

Analysis of the Integration Process of Vulnerable Communities in Social and Economic Development: Batwa Community of Muyange Site Two

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Abstract

The lack of access to food, education, housing, medical healthcare, freedom of participation, and sanitary facilities are some characteristics of vulnerability. Vulnerability can arise from an individual, community, or larger population challenges, requiring diverse policy interventions from social and economic neighborhood development, and income policies, to individual medical support. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the integration process of vulnerable communities in social and economic development, specifically focusing on the Batwa community of Muyange Site Two. The study's objectives are: (1) to identify the living conditions of the vulnerable Batwa communities in Muyange Site Two, (2) to highlight factors hindering the integration process in social and economic development, (3) to explore the role of local administration in integrating vulnerable communities, and (4) to propose practical solutions expediting the Batwa community's integration. Employing stratified random sampling, the research included 50 households from a total of 200 households. It combined qualitative and quantitative methods, using interviews and questionnaires administered directly to the

Batwa community. The study revealed challenges faced by the Batwa in accessing food, land for agriculture, and education, leading to extreme poverty. It also identified strategies for the Batwa, local administration, and the government to accelerate integration, emphasizing self-reliance and government support for housing and land ownership to overcome discrimination in the social and economic integration process.

Keywords: Integration Process, Vulnerable Community, Social Development, Economic Development, and Batwa Community

Introduction

The general objective is to analyze the integration process of the Batwa Community as vulnerable individuals in social and economic development. The main elements to be developed include the living conditions of the Batwa community, the factors that hindered the integration process, and the role of local administration in this integration.

On every continent, one finds indigenous peoples/ethnic groups with distinct cultural and social organizations, traditions, and ways of life that separate them from the rest of society (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019). While variations exist among these groups, they share common characteristics, notably extreme vulnerability to discrimination, exploitation, and oppression, putting them at risk of literal extermination, particularly their cultures and traditions (Ball et al., 2022).

In East Central Africa, the indigenous peoples known as Pygmies or Batwa are acknowledged as the oldest inhabitants of the African tropical forests covering much of Central Africa (Hergum, 2000). The same author asserts that when Hutus invaded Rwanda between 500 to 1000 A.D., and later, the Tutsis arrived from Abyssinia in the 16th century, they found the Batwa had already been there for centuries. The "ethnic difference" between these groups remains a significant issue. The Batwa unequivocally identify themselves as indigenous people in their past and present ways of life, distinguishing themselves from the other two ethnic groups said to have originated from different areas.

Today in Central Africa, we identify the Batwa in the area of the Great Lakes region, around Lake Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the west, Uganda in the north, and Burundi in the south. The Batwa have no history of long migration. As several studies attest (IWGIA, 2007), the Batwa or Pygmies living in Central Africa number approximately 300,000 and are called by different names from country to country: in Burundi, Rwanda, D.R.C., and Uganda, they are called Batwa or Pygmies; in Tanzania, they are called Hadzabe; Aka or Bambend-jelé in Congo-Brazzaville; Bagyeli, Baka, and Medzan in Cameroon, etc. According to Janssen (2015) quoting Lewis

(2000), by listening to Burundian public opinion, one would easily believe that nowadays, the general conception of the Batwa has improved, that the Batwa and other ethnic groups have arrived on an equal footing, that discrimination against them belongs to the past. Consequently, there is no difference left between the rural Burundians. However, it is not easy, as it has been written, that "economic conditions are difficult for most rural people in the region today".

Regarding the update on the Batwa, in Burundi, a distinct political approach was adopted through the Arusha peace negotiations that concluded the prolonged civil war (Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, 2003). According to the report by the African Commission's Working Group on Population/Indigenous Communities (2005), Burundi is a country with approximately 12 million inhabitants, divided into three primary ethnic groups: Hutu (about 84%), Tutsi (about 14%), and Batwa (about 2%). As per IWGIA (2007), the Batwa communities in Burundi are recognized as one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, notwithstanding the presence of other vulnerable groups. The report highlights the high levels of poverty among these individuals, the lack of access to education for their children, issues with land and healthcare accessibility, quasi-institutional exclusion from employment, and the looming threat of the extinction of their culture. However, the Batwa communities represent a workforce, facilitating potential intervention on their behalf.

