



Evaluation of the Burundi Community Rehabilitation Project 1999 – 2002

**on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
and the World Bank**

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This report was written in August 2002 for UNHCR and the World Bank. Its aim is to assess the results of the rehabilitation programme and to analyse the relevance of projects of this type in Burundi or elsewhere.

The conclusions presented in this report are those of the consultants; they may differ from the analyses of UNHCR and the World Bank.

We would like to express our gratitude toward the UNHCR personnel in Bujumbura and in Muyinga, for making this evaluation possible. We would also like to thank the partners, the public administration and communities, who gave us of their time and trust when we met. We hope this work will contribute to improving prospects wherever prevail conditions as dramatic as those in Burundi.

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Executive Summary

On 9 July 1999 the World Bank signed a grant letter for two million US\$ to UNHCR. This grant launched a project to facilitate preparations for the return of hundreds of thousands of Burundi refugees living in camps in Tanzania, and to consolidate the peace process.

On 31 July 2002 the last project activities ended, after 16 sub-projects had been implemented in sometimes dangerous and always changing conditions. The project has supported the efforts of international aid agencies, operating deep inside Burundi society, to supplement state and societal regulation.

The project has a much larger budget than usual World Bank projects related to post-conflict reconstruction (these usually range from \$200,000 to \$300,000). The project is inspired by a similar one in Rwanda and builds on the creation of stakeholder participation structures. The project is an operational exploration of the link between emergency and development (known as the “Brookings process”). It is conceived as a pilot project.

The evaluation aims to draw from this experience the operational principles which could ensure the quality of future rehabilitation programmes in conflict environments, before repatriation takes place. The evaluation was carried out during August 2002 by a team of three independent consultants.

Objectives

The project, consistent with World Bank policies, the UNHCR mandate, and the requirements of the population, was focused on rehabilitation. It was able to adapt during implementation, to respond to the most pressing needs of the people.

The project objective was rehabilitation of infrastructure (to bring them to a level similar to the pre-war situation); building local capacity and supporting the self-management of achievements by the local population – so as to enhance the country’s ability to integrate returning refugees. The project focused on the north-east and the south-west regions, which, among the areas most affected by returns, are those where the security situation permitted its implementation.

As it is not repatriation or reintegration, but rehabilitation, the programme is not traditional to UNHCR, in that it deals with the situation prior to the return of the beneficiaries under the mandate (namely the returning refugees and displaced people). Yet there are many countries in which UNHCR carries out activities related to the prevention of flight and preparation for return – such activities aim to reduce the number of refugees and at promoting durable solutions. From this angle the project is therefore relevant to UNHCR’s mandate.

The project aims are defined as providing a foundation for the return of refugees/displaced people (by UNHCR), and as maintaining minimal standards of living for the population (by the World Bank). As Burundi is suffering from gradually deteriorating social services and a continuing polarisation within society, few

agencies are able to manage multi-sectoral projects in a plurality of provinces – the World Bank’s choice of working on this project with UNHCR was therefore appropriate.

The concept of rehabilitation implies restoration of a pre-existing set of conditions, assuming a definition of “normal” living conditions - while these have taken on a very different meaning as a result of the war. The concept of rehabilitation may therefore distract planners from considering innovative development strategies, more relevant to tackling the causes of crisis situations. This slight discrepancy between plans and needs has led in the early implementation of the programme to an approach based mostly on bricks-and-mortar achievements. However this was gradually corrected as the population’s needs were increasingly taken into consideration.

UNHCR has demonstrated a rare ability to develop projects through a continuing dialogue and experimentation with communities, rather than simply on the basis of NGO proposals or of excessively rigid social needs assessments.

The sub-projects carried out have covered three key types of activities:

1. Some activities relating to economic security and reconciliation;
2. Construction work – mainly schools, some health centres, roads and water management infrastructures;
3. Legal advice and judicial support, aimed both at the local population and at the Ministry of Justice.

The first type of activities has been the least understood by the beneficiaries, and UNHCR did not go very far in that field, with which it is relatively unfamiliar. Communities at all levels, from cities to the hills, have underlined the importance they attached to the second type of activities. Finally legal aid, which came later, was of primary interest for the people concerned, all the more so since legal issues are among the most sensitive ones facing returnees (90% of lawsuits relate to land and are connected to the history of displacement and return). As a result, the relevance of the programme to the communities has markedly increased over time.

Constraints and achievements

UNHCR succeeded in carrying out an innovative and effective programme, despite a difficult operational and institutional context. Management was adaptable and showed continuity – however it suffered from limited monitoring and from a lack of long-term vision for the sub-projects.

The bullet points below describe the structural constraints and trends affecting the nature of the project:

- Strong political will among many actors, especially international aid agencies from 1998/99, to prepare and facilitate the return of about 400,000 refugees – a return that however did not occur on that scale, and remains unlikely.

UNHCR was able to operate freely without waiting for hypothetical returns to materialise. Activities have therefore been possible, which benefited groups of people

who had indeed returned (the current rate of return in the North is about 300 people per day, although a similar number of people are still fleeing from the South). The general population also benefited.

- The level of infrastructure development is virtually unique in this part of Africa (with the exception of Rwanda), and public services function whenever the security situation is appropriate. Nevertheless economic security weakens year on year and social infrastructure frequently suffers from war damage. Population growth is fast (55% of the population is under 25), while health security is worsening (malaria, AIDS) and access to land becomes more difficult.

UNHCR was tempted to rebuild large structures, which would have been subject to theft and expensive to maintain. It was also tempted to seek excessively ambitious reconciliation objectives. The project did give in to these temptations. On the other hand the project was able to experiment with public health activities and community meetings (Rumonge), as well as micro-credit projects (Muyinga), and promotion of land legislation – all addressing fundamental shortcomings in the country.

- A country characterised by rampant military-related insecurity, affecting different provinces at various times (three quarters of the country were affected at the time of the evaluation). Burundi also suffers from chronic civil violence virtually throughout the country, leading to attacks and intimidation against individuals.

The project coped with the security situation, preserving the principles of field presence and contacts with all communities. There was a close relationship between plans and achievements, demonstrating the project's effectiveness. The projects that were most politically suspect (such as "villagisation" and house rebuilding) have been avoided.

- Social mobilisation structures that are top-down and linear, built around the authority of the public administration, and civil society's input is reduced (with the exception of churches, whose structures are separate, and of the remnants of some pre-colonial structures). The Community Development Centres have not succeeded in freeing themselves from administrative tutelage.

Sub-projects have taken a long time to develop a participatory dimension, partly because of the limited capabilities of implementing partners and of the spending schedule constraints (the schedule is highly constrained). The most socially relevant sub-projects, such as women's groups, were not linked to construction sub-projects, and a momentum for sub-projects not well connected to civil society – as illustrated by the absence of a link between Bashingantahe¹ and legal workers.

- A community of NGOs working as sub-contractors with international funding; their ability to mobilise society is increasing – even if their action has mostly

¹ Customary community mediators and arbitrators.

been limited to a palliative role of rebuilding and redistribution. New NGO initiatives are springing up in such fields as reconciliation and justice.

UNHCR was effective at developing relationships with partners based on demanding standards, supporting institutional development. UNHCR particularly underlined the need for impact indicators in the design and implementation of sub-projects. A delicate balance has been maintained between the necessary autonomy of the implementing partners and the requirements of technical and financial control.

- An organisational structure ill-prepared for the management of complex projects in a fluid context (restrictive cuts in human resources, slow disbursement, limited access to outside management expertise, incompatibility between policies and income generating projects), a wide ranging portfolio of projects (social engineering, buildings, legal work, economic support, complex financial management), difficult and dangerous working conditions.

Staff commitment was remarkable, innovative procedures were introduced – such as those on the follow-up of inputs, on regular spot audits, etc. However the technical supervision of projects has suffered from shortcomings. Personnel was reduced by 60% in August 2001 with no reduction in overall workload - this had dramatic consequences on the work burden carried by remaining staff. The cost-cutting caused or worsened a loss of efficiency. Long term resource planning was often missing, and the implementing partners suffered from an unpredictable payment schedule. Relationships with World Bank representatives were helpful, and information flows to the Bank were as direct as possible.

