

The Enterprise of Integration:  
The Case of Urban Refugees in Rwanda

by

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## **Abstract**

### **The Enterprise of Integration: The Case of Urban Refugees in Rwanda**

**Abstract:** Interviews were undertaken over a series of months with 20 Congolese refugees living in Kigali. The study explores their levels of integration in all of the legal, economic, and social/cultural dimensions. Taking into account the differing degrees of support received, this study also makes comparisons between those refugees officially recognized as urban, and those who were not. Finally, factors for successful refugee integration are assessed.

10 January 2011

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AEC	African Economic Community
AHA	Africa Humanitarian Action
ARC	American Refugee Committee
CEPGL	Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries
CNDP	Congrès National du Peuple
CNR	National Council for Refugees
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Committee
ExCOM	Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner's Program
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FDLR	Front Démocratique pour la Liberation du Rwanda
GNP	Gross National Product
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IT	Information Technology
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Governance, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs Rwanda
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning Rwanda
MONUC	Mission of the United Nations Organization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NBI	Nile Basin Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais Democratique
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USCRI	United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
WFP	United Nations World Food Program



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What could this man have been yesterday? A sower in the spring, a harvester in the fall...? And today? A refugee, with a bowl in his hand, queuing for soup. What a waste of human energy, I think, an abasement of dignity...a billion people capable of work with nothing or almost nothing to do for the duration of their lives...If they could be given worthwhile occupations, humanity could make dizzying progress. The world's wealth would be doubled. Pyramids of merchandise would rise in even the poorest countries. Granaries would overflow. Water would flood the largest deserts.

- Richard Kapuscinski (1991)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The movement of peoples from one part of the world to another has taken place at all times in human history, on varying scales, and under a vast array of circumstances. The reasons behind such movements may differ – from the climatic to political to religious – but the pressures of human migration continue to transform the world in all of the political, economic, social, and cultural realms.

In recent years, the number of people forced to seek out life in a new country has greatly increased, largely due to a rise in natural disasters and conflicts, as well as improved functions of global mobility. Whether the process occurs slowly through cultural infiltration or more rapidly, as in the case of refugees fleeing a conflict, patterns of human migration have significant consequences for all of the migrants themselves, the host country, and the international community.

The phenomenon itself may not be a new one, but the global response to cases of human migration continues to change dramatically. In the developed and developing worlds alike, countries are increasingly establishing stricter immigration policies in response to the parallel rise in the number of people seeking asylum within their borders. As the

processes of globalization continue to threaten national sovereignty, states are continually seeking out new ways to protect their own interests and those of their citizens. It was at this crossroads that refugee law, and with it the very definition of a refugee, arose. States have had to come face to face with the harsh realities of large population movements – and the hefty responsibilities of hosting them.

Since the official legal refugee protection regime began in 1951, the international community has favored the use of refugee camps as its central organizing concept. The key flaw that lies therein is the assumption of the temporal nature of refugee crises. Refugee camps are meant to be short-term responses to a short-term emergency. The reality, however, paints a different picture. In fact, almost 70 percent of the world's refugees have been in camps for ten years or more (USCRI, 2005). That long-term heavy reliance on camps can have a negative impact on all of the refugees, locals, and host countries involved.

The thesis at issue aims to explore alternatives to refugee camps in cases of protracted refugee crises. Specifically, it aims to develop and test a methodology for analyzing the viability of integration in the case of a select group of urban refugees in Rwanda. The main structure of the thesis is, therefore, twofold. First, it will develop a concept for analyzing

the viability of integration as one alternative solution to protracted refugee crises by revisiting the literature on both the theory and current-day responses to refugee crises; demonstrating the need for alternative responses to protracted refugee crises; and developing a research methodology.

Second, the thesis will apply the methodology and test it by means of a case study of urban refugees in Rwanda. It will analyze their levels of self-sufficiency and integration in their local communities, and the associating causal factors. It will then draw together conclusions from the findings, and identify a number of potential opportunities that exist for the major stakeholders in order to maximize integration as one possible alternative solution to protracted refugee crises. Table 1 below provides an overview of the thesis structure.

<b>TABLE 1: STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS</b>
<p><b>Overall Goal</b></p> <p>To develop and test a methodology for analyzing the viability of integration in the case of a select group of urban refugees in Rwanda.</p> <p><b><u>First Objective</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop the concept for analyzing the viability of integration as one alternative solution to protracted refugee crises.</li> <li>• To revisit the literature on both the theory and the current-day responses to refugee crises;</li> <li>• To demonstrate the need for alternative responses to protracted refugee crises;</li> <li>• To develop the research methodology to test the viability of integration as one alternative response to protracted refugee crises.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Second Objective</u></b></p>

- To apply the concept to urban refugees in Rwanda and identify potential opportunities that exist for the major stakeholders in order to maximize integration as one possible alternative solution to protracted refugee crises.
- To analyze the levels of self-sufficiency and integration of select urban refugees in Rwanda;  
To identify the causal factors and identify potential opportunities.

Situated in the heart of Africa's Great Lakes region, Rwanda presents an ideal site for carrying out this case study. Due to its volatile history, it is often considered to be an exclusively refugee-producing country. As such, little research has been conducted to date into Rwanda's role as a refugee-hosting country. And yet some 59,000 refugees call Rwanda their home (USCRI, 2009). More importantly, while media attention and the services of government and various international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focus on those refugees in the burgeoning camps along Rwanda's borders, the country's urban refugees often slip under their radar. Indeed, no research to date has been conducted into the situation of Rwanda's 2,547 officially recognized urban refugees who, although they may not make up a significant proportion of the population, are nonetheless important actors for the Government of Rwanda to consider as it strives to achieve its goal of becoming a middle-income country by the year 2020, and in upholding its commitments under international humanitarian law. Far beyond its theoretical value as a contribution to the body of knowledge, therefore, this thesis hopes to prove directly beneficial to Rwanda and its people.

## **2. DEFINITIONS**

This chapter presents working definitions of the concepts of refugees, urban refugees, and protracted refugee crises that are used throughout this study.

### **2.1 What is a refugee?**

Article 1 of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as any person who:

*owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or to return there because there is a fear of persecution.*

Refugees are often confused with other migrants. Economic migrants are those who make a conscious choice to leave their country to seek a better life, and have no specific political reasons not to return. Illegal immigrants are those who enter a country without meeting legal requirements for entry, or residence, but who do not have a well-founded fear of

persecution in their own country. Refugees should also not be confused with other persons of concern. An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country of origin, has applied for recognition as a refugee in another country, and is awaiting a decision on their application. An internally displaced person (IDP) may have been forced to flee their home for the same reasons as a refugee, but has not crossed an internationally recognized border.

While all twenty refugees who participated in this study were officially recognized as such, it is important to note that there are often times there are many who fall under the legal definition but are not actually recognized by their respective governments (Hovil, 2007). In this particular study, however, there is an important distinction to be made between refugees who were granted the government's permission to take up residence in Kigali, and those who chose to do so without the legal right.

## **2.2 What is an urban refugee?**

The question of what constitutes an 'urban refugee' is a contentious one as it is often used to classify all forced migrants in urban areas as the same, making no distinction between those who have been legally recognized as such and those who have not. The body of literature on



international law fails to adequately or clearly define urban refugees as a distinct category within the refugee population. Instead, their existence would simply seem to be implied by the over 40 universal and regional instruments that are concerned with refugees (Campbell, 2006). As varied as the definition of an urban refugee is, so too are the number of reasons why refugees choose to settle in urban areas instead of seeking the protection and assistance of government-sponsored refugee camps.

For instance, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (Obi and Crisp, 2001) suggests that the massive influx of refugees in Kenya in the 1990s and the lack of arable land meant that refugees were settled into camps located in arid and semi arid areas. It was thus a desire to escape these barren conditions that led many refugees to seek out new lives in urban areas. In addition to environmental factors, refugees choose the urban life for a number of other reasons. Indeed, studies have repeatedly shown that despite the availability of food aid and services in places of encampment, people prefer freedom, and the autonomy to decide and rebuild their own lives.

According to Bailey (2004, p.7), an urban refugee is “an individual living in an urban area outside of his/her country of origin who meets the criteria put forth in the Refugee Convention even if the person has not been

recognized by a host government.” Sommers (2001) outlines four distinct categories of urban refugees: (i) the few who are officially defined as refugees and have permission to reside in cities; (ii) those officially defined as refugees but lacking legal rights to urban residence; (iii) those who have come to an urban area to seek asylum as a refugee at a UNHCR office; and (iv) those who claim to be refugees but live without any institutional recognition or assistance.

### **2.3 What is a protracted refugee crisis?**

A protracted refugee situation is defined as “one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. Their lives may not be at risk, but their basic rights and essential economic, social and psychological needs remain unfulfilled after years in exile” (ExCOM, 2004, p.1). Such a situation can arise from the direct cause of the conflict being prolonged, as was the case with Angola's thirty-year civil war, with refugees being unable to return, or from indirect causes, such as when various stakeholders with vested interests are to blame. For instance, political actors with control of certain parts of the country, and others wanting to cash in on the underground economies created by the conflict would have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo (Goetz, 2003).

### **3. UNDERSTANDING THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS**

This chapter sets the context for this study by providing a brief examination of the global nature of the refugee crisis and the international legal response to it.

#### **3.1 Dimensions**

By the end of 2008, the number of people of concern to the UNHCR was 34.4 million, up from 21.02 million in 2006. This figure includes 10.5 million refugees, 14.4 million IDPs, 6.6 million stateless people, and 827,000 asylum seekers. An additional 1.4 million people were considered to be in refugee-like situations, and 51,000 in IDP-like situations. Meanwhile, 604,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily throughout the year (UNHCR, .2009).

No continent and few countries are left unaffected by the modern day refugee crisis. One third of all refugees live in Asia and the Pacific, three quarters of who are Afghans. The Middle East and North Africa host one fifth of all refugees, the majority of whom come from Iraq. Meanwhile, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe host 20 and 15 percent of the world's refugees

respectively. The Americas trail with just eight percent of the world's refugees (UNHCR, 2009).

For the past three decades, Afghanistan has been the leading refugee producing country, with 2.8 million Afghan refugees – or one out of four refugees in the world – in 69 different asylum countries by the end of 2008. Iraqi refugees followed, with 1.9 million. Together, Afghan and Iraqi refugees account for 45 percent of refugees under UNHCR's mandate. These groups are followed by Somali and Sudanese refugees, with 561,000 and 419,000 respectively. Other significant refugee producing countries include Colombia, with 374,000, and the DRC, with 368,000 (UNHCR, 2009).

The world over, “warehoused” populations of refugees can be found. In 2004, it was estimated that almost 60 percent of the world's refugees could be considered warehoused, meaning they are virtually dependent on humanitarian assistance and are not free to work, practice professions, run businesses, or own property (Smith, 2004). From the Congolese refugees living in Tanzania's refugee camps for more than five years, to the Palestinians who have made the West Bank their home for the past 60 years, refugees – and the camps that house them – can be found across the globe.

Last year, the global refugee population fell for the first time in two years, largely as a result of voluntary repatriation, and improved demographic data coverage (UNHCR, 2009). Still, this is offset by the rising trend of people being encouraged to stay in their country even in exile, as demonstrated by the increase in number of IDPs.

### **3.2 The international legal context**

Although this thesis is not focused directly on examining the body of laws that protects refugees, it is nevertheless important to address the major international legal instruments put in place by the UN that currently govern the rights and treatment of refugees, and which impose obligations on states to protect those rights. According to Lubbers (2002), the notion that *the international community has a responsibility for the protection and care of refugees* is one that stems from the creation of the League of Nations in 1920. Following the turmoil and mass movements of people that resulted from World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, an “international conscience” began to develop; no longer was the burden of refugee hosting to fall solely on the shoulders of individual governments or private charitable organizations.

The League defined refugees in terms of their ethnic background: certain groups, such as Armenians and German Jews, were deemed to be in danger if they were to return to their home countries. Over the years, the League introduced a number of measures and implemented new agreements designed to protect refugees as new situations emerged. For instance, the “Nansen passport” – named after the first High Commissioner for Refugees – was established, providing, for the first time, refugee travel documents that were honored by governments in 52 countries. More than 450,000 Nansen passports were issued that allowed its holders to immigrate, with the effort being such a success that the Nansen International Office for Refugees was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1938. From identity papers and travel documents, legal measures became increasingly comprehensive over time. Eventually, even such matters as access to employment and protection from expulsion were addressed.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out everyone’s basic human rights, including “the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution” (Art. 14). However, this general right to seek and enjoy asylum does not ensure the right to be granted asylum. Thus, additional and broader international legal instruments had to be drawn up to guarantee the protection of refugees and outline their inherent rights. In

1951, the international community took a significant step in this direction by creating the UNHCR, whose mandate included providing international protection and seeking permanent solutions for the problems of refugees.

In the aftermath of World War II, UNHCR created the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. It was the international community's attempt to broaden its definition and protection of refugees, a necessary measure in the face of the large numbers of people who had been displaced as a result of the turmoil. A legally binding treaty and a milestone in international refugee law, the Convention guarantees minimum standards for refugees within their country of asylum and aims to ensure that refugees are treated in the same way in all states which are party to the Convention. Underlying this Convention is the encouragement of states to fully incorporate persons granted refugee status into the social, economic, legal and political fabric of their new society through a process of naturalization. Whether or not refugees become citizens of their host states in terms of legal rights, the Convention requires state parties to extend to refugees the same standard of treatment that it does to nationals in some cases, and in others, as favorable as possible and not less favorable to that accorded aliens generally in the same circumstances.

Subsequent events demonstrated that movements of refugees were by no means limited to the effects of World War II in Europe. As new refugee groups emerged, it became increasingly necessary to adapt the Convention in order to make it applicable to new refugee situations (UNHCR, 1993). In 1967, a Protocol was introduced making the Convention truly universal. By 2000, a total of 139 countries had signed the 1951 Refugee Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol.

In 1969, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) also passed its own Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa (African Refugee Convention), which narrowed the international treaty to the African context. Until that point, apart from the UN Convention, there existed no legal instrument that offered official protection to refugees on the continent. To fill that gap, as well as to show solidarity with African peoples still under European colonial domination, the OAU established this relatively wide-reaching refugee policy.

Despite incorporating the UN Convention, the OAU Protocol went above and beyond it, expanding the very definition of a refugee to persons fleeing colonial domination and anti-colonial warfare. Whereas the UN Convention placed the emphasis on individual persecution, the OAU definition concentrated on groups of people at risk during a conflict



(Holborn, 1975). The Protocol specified that the granting of asylum should be a neutral decision, and not one seen as a hostile act by the refugee-producing state. Article Five of the OAU Convention also addresses the question of durable solutions for refugees, claiming voluntary repatriation as the ultimate solution. Importantly, it makes an explicit provision that it is up to refugees themselves to determine the time and manner in which they will return home (Bakwesegha, 1995).

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan once said, "Human rights belong not to a chosen few, but to all people. It is this universality that endows human rights with the power to cross any border and defy any force" (Annan, 1999). Accordingly, simply by crossing an international border, someone does not lose his or her rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Refugees, as defined by the 1951 Convention must, for instance, receive the same treatment as nationals of the host country with regard to free exercise of religion, access to elementary education, access to public assistance, and protection of social security. They must receive the same standard of treatment provided to nationals of a foreign country with regard to the right to belong to trade unions and the right to engage in wage-earning employment. Under the Convention, refugees must also receive the most favorable

treatment possible with regard to the right to own property, the right to practice a profession, the right to self-employment, and access to housing.

As defined in Article 1 of the 1951 Convention, in order to gain refugee status individuals must show that they subjectively fear persecution and that their fear is rational or reasonable, based on objective facts. Thus both elements – the subjective (how they perceive the threat) and the objective (the facts) must be considered in determining the existence of well-founded fear (Hathaway and Hicks, 2005).

The large body of international laws and the many organizations established to assist and protect refugees do not discount the many challenges and tensions inherent in international refugee law and the international refugee regime. Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of the international legal framework regarding refugees, the content of such legislation becomes irrelevant if governments choose not to enforce them. Onyango (1986, p. 1) describes the OAU charter as “pragmatic” and “progressive”; and notes that (at the time) thirty-three member states had ratified the agreement. However he also observes that only a few of these countries have modified their national legal systems to reflect the Convention’s principles. Lack of enforcement mechanisms, multiple options for interpretation, and lack of state capacity to address the rights of refugees can lead to a lack of rights protection (Mecagni, 2005). However,

their existence does signify the international community's commitment to refugee protection.

While the international community struggles to find ways to effectively implement its agreed upon laws, host countries are concurrently trying to etch out suitable national responses given the constrained global environment within which they are situated. In fact, given the international legal framework within which host countries operate, the line between national and international policies – and their respective impacts – is frequently blurred. National sovereignty falls by the wayside, for instance, when it comes to Refugee Status Determination, which is primarily conducted by the UNHCR (although Rwanda is a notable exception to this). Indeed, Karadawi (1999) argues that much refugee policy in the Global South has been driven by the demands of external donors and humanitarian organizations. However, whether national or international in nature, the legal framework governing the lives of refugees can be a strong determinant in the quality of their lives. As Bailey (2004, p.5) notes, “These rights (in particular regarding movement, employment, identity documents, detention and deportation) have a bearing on the livelihood opportunities for urban refugees.”

## **4. RESPONDING TO THE GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS**

This chapter provides a theoretical framework for this study by conducting a literature review of the arguments concerning relief versus development efforts, as well as the concept of urban refugees as burdens or boons in the development trajectory.

### **4.1 Relief versus development**

Responses to refugee crises generally fall within the landscape of the debate concerning relief versus development. The relationship between the two concepts is an important one since the development community has seen much of its investment eroded in recent years by conflict, while relief agencies recognize the need for sustainable peace for the long-term success of their work (Smillie, 1998).

Relief efforts are aimed at delivering services, treating the symptoms of a problem, and meeting immediate short-term needs. On the other hand, development – at least in theory – aims to facilitate change, tackle the root causes of a problem, and prevent it from happening again. It takes on long-term objectives in working to transform and build capacity. Here, the focus tends to be on the community, utilizing existing leadership styles and

structures, versus the primary partner and recipient as the individual in relief efforts.

Meanwhile, development works on a smaller scale and often takes on a much more decentralized and participatory structure, while relief efforts tend to use donor structures that are hierarchical and centralized, and which operate on a much larger and impersonal scale. Development is intended to begin with the locals' perceived needs, while relief efforts begin with the international and donor community's perceived needs. Of course, it is important to note the distinction between theory and practice, with much of both development and relief work being guided by the need to attract global donors.

From the 1960s to 1980s, the standard approach to relief and development was a linear one. They were seen as two distinct and sequential concepts; emergency efforts moved from relief through reconstruction to development along a continuum. In the early 1990s, the two became no longer viewed as self-contained processes. Today, as Smillie (1998) suggests, there is a general agreement that unless relief efforts capitalize on inherent development potential, the vulnerability of societies in crisis to emergencies is likely to continue and perhaps even deepen.

However, both relief and development efforts continue to be plagued by three major challenges (Smillie, 1998). The first is timing – when to engage, when to modify the intervention, and when to withdraw. This is, of course, determined by such factors as political will and financial resources. This leads to the second challenge of funding, with both relief and development funding remaining sporadic, patchy, and largely driven by political agendas. Because short-term funding is required for long-term needs, both relief and development efforts have felt the effects of declining overall aid resources. The third challenge is in understanding and learning from past efforts.

Within the debate surrounding relief versus development lie the various responses to a refugee crisis. There are three major durable solutions, though not specifically coined as such in the 1951 Convention, that are usually prescribed by UNHCR. The first is repatriation, which consists of the 4Rs: Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. Here, resources are allocated to improve the environment inside the countries of origin so as to facilitate the voluntary return of refugees. Some 604,000 refugees repatriated voluntarily during 2008. Repatriation figures have continued to decrease since 2004, with the 2008 figure the second-lowest in 15 years (UNHCR, 2009).