In Burundi, the Batwa are gradually gaining more representation. Presently, this community holds one seat in parliament and three seats in the Senate, as reserved by the Burundian constitution of 2005 (Art 164). Enabling the Batwa community's participation in the country's social and economic development is crucial for their improved situation. The involvement of indigenous minority groups in human rights reports has been a long-standing concern. Indigenous peoples often face issues such as violence, marginalization, dispossession of land, forced relocation, and denial of land rights, all of which are documented in human rights reports (United Nations, 2019). Amnesty International emphasizes that indigenous peoples' rights are human rights and acknowledges the historical denial and violation of these rights (Amnesty International, 2019). Minorities and indigenous peoples collectively have the right to define themselves and have their identities recognized, as outlined in international human rights standards (*Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, 2024).

In Bubanza province, specifically at Gahongore Hill, there is a site called Muyange Two that comprises more than 200 Batwa households and 415 households from other ethnic groups. It began in 2000 during Burundi's civil war. Most of the population living there faces challenging life conditions, rendering them vulnerable. NGOs like CORD, UNIPROBA, and Christian

Aid have supported them in developing economic projects. These initiatives aim to raise literacy awareness, modernize banana farming, improve goat breeding (received as gifts), and promote activities in arts and women's groups focused on savings and credit.

Despite these interventions, the Batwa community and other vulnerable groups still struggle with self-financial support and social and economic integration. They resort to begging or working for individuals to meet their basic needs. Some of the livestock provided to them were used for nutrition, while others were sold for food and alcohol. Surrounding households are cautioned to secure their harvest against robbers from Muyange site Two. Integrating the Batwa community and vulnerable individuals enables their full and effective participation in societal and economic development structures, serving as a solution to combat discrimination and inequality. According to Janssen (2015), the current economic climate poses challenges for rural residents in the area, as noted by Lewis (2000). Muyange Site Two requires assistance to enhance awareness, acquire donations for improvement, and receive comprehensive capacity-building training. This training should focus on modern crop cultivation techniques, woodwork material maintenance, and establishing small family businesses for self-sustainability, minimizing the need for begging.

Definitions for key terms: Integration process, Vulnerable Community, Social and Economic Development, and Batwa Community.

The integration process, etymologically, comes from the Latin "integrate" which means to make whole, complete. According to Cormoş (2022), the integration process within the association of the subject, having to adapt, being in conformity, and being able to be displayed or less favorable to the insertion. On one hand, we can understand the integration process as an operation by which an individual or a group is incorporated into an activity, and on the other hand, it is a policy to integrate disadvantaged populations, immigrants, minorities, and the poor (Cummins, 2019). In this paper, the integration process means considering the Batwa community as vulnerable people and helping them socially and economically to participate in activities that generate income to become self-support and to be also part taxpayers.

Vulnerable Community: First of all, someone can describe a vulnerable as something that can be wounded or physically injured. Second, can refer to a vulnerable as being open to criticism or attack, easily hurt by adverse criticism, and sensitive (Merriam-webster, 2019). Vulnerability within a community system from susceptibility to harm due to the interaction between available resources and life challenges. It results from developmental problems, personal incapacities, disadvantaged social status, inadequate networks and supports, degraded environments, and complex interactions over a lifetime. Addressing varying vulnerabilities requires different policy

interventions, from social and economic development to educational and income policies, as well as medical interventions (Kreuter et al., 2020). In this context, 'vulnerable community' refers to materially poor individuals living in adverse conditions, lacking primary needs like education, food, housing, and land, requiring support and protection.

Social development, as described by Khan's concept of the "upward movement" encompasses all aspects of society including economic and non-economic factors, institutions, attitudes, and policy measures that promote change (Khan, 2000). So, by addressing social, economic, and institutional factors while also considering attitudes and policy interventions, the upward movement aims to uplift communities and facilitate comprehensive development. In this article, social development aims to facilitate the Batwa community's access to food, education, land, healthcare, financial aid, and positions in public administration.

Economic Development, spans various countries and emerged as a subject in the late 1940s according to Amartya Sen (1996). Sen emphasizes its spontaneous emergence from chaos, aiming to overcome poverty through income-generating activities. Rocher (1985) defines economic development as activities related to the production and consumption of wealth, measured by GDP and GNP for standards of welfare. In this context, economic development involves sustained efforts by policymakers and communities to enhance a society's economic well-being and quality of life.

Batwa Community, Lewis (2001), refers to a group of hunter-gatherers in equatorial forests in central Africa. In this paper, the Batwa community denotes an ethnic minority lacking land ownership, especially in Burundi.

