THE LAND OF ONE THOUSAND VILLAGES;
EXAMINING RURAL RESETTLEMENT PLANNING AS A DRIVER FOR POVERTY REDUCTION IN POST-CONFLICT RWANDA.

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To my husband, Chris, who has consistently supported my research and travel whims without complaint.

Image of Rwanda landscape taken by Chris Heidger in December 2017.
MAP OF RWANDA’S DISTRICTS
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

MDG  Millennium Development Goals
IDP  Integrated Development Model Village
Umuganda  Traditional practice in Rwanda; ‘coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome’
Imihigo  Traditional practice in Rwanda; translates to ‘vow to deliver’
Ubudehe  Traditional practice in Rwanda; translates to ‘collective action and mutual support’
Girinka  Traditional practice in Rwanda; translates to ‘may you have a cow’
MINALOC  Ministry of Local Government
MININFRA  Ministry of Infrastructure
RHA  Rwanda Housing Authority
Umudugudu  Village (singular); the lowest level of government, often used interchangeably as the Rural Resettlement Program
Imidugudu  Village (plural); the lowest level of government, often used interchangeably as the plural form of the Rural Resettlement Program
RPF  Rwanda Patriotic Front; current political party; party of President Paul Kagame
AOU  African Organization for Unity
Old Case  Refugees who fled Rwanda during the conflict in the 1960s and returned to Rwanda after the Genocide
New Case  Refugees who fled Rwanda during the conflict in the 1990s and returned to Rwanda after the Genocide
UNHCR  United Nations High Commission for Refugees
MININTER  Ministry of the Interior
EDPRS  Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy
EICV  Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey
WDA  Workforce Development Authority
GIS  Geospatial Information System
LTR  Land Tenure Regularization
RSTF  Rural Settlement Task Force
ICT  Information Communication Technology
Rural area  An area which is mainly characterized by agricultural and livestock activities. It is also characterized by a small number of medium-height buildings within a cluster of dwellings
Resettlement  Operation consisting of reorganizing a group settlement site by modifying the composition and layout of its components
Group Settlement  Included in the settlement organization plan applicable in Rwanda on which grouped houses of the same standard are erected and which is fully serviced and offers possibilities for its extension
## Table of Contents

Map of Rwanda’s Districts ............................................................................................................. 2
List of Abbreviations and Definitions .......................................................................................... 3
Table of Figures ............................................................................................................................ 5
Executive Summary ..................................................................................................................... 6
Introduction ................................................................................................................................... 7
  Relevance of Research ............................................................................................................... 7
  Research Objectives .................................................................................................................... 7
Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 7
  Research Limitations ................................................................................................................... 8
Background .................................................................................................................................... 9
  1960-1993 .................................................................................................................................... 10
  The Genocide .............................................................................................................................. 11
Policies and Programs .................................................................................................................. 13
  Rwanda Vision 2020 .................................................................................................................... 14
Home Grown Solutions ................................................................................................................ 15
  Umuganda .................................................................................................................................... 15
  Ubudehe ...................................................................................................................................... 15
  Girinka ....................................................................................................................................... 17
  Imihigo ....................................................................................................................................... 18
Resettlement to Umudugudu ........................................................................................................ 19
  Budget ....................................................................................................................................... 20
  Implementation of the Rural Settlement Policy ........................................................................... 21
  Organic Approach to Settlement ............................................................................................... 22
IDP Model Village ....................................................................................................................... 23
  IDP Selection Criteria .................................................................................................................. 25
  IDP in Practice and Challenges .................................................................................................. 26
  Housing ..................................................................................................................................... 28
  Implementation of Rural Resettlement at Umudugudu Level ..................................................... 29
  Implementation of Rural Resettlement at District Level ............................................................ 30
  Beneficiaries and Challenges ..................................................................................................... 31
  Remaining Challenges ............................................................................................................... 32
Reevaluation of Thesis Question and Conclusion ........................................................................ 33
Appendix A – Survey Questions .................................................................................................. 34
Appendix B - Policies .................................................................................................................... 35
Appendix C - EDPRS.................................................................................................................... 37
Appendix D – Land Tenure Reform ............................................................................................... 38
Appendix E - Law .......................................................................................................................... 39
Appendix F – Political and Government Structure ........................................................................ 40
Works Cited ..................................................................................................................................... 41

TABLE OF FIGURES

*Figure 1: Map of Rwanda* ................................................................. 9
*Figure 2: Estimated Exodus from April to August 1994 (OXFAM, 1994)* ...................... 12
*Figure 3 Ubudehe Category Breakdown* ................................................................. 16
*Figure 4 Cycle of Home-Grown Solutions* ......................................................... 19
*Figure 5 Budget Proposal for next three Fiscal years – Currency in Rwandan Francs (Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning)* ......................................................... 20
*Figure 6 view of a Settlement Site as Described by the Rural Settlement Policy* .............. 22
*Figure 7 4-in-1 Model Home (MININFRA)* .............................................................. 24
*Figure 8 - IDP Model Village Plan (MINALOC, 2014)* ............................................. 25
*Figure 9 Location of Current IDP Model Villages – Circles Indicate Those Visited During Research (MININFRA June 2017)* ........................................................... 26
*Figure 10 IDP Muninya* ................................................................................................. 28
*Figure 11 Prevalence of Roofing Type* .............................................................................. 28
*Figure 12 Example of Tin Roof and Clay Tiled Roof Side-by-Side* ............................... 29
*Figure 13 Hospital Built by Rwantonde Community* ................................................... 30
*Figure 14 A family cooking sorghum in the umudugudu* ............................................. 31
*Figure 15 EDPRS Literacy Rates by Ubudehe Category* ............................................ 37
*Figure 16 Access to Drinking Water by Category* ....................................................... 37
*Figure 17 GIS Snapshot of LTR Program Data (LTR 2011)* .......................................... 38
*Figure 18 Government Structure* ...................................................................................... 40
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the 1994 Genocide, Rwanda embarked on an ambitious plan to resettle its entire rural population into thousands of planned settlements across the country. Development agencies at the time were skeptical of such a plan as similar efforts across Africa had largely failed and were crippled by corruption, human rights abuses and poor follow through. Rwanda however, has been an exception. Twenty years after the initial Human Settlement Policy was introduced, Rwanda has made notable strides towards addressing land use planning, a poor education record, high levels of poverty and low levels of health access. Through national-level strategies, clear and concise goals, adequate international and domestic funding, and an acute recognition of its vulnerable populations, Rwanda is now leading Africa in economic, health, education, and environmental standards. This thesis explores Rwanda’s resettlement practices and argues that it could not have been realized without thoughtful and decisive actions taken by the Government in planning and executing the rural resettlement program.
INTRODUCTION

RELEVANCE OF RESEARCH

The United Nations High Commission on Refugees Annual Global Trends Report from 2016 stated that forced displacement is the highest ever recorded by the 70-year old agency with an unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world currently displaced from their homes by conflict and persecution (UNHCR, 2016). This trend is unlikely to remain at such extraordinary levels, and predictably, in the coming years, many countries will begin to experience return migration, causing new and additional stress on post conflict countries. The problems of land scarcity and an insufficient built environment for returning refugee populations provide ample opportunity for planners to utilize urban and rural settlement practices and policies. These efforts should be aimed at addressing the issues of poverty, security of tenure, land-use planning, housing needs, infrastructure development, and provisions of social services; practices which are often overlooked beyond the urban context.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This thesis aims to study the Rwandan rural resettlement efforts known colloquially as imidugudu (singular: umudugudu), which have been carried out across Rwanda for the past 20 years. It asks, how does the Rwandan rural resettlement program address issues of accessibility and poverty reduction for its rural agrarian population? In order to do this, a clear examination of the role of the policies and supporting agencies for rural resettlement needs to take place. This requires understanding the specific background of the rural resettlement program and analyzing the extent of its outcomes. This research will expand on the discipline of urban planning in that it examines a way in which use of policy driven rural resettlement planning efforts can take into account high rates of poverty, low rates of literacy, access to water, sanitation, as well as access to, and creation of, adequate housing.

METHODOLOGY

Rwanda was selected because it is a data rich developing nation and both case-based and in-country observations could be tailored to an illuminative description of the rural settlement program. Data was captured using people’s personal perspectives and lived experiences and was also derived from carefully reviewed policy papers and previously conducted research assessments. The primary data source for this thesis is based on interviews, focus groups and observations conducted while in Rwanda from December 29th 2017 to January 7th 2018. During that time, interviews were conducted with officials in the Rwandan Housing Authority, the Ministry of Local Government, the Kirehe District Mayor, sector leaders, cell leaders, three village leaders and over twenty village residents in five different villages. Research was conducted in Eastern Province, Southern Province and Western Province and interviews and informal conversations were conducted in both English and through a local Rwandan graduate.

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1 Umudugudu (pl. imidugudu) is the Kinyarwanda word for village and became the name of the initial program of resettlement enacted by the Rwandan Ministry of Local Government in 1998 and is still used colloquially today when referencing both villages and the policy for moving into a village.
student fluent in the local language, Kinyarwanda. Interview questions included basic demographic questions as well as gathering histories of resettlement and government accommodations during the resettlement process (Appendix A).

Interviewees were selected based on availability and willingness and consisted mostly of women and genocide survivors while much of the leadership, both local and in the government, had held their positions for many years and were very knowledgeable on the topic of resettlement. All meetings with government officials were arranged prior to arriving in country and were selected based on existing organizational structures posted on government websites and based on their role in the rural resettlement process. Through a network of American Peace Corp volunteers, a Rwanda-based Canadian NGO, and a dual-national Rwandan/American religious leader living in Rwanda, research was also able to include visits with two village leaders as well as the Kirehe District Mayor.