Sustainability aspects

Sustainability considerations originally focussed only on material realisations. Sustainability concerns later encompassed social change processes, with little consideration for strategic direction. The financial continuity of the activities – whose funding under the project ended as they reached their “cruising speed” – was ensured by European Union funding, although this aspect could have been more closely planned for by the Bank and UNHCR.

UNHCR, in coordination with its partners, has attempted to identify the impact of the sub-projects. However, there is insufficient understanding of the evolution of local situations surrounding sub-projects. A strategic outlook encompassing all activities is missing. This increases the risk that the project be divided up into micro-achievements dotted around the country, with few results visible on a national scale. It should however be possible to develop a common impact assessment framework applicable to all sub-projects, which will define different activities according to their relevance to fundamental aspects of the crisis. The synergies between the sub-projects could have been greater.

Social investigators and participatory NGOs have not obtained better results in coming to grips with local dynamics. However, improved projects were developed through contacts between UNHCR, NGOs and communities. This, in the context of Burundi, underlines the need for field presence to compensate the “knowledge gaps” identified by the World Bank, particularly regarding the situation in the hills.

The programme gradually developed some synergies, especially during 2002, at the nexus between building programmes and social development activities. By pressing that activities in different sectors (justice, education etc...) take place in each province as an indivisible whole, UNHCR was able to protect some sensitive programmes from cherry-picking by skeptical stakeholders. This reinforced the overall viability of the project.

Project achievements were safeguarded by the principle of joint financing of activities by programmes seeking similar objectives – those of the European Development Fund of the European Commission – whose size and duration were greater than those of the World Bank's. The cooperation with the European project gave the programme greater continuity and consistency. This underlines the fact that, whenever the Bank engages in such “pilot” projects, it should assess (through a mid-term evaluation for example) the way in which continuity can be ensured beyond the project's completion date, for example through transfer of activities to another project.

Although good coordination was ensured with some other agencies such as the UNFPA, genuine collaboration with other agencies only took place in the field at the level of sub-projects – such as ECHO, involved in health activities, and collaboration between UNDP and its “PCAC” rehabilitation programme. Security concerns have created a useful coordination framework on the ground. However neither the World Bank nor UNHCR appear to have encouraged other agencies to consider developing programmes/projects similar to theirs nationally. Yet the Technical Committee and the Projects Committee which include this project, and were set up together with the European Commission, are responsible for most of the communications among funding agencies.

As the sub-projects are almost all in an experimental phase it is necessary to continue the activities. Achievements so far would be threatened by the premature interruption of activities or financing. Capacity building has now become consistent with the objectives sought, and it is important for UNHCR to plan the takeover of the projects beyond the end of 2002.

Recommendations

- **Objectives:** Community rehabilitation should be redesigned to become more relevant to a context of chronic instability. The evaluation would propose the notion of strengthening the management of social risk. The concept of risk facilitates the determination of priorities (expressing the needs of the population in terms of fears and also in terms of alternatives). The word “social” sets the activities apart from the political field, and also avoids the politically sensitive notion of “community”.
- **Management:** Administrative risks threaten the project and call for the development of a project management cell. This must have practical procedures for sub-contracting and managing resources in sub-projects, and above all, ensure adequate capacity and a critical level of continuity in staffing. The team should be organised so as to be accountable on technical and financial matters to UNHCR, which would remain responsible for strategy

issues. The team's expertise in social issues should go beyond the level currently within UNHCR. An alternative approach could be to ensure that the financing of UNHCR staff positions be included from the start in the project budget.

- **Social dimension:** The participative approach works better when it is implemented at the same time as activities, in contact with the population. It would be important to systematically develop the social dimensions initiated in the projects – for example public meeting centres as the one at the Rumonge community health centre. It would also be possible to experiment with social funds, to support community services. A form of sub-contracting should then be planned to comply with UNHCR procedures (which call for all funding to be used in the year they are disbursed).
- **Sustainability:** To ensure greater consistency among projects, the concept of a target population could be redefined, by focussing all activities on two zones and by aiming to achieve a specific level of impact for the project in relation to these zones. More integrated approaches should be developed, in which all sub-projects are subordinated to a specific objective.
- **Innovation:** The World Bank has in Burundi an operational partner able to gather various sources of funding and ensure project level coordination among donors, even though the donors themselves often fail to liaise with one another. The Bank also allowed the launch of new types of programmes (judicial and legal assistance, community health centres), which are as innovative (and as little-known) as they would be relevant in other parts of the world (Liberia, Nepal). It is crucial to maintain the momentum gained by these innovation, and to replicate the cooperation seen in Burundi into other pre-repatriation situations.

List of Acronyms

ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
ADSSE	Association for Social Development and the Protection of the Environment (<i>Association pour le Développement Social et la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement</i>)
AFVP	French Association of Volunteers for Progress (<i>Association Française de Volontaires pour le Progrès</i>)
ARP	Austrian Relief Programme
BPE	Office of Education Programmes (<i>Bureau des Programmes de l'éducation</i>)
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
FEPADE	Women for Peace and Development (<i>Femmes pour la Paix et le développement</i>)
FPCS	Framework Programme of Community Support
ILG	International Law Group
LI	ITEKA League
Libejeun	Burundese League for Childhood and Youth (<i>Ligue Burundaise pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse</i>)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PREBU	Burundi Rehabilitation Program (<i>Programme de réhabilitation du Burundi</i>)
RCN	Réseau Citoyen/Citizen Network
UNDP	United National Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund

Map of Projects in Burundi

(To be inserted)

1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation of the Evaluation

A financial audit and an evaluation were due to take place as the pilot project “Community Rehabilitation in Burundi” reached its final phases. The evaluation was given a twin objective: to give an overview of achievements and shortcomings, and to help prepare future interventions by UNHCR and by the World Bank. It was planned that the evaluation report should be both a tool to support decision-making within the two organisations, as well as a document aimed at informing a wider public working in the field of emergency rehabilitation.

The main criteria suggested by the terms of reference (see Annex 1) are: the relevance of the activities; their coherence with other interventions; their impact; and the quality of the achievements. The evaluation team also found it necessary to consider sustainability, because it is a key aspect of rehabilitation.

The three evaluators selected by UNHCR have a long experience of the Great Lakes region: in addition to the two Burundi experts, the Team Leader has worked in the region since 1993. They are also familiar with technical and performance evaluations (which are the specialty of Channel Research Ltd) as well as with the specificities of work in crisis conditions.

1.2 Indicators Used and Populations Visited

Were used principally qualitative indicators, based on observation and interviews, and the verification of the relationship between planning and implementation. The relatively brief timeframe of the evaluation did not allow for a quantitative impact analysis. As some of the realisations had only just come on stream at the time of the evaluation, the social impact indicators included any indication of popular interest for the achievements of the project, as well as projections based on the evaluation team members’ experience of comparable situations (previous similar projects evaluated in a comparable environment).

The evaluation team has had to follow the security directives of the United Nations within the country. The circumstances in July and August 2002 did not allow visits to the oriental Communes in the provinces of Makamba, Rutana, Ruyigi and Canzuko. The sub-projects visited were those in Bururi Province (Rumonge and Gatété were observed from an armoured vehicle), in Muyinga Province (Communes on the border area with Tanzania) and Kirundo Province. All the sub-projects visited were either under completion or just finalised. The list of people and organisations met is in Annex 2.

1.3 Typology and Criteria

The sub-projects carried out have covered three key types of activities:

1. Some activities relating to economic security and reconciliation (mostly in 2000 and 2001);

2. Construction work – mainly schools, some health centres, roads and water management infrastructures;
3. Legal advice and judicial support, aimed both at the local population and at the Ministry of Justice (from December 2001 to the end of the project).

The sub-projects were evaluated as a whole rather than individually, taking two key aspects into consideration:

- social aspects and involvement of populations;
- practical and material achievements, including economic outcomes and constructions.

To facilitate the analysis, the evaluation used three key criteria:

- Effectiveness: relationship between what was planned and what was actually achieved on the ground.
- Sustainability: long-term probability of the continuation of benefits attained.
- Relevance: the potential for given achievements to be used; and capacity to address concerns related to the general objectives of the programme and to the specific objectives of the sub-project.

