Gaza has been attributed to quick population growth and the rising numbers of ‘angry young men’ who are frustrated because of the lack of jobs or prospects.<sup>2</sup>

1.3 Rigorous research on post-conflict programming is generally limited, whether it be from a development, security, or conflict resolution perspective. Gender and conflict research is therefore even more limited, and the little that does exist focuses almost exclusively on young women and takes into account the experience of young men in the aftermath of war. Similarly the handful of studies which look at the experiences of ex-combatants are mostly concerned with ex-child soldiers, or female ex-combatants, and largely ignore young adult men. Moreover, the youth dimension is largely absent in child soldier programs even though most beneficiaries of these programs are in fact adolescents and not children by the time they go through the programs.

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<sup>1</sup> See also, for example, African Rights 1995, Des Forges 1999, Sommers 1995, 2006a, 2006b, and Uvin 1998.

<sup>2</sup> See “Young, Alive But Not Very Heaven”, the Economist, January 31, 2008. The article points out that the population of both Gaza and Kenya has grown about sixfold since 1960, well above the average for North Africa (3.6 times) and for Sub-Saharan Africa (4.3 times).

1.4 This report concerns youth in post-conflict Burundi. The study focuses on young men, with a view to understanding if these youth pose a risk to renewed conflict in these countries. Burundi has arrived at a crossroad. It has experienced, on the one hand, a long history of conflict, ethnic polarization and politicization, authoritarian rule, a decade of civil war, and growing impoverishment, and on the other hand, power sharing arrangements, democratic elections, peace agreements, demobilization, and an infusion of development aid. In between lies a generation of young people raised during a brutal war, with years of lost education, trauma, and loss. Some have fought, some have fled, some have stayed, but all have faced dramatically limited opportunities. These young adults who came of age during the war now represent the future of Burundi. But until now, there have been few if any systematic attempts to understand them. Given the research gap on youth and conflict, and Burundi's current experience as the recipient of large-scale DDR, development and conflict resolution programming, this research focusing on young people and conflict - and young men in particular - is timely.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1.5 The research had four objectives:

- (a) to understand how poor and excluded youth are coping in post-conflict Burundi with a view to determining if they pose a major risk to renewed fighting and conflict;
- (b) to examine how gender dynamics plays out in Burundi and how these contribute to increased risk of renewed conflict;
- (c) to identify policies and programs in place to support poor youth; and
- (d) to identify the implications of findings in terms of policy and programming recommendations.

The study looks at both ex-combatants and non ex-combatants with a view to understanding if ex-combatants pose a particular risk to renewed conflict.

### **APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

This study is based on the following data sources: a literature review on youth in post-conflict settings, in-depth qualitative interviews carried out in Burundi for this study and a review of ongoing youth programs and youth policies in Burundi. Consultations with the Government of Burundi and other stakeholders (including the donor community) were carried out to ensure the relevance of the study within the Burundian context. Upon completion of the study, results and recommendations were disseminated in-country to obtain feedback and further inputs for recommendations. Consultations were held across relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoY), the National Youth Council, the Peace Building Fund, the National Commission for Aid Coordination (CNCA), the National Commission for the Fight Against HIV/AIDS (CNLS), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Solidarity and Human Rights, the Ministry of External Affairs, the city council of Bujumbura, and the World Bank community and Social Development Project. Additionally, two workshops were held to collect feedback from donors and UN agencies, national and international NGOs as well as local youth associations. Feedback and recommendations from these final consultations have been incorporated into the study.

1.6 The study's qualitative data, which is the main source of information for this study has a strong focus on capturing the 'Voices of Youth', following on this established methodology in the 'Voices of the Poor' (Narayan et al 2000).<sup>3</sup> Data were collected in 2006 and included 376 in-depth interviews with the following characteristics:

- A sample was designed to focus on the perspectives of marginal youth, within which four broad types of categories were identified: (a) internally displaced people (IDPs), repatriated refugees and households that did not relocate as a result of the conflict, (b) rural and urban dwellers, (c) ex-combatants and non-ex-combatants, and (d) economic categories ranging from the indigent to well-off (see Annex 1 for detailed research sample and Box 1.1. for a description of the challenges in categorizing interviewees). The research targeted almost half of the interviews with male youth, close to one quarter with female youth and one quarter with adults: the gender breakdown of youth was 180 males and 88 females. The rural/urban split was 210 from urban and 166 from rural areas.<sup>4</sup> The average age of youth interviewed was 22 years, with the average educational levels of all interviewees being 6<sup>th</sup> grade and half being unmarried. Two categories of people were over-sampled: child-soldiers and adult ex-combatants.
- The adults were selected as key non-youth informants and interviewed because of three principal reasons: they have significant experience with and knowledge of youth; they were in positions of authority whose approval and support was required to allow the research to proceed; and they had social power and influence on youth, as identified by youth themselves.
- Economic categories were established using a simple tool to rank households. In rural areas, number and type of animals, off-farm employment, whether they hire people to work for them, and the quality of house were used as proxies. In urban areas, household labor, quality of house, nature of work (salaried, informal but constant, informal and occasional), and regular mode of transportation were used as proxies. Each respondent was ranked accordingly from indigent to well-off.
- Based on the above categories, four locations were selected for the research: Busiga, Ruhororo, Nyanza-Lac and Bujumbura city. Ruhororo because it has the country's largest IDP camp, Nyanza-Lac because it has the highest number of returned refugees, and Busiga, given that was one of the calmest communes during the conflict, and consequently most households stayed home throughout the war. Bujumbura was chosen because it is urban; research was concentrated in Kamenge and Musaga, two poor

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<sup>3</sup> For Voices of the Poor, the World Bank collected the voices of more than 60,000 poor women and men from 60 countries in 2000, in an unprecedented effort to understand poverty from the perspective of the poor themselves. The research, which was participatory, chronicles the struggles and aspirations of poor people for a life of dignity.

<sup>4</sup> Although approximately 10 percent of the population lives in urban areas in Burundi, about half of youth interviewed for the study live in urban areas. Researching urban youth in Burundi remains new; no prior substantial research on Burundi's urban youth has been identified. Burundi has a high urbanization rate with an annual average of 6.4 percent compared with an average annual rate of 3.5 percent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

neighborhoods at the periphery of the city, almost entirely Hutu and Tutsi respectively. Within each of these locations, between two and three *collines*<sup>5</sup> were selected.<sup>6</sup>

- Interviews adopted an ‘interview guide’ approach in which ‘topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form, and sequence and wording of questions are decided by the interviewer in the course of the interview’ (Quinn Patton, 2002). Interviews were on average approximately two hours long, for the most part with individuals but also some focus groups.<sup>7</sup> The interview guide consisted of 21 questions, designed to explore respondents’ aspirations and perception of development, gender trends and perceptions, governance and the future, and particularly their own future (see Annex 2 for interview guide). Subjects that may be potentially traumatizing such as past violence and household conflict were specifically omitted from interviews.<sup>8</sup> The value of the research was adjudged not to justify the potential risk of re-traumatizing respondents, particularly given the lack of associated psychosocial support services in the country. This must be acknowledged as a potential limitation of the study given that no inferences can be made on the psychosocial health of youth and associated impacts.

## REPORT ORGANIZATION

1.7 The report is organized as follows. After this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the context for the study, and includes a definition of youth as well as a brief description of the country context and socioeconomic indicators for youth. Chapter 3 presents the main research findings on how youth are faring, how they see their prospects, and the challenges they face, including those related to meeting gender norms and other social institutions. Chapter 4 presents a description of the policy response and programs targeting youth, scanty as they may be. Lastly, Chapter 5 summarizes the study’s main findings and conclusions, and presents an overall approach for youth development as well as policy directions.

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<sup>5</sup> A *colline* is the lowest geographic marker for Burundians, consisting of about 150-300 households.

<sup>6</sup> A random sampling strategy was adopted which consisted of walking through the relevant areas adjusting routes according to local advice to fulfill the planned sample requirements. Between six and seven weeks were spent in each commune. Permission to work in the locations was sought from the governor in each province and then from the communal administrator. Once in the *colline* (or urban neighborhood) the *chef du colline* was consulted and interviewed first.

<sup>7</sup> Experience using focus groups within the first two weeks of research did not produce the depth of personal analysis sought and therefore individual interviews were used as an alternative, more effective approach.

### **Box 1.1: The Challenge of Carrying Out Research in Post-Conflict Settings**

The planned categorization of IDPs, refugees and those who had remained in their communities during the conflict proved difficult to apply with any degree of realism. For example, refugees are officially defined by the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees<sup>1</sup>, however, there are numerous international instruments<sup>1</sup> used to focus this broad definition, the application of which goes beyond the scope of this study. Within the context of this study the following scenario highlights the problems encountered.

One respondent left Bujumbura periodically when violence peaked. He would live on a fishing boat moving around Lake Tanganyika until the situation improved. On one occasion, he was out of Burundi for over a year, traveling as far as Zambia. He never once entered a refugee camp and did not receive a return package. Is he to be categorized as a refugee? The situation is as equally complex with regard to IDPs. In addition to those living in the formal camps, many Burundians did not flee to these sites, but rather 'dispersed' from the town centers. This was not usually a permanent condition but rather a long-term pattern of dispersal and return associated with cycles of violence throughout the conflict. So do those, for example, living in an IDP camp for nine years fit into in the same category as those who on eight different occasions fled for varying amounts of time and eight times returned?

The very nature of post-conflict society, shaped by a complex series of dynamics and largely chaotic in character does not naturally lend itself to being divided into such rigid categories. Respondents were nonetheless categorized as planned for research purposes; however, these categories are artificial and debatable in their failure to capture the reality of peoples' lives. Some related results are presented but their limitations must be recognized, and indeed the very difficulty presented in categorization is reflected in the few major and statistically relevant variations between categories.

## 2. CONTEXT FOR YOUTH IN BURUNDI

2.1 How is youth defined generally and specifically in post-conflict Burundi? What are the additional challenges faced by youth in transitioning to adulthood as a result of their country's history of conflict and the current post-conflict setting? What is the overall profile of youth in Burundi and how do young people compare to those of other nations, in terms of education, employment, health status, and demographics? This chapter looks at these questions, and also provides some key macroeconomic indicators for Burundi to provide a context for analyzing Burundian youth.

### MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM ADOLESCENCE TO ADULTHOOD: YOUTH DEFINED

2.2 The World Bank's 2007 World Development Report (WDR) on youth identifies youth as "the transitional phase from childhood to adulthood when young people, through a process of intense physiological, psychological, social, and economic change, gradually come to be recognized—and recognize themselves—as adults" (World Bank, 2006a). The elements of this developmental period include: pubertal maturation, cognitive development, ability to understand a future time perspective, ability to extrapolate, experimentation, and moral development (Feldman and Elliott, 1990). Broadly speaking, adolescence has been divided into three subcategories: early adolescence, during which intense physical and social changes corresponding with puberty take place; middle adolescence, during which young people become increasingly independent; and late adolescence, which applies to those who for social or other reasons delay entry into adulthood (ibid.).

2.3 The WDR identifies five explicit life transitions that define the emergence of adulthood: learning as adolescents and young adults, starting a productive working life, adopting a healthy (or unhealthy) lifestyle, forming families, and exercising active citizenship. In conflict and post-conflict settings, however, youth face a dual and complex transition. Life stages preceding adulthood are complex and challenging enough during peace time; however, conflict profoundly affects this transition by breaking down social norms and cultural practices, exposing youth to appeals to violence by societal leaders, disrupting education systems and employment opportunities, delaying family formation, and preventing the exercise of citizenship. For many youth, violence can promote a sense of identity based on the ability to exercise power. Youth in conflict thus must navigate the complex transition from combatant or victim to being a civilian and productive member of society as well as go through the normal psychological and physiological changes that define the transition to adulthood.

2.4 Biological processes – and specifically puberty – drive the initiation of adolescence; in contrast, societal factors largely determine the initiation of adulthood (Feldman and Elliott, 1990). Thus the definition of youth depends on the societal and cultural context. The United Nations defines youth as those in the 15-24 year age group. In many developing countries, the period is extended further, given extremely high rates of youth unemployment, with corollary consequences on the ability to marry, both of which prevent young people from attaining the status of adult.



Thus, for the purposes of this study, the working definition of youth is considered to be beyond that of the conventional 'biological' definition to encompass the contextual social considerations and therefore a broader age range from ages 15-30 (inclusive); this definition is equally employed by the Government's youth policy.

## **BROAD-BASED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS FOR BURUNDI**

**2.5 Youth represent a key group within Burundi's population.** Burundi has a population of 7.8 million, with 46 percent below the age of 15, and 29 percent between the ages of 15 and 30 (US Bureau of the Census International Database, 2006). Compared to other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Burundi has a high rural population: 90 percent of Burundians reside in rural areas, compared to an average of 65 percent for SSA. That said, Burundi's annual urbanization rate of 6.4 percent is high when compared with the SSA average of 3.5 percent (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1. Economic and Social Indicators, Burundi and SSA**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Burundi 1990</b>	<b>Burundi 2005</b>	<b>SSA 2005</b>
Population (million)	5.7	7.5	734.7
% annual population growth	3	3.6	2.3
% urban population		10	35
Urban growth rates		6.4	3.5
GDP per capita (current US\$)	200	106	847
Life expectancy at birth (years)	50	44.6	46.7
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	80	114	96
Under-five mortality rate (per 1,000)		190	163
HIV/AIDS prevalence rates (15-49)		3.3	6
Literacy rate (above 15 years)	37	59	Na
Primary completion	41	35.7	Na
Primary school enrollment (% gross, total/male/female)	71	84.9/91/78	98
Secondary school enrollment (% gross, total/male/female)		13/15/11	31
Tertiary school enrollment (% gross, total/male/female)		2/3/1	Na

*Source: World Development Indicators 2007, World Bank*

**2.6 Levels of education remain extremely low in Burundi, with some signs of progress.** While the country's adult literacy rate stands at 59 percent, youth literacy rates are significantly higher, at 73 percent (World Bank, 2007). Young men fare better than young women: the female-to-male youth literacy ratio is 92 percent, with the ratio in primary and secondary education being 83 percent. This is also reflected in the gross enrollment ratios as shown in Table 2.1. Primary education was particularly affected by the conflict. The elimination of primary school 'fees' in 2005 coupled with the end of the conflict resulted in the recovery of the primary school enrollment rate

above pre-conflict levels, but quality of education remains severely degraded: 67 percent of the primary cohort persists to 5th grade but the primary completion rate is extremely low at 37 percent (World Bank, 2006). Although secondary enrollment remains well below the SSA average, the past ten years saw considerable progress, with a doubling in secondary enrollment. Secondary education was not affected by the conflict given that secondary schools were located in areas less affected by the war and given the increase of '*colleges communaux*' since 1992 (World Bank, forthcoming a.). Tertiary education has increased by 70 percent from 1990/91 – 2000/01 but remains well below the SSA average (ibid).

**2.7 With poverty and human development indicators having worsened since the war, youth prospects for improving their status remain low in Burundi.** Conflict has had a devastating impact on poverty in Burundi. In 1998, the incidence of poverty was estimated at 89 percent, more than twice as high as that of 1993 (ibid). Burundi also has one of the lowest human development indicators in the world. According to the United Nations Human Development Index, Burundi ranks 167 out of 177 countries (UNDP 2007/08) with life expectancy having declined from 50 years in 1990 to 45 years in 2005 (World Bank, 2007). Moreover, whilst political progress and economic reforms have produced visible results in some areas, GDP per capita has not recovered to pre-conflict levels and lags behind other low-income SSA countries. Burundi's receding GDP has resulted in per capita incomes dropping from US\$200 in 1990 prior to the conflict to US\$106 in 2005 (Table 2.1).

**2.8 The paucity of reliable and detailed data<sup>9</sup> makes it difficult to accurately gauge the scope and structure of poverty in Burundi.** However, according to a 2004 opinion survey, approximately 40 percent of the population is subjectively poor and more than 80 percent believe poverty has either remained constant or increased in the last five years.<sup>10</sup> In 2005, 18 percent of the population was displaced, typically living in abject poverty. Projected estimates show that rural areas have a higher incidence of poverty at 84 percent compared with 42 percent in urban areas (World Bank, forthcoming).<sup>11</sup>

**2.9 Paid employment is a central issue for youth in Burundi, as in many other countries.** Data from the *Questionnaire des Indicateurs de Base du Bien Etre* (QUIBB) 2006 survey indicate that at the national level only 23 percent of youth age 15 to 24 years has a paid job (MINIPLAN, 2006). Table 2.2 provides the share of youth by occupational status at the national level, in urban and rural areas, by quintile. As youth can combine work and study, the proportions add up to greater than 100 percent. Among those working and living in a household in the bottom quintile of the distribution of consumption, three-fourths (76 percent) are employed in agriculture (excluding export crops), while that proportion is 46 percent for those youth working and belonging to the top quintile of consumption. The second source of paid employment for youth is export crops, but only for seven percent of workers. In urban areas, however, some 36 percent of youth with paid employment work as domestics, nurses, drivers, and other similar low-skilled occupations. Virtually none of the employed youth benefit from a work contract, suggesting that youth employment takes place almost entirely in the informal sector. About a third of youth who are working are also studying, and the proportion is about half in urban areas.