The second solution is integration into the host country, which will be the focus of this thesis and thus explored in greater detail below (see Ch. 5). The final solution is resettlement to a third country. However, this option is, in reality, viable for only a very small number of the world's refugees. Hynd (2002) notes that while local integration was historically a preferred option, a shift in the 1970s and 1980s towards resettlement resulted in resettlement fatigue. Crisp (2003) notes that a second shift also occurred in the mid-1980s whereby repatriation became seen as the only viable solution.

What all of these solutions have in common is the struggle to find an effective way to close the gap between emergency relief and longer-term development when dealing with refugee crises.

#### **4.2 Burden versus boon**

While the theoretical debate on development versus relief is a central one to the question of response to the refugee crises, so too is the question of refugees as a burden or a boon to their host communities. According to Sommers (2001, p.348), when people become refugees, they have two dramatically different practical alternatives: "living in organized settlements

or camps, or pursuing what has come to be known as settling spontaneously.” Kuhlman (1994) notes that both African governments and the UN have routinely preferred organized settlements over integration as a response because they are easier to control and assist. Thus, host country responses are constructed in such a way that discourages any processes of refugee integration (Kibreab, 2003). Rutinwa (1999, p.15) suggests that African governments have abandoned their open door policy towards refugees because of “the pressure exerted on them by the sheer magnitude of the refugee problem, the impact of refugees on host communities, security concerns, the economic crisis...and the failure of the international community to provide adequate assistance to refugee hosting countries.”

Refugee camps can take various forms: planned or unplanned, self-sustaining or entirely reliant on international aid, permanent or temporary, or hierarchical or self-governing, and they can vary in size and density. At the extreme are locations such as Kakuma Camp in Kenya, which is one of the oldest and largest refugee camps in the world. Today, with the financial and technical support of the UNHCR (although chronically inadequate), Kakuma houses almost 100,000 refugees, due in large part to the continuing conflict in neighboring Sudan. What was supposed to be a temporary entity has since become a permanent establishment, since



looming uncertainty about both security and economic opportunities in the home countries of refugees hinders their ability to return.

Whatever the structure, there are a number of perceived advantages to warehousing refugees in camps. Rutinwa (1999) argues that because camps are supposed to be temporary entities until repatriation can occur, camps limit the potential for local settlement and integration and thereby increase the chances of promoting repatriation. He also argues for camps from the point of view of efficiency and transparency of aid delivery. For many, having these structures through which to ensure refugee care is the reason for the refugee camp at its most basic level. After all, most camps are established as temporary emergency measures when a crisis creates a sudden influx of refugees. It is arguable that there would be no other way to tend to the food, shelter, and health needs of so many people and to organize assistance in such a short period of time. This becomes especially important for the elderly or sick refugees who have no one left to turn to and rely on the medical care or free housing they receive in the camps to survive. Along those same lines, camps can also serve as a useful place for family reunifications to take place.

From a rights and legal standards point of view, Jacobsen (2001) maintains that camps can provide security to refugees and facilitate the

monitoring of protection issues. Similarly, Jamal (2000) argues that camps in fact strengthen asylum by creating an international burden sharing and reducing host fatigue. From a security point of view, many African states take up a xenophobic position in arguing that camps serve to contain security problems introduced by refugees and to reduce conflict between host and refugees. For these states, camps can also reap economic benefits through the temporary influx of capital that comes from relief agencies running the camps. However, the key word there is 'temporary', and states often find themselves with less money and more waste if and once the camps are destroyed.

Much of the literature focuses on security problems and xenophobia as reasons for the changing attitudes and receptivity towards the integration of refugees in host countries. "The growing xenophobia in some countries coincides with a democratization process in Africa which compels governments to take public opinion into account in the formulation of their refugee policies" (Rutinwa, 1999, p.15). Indeed, while refugees and migrants everywhere are often subjected to xenophobic hostility and scapegoated as the cause of crime, disease and a loss of jobs, Parker (2002) argues that urban migrants, in particular, are vulnerable to the effects of xenophobia due to their reliance on existing markets and public services. Evidence suggests that most urban refugees are in fact subject

to widespread discrimination by both the state and the local population, and also face persistent police abuse (Kagwanja, 2002; Verdirame, 1999). Thus, host governments are hesitant to promote local integration of refugees for fear of political unrest. Finally, Betts (2003) notes that if refugees are perceived as a cost, then it follows that containing their flow will be seen as a benefit.

However, in recent years, there has been growing debate about the viability of refugee camps, particularly in protracted refugee situations where refugees will have been in these temporary establishments for often as long as 15 to 20 years. As Jamal (2000) points out:

When a person flees for his or her life, a plastic shelter, a jerrycan of water and a container of maizemeal provided in a camp far from home may be exactly what that person needs. Five years on, though, and those same minimum standards that once protected a life will, if unchanged contrive to stifle it. (p. 3)

Confinement to camps has been demonstrated to have a number of adverse effects on both refugees and hosts. Goyen *et al.* (2006) note that

establishing parallel services undermines local institutions by attracting the best staff to earn the higher salaries paid by humanitarian organizations. Harrell-Bond (2000) suggests that targeting relief to camps, surrounded by people often as poor or poorer than refugees is wasteful and also generates hostility from local communities since they can visibly see that they are not receiving as high quality services as those in the camp. The UNHCR's response to this criticism is to ensure that the standards of living of refugees within their camps are "harmonized" with those of the surrounding local population. However, their hands are left tied, and their promise unfulfilled, when the local population is close to starving, as is often the case. Making things worse is when a refugee camp closes, an event that is usually followed by the closure of all the physical infrastructure and services that accompanied it, including health clinics and schools. As a result, locals often feel the pain even more once the camp is shut down.

Clark (1985) argues that life in camps adversely affects the mental health of already traumatized people, who often abandon social responsibilities in the face of the despair in their long-term prospects. Black (1994) suggests that congregating refugees strains local resources, including the environment, more so than does a dispersed population. Van Damme (1995) notes that camps represent a health risk by increasing exposure to

disease, with a clear link between the size of camps and mortality rates. Finally, Lischer (2005) also suggests that camps can become militarized, thereby heightening civil or international war.

The negative impact of refugee camps can be felt even by refugees outside their borders. Chambers (1985) and Hansen (1981) argue that focusing assistance on refugees in camps ignores the needs of the majority of refugees who are self-settled. Harrell-Bond (2000) also notes that the popular media image of the refugee in a camp promotes the idea of the refugee as a problem, rather than as 'persons with problems', obscuring the reality that refugees are in fact ready to put their energies into productive work which could also benefit their hosts. As Black (1994) points out, refugee camps are also expensive. If they were temporary, as intended, financing would not be problematic because donors tend to pour money into crisis situations at their beginnings. Yet, as camps become permanent and as refugees become materially dependent without other means of income or survival, camps require the same emergency-situation funds to continually run the expanding structures.

For the most part among proponents of camps, there seems to be a consensus that while they are not the best solution, huge influxes of refugees can completely overwhelm the capacity of the local population

and the infrastructure, wreaking havoc on the environment and socio-economic system. As a result, local authorities sometimes have no choice but to seek separate sites for refugees.

Given the protracted nature of many refugee situations in the world, few would argue for the complete elimination of camps. Indeed, for many refugees, the standard of living in camps is higher than those which the refugees left behind in their home countries. However, it must be acknowledged that whatever the reasons for or against warehousing refugees in camps, doing so fundamentally violates their rights to freedom of movement as guaranteed under international law, and there is a definite need to explore additional durable solutions, namely the possibilities of local integration and the promotion of self-reliance, which many such as Jacobsen (2001), Crisp (2003), and Hovil (2007) argue is possible under certain circumstances. Jacobsen (2001) in fact calls the local integration of refugees “the forgotten solution,” which has rarely been systematically pursued, while Hovil (2007, p. 619) believes it points to “the potential for an alternative refugee development policy that can genuinely benefit both refugees and their hosts.” Still, Crisp (2003) notes that while the principle of local integration is firmly established in international law, its practice to date has indeed been very limited.

## **5. UNDERSTANDING REFUGEE INTEGRATION**

This chapter outlines the various definitions and measures of refugee integration, the numerous factors that affect levels of refugee integration, and whether integration can be seen as a viable response to situations of protracted refugee crises.

### **5.1 Definitions and measures of refugee integration**

According to Bascom (1995), the integration of refugees is one of the most poorly understood and under-researched topics in forced migration. Integration is defined by Harrell-Bond (1986, p. 7) as “a situation in which host and refugee communities are able to co-exist, sharing the same resources both economic and social with no greater mutual conflict than that which exists within the host community.” Integration assumes that over time both new arrivals and the host population undergo change in response to each other, which presumes contact with one another.

UNHCR defines three dimensions to the process of local integration: legal, economic and social/cultural. The legal dimension consists of the host state granting refugees a progressively wider range of rights and entitlements that are broadly in line with those enjoyed by its own people.

Bulcha (1988) defines economic integration as the process of securing work and becoming a part of the regularly employed labor force in a given society. He further argues that for refugees to be considered economically integrated in their country of asylum, they must have reached a level of material self-sufficiency. Finally, the social and cultural dimension of integration places responsibility on the refugee to make conscientious efforts to acclimatize themselves to the local environment and understand the new cultures and lifestyles in which they find themselves. Successful integration should be sustainable and benefit both the refugees and the local communities among whom they settle.

Jacobsen (2001) says refugees are de facto integrated when they: (i) Are not in physical danger (and do not live under the threat of refoulement); (ii) Are not confined to camps or settlements, and have the right of return to their home country; (iii) Are able to sustain livelihoods through access to land or employment and can support themselves and their families; (iv) Have access to education or vocational training, health facilities, and housing; and (v) Are socially networked into the host community, so that intermarriage is common, ceremonies such as weddings and funerals are attended by everyone, and there is little distinction between refugees' and hosts' standard of living. It should be noted that integration is quite different from assimilation. For instance, in the case of Guinea, as cited by



Van Damme (1995), there was an opportunity to integrate assistance to refugees and local populations where this was feasible and cost-effective, as in the case of health provision and joint use of educational facilities. However, socio-economically and politically, the two populations maintained a clear and distinct identity.

Working with refugees in Southeast Asia, Banki (2004) was able to determine a number of indicators that could be used to characterize and measure high levels of refugee integration. These are that: (i) Refugees are not restricted in their movements; (ii) Refugees own land or appear to have official access to it; (iii) Refugees participate in the local economy; (iv) Refugees are moving in the direction of self-sufficiency; (v) Refugees are able to utilize local services such as health facilities; (vi) Refugee children attend local schools; and (vii) Refugees are dispersed among the local population.

## **5.2 Factors affecting refugee integration**

According to Banki (2004), there are several possible factors that explain differing levels of refugee integration in host countries. Importantly, not every factor will necessarily be prevalent in each and every refugee hosting country. Indeed, as Banki illustrated in her case study of Nepal,

Pakistan, and Kenya, there are often two or three factors that are the strongest in a country, with other factors remaining completely absent.

Banki groups the factors into six different categories. She begins with the political – those factors that occur on a national level and typically take into account tactical security and internal, cross-country relations. These, she suggests, would be prevalent “when host governments are influenced by global opinion, interaction with sending countries, and geo-strategic issues” (2004, p. 5). From there, Banki moves on to security factors – those which occur as a result of the host country’s desire to protect its citizens from threats, or perceived threats, such as rebels or criminals.

Next, Banki identifies economic factors, which take a market view of the situation. For instance, here refugees would be seen either as a valuable worker or a threat to their domestic counterparts. Social factors are also important, she says, such as those dealing with ethnicity, religion and language. Banki suggests that refugees who are “socially similar” are better able to integrate into their host communities.

Physical factors are also important and Banki breaks these down into four classifications. First are geographic factors, including the ability of a refugee to easily cross the border. The more porous the border, the more

easily refugees can blend into the local population, she suggests. Second, are the physical or temporal factors. Here, the arrival time of the refugee as well as the amount of time a refugee spends in a host country are the two key determinants. Third, Banki gives weight to the size of the refugee population, both in proportion to the host country and in terms of how quickly the refugees arrived. The greater the influx of refugees into a host country, the more likely they will receive a hostile reception from governments and locals alike. Fourth, Banki identifies the individual refugee as an important physical factor in determining their own personal level of integration, suggesting that refugees are often able to integrate despite political, economic and social determinants.

The sixth and final factor that Banki identifies as having a major significance on levels of refugee integration is the national legal system in which refugees find themselves. Banki notes that “legal factors can be presumed to prevail when official legal status and high levels of integration go hand in hand” (2004, p. 5).

### **5.3 Integration as a viable alternative solution**

The local integration of refugees has to date predominantly been seen as a negative phenomenon, with arguments against it often overlapping with

those in favor of camps. Ferris (1993) claims that host governments are burdened, above anything else, with the task of balancing competing economic, political, ethnic, and humanitarian demands in the face of refugees. Further, he suggests that the two major reasons for host governments' resistance to local integration are security problems, in that they would lead to an increase in crime and conflict, and resource burdens. In addition to scarce resources such as housing and water, it is argued that refugees present competition for scarce economic opportunities, and further drain infrastructure such as schools and health facilities.

Napier-Moore (2005) echoes these reasons, claiming that refugees are increasingly being seen as an economic and environmental burden on host-countries, which are themselves suffering from declining economies and growing populations. In addition, she claims that in the post-Cold war democratization process, some African leaders mobilized electoral support on the basis of xenophobic and anti-refugee sentiments. There is also a common fear on the part of many African states that those who are able to achieve economic stability in the host country will never return.

Whether they arrive in massive numbers or not, many refugees find their own way within the host society and, whether in rural or urban areas,

become what have been termed as 'self-settled'. Many refugees have always been, as UNHCR describes them, 'spontaneously' or freely settled among the local population (although not necessarily integrated) and their survival has been as a result of their own efforts, the generosity of local hosts, and the extent to which they could gain access to employment in the formal or informal economic sectors and share in the health, education and other services intended for nationals.

However, in order for local integration to be encouraged as a viable alternative to refugee camps in protracted situations, both host governments and their citizens must be convinced that it is in their benefit to do so. As Crisp (2004) suggests, simply calling on states to respect international law is not only unlikely to be effective, but is also hypocritical as the world's more prosperous states continue to both close their own doors to refugees and reduce foreign aid.

In recent years, an increasing amount of research has come forward with examples of the ways in which integration can be beneficial to the economies of recipient countries. Kuhlman (1994) suggests there is a general agreement from empirical research that a development approach rather than relief is crucial for ensuring that the survival energies of refugees are used as resources for development. By failing to recognize

the resources which refugees themselves bring to the situation, the relief model inhibits the mobilization of these resources and networks for the benefit of both the refugees and the local economy. As Jacobsen (2002, p. 1) has noted, "When refugees are allowed to gain access to resources, have freedom of movement and can work alongside their hosts to pursue productive lives, they will be less dependent on aid, and better able to overcome the sources of tension and conflict in their host communities."

Jacobsen (2002) claims that refugees have a multiplier effect by expanding the capacity and productivity of the receiving area's economy through trade and the growth of markets. They bring material wealth from their home countries, ranging from gold to trucks to computers. New markets spring up and many goods can be found that were unattainable in the region before. Self-settled refugees can provide economic inputs for the receiving community, both at the local level when they first arrive, and over time, as refugees move deeper into the host country. When they are permitted to participate in the local economy, she says, refugees contribute their human capital, in the form of education, new technologies and skills, or needed labor. Some host countries have benefited economically from refugees as a result of agricultural expansion or intensification made possible by refugee labor, as Kok (1989) shows in eastern Sudan, or new farming practices. Local farmers can benefit when

where is increased demand by refugees for local food as opposed to unfamiliar or unwanted food aid.

Hagen (1980) found that Tibetans fleeing to Nepal brought their carpet-making skills. Today, carpet making is the largest foreign exchange earner in Nepal, exceeding tourism, and the industry was begun immediately upon their arrival so there was little need for a relief phase. Hovil (2002) found that self-settled Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda were not only self-sufficient but also frequently and actively engaged in their local economies. "Although technically they do not exist, they are living, working, paying taxes, and contributing to the local economy in the district," she writes (p. 23). So, too, were Liberian refugees in Ghana successfully able to embrace entrepreneurship in an urban context. Here, Dick (2002) shows that they have created tailoring shops, clothing stores, and beauty salons, sell clean water, offer information technology (IT) and typing training and have become a benefit not only to themselves but also to their communities. These examples echo the findings of Chan and Christie (1995), who claim that refugees, particularly in an urban setting, typically respond to their situation by creating their own ethnic capitalism, or what they call "ethnic entrepreneurship".

Finally, refugees also attract remittances into their host countries. Estimates of remittances were in the order of US\$318 billion in 2007, up from US\$297 billion in 2006. Over US\$240 billion of this went to developing countries, making up a third of total financial flows to those countries. The top five recipients of remittances were India (US\$27 billion), China (US\$26 billion), Mexico (US\$25 billion), the Philippines (US\$17 billion), and France (US\$12 billion) (Jensen and Kletzer, 2008). In 2008, remittances to Rwanda totaled US\$200 million (Orozco, 2009).

The common fear that those who are able to achieve economic stability in the host country will never return is two-faced. On the one hand, Sepulveda *et al.* (2006) suggest that people impoverished by an economy based on relief will be unable to return without enormous investment in their economic rehabilitation, while those able to acquire the resources in exile are likely to return voluntarily when conditions are improved. Crisp (2003) suggests that refugees who have led a productive life in exile, received an education, developed practical skills, and accumulated some resources may actually be more willing and better equipped to go home and contribute to the reconstruction of their country than those who have languished in camps for years, surviving on minimal levels of humanitarian assistance. Hovil (2007) also found that Sudanese refugees in Uganda



would take their dead back to Sudan for burial, a clear indication that they themselves intended to return.

On the other hand, Phillips (2003, p. 16) found that “While Afghan refugees were seen by many as a burden on the economy, their rapid repatriation from Pakistan has caused a sharp downturn in the local economy, with many businesses recording severe losses and facing possible closure after the massive exodus.” Repatriation might have been detrimental, but it nonetheless demonstrates the positive economic impact of these refugees, which are often only acknowledged after they leave an area. While xenophobic and national security fears also may well be true in the short term, Mandaville (1999) suggests that these problems would likely subside over time:

Mixed marriages (between forced migrants and hosts and among various migrant groups), business enterprises engaging locals and migrants, the creation of new linguistic idioms and religious organizations, and the diffusion of ideas will necessarily have transformative effects on all involved. (p. 653)

Major barriers to refugee integration include: lack of employment, racism and discrimination, inability to speak the language, and the lack of

recognition of qualifications and experience. According to Crisp (2003), the potential for successful local integration and the creation of sustainable refugee livelihoods exist: where refugees have established strong social and economic links to their country of asylum; where they are granted legal status; and where they move into an area that is populated by people of the same ethnic origin. He demonstrates that with the proper support of the government, locals and fellow refugees, they can become a success.

Large numbers of refugees throughout Africa have spontaneously settled in urban areas and have managed to support themselves without international assistance. All that is required, according to Dick (2002a), is a longer-term perspective:

It would be useful to assume that refugees will stay for a few years and to make plans to utilize their presence. If this assumption proves false...nothing has been lost. But if refugees do stay on, community development efforts would be a better alternative to repeating the same scenario of funding years of relief that only perpetuate refugee dependency. (p. 28)

Jacobsen (2001) provides a thorough examination of the interests of all the various stakeholders involved in promoting self-sufficiency and local integration of urban refugees. With the successful creation of partnerships,

international donors, NGOs and the UNHCR will see a better use of their relief funds and the protection of refugee rights, while host governments and the local population will see increased local economic development, a reduced burden on community resources and the environment, and improved relations with both donors and the sending country. Also important, the refugees themselves will have greater security and protection of rights, while becoming self-supporting. Crisp (2003) admits that the political climate is not ideal for such an endeavor at the moment, but the principle that refugees should enjoy productive lives and contribute to the development of the areas where they have settled needs to be revived.

#### **5.4 Urban refugees and integration**

As the world's urban population grows, so too does the problem of urban refugees and how best to deal with them. In Africa, specifically, despite still largely being characterized by rural agricultural production, the continent has witnessed the highest urban growth rates of anywhere in the world (Sadik, 1996). Still, while half of all the world's refugees live in urban areas, seven out of ten refugees in sub-Saharan Africa reside in camps (UNHCR, 2009).

