Burundi: Conflict Scan

Conflict Scan Report 2

November 2015
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Executive Summary

This document is a report on the research findings from the second Burundi quarterly Conflict Scan conducted by Search for Common Ground (SFCG) as a component of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) funded Impore Iwacu project. Building on the approach used by SFCG programming around the world, the Conflict Scan uses a fast and lightweight methodology consisting of a survey of 420 people and Focus Group discussions with 157 key informants across 7 intervention provinces.¹

Top Findings

The top three findings were as follows:

1. **A majority of those surveyed (59%) feel safe, but a significant percentage (41%) expects the situation to worsen over the next several months.** Feelings of insecurity are also likely underreported, with qualitative research suggesting that many people feel unsafe answering questions related to the current security in Burundi at this time.

2. **In general there remains a perception that youth attract problems (51%), particularly due to their involvement in political parties.** However, this is worth noting that this represents a serious decrease from CS1 in which 76% had the same negative association of youth.

3. **Overall, 78% of people felt that ethnic relationships today are largely positive², however, 31% hold the perception that ethnic relationships have deteriorated over the last 3 months³⁴.** Reasons for a perceived deterioration of ethnic relationships often including increased use of negative language, hate speech, hurtful jokes, and insults both in the media and at the community level.⁵

Evolutions since the February 2015 Conflict Scan (CS¹)

**Land conflicts remain the most significant source of violent conflict (33%) in the provinces that were covered by the scan.** Land conflicts included both conflicts over land boundaries, and conflicts over land ownership. Conflicts over land were reported as having stayed at the same level, or even slightly decreasing, since CS1. The capital, Bujumbura-Mairie, was the only Province in which land conflicts did not rank as the most significant source of violent conflict; there, conflicts over power and politics were ranked as the highest source of violence, according to 33% of those sampled.

**Perceived levels of discrimination based on ethnicity (4%), religion (2%), and gender (5%), all remain low;** showing little change since CS1. However, typically, the examples of ethnic based discrimination that were cited were not easily distinguishable from discrimination that could take place due to political affiliation, which can appear to be divided along ethnic lines. **Political discrimination (14%) is on the rise since CS1 (10%).**

The high levels of conflict, and the growing security concerns continue to maintain high level of distrust. However, surveys results revealed that **community trust has improved from**

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¹ This research has been initiated and supported by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to inform the mainstreaming of peacebuilding and conflict-sensitivity in UNICEF programmes and those of other actors. UNICEF would like to thank the Government of the Netherlands for its generous support. The views expressed in this study are those of Search for Common Ground and are not necessarily shared by UNICEF, the UN or the Government of the Netherlands.

² 22% felt that ethnic relationships are largely negative

³ 65% of people feel that ethnic relationships have stayed the same in the last 3 months

⁴ Trends in the evolutions of ethnic relationship are based only on perceptions as reported by survey respondents because this question was not included in CS1 and therefore quantitative comparison is not possible.

⁵ Isolated reports of direct threats and targeted violence were also made

⁶ CS1 is the first Conflict Scan which was produced in February 2015 (http://bit.ly/Burundi_CS1)
52% at CS1 to 57% at CS2. Similarly, levels of optimism for future security has also risen from 13% believing the situation will improve over the next three months, to 30%.

Research found that people still have low self-reported capacities to resolve conflict constructively and without violent reactions. Additionally, 53% of people reported that they do not currently have opportunities to contribute to building peace at the community level, though 96% of them would like to have them. Similarly, 72% of people reported that they do not currently feel they have opportunities to participate in constructive dialogue related to on going local conflicts, despite 94% wanting such opportunities.

Since the first scan, reports of UNICEF school materials being delivered after the start of school have been resolved. No communities reported conflicts being caused by late school supply deliveries at the start of the most recent school year.

**Programming Recommendations for all Peacebuilding Actors in Burundi:**

**To Improve ‘Do No Harm’:**

- Increase transparency about participant selection criteria for projects.
- Sensitize local government authorities, and project focal points on the importance of nonbiased selection of participants for both projects and job opportunities.
- Monitor projects and activities closely to discourage mismanagement of funds.