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<sup>9</sup> The only household survey that allows for direct measurement of income poverty was conducted in 1998.

<sup>10</sup> The World Bank carried out the survey, which covered 3,000 respondents and provided insights on perceptions of poverty and priorities for action.

<sup>11</sup> figures projected WB & AFRISTAT:17 (2004)

2.10 Yet there are also a large number of youth who seem to be inactive in the labor market, neither working nor studying. This might partly reflect the difficulty of measuring un- and underemployment using traditional labor market measures in the Burundian context, as in many SSA countries. While the percentage of inactive youth is high, the data does not provide information on how many of these youth are involved in unpaid labor, including subsistence agricultural activities at the household level. The data does reflect, however, that 40 percent of youth, excluding those who are studying and looking for work, are receiving no income. Furthermore, only 6.2 percent of youth are heads of households, which suggests that because of lack of resources and limited paid employment opportunities, most youth cannot start a family and make it on their own without support. Given demographic transitions in Burundi and the increased proportion of youth in the population, youth employment issues will continue to grow in importance.

**Table 2.2. Occupational Status of Youth, Age 15-24 Years, 2006 (%)**

	National	Urban	Rural	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
Studying	34.5	51.7	31.6	32.2	34.0	34.8	36.7	34.6
Working with paid job	23.2	15.5	24.5	26.2	24.1	24.8	20.4	21.4
Looking for work	6.7	8.7	6.3	9.5	6.5	7.1	5.6	5.2
Inactive (not in any of the above categories)	40.4	27.7	42.6	38.2	41.0	38.5	42.0	41.8

*Source: World Bank staff using QUIBB 2006*

**2.11 Health conditions overall have recovered to pre-conflict levels but remain dismal.**

Recent data shows that exposure to violence during the course of the conflict in Burundi has had an adverse impact on children’s health. This relates specifically to chronic malnutrition<sup>12</sup> which has been associated with substantially less schooling during adolescence, worse adult health and lower adult productivity (World Bank, 2008). At US\$13, Burundi’s health expenditure per capita is the lowest in SSA. Lack of access to basic health services has resulted in high mortality rates from preventable causes such as malaria, tuberculosis and diarrhea compared to other SSA countries.

**2.12 The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate amongst young people age 15 - 24 years is lower than the overall prevalence rate of the total adult population,** which stands at 3.3 percent (World Bank, 2007). The incidence of HIV/AIDS is greater amongst female youth at 2.3 percent compared with 0.8 percent amongst males (ibid). The prevalence rate is also higher in urban areas at 9.5 percent compared with 2.5 percent in rural areas. A 2005 survey on carried out by the Ministry of Health<sup>13</sup> on youth and HIV/AIDS in Burundi found that 84 percent of 15 – 24 year olds were aware of male condoms and that only 58 percent of young men and 30 percent of young women knew where they could obtain them. Within the same age category, of those who were sexually active within the previous 12 months, 48 percent of male and 42 percent females used a condom. The study further found a correlation between the use of condoms and levels of education (Niyongabo, 2005).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Children who were exposed to violence during the conflict show a height to age ratio which is between 0.515 and 0.618 standard deviation lower than Burundian children who were not exposed to violence during this time.

<sup>13</sup> 2005 Enquete de surveillance de comportements relatifs aux IST/SIDA au Burundi. Ministere de la Sante Publique Unite sectorielle de Lutte Contre le Sida. Service Sero-epidemiologie du VIH/SIDA/IST, Bujumbura, Burundi.

<sup>14</sup> This is corroborated by World Bank data in the Education Country Status report (2006) which found that contraceptive use increases amongst women in line with the level of educational attainment. The probability of a woman in Burundi using a method of birth control is 6 percent for women with no education, increasing to 44 percent for those who have completed higher education (World Bank, 2006).

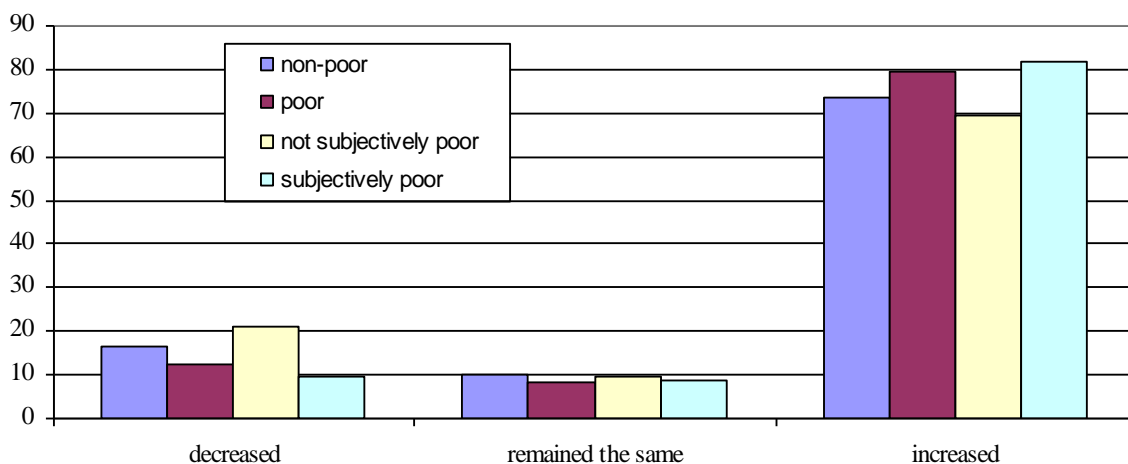
### 3. THE SITUATION OF YOUTH IN BURUNDI TODAY

3.1 This chapter describes the situation of youth in Burundi today based on the views of youth. It looks specifically at: (a) the socio-economic status and social mobility of youth; (b) the views of youth on education and employment; (c) trends and views of youth on migration; and (d) youth perspectives on governance, citizenship, peace and conflict. Given the current government focus on demobilizing ex-combatants, the chapter also looks briefly at youth ex-combatants in Burundi before moving on to the subject of gender dynamics and youth. Whilst direct quotes from interviews conducted serve to support analysis in this section, Annex 3 provides a full account of five interviews, selected to represent a range of youth views captured.

#### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

3.2 **Years of war have taken their toll on youth, who feel their situation is worse than the previous generation.** Not surprisingly, the majority of youth interviewed for the study considered their situation to be fairly desolate, with widespread discontent about the extreme levels of poverty and suffering throughout the country. The overwhelming majority of youth believed that long-term conditions of life have deteriorated and that the economy is in decline relative to its pre-conflict state. Indeed, according to national data, GDP per capita has decreased from a pre-conflict level of over \$200 to \$106 in 2005 (World Bank, forthcoming a.); similarly deteriorating social indicators in education and health validate youth’s own perceptions. The sentiments of youth are similar to the general population, as a 2004 World Bank Opinion Survey demonstrates. The overwhelming majority of respondents of the survey believed poverty to have increased within their community over the last five years (Table 5).

**Graph 3.1. ‘How has the poverty situation progressed in your community over the last five years?’**



Source: Source: Poverty Assessment, World Bank, forthcoming a.

**3.3 Rural youth perceive more strongly a decline in their conditions than their urban counterparts.** The majority of rural respondents cited conflict and changes in climate and population growth as reasons for long-term deterioration of their overall situation. A significant proportion also mentioned the lack of land, which is not surprising in a country where 57 percent of the households live a plot of less than one hectare (MINEPLAN, 2006). This points to a series of dynamics, independent of and preceding the conflict that have had a profound effect on the socio-economic conditions of the population. The majority of rural youth are also discouraged with agriculture. Youth are acutely aware of the conflict's negative impact on the agriculture sector and the majority of rural respondents, particularly in the north and center of the country, expressed their desire to 'escape' a life of farming. Respondents expressed three main ways to 'escape' agriculture, and certain poverty: education, migration, and hard work, as discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

**3.4 About one third of urban dwellers, especially migrants, have seen a relative improvement in their situation compared with the previous generation, regardless of economic category.**<sup>15</sup> Bujumbura (including Musaga) saw a relatively higher frequency of positively-oriented responses; these areas are overwhelmingly urban and Tutsi and contain disproportionate levels of Burundi's migrant population. This relative level of optimism may be related to post-conflict dynamics, given that respondents' migration was conflict-driven and that they have recent memories of a worse life. The sense of moderate optimism regarding the economic future does not necessarily imply any real amelioration in conditions, but rather, is linked to the visible potential for improvements in an area that is historically one of the richest communes in the country.

**3.5 Youth in Ruhororo and Kamenge perceive their economic situation to be particularly negative.** This view is related to the disproportionate impact the conflict has had on both of these communes, rather than geography or demographics. Very little infrastructure remains and few employment opportunities are available in these areas. In rural Ruhororo, Tutsis in the IDP camp and Hutu neighbors remain deeply affected by fear compounded by the economic shocks of the conflict. In urban Kamenge, which is almost exclusively Hutu, little has changed since the war. While Hutus have gained political stature at the national level, this has had no impact on the poor living in this neighborhood. It is clear that the inhabitants of both these communes have suffered greatly from the conflict which ultimately has added little, if not eroded, their socio-economic situation.

**3.6 Views on the causes of youth marginality vary significantly.** Perceptions of marginal youth can be divided into two distinct categories: the conservative and the progressive. A more 'progressive' position posits that the situation of marginal youth is a product of the debilitating constraints of poverty, unemployment and insecurity. In contrast, the 'conservative' school of thought attributes the dire situation of marginal youth to their own weakness in personal character: both male and female marginal youth are viewed to be lazy, drunk and sexually promiscuous. This interpretation of social reality transcended all social groups, albeit with a slightly higher frequency within the higher economic categories. A second form of 'conservative' analysis observed is more

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<sup>15</sup> Overall trend of deterioration 68 percent where n = 228. A higher percent of improvement over deterioration responses were recorded in urban areas (excluding Kamenge) but this was not the majority.

structural, arguing that societal changes have led to deterioration in cultural values, with international influences cited as having contributed to this change. The ‘conservative’ interpretation of marginality is disproportionately applied to male urban youth, with the most negative views attributed to young male migrants. From both a ‘conservative’ or ‘progressive’ perspective, sexual behavior appears to determine female youth marginality. Marginal youth frequently adopted a progressive stance on their predicament.

**3.7 Education, parents’ wealth and marriage are perceived as the main factors contributing to economic and social status among youth.** The primary determinant for youth’s quality of life is perceived to be their completion of further education, regardless of gender, as will be discussed further. The second-ranking determinant, again regardless of gender, was related to parents’ wealth, with the occasional reference made to the values parents instilled in their children or the degree of divisions in households due, for example, to polygamous marriages. For female youth, both urban and rural, marriage acts as an additional factor contributing both to economic status and social security.

**3.8 The idea of ‘personal character’ emerged as a strong recurring theme to describe the varying situation of youth.** Frequent references to ‘*centre de négoce*’,<sup>16</sup> ‘*ligala*’<sup>17</sup> and prostitution are commonly used to describe ‘deviant’ or ‘marginal’ people. These words are frequently associated with idleness, drunkenness, menace and ultimately petty criminality, with an additional association with brutal violence in Bujumbura where gangs of youths at *ligalas* conducted atrocities during the conflict.

**3.9 Personal qualities, such as hard work and perseverance, also feature prominently in youth achieving upward mobility.** Burundian youth think of survival and progress in individualistic and capitalist terms; consistent qualities and values include hard work, perseverance, good planning and oversight, as well as dynamism and innovation. Good management, responsibility and dynamism were highlighted as key to achieving upward mobility. Dynamism refers to a set of personal attributes such as having foresight, being innovative, and/or actively seeking opportunities. The importance youth attach to this ethic is striking and particularly so because it resonates across all economic categories. Setbacks and unpredictable shocks are common place in Burundi, and thus youth consider having the strength of character to survive these shocks as being central to upward mobility. They are, however, aware that life is hard and recognize the likelihood of failure. The majority of youth interviewed also conceded that downward mobility is more common than upward mobility in Burundi.

**3.10 The importance attributed to personal responsibility is particularly frequent in rural areas.** Youth respondents were adamant that they will not let destiny or traditional values determine their lives; however, in parallel they expressed their appreciation for the role of luck and ‘God’ in their future. Having a good sense of responsibility is related to the ability to resist temptation and to maintain traditional values; polygamy was often associated with this assertion, condemned across all social groups, primarily for being economically irrational. Opinions vary on the occurrence of polygamy, with national statistics suggesting it is rare (three percent of the population) (MINIPLAN 2006).

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<sup>16</sup> A generic word for a small market area where youth are often found loitering in the afternoon.

<sup>17</sup> *Ligala* is a Swahili word that simply denotes a place to hang out that has a negative connotation. It could be a market place, or any other public place where people tend to congregate.

“Some young men I know have become rich because of their dynamism. Some of them even came from poor families. They may have started selling peanuts in little plastic bags and now they are big traders.” (26 year-old male IDP in Rubororo)

[Talking about his hopes for his children] “They will be dynamic in life and become good managers. I don’t expect them to study because I don’t have enough money to pay for that. In that respect, they will have to endure the life of their father. But everything depends on their personality, because every bit of money that they earn, even at a young age, they can use to start a small business. I know big traders who started by selling peanuts.” (28 year-old poor male, Rubororo)

**3.11 In rural areas, opportunities for upward mobility of female youth are perceived to be more limited than for male youth.** With the exception of a few, female rural youth’s opportunities for upward social mobility are limited to marriage and education. For rural male youth, education and migration is the ideal path to upward mobility; whilst migration is considered to be a less desirable option for rural female youth. Rural male youth have demonstrated the ability to gain economic vertical mobility simply through creativity and entrepreneurship, although this is not common.

**3.12 Despite the gloomy economic situation, Burundian youth are still generally hopeful and aspire to a better life.** The overwhelming majority of youth interviewed evoked a strong sense of determination; a deep undercurrent of perseverance prevailed even amongst those who were more fatalistic. These findings of hope, aspirations and immense strength of character present a stark contrast to the common references in the literature on African male youth as angry, frustrated and drifting into violence (Collier, 2000; Barker, 2006).

**3.13 Urban migrant youth have more positive views on their future than native urban youth.** Subjective factors may account for this contrast in relative expectations in the absence of an economic explanation. Rural to urban migrants compare their situation (or tangibly nearer potential situation) to that of their rural peers and previous quality of life. In contrast, the urban-born are not upwardly mobile relative to their expectations and against a backdrop of the urban-rich (they do not compare themselves with rural-poor with whom they have no or limited contact). Another possible explanation of this trend is the high relative levels of social controls in rural areas to which migrants were accustomed. Urban-born youth have more anonymity. It should be said that as a consequence they also have greater exposure and access to negative forces in society, e.g. narcotics.

**3.14 In addition to perseverance and an optimistic outlook, youth also display a strong sense of resilience.** The set of emerging coping mechanisms (education, migration and hard work) are peppered with recurring themes of perseverance initiative, foresight and increasingly innovation and dynamism. Other research supports the strong sense of resilience demonstrated by Burundians emerging in the findings: the World Bank Opinion Survey (2004) found that in both 1998 and 2004 all economic categories of respondents had at a minimum an 85 percent positive response rate to the following questions: ‘Do you feel useful?’, ‘Do you feel strong’, and ‘Do you have plans for the future?’.

## EDUCATION

**3.15 Burundian youth place education as their top priority; it was the theme the most frequently discussed.** The prevalence given to education in Burundi as a crucial path towards

securing a sustainable livelihood is in line with findings across SSA, although levels are particularly high in Burundi (Hyden 2006, Kwesiga 2002). The recent World Bank Education Country Status Report (2006) identifies a clear correlation between the length of a persons' education and the probability of being employed in the modern sector of the economy. Some 64 percent of those with 10 or more years of schooling, and 80 percent of those with 15 or more years of schooling, work within the modern sector. As highlighted in the previous chapter, while education at all levels has surpassed pre-conflict levels, access to secondary education remains very limited, especially for the poor. The proportion of children that complete primary, secondary and tertiary education was 79, 11 and 2 percent respectively in 2004 (UNDP, 2006b). At the same time, Burundian youth place tremendous value on the completion of studies up to a stage where it is officially recognized by certification, or education *'jusqu'au diplôme'*. Achieving a lower level is not considered to be worth the investment. Youth do not perceive a positive correlation between quality of life and years of education until surpassing the *'diplôme'* threshold.