Current research suggests that urban refugees are not necessarily as disadvantageous to host countries as they are overwhelmingly made out to be. According to Ndege, Kagwanja and Odiyo (2001), urban refugees, by virtue of their origins, typically have greater education and skills than their counterparts living in refugee camps and thus deserve to be handled differently from camp refugees. Taking what knowledge of the market many of them had from their home country, they are often able to do productive work and boost the local economy. Despite receiving no support from the government in terms of education, healthcare, shelter etc., many of these refugees go on to become successful entrepreneurs. Similarly, Sommers (2001) and Kuhlman (1994) argue that it is often the most entrepreneurial and educated that choose to risk violating the law and attempt to make a living in urban areas. These views echo the findings of Weaver (1985) and Waldron and Hasci (1995) who propose that urban refugees possessed skills such as shop-keeping and artisanship from their lives in their previous countries, while many others were also members of various professional bodies in their home countries.

As Landau (2004) suggests, the most significant and under-explored themes in the body of research surrounding this topic remain twofold: (i) under what conditions particular outcomes are likely; and (ii) the impact of those outcomes on all of the stakeholders involved.



## **6. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter is divided into seven sections, covering the aims and techniques of the collection and analysis of data for this study. An attempt has also been made to discuss the justification for using such methods, the reliability and validity of the data, as well as the limitations of the study. Both primary and secondary data were used in this research.

### **6.1 Research Aims**

The purpose of this research is to contribute to the body of literature that examines the current state of the world's refugees. It aims to draw attention to issues of forced migration and, more specifically, to those who suffer from its effects, among the relevant actors both in Rwanda and abroad. It intends to assist in creating a better understanding of the situation faced by urban refugees among all of the local population, NGOs, national policy makers, and the broader research community. It hopes that in identifying the survival strategies and levels of integration of select urban refugees and their causal factors in Rwanda, the viability of integration as one possible alternative solution to their plight will be assessed.

It is within this context that this research investigates the livelihood strategies of a small number of refugees who have chosen to settle outside of refugee camps in Rwanda. More specifically, it aims to determine their levels of self-sufficiency and integration, and the causal factors behind that integration. To date, no scholarly study has been completed that looks into the status, conditions, livelihoods or integration levels of urban refugees in Rwanda. Thus, not only will this research be the first of its kind, it hopes to better inform future studies relating to the plight of urban refugees in Africa and around the world and, consequentially, the related policy-making processes.

It is not to suggest that integration should be an exclusive alternative to refugee camps as a solution for dealing with protracted refugee crises. Rather, given the very protracted nature of the crises and the accompanying challenges facing both the refugee hosting countries and the refugees themselves, it is the goal of this research to offer alternatives, to examine those complimentary durable solutions that are not only necessary, but are also possible.

## **6.2 Conceptual Design**

“Doctors know that lots of things can go wrong, and that a particular symptom such as high fever might reflect dozens, or hundreds, of underlying causes” (Sachs, 2005, p. 79).

In chapters 4 and 5, various responses to the global refugee crisis were examined. What that examination revealed, more than anything else, is that the crisis is a very complex phenomenon, one that reflects a myriad of potential obstacles to an individual’s freedom of opportunity. However, while generalizations might be necessary in theory and helpful in practice to a certain extent, individual assessments of specific country contexts are indispensable. Jeffrey Sachs compares the required work with that of a medical doctor who needs to perform a “differential diagnosis” of the countless potential causes of an illness (2005, p. 83).

*This research begins with an analysis of the country environment, focusing in particular on the intertwined history and origins of conflict in both Rwanda and the DRC. It then presents a picture of Rwanda today, examining the country’s poverty context and basic elements of human development. Finally, it looks at the refugee context, examining the policy framework for their treatment, including the subsidiary roles played by all of the Government of Rwanda, the UNHCR, and NGOs.*



### **6.3 Research Method**

It is to this end that this research focuses on the case of urban refugees in Rwanda. According to UNHCR estimates, there are approximately 2,547 officially registered urban refugees in Kigali, Rwanda (UNHCR, 2008). If one were to include the number of refugees living in Kigali that are not officially classified as “urban”, that figure would increase considerably. Twenty refugees living in Kigali participated in this study. While all of the participants had received official refugee status, only half had been given the necessary legal permission to reside in Kigali and out of the camp confines. The other half was living in Kigali without the actual knowledge or permission of the Government, and therefore without the support of the UNHCR. This diversity allowed for a closer study of the impact of official channels of support provided to urban refugees, as those living in Kigali illegally received little to no official assistance.

The sample population was diverse in age, ranging from a 17-year-old student too young to remember why his family first fled the DRC as refugees, to a 43-year-old man for whom the memories of war were all too fresh. Capturing information from a wide age range of participants was ideal for this study in order to better understand the different levels of self-

sufficiency and integration that refugees of various age groups had achieved.

Of the participants interviewed, five were female and fifteen were male. This discrepancy can be explained largely due to the method of data collection. Participants were found using a non-probability snowball technique. Because of the stigma associated with being a refugee that currently exists in Kigali, it was difficult to locate participants who were comfortable speaking on the subject. Instead, once a few cooperative participants were found, they then referred the researcher to other urban refugees they knew of. Because of the trust that existed between the participant who had already been interviewed and those they were referring this researcher to, they were much more willing to cooperate in the study. As a result of friends referring friends, most of whom were male, that necessarily tilted the scale of this research in their favor. Yet, the participation of the five females in this study still provided rich insight into the differences in their plight and strategies.

All of the participants in this study were refugees who originated from the DRC and fled throughout different times in their country's tragic and turbulent history. This is explained by two factors. Firstly, as mentioned above, the snowballing technique of finding participants strongly biased

this study towards those refugees who were friends, and who shared something in common, namely their country of origin. Secondly, due to the fact that more than two-thirds of Rwanda's urban refugees originate from the DRC, it was inevitable that this bias would exist. This bias, however, could be seen in a positive light since any findings that arise from this study can more plausibly be applied to the majority of Rwanda's other urban refugees.

This research was carried out in the form of semi-structured interviews. Participants were provided with a sheet of questions (see Annex I) and given time to reflect on their answers. Once the participant was ready to proceed, the researcher would read the questions aloud – one by one – allowing for time to respond between each question. Within the responses, participants would often raise other issues, ask their own questions, or provide answers to questions never asked of them. It was in fact within this unscripted part of the research that the richest and most telling insights were revealed.

The benefits of conducting this research through semi-structured interviews were many. Firstly, as mentioned above, the informal nature of the interview allowed participants to feel comfortable enough to volunteer information that was never even asked of them. Secondly, by keeping the

interview a private matter, conducted one individual at a time, participants did not have to worry about possible repercussions of them being truthful, which would have been a major concern in other formats, such as a focus group. Thirdly, by conducting oral interviews as opposed to written questionnaires, this research was able to tap into stories that otherwise would have been missed. Several of the participants had little to no education and forcing them to write their responses would have been severely constrained those responses. Moreover, all of the participants come from a rich oral tradition, making them much more comfortable in speaking than writing their answers. As a result of using semi-structured interviews, the research was ordered enough to keep focus, but flexible and comfortable enough to gain rare insight.

Interviews were conducted in a place of choosing of the individual participants. In more than two-thirds of the cases, this meant at the home of the participant. In the rest of the cases, interviews were conducted either at the private home of the researcher or in a quiet local café. In all cases, participants were encouraged to choose a location where they could speak freely and comfortably. This would ensure that their answers were as open as possible and thus valuable for research purposes.

Interviews were recorded by note-taking only. Initially, this research proposed using audio-recording to capture the interviews, but it was quickly discovered that few participants felt comfortable with being recorded. Even after being reassured that their interviews were completely confidential, several respondents still noted fears of having their interviews discovered by a third party and played over the radio (a harsh reminder of the way in which radio was used as the primary communication tool in instigating the 1994 genocide).

In most of the interviews, French was the language of use. Both the informed consent form and survey questions were translated into French in order to ensure participants were fully aware of what they were agreeing to. The researcher asked questions in French and took notes in French exactly as the participants replied. Translation was done afterwards in order to ensure that no information was mistakenly translated in a rush during the actual interview. While the researcher felt confident enough conducting the interview in French, a translator was also on hand. The translator was also fluent in Kiswahili, the other dominant language of all of the participants, providing an extra assurance that participants would be able to express themselves however they felt most comfortable. The translator, a student at the Université Libre du Kigali, signed a

confidentiality form so as to ensure the participants' responses were kept anonymous.

In order to improve the quality of this study and to supplement the findings of the primary data, secondary sources were also widely used. This included both published and unpublished sources from journals, articles, books, official reports and policy documents, and Internet sources.

#### **6.4 Qualitative versus Quantitative Method**

According to Glesne and Peshkin (1992), the research question should define the research method. In following, Brannen (1992) notes there are three kinds of methodological approaches: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed. The qualitative method is believed to be the most useful approach when examining a problem deeply, while the quantitative method is useful when examining a problem widely (Denzin, 1989). Similarly, Minichiello (1995) explains that the qualitative method should be used when attempting to uncover the thoughts, perceptions, and feelings of participants. As such, the sample of participants need not be large as the goal of the study is to explore a topic in-depth rather than seek a representative sample of the population. Analysis of data is carried out as narratives rather than by numerical values, with emphasis placed on

process and meanings rather than quantity, intensity or frequency (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Conversely, the quantitative method emphasizes representativeness, placing the focus on a large representative sample size, and using questionnaires and statistical analysis of numerical data.

The qualitative method is argued to be more flexible and reflective (McCracken, 1988), while also allowing important dimensions to emerge from the data analysis without supposing in advance what those dimensions will be (Quinn, 1980). Its weaknesses, however, include the subjectivity of results obtained, and the difficulty of replicating qualitative studies. In addition, the qualitative method is not as useful as its counterparts when making generalizations and predictions (Patton, 1990; McCracken, 1988). Conversely, the quantitative method is said to allow for generalizations and the uncovering of broad trends, and can more easily be replicated or compared with other quantitative data. However, the approach also suffers from criticism of over-generalization and little flexibility or reflexivity (Brannen, 1992).

In light of the above discussion, this study chose to make use of both the qualitative and quantitative methods, in an approach called triangulation (Bryman, 1992). Here, in what Bryman terms “multiple operationism,” the validity of the study’s findings is enhanced by the use of more than one

method of data collection. Despite suffering criticism on the grounds that tallying different data sources does not necessarily lead to correct inferences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995), others have noted that that varying characteristics of quantitative and qualitative approaches make it feasible to combine them into a research work (Mikkelsen, 1995).

In this study, qualitative methods were used to interpret deeper and more comprehensive relationships between variables analyzed by using quantitative techniques. Quantitative techniques were used to present data on socio-demographic information while the qualitative method was used to analyze data on the various livelihoods. The choice of both methods, in this way, has been influenced by the nature of this study's research problem.

As stated previously, this research aims at understanding the livelihood strategies and integration levels of a sample of urban refugees in Kigali. Thus, the best way to capture the unique and broad strategies and experiences of these refugees is by using both qualitative and quantitative data. By using a combination of methods, this study will have the advantage of the deep description and insight into the lives of respondents by qualitative methods, as well as the potential to contribute to statistical reliability, as with regards to the demographic background of participants.



## **6.5 Ethical Considerations**

It was this researcher's top priority to keep the identities of all participants confidential, and their responses anonymous. Interviews were conducted in private locations or discreet public locations at the discretion of the participant. Participants were informed as to the purpose of the research and the desired outcome. Participants were also well-informed of their rights and duties prior to the interview both through an informed consent form and a verbal explanation by the researcher. Participants were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and that their participation was completely voluntary. They were also made aware of the fact that there would be no financial compensation for their participation.

During the interview, the researcher stayed as neutral as possible, allowing the participant to speak freely without interruption or challenge. No discrimination was made on the base of age, color, ethnic group, gender, race, religion, or socio-economic status. The translator was asked to step in only on the request of either the researcher or the participant. Otherwise, he remained a silent observer to the process. Notes were

taken without the names of any participants, instead keeping track of individual participants by assigning numbers.

Following the interview, all notes were placed in individually sealed envelopes marked by number only and placed in a secure safety box, the code of which was known only to the researcher. Participants were given the contact information of both the researcher and supervisor in case they had any concerns about the use of their responses. A letter of appreciation was also given to participants a week after their initial interview, again encouraging them to contact the researcher if they had suffered any negative or traumatic experiences following the interview.

As many potential risks as possible were anticipated in advance of the interview. Because refugees are a vulnerable group and have necessarily lived through a traumatic experience, it was conceivable that interviews could further traumatize participants by making them relive their past. However, it was found that this risk has generally diminished with the amount of time each refugee spent in Rwanda. In addition, the researcher has had significant previous experience working with refugees and victims of war, and has received training on Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome and how to sensitively deal with any related symptoms that might have arisen. A counselor's number was on hand in case their services were required.

However, none of the participants appeared to experience trauma or disturbance during the interview, and a counselor was not necessary.

A further potential risk identified was that of stigmatization of participants within their own communities, which could occur as a result of their participation in this research. Thus, participants were well informed of the purpose of the research and their roles in advance of the interview. They were also allowed to choose the location of their interview, choosing a place where they would feel secure and know that their information would be kept private.

## **6.6 Limitations**

Given the extended period of time the researcher was able to spend in Rwanda prior to and during the interview period, many limitations were overcome. The researcher was able to become familiar with the country's geography, institutions, cultural rituals, and even acquire basic Kiswahili and Kinyarwanda skills, which would often serve as a good 'ice-breaker' with participants. The researcher was also able to remain flexible in terms of scheduling interviews.

Still, the research did suffer from three major limitations. Firstly, because of the stigma that is associated with being a refugee in Kigali, as well as the fact that many had not been granted the legal right to leave their camps, it was difficult to locate participants who were not worried about their involvement in the research. As a result, and as previously mentioned in Chapter 6.3, the research was biased towards male participants who were acquaintances. Female participants willing to be involved were more difficult to locate. Prior to starting the research, it was hoped that this research would have a sample of 50 percent women, but that proved difficult without much more time being spent in Rwanda. Still, the five females who participated in this research provided a valuable contribution, resulting in more dynamic and representative findings.

A second limitation arose due to the economic status of the participants. Because the majority of the approached prospects were living well below the poverty line, many of them saw the opportunity to participate in this research as a chance to make money and as a result, demanded financial compensation from the researcher. Thus, while almost 30 potential participants were initially identified for the study, only 20 agreed to participate when it was confirmed that they would receive no financial compensation for their involvement. Despite not having participated, their

decisions are nevertheless telling and reflect the reality of their situations and the financial difficulties they continue to face.

A final limitation was the inability of the researcher to expand the scope of this study to include interviews with members of the host community. As integration has already been defined as a two-way process involving both refugees and their hosts, this study is necessarily weakened by not having examined integration from the perspective of the host community. Still, given the targeted nature of this research on the actions taken by refugees in response to their situations, it was felt that this weakness would not detract from the strength of the final argument.

## 6.7 Analysis

In order to analyze the collected information, it is necessary to return to Chapter 5, where we looked at Banki's and Jacobsen's dissection of what refugee integration means in actuality, how it can be measured, and what the causal factors are behind it (see Table 2). It is against a combination of these indicators that the interviews conducted in this study are analyzed.

<b>TABLE 2: INDICATORS OF REFUGEE INTEGRATION</b>	
<b>Banki (2004)</b>	<b>Jacobsen (2001)</b>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees have freedom of movement</li> <li>• Refugees have official access to land</li> <li>• Refugees participate in the local economy</li> <li>• Refugees are moving towards self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Refugees have access to local schools and services</li> <li>• Refugees are dispersed among local population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees are under no physical threat</li> <li>• Refugees are not confined to camps</li> <li>• Refugees are able to sustain livelihoods (access to land, jobs), and support themselves</li> <li>• Refugees have access to education / health services / housing</li> <li>• Refugees are socially networked</li> </ul>
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In order to determine the extent to which this sample of Rwanda's urban refugees are integrated into their host communities, this study thus proposes the following the following criteria (see Table 3).

<b>TABLE 3: CRITERIA OF REFUGEE INTEGRATION FOR THIS STUDY</b>
<p><b>Legal Dimension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees are not restricted in their movements</li> <li>• Refugees have the right to land, jobs</li> <li>• Refugees have the right to health and education services</li> </ul>
<p><b>Economic Dimension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees have access to jobs</li> <li>• Refugees have access to health and education services</li> <li>• Refugees are able to support themselves or have prospects of soon being able to</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social / Cultural Dimension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refugees are dispersed among the local population</li> </ul>

Using these criteria, this research will propose to identify the level of integration of the urban refugees sampled in this study. Once the level of integration is identified, it will be necessary to assess the causes of that

integration. Thus, this thesis will return to Banki's (2004) assessment of factors affecting refugee integration (see Table 4).

<b>TABLE 4: FACTORS AFFECTING REFUGEE INTEGRATION LEVELS</b>	
<b>Government-Side</b>	<b>Refugee-Side</b>
<p><b>Political</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tactical security</li> <li>• Internal, cross-country relations</li> <li>• Interaction with sending countries</li> <li>• Global opinion</li> <li>• Geo-strategic issues</li> </ul> <p><b>Security</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of citizens</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Labor market</li> <li>• Domestic economy</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status</li> <li>• Rights</li> </ul>	<p><b>Social</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnicity</li> <li>• Religion</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul> <p><b>Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography</li> <li>• Timing of arrival</li> <li>• Size of refugee population</li> <li>• Individual traits</li> </ul>

Source: Banki (2004)

Taking into account both the determining factors on the side of the government and refugees, this research will attempt to prescribe an explanation for the levels of integration of this group of urban refugees in Rwanda, and identify the challenges and prospects for integration in the future.

## 7. RWANDA'S URBAN REFUGEES – A CASE STUDY

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first two sections will detail the origins of conflict both in Rwanda and the DRC, two countries whose histories are so intertwined that both need to be understood simultaneously. The third section presents a picture of Rwanda today in order to better understand the environment in which the respondents of this study find themselves. Finally, the data of this research will be presented.

### 7.1 Rwanda: Origins of Conflict



**Figure I: Map of Rwanda**

*Source: (CIA, 2009)*

As Waller (1997, p. 3) wrote, “If you think of Africa – as many people do – as a flat, brown, sandy land with few trees and little rain, Rwanda comes as a shock to the senses.” This small, land-locked country in East Africa covers 26,338km<sup>2</sup>, and is

bordered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania,



Uganda, and Burundi. Figure 1 indicates Rwanda's location in Africa. Despite its small size, Rwanda's history is as rich and complex as the flora and fauna that cover it.

Pre-colonial Rwanda consisted of three loosely defined ethnic groups – the Tutsi, the Hutu, and the Twa. Instead of being three distinctly separate groups, however, Rwanda's rich oral history suggests that there were in fact 18 neighboring family clans, to which the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa all belonged. Sharing a common language, common culture, and many of the same traditions and customs, the groupings were more so socio-economic classifications within each clan (Nolting, 2003). Despite the pastoralist Tutsi comprising the political elite, there was in fact little distinction between the groups. Inter marriages were common, and the groups joined together to fight against neighboring clans.

However, these distinctions would become more pronounced after 1907, the year Belgium invaded Rwanda. The resulting transfer of power would have a lasting impact on the societal and developmental trajectory of the small country. Thereafter, Belgian's Albert I gave preferential treatment towards the Tutsi minority through methods of unfair tax collection, forced labor and unequal access to education. Rwanda's social fabric slowly began tearing apart. Identity cards that drew ethnic lines according to

physical measurements and factors of wealth sealed the deal. The fluid nature of Rwanda's ethnic divisions had been transformed into a rigid and final system of discrimination that would ultimately lead to conflict and violence (Magnarella, 2002).

The end of World War II might have served as the catalyst for Rwanda gaining its independence in 1962, but it was a fact that indeed changed very little. Under its new leader, Grégoire Kayibanda, the country witnessed an increasingly repressive one-party state and the strengthening of ethnic divisions and discrimination. This resulted in the first significant wave of Tutsi fleeing to neighboring countries, including the DRC. Between 1959 and 1994, there were in fact seven large-scale massacres in Rwanda (IPA, 2004).