**Targeting key individuals: Supporting resilience to violence among vulnerable groups**

- Support income-generating activities to reduce tensions around land conflict.
  - Encourage more efficient farming practices to improve agricultural yields on small parcels and increase alternative methods for income generation for farmers and those facing land conflicts.
- Support youth to serve as leaders in their communities.
  - Open space for youth participation in economic and community leadership initiatives, including youth centers, and involve them more in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts at the community level.

**At the community level: Increased focus on conflict sensitive communication**

- Monitor, and target the evolution of hate speech by all parties involved to address issues early on.
- Continue to support media through conflict sensitivity training and focusing on highlighting positive relationships between groups and to reduce polarizing language.

**Addressing structural challenges: Improve confidence in judicial and land decisions**

- To prevent further conflict and support resolution of current conflicts, monitor the management of property and land belonging to current refugees, now and when they return.

**Improving Social Cohesion: Themes to Address**

- Programming should improve collaboration between political parties and protect progress made between ethnic groups to reduce the risk of future polarization and deterioration of relationships. Dialogue activities are important to this process.
Research Findings

Introduction
This report will first look at the current conflict context, including the top sources of violent conflict, community perceptions related to security, and optimism about the future. Then the report will discuss current levels of social cohesion and resiliency. This includes discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation as well as trust at the community level. Opportunities for improving peacebuilding will be identified, and finally recommendations for improving peacebuilding programs in Burundi will made.

Methodology
This document is a report on the research findings from the second Burundi quarterly Conflict Scan conducted for the Impore Iwacu SFCG – UNICEF project. Building on the approach used by SFCG programming around the world, the Conflict Scan used a fast and lightweight methodology with the aim of improving Conflict Sensitivity and Do No Harm principles for Search for Common Ground (SFCG), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and partner program interventions in Burundi. The conflict scans are intended to be conducted every 3 months with the aim of improving understanding of conflict contexts and evolutions over time in target areas. By improving understanding, the approach is designed to increase conflict sensitivity and to monitor and improve the use of Do No Harm principles in program interventions. All data was collected in November 2015.

Geographically, the scan covers 7 provinces in Burundi (See Appendix 4⁷), which were purposefully sampled to correspond with key PBEA program intervention areas. The Conflict Scan used a survey and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to collect feedback from 577 participants over a three-week period. As shown in Table 1, one commune was purposefully sampled per province.

Table 1: Geographical Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Commune Selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bujumbura Mairie</td>
<td>Kamenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bujumbura Rural</td>
<td>Isare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bubanza</td>
<td>Mpanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cibitoke</td>
<td>Rugombo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kirundo</td>
<td>Busoni</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makamba</td>
<td>Nyanza-Lac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rumonge³</td>
<td>Rumonge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

157⁹ respondents participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which were made up of two groups of 12 people per province; ‘youth’: ages 15-28, and ‘influencers’: parents, teachers, and community leaders. 420 Burundians were also randomly surveyed; 60 people in each of the 7 provinces¹⁰. Additional information on the methodology and the tools used can be found in the appendices. The research approach framed conflict as any dispute, violent or non-violent, between two or more parties.

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⁷ All appendices can be found in the separate pdf file ‘Burundi_CS2 Report Appendices’
⁸ Since CS1 Bururi province was separated into 2 provinces: Rumonge & Bururi province
⁹ In total 168 were originally invited to participate in the Focus Group discussion
¹⁰ This survey sample size is representative at the aggregate level, but does not claim to be representative at the provincial level
Part 1: Context and Recent Developments

**Conflict Drivers: Land issues present a persistent challenge**

In each province survey participants were asked to indicate the primary cause of violent conflict impacting the community. The largest violent conflict driver at the aggregate level is ‘land conflict’ (33%), including both conflicts over land borders and land ownership.

In Burundi, farming is the primary source of income in one of the most densely populated and the poorest countries in the world. As seen in Chart 2, land conflict is the greatest source of violent conflict in 5 of the 7 provinces. In Cibitoke land conflicts and domestic disputes were rated equally, however, focus group participants suggested that domestic disputes there are often caused by in-family land conflicts due to their great financial importance to families and disagreements on their management. The only province in which land conflicts did not rank at the top was Bujumbura-Mairie, where conflicts related to power and politics was rated as most significant.11

Land conflicts typically come in one of four forms: dispute over a land border with a neighbor (commonly involving one person farming over the limit); dispute over the division of land for selling or inheritance within the family (most commonly between siblings); dispute over land ownership between a family (one of which sold their portion of the land—typically before official inheritance rulings) and the recent purchaser of a parcel of the land; and disputes between the current occupant or purchaser of the land with a returnee who is seeking to reclaim their land.