**3.16 Education is perceived to be central to individual social mobility and family survival strategies, regardless of gender, economic category, and geography.** The appreciation of education is in stark contrast to the negative perceptions of the agricultural sector; education is seen as the way out of agriculture and rural life. The juxtaposition between education and agriculture emerged as a recurring theme among youth, as reflected in comments such as:

“People with education have more job opportunities, especially if they have a high school degree. So they can have a job and live independently of the life in the *collines*.” (20 year old male farmer, remote colline, Busiga)

“If you don't study, the only opportunity is to cultivate 10 hours a day under a hot sun, every day of the year.” (28 year old male official, Rubororo)

The situation is particularly desperate for the rural poor, who are the very group expressing a desire to 'escape' agriculture. Nine percent of children attend secondary school in rural areas compared with 37 percent in Bujumbura (MINIPLAN 2006). A statistical analysis of the impact of urban/rural residence, gender, income quintile on access to primary school found that urban/rural residence and income quintile were the most significant factors in determining a child's probability of school enrollment (World Bank, 2006). Moreover, there is widespread demand for and importance placed on vocational training, particularly in the Northern communes, likely reflecting the desire to shift away from agriculture. Some 23 percent of respondents in Ngozi Province mentioned the issue.

**3.17 The profound value attached to education transcends ethnicity.** Education was the most common response to questions on life plans among all respondents. Political factors may play a role in the crucial importance attached to education. Access to education was used as a means of propagating social exclusion in pre-conflict Burundi, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. Inequality of access to education became embedded for two key reasons: (a) fear of exposure to violence amidst oppression of the 'educated' along ethnic lines; and (b) a heavy bias in educational infrastructure towards the urban Tutsi power base. President Nkurunziza's first presidential decision to provide free primary education for all may also explain the overwhelming importance Burundians attach to education, which was a symbol of change in 'the system.'

**3.18 Youth and their parents value education equally for females and males across all economic categories.** School enrolment levels are lower for female than for male youth as noted in



the previous chapter (Table 2.1), however, all respondents emphasized the importance of educating both male and female youth, regardless of the respondents' sex, age, geography or social group. The gender literature points to multiple barriers faced by women in accessing education related to traditional gender roles and parental attitudes (UNESCO, 2000; Kwesiga, 2002). These include *inter alia* pregnancy, which results in expulsion from the education system in much of SSA including Burundi; expectation of early marriage (Kwesiga, 2002);<sup>18</sup> and responsibility for siblings and housework (Yahya-Othman, 2000). Aspirations for male and female higher education, however, were similar. Education was one of the most frequent answers amongst women when asked about their own plans or when parents were asked about their dreams for their children (male and female). Furthermore, when speaking about trends since their parents' time, young women, even those living in the very toughest of conditions described their increased access to education as a positive change.

“As soon as the child doesn't take breast milk anymore, I want to take up my studies again. I want to become a nurse and earn money to support my brother.” (18 year old IDP, Kamenge)

“I want to finish my studies [she was raped, fell pregnant and had to leave school]. If I manage to do that I look for a job to take care of my unborn child and my family.” (20 year old migrant Musaga)

“When my mother was young, women only did household duties and did not go to school, but because of development girls can go to school and get knowledge and skills.” (16 year old female student, IDP camp)

## MIGRATION<sup>19</sup>

**3.19 The number of youth migrants to urban areas is growing.** As previously discussed, while 90 percent of Burundians reside in rural areas, the country has a high urbanization rate of 6.4 percent. International research has shown that youth are more likely to migrate than adults, and Burundi is no exception. The classic economic explanation is that migration is an investment, requiring individuals to incur costs to generate the return from higher incomes. Young people are likely to face lower costs in moving and have higher lifetime returns and their foregone earnings from migrating are likely to be lower than for adults (World Bank, 2006). Youth are also more willing and able to take risks associated with migration than adults.

**3.20 Migration is perceived to be central to economic and social development opportunities in Burundi, particularly for rural young men.** As in other countries in the region, rural youth migrate to urban areas in order to seek education or employment opportunities and/or escape rigid social norms. Given the post-conflict environment, security was an additional reason for rural youth to migrate to urban areas. Three distinct groups of urban migrants are discernible. First are those who migrated before the conflict, often in pursuit of higher education. This group forms part of the elite of society, are primarily Tutsi, male, well-educated and older. The other two groups, who are generally younger, comprise those who migrated during the conflict: the first in search of education or employment and the second escaping violence and conflict. The latter included

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<sup>18</sup> This was found to be the case in Uganda—other studies have confirmed these results in Botswana, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia (Kwesiga 2002).

<sup>19</sup> In the youth sample, 17 percent were migrants. Interviews included questions related to perspectives on migrants. The sample included 66 urban migrants.

respondents who suffered the most during the conflict and are amongst the poorest urban residents. In contrast, the former category of ‘deliberate’ migrants, although often poor, living under challenging conditions, frustrated at their poverty and fearful of their future, displayed traits of being upwardly mobile against great odds. They shared a strong ideology of individual advancement and generally had clear plans for the future and a negative attitude towards male urban youth at the *ligala*. When economic opportunities are available in rural areas, intra-rural migration occurs, such as in Nyanza-Lac. Indeed this province has been a long standing region of in-migration through both government policy and economic interest.

**3.21 Economic barriers, high risk, responsibilities and a negative perception of ‘the city’, however, emerge as key justifications for not migrating and remaining in rural areas.** Those who do not aspire to migrate judge the associated risks to be too high and the result unpredictable. A greater value is placed on the stability offered by the rural environment, which is rich with social support networks, than the potential for an increase in quality of life in the city. Ten percent of young rural respondents suggested they were prevented from migrating because of situations beyond their control such as familial responsibilities. A significant group, 21 percent of all rural respondents, pointed to the negative connotations the city conjured and associated cultural stigma for those who gravitate towards it, particularly female youth. This represented the older voice of respondents who displayed contempt for young urban migrants and perceive them to be ‘lazy’ and tempted by the ‘bright lights.’

**3.22 In rural areas, a culture that highly regards traditional rural life and associated values continues to perceive migration negatively.** Seemingly rational, economic justifications for resistance to migration expressed by rural respondents are inextricably influenced by individual cultural perspectives, and thus ‘rational’ decisions are founded in subjective reasoning. Burundians share a strong sense of attachment to their land, based in a deep socio-cultural foundation. This resistance to change is also invoked by rural youth themselves – particularly women – suggesting a deeper and widespread ideological support for such traditional images.

**3.23 There is a stark contrast in perceptions on male and female youth migration.** Male youth are perceived to be more mobile. In both urban and rural areas however, migrant women, are generally described in terms of laziness and moral weakness. Many respondents made a connection between female migration and the loss of sexual innocence. This attitude was particularly notable in Ruhororo IDP camp, where female migration and ‘unwanted pregnancy’ were described as synonymous. Whilst cases of this indeed existed, it was by no means representative. Rather, high levels of frustration amongst male youth in IDP camps may explain this rather extreme rigid attachment to traditional values.

## PEACE, GOVERNANCE AND CITIZENSHIP

**3.24 Burundian youth expressed strong views on peace, conflict and governance, which reflects a citizenship-based value framework.** These values oriented towards citizenship are important as the country builds not only its physical infrastructure, but also its public, political and governance institutions:

“Citizenship is an ideal in social movements and political life, but the meaning is illusive because almost any relationship between individuals and communities can be cast as an aspect of citizenship. The simplest definition is that to be a citizen is to be

a member of a political community and to enjoy the privileges and protections, as well as the incumbent obligations, associated with community membership.... Active citizenship emphasizes how individuals should hold public officials accountable for their actions, demand justice for themselves and others, tolerate people who are ethnically or religiously different, and feel solidarity with their fellow citizens and human beings.”<sup>20</sup>

**3.25 ‘Rule of law’ was emphasized by youth.** One set of common responses related to justice are combating corruption and clientelism. These were strongly emphasized by youth regardless of socio-economic category and educational attainment levels, although they were particularly common in Bujumbura.

“I’d favor social justice with impartiality, and without trying to favor family members or friends. I would not take decisions all alone but consult my advisors. I’d fight corruption and would sanction those who engage in embezzlement.” (*Musaga, 19 year old migrant man, works in a boutique*)

“If I had the power, I’d do a lot for the small people and I’d fight corruption a lot.” (*Kamenge, 21 year old FNL auto-demob with no education*)

**3.26 Youth place a significant emphasis on justice and equality.** For example, a common response to the question, ‘describe someone who you admire’ included themes such as ‘someone who listens to others, even if you are their subordinate’ and ‘people who do not oppress others.’ These themes were common in both urban and rural areas.

“I admire someone who would plead for the *sinistrés*.<sup>21</sup> Many administrators put their own needs first, and someone who doesn’t do that is someone to be admired.” (*Rubororo IDP camp, 20 year old unemployed man*)

“I admire the chef de quartier of Mirango. He is just and honest. If he has to make lists of people of a certain category, for example, orphans, he doesn’t put anyone on the list that doesn’t belong to that category, even if people try to corrupt him.” (*Kamenge, 29 years old female*)

**3.27 Youth want their leaders to ‘be respectful’ and to ‘listen to others’.** A frequent response to the question ‘if you became the communal administrator tomorrow, what is the first thing you would do’ was related to respect for others. This view was equally prevalent among youth in rural and urban areas.

“I would be closer to the local people and listen to them more. I would encourage freedom of expression, so that people would talk. I would make sure that the administration would have close relationships with people, so that they would not get lies.” (*Busiga, 18 year old former child soldier, now taxi-velo*)

“I would listen to everyone, rich and poor. This is rarely done in Burundi.” (*Busiga, 19 year old girl*)

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<sup>20</sup> World Development Report 2007, page 160.

<sup>21</sup> *Sinistrés* refers to the vulnerable victims of a disaster or crisis

3.28 **Corruption was the most discussed ‘political’ issue raised by youth**, dealing directly with the relations between state and citizen.<sup>22</sup> The issue recurred across a range of topics discussed in the interviews, although it was primarily associated with international aid, particularly emergency assistance.

3.29 **Youth were acutely aware of the role of corruption, criminality and socio-political connections in catalyzing rapid individual progress, frequently to the detriment of others.** Illegal means, including corrupt activities, were widely recognized by respondents as a means of upward socioeconomic mobility. As a 23 year old IDP who fled to Bujumbura expressed, ‘fraud and corruption is the fastest way to get rich’. This far-reaching cynicism was directed predominantly towards the political arena; all respondents without exception and regardless of socioeconomic category believed that politicians are driven by money alone. In this respect, urban respondents frequently portrayed an image of a ‘parallel world’ in Bujumbura, where the ‘type of abode’ and ‘neighborhood’ were frequently cited as markers of upward mobility and commonly associated with politicians. This is illustrated with the frequent reference respondents made to the ‘Arusha quartier’ and the associated cynicism regarding the motives of its inhabitants during the Arusha peace talks.<sup>23</sup>

3.30 **Social relations and personal attributes are valued when it comes to matters of governance.** Many of the examples youth described of people they admired, of behaviors they desired, of standards they set for themselves and for others related to the attributes of a *bushingantabe*, which is a traditional justice system involving local authorities who arbitrate conflicts using statute law as a reference.<sup>24</sup> The notions of respect, equity and justice portrayed in many responses relating to leadership qualities suggests that it is better people rather than better institutions that are sought.

3.31 **Burundi: an emerging climate for social accountability?** As noted above, youth are clearly concerned about corruption and violence, about being misled, neglected and exploited. They have come to profoundly distrust politicians and the state, an indication that the old centralized system of power has lost its legitimacy. Youth demand to be respected, to be listened to and to be treated fairly and equitably. Such sentiments might be considered as prototypes of human rights and citizenship which feature prominently on the international good governance agenda (An-Na’Im, 1992). Against the backdrop of a historically authoritarian system which created a huge chasm between national leaders and Burundi’s grassroots, the country is witnessing the emergence of a more bottom-up political ethic as reflected in the Government’s reference to ‘social consensus and civil society participation in public policy design and implementation in the PRSP’s (2006) governance pillar. This new approach might create an environment conducive to methodologies of ‘social accountability’, which incorporate the strong voice of the public, particularly youth, on governance issues by building on traditional social institutions (such as *bashingantabe*) and local governance mechanisms. This perspective is particularly pertinent given the fact that structural inequalities, such as trust amongst key leadership figures and the stark divide between urban elites

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<sup>22</sup> Le Billon observes similar themes in the Balkans, Nicaragua and Sierra Leone (Le Billon, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> The ‘Arusha quartier’ refers to a neighborhood of expensive houses built by the politicians who negotiated the Arusha Accords (1993). It is widely thought that these houses were built with the ‘per diems’ received whilst participating in the peace talks; references to the ‘Arusha quartier’ are often used to illustrate the common perception that the sole motivation of politicians is pecuniary.

<sup>24</sup> Although the traditional system is closer to communities than formal law, it has lost legitimacy due to its politicization over the past decades. Widespread poverty means that the poor can no longer afford the traditional in-kind offerings expected and allegations of corruption within the system are becoming increasingly common (World Bank, 2008).

and the rural masses, contributed to the onset of the conflict and continue to present a potential trigger (World Bank 2005).

**3.32 Youth view peace as a multi-dimensional concept, interrelated with security, development and social relations.** Burundian youth and their peers see peace in an integrated way, with no significant differences in answers by age or sex. These perspectives broadly mirror the current post-conflict agenda, which is based on security, development, justice/reconciliation and governance. The sole exception was governance, which youth and their peers did not mention directly in relation to peace and security. But while the issue of governance did not come up in this context, the theme was raised by youth in other contexts. Thus while politics or elections may not have been the first priority among Burundians immediately after the conflict and in reference to achieving peace, they did, nonetheless, speak passionately about governance and citizenship.

**3.33 Tackling criminality featured prominently in young people's definitions of peace.**<sup>25</sup> Reference to criminality was particularly evident in Busiga, the commune least touched by the conflict, as well as in the urban areas of Kamenge and Musaga. The close link between peace and criminality might reflect the fact during the war, more people suffered from theft and criminality than from directly politically-motivated warfare, and this may have persisted after the war. Indeed, the poor security of goods and people is a prime obstacle to growth in Burundi (World Bank, 2008), where 'the population has been begging for no more than security from their politicians, the minimum condition that will allow them to work' (Nkurunziza and Ngaruko, 2002). If criminality continues, peace has not been achieved, as far as ordinary Burundians are concerned.

**3.34 Youth also frequently associate meeting basic needs with peace,** the idea being that peace cannot exist without a minimum level of material well-being, especially nutrition. The image that dominates this category is hunger. Although less frequently than for nutrition, respondents also referred to access to basic health needs. The poor in particular define peace in this manner. This definition of peace supports the widespread belief that poverty and conflict are related.

"Peace is foremost having bread. If my children and those of my neighbors don't cry of hunger at night I have peace in my heart". (29 year old male migrant peanut seller in Musaga)

**3.35 Social peace emerges as the third most frequently mentioned definition of peace,** encompassing social relations, cohabitation and social harmony. This definition transcends geographical category and gender groups.

"If we live in the same place and understand each other, there will be peace". (21 year old woman in Busiga)

"Peace is when people live together and share, they don't kill each other but help each other. There is almost peace now, so there is hope". (30 year old male student from the interior, living in "Chechnya," a very poor neighborhood in Musaga)

**3.36 Youth also associate peace with mobility.** However, most Burundians are stationary and do not migrate, According to MINPLAN data for 2006, for example, 80 percent of Burundians were 'immobile' within the previous 12 months. The notion of mobility as positively associated with peace has likely origins in three areas: (a) the desire to return to the 'innocence and communality'

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<sup>25</sup> Reinforced by a survey conducted by CENAP & NSI, 2007, Q2

reminiscent of a romanticized pre-conflict era of freedom and ethnic harmony; (b) the association of life during wartime with imprisonment; and (c) mobility as a symbol of well-being in Burundi. This final point reinforces the idea that the ability to move represents an increase in capacity to earn money, in line with youth perspectives on migration and the opportunity it presents to ‘escape’ agriculture.