Promise of hope and reconciliation finally came in 1973, when a coup d'état established Juvenal Habyarimana as leader, one who was willing to push for public reforms that even saw the troubled economy rebound. Still, overpopulation, the decline in world market prices for coffee and tea, and continuing ethnic tensions hampered significant progress (HRW, 1999).

In the meantime, the problem was becoming a regional affair. Rwanda's Tutsi refugees continued to struggle for survival and self-sufficiency in

neighboring Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the DRC. Tanzania's Julius Nyerere adopted a lenient policy towards them, but there were other leaders, including Uganda's Milton Obote, who considered the refugees, "a temporary phenomenon who would eventually return to Rwanda" (Murison, 2003, p. 4). In response, the Rwandan refugees started to organize themselves.

In 1990, after forming the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) with the support of the Ugandan military, refugees based in Uganda launched their first invasion of Rwanda in the northeast in 1990, an event that coincided with the collapse in global coffee prices and increasing global pressures for democratic reform, the combination of which forced Habyarimana to sign a peace accord with the RPF three years later. In addition to the repatriation of refugees, the Arusha Accords committed the Government to the rule of law, pluralism, human rights, and the integration of RPF troops into the national armed forces.

Still, neither the Tutsis nor Hutus were satisfied with the agreement, and with a weak mandate and few forces in-country, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) had little ability to enforce the ceasefire. The Hutu, in particular, began a campaign of hate speeches and propaganda that portrayed the Tutsis as foreigners who had no right

living in Rwanda (HRW, 2006). Next, they began to distribute weapons and train military groups, including the Interahamwe, the results of became well known to the world albeit too late.

On April 6, 1994, with the shooting down of Habyarimana's plane over Kigali, Rwanda's genocide had begun. Within a few hours, Hutu extremists had set up road blocks throughout the city and begun to implement a plan for massacre that had been three years in the making (IPA, 2004). Over the next 100 days, everyone from political opponents to UNAMIR peacekeepers were systematically targeted and killed while the international community resisted getting involved. The result was more than a million deaths, three million exiled, and one million internally displaced (Government of Rwanda, 2002). Finally, RPF troops coming down from their base in Uganda managed to invade and stop the genocide, declaring total victory on July 14, 1994.

A transitional Government of National Unity under President Pasteur Bizimungu was established, but the challenges it faced were immense. An estimated 78 per cent of the population was now poor (Evans *et al.*, 2006), not to mention the destruction of infrastructure and negative impacts on health, education, and agriculture that had resulted from the conflict. Even

worse was the social and psychological destruction, resulting in a society even more divided and distrustful than before.

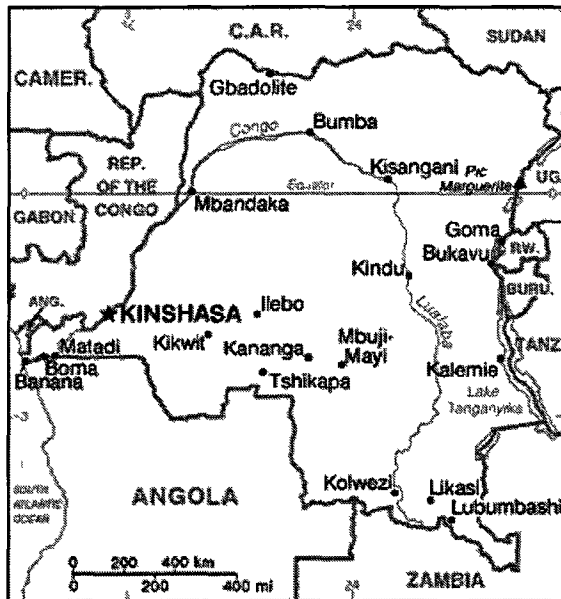
In 2003, former RPF Major General Paul Kagame was elected as President and set to work reintegrating those who had been displaced or exiled, liberalizing the economy, promoting education and health, and, perhaps most importantly, launching a process of national reconciliation.

However, the exiled génocidaires continued to pose a threat outside of Rwanda's borders, particularly regrouping in the refugee camps in Goma and Bukavu. War also continued to rage inside the borders of the DRC, when newly installed President Laurent-Désiré Kabila turned against his Rwandan and Ugandan allies, sparking a continental conflict that saw seven countries supporting various local armed groups for a piece of Congolese territory and wealth (HRW, 2004).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully delve into the origin of the Rwandan people. Still, the country's pre- and post- colonial history remains relevant in the context of today's economy and Government, which has taken upon itself the task of establishing a new national identity marked by unity and "a common origin" (Republic of Rwanda, 2004, p. 18), something which necessarily impacts the country's national refugee

policy and national attitudes towards refugees. In addition, because the plight of Rwanda's refugees ironically stem from conflict that emerged within its own borders decades ago, it is necessary to look at the two countries' conflicts with an understanding of the other.

## 7.2 Democratic Republic of Congo: A fragmented state



**Figure 2: Map of DRC**

*Source: (CIA, 2009)*

The DRC is a sprawling country of 2.34 million square kilometers home to 64.7 million people, making it the fourth most populous country in Africa. With hundreds of different ethnic groups within its borders and over 242 languages spoken, the

DRC represents one of the most challenging countries from a governance perspective, something which has been reflected throughout its turbulent history.

When people talk about the state in Lingala, only one of the five national languages of the DRC, they often say, "Leta exali lisusu te," meaning that it has ceased to exist (Gakunzi, 2004). This demonstrates the degree to which the Congolese feel their state has failed them. Today, the DRC's internal structures are weak, and have been since most of its residents can remember. Especially since the mid-1990s, a series of wars have

seen the death of over 3.5 million civilians – more than any other conflict since World War II (Congo's Hope, 2005).

Populated as early as 10,000 years ago, there were various ethnic groups who occupied the land and organized themselves into small kingdoms and republics (Davidson, 1992). King Leopold II of Belgium originally took control of the region in 1885, calling it the Congo Free State and ruling it with a brutal regime of exploitation, coercing the local population into slave labor. Leopold eventually gave control over the state to Belgium in 1908, but a regime of paternalistic colonialism and extreme resource exploitation continued. During the 1950s, a nationalist movement began to spread throughout the DRC, which eventually led to the declaration of an independent Republic of Congo under the leadership of President Kasavubu. However, the abrupt nature of the transition from a colonial state to an independent state meant, again, little more than a change in leadership.

In addition to a history of brutal colonial rule, the DRC has been weakened by two factors: (i) the process of state formation; and (ii) the end of the Cold War. When the colonial powers drew the national borders, and surrounded the DRC by nine different countries, they were setting the stage for instability throughout the region. In fact, Leslie (1993) suggests



that the externally-imposed borders meant that the DRC never had territorial legitimacy and attempts by Mobutu to create a national identity in fact failed, leaving the country ethnically divided.

The US had also set out to buy influence in the region, installing Mobutu as army chief and eventually supporting him in his coup against the president at the time, Patrice Lumumba. For over 32 years, the Mobutist state was able to compensate for its lack of internal legitimacy by drawing huge dividends from its international status as a staunch ally of the US in Africa. But, when the end of the Cold War meant the US no longer needed anti-communist allies, the DRC suffered a massive decline in levels of bilateral aid (Van de Walle, 2001). In fact, bilateral aid to the state went from US\$823 million in 1990 to US\$178 in 1993.

During the Mobutu regime, he enacted a number of policies that ultimately limited the state's ability to provide security and goods to its citizens. For example, the 'Zairianization' campaign launched by Mobutu in the 1970s involved the nationalization of over 1,500 foreign-owned companies. The majority of these foreign-owned companies were expected to hand over their profits to influential members of Mobutu's regime, essentially opening the door to rampant government corruption (Matthews and Solomon,

2001). By the end of Mobutu's rule, it was estimated that he stole approximately US\$5.5 billion from the state

The World Bank estimates that the country's Gross National Product (GNP) fell by four percent each year since 1970. Real wages were one-tenth the level they were at the end of colonial rule. Ninety percent of the country's roads were unusable due to state neglect, leaving less than 1,000 miles of paved road in a country that has a land area of over 2 million square kilometers. In fact, only 15 percent of the roads inherited from Belgian colonial rule were still passable 25 years later (Reno, 1998). Public transportation was virtually nonexistent and while the state leaders were increasing their wealth, it was at the expense of the rest of the population, of which over 80 percent live under the poverty line.

As a result, conflict has ravaged the country almost continually since independence. Secessionist rebellion and civil war occurred between 1964 and 1965, and again between 1977 and 1978. The replacement of Mobutu by Laurent Kabila in 1997 has witnessed years of internal fighting between Kabila's supporters and supporters of the Rassemblement Congolais Democratique (RCD). The degree of ethnic strife in the country is evident from the 1996 attempt by Tutsi rebels to capture part of Eastern Zaire, and the capital of Kinshasa the following year. Several bordering countries also

got involved in the conflict, including Rwanda and Uganda on the side of the RCD and Angola and Zimbabwe on Kabila's side. By 1999, six African countries were involved in the conflict.

The DRC remains a weak and fragmented state at the very least, with different armed factions vying for control over various regions throughout the country. In March 1993, *Le Monde Diplomatique* reported that in the country, "the infrastructure, roads, means of communication have disappeared, the universities have closed, the hospitals have become mortuaries, the campaigns to fight the great epidemics are suspended" (Weiss, 1995, p. 158). The current crisis has been ongoing since 1996 and attempts at ceasefires have repeatedly been violated.

In April 2003, President Kabila signed a transitional constitution calling for elections and an interim government. Soldiers from neighboring countries began to pull out, but violence again erupted in the capital in March 2004 and in the East in December 2004. Rebel leaders were appointed vice presidents and the first elections in the state in over 45 years were held in 2006. Again, Kabila gained a mandate to serve as President, but peace has remained elusive, with violence and renewed fighting breaking out in the east of the country in 2008 and displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

By the beginning of 2009, there were two armed groups operating in eastern DRC that had the strongest military capacities, and that had also caused the most civilian suffering: the exiled Rwandan Hutus grouped together in the Front Démocratique pour la Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), and Laurent Nkunda's Tutsi-dominated Congrès National du Peuple (CNDP). However, Nkunda's ambition would come to alienate the supporters he once had in the Rwandan government. When the CNDP forced the total collapse of the Congolese army, Kabila cut a deal with Kagame, and alliances in the region were about to change.

On 20 January 2009, the Rwandan army moved through North Kivu as part of Operation Umoja Wetu (Our Unity). In exchange for the removal of Nkunda by Kigali, Kinshasa agreed to a joint military operation against the FDLR and, in fact, to give key positions in the political and security institutions of the Kivus to members of the CNDP. After 35 days, results of Umoja Wetu were modest at best.

The FDLR had only been marginally weakened in the region, and almost completely untouched in South Kivu. Less than 500 FDLR members surrendered to the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC), and no less than one month later, the rebels had regrouped and began retaliating

against those civilians it believed were a part of Umoja Wetu (International Crisis Group, 2009). At the very least, the Operation represented a new partnership between Rwandan and Congolese troops that could represent an important step forward.

Umoja Wetu was followed by Kimia II, which launched on 2 March 2009. Meaning “calm” in Kiswahili, Kimia II was a joint effort of MONUC and the Congolese army to secure civilians while disarming finally the FDLR and pushing them away from strategic and mineral-rich areas. According to MONUC, 1878 combatants have been demobilized as part of Kimia II, 198 in October 2009 alone. With pre-2009 estimates of between 5,000 and 7,000 FDLR members, that would suggest that Kimia II has helped put a dent in FDLR forces by up to a quarter (Stearns, 2009).

Still, Kimia II has been criticized by many organizations for the coinciding spike in deliberate killings by the Congolese army (at least 505 civilians since the operation began), as well as retaliation killings against civilians by the FDLR (at least 630 by September 2009), and MONUC’s inability to protect civilians has been questioned (Troops killed 500, 2009). Whether the abuses are directly related to Kimia II operations is questionable. Still, MONUC has since taken a step back in its support of Congolese troops in

the worst-affected regions but continues its participation in overall operations.

What is clear is that the two histories of Rwanda and the DRC are inevitably intertwined, and fifteen years after the Rwandan genocide and the resulting spread of rebels in eastern DRC, they remain a significant threat to peace in the region. They have not yet been disarmed and continue to pose a threat to civilians in both countries, as well as the stability of their governments.

### **7. 3 Inside Rwanda Today: A Profile**

The preceding brief account of the histories of conflict in both Rwanda and the DRC demonstrate the deep ethnic tensions that run through both societies and, in the case of Rwanda, tensions that have run since well before the genocide. Post-genocidal Rwanda has seen significant economic achievements. In fact, the World Bank's 2006 Global Monitoring Report names Rwanda as one of those "[c]ountries making the fastest progress [and] exceeding the rates of improvement achieved by today's industrialized countries at a similar point in their history" (p. 47). Still, Rwanda continues to struggle with a per capita income that is lower today than it was in 1990, and more households below the poverty line than

there were in 1985 (Government of Rwanda, 2002). And, despite having restored peace and stability within its own borders, Rwanda is still feeling the threat from the conflict that continues to erupt on the Congolese side of its border.

Rwanda has a population of 8.1 million and a yearly population growth rate of 2.9 percent. The average life expectancy at birth is 43 for males and 46 for females (UNCTAD, 2005). Despite having the world's highest urbanization growth rate with 11.6 percent in 2005, Kigali remains the only major city in Rwanda, with a population of one million - 900,000 more than any other city in the country (Republic of Rwanda, 2003). The majority of Rwandans continue to live in a rural society, with 60 percent of the population living below the national poverty line of RwF 64,000 per annum per adult and 42 percent below the extreme poverty line of RwF 45,000 (Republic of Rwanda and UN, 2003). Much of this poverty is concentrated in rural areas, more so than in other African countries (Mackinnon *et al.*, 2003), with the incidence of poverty higher than 50 percent in all provinces except the city of Kigali, which stands at 12.3 percent (Government of Rwanda, 2002)

As a result of this growing urban-rural divide, so too is there a growing inequality among the population. The average consumption of the top

quintile of the population is almost ten times the average consumption in the bottom quintile. In addition, Rwanda's Ginicoefficient has increased sharply from one of the best figures on the continent in the mid-1980s with 0.27 to a rather high level in 2001 of 0.4555 (Republic of Rwanda, 2003a).

The genocide, and subsequent economic and social reforms initiated by the Kagame Government, has turned Rwanda into an international favorite for foreign assistance. Many donors are particularly active in Rwanda particularly because of a desire to support a tragic country where the international community previously failed just over a decade ago. Immediately following the genocide, Rwanda received up to US\$700 million in foreign aid. In 2004, this figure dropped to US\$468 million, but this still remains well ahead of many other African countries (World Bank, 2006). Thirty six percent of this aid was attributed to general budget support, while the other funds were used for a variety of purposes: 17 percent went to economic infrastructure development, 16 percent to human resource development, 9 percent to governance measures, 7 percent to rural development, 5 percent to education, 3 percent to cross-cutting issues, 2 percent to private sector development, and 5 percent to other projects (Amis *et al.*, 2005).



In an effort to improve its socio-economic standings, Rwanda has begun to increase its participation in multilateral and regional blocs, including the African Economic Community (AEC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI), and the East African Community (EAC). It is also a founding member of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL). Together, they include areas of cooperation as broad as trade, investment, monetary and fiscal affairs, infrastructure and services, human resources, science and technology, agriculture, environment, tourism and wildlife management, and health, social and cultural activities.

Regional integration agreements have potentially far-reaching impacts on Rwanda's refugees. They mean that the Government will have to follow rules and legislation that impact on all members of the grouping. It is further bound by certain decisions and has to give up on sovereignty and decision-making power. These agreements usually involve regional initiatives that are much more viable and sustainable than local or national ones. The protection of refugees, for example, is much easier if comprehensive measures are implemented in all of Rwanda's neighboring countries.

Today, Kagame's Government speaks of a homogenous people, and works to protect a new Constitution that makes illegal discrimination on the basis of race, gender, or religion. By emphasizing a single common Rwandan identity, the Government has seemingly conquered insurmountable odds in reuniting a country that was fractured almost irreparably. It has also implemented a uniquely Rwandan brand of transitional justice for genocidaires despite challenges given the scale and brutality of the genocide, the high degree of public participation, and the geographical and economic constraints that force perpetrators and survivors to often live side by side.

In 2002, the government launched Gacaca, a system of 11,000 community courts that were committed to holding those responsible for the genocide accountable in criminal trials. While national courts and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda prosecute the higher ranking officials and the political and military leadership of the genocide, over 800,000 Rwandans have been accused before the Gacaca – one-fifth of the country's adult population. Despite providing limited reparations to survivors, Gacaca courts have been able to offer some degree of symbolic reparations, not least of which by requiring suspects who plead guilty to reveal the whereabouts of their victims' remains in order to be eligible for reduced sentencing.

Still, there are those who criticize the government's supposed elimination of ethnic distinctions as self-serving for Kagame in that it works to disguise the dangerously overwhelming majority of Tutsis in government and the underrepresentation of Hutus (Adams, 2008). So, too, could this reflect the heavy hand of Kagame himself, whose picture hangs in houses, restaurants, and shops across the country.

Whatever the motive, in underscoring the unifying attributes of Rwandans, outsiders are necessarily labeled as such. Rwanda's refugees must therefore cope with not only regaining their economic footing in a new country that is itself on unsure footing, but surviving the fractured social fabric in which they now find themselves. It is the purpose of this thesis to discover to what extent this has affected levels of integration among a select group of urban refugees.

#### **7.4 The Refugee Context**

One of the reasons for selecting Rwanda as the location for this study was precisely because of the fact that it is rarely thought of in terms of a refugee-hosting country. On the contrary, thanks to the tragic legacy of the 1994 genocide, Rwanda is rightly regarded as one of East Africa's largest

refugee-producing countries. Indeed, thousands of Rwandan refugees still make neighboring countries including Uganda and Tanzania their home. Despite the signing of tripartite agreements with these countries for the voluntary repatriation of refugees, many still choose not to return based on fears of oppression from the government (Williams, 2004).

Still, thousands of refugees from the DRC, Burundi, and a host of other countries, are being sheltered in camps and living in urban areas throughout Rwanda. This study aims to shed light on these refugees who, largely in the aftermath of 1994, have been steadily streaming into Rwanda and trying to eke out a living for themselves.

#### **7.41 Dimensions**

According to the latest UNHCR estimates, Rwanda is home to 55,645 refugees, of which 52,083 originate from the DRC (93.5 percent) and 2,831 originate from Burundi (5 percent). The remaining 1.5 percent of refugees come primarily from Kenya and Somalia. The majority of these refugees are female, numbering 30,635 (55 percent). Children are the other major component: 12,233 (20.85 percent) are between the ages of 0 and 4, 2,914 (23.24 percent) are between the ages of 5 and 11, and 10,044 (18.34 percent) are between 12 and 17 years old (Mutesi, 2008).

These 55,645 refugees are housed in six refugee camps spread throughout the country: Nyabiheke, Kiziba, Nkamira, Nyagatare, Gihembe, and Kiziba. Both Kiziba camp in the west and Gihembe camp in the north host more than 18,000 refugees each.

The majority of Burundian refugees fled to Rwanda in 2005 due to fighting between the Burundian army and the National Liberation Front, and they now live in Kigeme camp. Meanwhile, the majority of Rwanda's Congolese refugees fled various waves of fighting in the 1990s and again between 2000 and 2003. In late 2006, renewed fighting in North and South Kivu Provinces in eastern DRC prompted another influx of refugees to Rwanda. At the time of writing, conflict has again flared up in the eastern DRC (see Ch. 7.2). As a result, the western city of Gisenyi in Rwanda, a ten-minute walk across the border from Goma, has once again been overwhelmed with Congolese refugees. It is estimated that some 250,000 Congolese have been displaced due to the recent violence (Nthengwe, 2008).

In addition to the officially-registered refugees, Rwanda is host to approximately 703 asylum seekers, 574 of whom originate from the DRC, 119 from Burundi, and ten from other countries (Mutesi, 2008). For the purposes of this thesis, it is the 2,547 refugees who live in Rwanda's urban areas that are the focus of the research.

