Responsible Land Governance: Towards an Evidence Based Approach
ANNUAL WORLD BANK CONFERENCE ON LAND AND POVERTY
WASHINGTON DC, MARCH 20-24, 2017

The missing link: Successes and lessons learned from an integrated approach to land tenure registration in Burundi.

Paper presented at the annual Land and Poverty conference of the World Bank, Washington, 2017.

David Betge[1], Jean Pierre Irutingabo, Hendrik Westerbeek

Introduction

The responsible governance of natural resources has become a globally agreed on objective manifested, inter alia, in the *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT) and applied by various organizations on the global and national level in recent years. There is broad consensus that securing land and other property rights will need to be at the center of global efforts for sustainable development for the foreseeable future (Iris Krebber in Hall and Scoones 2016: 8). Land tenure registration has become an increasingly applied tool to facilitate the protection of property rights on a broad scale and across different social groups. It also serves governments to build datasets on spatial infrastructure, supporting planning and development efforts. Nevertheless, while the general need to address insecure property rights is largely undisputed, the benefits as well as the potential pitfalls of conducting large-scale land registration, particularly in socially and economically fragile contexts are at the center of intense debates (see e.g. Deininger and Feder 2009, Aryeetey and Udry 2010). While there is little reliable data on the impact of land tenure registration on land disputes as well as the resolution and prevention of violent conflicts, tenure registration programs have been and are being applied in post-conflict situations such as Uganda and Burundi. So far, these efforts had mixed results for the various affected social groups as well as the relationships between different actors within the state structures (see: van Leeuwen et al 2016a). In the Burundian context, the great majority of legal disputes relates to conflicts over land and these land conflicts frequently result in violence (Kohlhagen n.d.). The Burundian government initiated and supported several measures in the past years to address land related conflicts and violence (Kohlhagen 2012). These measures involved the mediation of land conflicts through locally recruited commissions and non-governmental organizations, particularly mediation between returnees and residents both of which often have a legal claim to the land, the decentralization of land management and a strengthening of the local court system (ibid. See also: Bunte/Monnier 2011). In 2011, the government introduced a new land law, which was supposed to facilitate large-scale, decentralized registration of land

with a particular focus on the recognition of customary land tenure systems (Kohlhagen 2012). Different international actors became involved in the implementation of the government's efforts to address land-related problems (see e.g. Netherlands Embassy Office Bujumbura-Burundi 2011). Soon, it appeared that a general obstacle to broader success of these ventures was a lack of coordination between the different actors, particularly within the government (Kohlhagen 2012: 4). Furthermore, the processes were found to be not sufficiently participatory and vulnerable groups were not effectively protected (Kohlhagen 2012: 6). Such lack of coordination and communication has the potential to fuel new conflicts, e.g. around the acquisition of land by investors with negative effects on local communities (see also: van Leeuwen et al 2016b). These problems are not unique to the Burundian context. The complex actor constellations and multiple interests in the context of comprehensive tenure reforms in poor and fragile countries make coordination particularly difficult. It is possible, for example, that the creation of new institutions in the context of land reform programs contributes to authority struggles between state and traditional authorities, leading to confusion amongst local populations and complicating conflict resolutions (Kobusingye et al 2016). Earlier comparisons among other countries implementing similar programs found that in general, middle-income countries were quite successful in their efforts while low-income countries especially in sub-Saharan Africa did not achieve very positive results (Platteau 1996 cited after IDLO/ZOA 2016). This paper reviews the experiences of ZOA, an international NGO conducting a tenure registration program in Burundi. The objective is to identify successes and lessons learned as well as to assess the scope for better coordination and communication between the different stakeholders. In the spirit of global efforts to improve the tenure security of the poor and to reduce the number of conflicts around land, this review is expected to contribute to program coherence and effectiveness of similar projects in the future.[2]