Any evaluation is based in part on a myth: that personalities, the individual capabilities and personal qualities of people involved in the project should not be taken into account (as the key focus is on whether best practice is followed). It is clear however that in the Burundi programme, factors related to individual qualities have had a major effect. Nevertheless the present evaluation will respect that myth, and will consider the programme in abstraction of the individuals; therefore staff will not be mentioned or described.

2. Context of the Project

2.1 Country Concerns

When the project was launched the situation in Burundi seemed to justify emergency support action. In June 1999 the country was emerging from an embargo on trade and transport, and regional negotiations led by the Mwalimu Julius Nyerere were going on between twenty parties involved in the conflict.

A peace agreement was expected to be reached by late 1999, as was the resumption of international development aid (a conference was planned in Vienna, as were funding by the European Commission and by the Belgian and French governments). A Transitional Constitution was promulgated, and the National Assembly was enlarged.

The World Bank and UNHCR agreed to use instruments at their disposal to support the resolution of the crisis – a decision reaffirmed upon the visit to Burundi by Mrs Ogata in June 1999.

However war never stopped, and indeed spread to the whole country as well as to the Democratic Republic of Congo, while a fitful peace was taking hold in Rwanda (amid the events of 1998 and continuing repatriation). The Lusaka Agreements, to which Burundi had been a party, were barely implemented.

The country remained in the grip of civil war from 1993, which itself resulted from polarisation within society, ever-increasing since independence in 1962, as demonstrated by the massacres of 1965, 1972, 1988 and 1991. Many regional experts now believe that, whereas the murderous intensity seen in Rwanda was not matched in Burundi, the number of people killed in Burundi since 1993 is similar to that in Rwanda. At stake in the conflict is the fate of refugee and displaced populations, numbering about 1.2 million individuals in total.

Social indicators used by the World Bank² are disquieting. With annual population growth above 1.9%, Burundi is Africa's second-most densely populated country. The economy has shrunk dramatically, over 50,000 people visit nutrition centres every day and over 600,000 people are displaced³. The Bank estimates that rural poverty grew by 80% since 1993. School attendance dropped from 70% to 44% over six years.

Some positive developments, however, have marked the lifetime of the project. On 28 August 2000, the Arusha Peace Accords were signed. A repatriation movement started in 2001, reaching the rate of 300 returnees per day in July 2002. Essentially, the level of infrastructural development remains very high in Burundi compared to the region (except Rwanda) and public services are functioning where the security situation allows.

² *Burundi: An Interim Strategy 1999-2001*, Report No 19592-Bu, Macroeconomics Unit 3, Africa Region.

³ Some reports from NGOs involved in the project refer to higher figures – for example Action Aid Burundi states that 12% of the total population is displaced (report from June 2000).

However the country remains plagued by rampant military-related insecurity, affecting different provinces at various times (three quarters of the country were affected at the time of the evaluation). Burundi also suffers from a chronic breakdown of civil order virtually throughout the country, leading to attacks and intimidation against individuals, on grounds of ethnicity, regional association or political affiliation. Social infrastructures are often targeted – partly as a result the population is unable or unwilling to either save or invest.

Such a context is hardly conducive to a participatory approach to development intervention. Moreover, social mobilisation in Burundi is traditionally organised in a linear way, with a focus around the authority of the public administration, and a very small input by civil society organisations (except for religious groups, whose structures are often separate). Traditional attitudes discourage the expression of personal or community ambitions and plans.

An important network of NGOs functions across the country, sub-contracting tasks funded by international donors. This network is gradually increasing its capacity to mobilise society, even though action in this regard has so far been restricted to a palliative role of construction and distribution. New NGO initiatives are now appearing, covering such fields as reconciliation and justice – and therefore complementing more traditional NGO fields of intervention, such as the provision of shelter, food security, healthcare and construction.

2.2 Definition of the Objectives

The approach chosen by the World Bank aims at stopping economic decline and encouraging a reconciliatory environment through adaptable and rapid interventions (in areas outside the remit of government), with an optimal rate of participation – although this will be necessarily lower than it could be, in view of the development context.

The interim strategy of July 1999 comprised three elements: promotion of good governance and investment in “ownership” of the stakes of peace (this element included the project carried out with UNHCR); the creation of productive employment through labour-intensive projects, and the resumption of imports and of some essential social services.

The first component of the strategy aims at launching highly visible actions, in a participatory and inclusive manner, to develop infrastructure “at village level”, thus enhancing interest for their protection and for peace. The Bank, recognizing the length and labour intensive management required by such activities, sees no economic interest in them, and proposes instead to use the other two components as macro-economic stabilisation methods.

The success of this strategy rests on an appropriate identification of the fundamental and incidental causes of the conflict. It requires that the population be able to take control of community resources (which it allegedly failed to do earlier) and that these resources be able to generate an interest in peace. By devolving decision-making as near the concerned populations as possible, the Bank hoped also to encourage women

and young people to make themselves heard. The validity of all these assumptions will be discussed below.

The World Bank has selected two partners to implement the “governance” component of its strategy: UNHCR and the NGO Twitezimbere. The two projects are similar in terms of aims, but the UNHCR project is designed with reference to repatriated people. The second project is not covered by this evaluation. The Bank has identified the lack of institutional capacity to absorb assistance as a major risk for the two projects.

At first glance, the World Bank’s choice of partner may be surprising. While UNHCR has developed a reputation in the Great Lakes region for its ability to carry out rapid, effective and large-scale structural rehabilitation projects (it spent \$ 203m in Rwanda from 1994 to 1999), its projects have not been very participative in nature.

UNHCR is constrained by its financing rules, which limit the project cycle to one year, and by personnel management policies which lead to frequent personnel change and hence a lack of continuity in dangerous situations such as Burundi’s. Moreover, the organisation has been shaken by restructuring as a result of budget cuts and a return to the core mandate in reference to non-refugee populations.

The greatest part of UNHCR’s work in Burundi is to ensure the repatriation and durable resettlement of refugees (247,000 returnees between 1996 and 2002), and to contribute to the return of displaced groups (380,000 people who fled since 1993, and some 200,000 who fled after the events of 1972).

The objectives of the project are to be understood in the context of UNHCR’s aims in Burundi in the 1999-2002 period, specifically as a complement to existing programmes funded from other sources (in particular to European Commission-funded programmes from March 2001).

At the start of the project in 1999 and 2000 the objectives were very much framed in terms of population displacement and incentives to resettle. This approach reproduced the concept of the Quick Impact Projects developed by UNHCR since 1991 in various countries.

UNHCR sought to ensure similar living conditions for different beneficiary groups (displaced, repatriated or dispersed people, as well as survivors of warfare). The agency also attempted to stabilise populations in the hills by providing them with essential services. In this case as in others, the assumption was that social infrastructure plays a major role in beneficiaries’ decision to flee or return home.

The World Bank has underlined from the start the need to ensure social participation in projects – it went so far as to budget for UNHCR staff training in this regard. The objectives of the project then widened to “homes” for teachers (AFVP, July 2001) and to judicial and legal support (ILG, LI, RCN, December 2001).

These objectives were carefully drawn up so as to avoid deepening existing national cleavages – the Bank’s interim strategy quotes the Hippocratic principle of “not harming”, and UNHCR’s contracts for sub-projects specify that interventions should

be non-political. As a result, the geographical spread of the activities does not benefit any particular region. The legal and judicial support programmes do not distinguish among beneficiaries in terms of the type of claims they make⁴, and there is no involvement in house building – an activity where it is particularly difficult to control the identity of beneficiaries.

2.3 Historical Overview of the Project

Negotiated in June 1999 in Bujumbura between the Government of Burundi, the World Bank and UNHCR, the project was designed through high-level discussions between High Commissioner Mrs Ogata and World Bank President Mr Wolfensohn. The approach was to launch two pilot projects to explore the modalities of joint programming by the two institutions, so as to reinforce the link between assistance provided at the time of emergencies, and that provided in the post-war development phase.

Two projects were identified: one in Sierra-Leone (subsequently abandoned due to the resumption of hostilities in the country), the other in Burundi. The general objective of the project as defined included the reinforcement of links between the two organisations.