According to the UNHCR, 2,547 refugees have been officially registered and granted permission to live in urban areas. Of these, 1756 originate from the DRC, 763 from Burundi, and 28 from other countries. However, it can be reasonably presumed that the number of refugees living in urban areas is in fact much higher. In this study conducted, 50 percent of participants considered themselves urban refugees because they lived and worked in Kigali despite the fact that they were not officially registered as such with the UNHCR. Indeed, they did not have the legal right to be living in Kigali and according to official records these 50 percent were still contained in the refugee camps. Thus, the number of urban refugees, including those not officially registered as such, is significantly higher than official UNHCR estimates.

Most of these urban refugees live in Kigali, Rwanda's fast-developing capital. Others are more sparsely dispersed in cities including Butare, Rwanda's intellectual capital to the west, and Ruhengeri, the most-used starting point by tourists for Rwanda's famous gorilla trek.

## **7.42 Response and protection**

### **7.421 Government of Rwanda**

According to articles 14, 18 and 41 of Rwanda's Constitution of 2003, the Government assumes responsibilities for social security matters. These should comprise a number of interventions that guarantee support to the most vulnerable members of society. In order to achieve this, various ministries and agencies have initiated a number of programs that tackle some of the most serious problems. In fact, an estimated seven to ten percent of the national budget is allocated to social protection programs (MINECOFIN, 2006).

Despite the multitude of individual initiatives and programs that, together, provide a more or less effective public social safety net, observers have noted that a coherent strategy for social protection and support particularly to the most vulnerable does not yet exist. Challenges include the lack of clearly defined programmatic goals, the poor identification of vulnerable target groups, including refugees, and the lack of transparency with regards to financial sources and partnerships (Bangwanubusa, 2004). Still, it is a first important step that the Government has started to recognize that this omission constitutes a significant gap in both poverty and growth policy.

Rwanda is a signatory to both the 1951 United Nations Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees (see Chapter 2.1). It also ratified the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa. Rwanda did initially maintain a reservation to the 1951 Convention, which related to refugees' freedom of movement, as well as to the 1967 Protocol's offer of recourse to the International Criminal Court. However, in March 2008, all reservations were lifted.

In 2001, the Government of Rwanda passed its own Refugee Law (n° 34/2001), which took a significant step forward in ensuring the country's refugees the rights they were guaranteed under international law. It was later modified and complimented by Law n° 29/2006. Law n° 34/2001 reads: "Considérant que le Rwanda a ratifié ces instruments internationaux et qu'il a conséquemment reconnu que les problèmes des réfugiés doivent être abordés d'une manière humanitaire pour leur trouver une solution" (p. 1). Its successor goes on to make two important adoptions. First, it approves the creation of a National Council for Refugees (CNR), made up of representatives from several key government ministries, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Defense. As stated in the Law, "The Council follows up and examines issues of foreign refugees who seek asylum in



Rwanda and Rwandan refugees in Diaspora and thereafter takes decisions” (Art.1).

**TABLE 5: RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NATIONAL REFUGEE COUNCIL OF RWANDA**

**As outlined in Article 5 of Law n° 29/2006**

- To implement the policy governing refugees in general;
- To monitor how the rights of refugees living in Rwanda and those of Rwandan returnees are respected in Rwanda;
- To examine and make decisions on applications of persons seeking refugee status in Rwanda;
- To retract refugee status from any refugee that does not respect laws on refugees in Rwanda;
- To mobilize all necessary resources in order for the achievement of repatriation and reintegration activities of Rwandan refugees in Rwanda;
- To establish and follow up good working relationship between Rwanda, UNHCR, and Countries in which Rwandans sought asylum so that their repatriation is effected without hindrance;
- To examine and approve activity report relating to refugees and returnees prepared by the Executive Secretary;
- To draft a financial budget relating to refugees living in Rwanda and the Rwandan returnees;
- To submit an activity report to the Minister in charge of refugees and returnees;
- To assist the Government in coordinating the activities of Local Associations and International Organizations operating in Rwanda which mobilize funds to assist in repatriation and reintegration of refugees.

The CNR was put in charge of making policy decisions concerning refugees, granting and revoking refugee status, ensuring respect for refugees’ rights, and broadly, implementing the national refugee policy instituted in Law n° 34/2001 (see Table 5). The body meets at least three times per year.

The status determination process for asylum seekers in Rwanda is clearly spelled out in Law n° 34/2001. Within 15 days of arriving in Rwanda, all asylum seekers have to report to the provincial or municipal authority closest to their point of entry and register with the closest immigration office. The immigration office then forwards their file to the CNR within 15 days, which then has six months to decide on the claim. Applicants are assessed against a series of criteria largely taken from the 1951 Convention (see Table 6). After the CNR issues its written decision, the applicant has 15 days in which to appeal. The CNR must rule on that appeal within 60 days, during which time the applicant is allowed to remain in Rwanda. Those granted asylum also have the right to bring their spouses and minor children to join them.

National authorities are responsible for managing the country's transit centers and refugee camps. Immigration officials from the Ministry of Local Governance, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs (MINALOC) register refugees in every refugee camp and transit centre. Asylum seekers in transit centers are recognized on a prima facie basis. In 2007, the CNR accorded individual refugee status to 160 people, all of whom were Congolese. Fifty applications were denied, thirty of which were Congolese and twenty Burundian (USCRI, 2008).

**TABLE 6: DEFINITION OF A REFUGEE IN RWANDA****As outlined in Article 1 of Law n° 34/2001**

- Toute personne qui craignant d'être persécutée du fait de sa race, de sa religion, de sa nationalité, de son appartenance a un group sociale, de son origine ethnique ou tribale, ou de ses opinions divergeant avec la politique nationale du pays dont elle a la nationalité, quitte ce pays, et qui, du fait de cette crainte, ne peut ou ne veut se réclamer de la protection de ce pays;
- Toute personne qui, n'ayant plus de nationalité et se trouvent hors du pays dans lequel elle avait sa résidence habituelle, a une crainte bien fondée d'être persécuté pour des raisons de race, d'origine ethnique ou tribale, de religion, de nationalité, d'appartenance a un groupe social ou d'opinions divergeant avec la politique nationale, ne peut ou ne veut, en raison de ladite crainte, y retourner;
- Toute personne qui, du fait d'une agression, d'une occupation extérieure, d'une domination étrangère ou d'événements troublant gravement l'ordre public dans une partie ou dans la totalité de son pays d'origine ou du pays dont elle a la nationalité, quitte sa résidence habituelle pour chercher refuge dans un autre endroit a l'extérieur de son pays d'origine ou du pays dont elle a la nationalité.

From its inception, however, the CNR has struggled with issues of capacity (USCRI, 2008). Although created in 2001, the CNR did not actually begin to register applicants and conduct status determination until 2004. During the three-year lag, the UNHCR took responsibility for adjudicating new applications and counseling new applicants. It was not until 2006 that the CNR was able to assume full responsibility for the application procedures. Even then, insufficient staffing (one executive secretary, three officers in charge of status determination, one officer in charge of repatriation, one accountant, and one secretary) continued to hamper the CNR's ability to carry out its mandate. Lack of expertise on refugee law and international protection on the part of the CNR has also made the system in Rwanda slow and inefficient.

In addition to the CNR, the national Refugee Law also put into a place a list of both the rights that officially recognized refugees are entitled to, as well as the duties that came along with being recognized as such (see Table 7).

<b>TABLE 7: RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF REFUGEES IN RWANDA</b>
<b>As outlined in Article 22 of Law n° 34/2001</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Le droit à un traitement non discriminatoire;</li><li>• La liberté de religion reconnue par les lois régissant les associations sans but lucrative au Rwanda;</li><li>• Le droit a la propriété mobilière et immobilière;</li><li>• Le droit a la propriété intellectuelle et industrielle;</li><li>• Le droit d'associations a caractère non politique;</li><li>• Le droit d'ester et d'être représenté en justice;</li><li>• Le droit à un emploi;</li><li>• Le droit au logement;</li><li>• Le droit à l'assistance et à la protection de l'Administration;</li><li>• La liberté de circulation conformément a la loi.</li></ul>

Among others, refugees are guaranteed the right to work, to housing, and to protection from the Government. Reflecting back on Banki's factors for successful integration, many of the necessary ingredients are seemingly present in Rwanda. This will be returned to in further discussions (see Ch. 8.1).

#### **7.422 United Nations**

UNHCR in Rwanda is composed of four offices spread out across the country, and maintained by 30 national and 18 international staff members. With a 2009 budget of US\$5,271,838 (see Table 8), UNHCR Rwanda has four main objectives in the current year: (i) Protect and assist refugees from the DRC and Burundi and asylum seekers from other countries; (ii) Improve shelter, water supplies, sanitation and educational facilities in three camps hosting a total of 50,000 DRC refugees; (iii) Help the Government promote the voluntary repatriation of Rwanda refugees and create income-generating activities for them; and (iv) Strengthen the national authorities' Refugee Status Determination capacity. Select key targets for 2009 include: (i) 50,000 refugees and asylum seekers receive international protection and material assistance; (ii) 10,000 Rwandan refugees repatriate voluntarily in safety and dignity, receiving an improved returnee package and transportation to their communities of origin; (iii) 2,000 Burundian refugees repatriate voluntarily by the end of 2008, and Kigeme refugee camp is closed; (iv) 500 refugees repatriate voluntarily to DRC, security permitting; and (v) Full enrolment in primary school for all refugee children is maintained, and girls' secondary school enrolment is increased to 100 percent (UNHCR, 2008).

UNHCR Rwanda has also highlighted three goals as they specifically relate to urban refugees, namely: (i) To strengthen the information

provided to urban refugees; (ii) To implement self-reliance activities; (iii) To limit and reduce the care and assistance provided. As their Country Operations Plan for 2007 states:

It is expected that urban refugees will have more access to self reliance activities in order to create and increase their incomes and this way, ensure their subsistence...There is a great need to advocate for more support from all stakeholders to self help activities to benefit urban refugees, as this is key to the success of the strategy and the achievement of objectives for urban refugees. (p. 6)

<b>TABLE 8: UNHCR RWANDA BUDGET 2007-2009 (USD)</b>			
<b>Activities and Services</b>	<b>Annual Program Budget</b>		
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,127,388	1,313,058	1,412,966
Community services	50,984	67,481	52,896
Domestic needs	239,052	306,556	263,145
Education	312,855	335,180	306,350
Food	12,072	0	0
Forestry	16,780	46,450	30,000
Health	558,883	572,787	590,855
Income Generation	3,772	100,000	50,000
Legal assistance	77,784	133,001	70,173
Operational support (to agencies)	361,979	349,773	343,801
Sanitation	141,839	142,234	139,397
Shelter and other infrastructure	103,305	146,650	100,150
Transport and	736,514	664,832	655,071

logistics			
Water	134,181	135,057	131,142
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>3,877,388</b>	<b>4,313,058</b>	<b>4,145,946</b>
Program support	1,050,482	1,137,257	1,125,892
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,927,870</b>	<b>5,450,315</b>	<b>5,271,838</b>

Source: (UNHCR, 2007)

In 2007, UNHCR protected and assisted a total of 51,600 refugees and asylum-seekers across Rwanda's refugee camps and transit centers, as well as 2,600 urban refugees in Kigali. Its assistance focused on ten priority areas: community services, domestic needs and household support, education, health and nutrition, legal assistance, operational support, sanitation, shelter and infrastructure, transport and logistics, and water. Key activities undertaken by UNHCR Rwanda in 2008 can be found in Table 8.

<b>TABLE 8: UNHCR PRIORITY AREAS OF SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Key activities and assistance undertaken in 2008</b>	
<p><b><u>Community Services</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted country-wide age, gender and diversity assessments</li> <li>• Created strategy for reduction of sexual and gender-based violence in all camps</li> <li>• Monitored implementation of standard operational procedures</li> <li>• Supported refugee camp management committees</li> <li>• Organized awareness campaigns and trainings on sexual and gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Legal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated registration data on camp-based refugees</li> <li>• Working with CNR to develop systematic information system</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Operational Support</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided technical and financial support to CNR</li> <li>• Organized training sessions for CNR and implementing partners</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Sanitation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversaw community program requiring household members</li> </ul>

<p><b><u>Domestic Needs / Household Support</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distributed essential non-food items and firewood in all camps and transit centers</li> <li>• Distributed sanitary materials to all camp-based refugee women and girls</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Education</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversaw schooling of 11,600 primary school-aged camp-based refugees</li> <li>• Assisted 590 urban refugee children in Kigali with primary schooling</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Health / Nutrition</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided basic health care to camp-based and urban refugees in Kigali</li> <li>• Provided counseling HIV/AIDS counseling and testing to 7,300 camp-based refugees</li> <li>• Provided anti-retroviral treatment to 260 refugees</li> </ul>	<p>to clean latrines twice a day</p> <p><b><u>Shelter / Infrastructure</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitated 1,800 houses and helped construct 320 shelters and 1,000 new houses</li> <li>• Maintained 6 kilometers of road to the camps</li> <li>• Refurbished a market in Gihembe</li> <li>• Equipped 200 communal kitchens with improved stoves</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Transport / Logistics</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Used public transport to avoid any disruption in delivery of supplies to camps and transfer new refugees from transit centers to Nyabiheke</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Water</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided 15 liters per refugee per day in camps</li> </ul>
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Source: (UNHCR, 2007)

### 7.423 Non-Governmental Organizations

UNHCR works with the following NGOs as implementing partners in Rwanda: Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), American Refugee Committee (ARC), Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Save the Children UK, and Forum for African Women Educationists. During this study, respondents noted receiving various support from AHA, JRS, and Right to Play. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, it is these three organizations that will be examined in further detail.



AHA is a pan-African NGO that works to provide effective humanitarian assistance to alleviate human suffering, building on the strength of African people to solve African problems. Founded in 1994 in response to the Rwandan genocide, it has since supported more than 10 million people in 16 African countries, to regain their health, dignity and wellbeing. Today, AHA has 1,700 staff throughout Africa, working in partnership with local populations to address the following six priority areas: (i) Capacity development; (ii) Health care; (iii) HIV/AIDS prevention and care; (iv) Public advocacy; (v) Relief and recovery; and (vi) Sexual and gender-based violence prevention and response.

A large portion of AHA's work is concerned with health care, where in Rwanda it provides medical services in Kibiza Camp. It also provides feeding centers, education and awareness programs, capacity development services. At the end of 2006, however, AHA introduced a new Urban Refugee Program, which seeks to address the health care needs of refugees in Kigali. In its first year, this program saw the opening of a Consultation Clinic in Kigali. Since then, it has expanded its program to include prevention, care, treatment and capacity development to urban refugees. In 2008, AHA reports to have provided over 5,100 urban refugees with access to health care and nutritional support, as well as

supporting more than 1,000 young people in accessing education – providing school materials, uniforms and tuition fees (AHA, 2008). AHA has identified numerous challenges it faces with working in Rwanda, namely a high turnaround of local staff and budget constraints. Still, in 2007, with a budget of US\$579,533, AHA reports to have assisted more than 18,000 Congolese refugees, 3,000 urban refugees, as well as 3,000 local Rwandans.

JRS is an international Catholic organization at work in more than 50 countries, providing assistance to refugees in refugee camps, to people displaced within their own country, to asylum seekers in cities, and those held in detention. Set up by the Society of Jesus in 1980, JRS is a worldwide network of associates and institutions of this Catholic religious order. Today, JRS is comprised of over 1,400 workers, the majority of whom work on a voluntary basis. They serve refugees, offering them practical and spiritual support, according to their humanitarian needs.

JRS focuses its services in the fields of education, emergency assistance, health and nutrition, income generating activities and social services. It is also very much concerned with advocacy and human rights work. This involves ensuring that refugees are afforded their full rights while in exile and during repatriation as guaranteed by the 1951 Convention and

working to strengthen the protection afforded to IDPs. This extends to lobbying for and promoting greater international protection and human rights legislation, either through participation in international campaigns and coalitions or through membership of international forums such as the UN Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC).

In Rwanda, JRS serves as the implementing partner for UNHCR for education in both Kiziba and Gihembe camps, where it offered pre-school, primary and three years of secondary education to 1,242, 8,358, and 1,734 respectively to refugee children in 2006. It also sponsored 439 refugee children to finish their secondary education in schools outside the camps. JRS also provided 401 refugees with skills training in various trades in both camps, as well as literacy classes to 459 students, and cultural, sports, and religious activities to 7,300 refugees (JRS, 2007).

Right to Play is an international humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Right To Play trains local community leaders as coaches to deliver its programs in countries affected by war, poverty, and disease in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and South America. Currently active in 23 countries, its programs target the most marginalized, including girls,

people living with disability, children affected by HIV and AIDS, street children, former child combatants and refugees.

Right To Play began operating in Rwanda in 2003. There, its Play to Learn project has grown from a volunteer-run operation based solely in Kigali, to a country-based office with a local staff of 20. In October of 2007, Right To Play launched an expansion of activities into Rubavu district. Moving away from working just in Kigali and its surrounding areas, the opening of a second office in the town of Gisenyi marked not only the extension of Right To Play activities to new areas in the country, but also a trend in positive collaboration with local authorities in Rwanda. By the end of 2008, Right to Play had trained 1,041 leaders from the community, and reached out to 50,141 children (RTP, 2009).

## **7.5 Data Presentation**

This section attempts a presentation and analysis of data collected from twenty urban refugees in Kigali. The section is divided into three sub-sections: (i) an analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents; (ii) an analysis of the conditions of respondents' lives before their arrival in Kigali; and (iii) an analysis of the conditions of respondents' lives after their arrival in Kigali. In the final sub-section, an analysis of the

roles of the agencies, organizations, and networks in supporting the respondents will also be brought in.

## 7.51 Social Demographic Characteristics

This sub-section presents the data results of respondents as they relate to age, educational background, and household composition.

### 7.511 Age Distribution

<b>TABLE 9: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS</b>						
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
15 – 19	2	10.0	1	5.0	3	15.0
20 – 24	3	15.0	3	15.0	6	30.0

25 – 29	0	0.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
A30 – 34	1	5.0	3	15.0	4	20.0
g35 – 39	3	15.0	0	0.0	3	15.0
e40 – 44	1	5.0	1	5.0	2	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

is an important variable in this study as it influences the respondents' ability to engage in productive activity. As noted by Johnson and Neumark (1997), in the life cycle hypothesis of human capital theory, there is a relationship between productivity and age, with productive age normally considered to be between the ages of 15 and 49. Although this study does not directly test this hypothesis, it shows that age is an important variable since in that it influences respondents' ability to partake in productive activity.

In Rwanda, the median age of the population is 18.7 years. With 42.1 percent under the age of 14, and 55.4 percent between the ages of 15 and 64, there is only a very small 2.4 percent of the population above 65 years. The age distribution of the respondents in this study can be found in Table 9.

Of the total 20 participants who were interviewed, 30 percent (6) fell within the ages of 20 and 24. This was followed by 20 percent (4) within the ages 30 and 34, 15 percent (3) from each of the ages of 15 and 19, and 35 and 39 respectively. Finally, ten percent of respondents (2) fell within the 25 to 29 age group, as well as the 40 to 44 age group. Of those respondents officially registered as urban refugees, the majority fell within the 20 to 24 and the 35 to 39 age groups. Of those respondents not officially registered in Kigali, the majority fell within the 20 to 24 and 30 to 34 age groups.

It is clear from Table 9 that the majority of respondents for this study were under the age of 35, with all of them falling within Johnson and Neumark's productive age range. As indicated earlier, this is partially due to the method of selection, as respondents were largely from the same circle of friends and thus more likely to be of similar ages. However, as Fall (1998) observes, the mobility of migrants declines at the age of 34 years. With 75 percent (15) of respondents in this study under the age of 35, Fall's

findings would certainly seem to hold true. It is also important to note that 90 percent of those refugees not officially registered in Kigali are below the age of 35, versus only 60 percent of the legal urban refugees. This would seem to indicate that a refugee's willingness to take the risk of leaving a camp without official permission and move to the city to try and make a living decreases with age.