Secondary data sources included assessments written by international organizations and non-governmental organizations such as the United Nations, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Human Rights Watch, the International Peace Institute as well as scholarly articles studying the many aspects of land, environment and housing in Rwanda. Additional and crucial documents include the policies themselves. The Government of Rwanda has a robust online database for each of their government agencies and documents and reports from the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), the Rwandan Housing Authority (RHA), the Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRA) and the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR) have each confirmed much of what was observed while traveling to Rwanda. These online databases have updated organizational structures, policy documents, news articles, survey results, reports, raw data, and updated census information for each district of Rwanda. The information on these websites is collected by and reported from the central government, therefore an additional purpose of this study was to confirm the extensively published government policies with observations and perspectives on the ground.

The literature review for this research resulted in the discovery of many documents produced by international organizations such as the World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), African Development Bank (ADB) as well as a plethora of information from the Rwandan government itself. Academic research on the rural resettlement program consisted of early documents prior to 2003 analyzing the early years of the resettlement process as well as an extensive report published by Human Rights Watch (2003) discussing the violations they observed as they reported early forced relocation taking place across the country from 1998-2003. Extensive work went into examining early policy documents and analysis of programs from 2000-2012. However, extensive research on the topic of rural resettlement has not been conducted in recent years making this thesis a unique contribution to academia and highly contingent on the primary research data that was gathered.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Much of the initial resettlement efforts in the late 1990s was conducted under the former government and not documented thoroughly given the post crisis state of Rwanda at the time. The land resettlement efforts subsequent to that, between the years 1998 to 2003, is also difficult
to analyze thoroughly due to the lack of information and repeated unsuccessful attempts to find the original text of the original 1998 Human Settlement Policy.

Additionally, time in Rwanda was impactful, but not long enough to get more than a brief understanding of the intricacies involved in a nation-wide rural resettlement program. While there, research and interviews were conducted in five different villages and discussions with approximately twenty residents took place. These involved discussing their experiences with the resettlement program and the quality of their lives as a result of the move from scattered to planned settlement. Interviews were also conducted with a number of leadership and key facilitators from the local and central government. Although the overall outcomes of the rural resettlement program seemed to be positive, there were a number of residents who appeared to be a bit guarded. Rwanda is known for its tight control and restriction of opposing government viewpoints within the population, and given that this resettlement program is government sponsored, there may have been a bit of hesitancy during interviews to fully divulge true opinions of the program.

Finally, a certain level of skepticism is healthy in an analysis of government programs where much of the information comes from the government themselves. Although Rwanda prides itself on government transparency, and the sheer number of published reports, documents, and surveys of its population is commendable, the entirety of this report does not even begin to touch on the enormity of the lived experiences of those who were the subjects of this program.

BACKGROUND

Rwanda, “the land of 1000 hills”, is a landlocked country in east-central Africa, and has an area of 26,338 square km, slightly smaller than the U.S. state of Maryland. As of 2018, Rwanda’s population hovers at approximately 12.2 million people and it is one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in Africa with 474 inhabitants per square kilometer (WorldPopulationReview, accessed March 17, 2018). The high rural population density causes acute land concerns and strain on the country’s agrarian economy which makes up 63% of its GDP (CIA World Factbook accessed March 28, 2018). The centrally located capital city of Kigali has a population of approximately 750,000 residents; less than seven percent of the total population of the country.
As of 2017, approximately 83% of the population lived in rural areas and more than 70% of the population worked in subsistence farming (CIA World Factbook, accessed Feb 2, 2018). Rwanda has a temperate climate with two rainy and two dry seasons each year making it a prime location for its agricultural society.

Relocation and resettlement programs for rural refugee populations across Africa are not a new concept. Ethiopia and Tanzania implemented rural resettlement plans, or, *villagization*\(^2\) in the 1970s and 1980s constituting one of the largest mass movements of people anywhere in the world at that time. These efforts, largely publicized as necessary for ecological and land scarcity issues, were expansive and affected millions of rural residents. The stated purpose of villagization in each of these cases was twofold: to create the necessary "preconditions" for agrarian socialism, and to facilitate the provision of human social services by concentrating scattered homesteaders into central communities (Steingraber, 1987).

In the end, these programs largely failed, causing massive long-term issues due to low-budgets, poor planning, political corruption, and lack of support from international organizations. Human rights reports show massive violations as populations in these countries were hastily, forcibly, and pitilessly uprooted from their homes and resettled on unviable land often in the midst of growing season leaving thousands without food or economic means, far removed from medical and education services (Gebru, 2009).

Based on the negative outcome of Ethiopia’s and Tanzania’s villagization program, the international community largely did not support subsequent rural resettlement programs in Africa. Rwanda was unique however in that the 1994 Genocide ultimately left the new leadership with a country of displaced people, many of them needing places to live and resources to resettle and start over. This gave the concept a villagization a new and different way to be applied as a possible solution for dealing with mass returning refugee and internally displaced populations. This unique combination of efforts in Rwanda’s approach to villagization made it a distinctive case study for tackling such issues head on. Through a series of progressive policies, embracing of cultural and traditional practices, updated and inclusive land tenure laws, massive government decentralization and significant investments of international aid, the past twenty years of Rwandan history has seen a marked change in how land, people, and services are accommodated and accounted for on a mass scale. Today, Rwanda has made substantial progress in stabilizing and rehabilitating its economy with low inflation and an average annual growth rate of six to eight percent, in addition to dropping child mortality by two thirds, near universal primary school enrollment and a strong focus on homegrown policies and initiatives (CIA World Factbook, accessed Feb 2, 2018).

1960-1993

Rwanda was colonized most recently by the Belgians\(^3\) from 1916-1962. The Belgians put forth massive efforts to engineer and segregate the population by ethnically classifying the tribes of Rwanda into Hutu and Tutsi clans, of which the Tutsi’s were considered the ‘greater’ of...
the two and enjoyed relative power and privilege compared to their Hutu neighbors. In November 1959, a violent incident sparked a Hutu uprising in which hundreds of Tutsi were killed and thousands displaced and forced to flee to neighboring countries. By Rwanda’s independence from Belgium in 1962, nearly 120,000 refugees, mostly Tutsi, had fled Rwanda for neighboring countries leaving the Hutu majority the newest leaders of the small country. Additional conflicts between Tutsi rebels and the Hutu government continued for the next 20 years and during this time, an additional 480,000 refugees fled Rwanda, mostly to the neighboring countries of Burundi, Uganda, Zaire and Tanzania (United Nations Outreach Program on the Rwanda Genocide, accessed Feb 2, 2018).

Also happening during the time of decolonization were efforts to develop and expand the city of Kigali as the capital of the country. The early phases of establishing infrastructure and public utilities drew an influx of Rwandans to the city in search of employment and social services while poor rural Rwandans continued to live in unplanned familial residential areas, often on plots prone to either flooding or on very steep hillsides. This led to urban density within Kigali as well as dispersed farming settlements throughout the country - all lacking basic services and infrastructure. In 1969, Rwanda’s population was around two million people and had the highest population density in Africa with 360 inhabitants per square mile (Brosha, 2010). The population at this time was nearly all agrarian and the climate, soil and topography provided optimal conditions for varied and sustainable agriculture. However, due to the already high and increasing population density, there was resulting decrease in arable land, and food crop production failed to keep pace with the rapid population growth. Increasingly, farmers began working the untenable land on steep slopes and in flood plains in an effort to feed their families and the flexibility to allow for plots to “rest” between growing cycles was more difficult. This caused increasing stress on the land resulting in lost productivity and additional strain on families whose ability to provide was very much dependent on the success of their farms (Brosha, 2010).

By the end of the 1980s, Rwanda’s agricultural resource base had been decimated by multiple conflicts, poor crop planning and agricultural overuse. In terms of croplands, forestry, and livestock, traditional coping strategies had given way to short-term thinking and survival instincts. By the end of the decade, half of all farming was taking place on steep slopes that once would have been considered unfit for agriculture resulting in over a decade of declining land productivity (Brosha, 2010). According to Luc Bonneux (1994), “the general situation in 1993 was such that less than 10% of the population lived in cities; most were living ‘up the hill’, in fragile ecosystems that were fast eroding due to deforestation and unsustainable agriculture. Nevertheless, 40% of the gross domestic product was generated by agriculture, there being virtually no other industries in the country.” In a country plagued by civil war, food shortages and land scarcity, the impending destruction of genocide would wipe out not just hundreds of thousands of lives, but also destroy the country’s agricultural livelihood and uproot and scatter the remaining population.

THE GENOCIDE

From October 1990 to 1993 the country of Rwanda was occupied with a massive civil war between the Hutu government forces known as the Rwanda Armed Forces (RAF) and the Tutsi rebels made up of mostly displaced Tutsi refugees conducting attacks from across the

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4 From 1948 to 1992, Rwanda’s population increased from 1,887,000 to more than 7,500,000 (IRIN, 2002)
Ugandan border. In 1993, in an effort to stop the fighting, the Arusha Peace Agreement was crafted and organized by the African Organization for Unity (AOU) with a goal of establishing a path to peace between the government and the RPF. The Arusha Peace Agreement was then signed in Arusha, Tanzania on April 4, 1994 by the government of Rwanda and the RPF, under the mediation of France and the United States. The agreement included points considered necessary for lasting peace to include establishing rule of law, repatriation of refugees both from fighting and from power sharing agreements, and the merging of the government and the RPF (United Nations Outreach Program on the Rwanda Genocide, accessed Feb 2, 2018). On April 6th, upon return from Arusha, the plane carrying both the Presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down on approach into Kigali International Airport. Within 30 minutes of the crash, Hutu extremists, who had been planning and propagating a Tutsi extermination fervently over the previous months, set up roadblocks. They were manned by Hutu militiamen, gendarmerie (paramilitary police) and military personnel who then began to identify and kill Tutsis as the Genocide began.