“Peace is being free to move around and visit friends and family”. (24 year old female in remote colline in Busiga)

“When you can visit others there is peace”. (18 year old young man, Rubororo IDP camp)

“A place where you can come and go as you wish, that is peace.” (20 year old student, Bwiza)

**3.37 Peace is seldom defined in terms of national politics or governance.** Less than 10 percent of youth employed this definition, and when they did, it was usually as an ‘add-on’ criterion. This may indicate that Burundians feel removed from national politics, or perhaps that they prefer not to broach a subject with a stranger, which in the past proved to be dangerous.<sup>26</sup> The exceptions were largely those who are frustrated with the current political regime, that is, those interviewed in the Tutsi-dominated areas of Musaga and Nyanza-Lac (which displays frequent apathy with the current government). This view was absent in the CNDD/FDD strongholds of Ngozi Province and Kamenge.

## **GENDER INSTITUTIONS: THE SLOW EVOLUTION OF GENDER NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **→ *Traditional Gender Roles Predominate in Burundi***

**3.38 Internalized gender roles delineate the parameters of acceptable behavior within the family, community and society in Burundi, consistent with other parts of SSA.** Young men are expected to reach a level of financial stability to prepare them for marriage and to support the family, while young women are expected to marry, bear children and be responsible for domestic work. In every society, there can be far-reaching consequences imposed internally and externally for those unable to meet these gender-based expectations. These are the norms to which youth strive, but they are hindered by the effects of conflict, climate change, population pressure and general economic stagnation. Recent research has shown that men’s inability to attain normative manhood may lead to a social embarrassment, frustration, low self-esteem and depression,<sup>27</sup> which in turn can cause men to turn to alcoholism, violence and sexual promiscuity.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, women who do not conform to the prescribed ‘moralistic’ behavior often face stigmatization by their families and communities (Hodgson and McCurdy 2001). Both young men and women thus often find themselves pressed between the forces of economic and social change and the expectations of socio-cultural traditions and values.

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<sup>26</sup> It is important to keep in mind that the interviews focused on people’s own lives.

<sup>27</sup> Amuyunzu-Nyamongo and Francis 2006; Sommers 2006a; Hyden 2006; Barker and Ricardo 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Silberschmidt 2001, Barker and Ricardo 2006.

3.39 **Generally, Burundians identify with a traditional sense of masculinity and femininity as it pertains to youth.**<sup>29</sup> After a decade of conflict, the prevailing expectations according to respondents' perspectives adhere to traditional feminine and masculine ideals that prevail throughout SSA.

3.40 **Male youth are perceived as providers, expected to be 'well-behaved' and to marry.** When discussing expectations of young men, youth and their peers clustered around a set of connected themes: the expectation to generate income, work hard, marry, and, foremost, support parents, wife and children. Support to parents, spouse and children was the most frequently named expectation in both rural and urban areas. The stakes are therefore high, and relate not only to physical survival but to social identity and dignity.

“My wife expects that I as a man work hard and fulfill the needs of the family. I must be responsible and make the right moves at the right moment. For example, as the school year is about to start again I must already start thinking of buying books and uniforms for my children” (28 year old male migrant in Nyanza Lac)

“My parents expect me to create a family and have children and provide them with a solid basis for living, that is to say have a stable and reliable income source.” (28 year old self demobilized soldier in Kamenge)

3.41 **Young men's relations with family, particularly their parents, are highly valued.** The frequency of **responses** such as being “obedient,” “polite,” “having morality,” and staying “close to home” clearly point to a second major stream of expectations of young men, which are associated with the traditional value of good behavior. Answers were more prevalent in rural areas, however, than in the city: morality, for example, was mentioned in 18 percent of the answers in rural areas, compared with only 1 percent in the city; obedience was given as a response five times as often in rural areas compared to the city. Clearly, this second stream of values, unlike the first, is subject to social change: in the city, it seems, this stream is eroding. It also reflects the lower levels of social control in urban areas.

3.42 **Expectations of female youth are above all related to 'good behavior'.** Good behavior centers on 'obedience', 'respect' and 'morality'. Themes of 'sexual chastity' and virtuous behavior were prominent in respondents' answers. These perspectives are consistent with the negative attitude towards female migration in rural areas stemming from assumptions linking the city with 'sexual freedom.' These values were mentioned equally across sex and age groups, indicating a deep internalization within Burundian society. As with expectations of male youth, the main difference observed is between the rural and urban responses. 'Obedience,' for example, was mentioned for women at 35 percent in rural areas and at 20 percent in the city. As with men, traditional gender expectations are seemingly being eroded by changing urban values.

3.43 **The second type of female youth expectations include 'working hard', being responsible, doing household work and getting married.** As expected, household work is assigned almost exclusively to females. 'Hard work' is assigned more often to female youth, particularly in the city (19 percent versus nine percent in rural areas). The expectation for youth to

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<sup>29</sup> Analysis in the following section is collected from 1) explicit questions on gender roles, 2) comparison of overall responses from men and women informants, and 3) the manner in which interviewees themselves analyze gender differences in the same question

‘work hard’ applies to both sexes, but for women it is usually set in the context of the household. For men, hard work is in the public sphere, it is about earning money, about being in charge and responsible for parents and their own family. While ‘earning money’ is the second biggest category for male urban youth, it is not once mentioned as an expectation for female youth, even though many women are income generators, in both rural and urban areas. Furthermore, of those respondents who cited ‘taking charge of the needs of a spouse, parents, or children’ as an expectation of youth, 71 percent assigned this as a male responsibility and only nine percent as female; although, once again, women clearly play a significant role in this element of family life.

**3.44 Marriage is one of the most significant mechanisms through which gender ideology is propagated** (Silberschmidt, 2001). In SSA, marriage is a cornerstone in the attainment of “manhood” and “womanhood;” it is perceived to provide social identity and is a crucial part of achieving adulthood (Kwesiga 2002). Discussions in rural areas largely confirm this notion, but overall, the profound importance of marriage in respondents’ lives was significant across all groups. The issue of marriage is a case in point highlighting the challenge of adhesion to traditional values in the face of economic peril and associated social change. Discussions highlighted a number of key youth strategies to overcome these shifting norms.

***→New patterns that counter traditional gender roles are emerging, particularly vis-à-vis women***

**3.45 As an adaptation to economic crisis, traditional gender roles are being challenged and new values related to women’s ‘dynamism’ and education are emerging.** As noted earlier, aspirations and values related to female education are similar to male’s. Education featured high in discussions for expectations of a ‘good woman’. Moreover, educated male respondents, both urban and rural, indicated a desire to marry a woman who had achieved a certain level of education, even though they wanted to maintain their traditional role as the primary economic power within the household. One would expect dynamism to be valued when describing young men given the importance placed on their role of economic provider. However, dynamism was spoken of as a positive attribute for women at a significantly higher frequency than that of men. Respondents with this perspective were slightly more often from Bujumbura than from the rural areas, under the age of 30, and more likely to be male. It is possible that men are automatically assumed to possess a certain level of dynamism in order to survive, which would not be case for women; however, this finding suggests a shift away from traditional gender roles for women.

**3.46 Young men value women’s dynamism mostly in relation to their preferences for a wife.** There is little doubt that this desire is an adaptation to economic crisis, recognizing the challenges of their environment and an awareness of the potential a marriage presents as an opportunity for economic partnership. This finding is supported by research carried out in Burundi which showed that women have the greater decision-making power in poorest households and that more husbands talk favorably about their wives’ independence in these poorer households. Such trends have been widely documented in South Asia also (An-Na’Im, 1992).

“I want to marry a dynamic woman who would not sit down and say, “I will wait for what my husband gives me.” With such a woman, even if I am not rich, we can search for ways of getting better in life.” (22 year-old man in Ruhororo)



“My future wife, if I am lucky enough to get one, should be dynamic and smart to help me well in life and be a real partner in my life, not just be beautiful of body. It is of no importance if she is urban or rural.” (23 year old male self-demobilized soldier in Kamenge)

**3.47 The emergence of new gender expectations for women is more of an urban-based phenomenon.** In rural areas, women need to work on the land from an early age in order to survive; in contrast, a range of economic strategies are required in urban areas. The need for economic diversification in tandem with emerging social change in urban areas could account for the urban-rural differences and could be opening space for women to be creative and take initiative.

**3.48 Lastly, dynamism among women was recognized as a positive change since the last generation.** Moreover, many youth brought up the notion spontaneously when asked to describe someone they admire. Evidently, the dynamism itself is not the new phenomenon, as women have always adapted to economic pressures; but rather that it is recognized and seen as desirable by men.

“Girls are more dynamic and have developed good foresight because they can no longer count on their parents and their husbands. This is especially the case for poor girls, because the richer ones are taken care of by their parents.” (19 year-old woman in Busiga)

“In the time of our parents, young people did not go to school whereas nowadays many youth are motivated to go to school. The youth from today have more foresight than in the time of our parents because those who don’t succeed in school try to be dynamic and to search for opportunities in life, like commerce, fishing...” (33 year old male refugee in Nyanza Lac)

“I admire every person who understands that life is not stable. You have to know that life has its changes. Every person who knows this and who uses all tactics with dynamism to succeed in life, I admire.” (34 year-old man in Rubororo)

### → *New marriage patterns are also emerging*

**3.49 Marital roles are shifting and becoming more flexible, particularly within the younger generation.** Another emerging trend which ran counter to traditional expectations was that of ‘spousal respect and cooperation’. The majority of those who mentioned this in response to the question ‘what makes a good wife or husband’ were under 30, and overwhelmingly urban (22 percent versus 11 percent rural). Discussions highlighted intra-spousal collaboration, initiative and respect. These observations challenge much of the literature depicting women as obedient silent workers and men as sole providers and decision-makers. The apparent shift may reflect adaptation mechanisms related to increasing economic hardship and longer-term social change towards values of equality. This emerging theme further undermines conventional wisdom regarding the behavior of men who fail to meet their masculine ideals, leading them to abandon their responsibilities and to make women the target of their frustration.<sup>30</sup>

**3.50 Traditional marriage expectations remain the ideal by which male and female youth measure themselves, but which, at the same time, is becoming increasingly difficult to attain.** Official marriage is a costly process which has become almost inaccessible to the poor. It was apparent from discussions that the traditional Burundian marriage is no longer the norm (Box

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<sup>30</sup> Silberschmidt 2001; Barker and Ricardo 2006; Amuyunzu-Nyamongo and Francis 2006.

3.50. The practice has become limited to wealthier households. Respondents describe that for others, parents have shifted the economic responsibility of marriage to their sons. Interviews indicated great difficulty in meeting traditional expectations of marriage because of a lack of the necessary land and/or financial resources, generally attributed by respondents to the conflict, climate change and population pressure, and unemployment in the city,. Nonetheless discussions indicated that marriage remains a strong youth aspiration. In response to a general question on their plans for the future, 50 percent of the unmarried men indicated that they envisaged marriage, or building a house (almost always an indication of a plan to marry). Plans for marriage were found to be approximately 20 percent higher in rural areas, although a significant number of urban male youth including migrants described marriage as a key life event. The importance of marriage was reinforced by older respondents' perception of 'what makes a good young man/women' as discussed above.

“Most young men desire to marry, but can't because of poverty. They can't build a house, or even buy pants or shoes. Some have parents who help—they build the house and pay bride wealth—and they are the ones who can get married. 25 year-old woman from the IDP camp

“I will only marry if I am economically secure. The age of marriage is getting higher, for young men need to save. In the past, parents financed the wedding, such as the bride wealth, they also paid for the house and celebration, but now there is too much poverty”. 20 year-old man from Busiga

“My parents grew up in a time of economic and political stability and as a result had few problems. For example, because they were well off, no boy could reach my age and still be unmarried. The father would do all that is needed to marry him, but nowadays the boy must help himself in everything that is required to marry.” *25 year old male from Nyanza Lac*

### **Box 3.1. Marriage and Tradition in Burundi**

Historically in Burundi, young women marry in their late teens, and young men slightly later. There are a series of elaborate steps required for marriage, including administrative, cultural, and religious procedures, and many costs of partaking in an official marriage: frequent visits (up to a year) to the future parents in law, the planning and execution of several events lasting multiple days, bride wealth and unveiling ceremonies, and bringing friends and family together on multiple occasions. There are substantial civil fees as well. For the first two years, the family of the groom supports the newly-founded family with gifts, housing and a sub-divided plot of their own land. This ends with a ceremony where the young family becomes “truly” independent, at which time the husband acquires full financial and social responsibility for his wife and children.

**3.51 Marginalized male youth were found to be systematically unmarried, with higher levels of an acute sense of hopelessness for the future.** Groups including the young IDPs in Ruhororo camp, the self-demobilized and some orphans explicitly mentioned that they would never be able to marry. Given the overwhelming importance the majority of respondents attach to this, including within the lower economic categories, these groups display an acute sense of hopelessness for the future. The inability to marry amongst these groups was discussed with frustration, defeat and shame.

3.52 **Poverty is pushing up the age of marriage for young men.** A significant number of respondents indicated that the age at which young men are getting married is increasing as a result of poverty, in line with trends elsewhere in SSA (Barker and Ricardo, 2006; Richards, 2006). This proved to be a near consensus in Ngozi province, the poorest rural area considered in the study. There was a general sense however that those who marry at the traditional age were more highly regarded by society.

3.53 **The marriage age of female youth, on the other hand, seems to be decreasing.** The age of marriage for young women was not perceived to have a direct relationship with poverty; this in itself suggests the dominant male role in the process. Responses argued that although men postpone marriage, they still prefer to marry younger women. The explanation provided is that young women agree to marry earlier (sometimes before the legal age of 18, and often unofficially) in an attempt to improve their dire financial situations. Women are therefore likely to bear the burden of the increase in male age of marriage, as potential wives of the same generation are left to face an ever-increasing barrier to attaining the basic social hallmark of femininity.

3.54 This issue is further compounded by the significant loss of young men as a result of the conflict, which limits marriage possibilities for young women. The conflict created not only a surplus of young, single, women, but also a substantial number of widows. In the face of competition, and with young men struggling to come up with enough resources to marry, women may be more willing to enter into unofficial marriages or even polygamy to avoid remaining single.

“For girls it is even worse because the crisis has killed more men than women and hence the number of women exceeds the number of men. Also, if a girl goes beyond 20 years, it is rare that she can easily find a candidate, if she hasn’t studied. Boys prefer the least old girls.”(19 year-old man Rubororo)

3.55 Urban migration is a strategy for preparing for marriage. Although migration is primarily aimed at seeking employment, the ultimate goal of many young men is to enhance their marriage prospects. It was very rare for married male respondents who did not already work in the city to migrate there. Young men in the two communes of Ngozi Province who migrated would generally send money back to their native colline to acquire land and housing, and return to marry several years later. They could subsequently return to the city and continue supporting their family remotely, or remain in the colline, returning to agricultural or rural informal sector work. Youth who ended up marrying in the city typically did not return to their colline.

3.56 **Unofficial marriage is increasingly used as a mechanism to overcome the inability to become economically independent and marry officially.** Whilst it is illegal in Burundi and remains less desirable than official marriage, many youth described the practice of ‘unofficial’ marriage as a coping mechanism in the face of hardship. This trend has been identified in other parts of SSA, from urban Mozambique to rural Kenya.<sup>31</sup> It is also perceived as an intermediary step to official marriage and thus whilst on the one hand young men are able to buy time to accumulate savings for a ceremony and other associated obligations, they are still financially responsible for their partner. Unofficial marriage therefore does not necessarily present a solution to financial stress.

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<sup>31</sup> Amuyunzu-Nyamongo and Francis 2006; Agadjanian in Barker and Ricardo 2006.

## THE CASE OF EX-COMBATANT YOUTH IN BURUNDI<sup>32</sup>

3.57 **Ex-combatant youth have low educational levels, with former child soldiers<sup>33</sup> having less education than others their own age.** This situation is of course not surprising given these child soldiers, now youth, carry with them a legacy of low educational attainment. This legacy is less dramatic than may appear at first. The differences with non-combatant civilians their age are generally not enormous (see also Tatoui-Cherif, 2006), for the large majority of poor people in Burundi suffered from low access to education during the war. Ultimately, whether one has four or six years of education makes little difference to an ordinary Burundian, since the individual economic benefits of education only materialize after having attained a high school diploma, or at least tenth grade (World Bank, 2006). That may also explain why education has not been a popular choice among child and demobilized soldiers.

3.58 **Reintegration of former child soldiers has been positive overall.** Nationwide, more than 90 percent of child soldiers live with their biological families (Tatoui-Cherif, 2006). This suggests that child soldiers have not become social outcasts that were systematically rejected by families and communities, as perceptions suggest. The image of returned child soldiers as drunks, petty criminals, or drug users, hanging out at the ‘centre de negoce’, wasting their money, and generally being dangerous, also turns out to be false, despite the warnings of administrators and policemen in these terms. All young men interviewed who had served as child soldiers had jobs and were making efforts to support themselves and their families. Indeed the only differences observed between youth child soldiers and other youth of the same age was complaints about infirmities, and a seemingly greater dependence on external aid, most likely because they expected to be compensated for the years lost in fighting in the war. This expectation, however, did not stop these child soldiers from moving on with their lives.

3.59 **Similarly, few differences were observed in terms of aspirations, constraints and attitudes between ex-combatants and non ex-combatants.**<sup>34</sup> Perspectives were broadly similar for both ex-combatants and non ex-combatants, particularly in rural areas where challenges in agriculture remain for both groups. The main discernible difference between ex-combatants and non-fighters is the degree of politicization in the former. For example, current national politics was discussed with over one-third of ex-combatants, a far higher proportion than with the overall sample. This held true across all groups of ex-combatants—regular, irregular, Hutu or Tutsi, and is perhaps not surprising given motivations for participating in the conflict or the exposure to political matters whilst fighting in the war.

3.60 **The social reintegration of ex-combatants also appears to have been positive.** Interviewees reported having been well treated by neighbors and families and made no mention of

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<sup>32</sup> This section is based on interviews with 63 demobilized ex-combatants, eight former child soldiers and 17 ‘self-demobilized’. Findings of the research have been published under MDRP Working Paper No. 3: Ex-combatants in Burundi: *Why They Joined, Why They Left, How They Fared* (October, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> We must recall here that only eight child-soldiers were interviewed as part of the study. Findings related to these interviews are supported and thus reinforced by the findings of the MDRP Beneficiary Assessment of the social and economic status of the child soldier special project beneficiaries in Burundi (June 2006)

<sup>34</sup> It must be noted that the positive image of reintegration conveyed by these findings is not consistent with views held by some public officials of the Burundian Government. The apparent disconnect is explained by the differing parameters through which reintegration assistance is evaluated: this study makes inferences based on ex-combatants’ situation relative to their civilian peers; the Government however, associates reintegration outcomes with economic performance and sustainable income-generation, independently from the performance of the surrounding community.

conflicts or problems (see also Taylor, Samii and Mvukiyehe 2006). Most youth ex-combatants had returned to their collines of birth, or, in the city, to their neighborhoods of previous residence. As a result, ex-combatants lived in places where people knew them, their families and their past lives. A few ex-combatants had even been elected in the conseil collinaire a year ago—a sure sign that they are not only well integrated but that they actually have the respect of their communities. Most ex-combatants also returned to mono-ethnic communities, which facilitated their reentry, and were considered heroes in their communities. That said, some negative images of ex-combatants were also portrayed. These are the unemployed urban-based ex-combatants, who are always suspected of malevolent behavior or criminality. This is consistent with the general image of urban-based young unemployed men.

**3.61 Ex-combatants displayed a strong esprit de corps.** Both in the urban neighborhoods and the rural collines, ex-combatants know each other well and have strong social relations. This esprit de corps is valuable, in that it is the basis for social capital. However, it can also have drawbacks. First, if ex-combatants continue to strongly identify themselves as such, it may hinder their social reintegration. Second, there is likely a certain degree of social control among these groups of ex-combatants; this goes counter to the objectives of demobilization and reintegration, which is to break up command and control structures and reduce the likelihood of future conflict. In conducting research for this study in urban neighborhoods, for example, interviews initially had to be organized two-by-two, so that at least one other person could hear what the other was saying. This reflects in large part initial mistrust about outsiders, but also, to some extent, social control between them.

**3.62 Self-demobilized ex-combatants are a marginalized group with higher levels of frustration and hopelessness.** The ‘self-demobilized’ are ex-combatants who were often recruited as children and left their troops before official demobilization. Respondents from this group cited various reasons for doing so, including injury, sickness or fear. Discussions revealed that many such men are concentrated in the city, (especially in Kanyosha and Bujumbura), and are almost exclusively unemployed, unmarried, and felt ignored and disrespected. This group was not eligible for receiving formal assistance following their ‘self-demobilization’. In addition, the self-demobilized were subject to the potential difficulties of social reintegration because they were deserters. Their difficulties are compounded by a sense of bitterness. Respondents conveyed a sense of injustice, stemming from spending much of their youth fighting and suffering and being left without recognition or transitional support, and with the additional hardship of feeling excluded. Few of the self-demobilized respondents had any plans for the future.

## **4. YOUTH POLICIES AND PROGRAMS IN BURUNDI**

**4.1 To date, very few government programs directly target youth.** This is particularly evident in terms of interventions targeting urban youth as well as vulnerable female youth. This is not at all surprising. Burundi is still very much in a post-conflict setting, with the FNL rebel group

still at large and pockets of conflict remaining, significant destruction from the war, and the majority of the population vulnerable. The ambiguity surrounding the definition of ‘youth’ and its cross-cutting nature further complicates youth programming. That said, the Government is in the process of developing a youth policy, expected to be completed early 2009. Moreover, broad-based development programs, while not youth-targeted, reach young people. These programs have so far been fairly ad hoc, and carried out largely by non-governmental or international organizations, in the absence of government coordination, and fall under the following themes: health, education, peace-building, community-driven development, and income generating activities (Annex 4 for details of planned, ongoing and completed programs).

**4.2 Whilst the Government’s PRSP does not include youth as a category under the strategy’s established ‘vulnerable groups’, the document nonetheless recognizes youth as an important issue.** Under pillar two of the strategy (promoting sustainable equitable growth), youth are explicitly targeted through: (a) diversification of employment and income opportunities through programs to rehabilitate social and productive rural infrastructure, which will serve to expand rural employment, particularly for youth; and (b) promoting tourism and handicrafts, the results of which are expected to benefit youth. Pillar three (developing human capital) addresses the strategy’s long-term vision of establishing a highly-trained young population in Burundi through investing in education infrastructure in underprivileged regions and developing a national policy on vocational education.

**4.3 Local Youth Associations are active in Burundi, and whilst they remain largely disconnected, efforts to incite collaboration are visible.** For example, a ‘Youth Forum’ has been established that unites 20 Youth Associations. The Forum serves to promote a network of ‘volunteers’ to facilitate youth work experience. Activities also include the collective promotion of citizenship values and an amelioration of ‘Association life’.

## BURUNDI’S NEW YOUTH POLICY

**4.4 In 2007, the Government began developing a National Youth Policy (NYP),** following the Gitega Forum in April 2007, which was supported by UNFPA.<sup>35</sup> The Ministry of Youth and the National Council for Youth of Burundi is responsible for the execution of the recommendations established at the Gitega Forum. The first progress review since the forum was held in December 2007, although to date there have been no significant developments. The final set of consultations with youth are expected to have been completed in December 2008. The NYP revolves around ten key actions and recommendations, including three of the four priority areas identified by youth in this study. These are described below. However, the urban and rural specifics remain to be addressed.

- **Employment:** The NYP includes: (a) a policy favoring ‘first job’ candidates; and (b) reinforcement of existing national funds for poverty reduction from a youth perspective through the creation of a fund to facilitate youth access to micro credit.

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<sup>35</sup> A financial commitment of up to US\$30,000 has been made by UNFPA to support the development of the NYP.

- **Education/vocational training:** The NYP seeks to: (a) strengthen youth’s entrepreneurial and technical capacity to create and manage associations; and (b) promote youth’s access to new information and communication technology.
- **Governance:** Although at a very basic level, the NYP recognizes the positive impact youth can have on governance. Action areas include: (a) establishing youth focal points within each ministry and at the provincial level; and (b) including youth in the design, implementation and supervision of youth-related initiatives.

4.5 **The remaining four planned action areas of the NYP are broad-based and geared towards youth mainstreaming.** They include: (a) strengthening the coordination of activities in the youth sector; (b) incorporating all socio-economic categories of youth and gender aspects into policies; (c) creating a national center for young volunteers; and (d) disseminating information related to the Pan-African Youth Movement.

#### **THE PEACE BUILDING FUND AND YOUTH ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

4.6 **The UN’s Peace Building Fund (PBF) for Burundi has established specific youth-driven interventions.**<sup>36</sup> The PBF was established to address immediate post-conflict needs in Burundi. The Government has developed the following priorities, each of which is considered vital to preventing a relapse into conflict: (a) good governance, (b) strengthening of the rule of law in security forces, (c) strengthening the justice system, promoting human rights, reconciliation and the fight against impunity, and (d) land reform, notably in the context of reintegration of the affected populations. US\$35 million was allocated to the PBF in Burundi.

4.7 **‘Strengthening peace and cohesion through the role of youth and women’ is one of the two components of the Government strategy’s ‘good governance’ pillar in the PBF.** High youth unemployment is the primary government rationale for specific support to youth under the PBF. In particular, the Government cites the reintegration of ex-combatants and return of refugees and IDPs as having created visible competition for jobs, particularly in urban areas (GoB, 2007). The youth element of this pillar is intended to focus on the most vulnerable youth in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, priority will be given to those that have been most affected by the conflict, in particular youth from displaced families who are facing specific challenges of reintegration into guest communities. In urban areas, priority will be given to street children and unemployed youth. This responds directly to the needs identified by youth to redress the rural bias of development assistance as well as to focus on youth who have suffered disproportionately from the conflict.

4.8 **The PBF has also allocated US\$4.1 million to the Youth Enterprise Development (YED) Project.** The Ministry of Youth and Sports and UNDP will be responsible for implementing the YED, which targets 7,300 beneficiaries for an initial period of 12 months with the potential for scaling-up following successful completion. The YED Project aims to support youth

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<sup>36</sup> The PBF constitutes an essential component of the enhanced UN architecture to provide for a more sustained engagement in support of countries emerging from conflict. It is designed to provide support at a time when sufficient resources are not available from other funding mechanisms, and will support interventions of direct and immediate relevance to the peace building process and contribute towards addressing critical gaps in that process.

empowerment through the creation of productive and sustainable employment opportunities in small and medium sized enterprises/industries sector, through the following components:

- Creating youth enterprises/industries.
- Strengthening institutional capacity of micro-finance and other private sector institutions directly focused on youth micro-credits schemes.
- Providing high quality micro-credit services tailored to youth, particularly women.
- Providing support to enhance skills development and training for the employability of young people in the formal and informal sectors.

4.9 **Government efforts to mainstream youth in development assistance are at a very early stage; however, the NYP and YED together present a platform from which to support vulnerable youth, in parallel with other mainstreaming initiatives.** Key areas of intervention include employment, vocational training and to a limited degree governance—as identified by youth themselves in this study. Perhaps more importantly, the adoption of such initiatives indicates an awareness at high levels within the Government of the important role of youth as catalysts for peace and as a driver of the country's economic recovery.



## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

5.1 This study set out to understand how youth are faring in post-conflict Burundi with a view to determining if they—and in particular young men—pose a major risk to renewed conflict. A parallel objective was to understand the role that gender dynamics may play in this equation. A summary of the study's findings follows.

*→ Youth, like all other Burundians, have suffered the consequences of years of conflict, particularly rural youth—but they see education and migration as strategies for improving their lives.*

5.2 Years of conflict have taken their toll on youth, particularly in rural areas where the agricultural sector has declined significantly. Overall, the incidence of poverty has increased, with levels of subjective poverty particularly acute in areas disproportionately affected by the conflict, and less pronounced in urban areas among the migrant population. These dynamics are further influenced by factors unrelated to the conflict such as population growth, climatic change, soil fertility and landlessness, which in turn impede poverty reduction. Not surprising, therefore, rural youth perceive more strongly a decline in their conditions than their urban counterparts. Many migrant urban youth have seen a relative improvement in their situation compared with previous generation, regardless of economic category. Respondents identified three main options for improving the lives of youth include.

- **Education** is at the center of family survival strategies and individual socio-economic mobility, across all socio-economic groups and gender. The economic benefits of education are widely considered to accrue only after having received a certificate (secondary school completion) and education is seen as having little value prior to that point.
- Demand for **vocational training**, which is in short supply in Burundi, is growing. This reflects a response to the diminishing opportunities in agricultural and is compounded by a widespread recognition of the limited scope for completing secondary education.
- **Urban migration** is a key strategy for enhancing educational, employment and marriage prospects, particularly for male youth. At the same time, there is social resistance to migration in rural areas, which is symbolic of a desire to preserve deeply entrenched values and attachment to the land. Youth must navigate these opposing forces.

5.3 Regardless of strategies employed or opportunities available, the majority of urban and rural youth ultimately face barriers to securing a sustainable livelihood, regardless of economic category. Employment emerges as a key theme throughout the study: youth's aspirations are consistently linked to securing a sustainable livelihood. Employment is therefore crucial in an environment where the labor market is characterized by mounting demographic pressure, excessive dependence on the declining agricultural sector, an unskilled labor force, lack of job training and a poorly-controlled informal sector.

**→ *Despite the challenges, youth reflect a general sense of hope and personal perseverance to overcoming the obstacles.***

5.4 Youth display an overwhelming sense of resilience in the face of severe hardship, with perseverance emerging as the most important personal value across gender and socio-economic categories. Burundians consider survival and progress in profoundly individualistic and capitalist terms. Themes of hard work, good planning, foresight, innovation and dynamism resonate from the voices of youth. Indeed, personal character is perceived to be a significant determinant of the socio-economic status of youth alongside education, parental assets and marriage. These factors also represent the potential for upward social mobility.

**→ *Youth exhibit an emerging sense of citizenship, which is an asset for reconstructing the country and facilitating reconciliation and good governance.***

5.5 Youth expressed clear citizenship values, voicing concern and often anger over issues of governance, accountability and anti-corruption. They expressed profound distrust for politicians and the state, an indication that the old centralized system of power has lost its legitimacy. Youth demand to be respected, to be listened to and to be treated fairly and equitably. They had strong views on justice, combating corruption and clientelism. Youth across socio-economic category and educational attainment levels emphasized the importance of these issues, even though they were more common in Bujumbura. Respondents also valued social relations and personal attributes when it comes to matters of governance and justice. Such sentiments might be considered as prototypes of human rights and citizenship which feature prominently on the international good governance agenda. Moreover, methods of social accountability might serve to empower the strong voice of youth in governance, build on traditional social institutions, and strengthen local governance mechanisms.<sup>37</sup> Such methods can also be effective conflict resolution tools in Burundi, where research reveals a strong will among the population to go beyond ethnicity and fear, but few opportunities to learn how to make that happen.

**→ *Thus youth present a positive force in Burundi, but how sustainable is this optimism?***

5.6 Youth in Burundi are a positive force. Even among the poorest and most excluded, youth have a general sense of hope about the future and want to contribute as productive hard working citizens. They value education, training, hard work. For their part, rural youth seek a better life than their parents, and are willing to migrate to do so. The question is how sustainable is Burundians overwhelming sense of perseverance? The findings highlight a very resilient society, evident both in the evolving diversification strategies and more directly from the voices of the most marginalized. However, is this level of resilience sustainable? Or is such hope confined to a finite transition period

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<sup>37</sup> In particular the socially-valued institution of *bashingantabe*.

symptomatic of a population emerging from over a decade of conflict-cloaked misery? This transition period may therefore present a crucial window of opportunity for Government intervention to improve the lives of its citizens.

**→ *Rigid gender roles and expectations and “frustrated masculinity” among men are not likely to be factors generating future conflict in Burundi.***

5.7 The relevance of frustrated masculinity as a driver of violence appears to be limited. This conclusion relates specifically to potential causes of violence, and does not intend to make any inference regarding the overall likelihood of a return to violence, which is beyond the scope of this research. The findings do not point to a significant group of marginalized, frustrated or angry young men that could be the source of future conflict because of their inability to achieve normative manhood. What differs in the case of Burundi, perhaps, is how young men react to trends of marginalization, in line with the emerging theme of changing gender norms. As in all societies, Burundian masculinity is centered around a sense of responsibility and of being a provider. However, when young men face challenges in achieving these objectives, they tend to work harder, seek to innovate and/or move to find opportunities elsewhere. Burundian society may be more able to adapt to young men’s inability to fulfill expectations of manhood than other societies, and as a result young men’s frustration and marginalization may be less severe than elsewhere. Some reasons that may explain this include: (a) Burundi is a relatively flat society without powerful local authorities who enforce traditional values, life has always been more individualistic and centered on the nuclear family than elsewhere in Africa; (b) Burundian society has always valued flexibility as a desirable character trait; and (c) the civil war in Burundi had a major ideological element for those who fought, who were defending the future of their people, and were widely seen as protecting their communities.