The High Commissioner visited Burundi in June 1999 – at which time, in conjunction with other regional and international organisations, she became committed to supporting the Arusha peace process. This involved actively preparing for the repatriation of Burundi refugees who had fled since 1993, almost all of whom were in Tanzania by the end of 1999. Meanwhile, the UN System, under the direction of the resident Coordinator, was seeking to launch support activities more geared towards development and social support.

The launch of the project, entitled “Grant for Burundi Rehabilitation Project”, became effective when the Grant Letter was signed on 9 July 1999. A first tranche of \$300,000 was released immediately. In consultation with the World Bank, the first activities financed by UNHCR were contributions to an inquiry (“Participatory Approach Accelerated Methodology”) in the provinces of Muyinga and Ruyigi; the building of schools by ARP, and the building of schools and health centres by ActionAid.

These rehabilitation actions supported projects already planned in the framework of the earlier Quick Impact Projects developed by UNHCR from non-earmarked funding, and were focussing largely on school building. Education buildings had been the dominant concern emerging from the participatory studies carried out by Twitezimbéré. On the advice of the Bank, UNHCR also started working in September 1999, together with ActionAid, on more participatory activities using “semi-durable” materials. These activities took longer than UNHCR is accustomed to, and the destruction of some schools just before their inauguration led to the abandonment of the project.

⁴ As such a distinction would necessarily lead to separate out the claims related to refugee return, which in turn would plunge the project into largely political issues.

The murder of several UN staff in October 1999 led to the withdrawal of staff from the country (security “Phase 4” was declared by the UN Security Coordinator). Some NGO partners continued a low level of involvement, but the project was effectively suspended until March 2000. At that time, UNHCR and the Bank decided to resume the work. On this occasion, UNHCR decided to capitalise on the previous year’s social studies (thus avoiding repeat studies which might have been unwelcome among the target population) and to follow a concerted effort by donors and agencies, which were by then also returning to Burundi.

The concerted effort was not to take place, however, and UNHCR launched its own second phase in a degree of isolation, but in the company of a larger number of partners, including ACORD, ADSSE, AFVP and BPE. Each partner’s capacity being limited, the spread of partners contributed to reducing the risks in large volume delivery of assistance in a short time period.

In January 2001 UNHCR switched to a more systematic, sub-project-based method for monitoring World Bank financing. The agency launched the second, \$1.7m tranche of the project.

In November and December 2001, UNHCR gradually formulated, in consultation with some partners, a concept of paralegal services aimed at addressing the serious shortcomings of justice in Burundi, which are major obstacles to repatriation.

Detailed analyses structured as problem trees were prepared for each intervention sector, so as to identify factors conducive to success and sustainability in each activity. The interventions were gradually concentrated in the north-eastern provinces (Kirundo and Muyinga) and in Bururi (especially the Communes bordering Lake Tanganyika), where most repatriation occurs and where security concerns are less acute.

In 2002 the project acquired a new dimension, in that it became more closely engaged with the land ownership conflicts experienced by the population. These conflicts amount to a veritable cancer, undermining the re-establishment of a normal social life. This dimension grew in importance and reached maturity upon the closure of the project in July 2002. Most of the activities carried out under sub-projects are expected to continue with either EC funding or non-earmarked UNHCR support.

The following activities have been carried out:

- Rehabilitation or reconstruction of 11 primary schools and of two vocational centres in the provinces of Muyinga, Ruyigi, Kirundo and Bururi, in collaboration with the NGOs ARP, ADSSE, AFVP, BPE and INTERSOS.
- Clearance of two swamps and rehabilitation of a seed distribution centre in Canzuko, with the NGO ACORD-Burundi.
- Rehabilitation or reconstruction of five health centres in Muyinga, Ruyigi and Bururi, in collaboration with ARP, BETRACO and INTERSOS.
- Rehabilitation of drinking water networks in Muyinga, Ruyigi and Bururi, with AAB, ARP and INTERSOS.

- Activities aiming at reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation in Muyinga, in collaboration with FEPADE (project of the Ministry of Social Work and the Promotion of Women).
- Legal and judicial assistance work in Muyinga, Ruyigi and Bururi, with the NGOs ILG, LI and Libejeun.
- Support to local and intermediate courts in Muyinga, Kirundo, Ruyigi, Rutana, Canzuko, Makamba and Bururi, in collaboration with RCN.

The sub-projects and their beneficiaries were the following:

Education sector: rehabilitation of primary schools

The objectives of the sub-project were:

- To increase the rate of school attendance among children in the areas concerned;
- To increase the capacity of the local primary schools to cater for the children due to be repatriated.

The beneficiaries were the children of school age in the areas concerned and the teachers who were supported by the “homes”.

Peace and reconciliation sector: Women for Peace and Development (FEPADE)

The project aimed towards peaceful conflict resolution and harmonious co-existence of the three main ethnic groups. As a first step, two administrative areas in a Commune were selected as the focus of intervention. To reach the aim, revenue-generating activities were supported so as to gather and motivate beneficiaries. There were activities in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry and milling.

Beneficiaries included repatriated and displaced women, as well as those who had stayed in the hills. The project provided support to women brought together in associations called “groupements”.

Health-care sector: Rehabilitation of health centres

The objective of the sub-project was to improve health among the population of the target areas and to provide acceptable conditions of hygiene for the work of health services.

Beneficiaries were the inhabitants of the areas concerned (repatriated, displaced people and those who had remained in the hills).

Water sanitation sector: rehabilitation of water mains

The objective was to improve living conditions for target hill populations, by connecting them to drinking water mains.

The beneficiaries were mainly hill populations.

Food security sector

In order to address the gaping needs of the target areas, UNHCR financed work related to improving the food situation, by increasing cultivated areas and making seeds available.

To this end, the clearance of swamps in Mwambu and Mbagara was carried out, and a seed distribution centre was rehabilitated in Rubanga, Canzuko Province, with the NGO ACORD.

Beneficiaries were those populations which had remained on the hills, as well as current and potential repatriated people.

Judicial sector: legal assistance and legal clinic

This sub-project was carried out by LI, the Burundese Human Rights League and ILG. The general objective of ILG and LI was to work together with their partners to promote wider access to legal advice and assistance. The project took pains to avoid duplication with work carried out by Lawyers without Borders (*Avocats sans frontières*) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The project was also mindful of the need to ensure that a greater diversity of people obtains access to legal assistance.

The “mobile legal clinic” was an operational structure which could play a role of mediation, conciliation and information, as well as one of awareness-raising among populations in relation to law. This was done either through public meetings or through the one-on-one discussion of individual cases. The clinic did not substitute itself to state administrative or judicial institutions, but it offered important operational support to the local authorities in their daily judicial work.

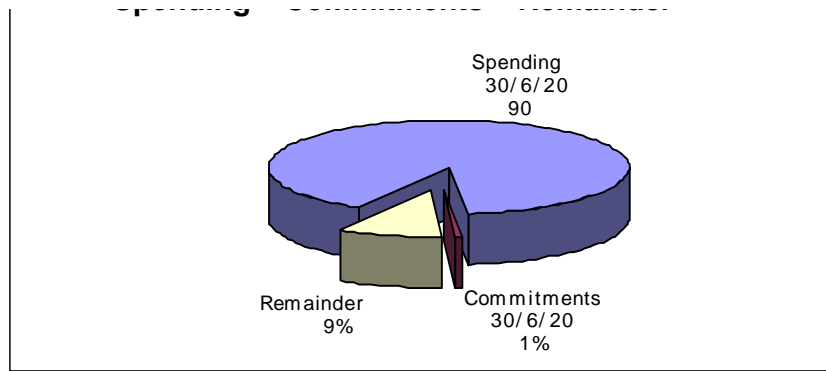
The beneficiaries of this sub-project were the communities from various ethnic backgrounds in the areas targeted by the activities. Action was mostly directed towards groups who suffered human rights violations not related to the political crisis of 1993.

Support to local and intermediate courts

This sub-project aimed at supporting the efforts to professionalise tribunals and enhance the independence of the judiciary in the target provinces, through training and logistical support. It aimed at reinforcing citizen’s trust in the judicial system.