### **7.512 Educational Background**

Rwanda committed itself to achieving universal primary education by 2010 and nine years of basic education for all by 2015, and indeed, looks to be on track towards meeting both of those goals (Republic of Rwanda, 2003b). In the years since the genocide, the Government has made significant strides in this sector, with primary level enrollment rates reaching 92 percent in 2006, one of the highest in the region (MINECOFIN, 2006). This is thanks to the introduction of policies that abolished primary school fees and compulsory school uniforms, and distributed freely textbooks to schools (Republic of Rwanda, 2004a). Secondary level enrolments have also improved steadily from a regional low of 6.5 percent in 2001 to 9.1 percent in 2005, which has also translated into increased enrolment in Rwanda's six universities from 16,000 in 2002 to 25,000 in 2004 (Republic of Rwanda, 2006).



Still, universal access to education remains hindered by levies at certain schools, social pressure to wear uniforms, distance to schools, and the opportunity cost that a household suffers by sending the children to school (Obura, 2005). For instance, according to World Bank estimates, 33.1 percent of Rwandan children between the ages of 7 and 14 are economically active (World Bank, 2006a).

In following, according to the 2005 Citizen Report Card, 42 percent of parents felt that despite the removal of most fees, the opportunity costs of sending their children to primary school remained too high. As of April 2009, 24 percent of women and 17 percent of men in Rwanda's rural areas have no formal education. In urban areas, the percentages drop slightly to 13 and 9 percent respectively (MOH, 2009).

<b>TABLE 10: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</b>						
<b>Educational Background (begun or completed)</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary	1	5.0	3	15.0	4	20.0
Secondary	3	15.0	3	15.0	6	30.0
University	4	20.0	2	10.0	6	30.0
Vocational	1	5.0	2	10.0	3	15.0
None	1	5.0	0	0.0	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It is within this context that urban refugees in Rwanda also struggle to earn an education and create opportunity for themselves. As livelihood options are increased by investment in education and by the skills that people acquire, it is important for this study to ascertain the education levels of respondents. Table 10 indicates the various educational backgrounds respondents attained in their countries of origin prior to their arrival in Kigali.

Table 10 illustrates that prior to fleeing their country of origin, educational access and qualifications of respondents were varied. The majority of respondents (12) had begun or completed secondary or university education, while 20 percent (4) had completed primary school and another 15 percent (3) had received vocational training. Five percent of respondents (1) were illiterate (having no formal education). Those respondents officially considered urban refugees were shown to have the same amount of secondary education as those illegal urban refugees. And, while those illegal urban refugees had 50 percent more vocational training and 33.3 percent greater levels of primary level education, those legal urban refugees in Kigali possessed 50 percent higher levels of university level education.

The interviews found that the six respondents who had tertiary education had studied a wide range of topics, including Accounting, Banking, Commerce, Management, and Political Science. Still, one 29 year old male noted that, “I couldn’t finish because we didn’t have the financial means” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Respondents who indicated having vocational training all noted that it was in the field of automobiles and mechanics. Meanwhile, all of the respondents who indicated having no formal education prior to becoming refugees noted that it was because they were too young at the time to start school.

In total, 80 percent of respondents had some level of formal education prior to arriving in Kigali. While those with university level education were twice as likely to be recognized as official urban refugees, it was those with greater vocational skills that took the risk to move to the city without official permission in the hopes of putting those skills to work.

<b>TABLE 11: EDUCATIONAL ATTENDANCE OF RESPONDENTS IN RWANDA</b>						
<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Secondary	1	5.0	3	15.0	4	20.0
University	3	15.0	2	10.0	5	25.0
None	6	30.0	5	25.0	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Upon their arrival in Rwanda, several respondents continued to pursue educational opportunities. Twenty-five percent of respondents (5) were, at the time of questioning enrolled in university in Kigali, 60 percent (3) of who are officially registered urban refugees (see Table 11). Meanwhile, 20 percent (4) indicated they are currently enrolled in secondary school, 5 percent (1) of whom are officially registered urban refugees. An additional 10 percent of respondents (2) noted that while they are no longer pursuing their own education, their children are currently enrolled in primary or secondary school in Kigali. Both of these respondents are officially registered urban refugees. Thus, with 45 percent of respondents currently enrolled in school in Kigali, it can be seen that, whether officially recognized as such or not, they have been both eager to, and able to access educational opportunities.

Of those legal urban refugees who are currently pursuing education in Kigali, 100 percent (4) indicated that they do so with the financial support of UNHCR. On the other hand, only 5 percent (1) of those illegal urban refugees indicated they are receiving financial support to do so from JRS. Five percent (1) noted they pay for secondary school with money sent from family members living abroad, and a further 15 percent (3) pay their school fees from their own salaries or with the support of roommates. One 26-year old male who is illegally living in Kigali but working in a financial

institution noted, "It is very difficult, but I pay for school with the little money I make from my job" (personal communication, 22 August 2008). The respondents with children attending school in Kigali all indicated they receive financial support to do so from UNHCR.

Interestingly, this is the sole case throughout this study where a participant identified making use of remittances. To contrast this with their local Rwandan counterparts, Clay and vander Haar (1993) found that 60 percent of households in Rwanda received some form of support from family members living outside the household, primarily through intergenerational support, or from children to parents. It would thus seem that the family support networks of these urban refugees are significantly weaker than their local counterparts. Still, with little support in the form of remittances, and equally little support from official or non-governmental channels, they have proven resilient in their desire, and their ability to find their own means to take advantage of educational opportunities.

### **7.513 Household Composition**

The household is organized around needs that have social, psychological, cultural, and historical dimensions to them. Rakodi (2002) has argued that household size or composition is a determining factor of the capacities and

strategies available to it. González de la Rocha (2000) has also stated that the size of a household and the availability of earners are very important elements of its vulnerability. Thus, poverty is more likely in a large household with proportionally small income earners.

Household size of respondents ranged from two to nine with an average of 4.5 members. The age of dependents in these households ranged from five months to 50 years. Forty percent of respondents (8) live in male-only households, while 5 percent (1) live in female-only households (see Table 12). The remaining 55 percent of respondents (11) live in mixed gender households, with 36 percent of these (4) in households that contained only family members. Interestingly, with only one respondent living in a female-only household, it would seem as though female refugees are far less likely to make the move to an urban area when unaccompanied by a male,

<b>TABLE 12: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS IN RWANDA</b>						
<b>Housemates</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Live with fellow refugees	10	50.0	4	20.0	14	70.0
Live with local Rwandans	0	0.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
Live with both Rwandans and refugees	0	0.0	4	20.0	4	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Officially Registered Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Unofficial Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Female only	1	5.0	0	0.0	1	5.0
Male only	3	15.0	5	25.0	8	40.0
Mixed gender	6	30.0	5	25.0	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

whether or not they are given official permission to do so.

In 30 percent of the cases, respondents considered themselves heads of the household, with the additional responsibility of caring for roommates and/or family members. Interestingly, all of the respondents who indicated they are currently living with family were also considered officially urban, thus indicating a negative correlation between having dependents and the willingness to take the risk of leaving camps for urban areas without official permission.

At 70 percent (14), the majority of respondents also live in households comprised of only fellow refugees (see Table 12). Meanwhile, 20 percent (4) of respondents live in mixed households of both fellow refugees and local Rwandans, and 10 percent of respondents (2) live in households with only local Rwandans. Interestingly, 100 percent (10) of those respondents considered official urban refugees lived in households with only fellow refugees, half of which live with their families. On the other hand, 60 percent (6) of respondents considered unofficial urban refugees lived in

these mixed or local households. This would seem to indicate that, armed with smaller support networks as individuals, the illegal urban refugees adapted by developing new and stronger networks within their new communities.

100 percent of respondents (20) reported to be tenants in their houses, paying a monthly rental fee to the property owner. These fees ranged from 0 RwF (where their roommates took care of all payments) to 100,000 RwF, with the average being 25,000 RwF. One respondent noted, “20,000 RwF gets you a small bedroom and living room. It depends on the standard of house you can live in” (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Given the average number of residents per household, it can be assumed that most households have two or more persons sharing a bedroom. Here, the findings of González de la Rocha (2000) prove true, as respondents with greater numbers of roommates had smaller financial burdens when it came to paying rent.

### **7.52 Life Before Arrival in Rwanda**

Although this study is not directly concerned with the dynamics of the economic life of respondents while in their country of origin, it is necessary to examine the issue to some degree in order to better understand not



only the 'shock' of the conflict and their suddenly becoming refugees, but more importantly to assess the skills and experience they may have brought with them to their new lives as refugees.

All of respondents originated from the DRC. This is due both to the method of selection (see Ch.6), and to the fact that more than two-thirds of Rwanda's refugees originate from the DRC. Prior to fleeing their home countries, 40 percent of respondents (8) indicated that they held jobs that were sufficient in supporting themselves and their families where the case may be. These jobs included: an administrative clerk for a local NGO, a chauffeur, farmers, a musician, and small business owners. One respondent noted, "We ran a small business in town. The conclusion? Everything was great" (personal communication, 8 August 2008).

A further 45 percent of respondents (9) indicated that members of their family, including husbands and parents, held jobs that supported them, and thus were not looking for jobs. For instance, one respondent said, "My father was a state official and we had a salary at the end of each month. It was enough to take care of all of us" (personal communication, 9 September 2008). Another noted, "I was too young, but my parents worked as farmers. We struggled, but we worked" (personal communication, 15 August 2008). The remaining 15 percent of

respondents (3) said they did not hold regular jobs before fleeing their home country (see Table 13).

<b>TABLE 13: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS IN COUNTRY OF ORIGIN</b>						
<b>Employment</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Employed	3	15.0	5	25.0	8	40.0
Unemployed	2	10.0	1	5.0	3	15.0
Otherwise engaged (homemaker, student etc.)	5	25.0	4	20.0	9	45.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Interestingly, of the 40 percent of respondents (8) that held permanent, full-time employment in the DRC, 37.5 (3) would go on to gain official urban refugee status in Kigali, while the remaining 62.5 percent (5) would go on to live in Kigali without official urban refugee status. Here, the nature of the employment was likely a determining factor since the official urban refugees were more likely to be employed in the formal sector, while all of those not recognized as urban were employed in the informal sector. Still, at a price of RwF 200,000 each, buying a work permit that would allow them to work legally in the country, proved too expensive for even many legal urban refugees.

However, with only 15 percent of respondents unemployed in their country of origin, the remaining 85 percent were necessarily armed with skills and

experience when they fled to Rwanda. In particular, many of the skills they came bearing were in high demand in Kigali. For instance, with one of the highest pupil-to-teacher ratios in the region at 69 to 1, Rwanda suffers from inadequate and insufficient availability of teaching and learning materials (Republic of Rwanda, 2006f: 6). Thus, the 40 year old male who studied Political Science at university in the DRC and became a high school teacher in Kigali was contributing his skills to fill a tremendous need.

### 7.53 Life After Arrival in Rwanda

Respondents arrived in Rwanda between the years of 1996 and 2004, with the majority of 60 percent (12) having arrived between 1996 and 1998 (see Table 14). Thus, 75 percent of respondents have lived in Rwanda for nearly ten years. Interestingly, of the five respondents who arrived most recently between 2002 and 2005, three are gainfully employed and two are enrolled in school. This would seem to indicate little correlation between their time of arrival and their ability to find work or education opportunities. The remainder of this sub-section describes their various conditions of arrival and current living conditions in Kigali.

TABLE 14: RESPONDENTS' DATE OF ARRIVAL IN RWANDA			
Year	Legal Urban Refugees	Illegal Urban Refugees	Total

	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1996-1998	6	30.0	6	30.0	12	60.0
1999-2001	1	5.0	2	10.0	3	15.0
2002-2005	3	15.0	2	10.0	5	25.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 7.531 Conditions of Arrival

On arrival in Rwanda, 75 percent of respondents (15) reported first spending time in refugee camps before making their way to Kigali. The remaining 25 percent of respondents (5) arrived directly from the DRC to Kigali without first passing through a refugee camp. The length of stay in refugee camps ranged from four months to ten years, with the average length of stay being four years and four months. Fifty percent (50) of respondents classified as official urban refugees first spent time in refugee camps before moving to Kigali, as did 100 percent (10) of those respondents considered nonofficial (see Table 15).

<b>TABLE 15: RESPONDENTS' LENGTH OF TIME SPENT IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN RWANDA</b>						
Year	Officially Registered Urban Refugees		Unofficial Urban Refugees		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
No time spent	5	25.0	0	0.0	5	25.0
0 months – 6 months	0	0.0	1	5.0	1	5.0
6 months – 2 years	3	15.0	2	10.0	5	25.0

2 years – 5 years	2	10.0	4	20.0	6	30.0
5 years – 10 years	0	0.0	3	15.0	3	15.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Interestingly, those who spent more than 5 years in camps are all between 19 and 24 years old and were all enrolled in school in the DRC before fleeing. Meanwhile, those respondents who passed no time in a refugee camp before moving to Kigali were all above the age of 30, a potential sign of the skills and experience they were thought to have that would help facilitate their integration into an urban area. Furthermore, 75 percent of respondents (15) noted that they still have members of their immediate or extended family living in refugee camps on Rwanda’s border with DRC.

The length of time spent in a refugee camp prior to arriving in Kigali was found to have little impact on respondents’ ability to find work or enroll in school (see Ch. 7.33). However, it does point to the severity of the refugee crisis in Rwanda, and the camps as much more than a supposedly temporary fix to a supposedly temporary problem.

While not the direct focus of this thesis, it is also important to examine the living conditions of respondents in the camps, as they are illuminating of their reasons to seek life in urban areas instead. One respondent noted, “Everything there is bad, but the worst is the malnutrition and where we

had to sleep” (personal communication, 22 August 2008). Another agreed, saying, “Some days I didn’t have anything to eat. My family had to compromise and everyone depends on UNHCR. There is no choice” (personal communication, 31 July 2008). When asked to highlight their biggest challenge of living in camps, one respondent said, “Housing and the means of survival are really terrible” (personal communication, 24 October 2008). Another said, “For me, the total dependence was the worst thing about life in the camps. We used to take care of ourselves. Here, we are beggars” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Yet another respondent said, “While refugees live in camps, there are things you are deprived of: a life, a job. There are lots of diseases. We study but it’s difficult” (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

Several respondents noted that despite the negative conditions of life in the camps, it also had its benefits, including security, health care, and support for education. For instance, one respondent noted, “The best thing about life in the camp was the security because there is never anyone behind me like those who are now in prison, those who mistreated us” (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Another said, “In those three years [that I was in the camp], I couldn’t hear loud gun shots anymore. I couldn’t hear shouting, or raping, or killing” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Others still expressed their gratitude for the various

support services they received while in the camps. “The best thing is the medical care and schooling. We had a good relationship between refugees and UNHCR” (personal communication, 8 August 2008).

In order to make a living and pass the time in refugee camps, respondents noted they were wholly dependent on the support they received from UNHCR, the World Food Program, and a few NGOs (although several pointed out that even this was insufficient). “We did nothing in the way of activities or generating revenue which could have helped make a living. We survived thanks to the humanitarian aid from UNHCR and WFP,” one respondent said (personal communication, 22 August 2008). “We were dependent for everything and never had enough of anything. I mean food, soap, clothes, everything,” said another (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Several respondents agreed that the worst thing about living in refugee camps was the inability to fill their time. “In the camps, we would only wait for food given to us by UNHCR and WFP which came in mediocre quantities without doing anything else,” said one (personal communication, 15 August 2008). “We were with arms crossed, without jobs, waiting only for the small rations we got thanks to WFP,” said another (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

One by one, each of the respondents who had been living in Rwanda's refugee camps made the decision to leave the camps and move to Kigali. Forty-seven percent of the respondents (7) who had passed time in refugee camps noted a desire to improve general living conditions as their main motivation for leaving. "I moved to earn a better living and improve our living conditions, which are different from that of camps," said one (personal communication, 9 September 2008). Another agreed, saying, "It was to find a better life, because of a life of suffering" (personal communication, 8 August 2008).

13 percent of respondents (2) suggested education was their main motivation for leaving, as they wanted to attend school in Kigali. "I decided to leave the camp because I wanted to study. I wanted to go back to school like I used to," said one (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Another said, "I wanted to find a job in the city and find a way to study. I wanted to find a future" (personal communication, 15 August 2008). The remaining 40 percent (6) indicated their desire to find a job caused them to leave the camps, with one respondent saying, "I couldn't bring myself to accept living the difficult life there. I wanted to have permanent work to better survive" (personal communication, 22 August 2008).



While their reasons for leaving the camps varied, and do not in and of themselves necessarily affect their ability to integrate, they do point to the strong desire of all respondents to take control of their situations and try to eke out a better life for themselves. This high level of motivation is reflective of Banki's characterization of individual traits and their impact on refugee integration levels (see Ch. 6.7). Each of the respondents was highly determined to make a living in Kigali under any circumstances, a factor that Banki identifies as having a positive impact on levels of integration.

Upon arrival in Kigali, the livelihood strategies of respondents differed almost immediately. Fifty percent of respondents (10) registered themselves with the UNHCR office in Kigali and were successful in gaining official recognition as an urban refugee. The other 50 percent of respondents (10) chose not to register themselves with UNHCR in Kigali and, according to official records, still remained camp refugees. Their reasons for doing so varied slightly, but almost all expressed the fear that they would be turned down, or worse, sent back to the camps, if they tried to apply for urban status. This points to both the lack of information refugees have with regards to the status determination process, as well as the strict qualifications necessary to be recognized as urban.

“Becoming an urban refugee demands lots of formalities which are difficult to fulfill. Even with those conditions it’s very difficult to be accepted,” said one (personal communication, 22 August 2008). “I am still registered in the camp in Kibuye. I don’t think my application to stay in Kigali would be approved,” said another (personal communication, 31 July 2008). “I came to Kigali for my own personal reasons. UNHCR knows me only as a non-urban refugee. I think otherwise I will get sent back,” said yet another (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Finally, one respondent said, “I didn’t [register] because I left the camps without UNHCR’s authorization. I had no choice.”

In the early days of arrival, the survival of many respondents was ensured by the combined efforts of various agencies, including UNHCR and several NGOs (see Table 16). Aside from those refugees granted urban status from the CNR, no respondents indicated receiving any assistance from the Rwandan government. In fact, 50 percent of illegal urban refugees were not even aware of the CNR’s existence or what it meant to them. This would, again, seem to indicate a significant lack of education being given to asylum seekers upon arrival in Rwanda with regards to their rights and the refugee status determination process, as well as any potential available channels of support.

Of the 50 percent of respondents (10) officially registered in Kigali, 90 percent (9) noted having received support from UNHCR. This support overwhelmingly took the form of financial support for medical services and education through to the end of secondary school. One hundred percent of these respondents (10) also cited assistance from the AHA in helping them pay for medical services. One 18 year old respondent, officially considered an urban refugee, noted that Right to Play had also assisted him in getting settled and adjusting to his new life through the use of sports, while another cited financial support from JRS for education. This indicates a seemingly significant reliance on both the UNHCR and the non-governmental sector by official urban refugees.

<b>TABLE 16: SUPPORT RECEIVED BY RESPONDENTS UPON ARRIVAL IN RWANDA</b>						
<b>Providing Agency</b>	<b>Legal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Illegal Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
UNHCR	9	45.0	0	0.0	9	45.0
NGOs	10	50.0	2	10.0	12	60.0
None	0	0.0	8	40.0	8	40.0

In contrast, of those respondents living in Kigali without official urban refugee status, only 10 percent (2) indicated receiving any support from an NGO, which took the form of financial assistance from JRS for education. That same 20 percent of respondents also cited assistance with medical care from the AHA. However, several of those respondents living in Kigali

without status noted that the support they used to receive from various NGOs in the refugee camps promptly stopped once they left. One respondent noted, “In the camps, I received help from Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS) for primary and secondary school, the World Food Program (WFP), the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) for heating blocks, and the AHA for health. Here in Kigali there are no NGOs which helped me. I’m forced to do my best alone in the city” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). None of the respondents living illegally in Kigali identified being given assistance from either the UNHCR or the Government. This points to a much heavier reliance on official channels of support by the urban refugees, while those living illegally in Kigali got by relying primarily on their own means and their own social networks.

