



Standard Project Report 2015

World Food Programme in Burundi, Republic of (BI)

EP-Burundi Special Preparedness Activities

Reporting period: 1 January - 31 December 2015

Project Information	
Project Number	200825
Project Category	Emergency Preparedness Activity
Overall Planned Beneficiaries	N/A
Planned Beneficiaries in 2015	N/A
Total Beneficiaries in 2015	N/A

Key Project Dates	
Project Approval Date	February 24, 2015
Planned Start Date	March 01, 2015
Actual Start Date	March 01, 2015
Project End Date	May 30, 2015
Financial Closure Date	February 01, 2016

Approved budget in USD	
Food and Related Costs	N/A
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	N/A
Direct Support Costs	233,645
Cash-Based Transfers and Related Costs	N/A
Indirect Support Costs	16,355
Total	250,000

Commodities	Metric Tonnes
Planned Commodities in 2015	0
Actual Commodities 2015	0
Total Approved Commodities	N/A

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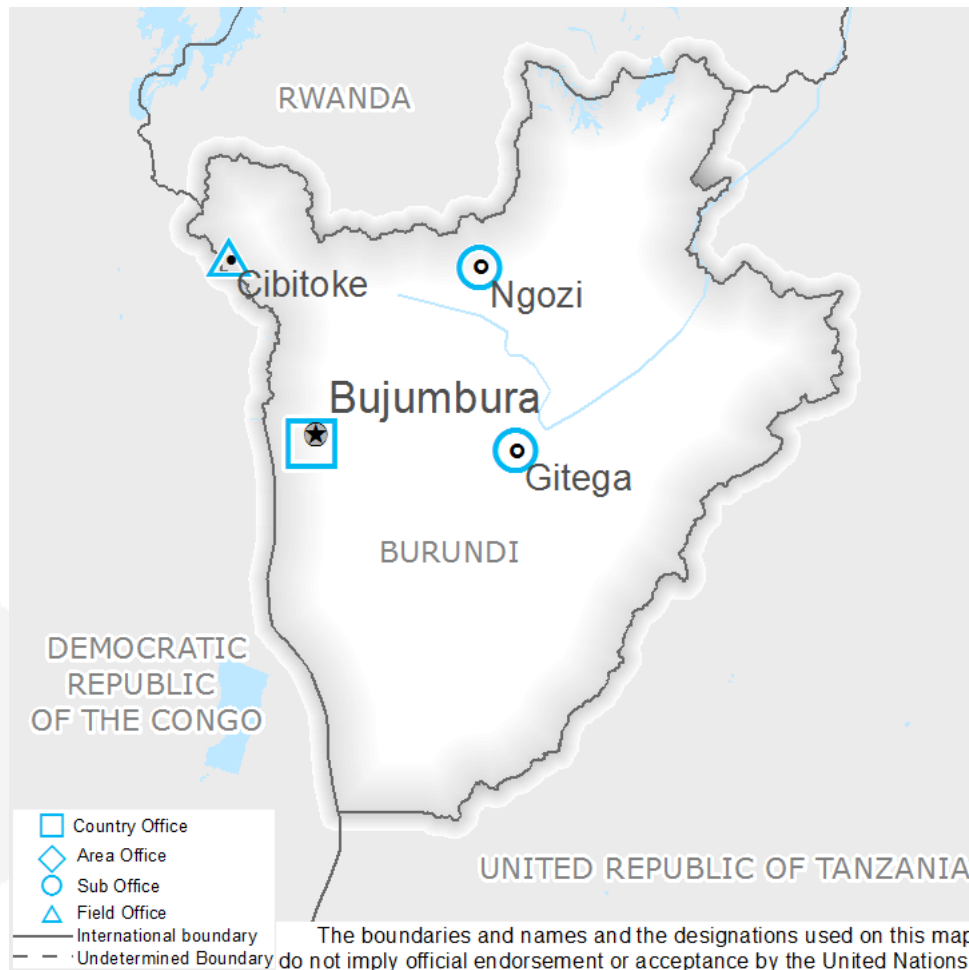
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COUNTRY OVERVIEW



Country Background

Burundi is a resource-poor, low-income, food deficit country. According to the 2014-2015 IFPRI Global Hunger Index (GHI) report, the country has the highest levels of hunger in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is ranked last, at position 76, with a global hunger index score of 35.6. The 2015 UNDP Human Development Report ranked Burundi 184 out of 188 countries. Poverty is widespread, with 90-95 percent of the population living on less than USD 2 per day, particularly in rural areas.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy, and it accounts for approximately 35 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 90 percent of the population's income. Subsistence farmers, who depend heavily on their crop production to meet their food and income needs, dominate agricultural sector. To complicate this situation, rapid population growth (2.8 percent in 2012), has resulted in the highest population density in Africa (310 inhabitants per square kilometre). As a result of the demand for land, the poorest and most vulnerable communities generally depend on and often live on marginal lands.

