

CASE STUDY

# BURUNDI 2017–2018 / CAMPS CLOSURE

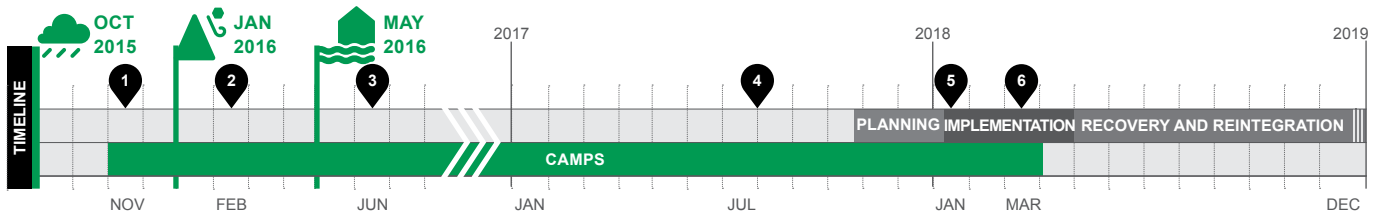
**KEYWORDS:** Camp decommissioning, Semi-permanent shelter, Rental support

<b>CRISIS</b>	El Niño and La Niña rains and floods, October 2015–March 2016
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE AFFECTED</b>	<b>5,068 households</b> (30,408 individuals) as of Jan 2016 (UN OCHA, <a href="https://bit.ly/2FRG533">https://bit.ly/2FRG533</a> )
<b>TOTAL PEOPLE DISPLACED</b>	<b>5,022 people</b> in the targeted provinces
<b>PROJECT LOCATIONS</b>	Provinces of Bujumbura Rural and Rumonge
<b>PROJECT BENEFICIARIES</b>	<b>767 IDP households</b> (5,022 direct beneficiaries) <b>40 households</b> plus 390 individuals from the host community
<b>PROJECT OUTPUTS</b>	<b>434 households</b> assisted with rental support <b>334 semi-permanent shelters</b> constructed Other outputs: provision of 727 NFI kits; 727 Hygiene kits; 434 Agriculture kits; 1,115 cash-for-work grants
<b>MATERIALS COST</b>	<b>USD 1,472</b> for the semi-permanent shelter, including latrine, kitchen and stone foundations <b>USD 1,050</b> for the semi-permanent shelter alone <b>USD 107</b> for the rental support for six months
<b>SHELTER SIZE</b>	<b>45m<sup>2</sup></b> (semi-permanent)
<b>SHELTER DENSITY</b>	<b>7.5m<sup>2</sup></b> per person
<b>PROJECT COST</b>	<b>USD 1,565</b> per household



**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The project decommissioned four camps for flood-affected, displaced persons and offered shelter support, NFI kits, transportation and re-integration assistance to the camps' inhabitants. More than 5,000 individuals were resettled in safe and dignified areas, although they remained in need of more secure and durable solutions. Those who could move to a safe piece of land received semi-permanent shelters and latrines, while those who could not were provided with rental support for six months.



- 1 Nov 2015: IDP camp of Gitaza (Rumonge) established.
- 2 Feb 2016: IDP camp of Cashi (Rumonge) established.
- 3 Jun 2016: IDP camps of Mushasha I and Mushasha II (Bujumbura Rural) established.

- 4 Jul–Aug 2017: Return intention survey to evaluate options and the intention of the IDPs to return to their areas of origin.
- 5 Jan 2018: Partial destruction of Bujumbura camps due to floods.
- 6 Mar 2018: Decommissioning of the four camps completed.

**STRENGTHS**

- + The organization used its previous role in the camps strategically.
- + Including the admin and finance team in the cash transfer activities.
- + Close involvement of the families.
- + Integrated programming.
- + Diverse group of profiles from different units in the organization.

**WEAKNESSES**

- Poor communication and coordination both internally and externally.
- Access to the sites and establishing the beneficiary list took time.
- Not all IDPs could return due to lack of land titles.
- Time needed to deliver materials, safe plots of land and pass customs created delays.
- The project did not cover all the gaps (such as access to water).



The tents provided in the camps were intended to last about six months, but families lived there for two years, in battered tents like these at Cashi camp.

## CONTEXT

Burundi is affected by adverse climate events and an unstable socio-political and security situation. It is located in an earthquake-prone zone, and natural hazards such as floods, landslides and intense storms often cause severe damage to land and lives, particularly in peri-urban and rural areas.

### SITUATION BEFORE THE FLOODS

Close to Lake Tanganyika, communities depend on fishing and subsistence farming to make a living. These activities have encouraged the movement of people from the interior of the country to lakeside or hilly areas, where landslides are frequent during the rainy season. The most vulnerable people in Burundi often earn insufficient income to build flood-resistant houses or buy plots of land in lower-risk areas. Their houses are generally made of mud.