ZOA's land tenure registration program in Burundi

The vast majority of people in Burundi is dependent on agriculture for their income and livelihoods (see: Hilhorst 2013). At the same time, the average size of landholdings has been shrinking over the past decades while the return of people who fled from the civil war has contributed to a significant rise in conflicts over land. These land conflicts are highly complex and range from intra-family disputes on heritage rights to disputes between repatriates and residents. Traditional and state authorities are involved in the resolution of these conflicts on the local level but in many cases, these actors are overburdened with the number as well as the complexity of the cases, particularly because the property rights are often not formally registered and conflicts between formal and customary rights exist. The formalized land registration in Burundi is based on the land law (code foncier) of 2011, which introduced land certificates as alternatives to titles for the registration of customary land rights and decentralized the land administration (Hilhorst/Porchet 2012). The land law provided for the

---

[2] The paper draws on a mid-term review (mixed method study using interviews, focus group discussion and surveys) of the program conducted by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO), a review of project designs, proposals, country annual plans, internal reports and a field visit including interviews and focus groups discussion with key program staff, beneficiaries and project partners.

establishment of communal land services (*Service Foncier Communal* – SFC) in charge of delivering titles to land owners. It also mandated the establishment of communal commissions as part of the SFC in charge of measuring the plots and addressing land conflicts on the local level (Commission de Reconnaissance Collinaire – CRC). A third state institution, which was created for the land tenure program was the national land commission (Commission Nationale des terres et autres biens – CNTB). This commission was specifically tasked with the resolution of conflicts related to land and originating in the different wars in the past. While at first the commission was strongly oriented at finding amicable solutions, mediating between the interests of repatriates and residents, the CNTB later changed their mediating approach towards one stronger oriented towards delivering verdicts. The role of the commission has been strongly discussed, with some stakeholders feeling that it has a certain political bias (RFI 2015). Since around 2015, the work of the CNTB has largely been suspended.

Several decentralized projects were started over the past years, addressing land rights issues through setting up and building the capacities of the SFCs in the context of land registration. A number of different non-governmental organizations were leading these decentralized efforts. While the land law was supposed to integrate the existing customary system with statutory law, it was met with strong reservations by the population and people still continue to show a certain resistance towards accepting the new system of land certification (IDLO/ZOA 2016). In late 2013, the Dutch Humanitarian organization ZOA started a project financed by the Dutch Embassy in Bujumbura, designed to indicate ways of bridging the gap between the various individual land registration projects and an envisioned scaled-up land registration program initiated on the national level, which would need to be implemented in a decentralized but coherent way (ZOA 2013). ZOA targets areas with high levels of repatriation of former refugees and displaced people and a special focus is put on safeguarding the interests of women in the process of land rights registration. Furthermore, ensuring the financial sustainability of the SFC was defined as a central objective. ZOA cooperates with local partner Mi-Parec (Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation under the Cross) who support the project in resolving conflicts related to land (ibid.). The combination of land registration and conflict resolution is central to the project. Mediation between conflict parties, particularly between returnees and residents, and a recording of the results of these mediations are seen as the basis for ensuring sustainable conflict resolution and tenure security of all parties (ibid.). Therefore, MiParec supports the CRCs with training in mediation practices and takes over mediations in particularly complex cases. A study on the challenges related to the Burundian land registration process published in 2013 indicated that better capacities of national-level actors and an integration of the ground level efforts with national policies and objectives are needed, while at the same time a strong focus needs to be put on the local acceptance of the measures (Hilhorst 2013). Generally, the land tenure registration projects in Burundi are seen as essential aspects of broader efforts to increase peace and stability as well as to contribute to food security for the population (Netherlands Embassy Office Bujumbura-Burundi 2011). In order to achieve these objectives several conditions have to be met. First, land conflicts have to be resolved before a piece of land is registered. It is also important to ensure the acceptance of registration procedures by the local communities and not least the local traditional

authorities. The process of registration must also not contribute to the weakening of existing rights such as customary rights of women. If all these conditions are met, people receiving land certificates need to be ensured that these certificates will in fact contribute to their tenure security. Therefore, local state authorities need to have the capacities to enforce the land rights of individuals. They also need to be informed of all land transfers after the issuing of certificates, because otherwise the registry will become unreliable.