Beneficiaries included magistrates, assessors and administrative authorities – for the training/retraining aspect, and local tribunals (*tribunaux de résidence*) and intermediary courts (*tribunaux de grande instance*) for the logistical support aspect.

Almost all funding was completed as at 30 June 2002 (see tables next page).



EXECUTION OF THE BUDGET AS AT 30 JUNE 2002					
Partner	Sector of activity	Total Planned Budget	Expenditures as at 30/6/2002	Commitments as at 30/6/2002	Remainder as at 30/6/2002
MASPF-FEPADE	Agriculture, Peace & Reconciliation	59.963.211	57.477.711	2.485.500	-
BPE	Education	36.543.559	36.308.515		235.044
INTERSOS	Education & health	368.738.210	341.675.113		27.063.097
Ligue Iteka	Justice	16.594.660	14.000.000	2.594.660	-
ARP	Education & health	135.921.971	113.723.390		22.198.581
ACORD	Food security	17.870.000	18.904.351		(1.034.351)
Eval./Audit	-	20.000.000	-	-	-
ILG	Justice	62.929.324	55.632.339		7.296.985
RCN	Justice	191.661.571	177.549.116	100.000	14.012.455
HCR	Capacity building	1.603.440	1.603.440	0	-
TOTAL BIF		911.825.946	816.873.975	5.180.160	69.771.811
EQ USD		1.066.463	955.408	6.059	104.996
INTERSOS	Education & health	27.000	27.000		-
RCN	Justice	14.358	14.358		-
ARP	Education & health	18.000	18.000		-
TOTAL USD		1.125.821	1.014.766	6.059	104.996
The total budget planned for 2002 includes the rest of the grant (900,000 USD) and the remainder from 2001 (193,921 USD), resulting in a total 2002 budget global of 1,093,921 USD					

The analysis of activities by sector shows that the largest amount of funding went to construction projects (which represent 50% of the total, as against 25% for legal work and 10% for support to women's groups and revenue-generation). This imbalance, considering what emerged as the population's priorities, was gradually addressed as the project unfolded.

3. Quality of Achievements

3.1 Planning vs. implementation

In terms of its general objectives, the link between planning and results is weak – for two reasons:

- The three World Bank assumptions described above were not verified to the extent expected;
- The impact of the sub-projects, taken individually, was low.

The project objectives were to ensure the basic conditions needed to make repatriation possible, create an environment in which the target populations have a stake in peace, and ensure that marginalised groups have more control over their destiny. The assumptions were that social services are very significant in the life of people, that those who have had a stake in the design and implementation of a project are committed to safeguarding it, and that marginalized groups will be able to be heard in the governance mechanisms of the sub-projects.

Interviews make clear, however, that whereas people see the presence of healthcare structures and schools as important, their absolute priorities are security and the prospect of regaining ownership of lost property. Moreover, the project shows that those structures that have been rehabilitated are just as likely to be the targets of theft or destruction (often perpetrated by others than the beneficiaries) as the older installations. Lastly, an analysis of the composition of the steering committees and of the community development centres demonstrates the dominance of these organs by people from cities, civil servants, and men. The influence of such groups appears, albeit indirectly, even in projects aimed at supporting women.

The sub-projects have often been implemented in mutual isolation, both between Communes and between sectors of intervention. The evaluation was not able to find connections, for instance, between school-building projects and those aimed at supporting women, or between income-generation projects and community health centres.⁵ An evaluation of the impact of the project must therefore take place with a consideration for the impact of other rehabilitation projects carried out by other organisations in the same sector. A glance at the population movement statistics shows that the projects in the provinces of Makamba, Ruyigi and Canzuko (southern border provinces) are less attractive to populations than those in more northerly provinces, and that the difference in attractiveness comes down to security rather than other social conditions.

The quality and effectiveness of the projects varied a lot according to the specific objectives of each of the sub-projects. It is remarkable that most projects visited demonstrated a very close consistency between what was planned and what was actually achieved at sub-project level. Where projects experienced difficulties in achieving most of the plans, they were either reviewed or closed down (as was the case with projects run by ActionAid and Libejeun). The close link between plans and

⁵ We did note, however, that programme officers have in recent months attempted to correct this lack of synergies, for example in the FEPADÉ and ILG projects.

achievements can be found both in the construction sub-projects and in the social development and legal work sub-projects.

Due to security concerns, the evaluation team was not able to visit sub-projects in Ruyigi and Canzuko. However, secondary sources indicate that, in those provinces too, planned results were achieved. ACORD, for example, active in Canzuko since mid-2001, has almost completed the clearance of the Mwambu swamp, thus enhancing food security by allowing an increase in the cultivated areas and by improving water management. New crops can now be planned. This clearly makes conditions more favourable to repatriation in this border area.

However, constraints remain significant. The uncertain security situation forces projects to be suspended from time to time. The negative effects of these suspensions are compounded by delays in payments, slow contract negotiations, lengthy contract approval procedures and even changes in UNHCR's own geographical priorities.

It is not always easy to mobilise populations in the Burundi context. People's interest depends in part on the goodwill of administrative authorities, and on the ability of the population to juggle other commitments. This is because populations face heavy demands from local authorities, other NGOs and daily work in the fields – not to mention the disruptions related to insecurity.

Climate constraints are important too. The implementation of many projects, in particular building projects, is heavily dependent on the weather, and is liable to be seriously disrupted during the rainy season. Constructions are delayed by rain, which also causes roads to become impracticable, therefore delaying the delivery of materials.

All these factors contribute to creating an artificially short time-frame for the implementation of many of the projects, down sometimes to a two-months window for some of the sub-projects (as was the case of some legal work projects), with no certainty that the projects will be continued beyond the current phase.

3. 2 Material aspects

Most buildings were schools and healthcare centres; some water management and road infrastructure was also built. The construction was of good quality and was closely monitored by the implementing partners in the field, as well as by UNHCR itself, which availed itself of the services of two Swiss architects and engineers.

The choice of materials is an oft-debated issue in Burundi. The choice is between locally produced materials, which are easier to repair or replace (tiles, woodwork, earth bricks), and imported materials considered more environmentally sound (metal sheeting, metal doorframes, concrete).

There are also issues related to quality of life. Oven-baked clay tiles offer much better thermal and sound insulation. They are more widely used than metal sheets, which do not have the same insulation qualities but are produced in ways less harmful to the local environment (traditional tile baking is a major cause of local deforestation). The

choice between the techniques depends mostly on the level of skill and training of the building contractor.

Some elements of the construction work, which make buildings vulnerable to violence, may be questioned. For instance, it is easy to take away items such as metal fences, poles and small metal sheets. Even though building did follow standards of construction prevailing in Burundi, widespread poverty and theft would justify a more cautious approach than the one taken so far by UNHCR.

Whereas efficiency was not a criteria for this evaluation, we did carry out an analysis of the NGOs' construction budgets, which offers relevant information on the selection of partners to implement sub-projects, at least in terms of the construction aspect (see table next page).

TABLE OF COMPARATIVE COSTS

UNIT PRICES COMPARISON		BURUNDESE COMPANIES			NGOs		
		BERCO	LOMATEC	EGB	INTERSO S	ARP	
TYPE OF WORK	U	PU	PU	PU		PU	PU
<u>BUILDINGS</u>							
Foundations dig	m3	3 000	2 000	1 224		2500	
<u>CONCRETE</u>							
Foundation concrete	m3	80 000	75 000	91 812		68250	
Clean concrete	m3	200 000	45 000	41 892		32500	37960
Reinforced concrete (350 kg /m3)							
Reinforced concrete platform	m3	320 000	198 500	206 894		228700	217490
Transverse girds	m3	320 000	198 500	206 894		228700	217490
Reinforced concrete columns	m3	320 000	198 500	206 894		228700	217490
Reinforced concrete ceiling (20x20cm)	m3	320 000	198 500	206 894		228700	217490
<u>WALLS</u>							
Stone wall (25cm thick)	m3	20 000	17 500	16 512		20750	
PVC film	m ²	1 500	3 500	10 026		1500	
<u>MASONRY</u>							
20cm oven baked brick masonry (concrete mortar)	m ²	12 000	10 500	5 560	Earth mortar	9300	5159