<b>TABLE 17: DISCLOSURE OF RESPONDENTS' REFUGEE STATUS IN RWANDA</b>						
<b>Attitude Towards Publicly Disclosing Refugee Status</b>	<b>Officially Registered Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Unofficial Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Closed / Afraid	3	15.0	6	30.0	9	45.0
Open / Unafraid	7	35.0	4	20.0	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

On being asked whether respondents felt it necessary to hide their status as refugees living in Kigali 45 percent (9) said yes. Of these, 33 percent (3) were official urban refugees. One official urban refugee said, “I hide it

so I don't lose certain chances of working" (personal communication, 2 October 2008), while yet another said, "I hide it because in Rwanda it's shameful to be a refugee. More than that, in Rwanda, refugees are blamed for everything" (personal communication, 15 August 2008). Illegal urban refugees expressed similar fears. "There is no importance in showing everybody that I'm a refugee because it doesn't serve any purpose. It would isolate me or make me different from the rest of the society that I am a part of here in Kigali," said one (personal communication, 22 August 2008). One student said, "I know that almost no one is proud of me. At school, if they know you're a refugee, they always make fun of you" (personal communication, 31 July 2008).

However, the other 55 percent of respondents (11) felt no shame in being open about their refugee status in Kigali. "I don't hide it because I am one," said one respondent (personal communication, 22 August 2008). Several respondents agreed that, "Being a refugee is not a disease. It's not a voluntary choice" (personal communication, 9 September 2008), and "It's not us who want to be refugees. It could happen to anyone. The main cause is bad politics in our home country" (personal communication, 8 August 2008). Still, several respondents felt being a refugee was nothing to hide because it was nothing to be ashamed of. "I don't hide it because I am proud of my nationality, my different language from Rwanda. I am

happy to tell people I am from Congo, and so a refugee,” said one (personal communication, 9 September 2008).

With the majority of respondents indicating their openness to disclosing their refugee status to others, this indicates that there has been little reprisal to date taken from the local police or the local population, or discrimination against them. In 2008, a total of ten refugees living in urban areas were arrested for not having the proper documents (USCRI, 2009). Still, despite younger respondents noting incidents of discrimination in school, the majority of respondents seemed to have no fear of physical threat or recrimination from the local people, indicating a significant level of comfort with their surroundings. Interestingly, whether a refugee had official urban status or not was shown to have little impact on their decision about whether or not to disclose that information.

### **7.532 Employment**

Rwanda remains a predominantly rural population, lending itself to the fact that roughly 93 percent of females and 81 percent of males work in the agricultural sector, albeit the majority engaging in subsistence farming (Republic of Rwanda, 2005). This plays a major role in the determination of income levels, as the few public sector employees, private formal sector

employees and the self-employed are proportionally stronger represented in the higher income quintiles (MINECOFIN, 2002). In fact, the recent Diagnostic Trade Integration Study found that “occupation appears to be the single most important variable affecting the probability of being poor” (Republic of Rwanda, 2005a, p. 8).

In Rwanda, the active population is considered to be roughly 4.5 million people; 15.5 percent of those are unemployed, and 48 percent are underemployed, working less than 35 hours per week (Republic of Rwanda, 2005). This, still, despite a consistent nationwide labor shortage.

After having settled into their new lives in Kigali, 40 percent of respondents (7) indicated that they had found full-time jobs to support themselves, 71 percent (5) of whom had official urban refugee status in Kigali (see Table 18). These jobs ranged from a clothing store manager, a seamstress, an assistant in a financial institution, a hairdresser, a car mechanic at a local garage, and a high school teacher. Interestingly, 71 percent (5) had also completed secondary or tertiary education in their home countries before becoming refugees in Rwanda, while 14 percent (1) had completed vocational training in mechanics and automobiles.

**TABLE 18: EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS IN RWANDA**

Employment	Legal Urban Refugees		Illegal Urban Refugees		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Full-Time	5	25.0	2	10.0	7	35.0
Part-Time / Temporary	2	10.0	3	15.0	5	25.0
Unemployed	0	0.0	2	10.0	2	10.0
Otherwise engaged (homemaker, student etc.)	3	15.0	3	15.0	6	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

57 percent (4) of those with full-time jobs had also held jobs in their home country before fleeing. For instance, one 35 year old male who studied management and accounting in university previously worked as an administrative clerk for an NGO in the DRC. After bypassing the refugee camps and directly being granted urban refugee status in 1998, he quickly found employment as the manager of a clothing store in Kigali, where he now earns RwF 100,000 per month. The current salaries in Rwanda for those respondents with full-time jobs ranged from RwF 20,000 to 150,000 per month.

The other 43 percent (3) currently employed in Kigali full-time did not previously hold jobs in the DRC. For instance, one 39 year old mother of seven whose family was dependent on her husband's income as a taxi driver in her home country before becoming a refugee was forced to find her own source of income after her husband's death. With a secondary



level education, she and her family would spend four months in a refugee camp before being granted the right to live in Kigali. There, she found work as a seamstress, a skill she learned as a girl from her mother. "Nobody lends me money – with a refugee card of identity, they can't," she says. "What I make is little and insufficient. I need at least an extra one hundred dollars each month. Still, my two oldest children also work sometimes. Together, we are able to feed the family" (personal communication, 29 August 2008).

Twenty-five percent of respondents (5) noted that while they did not have permanent employment, they do find enough small jobs in the informal sector to support themselves financially. One 29 year old male who dropped out of university because it was too expensive, but made a good living as a musician in his home country struggles to find work playing his music in Rwanda. "Occasionally, I find the opportunity to do my music. I play piano and bass guitar. I haven't had any permanent work, but I hope to have some very soon," he says. "That's where I find something for my survival. What I'm doing now is just enough to live in the city" (personal communication, 2 October 2008).

Finally, the remaining 40 percent of respondents (8) reported having no employment whatsoever. Of these, 75 percent (6) noted they were in

school or otherwise engaged and could not work, and were thus dependent on family members or roommates for financial survival. One 23 year old female student said, “I live thanks to my roommates who work” (personal communication, 15 August 2008), while another 22 year old male said, “I share life with my roommates. Often we find temporary work but it doesn’t last a long time” (personal communication, 9 September 2008). Thus, all of the respondents considered official urban refugees in Kigali are gainfully employed in either the formal or informal sectors, or are currently enrolled in school. Furthermore, 80 percent of illegal urban refugees were also employed in the city.

Despite receiving no support from the Government, and only very limited support from UNHCR and NGOs, the majority of respondents were able to use their skills to find work. In all cases, respondents were not necessarily using the same skill set they had developed in their country of origin. Still, they were able to find or generate work for themselves, which could be considered a skill in and of itself, and one which would be well complemented by the provision of additional skills training programs. And all of this with little to no official support, and minimal reliance on other social networks.

Considering the percentage of respondents who chose to start a new life in Kigali for the purposes of finding a job and improving their living conditions, this study wanted to ascertain whether or not they continued to think that Kigali held greater economic opportunities for them than their previous lives in the camps. Twenty percent of respondents (4) indicated that they still felt that Kigali was a city of great opportunities for refugees. One 23 year old currently enrolled in university and studying Management noted, "Here we can find ways to make money to survive and clothe ourselves" (personal communication, 9 September 2008). Another 35 year old respondent who was working as a car mechanic agreed, saying, "There are many opportunities in Kigali since salaries are high" (personal communication, 2 October 2008).

The other 80 percent of respondents (16) responded negatively, suggesting that there were few opportunities for refugees in Kigali. One 23 year old woman who works as a hairdresser noted, "Our lives are hard because there is no assistance, especially with food" (personal communication, 29 August 2008). Despite having found work as a high school teacher, another 40 year old respondent noted, "Life is completely difficult in Rwanda, especially Kigali. There are no opportunities for refugees" (personal communication, 9 September 2008).

When asked whether they thought there were greater economic opportunities in Kigali for refugees now compared to when they first arrived, 30 percent (6) answered positively (see Table 19). Of these, 50 percent (3) had spent more than ten years in Kigali, while the other 50 percent had been there just over five years. Surprisingly, it was those respondents living illegally in Kigali who remained the most optimistic about their new lives. The 29 year old musician said, “Yes, more opportunities exist now since we have more contacts. The more time we stay in the city, the better connected we are” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Another 18 year old student noted, “Little by little things get a bit better. There are a few more opportunities for us now than when we first arrived in Kigali” (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

The remaining 70 percent of respondents (14) felt that the extent of opportunities in Kigali for refugees had not changed since they first arrived. Still, it is important to note that when asked whether survival in Kigali was more difficult than in the camps and if they would consider returning, 95 percent of respondents (19) responded in the negative, suggesting that struggling to make a living in Kigali was still better than being confined to camps.

**TABLE 19: RESPONDENTS' OUTLOOK FOR THEIR ECONOMIC FUTURE IN RWANDA**

Attitude	Officially Registered Urban Refugees		Unofficial Urban Refugees		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Positive / Optimistic	2	10.0	4	20.0	6	30.0
Negative / Doubtful	8	40.0	6	30.0	14	70.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Despite the majority of respondents identifying few opportunities for refugees in Kigali, all but one preferred their new lives over living in a camp. Even more interesting is the fact that it was those refugees living illegally in Kigali who remain the most optimistic about their situations. This would seem to indicate that in addition to having the personal traits of optimism and persistence, it was specifically this group of respondents that, despite difficult living conditions, felt especially comfortable within their communities, and felt confident in their abilities to survive in those communities.

### **7.533 Political Freedoms and Access to Resources**

This research wanted to ascertain the perception of respondents towards their political and economic freedoms and the impact of those perceptions on their livelihood strategies and level of integration. While this study has already presented the legal rights of refugees in the eyes of the

Government of Rwanda, the perceptions of this group of refugees as to their rights were shown to be quite different.

When asked whether they felt they had equal access to natural resources and markets as compared to Rwandans, 100 percent of respondents (20) answered in the affirmative, with the majority suggesting that the only barrier was that of financial means. "Everything is for sale like it is for everyone in Kigali. What is important is having the money," said one respondent (personal communication, 22 August 2008). Others agreed, saying, "We are allowed anywhere. We have free access but it depends on your means. I've had no problems. I benefit like anyone else" (personal communication, 31 July 2008), and "We should have access like everyone else but our means don't allow it" (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

Respondents were, however, more hesitant when asked whether they felt they had equal access to this land. Only 30 percent (6) agreed, with one saying, "Yes, there is no law that prevents us from living and working on the land" (personal communication, 29 August 2008). Of these, 67 percent had official urban refugee status. Still, the majority of respondents (14) suggested that "the land belongs to the people of Rwanda. It is not for us" (personal communication, 9 September 2008). Another said, "Land is for

the state and its citizens. With refugee status, that does not include us” (personal communication, 2 October 2008).

In addition to access to resources, it was important to ascertain participants’ perceptions towards their political freedoms, which necessarily impacts their ability to be self-sufficient and integrate into the local community. When asked whether they felt that the laws prevented them from engaging in economic activity, responses were split right down the middle, with 50 percent of respondents (10) answering yes, and 50 percent (10) answering no. One legal urban refugee said, “Sometimes the fact that my identity card isn’t Rwandan can prevent me from working, but it’s the only thing” (personal communication, 12 September 2008). Another suggested, “A condition for economic activities is to be Rwandan and we aren’t Rwandan” (personal communication, 15 August 2008). Meanwhile, those living in Kigali illegally also agreed, with one saying, “Because we don’t have identity cards, the national law prevents some of us from working” (personal communication, 31 July 2008).

Still, 50 percent of respondents felt that there was more flexibility and freedom to engaging economically. “The law doesn’t stop us, but there are some activities or professions that require you to be of Rwandan nationality,” said one. “I was a politician back home. I cannot do that here.

I cannot lead these people because they are not my people” (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Another suggested, “The law here is favorable for everyone. Nobody is stopping us from working or finding our own jobs. It’s up to us” (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

When asked whether they were scared of either the local people or local authorities, only 5 percent of respondents (1) said yes. Despite having official urban refugee status, the 18 year old male said, “I’m scared of the police because when I was young, the Congolese police treated me and my parents badly and told us that we were strangers. That’s the reason why we are here in Rwanda now, because of the police” (personal communication, 15 August 2008). Still, the remaining 95 percent (19) of respondents said they were not afraid of the police in Rwanda, but instead felt protected by them.

“I do not fear them. In fact, I am proud of them because they keep us in security,” said one (personal communication, 29 August 2008). Others agreed, saying, “The people of Rwanda are nice and the police have never arrested me. On the contrary, they keep us safe” (personal communication, 12 September 2008), and, “In this country, human rights are respected and peace is king so everyone can be free and proud of who he is. On top of that, the people here are cool and the police are



sufficiently disciplined so I have nothing to be afraid of” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Finally, one participant suggested that as long as he obeys the laws, he will not be reproached by police. “I follow all the laws. I have papers proving my status as a refugee. I am not guilty of anything. I am not a thief or a criminal. So I am not afraid” (personal communication, (31 July 2008).

Participants were also asked whether they perceived local customs as standing in their way from engaging in economic activities. Here, 10 percent of respondents (2), both of whom had official urban refugee status, agreed, with one suggesting that, “The law works together with the locals and their customs to keep us out” (personal communication, 15 August 2008). However, 90 percent of respondents (18) disagreed, with one pointing out, “local customs are almost the same as ours so they do not bother us” (personal communication, 12 September 2008), while another suggested, “The customs of Rwanda don’t have anything to do with my activities” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Indeed, as Annette Nyekan, UNHCR Representative in Rwanda, noted, refugees from neighboring countries are easily assimilated in Rwanda because of similarities in culture and language, especially as many Rwandans were at one time refugees in their countries (Mutesi, 2008).

Interestingly, it were those respondents with legal urban status that expressed the most hesitation towards local laws and customs in Rwanda. Despite having the legal right to live and work in Kigali, they felt more restricted in their rights and movements than those respondents living illegally in the city. This would seem to demonstrate a deeper sense of integration held by those illegal urban refugees. As noted in Ch. 7.513, the majority of the illegal urban refugees live in the same household as local Rwandans. This closeness and the inevitable mixing of cultures seems to have narrowed the perception of differences in customs, and gave respondents a greater local network, as well as a coinciding greater confidence, in their rights and ability to do the things they want to do. Still, the findings also demonstrate the lack of knowledge on the part of respondents with regards to their own rights.

#### **7.534 Health and Nutrition**

Health services in Rwanda have traditionally come at a high cost, preventing the majority of Rwandans from accessing them. The Government hopes that with the introduction of its new community healthcare system, *Mutuelles de Santé*, and a new subsidy for certain treatment fees for the poorest households, basic healthcare will be made available to a greater percentage of the population. Indeed, from its pilot

phase in 2003 to late 2005, membership increased from 9 percent to 44 percent on a national scale (Republic of Rwanda, 2006a). Still, there remain challenges of often having to pay 30 percent co-payment at the health center, requirement of individual registration of all family members, and the costs of health problems not covered under the scheme (Save the Children, 2005). For instance, 57 percent of Rwandans prefer to visit traditional healers in favor of government facilities, while 28 percent of women do not deliver at a government facility, both due to the high associated costs (OSSREA, 2006).

This study wanted to ascertain the health and nutrition levels of respondents in order to measure their success in accessing food and medical services. Twenty-five percent of respondents (5) indicated that they suffer from minor health problems. However, the cost of healthcare was unanimously identified as the major obstacle to receiving treatment. "I have a throat problem that I can't treat since it requires seeing a doctor and that would cost me the eyes of the pope!" exclaimed one 29 year old male (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Another suggested, "When we suffer from a severe illness, especially one that's incurable in Africa or Rwanda, we can't easily find treatment. If we find it, we can't easily pay for it. So it's only God who cares for us" (personal communication, 8 August 2008).

<b>TABLE 20: SUPPORT RECEIVED BY RESPONDENTS FOR HEALTHCARE COSTS IN RWANDA</b>						
<b>Providing Agency</b>	<b>Officially Registered Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Unofficial Urban Refugees</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
UNHCR	2	10.0	0	0.0	2	10.0
NGOs	7	35.0	0	0.0	7	35.0
None	1	5.0	10	50.0	11	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Still, several respondents said that there is support to be found in paying for healthcare costs (see Table 20). Fifteen percent (3) of respondents officially registered as urban refugees said UNHCR covers their fees for basic treatment from a public hospital, while they must pay by themselves for services from a private hospital. Twenty percent of respondents (4) also considered officially urban said they continue to receive medical support from Africa Humanitarian Action.

While urban refugees living legally in Kigali have the right to access health care services, thus in itself demonstrating one of Banki (2004) and Jacobsen's (2001) key indicators of refugee integration, the reality is that the majority of those respondents do make use of that right. Most of those considered legal could not afford the costs of health care on their own, and received little official support. Meanwhile, those illegal urban refugees did not even attempt to seek health care from traditional institutions, instead

seeking out assistance from friends, local healers, or even, in the case of one respondent, returning to the refugee camp in Kibuye where he is registered whenever he is sick to receive medical support from the organizations working there. The reality is then, that instead of being a burden on local services, the majority of respondents either suffered in silence or sought out their own means of taking care of themselves.

Food security also continues to pose a concern. The five crops that contribute to more than 70 percent of the consumption basket in Rwanda's rural areas have been in constant decline. Coupled with an expanding population, this results in permanent deficits of calories, proteins and lipids (Republic of Rwanda, 2006b). Only 3.3 percent of households have three or more meals per day, with the great majority of 78.7 percent taking two meals and 18 percent having only one. And with regards to the quality of the food, 81 percent of households claim to rarely eat proteins in the form of meat or fish. Indeed, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that 3 million Rwandans were undernourished in 2003, representing 36 percent of the population (FAO, 2004).

Ruhengeri and Gisenyi in the northwest have a comparably high agricultural potential, but they were longer affected by considerable insecurity and still lack sufficient housing. Many returning refugees were

resettled in Kibungo and Umutara in the east which now suffers from a lack of infrastructure and environmental pressure. Kigali, Butare and Gikongoro in the south have a low agricultural potential with relative aridity, soil acidity and high population density (Government of Rwanda, 2002).

100 percent of respondents (20) stated that they do not grow their own food for either subsistence or for sale. This is in line with food production trends throughout the city. With the highest population density and fastest urbanization rate in all of Africa, Kigali sees very few of its residents engaging in subsistence farming. "In Kigali, nobody farms," said one 35 year old male. "Even people originally from here don't cultivate" (personal communication, 12 September 2008). Another 31 year old female said, "In Kigali, we don't farm, except for those lucky enough to get a large piece of land. We don't have any land. That is for the rich" (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Furthermore, 95 percent of respondents (19) said they did not own any domestic animals, while 5 percent (1) owned several goats.

To meet their food requirements, 95 percent of respondents (19) thus said they buy all of their food from local markets. The remaining respondent, a 23 year old female with official urban status, said she continued to receive

food through the support of the WFP. Still, 90 percent of respondents (18) said that what they were eating was not enough to survive. “With the \$40 I make per month and \$120 from my husband, it’s just not enough to feed the nine people in my house. It’s never enough,” said one woman (personal communication, 29 August 2008). Others said, “Food is very expensive here. Life is very expensive here. What I am able to buy is always less than what I need” (personal communication, 2 October 2008), and, “We are four people – one works but the others are students. It’s the one who works who pays for us and with the little he makes, so we never have enough to eat” (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Meanwhile, one respondent suggested that refugees are always going to be worse off than their local counterparts: “Rwandans don’t have enough to eat with their opportunities, so for refugees it’s even worse” (personal communication, 9 September 2008).

Food security for urban refugees represents a similar dilemma to that of health care. While those recognized as legal can farm their land *de jure*, the economic reality, complicated by land scarcity in Rwanda, prohibits them from doing so *de facto*. Illegal urban refugees face the same realities, and are thus forced to buy what they can with the little money they make. Still, those illegal urban refugees placed more confidence in

their own abilities and social networks to survive over their legal counterparts.