ZOA aspired to design its land tenure program in Burundi in a way that would meet all of these concerns and obstacles.[3] The general objective of the program is that the owners of land in 39 collines[4] in the municipalities of Mabanda and Vugizo[5] have sufficiently secure land rights to allow them to invest in their land and to intensify agricultural production (IDLO/ZOA 2016). The core of the program is the registration of the location of a plot of land and the dimensions of the parcel. This data is put on a certificate so that the owner has evidence, which helps to reduce uncertainties and conflicts concerning boundaries. A public registry ensures that everyone who wants to acquire land can verify who the owner is and that his (or her) assertions as to the dimensions and other aspects of the land are true (ibid.). ZOA followed a cluster approach with a proactive, cluster-wide approach (approche groupée) of registration services and complementary activities for its program. This meant, that in a targeted area, the objective would be to have all households register their land, requiring all of them to be informed of the process and its objectives and to recognize the benefits of participating. The alternative to this would have been an approach, relying mostly on building the capacity of state actors who would only register plots of individuals approaching the authorities directly themselves (approche isolée). The group approach tries to address the social complexities of land tenure registration with a strong focus on recognizing and addressing conflicts.[6] ZOA's land rights program was designed as part of a holistic approach integrated in interventions by ZOA and other organizations targeting the effects of tensions over refugee resettlement, high population growth and declining agricultural productivity. In this sense, the land registration program relates to efforts for intensifying agricultural production through distributing agricultural inputs such as e.g. seeds, fertilizer, organic manure or goats and providing trainings on agriculture in the same program areas conducted by ZOA and partner organizations. A basic idea of the program is that conflict mediation, land certification and activities aimed at increased investments in agriculture and increased agricultural productivity are mutually reinforcing (ZOA 2013). The first step of the land tenure program was a large-scale assessment of land conflicts in the intervention area followed by a mediation of the identified conflicts. The solutions to these conflicts were then to be

---

[3] See figure 1 below for the logic of the intervention.

[4] Colline means 'hill' and is the second smallest administrative unit in the country, the smallest are the sous-collines (Fransen 2011). People in rural Burundi do not usually live in dense villages with their fields surrounding the village but rather spread over a hill with their homestead surrounded by their plot.

[5] See the maps in appendices 1 and 2.

[6] The Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) had implemented a land registration program on which ZOA could build. One assumption informing the clustered (grouped) approach is that it takes a long time for state authorities to build adequate capacities to facilitate a conflict sensitive demand driven approach, based on adequate and comprehensive information of the target groups by state actors. Furthermore, the isolated approach could leave large numbers of parcels unprotected by registration and be restricted to the registration of land acquired by large, more affluent buyers. This happened during the SDC project.

fixed by the registration of plots. While conflict resolution institutions existed in the Burundian context on the colline level; such as the elected leaders of the colline and traditional bashingantahe ('men of integrity' serving as conflict mediators and justices), the land code of 2011 made it necessary to create an additional institution capable of handling a relatively large number of conflicts. Therefore, the Recognition Committees on Colline level were created (CRCs). These committees publicly establish whether there are land disputes regarding a plot, determine who occupies that land and who holds the de facto rights to that land and conduct plot surveys using handheld GPS devices, mobile phones with Kobo collect software and aerial photos. All of the neighbors of the particular plot participate in this exercise. The outcomes of the process are published and if after a period of 15 days no objection is made a certificate can be issued. The owner needs to retrieve the certificate from the SFC office. After this has happened there follows another 30 day period during which objections to the registration can be voiced. In case that someone disagrees with the registration and the conflict cannot be mediated, the case is taken to the CNTB or a responsible court.

Fig. 1 Intervention Logic

```
                                                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                                                    │ Resolution of       │
                                                    │ conflicts related   │
                                                    │ to repatriation     │
                                                    └─────────────────────┘
                                                              │
                                                              ▼
┌───────────────────────┐                          ┌─────────────────────┐
│ Agricultural          │                          │ Land certification  │
│ development           │                          └─────────────────────┘
│ (fertilizers, seeds)  │                                    │
└───────────────────────┘                                    ▼
          │              ┌──────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────┐
          ▼              │ Decrease of  │◄─────────│ Improved tenure     │
┌──────────────┐────────►│ land         │          │ security            │
│ Production   │         │ pressure and │          └─────────────────────┘
│ increase     │         │ conflicts    │                    │
└──────────────┘         └──────────────┘                    ▼
          │                      │                  ┌─────────────────────┐
          ▼                      ▼                  │ Improved access to  │
┌──────────────┐         ┌──────────────┐           │ credit              │
│ More         │         │ Improved     │           └─────────────────────┘
│ available    │         │ social       │
│ resources    │         │ cohesion     │
└──────────────┘         └──────────────┘
          │                                   ┌─────────────────────────┐
          └──────────────────────────────────│ More investment in      │◄──
                                              │ agricultural production │
                                              └─────────────────────────┘
                                                          │
                                              ┌─────────────────────────────┐
                                              │ Inclusive and sustainable   │
                                              │ economic and social         │
                                              │ development                 │
                                              └─────────────────────────────┘
```