From April to July 1994, members of Hutu militias and ordinary Hutu citizens were incited by local officials to take up arms against their neighbors, and across Rwanda they collectively and violently murdered 800,000 people. By the time the Tutsi-led RPF gained control of the country through a military offensive in early July, hundreds of thousands of Rwandans were dead and many more displaced from their homes or had fled the country (figure 2). The RPF victory, and fears by Hutus of a potential reprisal for the genocide, created an additional two million more refugees (mainly Hutus) fleeing Rwanda, exacerbating what had already become a full-blown humanitarian crisis (history.com staff 2009, accessed Feb 2, 2018). In the months following the Genocide, tens of thousands of mostly Tutsi refugees from prior decades, known as old case refugees, returned to Rwanda. Having been gone for so long, they found themselves returning to a country destroyed by genocide and to communities, homesteads and farmland that was no longer recognizable or legally belonging to anyone.

From 1994 to 1996, Rwanda was still in the midst of conflict with attacks happening between newly empowered Tutsi officials and the former Rwandan military and police living in the camps on the then Zaire border. The camps were created by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were put together so hastily that many Hutu refugees died from cholera and dysentery. These camps, home to many of the leaders of the genocide and former leaders of the Hutu regime, who were working to rearm and push back into Rwanda to retake the government. To counter this offensive, the RPF began launching counter attacks
against these militias within Zaire causing another wave of hundreds of thousands of refugees, known as new case returnees, to return to Rwanda.

This second wave of new case refugees back into Rwanda from Zaire, were invariably Hutu refugees, many who had participated in the genocide. This wave created the potential for conflict as they were also returning to land they had only left in 1994, often finding old wave refugees now occupying their farms, homes and communities creating widespread housing, land, and food shortages. Critically, despite having just been the victims of a mass genocide, the new RPF led government promised to respect the entitlements to property abandonment by the new case refugees recognizing their most recent abandoning of the properties. This led to repatriating new case returnees being able to reclaim their houses and fields from old case returnees who had temporarily occupied. This however left many people displaced and homeless in the process.

Not only was housing an acute problem, but both urban and rural areas needed more land to accommodate the influx of people as well as accommodate for the massive amounts of internally displaced people. Some new case repatriates stayed homeless upon finding their house destroyed or were unable to reclaim them from their new occupants. In some places, sharing arrangements were made between old case repatriates and new case returnees. A huge number of people, however, ended up living under plastic sheeting provided by relief agencies. Estimates of the number of families in immediate need of housing in 1996 ranged from 250,000 to 300,000 (van Leeuwen, 2001).

In December of 1996, the Ministry of Public Works, in an effort to alleviate the increasing pressure for productive farmland, instructed rural residents to begin moving into regrouped settlements. The goal of these instructions was to encourage the development of rural centers into planned settlements as a way to improve the living conditions of the population as well as create a more sustainable plan for agriculture to support the population moving forward. After years of concerns by policy makers and observers, the new Government of National Unity Cabinet decided that this would also help alleviate unplanned land as the regrouping would allow for increasing contiguous farmland plots for agriculture and grazing while offering more opportunities to provide basic services to grouped settlements. This plan was then advertised as a way to promote reconciliation and send the message to all remaining refugees that there was land and space for them to repatriate should they want to return\(^5\). Villages would then be required to facilitate the provisions of services. In addition, the integration of different ethnic groups in the villages was expected to lead to better relations and potential social conflicts would be solved when formerly landless families were able to have access to land (van Leeuwen, 2001).

Policies and Programs

In 2000, there was significant efforts being made to resettle the population. At this time, the government of Rwanda, led by RPF Commander, President Paul Kagame, enacted a series of programs and policies that outlined the future of Rwanda as a unified country working towards

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\(^5\) In summer 2017, the United Nations evoked the Cessation Clause which declares Rwanda safe for its refugees across the world to return. Many neighboring countries who offered asylum required the return of all refugees by January 1, 2018. (Jakachira, 2017).
the goal of leading Africa in economics, growth, education and health. As Defense Minister and Vice President from 1996-2000, Paul Kagame, then serving under President Bizimungu pushed the government to be a non-ethnic and inclusive representation of Rwanda moving forward. Ethnicity was removed from all citizens’ national identity cards and the distinction between the Hutu and Tutsi was downplayed and encouraged to be ignored. Upon his election in May 2000, President Kagame also set up a constitutional commission which was required to adhere to a set of fundamental principles to include equitable power sharing and democracy in recognition of the Arusha Peace Agreement, signed prior to the Genocide. The commission sought to ensure that the draft constitution was "home-grown", relevant to Rwanda's specific needs, and reflected the views of the entire population; they sent questionnaires to civil groups across the country and rejected offers of help from the international community, except for financial assistance (Gasamagera, 2007). The new constitution was voted on and approved in May 2003.

**RWANDA VISION 2020**

Rwanda Vision 2020 was also a plan of the new Kagame government and continues to be the driving force behind much of the post-conflict follow-on development in Rwanda. Vision 2020 was also frequently referenced as a guiding document by government officials and local leaders while conducting research in Rwanda. Launched in 2000 as an effort to avoid further uncontrolled growth, it aimed to create a unified goal for each of the government agencies. The Vision provides the country’s overall macro-economic development framework and emphasizes the instrumental role of land use management in the country’s development. The document also outlines the strategic overarching goals for the next twenty years with the overall intent to fundamentally transform Rwanda into a middle-income country providing access to basic infrastructure services, such as shelter, electricity and drainage. Specifically, it stated that its “aim is to attain a per capita income of a middle-income country in an equitable way, with aspiration to become a modern, strong and united nation, without discrimination between its citizens.” (Rwanda Vision 2020) The policy consists of a list of goals which the government aims to achieve before the year 2020 which include reconstruction, infrastructure and transport improvements, good governance, improving agriculture production, private sector development, and health and education improvements (Kinzer, 2008).

Referencing the issues of infrastructure, land use planning and settlement as one of the policy’s six pillars, Rwanda 2020 states; *Rwanda will pursue a harmonious policy of grouped settlements based on economic activity. Rural settlements organized into active development centers will be equipped with basic infrastructure and services. This system of settlement will serve as an entry point into the development of non-agricultural income generating activities. Land will be reorganized and consolidated so as to create adequate space for modern and viable farming.* (Rwanda Vision 2020, Pg. 18)

Rwanda Vision 2020 is critical in that it brings together all levels of government to work towards a common goal. The key ministries involved in its outlined execution of the rural resettlement program include the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA), the Rwandan Housing Authority (RHA) and efforts from the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) and the Land Tenure Regularization Program (LTRP). (Appendix B and Appendix C)
HOME GROWN SOLUTIONS

One of the ways that Rwanda is unique in its resettlement approach, is the way in which the new laws and policies have integrated historical customs and traditions within the execution of the plans. These cultural and traditional practices date back to pre-colonization times and have allowed for things such as community service, poverty alleviation and political processes to build national unity by emphasizing culturally recognized activities for use in working toward accomplishing the goals of Rwanda Vision 2020. These principles, incorporated into daily lives, have set the tone for collective action across the country, which touches on every facet of the rural resettlement program. These “home grown solutions” are the foundation of accommodating the rural resettlement process and have been used to identify and address the issues of accessibility to social services and address poverty across the rural population.

UMUGANDA

*Umuganda* is a tradition that translates to, ‘coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome’. Today, umuganda continues to be ‘community work’ and Rwandans between the ages of 18-60 are encouraged and often required to participate in four hours of community labor on the last Saturday of each month. Ministry of Local Government estimates that 80% of the Rwandan population takes part and projects include infrastructure development, building schools, medical centers, hydroelectric plants as well as rehabilitation of wetlands and agricultural plots. Estimates of the value of umuganda to the country’s development since 2007 is estimated at approximately $60 million USD (African Development Bank – Rwandapedia, 2018). A number of challenges do arise with such an effort and these large events require massive amounts of planning and coordination which can sometimes lead to wasted time, lack of resources and highly unattainable goals. Umuganda also has much higher rates of participation in rural communities than urban centers which likely is a result of urban populations having less sense of community, and ownership of their neighborhood than smaller rural populations and communities. Umuganda has been a crucial aspect of carrying out the resettlement program. It is estimated that over 12 million man-hours are contributed to community development efforts each month⁶, much of which has been realized by way of building public services at the umudugudu level. This sense of community development and oneness while coming together to work on projects for the collective population has been an effective way that the Rwandan tradition of umuganda is being used to build on community planning principles.

UBUDEHE

The strongest and most impactful cultural applications being used in rural settlement planning and poverty reduction today is called *ubudehe* which refers to the long-standing Rwandan practice and culture of collective action and mutual support to solve problems within a community (African Development Bank – Rwandapedia, 2018). The focus of traditional ubudehe was mostly on cultivation and collectively working together to most productively feed the community. Today, ubudehe is a poverty reduction strategy launched as part of a partnership between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and the Ministry of Local Government.

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⁶ Estimate of man-hours is based off of average number of participants each month (three million) multiplied by the four hour requirement to work.
The overarching objective of ubudehe is to categorically place people within very specific and defined levels of poverty or wealth in order to best address the needs of those who are within the lowest poverty levels. In order to do this, a poverty level category system was created by the central government where households and villages each determine the poverty level of each family in their community (see Figure 3). This is done every one to two years and is conducted by an ubudehe committee of inyangamugayo (people of integrity) who outline the needs of the people and a plan for development priorities within the village moving forward. Simultaneously, the same process is conducted at the household level and families are expected to examine their own personal finances and assets and report to the committee which category they believe they fall into. In an effort to remain transparent and consistent across the community, the household poverty level categorization takes place publicly with all heads of households gathered to report their status which then must be further validated by the village leadership themselves.

