INCLUDE

Final findings
Barriers to Batwa inclusion in Rwanda

The research project 'Investigation into structural barriers to historically marginalized people's (Batwa) inclusion in development in Rwanda' looks at why attempts to remedy Batwa marginalization have not succeeded, despite official acknowledgement of their vulnerability. The key hypothesis is that the framing of Batwa identity within the global indigenous discourse, which is composed of national and international laws and involves a variety of transnational actors, plays a determining role in their persistent marginalization and disempowerment. The following are the main interim findings and policy messages.

Final findings

- Socio-economic disadvantages, notably in relation to access to land and property, produce vulnerabilities. The depth and range of Batwa poverty affects their participation in community activities, which creates new vulnerabilities, particularly in relation to the law, violence, access to the benefits of community participation, their ability to raise their voice, and their ability to seek redress.
- The Batwa feel a strong sense of unfairness, but it is not yet clear whether this relates to their sense of themselves as a historically-marginalized people (and, more broadly, to poverty) or to their contemporary identity.
- Progress is strongly seen by the Batwa as necessary and encompasses both socio-economic progress towards integration, particularly at the individual (rather than community) level, and the need for more material goods.
- In relation to youth employment, many Batwa stated a desire to work their way out of poverty by beginning a small business, but lack the start-up funds to do so. Youth employment may be facilitated by providing training in small business start-ups and interest-free loans for the initial capital.
- While identity functions as a strategic barrier to socio-economic progress towards better integration, the research found that indigenous identity is largely irrelevant to Batwan identity and everyday life (as they understand it).
- The research methodology, public reflective equilibrium, does not appear to be entirely successful in this context: while it was successful in facilitating interviewees' reflections on their situation, interviewees were not willing or able to assert new capability categories. Any new categories that have come out of the data have been deduced by the researchers rather than asserted by interviewees.

Policy messages

- **Ask excluded groups how they view their own exclusion:** Identity ascription is a global process, involving strategic actors at a range of levels, both historic and contemporary. However, social exclusion is a two-way process and outsiders cannot understand the particular complexity of what it is being excluded. Hence, the importance of asking excluded groups how they view their own inclusion and identity, using a reflexive approach, cannot be overstated.
- **Ensure that interventions consider identity:** Identity politics and socio-economic disadvantage 'intersect' and reinforce one another, which is why marginalized groups are so often the poorest of the poor. Hence, efforts to address socio-economic disadvantages should always include an understanding of identity construction.

- **Recognize that identity can also be a barrier to inclusion:** While identity recognition can play a positive role in bringing a group in from the cold and increasing their participation in society, it can also become a structural and fundamental barrier for the excluded to overcome.

Knowledge products

- Ndahinda, F (2016) 'On Peoples' rights, indigenous rights and interpretative ambiguities in decisions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights', African Journal on Human Rights, 16: 29–57.
- Goodwin, M (2016) Approaching Social Exclusion: poverty, discrimination, identity, Keynote lecture presented at Workshop on Poverty, Bochum, Germany, 8–9 July 2016 (the lecture presented the project methodology as a means of approaching social exclusion).
- Goodwin, M (2015) PetchKutcha, Presentation on social exclusion to public audience at the Tilburg Night University, 1 October 2015, https://videocollege.uvt.nl/Mediasite/Play/b6caaf31c57f4513bfec355b1f5c5ce21d
- Documentary of the interview process and provisional findings, shown at mid-term workshop (available shortly on the project website).
- Goodwin, M (2015) Indigenous rights, social exclusion and the Batwa of Rwanda, Conference paper presented in Ghent, 9 December 2015.
- Goodwin, M (2015) A view from the South, Conference paper presented in conference on Transnational Sovereignties at King's College London, 18 March 2016 (the paper situates Batwa settlements at the centre of transnational narratives).
- Goodwin, M (2016) The importance of elsewhere, Inaugural lecture delivered at Tilburg University, 29 April 2016 (the lecture situates the Batwa in a global indigenous narrative), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsjO4NNSxuc&list=PLxCB-ZrMdnFsT3xbpwb2sZk0VIRS07fl3&index=10

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http://includeplatform.net/research-group/investigating-structural-barriers-to-batwa-inclusion-in-development/