Source: ZOA 2013

Successes and Lessons learned

A few noteworthy developments correlate with ZOA's land registration project in Burundi. First, there has been an increase in land transactions over the last three years, which has even picked up since the registration process started. This suggests that the registration facilitates the transactions of real estate, even though the specific causal relationship is not yet clear (IDLO/ZOA 2016). Second, the initial registrations seemed to correlate with a decrease in criminal cases related to land. In later phases of the program, this correlation was less clear and the data available does not allow for inferences on causal relations. Nevertheless, decreasing the number of criminal cases and violence related to land conflicts is a central objective of the program and indications that the registration in combination with conflict mediation has a positive

impact in this regard are encouraging. Despite this, the overall rate of conflicts has increased, the reason of which is not yet completely clear (IDLO/ZOA 2016: 61). It could well be that during the registration process latent conflicts surface, increasing the total of recognized conflicts. In any case, this finding indicates the importance of quality conflict resolution in the areas where registration happens. So far, the resolution of conflicts in the program areas appears to go well. The reports of CRCs and the testimony of beneficiaries show that people decide to have their conflicts mediated instead of taking them to court and some also withdrew their cases from court and decided to go through a mediation instead.

In order to contribute to stable, sustainable solutions people need to accept the conflict resolutions also after the registration is conducted (ibid.). The findings from the ZOA program are generally in line with other research indicating that land registration can have positive impacts on conflicts but effective conflict mediation needs to be in place (see e.g. Holden et al 2011). There are many indications in the broader literature that whether land registration has a positive or a negative impact on conflicts is very much context dependent and the specific setup of the registration is crucial. The respondents of the mid-term study on ZOA's land registration program almost unanimously declared that they perceived a positive impact on conflicts and reported a reduction of, in particular, boundary conflicts through the program (ZOA/IDLO 2016 p. 34). Continuous learning and a flexible approach to the project were necessary to achieve this. A central challenge in the beginning was the attendance rate of the sensitization campaigns. The idea was to conduct meetings at the village level to inform people about all the aspects of the land registration process. It showed that people were strongly occupied by their agricultural activities and did not attend the meetings. Of those attending, men were the majority while women were vastly underrepresented. ZOA then decided to conduct door-to-door information campaigns. To this end 'vulgarisateurs' or outreach-persons from the communities were selected to conduct the information visits. This strategy was much more effective than the group meetings and is being replicated in a new USAID funded project, which ZOA started in 2017 (ZOA 2015). The mid-term study confirmed that in the areas where registration was put in place people are broadly informed about the process and aware of its objectives to improve land tenure security and resolve land conflicts (IDLO/ZOA 2016). A second, and newly developed strategy to reach people, is the public performance of informational sketches in central places such as church squares and other common meeting places at the colline and sub-colline level. People are called for "Tumeny'Ivy'Amatongo yacu" meetings, meaning approximately: "Let's know all what concerns our plots of land" in Kirundi. After the performances, questions related to land rights and the registration process are asked to the attendees and for correct answers people can win useful prizes such as hoes, bottles, the land code book or mobile phones. These campaigns reached much more people than the original village level meetings and members of the Recognition Committees (CRCs) expressed their regret that this method was not used from the beginning, because in their opinion it would have been highly useful for reaching all stakeholders to inform them on the land registration process from the start. Another challenge was that the members of the CRCs and the outreach people are all volunteers. The time-consuming work in the context of the registration program led to domestic conflicts for these volunteers who had to justify the amount of energy and

time they invested. The volunteers thus asked for some kind of (financial) recognition. The different project partners discussed a solution and the commune indicated that there was no budget for any compensation. ZOA's project manager therefore proposed that the CRCs and the outreach groups could form savings associations. For these associations ZOA would pay a certain and relatively small input, which these then could invest in form of micro credits, earning them a small interest. This proved to be an acceptable solution to the CRCs and outreach groups. These then continued with their work and reported to be strongly motivated again. The mid-term review found overall evidence that the population targeted by the program was generally much more confident about their situation, envisaging a future without conflicts.