**→ *To the contrary, gender roles and norms around female roles and marriage appear to be loosening, which is helping young people cope.***

5.8 Current and evolving gender norms in Burundi form part of society’s adapting mechanisms to poverty and social change. Burundians’ lives are profoundly changing under the pressure of poverty and insecurity amidst modernization and increasing urbanization. Against this change, a strong sense of tradition is still embedded within society, but it is increasingly hard to follow. Youth in particular are exposed to the enormity of the struggle to reconcile the old and the new, in living up to their socio-cultural expectations during uncertain times. However, society appears to be shifting to accommodate this struggle. These are dynamics wherein girls and women are encouraged to study as long as they can, where female dynamism and mutual respect between spouses is increasingly sought, and where traditional marriage expectations are relaxed.<sup>38</sup> The ongoing shift in gender norms may present the opportunity to build on such dynamics through a ‘positive deviance’ approach to gender-focused development initiatives.

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<sup>38</sup> Conforms to Barker and Riccardo (2006) when they write that “various studies and research [...] confirm that many young men simultaneously hold traditional and rigid views about gender alongside newer ideas about women’s equality.”

***→ Targeted support for youth has been incipient, both from government and non-governmental organizations, which is not surprising given the overwhelming needs of the whole population in a post-conflict setting.***

5.9 The low level of governmental and non-government support for most poor youth, especially in urban areas (current government sees its power base in the country side; positive change from previously ignoring and exploiting country side, but taken too far); is understandable given all the needs of the population in a post-conflict reconstruction period. The study findings thus raise questions about what is possible in terms of youth policies in post-conflict settings. With competing priorities and vast needs among the whole population, does it make sense to target youth?

## **CONCLUSIONS**

5.10 The present study on Burundian youth has shown that despite the hardships, suffering and struggles associated with years of conflict and the post-conflict period that has followed, young people remain a positive force in Burundi. Concerns about large groups of ‘angry young men’ and the risks they may pose to renewed conflict would appear to be unfounded in Burundi today among the general youth population. Rather young people, male and female, display remarkable levels of optimism, motivation, perseverance, and resiliency – even in the face of adversity, obstacles and their history of conflict. Based on data collected for this study, ex-combatants as a group do not appear to pose a particular risk, perhaps with the exception of the self-demobilized who were not eligible for formal demobilization and reintegration benefits.

5.11 A window of opportunity thus appears to present itself to take advantage of the energy, vitality and potential of young people, given in particular the overwhelming needs in post-conflict Burundi. The question is how best to capitalize on this potential. This report proposes an overall approach for youth development as well as recommends directions in terms of youth policy based on the findings of this study. Given the focus on the voices of youth rather than a comprehensive sectoral diagnostic, these recommendations are not definitive but set out a direction for youth policy in Burundi. Inputs into youth policy could be timely given the incipient nature of Burundi’s youth policy framework.

## **APPROACH TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IN BURUNDI**

5.12 In contemplating how best to both support and capitalize on young people, we must consider that youth in Burundi comprise a full third of the population. At the same time, findings from this study suggest that many youth actually confront many of the same constraints and challenges as older adults.

5.13 Also relevant to the question of how to assist Burundian youth are the huge needs of post-conflict Burundi, owing to the devastating social and economic costs of war and conflict. Burundi is one of the poorest countries in the world, and yet it must work simultaneously across a broad range of themes and sectors to rebuild physical infrastructure, the economy and collapsed public institutions; restore health care and social systems; address environmental degradation due to population displacement and pillaging of natural resources; and last but not least create security and rule of law. This suggests that while the needs of youth may be significant, they have to be put in the context of the overall needs of the country and the population.

5.14 Thus this report recommends the following three-pronged approach to youth development.

- *First*, given that youth represent such a large cohort of the population, and that many youth share the same constraints and limitations as adults, the concept of youth needs to be rethought and nuanced for the Burundian context. A youth development approach needs to be differentiated to address the different needs and priorities of adolescents, ‘youth’ and young adults. Among 15-30 year olds, for example, which age group represents the transitional stage? Among this group of youth that are actually transitioning to adults, which segments should be prioritized? Which segments pose the greatest risk to Burundi’s social and economic development? This study would suggest that, for example, urban unemployed and excluded young men and adolescent mothers may be such groups, but further analysis would be required.
- *Second*, given the overwhelming needs of the population and the country at this juncture, youth policy should focus on including youth within mainstream and existing development and recovery support to enhance efficiency. However, targeted youth-specific programs may serve to facilitate the mainstreaming process and may be considered as a potential parallel medium-term measure. Whilst the focus of such targeted initiatives should remain on identified ‘high-risk’ or vulnerable groups, interventions to build on existing youth potential should also be considered. For example, building on existing proven youth enterprises or work experience schemes for educated, unemployed youth.
- *Third*, the deeply embedded socio-cultural elements of youth issues demonstrated by the findings call for an emphasis on practices in social development in parallel to economic-oriented interventions. It has been shown elsewhere in SSA that Community-based organizations and local governance systems present an effective channel through which to reach youth directly. In this respect, local youth associations demonstrate particular potential. Equally, the influence asserted by faith-based organizations might be harnessed to reach youth, particularly for interventions aimed at family formation. Local governance mechanisms could also be instrumental in empowering youth to exercise citizenship and should form the very foundation of such interventions through decentralized community-driven initiatives.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR YOUTH POLICY**

With the above approach in mind, and drawing on the World Development Report 2007 on youth development, this report makes recommendations in the following areas: (a) improving the quality and relevance of education to improve learning for work and life; (b) helping youth find a livelihood; (c) helping young people form families; and (d) empowering youth to exercise citizenship. These are discussed in turn below. The MoY has a key role to play in the propagation of youth mainstreaming and programming across the sectors outlined below. It is recommended that the MoY consider the approach outlined in this study whilst developing the NYP and that Technical Assistance is provided to the MoY to ensure the completion and implementation of the Strategy. Furthermore, the GoB as well as the donor community have a critical role to play in ensuring appropriate youth representation

within the ‘12 priority sector groups’ newly established by the CNCA as well as the necessary youth-related indicators incorporated into the sectoral results matrices emanating from the PRSP.

→ *Learning for Work and Life: Improving the Quality and Relevance of Education*

5.15 Education is a first priority for Burundian youth, both males and females. Indeed, literacy levels among youth are close to 75 percent, primary school enrolment has recovered to pre-conflict levels, and secondary enrolment has doubled over the last ten years. While access to education needs to continue to increase, if education is not preparing young people for gainful and productive employment, these investments could be inefficient or even wasted. Thus the relevance and quality of education also needs to improve—not only to prepare young people for work but also to prepare them for other challenges of life. WDR, 2007 stresses the importance of the following policy directions, which are relevant to the Burundian context: (a) making the education curriculum more relevant; (b) blending of vocational and general curricula; (c) better connecting education to work and the local economy; (d) improving teacher quality and performance; and (e) integrating life skills in vocational education.

5.16 Caution needs to be exercised with regard to technical and vocational education (TVE), which Burundians prioritize and demand, as indeed does the government (as reflected in its recent requests to the World Bank for related support). Many African countries have invested heavily in this sector with disappointing results. The unit cost of TVE is expensive, thus investments have to be balanced carefully with the resulting potential economic and social benefits.

5.17 Issues of access, quality, efficiency, and financing have been shown to be common barriers to the success of TVE programs elsewhere in SSA (World Bank, forthcoming b.). To this end, Johanson and Van Adams (2004) in their comprehensive study on TVE in Africa, outline the following best practices for implementation:

- Develop a governance framework on TVE that brings government and employers together in decision-making, increases the efficiency of public expenditures, and improves links to the market. To this end, the establishment of national training authorities has proved an effective approach in Cote d’Ivoire, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.
- Establish an institutional framework for TVE that focuses on quality and accountability; establishes occupational standards for skill development together with employers; strengthens pre-service and in-service instructor training; review curricula; sets minimum standards for training institutions; develops accreditation procedures; monitors public and private institutions; and decentralizes management of TVE to improve relevance and efficiency of training.
- Make linkages between TVE and the informal sector, which in Africa is generally the most vibrant economic sector and holds promise for providing young people with their first critical work experience.

5.18 Lastly, in a post-conflict country such as Burundi, programs bringing school dropouts up to an academic level equivalent to that missed in formal education through non-formal education could be important for youth, including youth ex-combatants. Experience has shown such programs to be effective when equivalency programs are combined with other services in a comprehensive manner. Described as second-chance programs, lessons include: (a) limiting the fiscal burden of these initiatives by ensuring programs are well targeted, designed to increase youth skills, and geared to the needs of the labor market; and (b) establishing clear linkages between these initiatives and on-the-job training, apprenticeship, self-employment and entrepreneurship development.

→ *Helping youth find a livelihood*

5.19 Creating a livelihood and finding a job are central for youth to transition to adulthood and establish a family. Youth in rural Burundi, for example, take significant risks in search of employment and economic opportunities, including migrating to urban areas. Lack of employment is a source of frustration for many youth, particularly young men who are expected to be the income earner of the family.

5.20 And yet, given the overall economic and human development situation of the country, limited work opportunities will remain a reality for both youth and adults in the near future. Clearly, tackling the issues related to employment creation and the corollary macroeconomic issues goes beyond the scope of this report. Meaningful recommendations can only be made by carrying out a detailed analysis of labor market demand and supply to understand youth un- and underemployment and youth-specific constraints in the labor market as compared to adults. However, drawing on international and Africa-specific experience, this report makes the following recommendations:

- **Provide support to formal and informal businesses to achieve higher productivity and growth.** On-the-job training is one of the most effective approaches for strengthening skills. Providing support to employers and employees can help link labor market demand to training programs. The agricultural and agro-business sector may have the potential to absorb a large number of unskilled youth, and could be a key driver of economic growth and poverty reduction in the short term.
- **Enhance labor market opportunities for poor youth by opening pathways to jobs through public work schemes.** Given ongoing infrastructure needs in Burundi, the Government will need to invest significantly in public works, which can provide an opportunity for low-skilled youth to acquire initial work experience and provide them with temporary income. Developing innovative mechanisms for road maintenance and other public services (e.g. using the AGETIP approach with NGOs, Box 3.2) could be considered to provide opportunities for youth employment. Programs should be implemented as much as possible at a decentralized level.

Box 3.2: Example of a Public Works Scheme with NGOs: AGETIP-Senegal

AGETIP-Senegal works with a roster of about 300 consulting engineers and 2,000 small contractors, many of whom were not contractors in 1988 when the program began. The agency created some 450,000 temporary jobs. By 2003, program-funded contractors had rehabilitated 325 kilometers (km) of urban roads, paved over 200km roads, cleaned 565km of drainage canals, installed 500km water pipes, fixed 220km of public lightings, installed 300 standpipes, and built more than 170 commercial buildings, 5,300 classrooms and 400 health posts.

(Wade, 2004 *in* World Bank forthcoming b.)

- **Improve the skill profile for out-of-school poor youth through improvement of traditional apprenticeships.** Strengthening traditional apprenticeship systems can improve the skill levels of poor youth in the informal sector and improve technology levels of master craftsmen.<sup>39</sup>

Box 3.3: Improving Traditional Apprenticeships Training

The Kenyan NGO, Strengthening Informal Training and Enterprise (SITE) ran the Jua Kali project from 1996 to 1998 to improve traditional apprenticeship training. The objectives of the project were to upgrade the technical and managerial skills of master craftspeople, enable them to diversify in their production, strengthen their capacity to provide quality training to apprentices, and strengthen the capacity of selected vocational training institutes to provide ongoing training to master craftspeople.

The key lessons from this project are:

- Master craftspeople are not immediately interested receiving skills training and need to be 'hooked'. This training has to be put in the broader context of business improvement and the transfer of marketable skills into tangible gains. Training has to be delivered in a flexible manner, taking into account the opportunity cost of the labor and the time of the participants.
- Master craftspeople seek training to increase income from productive aspects of the business rather than seeking to increase fees for traditional apprenticeships.
- Training interventions proved a useful entry point for upgrading the technology of small and mediums enterprises.
- Linkages with vocational training institutes proved disappointing – they did not become

<sup>39</sup> Potential interventions to improve traditional apprenticeships include: (a) providing training to master craftsmen in the context of business improvement to upgrade their technical and managerial skills including marketing, diversify their production, strengthen their capacity to provide quality training and introduce them to upgraded technology; (b) developing formal standards within a quality assurance framework and certifying skills attained as a benchmark for quality and portability, while at the same time developing time limits for an apprentice to become a master craftsman him/herself; (c) establish pilot conditional cash transfer programs to master crafts men to ensure their apprentices follow literacy training and reach a certifiable level of skills in a agreed upon time; (d) pilot saving schemes for apprentices to start their own business upon graduating from both literacy and non-formal education programs as well as the training; and (e) develop formal standards for the apprenticeship programs.



sustainable providers of training to Jua Kali.

→ Independent trainers could be promoted as training providers to the informal sector. This is likely a more sustainable approach to working through vocational training institutes; which, as structured appear to have little potential for promoting employment in the informal sector.

→ Collaboration with informal sector associations is of prime importance.

→ Upgrading informal sector enterprises is possible through carefully targeted skills development.

(Hean, 2001 *in* World Bank, forthcoming b.)

- **Capitalize on youth's drive, motivation and individualism through entrepreneurship training and micro-finance.** Enhancing opportunities for young entrepreneurs holds considerable promise for job creation; however, evidence from elsewhere in SSA indicates that failure rates can be high. Successful programs often use screening measures, such as the preparation of a business plan, as a tool to identify motivated and credit-worthy participants. Program design should include business-related training, technical assistance, frequent counseling visits and access to credit. NGOs tend to be more effective than government in delivering such programs (Johanson and Adams, 2004). Training for young entrepreneurs should follow a clear set of guidelines to achieve the greatest impact (Box 3.3).

### **BOX 3.3: Training for Self-Employment**

Training for self-employment in micro-enterprises requires major changes for most training providers, particularly with regard to the following areas:

→ **Labor market linkages:** New trades selected for training need to be based on an analysis of the local market and will vary by geographic area. Trainers need to be selected for their special competencies and with consideration for cost-sharing potential.

→ **Training content:** Practical business skills need to be taught, and training for examinations and official certificates de-emphasized. Short modular courses can be introduced. Technical training needs to go beyond the standard trades (for example, tailoring and carpentry), to avoid market saturation.

→ **Training delivery:** Training has to be short, entry requirements should be flexible and training hours and venues convenient for trainees. The focus is on taking training programs to target audiences rather than being fixed on center-based training.

→ **Training materials:** Most training materials still need to be developed, and should be designed such that poorly educated trainees can follow them.

→ **Certification:** Certification should be based on demonstrated competency.

→ **Training follow-up:** Early attention should be given to complementary services needed to

succeed as a self-employed person, for example, credit, marketing, and business counseling (Haan, 2001).

→ **Income-generating activities:** Technical skills may not be in demand, but income-generating activities cannot be promoted effectively without addressing a ‘technical’ side to transfer practical knowledge regarding production techniques, raw materials, tools and equipment and product design. This requires activities such as:

- *Pre-credit technical orientation:* Prospective borrowers should be advised of promising economic activities, relevant technologies, the kinds of tools and equipment to buy, and other practicalities.
- *Demonstrations:* To introduce untraditional production techniques and product designs, short demonstrations of applications can be conducted.
- *Skills transfer:* Short training sessions can be offered on skills transfer and the technical aspects of income-generating activities.
- *Business counseling:* Frequent visits can be paid to borrowers who have started up a new business to help them deal with minor administrative and technical problems.

(Johanson and Adams, 2004 *in* World Bank, forthcoming b.)

### → *Helping young people form families*

5.21 Forming a family is key for youth to transition to adulthood. The study finds that trends in family formation are changing in Burundi, as are gender roles within the household. Positive trends include young men postponing marriage and the liberalization of traditional gender expectations, e.g. increased education for women, an increase in mutual respect between spouses, and flexibility in traditional marriage roles. On the other hand, the tendency for women to marry earlier is cause for concern.