In the all but one province13, the majority of participants stated that the level of land conflicts has decreased slightly or stayed the same since last February. A common justification for this was the reduced pressure over land due to the high numbers of people fleeing the country before and during elections, resulting in reduced population density. Generally, the recent suspension of taking on new cases by the CNTB is also being perceived as having reduced the number of new conflicts emerging, however, those cases that were left unresolved still remain unresolved, which in some provinces was the primary reason cited they did not say the number of conflicts had in fact decreased. According to participants, this is because when a case is not ruled in their favor, or when they fear there is no hope of a successful outcome for their land conflict, people will resort to violent methods in order to resolve the issue. There is a clear lack of clear understanding by members of the population on how the CNTB makes decision, which types of land conflicts they address, and a perception that the CNTB is biased and will always rule in the favor of long-time returnees, rather than recent occupants. Unfortunately, this is resulting in a highly negative image of the CNTB, and a lacking of confidence in their ability to help resolve land conflicts.

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11 It is not surprising that Bujumbura-Mairie would have a different result than the other 6 provinces given the high activity of political conflict and civil unrest in recent months, and also taking into account that as the urban capital, it has less farmers and less plots used for farming.

12 This question was changed from CS1 to focus on violent conflict, and to only allow 1 response per person, thus comparative data from CS1 is not available.

13 In Cibitoke, the majority of participants felt that land conflicts had actually increased since CS1. In Kirundo and Bujumbura-Rural participants were more divided on if land conflicts had risen or stayed at the same level.
In Bujumbura-Mairie participants said they have seen a reduction in land conflicts because of improved (closer) access to a new tribunal in Kamenge which provides counseling and advice to people in land disputes; however, this was in contrast to the other areas, where people claimed that they do not feel comfortable turning to the justice system when facing conflicts, due to perceptions of corruption within the local courts. Participants felt there is often inequality when treating cases, ruling in favor of those with more money or power. In those areas where land conflicts are said to be worsening participants say it is because of the poor security, which has caused an increase in unemployment, poverty, and as a result an increase in financial desperation leading to increased land conflict related violence and killings. It appears if the economic and security situation continues to decline, land related violence is likely to increase.

Participants explain that land conflicts are the most likely type of conflict in which parties will resort to violence due to corruption of the judicial system; in which there is a perceived imbalance of power and a fear of an unfavorable ruling due to the opposing party’s ability to ‘buy’ the case. The idea of taking a land conflict to court evokes a fear of entering a slow, cumbersome and potentially costly legal process, which participants cite as a primary reason that people choose short-term solutions, sometimes

"People may use violence because they may think that the other person will pay [to win the case] and they will lose, so they think they should kill him. They don’t trust the court."

-Participant, Kirundo Province
including violent conflict resolution mechanisms. This is particularly pertinent to farmers because they fear it will not be possible to resolve their land conflicts through the court system before potentially losing the value of an entire season’s crops.

Many properties left behind by refugees in the last few months are also being reported as being inhabited by other families, suggesting potential for additional, new, long-term land related conflicts. Focus group participants described several ways in which local authorities have been allegedly allocating land over the past few months for temporary occupation. In some cases, participants noted that vacated properties are being given to new arrivals from other provinces, predominantly those fleeing Bujumbura due to insecurity, to live in temporarily. However, homes are reportedly also allocated to help alleviate the burden for local families as an alternative to having to pay rent for their usual home. In some cases it is also reported that community members are relocated into vacant homes as a choice made by the local administration in order to reduce the size of the zone that community members occupy, so as to increase the ability to provide improved security. This varies from colline to colline.

In the majority of focus groups, participants stated that a new tenant is required to first inform the refugee before occupying their land (via telephone, or when they come back temporarily to check on their property), and that the refugee almost always prefers to have someone - even a stranger - occupying their home, in order to help safeguard their property and their belongings against thieves and bandits and to help maintain their fields. However, some people in focus groups believed that these refugees are forfeiting their right to their land and property altogether, and this represents a red flag for a potential increase in land management conflicts in the future.

The second greatest driver of violent conflict is domestic disputes, causing 20% of violent conflicts. Domestic disputes encompassed a wide array of problems between couples, usually describing fights over communication and consensus related to the management of money or property (often including selling land without one partner’s consent) between couples (husband and wife), but also very often fights related to polygamy, adultery, and infidelity. Fights over polygamy and adultery are often heavily tied to land conflicts as they result in fears of pending land conflicts between ‘legitimate’ and ‘illegitimate’ children over the inheritance of this land, as well as the reduction of value of the land caused by having to reduce divide the parcel into a greater number of plots for each of the children. There was no clear measure as to the severity of these domestic disputes, however, it was reported that it is very common for them to become violent, most often involving husbands beating, and sometimes killing, their wives.

Security

"Today there is higher unemployment because of the poor security. Many of us went to work in Bujumbura before; now we can’t go to Bujumbura for work anymore. People don’t feel comfortable going to another province [for work] because they need a permission letter."

- Participant, Bujumbura-Rural Province

"Because of the poor security, people think they can die at any time, so they want to get their shares first."

- Youth Participant, Cibitoke Province
The survey found that 59% of respondents perceive their current security as ‘Safe’ or ‘Very Safe’ as compared to 70% from CS1 in February. Currently 29% perceive their current security as ‘Not Very Safe’ or ‘Not Safe At All’, as compared to 20% from CS1. While these numbers show that a majority of those sampled still feel secure, the decline in these numbers is significant. A number of participants also agreed that survey respondents would be likely to be afraid to answer this question honestly, and may have already changed their own practices in regards to security — suggesting that in both cases of CS1 and CS2 the level of insecurity could be underreported (see Appendix 3 for more information on security).

Respondents linked reports of low current security when traveling to and from their daily activities (work, school, etc.) to factors of distance. Those who had to travel to a different colline or neighborhood in order to reach their place of work or school were more likely to feel insecure, be harassed at check points, or to be treated with suspicion. Several respondents mentioned the problem of having an ‘unfamiliar face’, noting that current security is linked to perceptions of being well-known in communities. In some cases, it was noted that checkpoints are being run by civilians, in addition to security forces. These explanations were accompanied by allegations that some people have been beaten to death for not having proper ID on them when they come across such a checkpoint.

Another factor that contributed significantly to people’s perceptions of their current security level across all provinces is radio programming. Many participants cited stories or news they heard on the radio as significant factors in making them feel afraid and insecure. Some participants also noted recent stories of local community members being beaten, tortured, or otherwise harmed for speaking to journalists about local security has increased people’s fears of speaking about security, and may have been a pushed some survey respondents not to respond, or to lie, to the survey questions.

Poor security is viewed as significantly impacting employment, poverty levels, and development. It has resulted in a loss of mobility to seek work or to sell goods, and has resulted in less jobs because many projects, and construction opportunities related to community development have been halted.

Levels of reported insecurity appear to get higher the closer they are to Bujumbura-Mairie, which has the highest level of perceived insecurity (62%) of all the provinces; this makes sense given that is has been the epicenter for civil protests, political conflict and violence since CS1. This does, however, mark a change since CS1, in which previously Bujumbura-Rural (now the second highest level of

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14 This decline in overall security could be accounted for by a change made to the question since CS1, in order to gather more precise data on perceptions of physical security rather than food and economic security.

15 People not recognized as being local to that area/neighborhood
insecurity, at 37%) had been ranked as having higher security levels than Bubanza, Rumonge, or Makamba.

**Security Optimism**

Perceptions of security remain good overall, and levels of optimism for future security have significantly improved, rising from 13% believing the situation will improve to 30%. When participants were asked if they thought the security situation would ‘improve’, ‘stay the same’\(^{16}\), or ‘worsen’ over the next 3 months, there is also a marked decrease of survey respondents who said that it would worsen (41%), as compared to CS1 (50%). However, in all FGDs the majority of participants felt that it was unsurprising that so many people remain pessimistic about future security. Many also felt that the amount of people who think that security will worsen is under reported, sometimes saying as many as 90% of the people they know in their communities that feel afraid that security will continue to degenerate. The belief that security will decline was often explained as resulting from fears caused by news heard on the radio and television about violence and killings in neighboring areas. Participants also reported that seeing so many people fleeing has contributed to a climate of fear; however, they acknowledge that the number of people fleeing in recent months out of fear has also declined. When confronted with results in which more people felt optimistic than not, participants most commonly believed that respondents were answering in terms of their hopes for the country. Particularly notable, was the belief that those who held strong religious views, as most of the country does, would be more likely to say that things will improve due to their belief that god would resolve things.

In one province the majority of participants believed that many people had fled because they had heard local political party youth members walking through the streets singing songs about how they were coming to kill them. They also cited that people in the community were getting threatening message and phone calls, as well as having things like ‘we will kill you’, ‘these are protestors’, ‘it’s here’, written on their doors. This was said to be targeted at people of opposing politically parties – though predominantly people of the Tutsi ethnicity were reported as having fled as a result.\(^{17}\)

Some participants cited a lack of clear actions, such as dialogues, at the national political level as a reason people felt so pessimistic. It should be noted that since the data was collected, the government has started international dialogue with opposing parties, which is likely to contribute to improved levels of optimism in the future.

\(^{16}\) 48% of respondents said security would either improve or stay the same
\(^{17}\) These reports were isolated cases coming from only one province, and were not wide-spread
Discrimination
Respondents were also asked if they had personally been discriminated against over the last 3 months due to their religion, ethnicity, gender, or political affiliation. In general, religion (2%), ethnicity (4%), and gender (5%) were all perceived as very insignificant sources of discrimination. Discrimination based on ethnicity may be underreported; in Bujumbura-Mairie, Bujumbura-Rural, and Cibitoke in particular, many participants felt ethnic discrimination is a more significant problem than the survey results show. New, growing conflicts related to ethnicity were specifically cited in Bujumbura-Mairie and Bujumbura-Rural. However, typically, the examples of ethnic based discrimination that were cited were not easily distinguishable from discrimination that could take place due to political affiliation, which can be appear to be divided along ethnic lines.

The definition of what constitutes gender-based discrimination remains very narrow for respondents, typically citing a lack of equal opportunity to access positions of leadership and to inherit land and property for women. Women are 5% more likely to be discriminated against for their gender than men.

Of the four categories assessed for discrimination by the scan, discrimination due to political affiliation was the highest. Political discrimination was described as on the rise by respondents, 14% of whom reported being discriminated against due to their political affiliation within the last 3 months, as compared to 10% in February 2015. Men are 14% more likely to have been discriminated against due to their political affiliation than women. However, qualitative research suggests that the levels of political discrimination are much higher than reported. The majority of respondents agreed that discrimination based on political affiliation is a very common problem, with 11 out of 14 FGDs claiming that survey results vastly underreport the frequency of political discrimination—typically claiming that at least 50% or more of community members are regularly discriminated against due to their political affiliation. Only 3 FGDs reported that their survey results appeared accurate.

Discrimination due to political affiliation was most commonly reported as lack of equal consideration for job opportunities (especially for teaching positions), promotions, other developmental and material opportunities, and especially for attaining positions of leadership. It was also expanded to encompass diplomas not being distributed to graduates, harassment, threats, verbal abuse, burning homes, and killings due to political party affiliation. Typically cases of political discrimination were considered to be against someone with an opposing political affiliation, however, in a few cases it was also cited as occurring against people with no political affiliation at all.

Origin of the person was also noted as a reason for discrimination. For example when someone is from a different province they may face disadvantages when trying to access job opportunities and promotions as compared someone who is a native to that province. Similarly, nationality recently became a cause for discrimination, specifically the mistreatment of Rwandans caused by recent political tension between the two nations. Lastly, in a few cases repatriates are perceived as being discriminated against by others. They can be harshly labeled a term meaning ‘not native’, and perceived as ‘here to take advantage of those who live here’ by those who never left.
Trust

“I can see trust with my neighbors, as long as it’s not about politics. You only trust others with the same party. But for community works etc., we all participate. We just don’t discuss politics. You can be afraid also because of the other communities – so even if trust is high in our community we can still be afraid.” — Participant, Bujumbura-Mairie Province

Community Trust

Surveys found that trust is improving, with 57% agreeing that people in their community trust each other, as compared to 48% from CS1. However, participants in focus group discussions reported that they believe that community trust levels should be lower, with a majority of people feeling they cannot trust one another. When asked why participants thought survey respondents would have underreported the level of trust it was common to cite the climate of fear to speak freely. Only one FGD reported that they thought trust levels were actually higher than reported by the survey results. Drivers noted of significant levels of distrust were differences in political opinions, parties, and ethnicities.

Focus group participants’ understandings of trust and lack of trust are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators for Lack of Trust</th>
<th>Indicators for Trust</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• poor communication/lack of dialogue</td>
<td>• when people attend funerals and parties together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• attendance restrictions on certain associations</td>
<td>• when people assist with problems such as when you are ill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• people staying home more instead of going out</td>
<td>• when your home is not robbed when you are away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• less discussion between neighbors</td>
<td>• Associations were believed to be something that helps increase trust levels at the community level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• night time guard patrols in neighborhoods</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• secret night time meetings where not everyone is informed or invited to attend</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Perceptions of Youth

Again, the majority of anecdotal evidence suggests that level of distrust in youth is also underreported, with 51% of respondents that negatively associate local youth as causing trouble. 59% of respondents reporting a low level of trust in the youth, indicating their level of trust in the youth is either ‘Not at All’, or ‘Very Little’.

“Recently unemployment has increased, so you see them more often doing nothing or even drinking or doing drugs. So unemployment causes them to be a source of conflict for the community.” — Participant, Cibitoke Province

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18 This survey question was reframed more positively than in CS1, which could account for some of the change in findings.
Youth are viewed as being commonly involved with conflicts, community problems, political parties, and other violence. They make up the majority of the population in the country, and are considered to be malleable due to high rates of unemployment, and a lack of jobs available after graduation from school. At the same time, the majority of respondents felt strongly that while youth are associated with causing trouble, they are not truly responsible for the source of conflicts.

Despite the current pessimistic view of youth in communities, participant feedback suggests that there are many ways to improve the levels of trust in youth. Specifically, increasing youth involvement in youth centers, sports, associations, and development projects are seen as positive ways to change their behavior and help them to avoid being involved in politics. Additionally, improving school attendance, and employment levels is widely considered to be a positive way to reduce youth involvement in negatively perceived activities.

Community members also suggest that increasing trainings on positive behavior change, conflict resolution, peace, and useful vocational skills would help them to improve their image. Participants encourage others to increase opportunities for dialogue with youth, particularly family dialogue, and to encourage adults to offer support and advice to youth by serving as informal mentors. Almost all qualitative feedback suggested that it is important to engage youth in preventing and managing conflicts, not only due to the significant role they are perceived to play in them, but also because they are the future of the country.

**Ethnic Relationships**

Overall, ethnic relationships are perceived to be overwhelmingly positive, with 78% responding that relationships between ethnicities are currently positive, and only 22% indicating that relationships are currently negative. Overall, respondents indicate that both ethnicities attend community events, churches, parties, marriages, funerals, etc., are members of the same associations, help each other, and frequently intermarry as evidence that relationships are good. The vast majority of participants said there are not significant conflicts based on ethnicity, ethnicity is not commonly a consideration when making decisions about someone, and that they feel safe and comfortable discussing their ethnicity with others, almost all, even being willing to share their own ethnicity publicly during the FGDs. Most felt that the importance of ethnicity was diminishing, and the level of trust between ethnicities is improving with each generation.

However, while the majority of respondents believe that ethnic relationship have remained...
relatively stable in recent months (65%), 31% of respondents indicated that relationships have been worsening over the last 3 months. This is most significant in the capital of Bujumbura-Mairie, where 52% of respondents believe that ethnic relationships have been worsening. It is important to consider that survey data was collected after a few key political speeches were noted in popular media as inciting hate speech were broadcast on the radio, which could be a factor in increasing fear and creating the perception amongst people that ethnic relationships are worsening. However, this should still be monitored closely as a perception of poor or worsening ethnic relationships could result in increased polarization, distrust, and eventually perpetuate further degradation of relationships.

Respondents’ reactions to the high levels of people in their communities believing that ethnic relationships were worsening were received with mixed results. Most felt that this data was a result of rumors and allegations heard on the radio that traditionally Tutsi neighborhoods in Bujumbura-Mairie are the ones behind organizing the recent protests, causing the current political conflicts. Along with the recent increase in ethnically divisive language in political speeches, and an increase in hate speech on the radio, this could have attributed to an increase in fear that ethnic relationships are worsening, even if they are not actually worsening as significantly as this figure suggests that the provincial community level. However, the majority of respondents did say that it has resulted in an increase in violent and hateful language, and ethnically divisive jokes and remarks at the community level. Respondents believe that there are a lot of ways in which relationships between different ethnicities can be improved. They suggested increasing opportunities for dialogue, meetings, sports groups, and associations that are comprised of mixed participants. They emphasized that dialogue and meetings should focus on themes of honesty and forgiveness. Increased attendance at school, in which ethnicities learn to live peacefully together, is also perceived as important. Additionally, they believe that religion and local priests have a unique opportunity to play a large role by encouraging their followers to promote tolerance and forgiveness. Respondents reported that trainings focused on tolerance, and forgiveness are also highly effective methods to encourage behavior change. It was also recommended that programs consider sensitizing local government authorities on the importance of not taking ethnicities into account when hiring for jobs.

**Opportunities for Peacebuilding**

**Reaction to Name Calling**

In order to attempt to understand participants’ likelihood of resorting to violence, the survey asked how participants would respond to being verbally insulted (called stupid). However, 70% of respondents said that they would not respond to (ignore) the person. However, anecdotal evidence found that the majority of respondents do not feel that this is an accurate representation of how people would respond, usually finding that more people would respond violently (by yelling, or fighting), and less would actually talk to the person to resolve the issues themselves. However, this particular conflict example of name-calling may not be

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30 3% believes that ethnic relationships have been improving.
a significant enough example of a conflict with which to gauge conflict response mechanisms and is unlikely to be sensitive enough to show significant changes from scan to scan.\(^2\) It Overall, the responses suggest that more work needs to be done to improve conflict response mechanisms and increase the capacity for nonviolent conflict resolution at the community level.

**Education Services**

A high rate of survey respondents (31%) refused to provide their perception on to what extent they felt that the current education system prepares youth to respond to disputes without violence. Based on participant feedback, this is most likely because they did not feel that they had knowledge of what happens inside the classroom due to low education levels and thus do not feel qualified to speak to the quality of dispute resolution taught in school. Of those that did respond, 56% felt positively that the education system prepares youth to handle disputes either ‘well’ or ‘very well’ without resorting to violence. However, this represents a significant drop since CS1 in which 67% of participants responded favorably. Participants frequently cited the Civics course offered in grade 7 and 8 as the best opportunity for students to learn about how to live together peacefully, and thus increasing their likelihood of resolving disputes without violence. However, the class was often critiqued by both students and teachers as being too short, and infrequent, to make a lasting impact on students’ capacities to resolve disputes without violence. However, most did feel confident that youth who are educated are more likely to have good discipline, and to use their deeper critical thinking skills in order to resolve conflicts without violence than their uneducated peers.

**Existing Opportunities for Peace Building & Dialogue**

Slightly more than half of respondents (53%) reported that they do not currently feel that they have opportunities to help build peace in their communities. Of those who said they did not have this opportunity, 96% said they would like more opportunities to contribute to local peace building.

Qualitative feedback on this was mixed, with some arguing that there are more opportunities available for people to contribute to peace building in their communities, but that people do not participate in them. There are a handful of opportunities that currently exist that participants were able to cite. Specifically, security and peace meetings were viewed as a significant opportunity, however, in most cases the invitations are selective, and typically include predominantly local leaders. Weekly community works activities were also viewed as an opportunity for peacebuilding, however, they were noted as currently not providing a lot of ability for people to contribute their ideas to peacebuilding, but it is considered to improve levels of social cohesion between community members. This is was the most apparent in

\(^{21}\) This indicator was not very responsive despite significant shifts in context since CS1
Rumonge, where participants said that community works was used to help build the new UNICEF school which was resulting in an increased sense of unity between community members. Participants felt community works, in particular, would be a very good platform to use for increasing opportunities for direct involvement in community peace building if it were structured in a more organized and efficient manner. Church teachings about peace, sports, and meetings and associations were also viewed as opportunities to contribute to peace building, though the latter three are typically not open to everyone.

Some participants felt that fewer have real concrete opportunities than reported, citing that survey respondents may have felt afraid to give honest feedback, because it could be considered critical of the leadership.