On a more technical note, the use of the Kobo software and the integration of the demarcated plots into ArcGis maps has proven to be very useful and the demarcation teams have developed impressive skills in using these tools. The usage of aerial photos serves to correct errors of the GPS measuring, which usually has an accuracy of around 2 meters (the photos have an accuracy of 50cm). Nevertheless, there are not many people in Burundi who are capable of using these tools and there is a strong need for extensive training if the tenure program is to be taken to scale. Furthermore, the technical infrastructure on the communal level and on the higher levels of government need further improvement. This means that e.g. the collected data still is not stored on central government servers but solely in the cloud and on individual computers. Only if such infrastructure is established can the data of the registration process be fully used for purposes of analysis and planning to facilitate positive development impacts. Improving the technical infrastructure is one of a number of central challenges for the future.

Challenges

Despite the successes related to raising awareness and starting the registration process many challenges remain. From the beginning it was noted that the relatively short timeframe of 36 months for the project (recently extended by another 12 months) would be a challenge for making the intervention sustainable (ZOA 2013). The program aims at acceptance of its normative and regulative core by the population and state authorities, including sensitive issues such as women's rights, and requires significant capacity building of local authorities. Thus, fundamental changes are envisaged, which can only be facilitated through a long-term process and are also influenced by a number of factors, which are difficult if not impossible to control such as e.g. interventions by other organizations in the same area and the broader political climate e.g. in the context of national and regional elections. The extension of the original program over 12 months and the expansion towards other areas contribute to working towards sustainability but the many obstacles related to government capacities, social complexities and political will indicate that a more long-term engagement would be necessary.

One of the central issues is increasing women's tenure security. While legally, women's land rights can be registered, this does not always ensure the factual access to land e.g. after the death of a husband. Furthermore, while the land code allows for the

registration of land in the name of women, the experience of the program so far shows that this rarely happens (IDLO/ZOA 2016). Other land management programs in Burundi in the past had very similar problems. The evaluation of a project implemented by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) in Ngozi province between 2008 and 2014 showed that the share of land titles registered in the name of women are low. In 2012, 6 percent of the titles were registered in the name of women, in 2013 this even reduced to 5 percent (IDLO/ZOA 2016: 49). In the context of the ZOA program, it showed that plots registered for families in the name of family heirs frequently came under dispute. Intra-family disputes are a strong challenge by which women are again particularly affected and it seems that the conflict resolution approach is not effectively targeting these problems as it was designed to mainly address conflicts between repatriates and residents (IDLO/ZOA 2016). Having been made aware of these issues through the mid-term evaluation the program now also focuses on making CRC members aware of intra-family disputes and enabling them to address these.

In relation to women's land rights but also regarding the program more generally, thus, the integration of land tenure, food security and conflict resolution approaches, an embedding into broader structures and particularly higher-level government support are essential for long-term success. Political will and capacity to provide this support present some challenges but the strong overall government support for the land tenure program indicates that positive developments are possible. To give an example of the needed support: in various instances people who have participated in the tenure registration program indicated that after feeling more secure about their land they now need support with improving their livelihoods e.g. by learning new agricultural practices and getting access to credit. While ZOA has facilitated food security oriented projects in areas where land tenure registration has happened or will happen in the future, these programs will need to be more effectively integrated with the land tenure program. Furthermore, there are indications that people would like to see stronger government support with rural development. There is little indication that the government has the capacity or intention to set up and implement targeted and broad rural development programs with a focus on improving people's livelihoods. Investments in the agricultural sector have not been a strong priority of the government in the past, even though it has shown strong support for the issue of land tenure registration. Limited support from state authorities can also pose a challenge in more indirect ways.