### SITUATION AFTER THE FLOODS

In October 2015, floods and landslides triggered by torrential rains caused thousands of Burundians to lose their homes, livelihoods and, in some cases, their lives. Four emergency camps were set up by the lead organization and its national partner to assist those displaced by the disaster. More than 3,700 people were still there in July 2017, and the rest of the displaced population (about 1,300) moved intermittently between the sites and their communes of origin, often in search of improved shelter or due to seasonal labour migration. The camps were managed by the national partner organization.

The shelter kits initially provided were intended to last approximately six months, though families lived there for more than two years. Living conditions rapidly deteriorated; tents were in dire need of repair; rain poured in from holes in the roofs, creating a muddy sleeping area and leading to increased incidence of pneumonia and other illnesses. In January 2018, the camps of Mushasha I and II were partially destroyed by floods. Many inhabitants expressed their desire to leave and requested assistance for a more durable shelter solution.

## NATIONAL SHELTER STRATEGY

The government and the international humanitarian community worked together to find a solution to close the sites and assist its residents. Activities were coordinated by the Durable Solutions Working Group, led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and co-led by UN agencies. In 2016, the government donated land in Kigwena to the inhabitants of Cashi and Gitaza camps. For those living in the camps of Mushasha I and Mushasha II, by the end of 2018 (two years after the floods) land had not been found yet. In the meantime, IDPs were supported by the organization through rental subsidies provided through this project, until a durable solution could be found.

### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The project provided different shelter and settlement assistance options, as described in the diagram in the next page. In most sites, it was directly implemented by the organization, with a team of eighteen national and four international staff. For Kigwena, the implementation was conducted by three organizations: two for shelter and latrine construction and one constructing water supply points.

### DECOMMISSIONING PROCESS

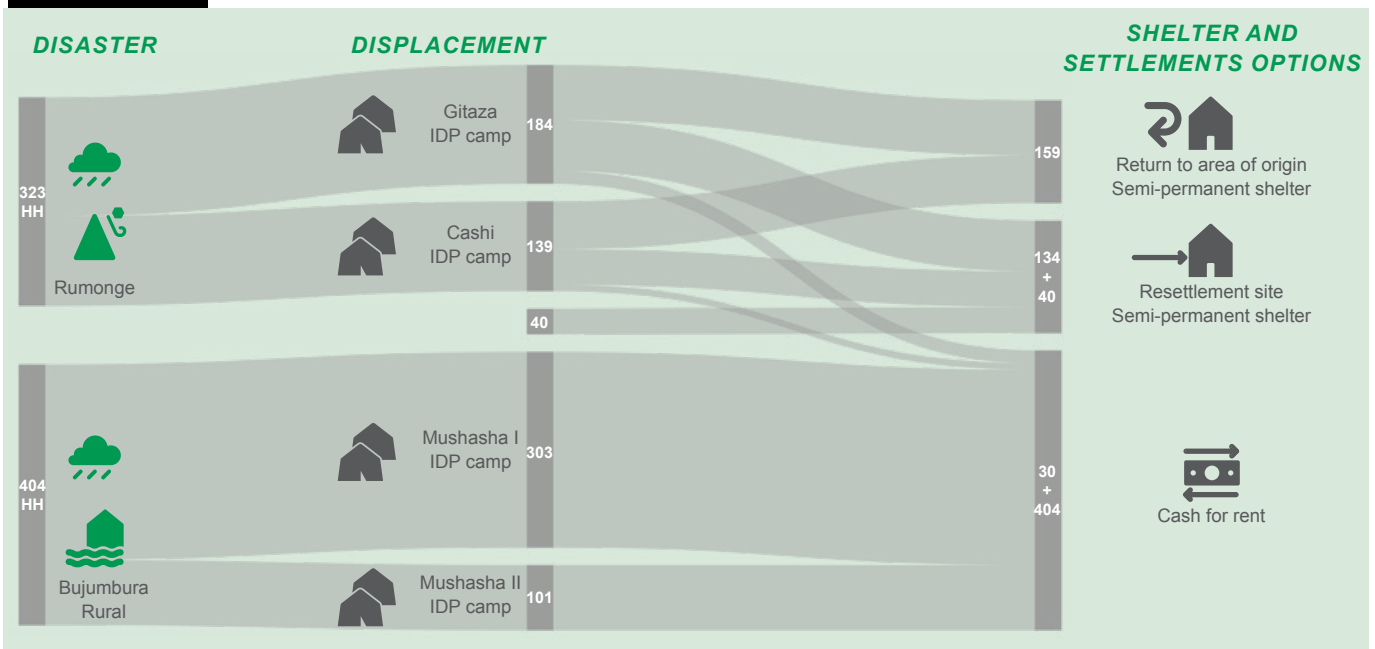
The decommissioning of all camps took place in March 2018. To achieve this, the following activities were carried out.

