Rebuilding After the Genocide in Rwanda

Delia Wendel
Harvard PhD Candidate

‘Re-Mapping Africa in GIS: From Humanities to Health’ Conference
Harvard University
30 March 2012
My PhD research: 4 case studies that identify 4 modes in which rebuilding space is related to peacebuilding

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(2010) Reasons for conflict by province
Partial representation of survey data collected by Rwanda NURC
150 Houses planned for ‘umudugudu’ (or: villagisation) resettlement within highlighted area
Umudugudu (resettlement village) for 100-200 houses, on a flat site surface
SUSTAINABILITY OF VILLAGEIZATION AND RECONCILIATION

The constraints of inhoudgona require a substantial input of technical expertise that has not been available to ensure sustainability of the resettlement.

In a country with a tradition of scattered housing in rural areas, reoccupying people in villages through the inhoudgona policy must be well planned and follow an added value, not only in terms of provision of physical and social infrastructures, but also in the physical environment, in order to enable reconciliation and social stability.

In theory, the inhoudgona policy was meant to answer to an urgent need for shelter, personal and national security, national reconstruction and reconciliation, better access to services and rationalisation/transformation of the productive sector.

In practice, it is confronted with a series of obstacles, chief of which is the absence of legal framework and of a clear policy ensuring the economic viability of the villages. This lack of a clear policy, both on the government and UNHCR sides, has undoubtedly lead to errors and shortfalls in the creation of these settlements.

In the case of the SP, UNHCR has embarked in an operation that is much wider than just building shelter. It is directly responsible for participating in the implementation of a settlement policy, which will have long-term consequences altogether socially, economically and physically, and for which, up to now, sustainability has not been ensured.

The sustainability of a SP in support of the inhoudgona policy depends on various factors, which can be divided into physical, social and economic, but are closely inter-related. If these factors are all taken into consideration, the success of the program is partially achieved. Subjective factors, which might alter the process, must also be taken into account.

Physical factors are:
- The choice of the site location and the impact on natural environment
- The protection against climatic hazards
- The site planning and layout
- The quality of the construction of houses
- The choice of adapted building technologies and materials
- The proximity of water
- The proximity of roads

Social factors:
- The proximity of schools
- The proximity of health centers
- The mix of geographic, ethnic and social backgrounds
- Community participation

Economical factors:
- Availability of arable and/or grazing land
- Availability of other income generating activities
- The proximity of markets and commercial activities
- The proximity of public transportation

These factors have also been the base for the evaluation methodology used in the field (see questionnaire in annex 4).

In four years, the inhoudgona policy has modified drastically the aspect of the rural landscape. The whole country is now covered with groups of tiny houses, all alike, whether in size, shape or type of materials; and UNHCR has heavily contributed to this change by providing the materials or building 98,447 houses in 212 settlement sites and in scattered locations all over Rwanda.

Site planning as contribution to reconciliation

Physical planning of new areas/villages is a necessary and deliberate exercise, which has practically never been done during the program (except for some of the recent sites implemented by UNHCR). Houses were usually put in rows as army barracks. No areas were considered for public facilities and social amenities, i.e. public squares, market stalls, existing or developments that can be preserved to have the least social tension, which runs contrary to the objectives of reconciliation.

Site selection and location was left up to local authorities. As suitable sites were already densely populated, the choice of inhoudgona sites was sometimes hazardous (e.g. on top of hills with no protection against strong winds, with the risk of rocks flying away (Montara) or on very steep slopes, with the heavy risk of soil erosion and of landslides (Cyamugogo, Byumba) often, trees were cut down and no attempt was done to massively reforest with plants of soil erosion and no protection against winds, rain, etc.).

Not UNHCR the sufficient technical expertise, it should have advised the local authorities on the choice of sites and done an environmental impact assessment.

OCCUPANCY RATE OF HOUSES

A major cause of concern appeared to be the occupancy rate of the houses built. From the sample of sites seen, the occupancy rate is quite high (over 90% of normal villages as reported by its inhabitants), even though it varies in function of the site location and geographical and social origin of the beneficiaries.

Moreover, the evaluation believes that the current
Field Notes 2011
(Delia Wendel)

23 Aug. 2011

ANDRE / NGUKWEHUBA

(1907 - Stated W/Gov; Writer (Deputy Head Writer))

MUNUKO + GUMANBI: 2 Villages featured.

Early: Valley cultivated by both villages.
MUNUKO gave maj. to GUMANBI
Lot of M. Not possible.

Handwringers @ M blamed B. = problems
Became psychological
M attacked B.
B retaliated w/ "inhumanity".

Residents went to a camp.

In camp youth from both villages
were positive.

With time attacks (+) were also
perceived as well.

Determination w/in each village to determine
what the root problem was - agreed
the problem was the valley.

Decision to cultivate variety in common twin
cooperatives.

Village began processes of justice (lists made
of perpetrators)

Hunted fugitives "men of integration"

Many parents sentenced to different

In coming years some perpetrators released incl.

(KUTUMA MIKA)
Rwanda Digital Elevation Model (DEM)
Umwe mu baturage twaganirije mu mudugudu wa Nyaruguru
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*SOURCE(s):* maps and photographs from Belgian, French, and German archives | BIG SCALE: Map small, medium, large consolidated settlements and major civic (cultural & religious) centers; SMALL SCALE: insets for examples of settlement morphologies (patterns) correlated to type of work/employment |
| JUL 1993         | Arusha Accords recommendations for consolidated settlements  
*SOURCE:* Arusha Accords and UN documents | BIG SCALE: Map recommended locations for small, medium, large consolidated settlements and major civic (cultural & religious) centers; SMALL SCALE: insets for examples of settlement morphologies (patterns) correlated to type of work/employment |
| 06 APR – JUL 1994| Where and when the conflict occurred (spatial & temporal mapping of the conflict)  
*SOURCE(s):* Oral interviews collected by the Rwanda Genocide Archive (Gisozi), and GPS + in-field interviews by author | Identify locations near official genocide memorials and representative major urban centers in each of the four (post-1994) provinces, employ survivors’ memories to help to reconstruct places of attack, refuge, defensive barriers, strategic value, supply, etc. |
| JUL 1994-1996    | Identify locations and types of emergency communities and refugee camps  
*SOURCE: UN, NGO and Rwanda government documents* | BIG SCALE: identify locations for camps, duration, types of refugees housed, administrators of camps – within and on borders of Rwanda  
SMALL SCALE: identify typical settlement morphologies with resource locations |
| 1996-2004        | Phase 1 Villagisation  
Project 01. Locate each of the official genocide memorials in relation to the magnitude of the atrocities  
Project 02. Locate all phase 1 villagisation projects (before & after) |                                                                                                                                           |
| 2004-present     | Phase 2 Villagisation  
Project 01. Locate changes to site preservation occurring in tandem with historical streamlining by government  
Project 02. Locate all phase 2 villagisation projects, noting changes in location, development & morphological priorities  
Project 03. Locate target areas for nyakatsi eradication, and types of replacement roofing materials  
Project 04. Locate all actual villages that noted similarities to radio soap opera spaces in listeners’ correspondance |                                                                                                                                           |