### **7.535 Social Networks**

The current proliferation of research on social capital began following the influential work of Robert Putnam *et al.* (1993), where he documented a striking connection between membership in organizations and the quality of government. According to Putnam *et al.*, social capital “refers to the collective value of all ‘social networks’ [who people know] and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other [‘norms of reciprocity’]” (2004, p. 1). Social capital is the benefits that arise from the sense of trust, reciprocity, information and cooperation associated with social networks.

The value of social networks has been a part of Rwandan society before Putnam *et al.* ever put it on paper. They are the lifeblood of the society, not least as it is currently working to rebuild a shared tragic history. For instance, on the last Saturday of every month, the people of Rwanda engage in an event called Umuganda. Everyone goes onto the streets and works on common public projects – everything from sweeping sidewalks to filling potholes to planting trees. This tradition, despite being considered



an annoyance by some of the young, is considered a valuable community activity by the majority of the population. It reflects the strong communal nature of social care, and the way in which institutional arrangements of social organization can become effective private social safety nets.

This study found that most respondents had begun to form and take advantage of social networks in Rwanda. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that they have become part of at least one local group or team since moving to Kigali. These include: football teams, basketball teams, rugby teams, a modern dance group, and a church worship group. All respondents noted that their groups were comprised of both Rwandans and fellow refugees, indicating a significant level of interaction between the two groups. On a broader level, 70 percent of respondents (14) felt that they belonged to a close-knit community in Kigali: 30 percent (6) to the local Congolese community, and 40 percent (8) to a community of mixed Congolese and Rwandans. "We try to integrate," says one 26 year old student. "The Congolese community is close, but I'm cool with Rwandans too. Everywhere I go, whether I'm with other refugees or nationals, I'm comfortable" (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Meanwhile, 30 percent of respondents (6) felt no community ties whatsoever.

The majority of respondents, both legal and illegal, expressed having formed some kind of social network during their time in Rwanda, one of the key indicators of refugee integration according to both Banki (2004) and Jacobsen (2001). The sports teams, church groups, and the like demonstrate that respondents are significantly dispersed among the local population, both of whom put aside any differences in title, status, or culture to enjoy activities together.

### **7.536 Future Prospects**

All of the participants in this study had come to Kigali in order to try and make a new life for themselves. They saw the city as holding out greater opportunities and promise for their futures. Now, several years after they made that decision, do they still feel the same way about Kigali? Is it still a city of freedom and hope? Have they found the opportunities they were looking for? This study wanted to ascertain what participants considered their future prospects and whether their move to Kigali brought them everything they had first hoped for. This is especially important as one of Banki's (2003) key indicators of refugee integration is that refugees are not necessarily able to support themselves, but they are at the very least moving towards self-sufficiency.

When asked if they were happy with their new lives in Kigali, 20 percent (4) said yes, all of whom were those living without official urban status. Despite all the difficulties of trying to find work and enough food to survive, this 20 percent agreed that these difficulties were a small price to pay for having their freedom outside of a refugee camp. "For the most part, I am happy because it's myself alone who is trying to survive here in the city and it was tiring living under the sheeting of the camp," said one 24 year old male (personal communication, 31 July 2008). Another said, "On the one hand, yes I am happy, because I have peace. On the other hand, no, because my hope for a good future is small" (personal communication, 2 October 2008).

Meanwhile, 80 percent of respondents (16) identified themselves as still being unhappy with their new lives in Kigali. Several identified cost of living as the major hindrance, with one saying, "Life here is difficult since everything has to be bought and at high prices" (personal communication, 12 September 2008). Another suggested, "Life in Kigali is too expensive. It isn't favorable for refugees" (personal communication, 15 August 2008). Others said that they will never be happy living in Kigali because it is not their home city. "I will not be happy until I am in my own country," said one (personal communication, 24 October 2008). Another said, "We are not happy with our lives because we are in another country" (personal

communication, 15 August 2008). Still, despite these sentiments, there was still an overwhelming gratitude for the fact that they were able to choose their own paths by moving to Kigali. As one respondent noted, "I am not too happy here, but when we don't have what we like, we are grateful for what we have" (personal communication, 9 September 2008).

Given these sentiments, what did participants think lay ahead for them in the future? 90 percent of respondents (18) indicated their desire to return to their home country as soon as it was safe to do so. "As soon as peace returns to my country, I have to return. They say home is always sweeter," said one (personal communication, 22 August 2008). Another said, "We hope for peace, security, unity because then we can return. That is my first wish" (personal communication, 15 August 2008). Yet another said, "That's our only thought. We think about it every day. If one day there is political stability, if the war finishes, if our country has peace. But we must always be careful of being killed. Unfortunately, the president of our country doesn't accept us as citizens" (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

Meanwhile, one respondent with official urban status indicated a desire to leave Africa entirely, saying, "We need help to relocate to a continent that is not ours, for another country that is not our own" (personal

communication, 8 August 2008). The final respondent, living unofficially in Kigali, could not yet bring himself to think about returning home, saying, “I don’t think about the future. I just think about now. I don’t even have the courage to think about returning home because of the war that I left and all the ignoble acts that happened and that are still happening today in my home village” (personal communication, 2 October 2008).

Until peace returns in the DRC, all but one of the respondents were determined to continue trying to make a life for themselves in Kigali, rather than return to the camps. “Life for a refugee is never better. But in a camp refugees receive little quantities of food and no one has anything to do like activities to earn a living,” said one respondent (personal communication, 22 August 2008). Others said, “In the camps, it’s something else. You need to visit there to understand. Here we are free” (personal communication, 31 July 2008), “Life in the city is expensive and difficult but sometimes certainly opportunities open up, things that are different than in camps where refugees are confined” (personal communication, 9 September 2008), and “Whether we are in the city or in the camp, life is hard because we are refugees. We are not ourselves. But life is better in the city because everything depends on what we are, what we do, and what we can do!” (personal communication, 15 August 2008).

Twenty-five percent of respondents (5) indicated their desire to finish university, and their hope that doing so would bring about a brighter future. “The future will be better maybe once I have finished school. Maybe then I will find a job,” said one respondent (personal communication, 12 September 2008). Another said, “I hope for the improvement of my life, a life where I am not still a refugee. After school, I think of opening my own garage” (personal communication, 2 October 2008). Yet another said, “To make the future better, I hope to study in university to earn a living. I want to be a politician who will do what he can to resolve the problems confronting our region” (personal communication, 31 July 2008).

Unsurprisingly, when asked whether they needed additional support from aid organizations or the government in order to survive in Kigali, all of the respondents overwhelmingly said yes. Education, health, housing, and food were at the top of the list for financial support. Others requested “help in finding a good job,” “help to reintegrate,” and “help to find how to bring peace to my home country.”

Despite the overwhelming majority of respondents being unhappy with their current situations in Kigali, it is telling that all but one preferred it to living in the camps. This would seem to indicate a hope, albeit largely unexpressed, about the possibilities for self-sufficiency.

## **8. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of this study, as well as a set of conclusions and opportunities, which would enhance the viability of integration as one possible alternative solution to protracted refugee crises.

The study had two main objectives: firstly, it developed the concept for analyzing the viability of integration as one alternative solution to protracted refugee crises. Secondly, it applied that concept to a select group of urban refugees in Rwanda, analyzing their levels of self-sufficiency and integration.

### **8.1 Summary**

All of the respondents were considered to be in the productive age range, with the majority below the age of 35. The proportion of illegal urban refugees below the age of 35 was significantly higher, demonstrating the negative effect of age on their willingness to take the risk of living in an urban area without official permission.

80 percent of respondents had some level of education prior to arriving in Rwanda as refugees. Illegal urban refugees were twice as likely to have vocational training versus formal training, while legal urban refugees were twice as likely to have university-level education. At the time of this study, 45 percent of respondents were enrolled in formal education in Kigali, demonstrating the ability of both legal and illegal urban refugees to access educational opportunities. Still, while all legal refugees received official channels of support for their education, only 20 percent of the illegal refugees received any kind of financial support, instead finding the means on their own or through their roommates and social networks.

All of the legal refugees lived in households with other refugees. Meanwhile, 60 percent of the illegal refugees lived in households with native Rwandans. Those refugees who lived with their families were also all legally recognized as urban. Taken together, these two findings indicate that it was individuals rather than families who were more willing to take the risk of leaving the camps without official permission. Once in Kigali, these refugees also had fewer refugee networks to rely on and, as a result, mixed more with local Rwandans.

Prior to becoming refugees in Rwanda, 40 percent of respondents were gainfully employed in their home country, while 45 percent were otherwise



occupied and not seeking employment. Thus, only 15 percent of respondents were unemployed prior to arriving in Rwanda, with 85 percent arriving with prior skills and experience, and seeking ways to put those skills to use.

At the time of this study, 40 percent of respondents, including both legal and illegal refugees, had found full-time work in Kigali. Fifty-seven percent of these had been employed full-time in the DRC. With one of the highest pupil-to-teacher ratios in the region at 69 to 1, several respondents, such as the high school teacher, held jobs that could be considered highly valuable in Rwanda. Meanwhile, 25 percent of respondents had found temporary work that was enough to support themselves financially, and 30 percent were otherwise engaged. Only 10 percent of respondents remained unemployed.

75 percent of respondents had been in Rwanda for over ten years. Of those who arrived most recently between 2002 and 2005, three had found employment and two were enrolled in school. This demonstrates that the amount of time spent in Rwanda was not as large a factor in determining their levels of self-sufficiency and integration as others. In addition, those 25 percent of respondents who did not spend any time in a refugee camp before arriving to Kigali were all over the age of 30, indicating that their

higher levels of experience and skills were likely the deciding factor in allowing them to live in urban areas.

90 percent of the legal refugees received support from either UNHCR or various NGOs or both. This support largely took the form of financing for education or health care. Meanwhile, only ten percent of those illegal urban refugees received any kind of support, and it came from NGOs. This would seem to counter arguments suggesting urban refugees are necessarily a drain on social services. Instead, they found work or relied on roommates and other social networks for financial means.

55 percent of respondents indicated their willingness to be open about their refugee status, including both legal and illegal urban refugees. This could be owing to the fact that 50 percent felt that Rwandan laws prevented them from engaging economically, and 70 percent of respondents believed their refugee status prohibited their equal access to resources such as land. Still, only five percent of respondents indicated a fear of Rwanda police. Instead, 90 percent of respondents felt that local customs were accommodating, if not similar to their own.

The study found that while all of the legal urban refugees made use of official channels of support to access health care, those channels were

closed off to illegal urban refugees, who refrained from getting medical care, paid for it from their own funds, or returned to the camps. Compounding this problem is the inability of all the respondents to grow their own food for subsistence, and 95 percent unable to purchase any domestic animals. Only one respondent continued to receive food from official channels of support.

60 percent of respondents indicated they were a part of at least one local group or team in Kigali, while 40 percent noted they felt that they belonged to tight-knit community that included Rwandans – almost all of which were illegal urban refugees.

Finally, only 20 percent of respondents felt that Kigali still had many opportunities for refugees, while 30 percent said it offered at least more opportunities than when they had first arrived. Still, all but one said they would ever consider returning to the camps instead of struggling to make a living in Kigali. Instead, there was an overwhelming preference of 90 percent of respondents who wanted to return to their home country as soon as it was safe to do so.

## **8.2 Conclusion**

This study sought to examine the role of local integration and the relevance of self-reliance as part of comprehensive durable solutions to protracted refugee crises. Indeed, in its first chapters, this study concluded that within a comprehensive solutions strategy, local integration and self-reliance can and should have their respective proper places. Indeed, implementing strategies of self-reliance can, by developing and strengthening refugees' skills and livelihoods, bring benefits to all stakeholders involved.

For host states, self-reliance allows refugees to contribute to the sustainable social and economic development of the country, as well as attract additional resources which can also benefit host communities. For the international and donor community, self-reliance can reduce the need for open-ended relief assistance and further underpins the durability of solutions. For refugees, it can give them the dignity and support they need to help them regain control of their lives.

As outlined in Chapter 6.7, local integration is a two-way process with three interrelated dimensions: (i) Legal; (ii) Economic; and (iii) Social/Cultural. In revisiting the indicators of refugee integration, this study shows that amongst this select group of Rwanda's urban refugees, both

those considered legal and not have achieved a significant level of integration into their local communities.

In the legal dimension of integration, the Rwandan Government has granted urban refugees a wide range of rights that are broadly commensurate with those enjoyed by its own citizens – of which illegal urban refugees are also to take advantage of *de jure*. Respondents are not restricted in their movements, and indeed, are rarely hassled by the local people or police. Despite the hindrance of financial means, they have access to local institutions and services, as well as natural resources. Still, it should be noted that respondents' legal rights and their perceptions of their rights were often two different things, as well as their rights *de facto* and the associated vulnerabilities.

In the economic dimension of integration, the Rwandan Government has granted urban refugees the right to work and indeed, the large majority of respondents – legal and not – have taken advantage of this. Most came to Rwanda armed with prior skills and work experience, and are now working to support themselves and contribute to the society in which they live. It is, in fact, those illegal urban refugees who were not able to access official channels of support that have proven the most resilient in becoming self-sufficient and maximizing their opportunities. As such, instead of being a

drain on aid resources, these refugees have proven they can survive on their own, and with the support of their own social networks. Still, their struggle to pay for the high cost of living in Kigali, including certain social services, represents an additional stepping stone to full economic integration.

In its third social and cultural dimension, both respondents and the local population have proven especially adaptable and were found to be, in many cases, deeply dispersed among the local population. The majority of respondents either belonged to a group or team with local Rwandans, or indicated that they felt part of the local community. This was largely assisted by the similarities in culture and language between the DRC and Rwanda. Interestingly, it was the illegal urban refugees – those who arrived in Kigali with no family networks – who seemed to integrate the most whether by choice or not. Indeed, arriving in Kigali as individuals made them more eager to seek out new networks of support, including among local Rwandans.

Overall, the significant integration of these urban refugees can be predominantly attributed to legal and social factors. Armed with the right to live and work in the city (or the semblance of such rights in the case of illegal urban refugees), they have the opportunity to maximize their skills

as they choose, and with little hassle from the local people or police. And, with significant similarities in ethnicity, language and cultural customs to the host country, this group had little trouble adapting to their new environments. While the timing of their arrival in Kigali proved to have little significance on integration levels, the individual traits of risk-taking and perseverance seemed a common factor that also aided in their integration, especially among the illegal urban refugees.

Respondents continued to face a number of problems affecting their livelihoods strategies, including lack of employment opportunities, low wages, and, in certain cases, their status as refugees. Still, this study has demonstrated that despite these challenges, and despite receiving little to no official support, they have managed to become active agents in looking after their own needs. They have not necessarily been crippled by their status as refugees, nor have they become a drain on the society around them. Indeed, they have sacrificed much of the support they used to receive in camps for the chance to make it on their own.

In conclusion, then, this study has shown that the gradual achievement of self-sufficiency gives an indication of the extent to which legal, economic, and social integration has been achieved among this group of urban

refugees in Rwanda, and lends itself to the opening up of new opportunities in the quest for a sustainable solution.

### **8.3 Opportunities**

With the highest population density on the continent, and an already severe housing shortage, Rwanda is not a country that can afford to implement a catch-all strategy of refugee self-reliance and integration. Indeed, camps would seem to have an unfortunate but inevitable place in the Government's response to the refugee crisis. Still, as this study has shown, integration of refugees can also have its place alongside the traditional response. Indeed, the urban refugees interviewed for this study were all found to be young, skilled, and ready and willing to contribute, and had already achieved a significant level of integration despite shortages of official support.

In view of these findings, it would seem that certain opportunities exist for the stakeholders involved to maximize the potential of integration as one prong of a multi-pronged response to situations of protracted refugee crises. These opportunities include:



- Upon arrival in transit centers, refugees' profiles should be examined to determine whether local integration might be a viable solution. If this process began early enough, it would help minimize any risk of protracted situations. Factors to take into account include, among others, age, skills, and dependents.
- While the Government of Rwanda has provided the legal basis for refugees to exercise their rights, a burden falls on the international community to then ensure the capacities of the country to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency are there. Increased funding could be made available for projects that benefit both urban refugee and local Rwandans, including income generation and microfinance activities, job-oriented skills training, and education grants or scholarships. This would also go to dispel any myths that refugees are a drain on the society but are capable of both supporting themselves and contributing to society.
- Increased training should be made available to urban refugees, especially informing them of their rights and responsibilities, in order that they take advantage of all the opportunities open to them.

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## **ANNEX I**

### **Questionnaire: Semi-Structured Interview Form**

Sex:

Age:

#### **Household Survey**

- 1) What is your country/region of origin?
- 2) What is your ethnic group?
- 3) What is the composition of your household: number of individuals, sex, age, professions, dependents, residency status?
- 4) When did you arrive in Rwanda?
- 5) Did you spend any time in camps before self-settling?
- 6) Do you still have family members who live in camps?
- 7) If appropriate, what were the positive aspects of camp life?
- 8) If appropriate, what were the negative aspects of camp life?
- 9) What was the hardest situation you faced?
- 10) What strategy did you use to cope? (i.e.: sale of goods, reducing consumption, sell firewood, leave family)
- 11) What are your most frequent purchases?
- 12) What are your major sources of income?
- 13) What are your major sources of spending?
- 14) Do you have any source of borrowing money? If so, what?
- 15) Is there a spirit of cooperation in the community? If so, has it changed over time?
- 16) What social networks do you belong to?

#### **Politics**

- 1) Does the law prevent you from engaging in economic activities? Do you respect this law?
- 2) Do local customs prevent you from engaging in economic activities? Do you respect these customs?
- 3) Is the central government policy conducive to your activities?
- 4) Do you have free access to markets?
- 5) Do you have free access to natural resources?
- 6) If appropriate, how do you do deal with these restrictions?

#### **General Means of Existence**

- 17) How long have you been here?
- 18) Where were you before coming here?

- 19) What were you doing before fleeing your home country?
- 20) What are the characteristics of your life/work now? What activities do you engage in?
- 21) How would you rate your physical safety?
- 22) Do you fear/face threats from the local population? From the police?
- 23) Do you own/rent a house/apartment? Who pays for it?
- 24) What role has the government played in your life?
- 25) What role has the UNHCR played in your life – in the beginning and now?
- 26) What role have other organizations played?
- 27) Do you have special skills? Are you able to use them?
- 28) What opportunities and constraints in business have you encountered?
- 29) Have you been assisted in these circumstances (i.e.: loans, training etc.)
- 30) What is your main source of income? Has that changed over time?

### **Food and Nutrition**

- 31) Do you have access to land?
- 32) Do you grow your own crops?
- 33) Is this sufficient to meet your needs and those of your family?
- 34) Who is responsible for looking after the harvest?
- 35) What is the history of support from the WFP? Other organizations?
- 36) Have you had to sell food to survive? If so, to who?
- 37) Do you have cattle/goat?
- 38) Are there options for increasing the availability of food? If so, what?

### **Health**

- 39) What major health problems have you or your family experienced today and in the past?
- 40) How do you cope?
- 41) Do you have access to a clinic?
- 42) How many times a day do you eat?
- 43) How many fruits/vegetables do you usually eat?
- 44) Where do you get your drinking water? How is it collected/stored?
- 45) Who in the household is responsible for collecting water?
- 46) Do you have adequate sanitary facilities? Do you share with other families?

### **Education**

- 47) What is the educational status of household members?
- 48) What skills, capacity, knowledge do they each have?
- 49) Do your children go to school? Is it far from home? Do they go every day?
- 50) Who pays for their schooling?
- 51) How many students are there per teacher?
- 52) Do your children have their own school supplies?

### **Market**

- 53) Where is the nearest market? How far is it?
- 54) How many times do you go?
- 55) Do you go to buy or sell?
- 56) What do you buy or sell?

### **Possibilities**

- 57) When you arrived, what were the options you had to support yourself and your family?
- 58) What are the opportunities that exist today?
- 59) Do you have professional qualifications? If so, what?
- 60) Are your qualifications recognized?
- 61) Do you put your qualifications to use?
- 62) What training did you receive in order to promote/support your skills? What was the outcome?

### **Conclusion**

- 60) Are there any additional comments relevant to this research topic that you would like to make?

Date of interview:

Duration of interview:





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