**BENEFICIARY REGISTRATION.** The initial list was provided by the Durable Solutions Working Group, acting as the link with local authorities and the leaders of the sites. This list, which included the type of shelter solution provided, was publicly approved and stamped by the Ministry.

**COMMUNICATION WITH COMMUNITIES.** Focus groups and communication activities were regularly carried out within the camps. The primary objective of these activities was to explain the project and obtain the information needed (including on type of assistance, dates of relocation, criteria for beneficiary selection and focal points in the camp), while also to listen to the needs and concerns of the camp residents. During



To facilitate the decommissioning process, the organization provided transport assistance and a cash-for-work grant for the dismantling and cleaning of tents and family plots in the camps.



Shelter and settlements options for decommissioning the four camps. All beneficiaries also received NFI kits.

these activities, women were encouraged to register as heads of household, participate in cash-for-work activities and be involved in choosing the most suitable shelter solution.

**CASH-FOR-WORK ACTIVITIES.** To generate income and involve them throughout the decommissioning process, all families were provided with a cash-for-work grant for the dismantling and cleaning of their tent and plot in the camp.

**DISMANTLING OF INFRASTRUCTURE.** A service provider was engaged to finalize the dismantling of the camp, taking care of health and pollution risks of WASH facilities.

**TRANSPORT TO THE RELOCATION SITE.** Additional transport assistance was provided for two sites:

- **A cash grant** was given to people returning to their places of origin, to help transport belongings.
- **Direct transportation** led by the Civil Protection of Burundi or IDPs from Gitaza and Cashi to the resettlement site, where they were met upon arrival by the organizations involved in construction.

## SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT OPTIONS

**A. SEMI-PERMANENT SHELTERS IN RESETTLEMENT SITE.** Those in Cashi and Gitaza who did not own land were relocated to the government-issued land of Kigwena, where 174 improved semi-permanent shelters were built. These included latrines and kitchens (including 40 for the most vulnerable among the host community). Due to budget restrictions, the shelters were built using corrugated iron sheets on the roof and temporary walls made of tarpaulins. The host community actively participated in the construction, supported through a cash-for-work programme.

**B. SEMI-PERMANENT SHELTER IN AREA OF ORIGIN.** 159 semi-permanent shelters were built in the areas of origin of the population living in Cashi and Gitaza camps, across seven different hilly locations. Due to timing and the complexity of transport to the isolated hills, some of which are located three hours away from a major road, the stone foundation was removed and households received cash to transport the materials (the equivalent of USD 2.50 per trip from the camp to the new land). Each household built its own latrine with materials provided and a cash grant for digging.



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The project supported return by providing shelters on a resettlement site on government-issued land in Kigwena (above left). When land tenure and safety allowed it, shelters were built in the area of origin of the IDPs (above right, in the hills of Rumonge).

**C. RENTAL SUPPORT.** For those who could not return or resettle, the organization provided rental grants of about USD 17 per month for six months, to rent a house in their areas of origin until a durable solution could be found. The organization visited the houses to be rented to ensure habitability and acted as witness to avoid fraud during contract signature. The transaction was done by a Burundian bank that paid 50 per cent of the rent to the landlord as an advance to secure the house (as contracts in Burundi request a minimum of three months in advance). The other 50 per cent was paid to the IDPs to safeguard them in case they had problems with the landlord, so that they could move to another house or use it for other needs.

All the inhabitants of Mushasha I and II received rental support, because the plots of land in Gatumba’s urban areas were in litigation. However, many IDPs were only living in the camps during the day, while staying with host families at night. The organization assisted all households linked to the camps with rental support to successfully decommission the camps.

For Cashi and Gitaza, rental support was provided for 30 households who could not relocate and whose plots of land were not deemed safe.

**HLP AND DRR**

In the Rumonge hills, beneficiaries were unable to provide property titles and safety of the land from risk of landslides needed to be ensured. To address these issues, a team of five workers (lawyers and engineers) from the organization, a technician from the Durable Solutions Working Group and the local authorities, hiked for two weeks in the hills to visit each plot of land and provide technical approval for construction and a community validation document of the property. This was approved by the Ministry as ensuring land ownership.

Of the 220 plots visited, 159 were validated; beneficiaries received a copy of the document to avoid future litigations, while other supporting documents were kept at the organization and the Ministry itself. Many plots were not validated because of the risk of landslides, due to the slope of the land or the proximity to a river. The households in this situation were included in the rental support and agricultural kit activities; the organization supported them in their search for a house to rent.



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The project decommissioned four camps for displaced persons in about four months. The sites were returned to the host communities who were able to use them as communal meeting spaces and playgrounds.

