

# QUICK IMPACT PROJECTS:

## SUPPORTING REINTEGRATION FOR BURUNDIAN RETURNNEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE REHABILITATION

Due to sociopolitical events and natural disasters occurring in 2015, over 300,000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries, half of whom are currently living in the United Republic of Tanzania. Those who return to Burundi often lack a source of income, an essential step in their reintegration process, and their added presence strains already limited resources in the community. As a result, social conflict can arise between returnees and host communities – vulnerable groups who must share both economic and community-based resources such as water points and schools.

Since early 2018, IOM's comprehensive reintegration programme for returnees and host communities has helped improve the ability of host communities to absorb a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returning refugees from Tanzania by creating platforms for dialogue, strengthening existing basic service infrastructure, and providing opportunities for short-term employment and job training.

### AT A GLANCE: IOM's REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2018/2019:

-  **51** Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) implemented
-  **13,495** participants in preliminary community dialogues
-  **2,313** participants in the in-depth community dialogues
-  **4,780** people remunerated through Cash for Work or unconditional cash
-  **665** agricultural toolkits distributed
-  **387** beneficiaries received vocational training
-  **10** business incubators created





COMMUNITY DIALOGUE EVENT IN MUINGA PROVINCE ©IOM 2019

## 2019 REINTEGRATION PROGRAMME

In 2019, thanks to support from the Department for International Development (DFID), European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) and the Governments of Germany and Japan (Japanese Supplementary Budget), IOM expanded its reintegration programme from 15 to 30 collines, or geographic zones, in Makamba, Muyinga, Rutana and Ruyigi provinces. Targeted communities were supported with the implementation of 34 rehabilitation works in the form of community-prioritized Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), chosen by communities during community dialogues. The selected projects were designed to help improve the communities' capacity to welcome the returning population.

### COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Community dialogue sessions provided a safe and welcoming platform for host community members and returnees to ask questions or express concerns related to the return process and jointly identify QIPs. With IOM staff and implementing partners guiding the tone, structure, and content of the dialogue sessions, each session resulted in the identification of one QIP to be implemented within the community.

Nearly 9,400 people were included in the 2019 preliminary dialogue sessions, which allowed IOM to reach the community at large and facilitated the selection process of community representatives who would participate in the more in-depth second session occurring the next day. A total of 1,638 representatives – including women, youth, returnees, IDPs, host communities, community leaders, elderly and people with disabilities – attended the community dialogues. The results of these discussions provided an important window into understanding and analyzing the most important needs of communities hosting high numbers of returnees and/or IDPs.



*Léonard Barakamfitiye, chef de colline and host community member in Rutana province, participated in the community dialogues held to identify and prioritize the community infrastructure rehabilitations which would be carried out in his colline. He explained, "We prioritized water for our community because there are some localities that don't have any access to it right now. Many people have to drink water from the swamp which is dirty and causes illness, like intestinal worms, malaria and other diseases. People are always sick, so this is why we chose a project that would help to construct new water points."*

## QUICK IMPACT PROJECTS

The chosen projects in 2019 included 15 school rehabilitations, 8 water source rehabilitations, 4 infrastructure rehabilitations (roads and bridges), 3 soil conservation initiatives, 2 fishing-related infrastructure rehabilitations, 1 marketplace rehabilitation, and 1 playground rehabilitation. Following QIP selection by the community, feasibility and engineering studies were carried out to ensure the projects were well-informed and sustainable, and skilled technical staff, including masons, were hired to oversee the construction process.

In addition to the technical experts, 35-50 beneficiaries were recruited per QIP to carry out the works together with IOM and ZOA, and received Cash for Work (CfW). The beneficiary selection criteria represented all members of the community:



RESULTS OF A SOIL CONSERVATION PROJECT IN MUYINGA PROVINCE ©IOM 2019



and overall participation of:  
  
60%  
women        
60%  
youth

1,425 beneficiaries were directly engaged in the project and provided with short-term job opportunities on the construction sites. This was complemented by an unconditional cash distribution and financial inclusion information sessions held for 2,400 of the most vulnerable members of the host community, who were unable to participate in the Cash for Work programme. Those selected for the unconditional cash distribution received a one-time disbursement of 25 USD.

## IMPROVING SOCIAL COHESION

For those involved in the projects, working side-by-side to identify and find solutions for the challenges they face has helped to create harmony where it is needed most. The rehabilitation projects allowed for neighbours to work together and learn a new skill, while also earning income to provide for their most urgent needs. Many of the projects have had a significant impact on the day-to-day lives of those who live nearby, as they now spend less time to reach potable water sources or cross an area where a bridge did not previously exist.

The community-based approach used in the implementation of the project promoted participation and ownership, while simultaneously building legitimacy and capacity of returnees and host communities alike. Furthermore, through the dialogue and interaction that accompanied the process of project identification, stakeholder consultation and project implementation, the project contributed to the stability and social cohesion of the communities involved while addressing key needs.



RESULTS OF A SCHOOL REHABILITATION PROJECT IN RUTANA PROVINCE: BEFORE VS. AFTER ©IOM 2019



Emelyne Habonimana, a 38-year old member of the host community in Rutana province, participated in the rehabilitation of a local school classroom as part of IOM's reintegration programme. "This was a good opportunity for us to work with returnees and displaced people," she said. "Before, we didn't have the occasion to meet them and work together or have a social activity but now this gives us the chance to do so." Emelyne planned to use the renumeration she received from the Cash for Work initiative to pay for a labourer to cultivate rice in her field, as well as food and school supplies for her two children.



## FOCUS ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Soil conservation projects were implemented to reduce the risk of flooding during torrential rains by slowing down the velocity of water as it flows down watersheds. As the majority of the population lives on subsistence farming and agriculture, these activities will be crucial to ensure food security and stability. The implementation modality followed best practices related to disaster risk reduction/soil conservation, which have already proven to have positive impacts in Burundi, such as: terracing activities (anti-erosion ditches) to mitigate impact of landslides and erosion, masonry works/rock blocks and planting of soil fixating grass to help consolidate the terraces, planting fruit trees as part of a greater reforestation initiative, promoting soil fertility through livestock distribution, and sensitization sessions on soil conservation with communities and local authorities.

## LOOKING FORWARD

IOM is now focusing on further building the capacity of community members on infrastructure maintenance through awareness raising and sensitization. Basic hygiene promotion is also an identified priority, especially for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene-related infrastructures, such as water source rehabilitation and spring catchments.

Despite the challenges that often accompany those who are returning to Burundi after long periods of time, reintegration efforts remain an essential tool for supporting a smooth transition into their new lives and communities. When the most vulnerable populations are empowered to become leaders in their own recovery, bonds between diverse groups are built and communities begin to feel more like home.



RESULTS OF A MARKETPLACE REHABILITATION  
PROJECT IN RUTANA PROVINCE: BEFORE VS.  
AFTER ©IOM 2019



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WITH THANKS TO  
OUR PARTNERS:

