



Evaluation of the Peace Building and Development Programme in Rwanda

Executive Summary

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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Evaluators: Charles Twesigye, Betty Babirye
Ddungu

Executive Summary

General Background

This report presents the findings of the Mid-term review commissioned by Oxfam GB Rwanda during September – October 2007. The review has been conducted a team of two experts; a Policy and Strategic Planning Specialist and a Rural Sociologist/Gender Expert. The overall objective review was to take stock of the progress made towards realising the programme objectives, so as to draw lessons for improving programme's quality, future programming and sharing. A participatory methodology was adopted, and embraced in-depth stakeholders' interviews and focused group discussions, direct field observations, attendance of community meetings and Gacaca sessions, and literature review. Field visits were held in 17 cells (14 intervention and 3 non intervention cells as control) in 7 districts in 4 provinces. District topographical maps were used to locate the cells before fieldwork.

Programme Context

Background

Rwanda continues to grapple with the effects of the 1994 genocide, although remarkable achievements have been made. The genocide signified a climax of the socio-political tensions and divisions that had disoriented the social-political structure in Rwanda since colonial times, left the socioeconomic infrastructure totally destroyed, too many orphans and vulnerable people; high HIV/AIDS prevalence, and a deeply divided society. While the physical and economic infrastructures have largely been resuscitated and progress made in reconciling the hitherto divided society, challenges of poverty, conflict and social vulnerability remain. These are compounded by a large proportion of young unemployed people, low literacy levels, especially among women, and dwindling economic and livelihood opportunities, especially in rural areas.

The current programme which runs from 2004 was designed on the basis of the challenges communities and Government were facing which included reintegrating demobilized soldiers, dealing with the wounds re-opened by the gacaca, and (re)settling refugee returnees. The programme builds on a pilot project in 2001, in which OGB transitioned from short term humanitarian intervention to longer term development programming, and has since 2004, reached 106 cells in 10 districts.

Changing political environment

The political, socio-economic and institutional environment in which the programme is implemented has changed remarkably – decentralisation is being consolidated and local governments have assumed a greater role; economic growth oriented EDPRS contrasts sharply with the previous PRSP that focussed on social indicators; *Gacaca* is winding up and Government has established Community Mediators (*Abunzi*) to reconcile while they administer local justice. And, sectoral and national development policies that guide all interventions are more solid, coherent and predictable compared to 2004 when the current programme started.

Programme Objectives and Target Groups

Targeting 150 vulnerable communities, the programme's main objectives are to contribute to:

- non-violent approaches for conflict management at individual, household and community level;
- equitable participation in governance through conflict sensitive poverty reduction projects;
- contribute to conflict sensitive implementation of the GoR's decentralization programme for good governance;

- development of conflict sensitive national level policies and plans that promote National Reconciliation and Poverty Reduction; and to
- strengthen the link between civil society actors and government in addressing national reconciliation and poverty reduction.

Main Findings:

With regard to review objectives, the main findings are summarised thus:

Relevance: The programme is highly relevant to the national priorities and community needs; has embraced livelihoods-based approach to conflict management and contributed to the integration of demobilised soldiers into civilian life. The programme has directly intervened in conflict issues complementing and implementing the Peace Building activities of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC); and is supporting capacity building of communities in conflict transformation through training and community forums.

Effectiveness: the programme approach is deemed effective in targeting poor, vulnerable and conflict-ridden communities – having reached more than 110,000 poor people in some of the remotest areas of Rwanda. Direct interventions enabled actual execution of projects. Conflict management training has helped increase understanding of conflict and peace building concepts. But the training in project management could be improved especially to address the need for adequate training, practical guides for project and financial management. Community micro-projects have provided arena to identify and resolve conflicts, and to enable individuals and households to co-exist peacefully and symbiotically.