Even more significantly, 72%, or people said that they do not have the opportunity to participate in constructive dialogue on key issues relating to on going local conflicts. Of those who said they do not have the opportunity to participate in dialogue about local conflicts, 94% said they would like them. With the exception of a select few, most participants agreed that the majority of people do not have opportunities to participate in real and meaningful dialogue in a way that can contribute to a reduction of conflicts at the community level. Those opportunities that were mentioned were almost the same as those mentioned for contributing to peace, including: peace meetings, community works, meetings and associations, sports, church, school, and youth centers.

**Opportunities for Collaboration**

Participants said that if they had a conflict they would turn to Bashingantahe, their neighbors, peers, the court, elders, parents, local authorities, association members, church leaders, lawyers and police. However, 5 of the 14 FGDs specifically stated that they had less confidence in police than they did when CS1 was conducted, citing instances of violence they hear on the radio, corruption, and bias based on political affiliation as the justifications. When asked who in the community commonly plays the role of the mediator participants noted that neighbors, local authorities, Bashingantahe, friends, parents, teachers and church leaders are the most common to fill that role. This list was the same, with the addition of association members and family members, for which members of the community have the most influence.

**Part 4: Program Recommendations**

Respondents also provided their own recommendations for peacebuilding programming and conflict prevention to help them to face the challenges to peace in their communities.
Recommendations include interventions at all levels in the community, including individual, communal, and institutional. The key themes of those recommendations are as follows:

**To Improve ‘Do No Harm’**:22

1. Increase transparency about participant selection criteria for projects
2. Sensitize local government authorities, and project focal points on the importance of nonbiased selection of participants for both projects and job opportunities
3. Monitor projects and activities closely to discourage corruption and mismanagement of funds

**Programming Recommendations**

**Targeting key individuals: Supporting resilience to violence among vulnerable groups**

- Support **income-generating activities** to reduce tensions around land conflict.
  - Encourage better, more efficient, farming practices to improve agricultural yields on small parcels.
  - Increase alternative methods for income generation for farmers and those facing land conflicts.
- Support **youth to serve as leaders** their communities.
  - Open space for youth participation in economic and community leadership initiatives, including youth centers.
  - Involve youth more in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts at the community level and continue to improve their capacity in this regard.

**At the community level: Increased focus on conflict sensitive communication**

- **Monitor, and target the evolution of hate speech**, especially ethnically and politically based, by journalists, politicians, political parties, and community members
- Continue to **support media** in addressing issues of tension
  - Continue to sensitize journalists in conflict sensitive journalism
  - Support media in highlighting positive relationships between ethnic groups
- Train non-politically affiliated association leaders in conflict mediation and resolution. For example, religious leaders can be included to spread messages of tolerance.

**At the institutional level: supporting a conflict sensitive school curriculum**

- Consider supporting the education sector in shaping **weekly civics classes** to more intentionally provide opportunities for dialogue, contribution to peacebuilding, and engagement with youth. This may be accomplished by adding time to the civics course or creating a new course focused specifically on these issues.
- **Adapt trainings and materials to fit directly to the civics course and broader curriculum** so that teachers leave with concrete and clear ways to apply what they have learned.

**Addressing structural challenges: Improve confidence in judicial and land decisions**

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22 The findings related to ‘Do No Harm’ can be found in Appendix 6
• To prevent further conflict and support resolution of current conflicts, monitor the management of property and land belonging to current refugees, now and when they return. More broadly, it may be important to monitor accusations of political discrimination in coming months to better understand the causes of these perceptions about the judicial system.

• Support the government in collaboration with the CNTB to improve the understanding of the population as to how the CNTB makes rulings, their role in the community, and what types of conflicts they handle.

• Support local courts in speeding up the time for processing cases, reducing cases of corruption, and promoting improved strategies surrounding land issues. This can be done with increased input from communities on the current limitations and blockages that prevent people from seeking legal rulings. Within this, programming should support efforts to improve the gender equality of inheritance policies, which may have a long-term effect on sustainability of land-related decisions.

Improve Social Cohesion: Themes to Address

• Ethnic and political relationships
  o Programming should improve collaboration between political parties and protect progress made between ethnic groups to reduce the risk of future polarization and deterioration of relationships. Dialogue activities are important to this process.

• Perceptions of the youth
  o Continue to support the youth to have a positive impact within the community and to be productive members of society

• Existing community resources and opportunities
  o Align programs to support increased organization and efficiency of weekly community works events, and use them as opportunities to increase social cohesion