Claustras	m ²	18 000	15 000	24 564	39000	28790
<u>WALL COVERING</u>						
Plastering	m ²	1 500	3 000	3 312	5200	2900
Brick masonry rejoining	m ²	2 000	1 200	2 448	1500	456
Ceramic squares	m ²	25 000	15 700	20 716	18800	
Plinths	ml	2 000	500	422	1500	649
<u>ROOFING</u>						
Metal tubing (60 x 40 x1,5)	ml	10 000	3 000	3 172	5800	
Rivet plate (150 x 30 mm)	ml	12 000	3 000	6 274	4200	6262
<u>FALSE CEILING</u>						
Unalit ceiling on wood beams	m ²	12 000	10 500	9 854	7149	
<u>DOORFRAMES</u>						
Metal door (0,90 x 2,50m)	pce	220 000	155 000	107 023	160000	
Metal window-frames with nacco glass (1,3 x 1,60m)	pce	185 120	195 000	92 780	123000	
<u>PAINTWORK</u>						
Vinyl paint on walls & ceilings	m ²	3 500	1 950	2 778	2150	1925
<u>PLUMBING</u>						

Sink	pce	150 000	80 000	155 568	120000
WC with seat	pce	250 000	150 000	220 560	150000
WC no seat	pce	150 000	85 000	158 592	150000
Visiting chamber	pce	40 000	45 000	90 764	60000
Sceptic tank	pce	900 000	1 500 000	2 644	1800000
				320	
Drain well	pce	1 000	1 100 000	1 344	1500000
		000		968	

Despite the fact that the NGOs receive logistical support, the unit cost of their services is double that of large Bujumbura-based companies. The decision to hire an NGO to carry out building work should therefore be made in view of its ability to engage with local populations. However it appears (from interviews carried out in this evaluation, as well as from other studies in the region) that populations do not distinguish between contractors and NGOs. Moreover, the social engineering capacity of the NGOs is generally quite limited.

The choice of structures to be built or rehabilitated has demonstrated a good understanding of the social context. The evaluation team was not able to verify whether the most isolated Communes were as well covered by construction work as the more accessible ones (bearing in mind that the more distant Communes are also those where opposition groups are the most powerful). However we could find no obvious case of excessive contrast between constructions built under the project and surrounding buildings. The coordination between partners and other agencies was satisfactory on this point.

The record of UNHCR's Quick Impact Projects is mixed in this regard. These projects, originally developed in 1991 in Ethiopia, called for buildings to be taken over, maintained and used under national development policies. However, the situation in Burundi is that the infrastructure surrounding construction projects is slowly deteriorating – some schools have no access to electricity or water. Despite this, UNHCR seems to continue to assume (incorrectly) that other actors will take responsibility for ensuring the overall consistency and viability of individual construction projects.

Whereas Burundi is host to other programmes such as those by UNDP (including for example the Community Support Framework Plan) and the World Bank, the evaluation team noted many instances in which no programme existed to support construction activities carried out under the project.

3.3 Social Aspect

Contrary to what might be expected, the most promising sub-projects from the social aspect viewpoint are not those that have followed participatory studies or lengthy consultation committees – they are those that have sprung up from debates and contacts with the population which resulted from the implementation of the projects themselves.

The level of interest by the population in the projects is tangible when one visits the projects. Voluntary groups such as steering committees (grouping parents of schoolchildren, or Community Development Groups) spring up around construction projects; their members take time to participate in decision-making.

Nevertheless a high level of guidance by the local administration remains in evidence, as is the rift between literate people and peasants, including in the ability to communicate in French (which is indispensable to negotiate projects). On the other hand, the more spontaneous and less policed groups that have appeared around the

legal clinics suggest that there are prospects for more in-depth involvement of the population in projects, even though communications between agencies and the government on the one hand, and the population on the other, continue to be mediated by the urban elite.

The mobile clinics were never mentioned in the participatory studies carried out by UNHCR's partners and the World Bank. The level of popular interest for them is much higher than the interest for social infrastructures, which people interviewed in the hills refer to as self-evident. The popular enthusiasm visible during meetings surrounding legal clinics is in sharp contrast to the level of interest visible at the inauguration of buildings.

The most participatory agencies have had difficulties reaching the quality standards demanded by UNHCR. ActionAid Burundi, a partner suggested by the World Bank as having the ability to mobilize and operating in Ruyigi, proved slower than other partners, used materials that were not durable enough, and was unable to respect UNHCR's admittedly tight disbursement deadlines.

Many other agencies, which have long worked with UNHCR, have had difficulties. ADSSE, for example says in its document that the rehabilitation of schools takes place upon the suggestion of the administrative authorities and the consultation of the population, adding that it does work which "corresponds to a real objective" – in other words the project was designed before the consultation.

UNHCR, however, has made significant efforts to correct this shortcoming. Training was organised for some partners. Project proposals and activity reports are frequently pored over to pick up mentions of participatory mechanisms and of social impact. In the difficult context of Burundi (described in Section 1), the evaluation team believes that the consultation systems set up around the sub-projects it visited should be considered fully satisfactory.

Lastly, the project was generally able to avoid the pitfalls related to the deep social segmentation that resulted from the war. None of the buildings serves one ethnic group more than others (which is often a problem when houses are built), neither is one region favoured over others. Criteria such as the place of origin of the refugees and security were taken into account in planning projects, but this did not lead to servile following of government priorities when these priorities were not consistent with the needs as assessed by the project. The sub-projects were built on state property.

It is to be noted that the two provinces (Bururi and Muyinga) where the project is most active in the last phase are both rich – however this does not detract from the importance of the projects in terms of the populations which fled, because the two provinces will remain important goals for returnees.

The FEPADÉ project of the Ministry of Social Work and Promotion of Women was taken over in north-eastern Communes (rather than staying in Bujumbura) and the sub-project of mobile legal clinics is active in Rumonge Commune, where land-use issues often have political overtones.

Results indicators are positive. For example, the average number of children in each class is diminishing thanks to building rehabilitation, and schools become more attractive to teachers coming from far away (they tend to avoid schools that do not have lodgings).

At the Muyinga Intermediate Court (*Tribunal de Grande Instance*), the quality of magistrates' work has been enhanced by the distribution of legal texts. Prior to RCN's interventions in August 2001, vehicles had to be requisitioned when field visits took place, which occurred just once every two months. The rhythm of these visits has accelerated, now reaching one visit per week.

Between January to June 2001, four magistrates were available for public hearings. The impact of their presence is visible in the number of cases that have been dealt with (see tables below).

2001 (before sub-project)	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
Available magistrates	4	4	4	4	4	4
Pending cases	536	545	547	561	540	577
Completed cases	20	20	16	24	18	37
Field visits	0	0	0	0	3	1

Between January and June 2002, three magistrates were taking place in all the public hearings.

2002 (during sub-project)	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
Available magistrates	2	2	3	3	3	2
Pending cases	688	714	722	719	719	726
Completed cases	7	10	22	20	19	10
Field visits	6	7	10	10	10	7

Following the intervention by RCN, the Muyinga judiciary has noticeably improved the quality of its work.

4. Sustainability

4.1 Integration and Continuity

The sub-projects were developed and closed in relative mutual isolation – although more communication did occur in the last months of the project. The project cycle is characterised by different identification processes, financial processes dependent on UNHCR management procedures, and a level of follow-up that varies according to accessibility and project performance. The isolation of each sub-project appears unnecessarily and seems to limit the impact of the activities. It does however correspond to financing procedures where each sub-project is contracted to a different NGO.

The cross-cutting activities mentioned in the terms of reference are actions of a more social nature – such as the planting of vegetable gardens in schools, the training of the unskilled teachers, and the establishment of steering committees. These activities grew over time, as the capacity of some partners such as ARP increased. However these cross-cutting aspects do not relate to other projects, an absence of linkage which can be considered a lost opportunity.

Projects, however, are not left to their own devices once completed. The example of the Rumonge Community Health Centre is telling in that respect: the centre was built by INTERSOS under a plan developed in consultation with future beneficiaries, and the NGO ABUBEF, which is due to take over the management of the centre (with UNFPA financing). The centre is involved in reproductive healthcare and also has recreational activities.