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<tr>
<th>Ubudehe Category</th>
<th>Definition (Government of Rwanda)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 Abject Poverty (Abatindi nyakujya)</td>
<td>owns no property, lives by begging and is wholly dependent on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Very Poor Abatindi</td>
<td>poor housing, lives on a poor diet, depends on others and does not own land or livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Poor Abakene</td>
<td>malnourished, owns a small portion of land, has low production capacity and cannot afford secondary education for their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Resourceful Poor Abakene Bifashije</td>
<td>own some land, cattle, a bicycle and have average production capacity-can afford secondary education and have fewer difficulties accessing health care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Food Rich Abakungu jumba</td>
<td>own large portions of land, can afford a balanced diet and live in decent houses, employ others, own cattle, and can afford university education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Money Rich Abakire</td>
<td>have money in banks, can receive bank loans, own an above average house, a car, cattle, fertile lands, have access to sufficient food and have permanent employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 3 UBUDEHE CATEGORY BREAKDOWN

A key part of ubudehe is that the residents of a community define the levels of poverty that exist in their own village and everyone is aware of their relative level of wealth compared to that of their neighbors. This theoretically acts as an equalizer among citizens and the information is ultimately used to decide development priorities as well as who should benefit from other social security programs.

While conducting research, many of the interviews with leadership revolved around this practice of ubudehe. The process of classifying residents that happens each year at the village level and village leaders that were interviewed reported it to be a long but relatively smooth process. They expressed its importance when the district government distributed tin sheets for roofs or goats or cows as they could easily consult the list of who required the most assistance. Village leaders also confirmed that the more ‘vulnerabilities’ a family had, the more likely they were to receive support which also greatly affected their ranking on the list. Vulnerabilities include, disability, gender, genocide survivor status, orphan status, elderly, etc. Village leaders also discussed the importance of finding work for category one residents. They reported that low-wage jobs that needed to be done in the community were often delegated to those who could work in an effort for them to ‘earn’ their way out of poverty while those who couldn’t work in category one were prioritized for more direct accommodation and resources.
Village leaders and the RHA Housing Regulations Manager were asked if categories two and three were ever seemingly envious of the resources distributed to those who were not quite as well off as them. The village leaders reported that was usually not a problem and few conflicts ever arose. The RHA on the other hand seemed surprised with the question as he also had never considered that to be a potential issue. In fact, the Housing Regulations Manager expressed that across Rwanda, the general population had a collective interest to raise the quality of life of the poorest population in an effort to all work towards improving the life of the population as a whole. Ubudehe was not discussed among villagers for this thesis, therefore further research is required in an effort to determine the underlying nuances of comparing neighbors and creating an entitlement program based on relative wealth. Assumingly, similar to entitlement programs in the United States and elsewhere, people may feel that claiming to be more or less poor than they are will result in additional resources to be allocated to them resulting in inaccurate reporting of one’s status.

Ultimately, ubudehe is both unique to Rwanda as well as critical for poverty reduction as it very precisely identifies those who need the most assistance to get out of poverty. Families and houses that are not within an umudugudu are also accounted for by the nearest umudugudu leader but the collective decisions of the community are less accurate and remote households may be left out of the process all together. By resettling the scattered population into villages, not only are those families then able to access the resources and economy that a village has, but they are then part of the ubudehe process in its entirety, ensuring that they are included when resources are allocated, should they need them.

**GIRINKA**

Girinka, translates to ‘may you have a cow’ and describes a centuries old cultural practice in Rwanda whereby a cow was given by one person to another, either as a sign of respect and gratitude, or as a marriage dowry. During Rwanda’s 1994 Genocide, 90 percent of cattle were slaughtered, devastating the livelihoods of many Rwandans (UNICEF, 2011). In Rwanda, social status is often acknowledged through the possession of cattle, a strong symbol of wealth. By providing the poorest households with cattle, the Girinka program improves the livelihoods of those most in need and institutes lost pride through the recovery of a traditional symbol of wealth (UNICEF, 2011). The cow not only supplies milk, which can be an important source of nutrition and income to families, but also manure, which is a source of fertilizer for crops and biogas for cooking (UNICEF, 2011). Girinka was initiated in response to the alarmingly high rate of childhood malnutrition and as a way to accelerate poverty reduction and integrate livestock and crop farming while simultaneously allowing for increased opportunities for income while resettling people into umudugudu settlements. The program works in two steps: first, a poor family receives a cow free of charge. Second, when the initial cow reproduces, the first female calf is given to a neighbor who then passes on a subsequent female calf to another neighbor, and so on.

The program is based on the premise that providing a dairy cow to poor households helps to improve their livelihood as a result of a more nutritious and balanced diet from milk, increased agricultural output through better soil fertility (by way of fertilizer) as well as greater incomes by commercializing dairy products. Since its introduction in 2006, more than 198,000 beneficiaries have received cows, of which 60,000 were funded by the ubudehe program targeting the poorest families (African Development Bank – Rwandapedia, 2018). Girinka has contributed to an
The increase in agricultural production in Rwanda - especially milk products which have helped reduce malnutrition and increase incomes. The program aims to provide 350,000 cows to ubudehe categories zero through two families by 2017 (Government of Rwanda).

Coupled with ubudehe, girinka is a common method of resource allocation for poor families. When category one or two families move into settled areas they are often given a cow as a ‘starter tool’ to sustain them and begin working on their ascent out of poverty. Girinka is a key aspect of the poverty reduction program and its use is best accounted for when cows are most fairly allocated through the umudugudu leaders and the ubudehe program. Obviously, this is more difficult to do when people live in scattered settlements rather than within the boundaries of a village. By encouraging the resettlement into villages, residents have the increased possibility to benefit from programs such as girinka making it a critical tool of the resettlement program.

**IMIHIGO**

_Imihigo_, which translates to ‘vow to deliver’, describes the pre-colonial cultural practice where an individual sets targets or goals to be achieved within a specific period of time. This practice has been one of the most critical aspects of accountability and equity across the country of Rwanda as it instills a sense of ownership and duty to perform among leaders across the country. Contemporary imihigo was implemented by President Paul Kagame in 2006 with the main objective of making public agencies and institutions more effective and accountable in their implementation of national programs and to accelerate the socio-economic development agenda as contained in Vision 2020. Imihigo is closely tied to ubudehe, umuganda, and girinka as it is a list of goals and priorities for each of the 30 districts, in line with the central government strategic goals. The main focus is on economic development, poverty reduction, good governance and social welfare. Each year, leaders are asked to take into account cross cutting issues such as gender, HIV/AIDS, environment, social inclusion and youth. Keeping this in mind, every village produces its goals and requirements for the coming year, to include updated ubudehe for families, progress of poverty reduction as people move through the ubudehe categories requirements for/status of schools, roads, hospitals, houses and/or construction and resource needs for the poorest residents. This information is consolidated at the cell level, then again at the sector and finally, at the district level who then reports their priorities directly to the President and the central government. District leaders across Rwanda are asked to prepare plans that are realistic, take into account the cost of delivering services as well as the available resources. To make sure that proper monitoring and evaluation can be conducted, indicators, targets and outputs must be clearly identified in the planning process.

During the imihigo process, the goals of the prior year are also examined and each village reports up the line which of last year’s goals have been accomplished. In order to make each leader most accountable to their residents as well as prove their effectiveness as a leader, each district’s imihigo results are televised and sense of competition is instilled by way of ranking best performing to worst performing districts across the country. The system of checks and balances is organic to the process as full transparency of each level of governments results, as reported to the central government, is posted online and in newspapers and is thus able to be examined for validity and truthfulness by all residents across the country. District leaders who perform well in their imihigo (hitting 70% of their goals or more) are given a bonus while district leaders who only complete less than 60% of their goals are removed from their position. The
Kirehe District Mayor noted that imihigo was a very stressful time for leadership and each year he hoped that his numbers would be favorable to him serving another term. Critically, this lends itself to further research to determine whether or not leadership ever feels compelled to adjust their numbers in an effort to keep their jobs or ‘win’ the imihigo competition.

The imihigo process is important to the rural resettlement program because the success of each level of leadership is contingent on resources being allocated fairly and accurately across the country. Throughout the reporting process, current and future years budgets can then have a high level of accountability as projects are complete. It also drives the planning for projects during umuganda, allocation from the central government to the districts and finally, to the village levels and needs for hospitals can be identified, and roads, schools etc. are also part of the imihigo. This process drives the development of social services of which addressing issues of accessibility and poverty are then secondary and tertiary issues that can also be improved upon.

Cultural Poverty Alleviation Practices

Barret et al. (2001) report that diversification of livelihoods to nonfarm activities is typically positively correlated with income and wealth. In rural Africa, this translates to the presence of more land and livestock in rural livelihoods. These indicators of wealth can offer a pathway out of poverty but only if rural poor can benefit from their nonfarm occupational activities such as working in markets, schools’ clinics, etc. The idea that clustering these farmers into planned settlements then allows for greater diversification of livelihoods as markets,
schools, and health facilities all create new opportunities for labor, selling of produce, and creation of stronger local economies to participate in nonfarming activities.

The positive wealth-nonfarm correlation may also suggest that those already poor in land and capital face an uphill battle because entry barriers to step into nonfarming activities are high. Not only in terms of financial investment but also in access to human and social capabilities. The latter is important to get access to (in)formal groups sharing information, skills and investments. Barret et al. (2001)

The rural resettlement program addresses the poverty gap for rural farmers head on. It does this by creating small economies of opportunity, wealth, and access to human and social capital. By removing the stress of land and house ownership and ensuring the basic provisions of a cow, education for children, basic health access and sanitation, rural farmers are able to sustain themselves, their family and continue working to increase their wealth and assets.

**BUDGET**

Rwanda’s 2018 government spending will be an increase of seven percent from fiscal year 2017 to $2.58 billion Rwandan Francs, with 17 percent of the budget being funded by external donors and the rest coming from internal revenue and borrowing (Reuters, 2017). The below published budget for rural development shows that 17 percent (approx. $693M USD), of the entire budget for each of the next three years will be spent on rural development and creating opportunities within umudugudu to encourage people into these grouped settlements.