Theoretical Approach

According to Galvan (2004), a theory constitutes a comprehensive explanation of how variables collaborate, their interrelationships, and particularly, how they influence one another. He states, "Theories serve as explanations aiding the understanding of human behavior and offering a framework for community developers to comprehend and elucidate events". The integration process of the vulnerable Batwa community in social and economic development involves discerning various classes of vulnerable people. Three theories have been formulated:

Theory of Social Integration, On the theoretical level, social integration signifies the principles by which individuals (actors, agents, or subjects) are interconnected within the social space, referring to relationships among these actors and how they accept social rules. The concept of integration is fundamental in functionalist theories, defining the mode of relations among the units of a system. They act to avoid disrupting the system and, conversely, cooperate to promote its unified functioning. The notion of

integrity holds importance in other theoretical perspectives utilizing concepts like consensus, solidarity, and correspondence. Kamali (1999) and (Xie et al., 2022) describe social participation as a dimension of social integration, involving the construction, reconstruction, production, and reproduction of social life. It's also about exercising a sense of belonging and satisfaction, engaging in relations that underpin successful strategies (e.g., a teacher not only imparts knowledge but contributes to societal reproduction by transferring human capital). Participation extends to recognizing social reality and being acknowledged by other community groups. Individual integral social action is a dialectical self-realization process within a familiar social context, providing the means for meaningful social action based on one's understanding of social life.

Theory of Low Development, according to this theory that started in the 1950s, poverty was seen as a consequence of economic underdevelopment. In the year of 1970s, economic development did not necessarily eradicate poverty. This theory helps the researcher to understand the integration process of the Batwa community in social and economic development as it is among the low-developed people as each one can testify. Developing a low population like Batwa lets them also participate in the general development of a country as stipulated by a theory based on low development. Poverty becomes an autonomous notion of the economic sphere. This is the birth of development theories from low (Brady, 2019). The population then becomes the actor and not only the beneficiaries. From this theory, the vulnerable Batwa community of Muyange Two Site can learn to be involved in activities that can help them participate in developing the country considerably like other communities, by raising their social and economic abilities.

Theory of Poverty, poverty denotes lacking adequate material possessions or income to meet basic needs. It encompasses social, economic, and political facets. Absolute poverty signifies a complete absence of means to satisfy fundamental personal requirements like food, clothing, and shelter. The threshold defining absolute poverty remains relatively constant, irrespective of location or era. In contrast, relative poverty arises when an individual fails to meet a minimum standard of living compared to others at the same time and place. Thus, the benchmark for relative poverty varies among countries and societies. This perspective reveals poverty as a consequence of societal inequality (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019a).

Additionally, it advocates for an empowerment model focused on the economy as a solution to enhance the socio-economic conditions of the Batwa, globally and particularly in Burundi. Galbraith's theory of mass poverty posits that populations trapped in poverty justify their situation due to the absence of sustainable progress (1980). He attributes this to the natural inclination of affluent countries to increase production and income, affecting people's

aspirations. He concludes that both scenarios result in either acceptance or deprivation.

Methodology

Methodology refers to the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. It involves the study of the principles and rules that determine the use of particular methods and techniques. A sound methodology is essential for ensuring that research is carried out in a rigorous and unbiased manner and that the findings can be trusted and replicated by others (Wilkinson, 2019). This study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods, utilizing an interview guide for qualitative approaches and a questionnaire administered directly to the Batwa community at Muyange Site Two. The study aimed to explore the impact of integrating vulnerable communities into Burundi's social and economic development and devise practical integration strategies.

Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were formulated to assess the living conditions of the Batwa community at Muyange Site Two. Similar questions were designed to identify factors hindering the Batwa community's integration into the social and economic development of Muyange Site Two. Additionally, inquiries were structured to elucidate the role of local administration in the integration process and to derive practical solutions for accelerating the integration of the Batwa community. These solutions aim to empower the Batwa as minorities within social and economic power structures, fostering their responsibility to combat discrimination and inequality. The researcher engaged in dialogue with local leaders, obtaining official permission to collect data from diverse community members at Muyange Site Two.

The target population comprised all households of the Batwa community residing in Muyange Site Two (200). Given the population size of the Batwa residing in the Muyange Two Site under study, a questionnaire was administered to a sample of fifty (50) households, representing $\frac{1}{4}$ (0.25%) of the total (200) Batwa households. Additionally, interviews were conducted with four local administrators as part of the interview protocol. This formula was utilized to determine the estimated sample size for this study: $n = (\text{Percentage} \times \text{Population}) / 100$.

In determining this sample, the researcher relied on a remark by Dr. Alexis (2018), quoting Javeau (1990), which states: "*les théories statistiques ne sont pas à appliquer à la lettre mais aucun échantillon ne devrait pas compter moins de trente individus*" (p.7), translating to 'Statistics theories are not to be applied as constructed, but any sample should have no fewer than thirty individuals.' Respondents were chosen using stratified sampling techniques. According to Kothari (2004), a stratified or representative sample

aims to select subgroups in proportion to their numbers in the population itself. This technique ensures the representation of the Batwa community and local administrators in the sample.

Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 1: Age group and Level of Instruction of Batwa community Respondents

Age group / Level instructions	Age group 18-25	Age group 26-30	Age group 31-35	Age group 36-40	40 and above	Tot n=50	%
Never attended School	2	3	2	1	10	18	36
Primary school	10	7	4	4	5	30	60
Secondary school	2	0	0	0	0	2	4
University	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Established by researchers

This table documents information regarding the various categories of respondents’ age groups and educational levels. Field data reveal that among the respondents, 18 out of 50, i.e., 36%, did not attend school; 30 out of 50, i.e., 60%, attended primary school; and 2 out of 50, i.e., 4%, attended secondary school for this research.

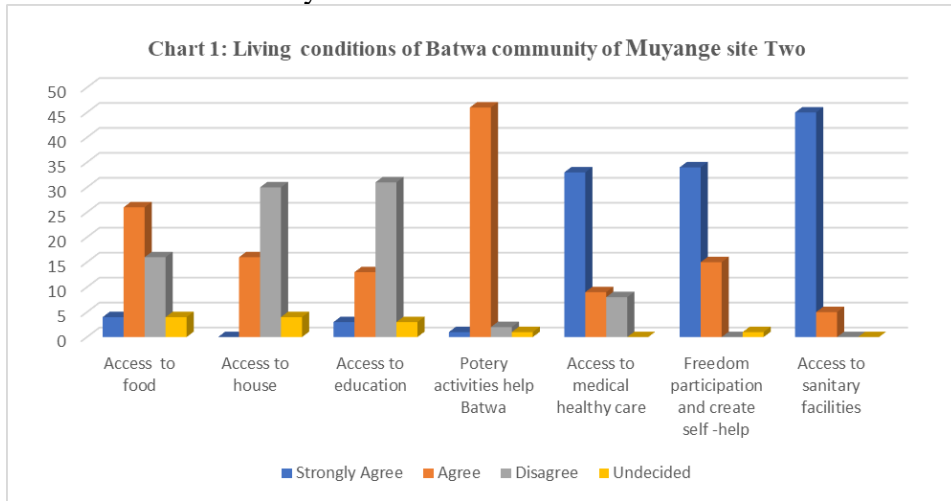
In summary, Table 1 illustrates the low educational attainment within the Batwa community at Muyange Site Two, where the majority, 60%, completed education at the primary level. This lower educational level is likely to impede rapid socio-economic integration, particularly for the Batwa in Muyange Site Two and the Batwa community in general.

Results and Discussion

Since the inception of this work, the target population has been 200 households situated in Muyange Site Two, located in Bubanza commune, Mitakataka zone, and at Gohongore Hill. A sample of 50 households was identified for the respondents, and 50 questionnaires were distributed to them. The questionnaire aimed to uncover the living conditions and factors hindering the integration process of the Batwa community in social and economic development, examine the role of the local administration and gather suggestions to expedite the integration process.

The researcher employed the Likert scale to structure the questionnaire for data collection. Named after organizational psychologist Rensis Likert, this scale presents responses as: (1) Strongly Agree (SA); (2) Agree (A); (3) Undecided (U); (4) Disagree (D) (Wikipedia Contributors, 2019b). All respondents completed and returned the questionnaires, resulting in a 100% response rate. This rate aligns with the guidelines proposed by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), suggesting a 50% response rate for analysis and reporting purposes. The interviewees comprised 4 local administrations, all of whom were successfully interviewed, ensuring a 100% response rate. Data collected

from both the Batwa community of Muyange Site Two and the local administration were analyzed.

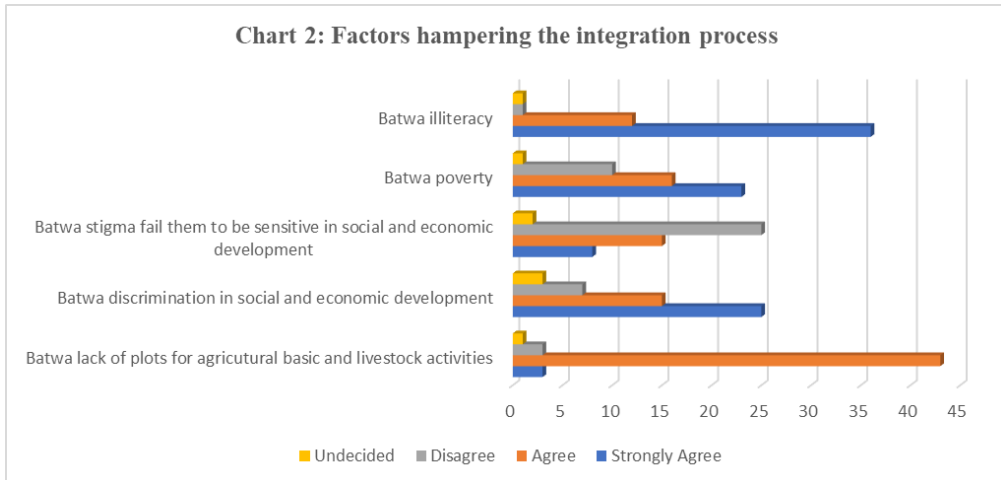


Source: Data collected from the field

The living conditions of the Batwa community depict a miserable life marked by the lack of access to food, housing, and public education. Among the 50 respondents, 16, i.e., 32%, disagreed regarding vulnerable access to food, while 30, i.e., 60%, disagreed concerning vulnerable access to housing. Additionally, 31 respondents, i.e., 62%, disagreed with the access to education.

These results highlight persistent issues within the Batwa community, aligning with Jansen's (2015) citation of Lewis (2000), emphasizing the challenging economic conditions faced by rural people in the region. Many of the Batwa's neighbors, similarly impoverished, perceive actions as favoritism, exacerbating the situation.

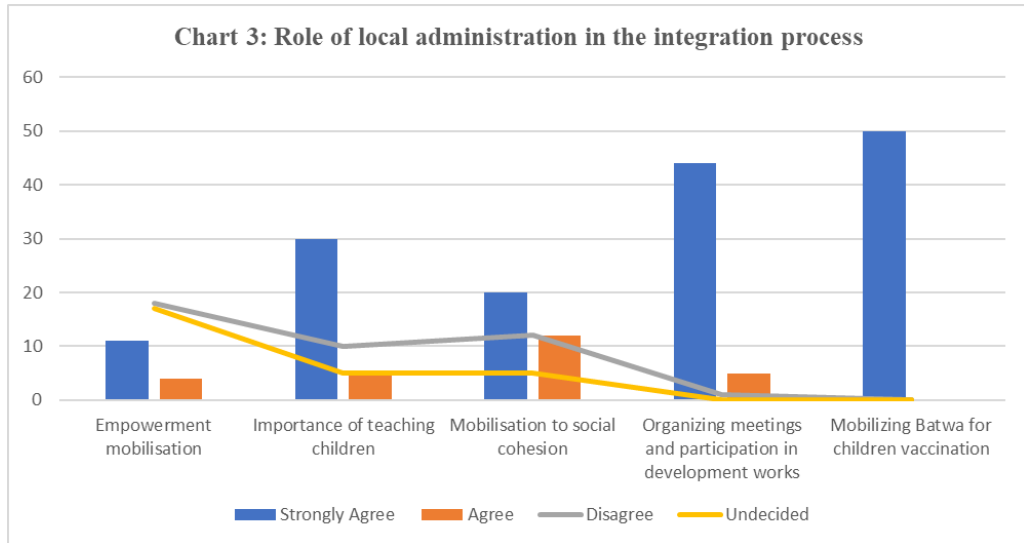
Furthermore, these findings resonate with Alexis Ndabarushimana (2021), who emphasizes primary needs as fundamental for a better life—access to water, medical healthcare, education, housing, and employment is essential for every individual. These findings elucidate the barriers impeding the integration process of the Batwa community in social and economic development.