A key aspect with regard to improving women's factual land rights is that for sustainable rights for women to be established in the Burundian context (as well as in others) strong, participatory communication processes are needed, which enable consensus-based agreements. This is difficult to address through a mere land certification project. Land tenure projects do generally not create rights but register existing rights. Furthermore, in the formal process of legalization (or registration, documentation etc.) the complexities of existing (customary) rights can get lost. Customary law often grants secondary land rights to women. Although less strong than those granted to men, these rights offer some protection to the interests of women. They function, in particular, as a sort of insurance against misfortunes, such as a long illness of the husband, his death, or a divorce. It is not always possible to register such rights, and even if feasible, the groups concerned are not necessarily aware of these registered rights or do not know how to make use of them. As a result, registration can lead to a significant erosion

of the security of land rights and the welfare of women (IDLO/ZOA 2016: 11). While ground level efforts such as those conducted by ZOA play an important role in strengthening the tenure security of people and supporting women in becoming advocates of their own rights, if the broader social and political framework, including dominant discourses on women's rights, are not supportive of the envisioned changes, this poses a significant obstacle to achieving the overall objectives. A central hurdle to women is e.g. that they are legally not allowed to inherit land. While a change in the Burundian succession law has been announced this was not realized yet and is subject to strong political debate.

Another recurring and problematic issue is the role or, more specifically, the capacity of the local governments. Changes in land use and ownership are often not brought to the attention of the communal land service. Through this, conflicts around land are in some cases increased. ZOA has initiated an SMS information service to lower the transaction costs related to the interactions between people and government, which makes it easier and more convenient to maintain the land registration service, but this is only a first step towards improvements. The SMS service has not delivered the necessary results due to various factors, not least the fact that large parts of the population are illiterate. The heads of the CRCs were supposed to report changes in land holdings and the CRC members were asked to report all land transactions during weekly meetings but feedback on this was minimal. Communal land registration officers are now being asked to conduct regular visits at the collines to enquire on changes, which were not reported to the CRCs or the SFC but this method is time consuming, strongly dependent on the cooperation of the local people and requires strong engagement and "people skills" on the side of the CRC team. All three are not always sufficiently available. Moreover, some people seem to distrust the authorities to a certain degree. While it appears that the work of the CRCs and in particular their involvement in conflict mediation has a positive impact on people's perception of authorities,[7] other state institutions are sometimes met with mixed feelings by the population. The above-mentioned example of the CNTB shows that people feel that at least some state authorities have a certain bias towards specific population groups. This relates not only to the CNTB but also to a special court, established to address land conflicts (Court speciale de terre et autres biens - CSTB). This court is perceived by parts of the population to have the same bias as the CNTB. Not only the verdicts of the court and the CNTB make people cautious, but there is also a certain degree of intransparency. The members of the CNTB e.g. are appointed by the president and their qualification is not always clear.[8] In general, the international (donor) community could support programs like the Burundian land tenure registration with awareness raising campaigns or by providing legal aid services (see: Foley 2007). In the Burundian context there are no indications that this being done on any significant scale to support the land tenure programs. The lack of an efficient supportive framework of the Burundian land tenure program is not only related to limited capacities on the

---

[7] Despite the generally positive impact of the work of the CRCs individual members have in the past been part of conflicts themselves due to them originating from the communities they work in.

[8] The experiences of the ZOA program also relate to findings of the broader literature that institutional multiplicity and competition combined with large numbers of contested land claims in post-conflict settings create confusion among people over which institutions (customary or statutory) to approach with their disputes (Kobusingye, 2016).

political and administrative level. While there are established networks and policy frameworks on the international and national level informing local projects, the creation of effective feedback links from the local level back to these higher levels of policymaking and support needs to be at the focus of further improvements.