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development (Objective: Sustainable poverty reduction is achieved through broad-based growth across sectors in rural areas by improving land use, increasing productivity of agriculture, enabling graduation from extreme poverty and connecting rural communities to economic opportunity through improved infrastructure)</td>
<td>Environment and Natural Resources</td>
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<td>35,950,555,441</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Urbanization and Rural Settlements</td>
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<td>1,177,882,837</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>10,330,719,311</td>
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<td>90,057,747,156</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Productivity and Youth Employment</td>
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<td>127,570,176,415</td>
<td>150,841,148,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>90,187,513,242</td>
<td>94,394,906,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>11,098,773,630</td>
<td>12,831,152,501</td>
<td>18,985,341,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Protection</td>
<td>6,690,232,141</td>
<td>7,723,339,479</td>
<td>10,764,810,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>19,356,203,825</td>
<td>9,733,135,327</td>
<td>17,614,442,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>4,995,976,452</td>
<td>7,095,035,666</td>
<td>9,081,647,652</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>590,898,036,740</strong></td>
<td><strong>558,529,450,794</strong></td>
<td><strong>647,878,712,358</strong></td>
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FIGURE 5 BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR NEXT THREE FISCAL YEARS – CURRENCY IN RWANDAN FRANCS (MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING)
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RURAL SETTLEMENT POLICY

The rural settlement policy as directed by the Rural Settlement Task Force, under the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) is the driving document for the physical implementation of the rural resettlement program and focuses on the site selection and umudugudu creation and expansion. This policy outlines the specifications for each new and existing umudugudu which is then enforced by way of permits, building codes and delegating power to village leaders as well as holding them accountable. In areas where families are dispersed, the policy states; every cell with over one hundred families or two cells close to each other should choose a site to accommodate at least 100 to 200 houses. It can have up to 500 maximum houses to attract a small business for entrepreneurs to do business. These sites should have basic infrastructure in place or should be located where infrastructure can easily be installed. Further, the policy states that the umudugudu should be within three kilometers of crop farms, should not be in environmental risk zones, on a slope no greater than 40 percent and should be on less fertile ground with a minimum of four kilometers between villages (Rural Settlement Policy, MINALOC 2014). Common kraals are encouraged near the population for easy manure accessibility for fertilizer and each site is expected to be left with enough space for expansion. The size of the road in between the site should have a width of eight to 10 meters. Roads connecting homes should be at least six to eight meters in width and that two houses adjacent to each other should be in line and face a road. When planning where to put a road, it is necessary to consider slopes not exceeding 40 percent so as to reduce occurrences of soil erosion (Rural Settlement Policy, MINALOC, 2014).

While traveling across Rwanda, the prevalence of scattered settlements was still obvious. Much of the following approaches to resettlement have gained traction more recently and the goal of 70% of rural households to be within an umudugudu by 2024 remains feasible. Those with whom interviews were conducted were resettled in the past few years and their experiences are included in the following sections and match very closely with the processes both discussed by government officials and outlined in government documents.
ORGANIC APPROACH TO SETTLEMENT

With the Human Settlement Policy, (Appendix B) the government set the tone for the future of habitation in Rwanda. Over the course of the early resettlement process however, Rwandans were very hesitant to leave their rural plots of land. There was fear among the population regarding the political climate and unease over what direction the country would take, and leaving their familial land that was yet to be titled for life in a village was not a popular option. Human Rights Watch in 1998 did report encountering forcible relocations in the early years of the program, reportedly in an effort to prove its success when international development agencies with large pocketbooks who came to see villagization for themselves. They also reported intimidation by government official, armed police officers and a few even experienced violent relocations for those who were originally unwilling. Based on reporting at the time, those incidents seemed mostly isolated to the first years of the program, however it is probable that they continued longer than that (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

As time went on, the government was able to better support the requirement to more organically settle within imidugudu by way of site planning and progressive land tenure laws and incentives. These efforts were responsible for delineating property and entering coordinates and survey results in GIS at the community level which allowed Rwandans legal documentation of their land and homes. The decentralization of the governments oversight of these laws down to the village level also allowed for village and community leaders to enforce the umudugudu policies on their own dispersed population by way of incentivizing residents to choose to relocate with the promise of better infrastructure, safer living conditions, certificates and titles, and access to social services such as schools and health facilities.

Environmental safety is also a concern for the rural population as flooding and mudslides occur more frequently washing away homes, destroying crops and killing people and livestock. According to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs report on High Risk Zones on Floods and Landslides (2012), floods and landslide are key disasters that frequently affect localized areas of the country and most of the affected people do not have efficient mechanisms to cope with natural hazards. In addition, the hilly topography and high annual precipitation rates with overexploitation of the natural environment such as deforestation, inappropriate farming and poor housing techniques accelerate the disaster risks and hence result into losses of lives and damages to property from the community exposed to these disaster risks.

Using the Home-Grown Solution of ubudehe, village leaders are able to track the rural population outside of the village boundary and account for families and homes that are in the
greatest risk of environmental hazards. When resources from the central government are allocated to the cell level, leaders are able to identify which families or homes are of greatest risk (often tied to ubudehe) and then offer assistance to relocate.

According to the officials at the Rwandan Housing Authority, families who are not in the lowest ubudehe category also have the option to move into an umudugudu if they currently reside in environmental high-risk zones. In these cases, the government purchases their high-risk land from them at market rate in an effort to discourage them from selling it to another family, and then allows them to purchase more environmentally stable land from the government nearby and for a discounted price leaving them with additional funds as an incentive. The second incentive in this transaction is that they will also be given a free home within the umudugudu as well as a cow (girinka) and seed to begin planting on their new land. In order to discourage families from generating income by renting out their new homes within the umudugudu, the family is required to live in the home for five years (interview with RHA, Jan 3, 2018). At the end of the five years, and given they have lived in the home for the entire time, they are given the title to their home.

Wealthy scattered families (ubudehe category three and four) in high risk zones are also encouraged to move into umudugudu. In these cases, the government does not purchase their land from them, but rather gives them title to a new plot of land in a safe zone and then requires the family to build their own home on a plot of land provided by the government within the umudugudu. In many cases, the family is able to keep ownership of their land in the high-risk zone, as long as they do not keep residence on it.

IDP MODEL VILLAGE

Vision 2020 sets the goal of at least 70 percent of households living in rural areas to move into integrated viable settlements before 2024⁷. In 2007 the Rwanda leadership came together at the Government of Rwanda’s Akagera Retreat to discuss their progress, challenges and a way forward for further developing the country’s rural sector. The ultimate resolution of that conference called for finding a permanent solution to Rwanda’s rural settlement challenge so as to spur the socio-economic development of Rwandans living in rural areas. The solution to this problem became one of the largest accelerants of the umudugudu program which is known as the Integrated Development Approach Model Village, or, IDP Model Village.

Model Villages have been a staple driving force for rural resettlement policy over the past few years and at least one has been funded in each of the 30 Districts with a goal of reaching each of the 416 sectors by 2024. The intent for these IDP Model Villages is to offer economic opportunities, favor rational land use and management and accelerate servicing with basic social economic and physical infrastructures in rural areas. Reshaping rural settlement in Rwanda through adapting an all-inclusive rural settlement model allows for providing a rural population access to clean water, electricity, health facilities, common marketplace, smart classrooms, improved road networks, common cowshed, and better agricultural practices.

In 2009 the first IDP Model Village was created in Eastern Province as a settlement of 365 single family houses and housed over 900 individuals. Upon completion of that project, an

⁷ The deadline of 2020 was realized to be too aggressive to thoughtfully resettle the population. Therefore in 2016 it was determined that the new goal would be 2024.
assessment was conducted by the local government to determine lessons learned for future model villages. It was quickly realized that individual homes were not conducive to protecting the environment and were ineffective in its land use and preservation which were one of the tenants of the program. Moving forward from that initial IDP, in 2015, a concept to create ‘four in one’ model homes, where four families would live in separate sections of the same structure, was created. This concept was used on all future IDP model villages and today, Rwanda is experimenting with ‘six in one’ homes and ‘eight in one’ homes within their IDP model.

When sitting down with the head of the IDP Model Village Program, located within MINALOC in the Capital of Kigali, he discussed the successes and future of the program. According to him, as of January 2018, there were 45 IDP Model Village sites that had been completed at a cost of 20BN Rwandan Francs (approximately $20 million). This accounted for approximately 5,000 people who had been relocated since the program really took off in 2015.

The specific workings of this program are unique and when considered on a large scale of accomplishing over 400 IDPs before 2024, could be rather effective. Locations for these IDPs are decided by a National Steering Committee of Ministers made up of the Ministries of Local Administration, Infrastructure, Agriculture, Environment, Health, Commerce and Technology. To address all areas of development, these IDPs, often located in remote areas of the country to accommodate farmers who still require access to their land, and can be accessible by creation of a paved road connecting it to secondary cities around the country. Each model village is also inclusive of a health center, a school, and a community hall. Considering that less than four percent of the rural population is without access to a television (EICV, 2014), the community hall has a television that allows for more “modern and progressive ideas to be shared” with the rural population (interview with MINALOC, Jan 3, 2018). Within this community center there is also access to furniture, a meeting room, computers and each was operated using solar electricity. Community leadership was also located in the community center to create accessibility with the villagers and as a central location for them to manage the policies and the security and police within the community.

![Figure 7: 4-in-1 Model Home (MININFRA)](image)
Also within the IDPs are employment creation centers and schools. The employment center is run by the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) under the direction of the National Employment Program. This employment center is a place for women and youth to train and support the community within the markets and to offer additional skills to a community that was previously most reliant on farming practices (interview with IDP lead official, Jan 3, 2018). Smart classrooms are a feature in each of the IDP model village schools where students are exposed to information and communication technology training (ICT). Rwanda began to develop its ICT program in 2000 after it adopted the National Information Communications Infrastructure (NICI) policy. The NICI plan was further integrated into Vision 2020, “to transition Rwanda’s agrarian economy to an information-rich, knowledge-based one by 2020.” (Ben-Ari, 2014).

Additional features of each IDP Model Village are kraals for cattle which are created on the edge of the community for manure collection and access to girinka-donated cows; market buildings with built-in tables for farmers to sell produce; rainwater collection reservoirs; sanitation facilities and community clean water access points; and playgrounds and preschools for children under age six. The edges of the IDP model villages are groomed and prepared for expansion and to encourage nearby scattered populations to also move within the village and enjoy the access to homes and social services that the IDP provides.