**LINKS WITH RECOVERY**

The project supported the reintegration of the IDPs in the host communities through cash-for-work programmes and distributing agricultural kits to those receiving rental assistance. Two quick-impact projects were also implemented, focusing on strengthening social cohesion by addressing community needs. These included construction of drainage canals to mitigate the impact of future floods, new water sources and infrastructure. For both projects, part of the works was done by contractors and part through cash for work. 80 workers were recruited, trained and closely monitored by the site engineers.

Additionally, a food-for-work programme encouraged the households that benefited from the semi-permanent shelters to make adobe bricks or earth compressed blocks made by a local youth association. This would enable the upgrading of shelters into more permanent houses.

**MAIN CHALLENGES**

Coordination posed a significant challenge, as each stakeholder involved had different goals, approaches and timelines. This created delays in the workplan, and additional staff and cars were needed to be present in various locations at the same time.

As the project was implemented at the beginning of the first wet season, rain prevented the construction of adobe bricks, which is why tarpaulins were eventually used for the walls.

**WIDER IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

Improved semi-permanent shelters were built for the first time in Burundi, proving to be a well-adapted solution during the rainy season. It was accepted by the community and the Shelter Sector partners.

Thanks to the Kigwena resettlement intervention, one community had access to clean water sources and better schools. This project removed the need for women and children to walk for three hours for water each day and improved the access to education.

The communities where the camps were settled recovered their public spaces and transformed them into football fields, playgrounds and community meeting spaces.



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## STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### WEAKNESSES

- **Communication and external coordination with various stakeholders could have been improved.** Each stakeholder had different needs in terms of timing, project approach and goals. **Internal coordination and handover** between staff within the organization could have been better organized, as certain critical information, such as beneficiary lists and surveys, was difficult to find and the incoming project manager had to extensively search for it.

- **Access to the sites and establishing the beneficiary list took time** due to the constant mobility of the households living in the area; more than two months were needed to reach an agreement with the local authorities on the final list.

- **The shelters could only be built where beneficiaries could ensure a land title.** For those whose land could not be validated, the organization provided rental support grants for six months, but this did not represent a durable solution.

- To ensure quality, tarpaulins and NFI kits were procured internationally. This **created some delays** and caused the original workplan to be adapted. This issue could have been identified during the project development phase and used as an argument to extend the four-month implementation period imposed by the donor. **The organization could have also improved planning** for the procurement of the items, as soon as the funding had been confirmed.

- **The project did not cover all the needs.** Improved hygiene and sanitation were achieved among some, but not all, beneficiaries. **Access to clean water** remained a challenge for a few beneficiaries due to distance to water sources. Additionally, as semi-permanent shelters were not intended to last beyond one or two years, **further support would be required to rebuild them as durable houses.**

### STRENGTHS

+ **The organization strategically used its presence and role in the set-up of the camps** to inform the design of project activities. Access to previous evaluations provided a clear overview of the context and the needs, and camp set-up activities strengthened the capacity of the community to assist.

+ **Including the organization's administrative and finance team during cash transfer activities was helpful** to ensure transparency and accountability. **Transfers were made through a local bank and beneficiaries did not need to have a bank account** in order to participate. This solution provided anonymity to the beneficiaries and landlords, as well as improving security at the site and for project staff.

+ To help ensure community engagement and sustainability, **the organization closely involved the families** to select the site of their shelters and the type of assistance needed.

+ **Shelter activities were complemented** with WASH, counter-trafficking, health and reintegration programmes.

+ The programme benefited from **diverse profiles from different units in the organization**, including: engineers, lawyers, economists, psychologists and social workers, to provide comprehensive support.



Although not all beneficiaries received a durable shelter solution, the programme successfully decommissioned all the camps and included reintegration components that benefited entire communities.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- **The programme should have been longer.** Providing rental support within a very tight timeframe reduces the intentionality and sustainability required for a long-term reintegration objective. In a four-month project, the results can be achieved but the quality of the intervention in terms of counselling, capacity-building and social cohesion is reduced.
- **To reinforce the coordination** between partners in the field, ensure that all have the same goals, priorities and deadlines, which must be agreed upon before collaboration begins. **More time and resources should be dedicated to improving coordination** in future projects when multiple stakeholders are involved, as this would save time during implementation and facilitate the interventions.
- **In situations where different types of assistance are provided, better comparison of the options** is required, to reduce real or perceived discrimination and to ensure the final outcomes for all beneficiaries are as similar as possible.
- **External factors affecting implementation should be carefully considered**, and possible delays discussed with the donor early on. For instance, construction should have happened during the dry season, allowing for lower costs and more durable shelter outcomes. **Longer-term options should also be discussed in advance, to ensure project sustainability** and to avoid leaving beneficiaries in precarious conditions after the assistance ends.