The ongoing socio-political crisis linked to the recent general and Presidential elections has worsened the socio-economic situation in the country. In 2015, the prevailing insecurity has resulted in both internal and external displacements, and more than 200,000 Burundians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The currency exchange rate has dropped and foreign aid, which accounts for about half of Burundi's national budget, has been significantly scaled back or suspended entirely by donors concerned with the political impasse.

As a consequence, food security and nutrition indicators have worsened over the last six months, since the political crisis started. An emergency food security assessment (EFSA) carried out in six provinces (Bujumbura Mairie,

Bujumbura Rural, Makamba, Kirundo, Rumonge and Cibitoke) in October found that 19.5 percent of households are food insecure. Of these, 18.5 percent are moderately food insecure and 1 percent severely food insecure. The assessment also found poor global acute malnutrition (GAM) in Bujumbura Rural (7 percent) and Rumonge (5.5 percent). In addition, the average national stunting prevalence is as high as 49.6 percent, and most provinces in the north and east of the country have even higher rates ranging between 50 and 60 percent.

Even if insecurity and violence have decreased recently, the crisis and its socio-economic consequences have already generated new humanitarian needs that require urgent attention from the immediate to medium term. For instance, there will be a need to facilitate the return and reintegration of the two hundred thousand Burundians who are currently seeking refuge in neighbouring countries. Furthermore, the El Nino phenomenon threatening the East-African region, and a possible unfavorable socio-political context in neighbouring DR Congo, due to the upcoming elections, may further increase humanitarian needs in the country.

Summary Of WFP Assistance

WFP and other actors are supporting the government's efforts to improve food security and nutrition in the country within the framework of the Burundian multi-sectoral strategic plan to fight food insecurity and malnutrition. WFP interventions' strategy is also in aligned with the government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II (2012 - 2016) promoting a progressive shift from humanitarian interventions to longer-term objectives to address some of the root causes of food insecurity.

Based on the prevailing socio-political and economic context, WFP strives to meet urgent food needs of the most vulnerable populations through the provision of life-saving food assistance, while improving communities' capacity to cope with shocks through recovery activities enhancing community resilience. WFP uses a combination of assistance transfer modalities for better results, including by supporting production and boosting local economic activity.

In 2015, one of the great achievements is the effective implementation of a home grown school feeding project with the related purchase-for-progress (P4P) intervention. Through these projects, USD 3.7 million was injected into the local economy, improving the living conditions and incomes of smallholder farmers participating in the project. Other key achievements included: the improvement of the feedback and complaints mechanisms, linked to voucher transfer for assistance to refugees; and, the introduction of the cash transfer modality in the refugee programme to allow refugees have access to fresh food. The feedback and complaints mechanisms were improved by introducing the use of smartphones for a quick reporting and feedback. The introduction of fresh food allowed the refugees to diversify their diet. Preparations for the introduction and complementary use of the electronic vouchers (WFP SCOPE platform) and biometric verifications at distributions are well advanced. It is anticipated that this innovative approach coupled with more regular reporting by both WFP and UNHCR will ensure the more efficient use of resources, thereby enhancing both accountability and transparency.

WFP also introduced an innovation approach consisting of combining the prevention of stunting programme with food for assets creation activities by providing a package of critical products and services to vulnerable households and individuals with the aim to prevent stunting and tackle food insecurity at the same time. However, the implementation of this integrated intervention was limited in certain areas because, with a strained resourcing situation, the country office had to prioritize the available resources for the vulnerable people affected by the then prevailing socio-political turmoil. If resources and security condition allow, WFP plans to scale up this innovation approach that promotes the integration and complementarity of FFA activities with household and community resilience building and nutrition while connecting beneficiaries to local market.

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	70,491	72,859	143,350
Children (5-18 years)	225,938	226,750	452,688
Adults (18 years plus)	97,231	97,675	194,906
Total number of beneficiaries in 2015	393,660	397,284	790,944

Distribution (mt)						
Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	4,487	302	1,199	874	96	6,959
Single Country IR-EMOP	798	128	259	0	0	1,185
Single Country PRRO	5,789	440	1,849	1,132	154	9,364
Total Food Distributed in 2015	11,074	871	3,307	2,006	250	17,508

OPERATIONAL SPR

Operational Objectives and Relevance

The immediate response preparedness operation was launched in February 2015 and aimed to strengthen WFP's emergency preparedness and response capacities in anticipation of an outbreak of violence linked to the 2015 general elections in Burundi (Strategic Objective 1). The risk of violence related to the elections was high and it was expected to negatively impact WFP's operations. At the same time, WFP would be required to respond to the humanitarian needs arising from the crisis.