**IDP SELECTION CRITERIA**

There are a number of criteria for families to be selected for the IDP model villages. When a site is initially selected, the beneficiaries are then pulled from a pool of residents in the surrounding scattered farms. The first to be selected are those in the lowest category of ubudehe who are also women headed households and/or disabled residents and/or genocide survivors. Even greater priority is given to those who meet the aforementioned criteria and are additionally living in high risk environmental zones. Once those families are accounted for, priority is then given to those families who meet only one or two of those criteria. The list is then approved by a district committee who is responsible for the oversight of the creation of IDP Model Villages in their districts.
Once the houses are complete\textsuperscript{8}, families who were selected are required to tear down their current home that is outside of an umudugudu (assumingly to prevent someone else from moving into it) and move into the IDP. Once in the IDP, the family is given a cow, seeds, and three to six months of food to establish themselves in their new residence. Their land is expected to be easily accessible and they are encouraged to continue to farm and be self-sufficient within six months of moving in.

Not only does the government rely on the tenants of ubudehe to determine who has priority for government assisted resettlement, but also gives priority to those residents who currently live within high-risk zones. These zones are determined by the central government land use planning map and are areas where households are in severe risk of landslides and/or flooding. In order to ensure that these families move to safer and more viable options for homes while still being able to access their farmland, IDP model villages are created. The process in which the location is determined is a combined effort of the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA), the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA), the Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) and the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Once a location for a settlement is determined based on the topographical conditions of an area, additional steps are taken to ensure that water sources and room for social services such as schools, health centers, markets, and fertile land nearby also exists.

\section*{IDP IN PRACTICE AND CHALLENGES}

While in Rwanda, research was conducted in IDP Munyinya in Muhanga District which had its initial groundbreaking in June 2017. This IDP, comprised of twelve ‘four in one’ type homes, was completely managed by the District and brought together landless, poverty level zero families from multiple cells in the area. All of the approximately 50 residents of this IDP were genocide survivors, widows, orphans and/or disabled elderly couples. While there, I had the opportunity to visit four different families in their homes, all of which had

\textsuperscript{8} In many cases, IDP model villages are built using the Rwandan Armed Forces during their “service weeks” – a rotating shift of military units who work throughout the year. International investors (often Chinese) were observed building roads to many of these settlements, but further research is required to determining who manages the actual building and project management of the IDP model villages.
moved into the IDP within the one to two months prior to my visit. The homes each consisted of three bedrooms, a spacious living room, a wet room for showers, an indoor kitchen extended off of the house and an outdoor toilet with septic tank also outside of the main entrance of the house. Three of the four families were given their home with basic furniture provided.

In my interviews with these families, I found that each of them reported being substantially better off than they had been prior to the move into the IDP and each reported decreased stress and overall increased wellbeing as a result of the move. Each of the families also reported having spent the years since the genocide in very unstable living situations often rooming with friends, family members or in shacks in high risk zones where they were constantly harassed by landlords and unable to cover the cost of both food and rent frequently having to choose. Many suffered obvious disabilities as a result of the genocide.

Construction of IDP Munyinya was still underway and each of the families had been relocated from different cells within the district in December 2017. One of the challenges identified during this move came from their initial allocation of food and furniture as these resources were to come from their individual cell leadership. The discrepancies of who was given what in terms of food, seeds, furniture etc. was identified as being a shortcoming of their originating cell leadership. Each family was promised by district leadership that these supplies would be provided in the very near future but a few were skeptical about it ever being supplied at all. One elderly couple was quoted saying “It is so much space to have three bedrooms for just the two of us. We have never had a consistent roof over our head without fear of having to leave. It is just very strange for us to have electricity but no food. How do we survive in our nice house? The government continues to ask for patience.” (Interview conducted on January 4, 2018). They had been given cornflower, a few kilograms of rice and oil upon moving in, but were too elderly to work and continue to sustain themselves beyond the initial allocation.

Since this IDP was constructed on the outskirts of an existing umudugudu it didn’t require the traditionally included schools, health center etc. In fact, just down the hill from the IDP there was new construction of government employee barracks. Many of the new IDP residents found themselves working at that site with stable jobs laying bricks and managing supplies making a living wage for the first time in their lives. Priscilla, a woman in her mid-30’s, managed the inventory as trucks brought materials to the construction site. She was a resident of one of the ‘four in one’ IDP homes and lived with her mother and sister and had her own very tidy room for the first time in her life. She said she had everything she needed and was happily supplying funds for food for her neighbors and had even helped find a number of the resident’s jobs building the government homes. Missing from this IDP was the presence of an umudugudu leader, but when asked, was assured that since the IDP was still so new, the residents were currently being accounted for by the neighboring umudugudu.
In 2009, by way of the EDPRS, the government of Rwanda embarked on a policy that would address the inequalities of housing for the majority of the rural population. At the time, a large majority of rural homes had thatched roofs that were made of branches and mud and were quick to leak, collapse and required significant maintenance to keep the water of rainy season from penetrating the home. A solution to this problem was the use of metal sheeting which is durable, lasts over 20 years and are easy to use for water collection in the very wet climate. Though implementation of ubudehe, the government began a program in 2012 where metal sheets were distributed to the districts and then down to the cell leaders who then allocated the metal sheets to those people in the lowest ubudehe poverty category. Based on interviews with the leader of a Rwanda-based NGO in Musanze, the sheeting was allocated in such a way that those who were the poorest would receive the tin roofs for free which would then incentivize those who could afford it to also purchase it. Families who voluntarily moved into the umudugudu would also be guaranteed a tin roof as additional incentive to relocate. Tin roofs today cost 7,000RWF (~$9 USD) per sheet and a family home of three bedrooms requires approximately 20 sheets to cover the home – total cost of $180 USD, a considerable but not unreasonable amount given that the average monthly income of a Rwandan is $900 USD. Since 2014, a significant increase of roofs have been distributed. The alternative roof-type that is also widely accepted is the clay tile roof which can be observed much more widely in the eastern districts where clay soil is used as a more common building material for homes.

The tin roof was in large an effort to raise the basic quality of life that even the poorest Rwandans could then enjoy. In addition to a tin roof, it also became standard practice to ensure that each house also had a concrete floor rather than a dirt floor. Houses of the families in the lowest level of ubudehe within the umudugudu, were given the provisions to upgrade their floor to concrete should they require it and those who were in a category that allowed for them to fund it themselves, were also required
to do so. Efforts were also made during the monthly day of service, umuganda, to assist those
who needed to upgrade their floor or their roof in order for everyone within the community to
have the required infrastructure.

Homes of this specification
were observed across Rwanda.
Additionally, only a small portion of
homes with thatched roofs were also
observed. When asking village
leaders how they enforced such
upgrades to homes, their response was
loosely that “people do not want to be
different from their neighbors, and if
given a roof for their home they
would find a way to install it and if
they were told it had to be done, very
rarely did someone not work to
accomplish it.”

IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL RESETTLEMENT AT UMUDUGUDU LEVEL

Umudugudu leadership plays one of the most pivotal roles in the distribution of
government resources as well as the contributions to yearly imihigo. I spoke with the current and
the former umudugudu leaders from Rwantonde, in Kirehe District which was an umudugudu
that has been around since before the Genocide. In 2006, with support from the sector, the
village of approximately 130 homes decided that they were in desperate need of a health facility.
At the time, the nearest facility was 37 kilometers away and much of village, as well as the rural
scattered population, was unable to access basic health services. With labor from the
community, and funding from the district, and a number of local NGOs, a relatively large health
clinic was built (Figure 13). This health clinic became an anchor institution in the cell and in the
years following, electricity, water, and roads were also constructed as the value of the hospital to
the population increased.
Also since the completion of this hospital in 2012, the umudugudu leaders began to notice that “hill people” (a colloquial term used for scattered farmers up in the hill) began requesting permits to move into the umudugudu. When asked the process of moving into the community, the leader stated that “they simply ask for a permit and then they are able to move into the area on a designated plot of land” (interview conducted Jan 5, 2018). Since the majority of these moves are from high-risk zones and conducted by people in severe poverty, the same process exists as discussed above. The umudugudu leader confirmed their ubudehe category of poverty, and if they qualify, they are given a home and asked to destroy their existing home outside of the village or they are given a plot and asked to build their own home.

Upon completion of the hospital, the umudugudu leaders stated that the size of their village has expanded to over 200 homes as a result of the development that subsequently occurred in the village. When the former umudugudu leader handed over his responsibilities to the new leader in 2013, there was approximately 30 percent of the umudugudu population in ubudehe categories one and two. When I asked the village leader what the current percentage of his population that lived in the lowest categories of poverty was, he stated that it was less than 10 percent, a 20 percent improvement over the past five years. This could likely be attributed to the levels of social capital accessible in the umudugudu, as well as the improved housing structures and direct support of government resources allocated through the village leader.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RURAL RESETTLEMENT AT DISTRICT LEVEL

There are 30 Districts in Rwanda, each of them run by a District Mayor who is appointed by the President and held accountable for accomplishing his goals through the yearly imihigo process. If at any time he is realized to not be effective, or accomplishes less than 50 percent of his yearly stated goals, the President can choose to remove him from office. Because of this, the Mayor that I interviewed expressed a high level of anxiety surrounding the upcoming imihigo reports as the competition between each of the districts to outperform one another was high. The mayor can serve two consecutive five year terms and this particular mayor ran a budget of approximately nine to 14 billion Rwandan Francs (10.5 to 16.5 million dollars), for a population of approximately 360,000 people. Much of his budget came from the central government with a lesser percentage coming in the form of the taxes imposed on his district’s residents.

Many of the Mayor’s goals revolved around poverty alleviation for the poorest residents. The 2015 ubudehe numbers he provided showed that 23.3 percent of his residents (approximately 84,000) lived in ubudehe poverty categories one and two. His plan to target these categories and support them becoming financially stable include spending much of his
funding on IDP Model Villages. In January 2018, his district had completed three model villages, but with the funding in place and many of trial and error of the initial IDP’s out of the way, the District was on track to have 35 percent of its population residing in IDP model villages by 2024, specifically targeting the lowest ubudehe categories and those living in high risk zones.