Conclusions - The way forward

There is clearly growing attention towards land tenure issues in poor and post-conflict societies on the international level and an increasing number of national and international actors interested in addressing these issues. A range of frameworks, guidelines and recommendations is informing these attempts. From looking at the Burundian context, it seems that despite this top-down attention and support not enough is being done yet. Furthermore, practical experiences of what works and what not are still scarce and the tenure registration program in Burundi is very much learning-by-doing. To improve current approaches, more and better practices for informing communities are needed, better ways to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, stronger capacities of local, regional and national state authorities and the legal system. Essential for this is the establishment of an effective feedback system between all actors involved in such efforts and their appreciation of the social complexities of land tenure registration. Furthermore, data collected through land tenure registration can support the setting up of core datasets on spatial infrastructure used to improve government services to the population. While approaches like the Fit for Purpose Land Tenure Administration framework point out the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the context-adapted registration approach, the real costs and complexities of such work are somewhat underappreciated. Setting up peace committees in fragile settings, building capacities on the local, district, regional and national level and protecting the rights and needs of vulnerable groups is costly. Not only financially, but also in terms of commitment and willingness to engage with these complexities. It requires long-term programs and effective, continuous communication with all stakeholders. The experiences from Burundi show that the government, with the support of international donors, should be more involved, supporting the process not only with adequate policies and legislation but also by setting up complementary programs for rural development and the necessary technical infrastructure on the national level to make the tenure registration sustainable. This also requires strong commitments from donors who need to extend their support beyond periods of one, two or three years. Short-term commitments are not in line with the need for long-term engagement. Moreover, actors like ZOA need to be aware that their engagement in these processes might force them out of their comfort zone, requiring innovative approaches and activities. The mid-term study of the program, inter alia, recommended the identification of organizations involved in the justice sector in order to coordinate project activities with the actions carried out by these actors. Such activities can be combined with advocacy work at the national level, lobbying for stronger political commitments to the reforms and improvements in the justice sector (IDLO/ZOA 2016: 63). Similar activities might be applicable in other contexts. Furthermore, the complexities of these processes, which, at times, are lost in the context of what seems like a "hype" around land tenure registration in developing countries, are a decisive

factor not only in post-conflict settings. All actors engaging in land rights activities must be aware of that. This fact should not discourage land tenure registration programs. It should rather be understood as a call for better coordination, for increasing synergies, enabling all actors to focus on their strengths, and as a call to increase the ongoing efforts based on sound and in-depth evaluations. The political commitment of national and regional governments will be essential to make land tenure registration a successful tool, but if political actors commit to these efforts, conflict sensitive and cost-efficient programs are possible (cf. Deininger 2008). Three central factors could support this:

1. Long-term funding by international donors with strong financial resources for monitoring and evaluation.
2. Targeted research programs with the objective of identifying the necessary conditions of successful land tenure registration programs in various settings.
3. Institutionalized communication structures allowing actors involved in land tenure programs to communicate effectively and efficiently on their experiences – within program countries as well as across different contexts.

All of this needs to focus on establishing better linkages between local-level efforts aiming at land rights registration, conflict resolution, sustainable women's rights and agricultural improvements and state-centered land governance based on spatial data infrastructure.

Bibliography

Aryeety, Ernest and Christopher Urdy (2010). Creating Property Rights: Land Banks in Ghana. The American Economic Review, Vol. 100, No. 2, Paper and Proceedings of the One Hundred Twenty Second Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May 2010), pp. 130-134. Published by: American Economic Association, Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/27804977, Accessed: 13-12-2016

Baltissen, Gerard and Petra Penninkhoff, John Belt, Avinash Bikha, Roger Bymolt, Henk van Dam et al (2013). Going for Governance - Lessons learned from advisory interventions by the Royal Tropical Institute. KIT Publishers, Amsterdam. http://213ou636sh0ptphd141fqei1.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/health/wp-content/uploads/publications/2082_going_for_governance.pdf, Accessed: 16-01-2017

Foley, Conor (2007). Land Rights in Angola: poverty and plenty. Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Working Paper. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/91177/2007-11_Land%20Rights%20in%20Angola.pdf Accessed: 03-02-2017

Deininger, Klaus and D. A. Ali, S. Holden, Jaap Zevenbergen, (2008). Rural land certification in Ethiopia: Process, initial impact, and implications for other African countries. *World Development*, *36*(10), 1786-1812.