Impact: Some of the visible impacts already realised relate to improvements in:

- Community capacity to manage / mitigate conflicts using non-violent means: evidenced by increased number of skilled and motivated conflict mediators; reduced conflicts, due declining culture of litigation, fines,; community cohesion as different people have been brought together by common interests e.g. genocidaires and genocide victims, demobilised soldiers, etc.;
- Community livelihoods: livestock provided manure, increased production up to 3 times; Produce stores increased access to seed contributing to food security and incomes, as well as increased community safety nets and disaster response capacity (e.g. famine). Among youth, a productive work culture is emerging as is among the “Batwa”.
- multiple benefits for women from milling machines- family health, nutrition, incomes, etc;
- Participation of women - including old women. Women now attend meetings and can easily seek support against sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Improving local governance: local leaders’ knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in listening, resolving conflicts, etc., were reported to have increased; Practice of collective decision making are being developed; poorest communities now have (or expect to own) live assets; Corruption associated with local leaders being judges, reduced, increasing transparency & access to “justice”; and community members are now easy to mobilise and increasing contact with local leaders, because they have forums where to meet, including the poorest people who were often under-looked.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

The OGB programme faces several challenges key of which include:

- High expectations from communities & local leadership amidst small financing base;
- Political & social sensitivity of conflict & reconciliation issues
- Breaking through socio-cultural factors/ attitudes that undermine some community projects

- Geographical & infrastructure barriers;
- *Gacaca* & post-*Gacaca* situation
- Institutional capacity concerns – skill levels, resources for M&E, and reporting

But it needs to be stated that the OGB programme has enormous opportunities to make impact:

- *Continuing programme relevance* – the conflict situation that the OGB programme is addressing is only changing context but the programme continues to be relevant;
- *Unique intervention approach* – the approach, thematic and geographical areas of OGB work are unique, and its remarkable success in such hard-to-reach areas has provided ground to make greater impact and mobilize more resources and actors;
- *The Joint Action Forum* and other formal networking structures, to build on and expand its partnerships
- *Solid presence in decentralised entities* – with well staffed and equipped regional offices in each province, OGB has opportunity to champion change, influence the development agenda and approach, and mobilise other partners.
- *Strong donor will* to support the programme
- *Clearer national and local policy context and solid institutional structures* has made the framework of engagement clearer, more predictable and supportive.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Key conclusions from the review include are that:

- the programme is relevant and the approach has been continuously adjusted to respond to the changing socio-political and institutional context;
- the programme model is effective in reaching and ensuring participation of all people, often spreading benefits beyond the target communities. But improvements are needed to effectively include the poorest members;
- the programme has significantly impacted the intervention areas through capacity building in conflict management; genuine reconciliation and coexistence, and tangible community projects for livelihoods and income generation.

Major Key Recommendations

- ✓ **Review the approach and programme operations** to: scale down the scattered interventions and increase the capacity building support in conflict management beyond training, community mobilization and participatory project management; devolve responsibilities for managing project funds so that staff time can be freed and communities get opportunity to hold themselves accountable. There is also need to focus on a smaller area – *Umudugudu* but retain the cell as the overall intervention area at community level; and revise the training manual to make its content richer and more user-friendly; and finally, there is need to rehabilitate community assets and re-train PMC members in older cells to ensure sustainability; and make local partnerships more formal.
- ✓ **Streamline improve the monitoring and evaluation system** to make it more effective, particularly, the data collection, analysis and reporting on outcome and impact indicators; and harmonizing the data collection and reporting tools to facilitate capturing detailed and comparable data;
- **A more flexible financing regime** should be considered – so that more relevant projects that reflect local priorities are implemented with minimal conditions. In this regard, there is need to consider social projects like schools, health centres, community centres – which have greater scope for participation, are more visible and symbolic.
- **Increase knowledge and skills of staff** especially in project monitoring and evaluation, leadership and communication and documentation.

- **A strategy for advocacy and networking to facilitate working with others** should be developed and implemented to popularise the adoption of the OGB's peace building and coexistence approach at policy level as well as decentralised levels.
- **Comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning** system that includes documentation of successes and sharing of information internally and with external stakeholders is needed.
- **A clear, realistic yet comprehensive exit and sustainability** strategy should be implemented as part of programme support - mobilisation of local authorities, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) should be undertaken.

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