**BENEFICIARIES AND CHALLENGES**

While traveling through Musanze District in the northwest of the country in January, 2018, I sat down with the head of a local NGO, PREFER, who was working closely with the umudugudu leaders to provide homes for some of the vulnerable populations who were living in nearby high-risk zones. At that time, she had enough funding for the relocation of twenty families into a nearby village. She reported that her NGO was funded mostly by donations and a yearly fund-raising effort in Canada and these funds were then put to use in partnership with the local cell leadership. When proposing her project, the cell leadership, in consultation with the local umudugudu leadership, referenced the poverty classification rankings (ubudehe) for their cell and identified the 20 families who were lowest on the list. These families included women headed households, widows, grown orphans who were survivors of the Genocide, families who lived in high-risk zones but were too poor to relocate and a number of handicap adults. Each was required to take part in the building of their new homes, but without requirement to fund the materials or the additional labor that was needed. The village, although small, already had a school and was at the end of a hard-packed dirt road. In accordance with the housing standards put forth by the Rural Settlement Task Force, 20 homes were built, each had a solar panel for electricity and each had an outdoor toilet, a small 10m x 15m plot of land for basic farming and was in walking distance to their larger crop fields.

I had the opportunity to sit down with ten of the adults who had moved into this village and they seemed genuinely pleased with their homes but still felt that they were lacking opportunities to jobs as the nearest large city was approximately five kilometers away. When asked what additional improvements could be made to their personal living situations, they seemed to think that furniture should have been provided and that food was still scarce as many of the men felt a disincentive to continue making the trip to their fields. Throughout the umudugudu in general, families were drying sorghum, cooking vegetables on outdoor fires (Figure 14). The day I visited was also a holiday so there was a general relaxed feeling to the village and many of the men were at a nearby bar celebrating the holiday and the kids were not in school.

Similar to my experience with the Genocide survivors in IDP Munyinya, residents that I spoke with informally all shared a common acceptance that life with in an umudugudu brought...
with it a certain level of stability and comfort as opposed to life on scattered farms with little access to social services. In a conversation with the Housing Regulations Manager at the Rwanda Housing Authority, he stated that initially, the biggest challenge to resettlement was the cultural farming mindset of moving from a rural area into an umudugudu. He stated that Rwanda is a culture of privacy and initially, people were very skeptical that they could live alongside other people and off of their family’s farm land. Eventually, he said, with the environmental challenges, and the desire for education and medical access, the necessity of living in an umudugudu outweighed the concern of having less privacy. As families slowly moved into the settlements, those who lived in scattered plots saw how their quality of lives changed. They began to witness former neighbors move out of the lowest levels of poverty and into the communities with better homes, and access to education and medical care. “Recently, I have been very impressed by how people came together to accept privacy concerns and are working forward together as Rwandans”. (Interview at RHA, Jan 3, 2018)

REMAINING CHALLENGES

Obviously, a program of this magnitude isn’t perfect. When driving across the country, there are still many homes that are not part of an umudugudu settlement and farms are still scattered across the hills. Although many of the families in these houses have not resettled in the physical sense, it seemed they have still reaped many of the benefits of the programs mentioned above. Only very rarely was a home with a thatched roof observed (the vast majority were metal sheets - or clay tiles in the east) nor was a rural informal shack built in lieu of a house or formal structure (with the exception of Kigali, where informal settlements and shacks were frequently observed).

Another challenge of the rural resettlement program is that although great strides have been made, Rwanda is still a country with less than a quarter of the population having regular access to electricity. Although many of the poorest residents are being served, the relative level of poverty across the country is still great. The same goes for access to more modern amenities such as a phone, television or a computer. Although the progress being made across the country is significant, the pure difficulty of uprooting and relocating hundreds of thousands of families is something that will continue to take time. Additionally, the ubudehe poverty category of two, the target goal for many of these initiatives, is still considerably poor.

Finally, the scale at which the IDP Model Villages are being created is being far outpaced by the growing population. The rush to move people into the Model Villages has created gaps in services for those who moved in prior to the settlement being ready for them. As I sat down with the four families in the IDP created for genocide survivors, none of them had yet been allocated a plot of land or seeds to grow on it. They were resettled once the houses were complete, but the provisions for them to feed themselves, have access to clean water, in some cases furniture and a plot of land, were yet to be funded or allocated. This gap in services is a result of a hastily run program that may be trying too hard to show solid progress (potentially to meet imihigo requirements) without ensuring that the overall intent of the program is being met.
REEVALUATION OF THESIS QUESTION AND CONCLUSION

How does the Rwandan rural resettlement program address issues of accessibility and poverty reduction for its rural agrarian population?

Rwanda’s rural resettlement program is complex and ambitious but by and large has become a catalyst for providing services for its majority rural population partly by way of identifying and serving its most impoverish segment of society. The systems and programs that are in place today are successfully targeting the individuals who most require social services and the program as a whole, is providing more than just roofs over heads, but also legal land tenure, education, improved health, and quality of life. The success of this program, I argue, is largely rooted in the early efforts of creating a national strategy in Vision 2020. This plan, cleverly coupled with the Home-Grown Solutions of tradition and culture, are directly addressing the issues of accessibility and poverty reduction through the resettlement process.

It is increasingly acknowledged that homelessness involves more than just being without a house. Indeed, more recent definitions of what constitutes a home highlight the role of social connections and support (Johnstone, Parsell and Jetten, 2015). The umudugudu program recognizes that poverty and homelessness cannot be alleviated without proper social support such as schools, markets, economic opportunity and access to healthy living and land tenure security. Had Rwanda ignored the scattered populations and let them settle in high risk zones in shacks and without access to education or health centers, it would likely not be the growing economy that it is today. In 2015, Rwanda was among the few African countries leading in the achievement of the MDGs especially in gender equality, women empowerment, universal primary education, child and maternal mortality, HIV prevalence, and environmental sustainability (MDG Monitor, 2015). It is likely, that such strides would not have been made without the attention paid to the rural population throughout the rural resettlement program. Creating fully integrated umudugudu settlements and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, the program is reducing poverty, acknowledging shelter as a human right and driving the economy to one of the strongest in Africa. In the coming years and decades, other countries will begin to struggle with the realities their own returning refugee populations. When this happens, Rwanda should be looked to as an example of how to manage land, housing, and social services through national strategies, land tenure laws and inclusive development practices with added focus on rural and poor populations.
APPENDIX A – SURVEY QUESTIONS

Local Resettled Population
List of general questions that were asked in informal conversations with local population:

1. Head of Household Status (Married, Widow, Female/male Headed Household)
2. How long have you been living in *umudugudu name*?
3. What year did you move to this umudugudu?
4. What were the circumstances that brought you to this village?
5. Where was your prior home (distance)?
6. How many people live with you?
7. Do you own/farm any land and how far away is it from your home?
8. Who did you purchase/inherit the land from?
9. How do you use your land?
10. Do you have ownership of your home?
11. Do you find living in a village to be a positive experience?

Umudugudu Leaders
General discussion topics addressed during informal conversations:

1. What are the general demographics of your village population?
2. What services does your village have (school, clinics etc)?
3. When were those built and who built them?
4. Have you noticed an increase of population since these services were built?
5. How much of your population is in ubudehe category one?
6. How often do you classify residents and what is the process like?
7. Do you feel like you have adequate support from the cell and district leadership to continue to grow your village and assist your poorest population?
8. What is the process for someone to move into the village from a nearby area?
9. Do you think your number of ubudehe category one residents will increase or decrease in the next cycle and what do you attribute that to?
APPENDIX B - POLICIES

The policies implemented in the years following the creation of Rwanda Vision 2020 play an integral role in the rural resettlement process. Outlined below are the most crucial policies that supported the program and how they were implemented.

Human Settlement Policy

Until 1996, land in Rwanda was very politicized and had been managed at a macro level often with favorability given to those who were the same ethnicity of the party in power at the time. In 1996, the government established the original National Human Settlement Policy in an effort to return much of the land to old case returnees while also accommodating the new case refugees. This policy was the first step taken by the new government to begin working towards the housing crisis caused by the inflowing population, with specific steps being taken to relieve some of the structural poverty of households who were often homeless, poor and vulnerable as a result of years of conflict. Those classified as vulnerable also included large numbers of widows, orphans and female heads of households, who following the genocide, lacked the ability to own or inherit land given their few legal rights as women or orphans.

Beyond accommodating the returning refugee population, there was guidance made by the initial Human Settlement Policy to also prohibit the building of houses outside of designated existing and proposed umudugudu areas. The Cabinet at the time hoped this measure would result in better land use planning and the ability for a more focused effort of providing services. Also with the grouping of these settlements, there would be distinct lines between agriculture land and land for homes and communities of which the goal was to allow the land to realize the maximum potential for crop productivity.

This new Human Settlement Policy was much contested in the international community as historical attempts at villagization were often violent as authorities in Tanzania and Ethiopia were known to have forced people from their land and relocating them in different parts of the country. However, according to the Rwandan Ministry of the Interior in 1997, “this form of settlement, in general, takes on a fundamental cultural dimension which is not necessarily transferable between countries. Rwanda cannot and should not base its rural development and settlement planning on comparison to other countries where similar programs have failed.” (MININTER, 1997) In later statements put out by the government, the government of Rwanda argued that the need for resettlement, unlike other countries, was a direct requirement stemming from the immense lack of housing and the significant need for preventing future social tensions.