Deininger, Klaus and Gershon Feder (2009). Land Registration, Governance, and Development: Evidence and Implications for Policy. The World Bank Research Observer, Vol. 24, No. 2 (August 2009), pp. 233-266, Published by: Oxford University Press, Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/40649283, Accessed: 13-12-2016

Fransen, Sonja (2011). Migration and Development: A World In Motion: Fieldwork Report Burundi: Methodology and Sampling. Maastricht Graduate School of Governance, Maastricht. http://mgsog.merit.unu.edu/ISacademie/docs/burundi_fieldworkreport.pdf Accessed: 17-01-2017

Hall, Ruth and Ian Scoones, Giles Henley (2016). Strengthening Land Governance: Lessons from implementing the Voluntary Guidelines. LEGEND Report 2016.

Hilhorst, Thea (2013). Land governance policies in Burundi. In: Baltissen, Gerard and Petra Penninkhoff, John Belt, Avinash Bikha, Roger Bymolt, Henk van Dam et al (2013). Going for Governance - Lessons learned from advisory interventions by the Royal Tropical Institute. KIT Publishers, Amsterdam. http://213ou636sh0ptphd141fqei1.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/health/wp-content/uploads/publications/2082_going_for_governance.pdf Accessed: 16-01-2017

Hilhorst, Thea and Nicolas Porchet (2012). Burundi - FOOD SECURITY AND LAND GOVERNANCE FACTSHEET, Landgovernance.org, http://www.landgovernance.org/system/files/Burundi%20Factsheet%20-%202012.pdf Accessed: 31-01-2017

Holden, S. T. and Klaus Deininger, H. Ghebru (2010, April). Impact of land registration and certification on land border conflicts in Ethiopia. In *World Bank Annual Conference on Land Policy and Administration, Washington, DC*.

Holden, S. T. And Klaus Deininger, H. Ghebru (2009). Impacts of low-cost land certification on investment and productivity. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *91*(2), 359-373.

IDLO/ZOA (2016). Rapport de l'Etude à mi-parcours, Report conducted by the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) on behalf of ZOA, unpublished.

Kobusingye, Doreen Nancy and M. van Leeuwen, H. van Dijk (2016). Where do I report my land dispute? The impact of institutional proliferation on land governance in post-conflict Northern Uganda. *The Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law, 48(2),* 238-255.

Kohlhagen, Dominik (n.d.). Land reform in Burundi: Waiting for change after twenty years of fruitless debate.
http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/field_protection_clusters/Burundi/files/HLP%20AoR/Land_Reform_Burundi_EN.pdf Accessed: 13-12-2016

Kohlhagen, Dominik (2012). Burundi: Land policy making in a conflict prone country. Summary paper for the Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty,
http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/field_protection_clusters/Burundi/files/HLP%20AoR/Land_Policy_Making_Conflict_Prone_Country_2012_EN.pdf

Netherlands Embassy Office Bujumbura-Burundi (2011). Multi annual strategic plan 2012 – 2015.
https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/binaries/rijksoverheid/documenten/jaarplannen/2012/02/15/meerjarige-strategische-plannen-burundi/meerjarige-strategische-plannen-burundi.pdf Accessed: 11-01-2017

Van Leeuwen, Mathijs and D. Kobusingye, P.H. Justin, R.T. Djomo, and J.W.M. van Dijk (2016a). Post-conflict land governance reform in the African Great Lakes region. Part I - The challenges of post-conflict land reform, ASC Infosheet 30,
http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/post-conflict-land-governance-reform-african-great-lakes-region-part-i-challenges-post Accessed: 22-12-2106

Van Leeuwen, Mathijs and D. Kobusingye, P.H. Justin, R.T. Djomo, and J.W.M. van Dijk (2016b). Post-conflict land governance reform in the African Great Lakes region. Part II - Reshuffling land ownership for development, ASC Infosheet 31,
http://www.ascleiden.nl/publications/post-conflict-land-governance-reform-african-great-lakes-region-part-ii-reshuffling Accessed: 22-12-2106

VGGT (2012). Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure Forestries and Fisheries, Committee on World Food Security, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-guidelines/en/ Accessed: 22-12-2016

ZOA (2013). Communal Land Service in Mabanda and Vugizo communes in Makamba Province of Burundi. Planning Document, unpublished.

ZOA (2015). Promoting landownership certification in Burundi, Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Plan, unpublished.

Appendix 1

Mabanda Commune (Blue point indicates Vugizo Commune)

Source: Google Maps

Appendix 2 Vugizo Commune

Source: Google Maps