5.22 Worldwide, research has shown that many young men and women are not well prepared for marriage and family formation, including making decisions about the timing and sequencing of having children. Thus one generalized recommendation for Burundian youth that could have high payoffs includes increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services—to individuals and couples, including both young men and women. These interventions are good investments in that they can help reduce population growth (and contribute to economic growth) as well as decrease the spread of HIV/AIDS. Specific recommendations include: (a) increasing culturally sensitive information on sexual and reproductive health; (b) including sex-based education to *inter alia* prevent early childbearing;<sup>40</sup> (c) increasing youth-friendly reproductive health service (e.g. specially trained providers, privacy, confidentiality and accessibility);<sup>41</sup> and (d) strengthening linkages between adolescent sexual and reproductive health with HIV services.<sup>42</sup> Reproductive and health information and services can also facilitate discussions to enhance gender equity in the household and engage men on masculinity issues.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> In Kenya, an impact evaluation of an intervention that provided female primary students with sex education (including the risks of getting HIV from sex with older men) reduced teenage childbearing (WDR, 2007).

<sup>41</sup> World Bank (2008).

<sup>42</sup> ACTAfrica Agenda for Action, 2007-2011 (World Bank, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> For specific ideas on addressing masculinity in HIV/AIDS programs see Barker and Ricardo (2006).

5.23 Other interventions to assist youth in family formation relate to teaching parenting and life skills to youth in different settings (including schools and livelihood training programs). However, an important lesson vis-à-vis these programs is that information on family formation should target parents, teachers, caregivers and the community, who influence decisions taken by youth. To this end, faith-based organizations have been shown to be an effective channel through which to reach the desired audience.

→ *Empowering youth to exercise citizenship*

5.24 Burundian young people appear to have strong citizenship values, which should be capitalized on to help development the country, facilitate reconciliation, and promote good governance. According to the 2007 WDR, active citizenship can affect development through three channels: enhancing social and human capital, promoting government accountability for basic service delivery, and enhancing the overall climate for investment and private decision-making.

5.25 Interventions to improve citizenship among youth people included: lowering the voting age, establishing youth councils and consultative bodies, promoting youth in military service and national and community service, and providing civic education. More recently social accountability mechanisms have been used in Africa and elsewhere to promote good governance and enhance democratic processes, improve public service delivery and more informed policy design, and empower poor people. These mechanisms include:<sup>44</sup>

- **Participatory policy and budget formulation**, which involves direct participation by citizens or citizen organizations in formulating public policy and budgets (i.e. in proposing projects and allocating funds).
- **Participatory budget review/analysis**, i.e. citizens and their organizations reviewing budgets to assess whether allocations match the Government's announced social commitments.
- **Participatory public expenditure/input tracking**, which involves citizens and citizen groups tracking how the government actually spends funds, with the aim of identifying leakages and/or bottlenecks in the flow of financial resources or inputs.
- **Participatory performance monitoring and evaluation**, that is, citizens and citizen groups monitoring and evaluating the implementation and performance of public services or projects, according to indicators they themselves have selected.

These mechanisms could be established through local governance systems or built into traditional social institutions with an emphasis on youth, or established specifically for youth.

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<sup>44</sup> World Bank (2004).

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## ANNEX 1: Research Sample Characteristics

Sample category	Number interviewed	Percentage
<b><i>Age</i></b>		
Youth aged 15-20	101	27 percent
Youth aged 21-25	87	23 percent
Youth aged 26-30	80	21 percent
Adults aged 31 – 35	38	10 percent
Adults (36+)	70	19 percent
<b><i>Gender</i></b>		
Male youth	180	67 percent of all youth
Female youth	88	33 percent of all youth
Male adults	51	73 percent of all adults
Female adults	19	27 percent of all adults
<b><i>Geographical area</i></b>		
Rural	166	44 percent
Urban	210	56 percent
<b><i>Education level of youth</i></b>		
Grades 1- 5	100	37 percent
Completed primary school	46	17 percent
Grade 7 - 12	70	26 percent
Completed secondary school	10	4 percent
Tertiary	12	4 percent
NA	34	NA
<b><i>Migratory status youth</i></b>		
IDP	54	20 percent
Returned refugee	27	10 percent
Stay at home	65	24 percent
Ex-combatant	39	15 percent
Migrant	48	18 percent
NA	26	10 percent
<b><i>Economic category youth</i></b>		
1	61	23 percent
2	114	43 percent
3	50	19 percent
4	11	4percent
NA	32	12 percent
<b><i>Marital status youth</i></b>		
Unmarried	173	65 percent
Married	95	35 percent



## ANNEX 2: Sample Interview Guide

Interviews started with the following broad questions:

1. How do you spend your time on a normal day? What did you do today so far? Is this different from yesterday? What are the main activities that keep you busy? (Work activities? Family activities? Church activities? etc.)
2. How is your life different than that of your parents?
3. What is the impact of the war on this situation?

### DEVELOPMENT/FUTURE

*Alright, let's talk about your future.*

4. Do you have a plan for improving your situation? What is that plan? Do you do this alone or with other people?
5. Who helps you with that plan, so that you may find success? (Such as: family, employer, teacher, government, neighbors, church or mosque, development project, etc.)
6. What are the organizations who support people like you? (specific international agencies, the Church, government agencies, etc.) Do they do a good job?

### YOUTH/GENERAL

7. Now, please tell me about the young men in your area. What is their situation?
8. How about young women?
9. Can people change category? Do you know any who did?
10. For your parents, what do (did) they expect you to be? Will you expect the same of your own kids?
11. And if you can't meet these expectations, what happens?
12. Do your friends or your partner (wife, fiance) want the same things of you that your parents do?

### RELATIONS/DIGNITY

13. Who listens to you?
14. Who treats you well (with respect, dignity)? Who does not treat you well? Why?
15. When you have a problem, who helps you? Who can you talk to about problems?
16. Who do you admire? Why? Do you have any heroes?
17. If you suddenly were the *Administrateur Communal* and you were in charge of this commune, what is the first thing you would change?

### SECURITY/PEACE

18. How is the security situation around here?
19. How is the "entente" here?
20. What does peace mean to you? What can people like you do to promote peace?

### Possible questions throughout:

- How is this different from the time of your parents? before the war? during the war?
- Is this different for older/younger people?

- Is this different for women/men?
- Is this the same for everybody? (gets at social inequality)

## ANNEX 3: In Their Own Voices, The Full Interviews

### Introduction

What follows is a selection of interview summaries with a variety of young men and women in different parts of Burundi. None of the interviews were audio recorded or transcribed. We were concerned that recording devices could make participants nervous and put them at risk should they be confiscated. Plus, we were more interested in an analysis based on narrative themes rather than detailed text. We were also aware that we could never guarantee the quality of direct quotes from participants because interviews were conducted in Kirundi, translated to French and later into English. The summaries presented here are based on interviewer notes. I have added some contextual details from memory for those I conducted myself. Names and identifying information have been altered to ensure confidentiality.

### Bujumbura, October 2006

#### *Jean*

Jean is a 23-year old single man who is from Bujumbura, and was interviewed in the same neighborhood where he grew up. He is a self-demobilized soldier, and left the war in 2004, two years before the time of the interview. He works as a *rabatteur de bus* and makes approximately 25,000 Burundian Francs per month.<sup>45</sup>

Jean begins the interview by explaining his experiences during the war, “My father had 3 wives, and my mother was the last and the youngest among them. I am the second of five children. My father died in 1994, when the FAB attacked our neighborhood. While we were fleeing, my father told us to leave first, and he would follow. He never came after us, and I never saw him again. He died, that is for sure. Now it is me who helps my mother with the money I earn as a *rabatteur de bus*. My older sister who is married also has many difficulties in her household.”

“In 1994 I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade and I had to interrupt my studies and flee to the DRC with my family, where I lived in South Kivu for 2 years and continued my studies until 6<sup>th</sup> grade. But there too there was war between the Banyamulenge and the Mai-Mai and so I decided to leave with 6 friends from my neighborhood in Bujumbura and join the FDD. My decision was caused by the desire to change things and to fight for that. I felt I had no choice.”

“In the field in Bubanza, I got a mysterious sickness: my legs swelled and I was in a lot of pain when we had to do a lot of marching over long distances. Our superiors were very hard people and they did not believe you when you had physical trouble, they thought these were excuses to desert. As we had neither a doctor nor medicines I felt my health and thus my life were in danger, and so I decided to desert to get treated. When I came home to Bujumbura and found my mother, my health was very bad. My legs and ankles were swollen

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<sup>45</sup> There is no direct English translation for “*rabatteur de bus*”. It is someone who works on a minibus, collects money from passengers and calls out destinations. At the time of the interview, 25,000 FrBu is approximately US\$25.

and I was in a lot of pain and the antibiotics I took didn't help. So an old neighbor gave me the address of a traditional healer in Congo where I stayed for 4 months and healed. I returned in Aug. 2003. When I returned here, I learned that my former colleagues were already assembled in camps and had received a registration number. With a group of friends in the same situation...15 of us ex combatants... we went to plead our case to get also a registration number like all the others to be either reintegrated or demobilized, but the response was negative: our superiors would not even listen to us." Jean becomes visibly distressed as he talks about this.

We asked Jean if he has any plans for the future. "I live day to day. Trying to survive and supporting my mother and my younger sisters. Sometimes I am able to help them, but it is very hard. I am not able to plan any projects for the future, and I have no plan whatsoever. But I can do a little trade, maybe some animal husbandry, sowing. If I had some small capital, I could help myself." He continues, "'I don't know why I did not get any support from those who made me work all these years.... and now they don't even want to see me. The war has affected me too much, in every way: for me, it is about fear and disappointment, too many useless sacrifices." He pauses again, "But there are also the satisfactions of our fight, such as the respect I get in my community, that has changed, and I also feel more Burundian than before. It is a mixture of satisfactions that become useless when compared with the disappointments."

Jean told us about the situation of young people in his neighborhood. "All of the young men here are not equal: there are some who are better off, but generally the majority are poor and without help, and without an occupation."

We asked Jean what he would change if he were to suddenly become the Administrateur Communale, he explained, "if I were to be mayor of the commune I'd do all I can to start projects to occupy the youth, to train them and to allow them to earn money and to leave the streets. But I'd also do things for widows, encourage them to create associations so as not to be alone and better defend their rights, especially widows of ex-combatants, because their tears and their worries should be a major burden on our conscience. There are many other things to be done, for sure—schools, roads, water, hospitals—but it is urgent to start with the most vulnerable."

Jean then described the security situation in his neighborhood. "There is peace now and a quite good cohabitation. But with our past (ex-combatants), when you are always hanging out in the street and people see you without work, if something happens you are always suspected. Whether they tell you or not, this is how it is. When you have new pants, people think you stole it somewhere, and that hurts."

Jean explained what he believes "makes a man." "To me a man it is not about showing you are a man at the cabaret, for the public; a man is a man foremost at home, in his family, and afterwards in the neighborhood, by taking up his responsibilities. Some people want to be a man but don't have the means, but if they have the right spirit, it can be realized."

Jean described what type of woman he would like to marry someday, "My future wife, if I am lucky enough to get one, should be dynamic and smart to help me be well in life and be a real partner in my life, not just be beautiful of body. It is of no importance if she is urban or rural."

Jean described the type of person he admired, "I have a friend, an ex-combatant like me (CNDD-FDD), we joined together and by accident he left as a deserter pretty much exactly when I did. We like to sing together and often do that. Whether at the front or here in civilian life, he always helped me and never betrayed me: it is him I admire."

## **Bujumbura, November 2006**

### *Joelle*

Joelle is a 22-year old woman who was interviewed in Bujumbura. She is single and has completed six years of primary school. She told us that she is a prostitute and is HIV positive.

“When the war started, I lived with my parents in the collines in the province of Gitega. My parents were killed and I took refuge at my neighbor’s house who watched over me and raised me for a year. In 1995, my aunt came and took me to Bujumbura with her. I stayed with her for 5 years. She died of an illness in 2000. I had to leave school and manage my life alone.”

We asked Joelle what a typical day was like for her. She laughed, “I don’t do anything during the day. Rather, I work during the night. I am obliged to work like this because I have no other possibility for surviving.” She was asked if she had any plans for the future, “For the moment, I have no idea.....unless there’s a benefactor to help me get out of this situation. It’s really very very hard.”

Joelle described how the war has affected her. “It’s because of the war that I lost my two brothers. The other was taken by the rebels and we haven’t heard from him for eight years. My life turned upside down after my parents were killed by the war. Right now, my life is hell.”

She was asked if she received help from anyone. “I have no one who helps me.” She then goes on to describe the organization called SWAA Burundi who provides assistance to HIV positive orphans. “There are people at SWAA Burundi who have agreed to help us, but it isn’t enough. What I need the most is medications, but I haven’t received any. When the illness gets worse, it will be difficult for me.” She described that the people at SWAA respect her. “At SWAA Burundi people treat me well because there, they listen to me without judging me.....and that’s not the case with all of the others who learn about the illness that I have. If I have a problem, I always go to SWAA.”

Joelle shared with us her thoughts on peace. “Peace is when you can sleep, wake up and do what you have to do without problems: for me, that’s peace.” She described that where she is now, security is good and “that people get along well, there is solidarity.”

Joelle was asked to describe the situation of young people in her neighborhood. “The young people here are really in danger, especially the girls because there are men who have money and try to attract them when they (the men) are perhaps sick. For young men, it is not the same thing. They learn trades and find work.”

Joelle was asked what she would do if she were suddenly to become the Administrateur Communale. “I don’t know, perhaps I would help poor people like me. It is necessary to clean up this commune. There is a lot of dirtiness, and its not good for the health of the population. Also, it is necessary for people to work, because they are becoming more and more lazy.”

Joelle was asked about her social situation. “I have don’t have any friends. I don’t think that I will marry one day. Nobody will want me.”

## Nyanza-Lac, September 2006

### *Richard*

Richard is a 30-year old demobilized soldier (CNDD Nyangoma). He demobilized during the cease-fire, and had hoped to be integrated into the military forces. He was not selected because he has only completed 3 years of primary school. He is married and lives in the commune of Nyanza Lac. He was timid during the interview.

Richard explained his current situation, “I am a mason but I also farm. Since I demobilized, I have been cultivating a manioc field 2-3 days a week. I haven’t yet harvested it. The other days I go and cultivate for others so that I can earn enough to eat.”

We asked him why he demobilized. “Me, I was demobilized because I had not studied very much. But I had always dreamt of a military career. It was the moment when the integration of the rebel forces into the army took place that I left.”

He described the effects that the war had on his life, “the impact of the war on me is that I got a “hard heart”: even if I see ignoble acts, even exaggerated ones, it rarely touches my heart.”

Richard described what he had done with the demobilization funds, “Yes, I received demobilization funds, but did not use them for development plans because I had nothing whatsoever. As you can see I am not a child and it is amazing I only married very recently. I used the funds to construct a house and marry. As well, there were immediate needs that required me to use the money. I don’t regret it, I used all the money for useful future goals.”

We asked Richard how he defined a good life. He said, “to have material ease, to have enough to eat and drink without having to steal; to have a decent house; to be able to send the children to school without difficulty; to have many children.... In order to attain this good life that I want, I have some plans. I am waiting for my manioc crops to produce. I will then sell some of the harvest and invest in palm oil producing trees or open a small shop.”

We asked Richard which agencies had helped him, “Those agencies that do help, never turned their gaze toward us demobilized under the pretext that they only aid the vulnerable. Supposedly, the demobilized have enough money from the program. But we would also like to be helped like the others....with reconstruction funds for houses, roofing tiles, goats. We are being discriminated against.” After some reflection, he continues, “We can’t really blame the agencies for this, but rather the local authorities who, when it comes to making the lists, are corrupt.”

We asked Richard what his hopes are for his children. “Foremost, I want my children to respect me as it is written in the Bible. For those who can assist me, it will be so much the better.”

Richard told us who he admired, “I admire President Buyoya because it is him who started the process of negotiation. Without him, the signatures for the cease fire would not have been obtained.”

Richard described the security situation in the area where he lives, “generally, there are not many conflicts that are difficult to solve. The problem, though, that could become serious and create other problems is about land—that is, conflicts over land between repatriates and those who stayed during the crisis.”

## Ruhororo IDP Camp, July 2006

### *Alicia and Marie*

Alicia and Marie are sisters who have spent the majority of their lives in the Ruhororo IDP camp. Their family was displaced by the widespread violence that swept across the commune in 1993. Alicia was 3 years old at the time, and Marie was 5—they are now 16 and 18 years old.

The family home is set back from the main road that runs through the center of the commune. Their neighborhood looks like many others in the camp. Houses are nearly identical, built in a neat line, close together and made from the same mud brick mold. When conflict broke out here a large number of families (mainly Tutsi) fled from the collines to the communal center and lived in tents. After 8 months, CARE built these houses for the displaced. It is an unusual sight, akin to a densely populated suburb in the middle of rural Burundi. The majority of those displaced 13 years ago have not returned home.