Source: Data collected from the field

Findings identified five parameters hindering the integration of the Batwa community in social and economic development. Among 50 respondents, 36 (72%) strongly agreed that Batwa illiteracy impedes integration, while 23 (46%) highlighted Batwa poverty as a barrier. Additionally, 25 (50%) disagreed that stigma prevents their integration, and 25 (50%) strongly agreed that Batwa discrimination hampers the process. Furthermore, 43 (86%) respondents cited Batwa's lack of plots as a hindrance.

These results indicate that the lack of agricultural plots, discrimination, poverty, and illiteracy hinder integration. This aligns with Jansen (2015) quoting Gaudeman (2001) on the significance of sharing lasting resources within the Batwa community through social associations. Margaretha Wewerinke-Singh et al. (2023), highlighted mobilization as crucial for planning and addressing injustices across generations. Then, Tornado M. (2012) supported social development by investing in the population to eliminate obstacles and enable dignified planning. The following section focuses on the role of local administration in the integration process.

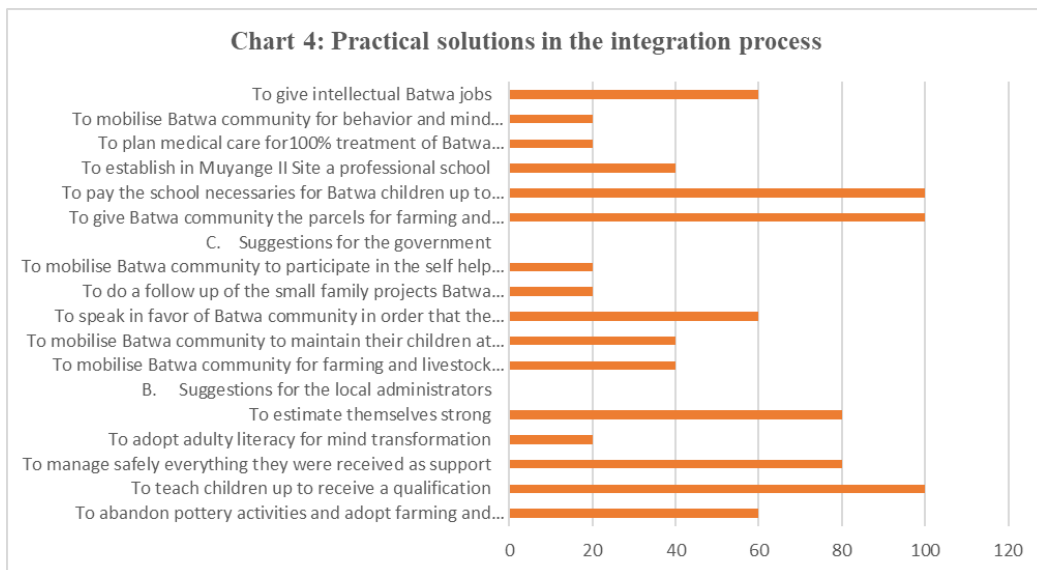


Source: Data collected from the field

From the findings, the local administration concentrated on five key areas to mobilize the Batwa community, facilitating their integration into social and economic development. Among 50 respondents, 30 (60%) strongly agreed on the importance of teaching children, while 20 (40%) stressed mobilization for social cohesion. Additionally, 44 (88%) supported organizing meetings to engage Batwa in community development, and all 50 respondents (100%) advocated for mobilizing Batwa for vaccination programs.

These results highlight the local administration's role in enhancing Batwa integration, focusing on teaching children, fostering social cohesion, community development, and promoting vaccination. Jounot (2004) emphasized infrastructure development, public service modernization, economic support, education, healthcare, housing, and job opportunities to uplift living conditions.

Kamali (1999) defined social integration as reciprocal interactions among social segments, encompassing both conflict and order. Integration signifies connecting diverse elements into a social whole or community, shaping stable social relations and balance among groups. The following section suggests practical solutions to expedite social and economic integration.



Source: Data collected from the field

The findings pertain to solutions mentioned by respondents for integrating the Batwa community into social and economic development. The Batwa community is considered the primary aspect of this integration process. Among 50 respondents, 30 (60%) suggested involving the Batwa community in basic agriculture and livestock. Additionally, 40 respondents (80%) suggested managing received support safely. All 50 respondents (100%) advocated for educating Batwa children to achieve qualifications, while 40 (80%) suggested encouraging the Batwa to esteem themselves strongly.