An important aspect of this policy would be the ways in which the efforts of resettlement would be carried out. According to van Leeuwen’s field research in 1998 (2001), there were initial issues with large international donors traveling to Kigali to view the Human Settlement Policy in action and these visits were reportedly precluded by rural farmers being bused into communities in an effort to show progress to potential donors. The policy itself was also highly scientific and did not take into account the many areas of the country where communities already resided and how to reallocate land that was already claimed through inheritance but without official documentation of its original ownership. Additionally, while this program was highly successful in housing the homeless population, there were residents who purportedly were unable to find land, or be allowed to claim land without first moving to an umudugudu. Arguably, this was the intent of the program and although van Leuween found these issues in his
field work in 1998, it would also later become apparent 20 years later that many of those living in umudugudu, reported founding it necessary to do so in order to have access to the required social opportunities such as health and education.

In 2004 and again in 2009, the Human Settlement Policy was updated and adapted to meet the changing needs of the country and to continue to align to the strategic goals of the National Urbanization Policy of 2008, new building control regulations and updated economic development poverty strategies for 2008-2012. According to the 2009 Human Settlement Policy (Rwanda Housing Authority, accessed Feb 27, 2018), the ministerial order n° 001/07.05 of May 19, 2009 relating to the implementation of the national program on regrouped settlement defines settlements, umudugudu and rural area as follows:

1. Settlement is a mode of human populating into groups of dwellings. This populating mode is distinguished by the measurement and physical aspect of the inhabited area and especially by the activities of the population. Therefore, there exist two kinds of settlement: rural and urban settlement.

2. Umudugudu is defined as a mode of planned settlement made of between 100 and 200 houses by site in rural areas. Measurements of plot reserved for umudugudu from 10 to 20 hectares with a possibility or capacity of extension and as far as possible a space provided for various nonagricultural activities so as to allow the population to earn their lives. The combination of all these elements constitutes the umudugudu.

3. The rural area is defined by its geographical situation and activities that are carried out by its population based especially on agriculture and livestock. This rural area is characterized by a low number of houses which in general do not rise high, as well as roomy agricultural fields and pastures. These characteristics allow to differentiate between rural and urban areas.

Moving forward, the Human Settlement Policy (with an updated draft to be released in the coming months) will continue to address increased land scarcity and the need to optimize productive land use. The rural population will still be expected to live in organized clustered settlements, as the urbanization rate is expected to accelerate. The policy is expected to continue to free up more land for production, promote rational land use and facilitate cost effective service delivery to the population, such as infrastructure, education, security and agricultural extension, and waste management (Human Settlement Policy, 2009).
The program created to best track population, housing and poverty status across the country is the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS), implemented in 2007. The EDPRS provides a framework for achieving the country’s long-term development goals as outlined in Rwanda Vision 2020 and the UN Millennium Development Goals. The program focuses on four themes: growth, rural development, human development and governance. At the onset of the EDPRS program, 90% of the poor population was rural and fell into the vulnerability categories of greatest destitution; widows, landless, sick, the elderly and child-headed households. The initial survey conducted at the time of the program’s inception annotated that the largest drivers of poverty to be lack of land, poor soils, unpredictable weather and lack of livestock (IMF Report, 2010). Since 2007, EDPRS surveys, known as the Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV) have been conducted in 2007, 2010, 2014 with another to be conducted in 2018. This survey, with complete results posted on the Government of Rwanda Ministry of Statistics website shows exactly which populations are reporting what in terms of their consumption, standard of living and access to real assets. Studying the poverty rates over time, the surveys show that Rwanda is making gradual progress on tackling poverty. These results will be discussed later in the report as they are a key indicator for showing success of the rural resettlement program.
Land Tenure Regularization Program

Land use planning and agricultural reform was arguably the most crucial early step of the government’s efforts to resettle rural Rwanda. Prior to the genocide, much of the land was owned by the State and the elite, and very few deeds or titles were accurate or held by the actual people working and living on the land. The land was fragmented and as families grew, the amount of land parceled per person decreased below what was recommended as one hectare per person (Bizoza, 2011). Until 2003, 90% of the country’s arable land was still governed by customary law while written land law applied only to a small number of persons and religious congregations. In 2003 there were an estimated 10 million plots of land that were unregistered (Deininger et al. 2011; Ali et al. 2014). The new Land Tenure Regularization Program (LTR) provided a framework to ensure private land rights through secured land rights and effective land use and management that contribute to the country’s social and economic development (Deininger et al. 2011; Ali et al. 2014). Under the LTR program, women were recognized as being legal land owners with the ability to inherit, purchase and sell land. From 2005 to approximately 2012, LTR was decentralized to districts, sectors, cells and umudugudu where residents were then selected and trained to lead their communities in demarcating individual land plots using topographic maps, geospatial information systems (GIS), survey equipment and pictures with the national land through the National Land Center. Levels of oversight were created at the sector and cell level where committees were established to sensitize the community about land laws, witness and confirm land transactions, implement LTR processes of demarcation, adjudication, dispute resolution and issuance of interim land certificates (Sagashya, 2012).

Consequently, the new LTR provided a framework to ensure private land rights through secured land rights and effective land use and management that contribute to the country’s social and economic development (Deininger et al. 2011; Ali et al. 2014). From 2009 to 2013 the Rwanda Natural Resource Authority demarcated and issued land titles for approximately 10.04 million parcels. According to a study by the African Development Bank, the LTR was cost-effective due to the large-scale involvement of local citizens, and the opportunity labor cost and employment of about 110,000 people, 99 percent of whom came from the communities in which the LTR was carried out. Employment of women was also high, where women filled 70% of staff field manager positions (Nkurunziza, 2015). With respect to implementing costs of the LTR program, estimates from the study by Nkurunziza (2015) show that each registered lease cost U.S. six dollars. This LTR has afforded Rwanda the 12th position globally on the registering property indicator of the World Bank’s Doing Business Report. Today, the current land tenure system in Rwanda continues to be the result of complex interactions between indigenous customs and the body of written land tenure regularization laws.
**APPENDIX E - LAW**

**Excerpts of Current Law Governing Human Habitation**

N°20/2011 of 21/06/2011 is the overarching mandate in which all of the following policies and agencies abide by while moving forward with the resettlement of Rwanda’s scattered population. Relevant applications to rural settlement planning are as follows:

Rural human settlements shall occupy spaces reserved for the construction of residences. Every residence shall be constructed in a group settlement site. (N°20/2011, Article 12)

Without prejudice to agricultural, livestock and environmental protection activities, infrastructure and public buildings shall be erected in residential areas by taking into account the need to ensure easy access thereto by all users. (N°20/2011, Article 13)

For the purposes of environmental protection, conservation and promotion, each rural human settlement shall be equipped with an adequate rainwater collection and drainage system that is in compliance with hygiene and sanitation legislation. (N°20/2011, Article 14)

Settlement operations that can be carried out in a rural areas shall consist of the identification of group settlement sites, land subdivisions, restructuring and replotting, rural renewal and real estate restoration (N°20/2011, Article 16)

Land selected to serve as a group settlement site shall be subject to a land subdivision plan. The Rural Land Subdivision Plan shall indicate locations reserved for: construction of roads; routing of various networks; infrastructure; dumps; harvesting and treatment of rainwater and wastewater; any other public use facility. (N°20/2011, Article 19)

**Housing Guidelines - Rural Settlement Task Force**

In the current housing guidelines as published by the Rural Settlement Task Force in 2011, the guidelines for houses constructed within umudugudu were as follows:

a) Living house: A rural house of between 5-6 people should at least be of m² 56 with three bed rooms and a sitting room. It can be increased in size as means available.

b) Kitchen: In order to have a sizable room for preparing meals, the size should at least be 7.2 m²

c) Store, Bathroom and Toilet. The store and bathroom should both be sizable, for purposes of cleanliness; every home should have a toilet with a depth of between 12- 20 m. where possible.
Decentralization has been a key policy of the Government of Rwanda since 2000 when the National Decentralization Policy was adopted. The main thrust of the policy was, and is, to ensure equitable political, economic, and social development throughout the country, and to be a cornerstone of the fight against poverty by increasing people’s participation in the planning and management of the development process (MINALOC Decentralization Implementation Plan, 2011). Today, the government hierarchy, outlined in figure 2, is the means in which information, resources and accountability are passed from the central government down to the village level. This system is highly effective and the reason accurate reporting up and down the chain is so successful.

Ministry of Infrastructure / Rwanda Housing Authority

Under the institutional reform by the Government, different agencies were created as implementing institutions under the Ministry of Infrastructure (MININFRA). The Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for the overall coordination of all sector stakeholders (Urbanization and Rural Settlement Sector, 2013). While overall, MININFRA is in charge of policy formulation and strategic planning, the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) was created to support to local development activities. The RHA was established in November 2010 with the aim of restructuring and organizing urban development and the construction industries. The overall mission is “to implement the national housing and construction policy through coordination, conception, development, monitoring and evaluation of actions and programs set out in its mission”. (Rwanda Government Urbanization and Rural Settlement Sector Strategic Plan)

Ministry of Local Administration (MINALOC)

MINALOC interacts with the urbanization and human settlement sector through Districts and the City of Kigali for the implementation of imidugudu policy for sustainable land use management and access to the basic infrastructures. MINALOC gives support to vulnerable households without shelter through distribution of building materials and community works. This Ministry supports the sector to collect data available on the “imidugudu” built in rural area, and to identify housing needs (Rwanda Government Urbanization and Rural Settlement Sector Strategic Plan).

The Rural Settlements Task Force (RSTF) is the action arm of MINALOC particularly linking themselves to the rural communities and supporting imidugudu development. While RHA is responsible for planning, the RSTF facilitates implementation of imidugudu creation and expansion. In the past, imidugudu focused on grouping households to better be able to reach them with services. The services are, however, still lacking in many places and the villages are too small to offer socio-economic viability. Therefore, the RSTF is currently working with sector leaders on layout plans to provide infrastructure, services and amenities in the majority of imidugudu settlements. The long-term intention of the Task Force then is to ultimately upgrade all rural settlements into integrated villages, providing opportunities for improved rural livelihood. Eventually, the dispersed umudugudu locations will form a type of mixed use trading centers and be a driver in economic growth as part of the greater urban network.
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