It may seem at first sight that an excessive number of partners have been involved in the activities – about ten partners at any given time during 2000 and 2001. However this is consistent with UNHCR methods. This number is also a consequence of the limited capacity of the partners. It allows greater management control at sub-project level in an area (which is crucial in conflict areas) and perhaps more geographical spread.

The programme gradually developed some synergies, especially in 2002, focusing on the connection between construction work and social programmes. By insisting that the projects take place in each province as an indivisible whole, UNHCR was able to safeguard some sensitive programmes from being filtered out by some stakeholders. This helped reinforce the viability of the programme as a whole.

The continuity of the project's achievements has been ensured by co-financing activities with an EC Development Fund programme pursuing similar objectives, whose duration and budget were greater than those of the World Bank project. This programme provided the project with a degree of continuity and consistency that would have been difficult to achieve otherwise. This matching of objectives underlines the fact that such "pilot" World Bank projects should carry out a review exercise (such as a mid-term evaluation) in order to ensure that, once the project is completed, it is taken over by another agency or transfer to another programme.

While a good level of coordination was achieved with other international agencies such as the UNFPA, the other programmes only really cooperated on the ground at the sub-project level (as ECHO did with its health programme, and UNDP with its rehabilitation programme). Security concerns are conducive to cooperation in the field, and operational approaches have often been shared. However neither UNHCR nor the World Bank seem to have sought to involve other agencies in the overall design of the project – whereas the Technical Committee and the Projects Committee established by the European Commission to manage its programme, including the takeover of the World Bank project, help ensure the bulk of communications among donor agencies.

The sub-projects are almost without exception in an experimental phase: activities therefore must be continued. The achievements reached so far would be compromised by a premature interruption of activities or disbursements. The development of the activities has now reached a level consistent with the objectives: it will therefore be important for UNHCR to ensure that the projects are adequately taken over by others at the end of 2002.

4.2 Sustainability of Achievements

War is the predominant contextual aspect of interventions in Burundi, as access to some areas may suddenly be closed down (as happened in Ruyigi and Canzuko) and as beneficiaries themselves may flee, thus wasting the energy of the operational partners and leading to the destruction of some of what was done. The evaluation team has not been able to reach a firm conclusion on the impact of military activities on the project, but it noted some practices aimed at safeguarding achievements to the extent possible.

UNHCR, in consultation with the implementing partners, has attempted to identify indicators for the long-term impact of the sub-projects. This suggests that the sub-projects were designed with long-term viability in mind. A significant effort was made to elaborate management structures, be they in relation to construction work on in relation to income-generation activities.

However, there was a lack of perception of potential future local developments in relation to the sub-projects. For example, the schools were built to include homes for teachers, but the cost of education borne by families, or the decreasing rate of school attendance, were not taken into account⁶. A strategic perspective was also lacking, that would have involved all the sub-projects into a single mutual support process. The lack of an overall perspective presents the risk that the programme may appear as a collection of small projects dotted around the country, with little visibility at the national level, and little mutual support among projects. UNHCR did attempt to surmount this weakness by concentrating projects within certain areas, selected in consideration of accessibility and of interest to potential returnees.

⁶ This failure comes down in part to the fact that UNHCR is used to implement programmes within refugee camps, where conditions are much more closed and controlled than in the open society – a radically different environment to the one in which this programme has operated.

The economic situation and the state of the country's finances do not suggest a positive outlook for the sub-projects once they are handed over to beneficiary communities. The government administration, a traditional source of support to infrastructures, is hardly able to muster its own operational budget. As a result of its weakness, there is a risk that the achievements of the legal support projects implemented by RCN be compromised once they are closed in the Communes where they are currently present. However, the informal arrangements seem to have greater chances of survival – such as that set up by FEPADE in the Commune of Gasorwe, which is still existing since it was launched by UNICEF in 1972, despite the fact that UNICEF stopped its involvement in the project years ago.

The economic interest of projects to families appears to be a key condition of their sustainability. Another condition is that maintenance costs should not be excessive – it is failure on this count that leads to achievements such as school buildings and ancillary structures being less durable than they should be. Lastly, it is clear that a project in the design of which the population was involved will be better maintained than those that are detached from the local context.

5. Institutional Aspects

5.1 Institutional Management

The evaluation team noted several factors, which indicate that UNHCR project implementation methods have hampered quality delivery. These factors included diminishing staff resources, slow disbursements, limited use of external expertise, inconsistency between the organisation's internal rules and the revenue-generation projects, an excessively large portfolio of projects (covering social engineering, buildings, legal work, economic support, complex financial management), and difficult and dangerous operating conditions.

The commitment of staff has been remarkable, however, and innovative procedures were introduced (such as follow-up to contributions by funders, regular spot audits), but the technical supervision of the project may have suffered from these procedures. The cost-cutting within UNHCR led to, and will aggravate, a loss of efficiency. The long-term planning of resources is often lacking, and the implementing partners suffer from a stop-and-go income stream. However, the consultations with World Bank representatives have been helpful, and information flow to the Bank was as direct as possible.

5.2 Coordination and Partnership

The operations in the hills are implemented by a network of NGOs sub-contracted to a plurality of funding sources; their ability to mobilise society is growing, even though their work has largely been confined to a palliative role of building and distribution. These NGOs play an information and experience gathering role on behalf of donors, allowing for good ideas to be picked up.

UNHCR was skilled at developing with the implementing partners a relationship based on high standards of demand and on institutional strengthening, by insisting on the use of impact indicators in the design of the sub-projects. A delicate balance was maintained, between the necessary autonomy of the partners and the imperatives of financial and technical control.

UNHCR has on several occasions carried out integrated collaborations, such as the "Area Rehabilitation and Development Plan", which was to bring together Twitezimbéré, UNDP and the Ministry of Planning. However, these collaborations have frequently lost momentum as a result of administrative requirements.

In fact, coordination largely came down, as always, to personal relationships between staff working on various projects rather than to formal committee relationships. The World Bank project has also benefited from contacts with other organisations established through the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee, which also led to European funding being devolved to UNHCR for rehabilitation projects.

It is precisely because the World Bank project was relatively lacking in innovation, as compared to projects designed by such organisations as PCAC, PreBu, Twitezimbéré, that coordination with other programmes was relatively easy. A complementary

choice was made in the provinces where interventions took place, and the most promising projects were able to move over from one donor to another.

6. Replicability

6.1 Knowledge Management

It may be necessary to review the participatory approach in the design and fine-tuning of projects, particularly in contexts of wars and where cultures are not very open to foreigners' insights. The ways in which decisions are taken in relation to the distribution of public and private property vary greatly from country to country. Decisions are not always taken by gathering all the people concerned or by asking them multiple-choice questions. In Burundi, popular consultations require more trust and more in-depth consideration of alternative approaches than rapid socio-economic enquiries allow.

On the other hand, the situation in Burundi has underscored the usefulness of intervention actors "blending into" the environment. Such blending resulted from frequent, familiar contacts between NGO partners and local people, and of the joint work, at equal levels, of international and national personnel. The presence of project staff around provinces for relatively long periods helped provide UNHCR with an understanding of the dynamics underlying repatriation that was better than that resulting from the World Bank-mandated studies, or even from UNHCR's own usual practice of accompanying convoys of displaced and refugees back to their place of resettlement.

The insistence from the start on the social dimension of projects and on understanding the local populations has helped develop new approaches, more fruitful in terms of impact than the Rapid Impact Projects, considered originally, would have been. For example, the Rumonge Community Health Centre set up by INTERSOS has created a public meeting space for a population largely deprived of meeting opportunities. Similarly, FEPADE's projects to promote women play on both the dynamics of income generation and on those of inter-ethnic reconciliation.

6.2 An Integrated Approach to Justice

The legal access programmes were real innovations in the Burundi context – indeed these programmes are not common at all around the world. The programmes help citizens express views on issues of great importance to them. These are not necessarily political views: whereas many of the legal conflicts are related to the history of exile, they cause more rifts within families than between ethnic groups.

These programmes could usefully draw support from other projects, such as income-generation projects and peace education sessions organised by women's groups, or such as community centres. It would be useful to systematically adopt a dual approach, in which construction projects (which can hardly be refused by the authorities) are developed in conjunction with legal projects (which are more sensitive from the authorities' point of view).