The operational profile of WFP in Burundi had been more development oriented in the past years, supporting the achievement of Burundi's national development priorities and responding to small-scale natural hazards. With a potential complex emergency threatening the country, the country office sought to significantly strengthen its core emergency preparedness and response capacities. The preparedness activities included staff capacity development in emergency response activities, additional staffing in key functional areas, and the provision of emergency IT equipment. The project was implemented in support of the government's national disaster management platform.

Results

Outputs

Within the framework of the project, the country office provided training to its staff and cooperating partners in emergency needs assessments which were required at the onset of a crisis, as well as emergency planning and response. Furthermore, WFP staff and cooperating partners were trained on monitoring and reporting modalities in emergencies.

The country office recruited an international security officer to help update and prepare the country office's security and evacuation plans, liaise with WFP's field hubs on all security-related matters, and coordinate alongside and support UNDSS local staff in elections security-related issues and programming. In addition, an emergency preparedness and response officer was recruited to strengthen WFP's ability to effectively coordinate the contingency planning and response activities with the humanitarian stakeholders in Burundi.

To further improve its ability to operate in emergency mode, WFP procured essential emergency information and communication technology equipment, connecting the main office and field offices and enabling the country office to autonomously operate at the onset of an emergency should existing communications infrastructure prove to be insufficient during the crisis.

Humanitarian hubs aiming to enhance coordination at the sub-national level in high-risk provinces were part of the original plan under this project. These hubs were not established, as the primary focus of the humanitarian community during the project implementation period was to ensure that robust government and inter-agency coordination mechanisms and planning were first put in place at the national level.

This project was complemented by a cross-functional internal simulation exercise to assess and strengthen the country office's readiness to respond to an emergency, carried out in March 2015.

Outcomes

Following the assessment and reporting training provided to WFP and partner staff, a successful rapid needs assessment was conducted in identified hotspots in the country (Bujumbura, Bujumbura Rural, Kirundo, Makamba and Cibitoke Provinces) in May 2015. The aim of the assessment was to determine humanitarian needs, in particular levels of displacement and the impact of the crisis on livelihoods, and to formulate recommendations. The assessment identified Kirundo, Makamba and Bujumbura Mairie Provinces as most affected by the crisis. WFP also contributed to setting up an IOM-led internally displaced tracking matrix, a tool that better informs decision-making on assistance to the people displaced by the political crisis in the country.

The emergency preparedness and response officer recruited under this project enabled WFP to play a central role in supporting the overall contingency planning process for the elections, and the planning and coordination work carried out by the new security officer ensured business continuity when violence in the country started.

Overall, the activities carried out under this project, complemented by the additional simulation exercise, significantly contributed to improved emergency response capacity, and WFP was better prepared to meet new and escalating humanitarian needs. At the onset of the crisis, WFP provided life-saving food assistance to the most affected vulnerable people under an immediate response emergency operation. Without the emergency and security-related planning, coordination and programming, and reliable IT equipment funded through this preparedness project, such a quick and effective response would not have been possible.

Sustainability, Capacity Development and Handover

The project included activities aimed at developing the capacities of the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and strengthening inter-agency coordination mechanisms. The platform comprises various government line ministries working with partners involved in emergency preparedness. In collaboration with OCHA, WFP trained government counterparts and local NGOs on the multisectoral initial rapid assessment (MIRA) methodology. The training was carried out following a needs assessment which showed that the platform had limited capacity in conducting rapid needs assessments at the onset of an emergency. Similar trainings were conducted for provincial platforms in Makamba and Kirundo provinces. The trainings culminated in the multisectoral needs assessment carried out in May 2015 in eight hotspot provinces.

Management

Lessons Learned

One key lesson learned from this emergency preparedness project relates to emergency needs assessment methodologies. The humanitarian actors involved in the multi-sectoral needs assessment noted that the MIRA methodology did not cover all the food security assessment aspects and had to be complemented with an emergency food security needs assessment. When used in a complementary manner, the two approaches add greater value and maximise the effectiveness of emergency needs assessments.

Overall, this emergency preparedness project enabled WFP to rapidly re-orient its operations and focus on emergency preparedness and response activities. WFP's own early warning and risk analysis systems had already indicated an elevated risk of election-related violence, resulting in increased humanitarian needs. The launch of this preparedness project was therefore timely and highly effective, and successfully mitigated the potential negative effects of election-related unrest on WFP operations. On several occasions, the UNCT and the donor community in Burundi commended WFP for its quick and timely response to the emergency.