The second aspect involves the focus on local administration and government. 30 respondents (60%) expressed that the local administration should support the Batwa in acquiring plots for agricultural activities. Additionally, all 50 respondents (100%) mentioned that the government should provide plots and cover school necessities for Batwa children until they complete their education.

Overall, practical solutions were crucial for both the Batwa community and the local administration, representing the government, to fulfill their respective responsibilities. These findings correspond to Rwantabagu's (2009) assertion that the Batwa's material conditions, particularly their lack of land and economic resources, significantly affect their societal status.

These findings resonate with Professor Alan Roger's approach to aiding non-literate adults, emphasizing literacy as crucial for success and development. Implementing these practical suggestions could help Batwa internalize development concepts and lead more modern lives.

Table 2: Synthetic Overview of the Integration Process of Batwa Community

Causes	Consequences	Strategies
Lack of plots for farming and livestock activities	Food problems and barriers for the source of auto-finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving Batwa plots for basic agricultural and livestock activities - To give Batwa tools for basic agricultural and livestock activities
Lack of means	House problems for the Batwa community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building houses for Batwa
Batwa illiteracy	Education problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teaching Batwa children up to finish their school studies - Mobilizing Batwa to adopt adult literacy - Mobilizing Batwa for mind transformation and behavior
Lack of lands where to dig pottery and tools for modernization	Pottery problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving tools and capacity building for pottery modernization
Diseases	Medicare problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medicare rescue and vaccinations
Batwa discrimination	Batwa integration hindrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Cohesion mobilisation
Pandemic diseases	Sanitary problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public water and vaccinations
Batwa poverty	Begging and lazing around Stealing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobilizing Batwa to stop begging and lazing around. - To promote Batwa manual works - To give jobs to Batwa who finished the school - To estimate Batwa on work.

Source: Established by researchers

Table 2 above displays the detrimental causes that hinder the integration process of the Batwa community in social and economic development. It also provides a synthetic overview by outlining the consequences of these harmful causes and proposing strategies to overcome the factors impeding the integration process. These actions are essential to accelerate socio-economic integration.

Conclusion

The study of this paper aims to analyze the integration process of vulnerable communities in social and economic development. Four objectives were established as follows: to identify the living conditions of the vulnerable Batwa communities in Muyange Site Two, to highlight factors hindering the integration process in social and economic development, to explore the role of local administration in integrating vulnerable communities, and to propose practical solutions expediting the Batwa community's integration. To summarize, the paper contributes to understanding the reasons behind the importance of the integration process of the Batwa community in social and

economic development and not only its implications on the characteristics of the person who is qualified to be vulnerable but also on the factors hampering the integration process and on the role of local administration in the integration process in social and economic development in Muyange site Two. It has revealed that lack of access to food, education, houses, Medicare, freedom participation, and lack of sanitary facilities are the factors hampering the integration process in the social and economic development of the Batwa community in Muyange site Two. It is a serious and precarious problem in terms of the integration of the vulnerable in social and economic development.

The paper highlighted that the factors that hampered the integration process of the Batwa community become everlasting characteristics that affect vulnerable communities and people from one generation to the other. In the study, the role of administration is to accelerate the integration process in social and economic development. Batwa community in Muyange site Two who experience bad living conditions suffers a range of food problems, education, housing, land, and health problems. Their ability to earn a living and participate in public life diminished and remained with stigma and poverty among other people. Batwa community in Muyange site Two is in extreme poverty of primary needs which are the main causes of the slow integration process in social and economic development. For more solutions, to overcome this big issue, the findings revealed that social and economic development is required to invest in the population by eradicating obstacles, and hindrances that forbid communities to implement their plans with dignity.

In general, to cope with the impacts of the integration process of the Batwa community in social and economic development, more emphasis must be placed on education teaching Batwa, giving land for basic agriculture and livestock, and building houses for them to prevent slow acceleration in the integration process. These issues must be handled with all seriousness by providing all the needed resources for holistic integration. The findings request Batwa community volunteers esteem themselves as able and proper humanity in living a more modern life to internalize the idea of development and a pressing need for the government and other actors to emphasize more energy and help the Batwa community by giving them land as it is known in Burundian culture that land is the sources of finance.

Conflict of Interest: The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability: All data are included in the content of the paper.

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Declaration for Human Participants: This study has been approved by the Hope Africa University, and the principles of the Helsinki Declaration were followed.

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