6.3 Procedures Inspired by the Field

The project benefited from detailed financial monitoring, based on the segmentation introduced in Bujumbura into the budget structures of UNHCR, according to donor

source. The staff was selected on the basis of their country expertise. Many field visits were made, and relationships based on critical dialogue were maintained with the partners.

In addition to these positive aspects, it would have been important to facilitate financial management for the partners, by adopting more flexible rules on the expenditure of funds (allowing expenses to stretch over more than one year), or by lengthening the planning period. In other words, it would have been beneficial to give to the managers of the project (UNHCR's programme section) the resources necessary to take a broad view and engage in strategic thinking regarding the interventions.

The management team should be able to rely on a framework of objectives formulated in terms of impact, which would form the basis of financial management. This should avoid being merely done in terms of income and expenditures, and should be formulated in a more systematic way in connection with results.

7. Recommendations

- **Objectives:** The concept of community rehabilitation should be reviewed, to become more adapted to a context of chronic instability. The evaluation team suggests that the concept of reinforcing capacity to manage social risks be used. The notion of risk helps decide on priorities (as it allows to express the needs of the population in terms of fears, but also in terms of alternative possibilities). The word “social” suggests activities that steer away from politics, and is less controversial than the term “communities”.
- **Management:** Administrative risks threatening the project call for the establishment of a project management cell, endowed with realistic procedures for sub-contracting and for resource management in sub-projects. The cell should be organised so as to be accountable on technical and financial matters to UNHCR, which would remain responsible for strategy. The team should ensure a continuous oversight of the sub-projects. Its level of expertise in social issues should go beyond the level currently. The only alternative approach could be to obtain financing for UNHCR staff from the project budget.
- **Social dimension:** The participative approach works better when it is implemented at the same time as activities, in close contact with the population. It would be interesting to develop more systematically the social activities, which we found within the projects – for example such meeting places as the one at the Rumonge community health centre. It would also be possible to experiment with “common good” revolving social funds, with funding from the community⁷. A form of sub-contracting should then be planned to comply with UNHCR procedures – which currently call for all funding to be used in the year they are disbursed, and precludes income generation.
- **Sustainability:** To ensure greater consistency among projects, the concept of a target population could be redefined, by focussing all the activities on two zones and by aiming to achieve a specific level of impact for the project in relation to these zones. More integrated approaches should be developed, in which each sub-project is presented under a specific objective to which it should contribute.
- **Innovation:** The World Bank has found in Burundi an operational partner able to gather various sources of funding and ensure coordination among funders, even though the donors themselves often fail to liaise with one another. The Bank also allowed the launch of new types of programmes (judicial and legal assistance, community health centres), which are as innovative (and as little-known) as needed in other parts of the world (Liberia, Nepal). It would seem

⁷ An illustrative example of the use of such funds was given by the case of a head of household occupying the house of a repatriated refugee. He only asked for the payment of Fbu 127,500 (about US\$100) to return the house, which covered the cost of repairs he had carried out after the owner had fled.

relevant to maintain the momentum gained by such innovation, and to replicate the cooperation seen in Burundi into other pre-repatriation situations.

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

The original terms of reference for the mission were in French. Below is a summary in English.

Country:	Burundi
Amount:	2,000,000US\$
Name of project:	Community Rehabilitation Project
Convention No:	DGF – Grant no 80
Implementing agency:	UNHCR
Period covered:	34 months, from September 1999

General objectives of project:

Short-term general objective: To finance community rehabilitation activities in poor provinces affected by the return of exiles.

Long-term general objective: To enhance cooperation between the World Bank and UNHCR in their future strategies and interventions in favour of countries in transition.

Specific objectives:

- To reinforce grass-root community initiatives;
- To ensure the durable reinsertion of repatriated, displaced and other victim populations, by allowing them to take charge of themselves;
- To allow beneficiary populations to have access to basic social services.

Expected results:

Community support under the project as financed should result in:

- The provision of community infrastructures, particularly schools, health-care centres, drinking water outlets;
- Support for local income-generation activities;
- Local capacity building.

Evaluation:

The evaluation team will review the following points, under a methodology to be proposed by the consultant:

- The nature and quality of the sub-projects identified in the programme, particularly in view of the requirements of a participatory approach involving beneficiaries are the various phases of the project cycle (identification, implementation and management);
- The relevance of the sub-projects in relation to the needs expressed by the beneficiaries;
- The quality and the level of the achievements in the field; The relevance and practical implementation of the selection criteria for the

operational partners (in terms of spread by sector, geographical regions, etc);

- The degree of integration of the cross-cutting activities in the programmes implemented, and their impact (including cooperation with other programmes);
- The actual and potential impact of the sub-projects on the process of reconciliation and community rehabilitation;
- The consistency of the project management procedures used with the Manual of 8 June 1999, approved by the two agencies.

On the basis of their analysis, the consultants will suggest strategic adjustments that would improve the manner in which the beneficiaries' needs are addressed in relation to the search for durable solutions. The evaluation should offer conclusions on the lessons to be drawn from this experience, and on their applicability in other post-conflict situations, whether or not otherwise comparable to the situation of Burundi.

Annex 2: List of people met

UNHCR/World Bank Staff

Mr Pamphile KANTABAZE, Principal Operations Officer, AFTH4, Bujumbura, World Bank
Mr Prosper NINTORERA, Programme Officer
Mr Stefano SEVERE, Representative, UNHCR, Bujumbura
Mr Arnaud ROYER, Reinsertion Programmes Officer, UNHCR
Mr Bernard LAMBRETTE, Programme Officer, UNHCR
Ms Marie-Goretti NAHIMANA, Programme Coordinator, UNHCR
Ms Yvette MUHIMPUNDU, Protection-Assistant
Mr Günther HEIL, Security Officer, UNHCR
Mr Peter BOMELI, Architect, UNHCR
Mr ROBERTO, Engineer, UNHCR
Mr Chitta Ranjan DAS, Repatriation Officer, UNHCR Sub-Office Ngara, Tanzania

UN staff, donors

Mr Michel TAILLADE, Representative, UNPF
Mr CECHIN, ECHO Expert
Mr Gaëtan BLAIS, PCAC Director, UNDP

NGO staff, Bujumbura

Ms Espérance MUSIRIMU, Project Officer, International Human Rights Law Group
Mr Fabio GREPPI, Director, INTERSOS Burundi
Ms Isabelle BROUILLARD, Director, Réseau Citoyen/Citizen Network. Coordinators for legal clinics established by Ligue Iteka and International Human Rights Law Group
Mr Jean-Marie GAHURAGIZA, Logistician and accountant, RCN
Ms Aline HOBINGINGO, Project Coordinator "Support to Justice"

Local government officials, NGO field staff, beneficiaries

Mr BUZINGO Déo, Programme Officer, ARP
Mr RUBERINTWARI Pasteur, Administration and Finance Officer, ACORD
Mr Pierre MUNDEBA MAPENDO, Kirundo Bureau Chief, ADSSE
Ms Dona Fabiola NSHIMIRIMANA, Legal Assistance Programme Officer, LI
Ms Jacqueline KARISABIYE, Director, Promotion of Women Department
School Children Parents' Committee, Rumonge, Bururi
Commune Administrator (Councillor), Rumonge, Bururi
Zone Chief, Rumonge, Bururi
Vice-President of Comunal Development Committee, Rumonge, Bururi
Steering Committee, Rumonge Primary School, Bururi
Members of Community Development Committee, Rumonge, Bururi

Director, Magara Primary School, Bururi
Sector Chief, Magara, Bururi
School Children Parents' Committee, Gatete, Bururi
LI mobile clinic team, Gatete, Bururi.
School Children Parents Committee, Busoni, Kirundo.
Director, Busoni Primary School, Kirundo.
Mobile legal clinic team, Butihinda, Kirundo.
Mr Frédéric CHITEGEZI, President, Gasorwe Local Tribunal, Muyinga.
President, Muyinga Local Tribunal
Judge, Myinga Intermediate Tribunal
Women Groupement of Gasorwe Commune
Women Groupement of Giteranyi Commune
Paralegals from International Law Group in Butihinda Commune
Peasants from Butihinda Commune
Group of displaced people in Muyinga Commune