The girls, particularly Alicia, were eager to talk. They invited us inside, in part to avoid the hordes of neighborhood children who had gathered around. The girls seemed proud of their family's tidy home. We were offered a seat on their sleeping mats, each placed a stool in front of us on the dirt floor and excused the mice running across the ceiling overhead.

The girls tell us that they are students. Alicia is in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and Marie in the 10<sup>th</sup>. Marie says: "I am proud that I am a student, and that I am able to get the school supplies that I need. Both of our parents supply our needs. What they do for us is generally enough." Alicia cuts in, "Even though it is difficult for them, our parents give us all they have and remain in poverty in order to educate us. I am also proud of our patience, in times of difficulty—when we have not enough food at home—we don't beg. Instead, I am patient."

They tell us that their situation is not the same as other young women around them. Alicia says there are many orphans and children who have lost one parent. They are the ones who struggle the most. Marie describes that there are two types of young women. "Some young women have parents who can supply their needs. Others don't have parents. For them, it is difficult to have clothes, beauty lotion, to pay the school fees and school supplies." She then adds, "there is actually a middle category. When the father is educated and the mother is not, the girl farms but does not go to school."

Education is clearly important to both girls. Marie says, "An educated person is able to plan for the future. Even with minimal education you can read at least a little. So if you are out traveling, you can read the signs, and this helps you to find your way."

We ask the girls about their plans for the future. Alicia tells us, "at this time, I don't have a fixed plan. Little by little, I think about my future and I know that I can do something. When I analyze the cases of young people who are not at school, they farm or look for food or trade. I am not doing this, I go to school. I can rest and review when I come home. This gives me inspiration to continue and get a degree....because the life of a farmer is not inspiring to me." Marie explains that education has been important for their older siblings because those who have gone to school and gotten a degree are now working somewhere and able to support themselves. Marie plans to continue her studies, to get a good job. She wants to be a nurse or a teacher.

Marie dreams about migrating to the city. "I would bring my parents with me, they are old and in the city there is water and electricity. It is an easier life. If I brought my parents, they would not longer have to work in the fields. The people I know who migrated to the city for work succeeded. They have a good life." She adds

that she knows both boys and girls who succeeded in this. Alicia is in agreement. “I would like a life in the city. In cities, you can do extra work. You can begin a small business—even selling something in front of your door. This isn’t possible here. In the city you can have a salary, save a little, have a small business on the side, and then help with the responsibility of younger brothers and sisters. Life in the city allows extra income to make life easier.”

We asked the girls how their lives differ from that of the time of their parents. Alicia describes, “During my parent’s time, a young woman would stay in the house or behind the house. She spent the whole day back there. Now that the houses are closer, it is not possible to close off young women. Also, girls couldn’t go to school then because they were so busy with household duties. Because of development, girls can go to school and gain knowledge and skills.” Marie added, “In the time of our parents’, the land produced more, there was more food.” Alicia elaborated in agreement with her sister, “the land now is less productive. It requires chemical fertilizers. We used to live near our land, and we could farm it more efficiently. Some crops have disappeared altogether—little by little they are not producing and they are dying out. Other crops have gotten diseases. Now there are fewer types of crops grown. It is very difficult for families to live on only 2 or 3 foods.”

The girls were asked about the young men in their area. Marie describes that some go to school and “others spend time in the centre de negoce<sup>46</sup> waiting for opportunities.” Alicia agreed and added that some young men from the camp migrate to the city and work as domestic help.

When asked about how young women should behave, Alicia described that young women should work hard to earn a living, and “live on her own strength.” They should not steal or “go out with young men”. Marie gave a more nuanced response. “For those who don’t go to school, they should work in the fields, complete their household duties, and be obedient to their parents. For those who go to school, they should go every day and not have any absences. After school, they should review their notes, and try to get good grades. During the vacation period, they should work in the house, and go with their parents to work in the fields if the soil is good.”

If a young girl does not live up to these expectations, Marie explains, “even if it causes problems in the family, they can not chase away the daughter. The parents should give her advice.” Alicia agrees that advice is the preferred solution.

When asked about how young men should behave, Marie describes that, “many young men don’t farm these days...but they should work hard in farming and other activities to earn a living. They should look after the animals when there are animals, and obey their parent’s wishes.” Alicia adds that the young men who live in the camp should fetch water from remote locations and could do this by a bicycle. For a young man who doesn’t live up to these expectations, Alicia says, “parents can’t do anything to fix the situation.”

The girls shared their thoughts with us about marriage. Alicia says, “a good marriage is one where there is a good entente between husband and wife. He consults with her before making decisions.” She goes on to describe that, “young men these days are not rich enough to get the things required for a marriage: the house, brideprice, and the celebration. Because of this, some men get married later. Others don’t wait and do so unofficially. Most get married officially. Those who do get married unofficially, usually wait one or two years and then do it officially.”

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<sup>46</sup> Centre de negoce refers to the center of the commune or zone and is usually referred to in a negative tone. Often people describe it as the place where bad things happen—men get drunk, fight, steal, etc.



We asked which situation Marie thought was better. “I prefer the official way, and there is a way to do it simply. You can have a small invitation list, a simple ceremony. You should make it simple. For young women who are born into a poor family, it is possible to be married by a rich young man. She can then live in that family and improve her situation. For young men who are born into a poor family, they have to work hard. He might need to migrate to the city and trade or work for someone else. A rich young man will marry a poor young woman if she has good behavior. For the rich women who marry poor men, they do so for love.”

Marie got up to attend to someone outside. Alicia continued the interview.

We asked Alicia what she would do if she were suddenly to become the Administrateur Communale. “I would create jobs for many people especially to help with delinquency. This is a major problem because there is nothing to do. People spend the day thinking about how to get means. If they can’t find a solution, there might steal or kill others. I would create local associations for agriculture. I would create vocational schools, especially for those young men who aren’t interested in farming. There have not been any vocational schools here.”

She then told us about the security situation in the camp. “It is fine. There have been some stealing by unemployed people, but they come from other communes.” We asked her what peace means to her, “Peace means that there is no fighting. There is food, and we can sleep in security. Peace means that there are no troubles among people living in the same area. There is peace now because before we would hear shooting in some places. But there is not enough food, and the food is not diversified enough. However, it is more important that we can sleep well at night.”

In speaking about the relationships in her area, Alicia described, “there is a good entente in many places between the displaced and those in the collines. But in other areas there is not, because food is being stolen by the residents.” We asked her if there is a difference between those in the colline and the IDPs here. “Life is almost the same. If we are poor here, they are poor too.”

Alicia told us whom she admires. She answered, “I admire those who share their ideas without fear or timidity. I think particularly of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President. She visits many areas of the country to understand the particular situation of people in different places.”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> It is interesting to note that two months after this interview, the second Vice President, Alice Nzomukunda resigned abruptly after stating the government was rife with corruption and embezzlement, and that this behavior undermined donor confidence.

## **Ruhororo Commune, Remote Colline, August 2006**

### ***Pascal***

Pascal is a 19-year old single male who lives in a remote colline in Ruhororo commune. He has completed 9 years of school. During the war, Pascal and his family were displaced to the Ruhororo IDP camp. They returned to their native colline six years ago.

Pascal introduces himself, “I am a student, and I study at the Lycee in another area.” During my vacation, I help my parents cultivate their land. I also have started a small business buying and selling beans to help with my school fees. I buy small quantities of beans from some families and then I resell them for a slightly higher price in Ngozi.”

We asked him where he got the capital to start this business. He responded, “it isn’t a large capital, it is quite small. Normally, I do this business during the vacation. I started it when I was in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and it is my older brother, who does something that I am not quite sure of in Bujumbura, who gave me a little money to start. Also, my parents gave me a part of their land to cultivate for myself. When the production is good, I sell the harvest and place the money in UCODE<sup>48</sup>, and withdraw some when I need it for school fees.”

Pascal described how he got the idea to start this small business. “I saw that my parents were not always capable of paying my school fees. In fact, we lived in the IDP camp for several years. There, life was not at all easy. I saw many young men who abandoned school because they didn’t have enough money and that tormented me. I told myself that if this were to happen one day to me, I would become crazy. That is why I never liked people who are lazy. At the very least you should go work for someone and with the money you earn, try to invest in something, even if it just peanut trade.”

Pascal then described how life was during the time of his parents. “In time of my parents, people still loved each other. And for that reason, God blessed their fields. Me, I always say that the bad agricultural production, the famine, all the natural calamities that have befallen us today are the punishment of God because of the hatred that has crept into the hearts of people.” He paused and then continued, “When my parents were my age, I often hear them say, agriculture alone was enough to cover all their needs, the granaries were always full but today that is no longer possible.”

Pascal described the war. “The war had a lot of impact on me because when the crisis broke out, I was still young. But still, I remember several terrifying events. Those who have suffered a lot, though, are my parents. In effect, in this colline, there were not a lot of Tutsis. We were two families. A lot of Tutsis live in the neighboring colline. We weren’t really informed about what was happening. Our closest neighbors, who are Hutu, came to tell us to hide at their house. It was a huge shock, because after the killings and burning of houses in the neighboring colline, the criminals came to find our families. When they arrived in our houses and didn’t find anyone, they said that we must be nearby. They then started to threaten our neighbors and foraged their houses, but in vain. We were hiding in the ditches where the bananas were put for ripening.

We stayed hiding for several months. It wasn’t safe enough for us to get to the (IDP) camp. It wasn’t possible for us until the day there was a battle in the collines. When people heard the gun shots, they ran away. After a couple of hours, we heard some people drinking beer they found in a nearby house. It was the military. My father approached a soldier, and he started shooting at my father. Luckily, he missed. Another displaced

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<sup>48</sup> UCODE is a savings and credit cooperative

person who was with the soldier cried loudly, 'Don't shoot! He is one of us!' They approached the ditches and got us out, and we went to the camp in Ruhororo."

We asked Pascal to tell us why he had returned to the colline when so many of the others are still in the camp. Pascal explained, "It was not easy to return. But after all, we saw we could not continue the miserable life in the camp. ....it was impossible to go to the fields to cultivate, we were constantly waiting for insufficient aid to arrive...Little by little, calm got reestablished and the displaced started to go cultivate in their collines of origin. In the beginning they were afraid that the residents there would kill them. But the residents as well were afraid because they knew the repercussions would not be light. Little by little, the move of the displaced to go cultivate in the collines became a normal affair. But the distances to travel were long. We could not cultivate all of our property, and consequently our production was small. When we went to cultivate, our neighbors welcomed us warmly and afterwards, we even started to spend the night there to continue working the next morning. In 2000, my father decided to return to cultivate the land.

Our neighbors always welcomed us with warmth. But the others (in the camp), they were afraid for us that we would be threatened or killed. Instead, those in the colline suggested that we go back to the camp and encourage the rest to come back. But those in the camp thought we must be seeking an immediate death-- that we must be sick of life."

Pascal explained that, "CARE gave us some ceramic tiles to help in the reconstruction of our house. They also gave us a goat to share with another family....when the goat had a baby, we gave it to the other family. They also gave us a little bit of food to help us restart our life in the colline."

We asked Pascal to describe the relationships he has with other young people around him. He explained, "The relations are good. I go with them to mass, to the market. At night, after having finished my activities, I spend a little time at their house, or they come to pay me a visit." As for the young people around here in general, "A lot of young people live in difficult conditions. The war killed a lot of animals, and now there is nothing that can fertilize the soil. The agricultural production has become very mediocre. But there are other families who are rich-- they have businesses. There are other young people who are dynamic, and will search, at any price, to assure themselves a good future."

Pascal described what a good life is to him. "To have a university diploma, to have a good job, to build a nice house, and to buy a car."

We asked Pascal to tell us what he would do were he suddenly become the Administrateur Communale. He explained that he would "sensitize all of the displaced to return to their collines of origin to cultivate their land. If they don't, I have a hard time seeing where we are going in the future.... because the young men in the camp, don't want to work with a hoe anymore."



## ANNEX 4: Overview of a Sample of Youth Programs in Burundi

### 'Adolescents and Youth'

**Objectives:** To increase access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services for youth.

**Activities:** (i) VCT, (ii) STI screening, (iii) Family Planning services and sensitization, and (iv) IGAs (Bujumbura Mairie, Gitega and Rumonge).

**Geographical areas:** Bujumbura, Gitega, Ngozi, Rumonge (Bururi)

**Implementation partners:** *Association Burundaise pour le Bien-Etre Familial* (ABUBEF)

**Program category:** Reproductive and Sexual Health

### Centre Jeunes, Kamenge

**Objectives:** To unite and support youth affected by conflict to facilitate peace and reconciliation, by: (i) raising youth awareness on peace and democracy, and (ii) contributing to a strong and democratic civil society.

**Activities:** (i) Peace and reconciliation projects, (ii) '*Animation*' projects (centered around peace-building activities), (iii) literacy projects and (iv) providing overall coordination for youth-related activities in the Northern Provinces as well as institutional capacity building for youth associations.

**Geographical areas:** '*Quartiers Nords*': Gihosha, Kamenge, Kinama, Cibitoke, Buterere, Ngagara.

**Implementation partners:** Direct execution

**Program category:** Peace and Reconciliation; Youth Training and Support

### **Civil Society and Human Rights Education**

**Objectives:** To contribute to the development of (i) democratic attitudes and behavior amongst youth, (ii) the capacity of 206 civil society organizations, and (iii) knowledge on human rights

**Activities:** (i) Activities to reinforce the human rights capacity of NGO partners, community-based organizations and community leaders, (ii) provision of community sensitization on human rights and peace through interactive theatre, (iii) creation and support of school-based human rights clubs, and (iv) sensitization of communities and school clubs on human rights, peace and reconciliation issues in collaboration with local media.

**Geographical areas:** Bujumbura, Gitega, Ngozi, Rumonge (Bururi)

**Implementation partners:** CARE

**Program category:** Peace and Reconciliation

### **The Participation of Youth in Social Cohesion at the Community Level**

**Objectives:** To empower youth to participate in peace-building activities within their own communities.

**Activities:** (i) Creation of youth enterprises/industries, (ii) strengthening institutional capacity of micro-finance and other private sector institutions directly focused on youth micro-credits schemes, (iii) provision of high quality micro-credit services tailored to youth, particularly women, and (iv) provision of support to enhance skills development and training for the employability of young people in the formal and informal sectors.

**Geographical areas:** 6 provinces (Cankuzo, Makamba, Kayanza, Bujumbura Rural, Bujumbura Mairie and Mwaro).

**Implementation partners:** UNDP and Ministry of Youth and Sports

**Program category:** Peace-building and Youth Training and Employment

### **The Youth Project**

**Objectives:** To reduce instances of violence perpetrated by youth.

**Activities:** (i) Sports activities with youth from different ethnic backgrounds, (ii) workshops in conflict resolution techniques, (iii) facilitated dialogue, (iv) peace concerts, (v) humanitarian relief work conducted by at-risk youth in cooperation with relief organizations, (vi) and retreats for former perpetrators of violence.

The Youth Project forms part of a four-program, multi-dimensional approach aimed at ethnic reconciliation and decreasing levels of distrust and violence ; it includes: 1) Radio: Studio Ijambo: promoting dialogue and peace-building, 2) Women's Peace Center: established in 1996 to support women's efforts to become key players in the peace building and reconciliation process, 3) Integration Initiative: serves to lead in forming a coordination structure for all local and international efforts in reconstruction and peace building and has established a Consultative Committee for Peace and Reconciliation Activities which meets twice a month.

**Geographical areas:** Country-wide

**Implementation Partners:** Search for Common Ground

**Program category:** Peace and Reconciliation

### **Support to the Burundi Reinsertion and Reintegration Program**

**Objectives:** To decrease youth dependence on the agricultural sector and to promote peace and reconciliation within the community.

**Activities:** To train at least 150 youth per commune within each six months of the program in five 'socio-economically profitable' trades.

**Geographical areas:** Gitega and Ruyigi

**Implementation Partners:** GTZ

**Program Category:** Youth employment and peace and reconciliation.

**'Youth Cluster'**

**Objectives:** (i) to reduce the level of new HIV/AIDS infections amongst youth, (ii) to enhance access to existing HIV/AIDS services within their communities, and (iii) to reinforce the capacity of existing youth associations.

**Activities:** (i) reinforcing the institutional capacity of youth associations, (ii) sensitization activities across both education and community-based initiatives, and (iii) enhanced access to and strengthening of referral to relevant services.

**Geographical areas:** Kayanza, Muyinga and Kirundo

**Implementation partners:** Family Health International

**Program category:** Reproductive and Sexual Health/HIV/AIDS