

SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

Background:

NCA was registered in Burundi in 2004 but has had activities in the country for about 16 years. The programme is a holistic programmatic response to address post conflict challenges in Burundi with special focus on: Conflict transformation, Peace building, Promotion of civil society in accountable governance, women's empowerment.

Purpose/ Objective:

The purpose of the Evaluation was to determine project effectiveness, impact on effected population, internal learning, shape strategy during the final programme year of a 3-year Agreement wit MFA and contribute to NCA and partner capacity building in targeting the most vulnerable.

Methodology:

The People First Impact Method (P-FiM) was used:

The participants received two days training in participatory communication, open questioning, listening skills etc. Training was essential to identify stages and quality of communication and to accurately record declarations of impact.

The field work was carried out by Kirundi – speaking Burundians.

A deliberate "goal free" approach was used in the first field work to avoid projecting agency perspective on community issues. This was followed by goal focused questions during second group discussions, to determine the impact of the NCA funded programmes and go deeper into issues shared by communities in the first "goal free" discussion. The first focused on what people felt were the most important things that had happened to them in their community over the past three years, the second allowed them to lead on issues and actions they would like to see now and in the future.

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Key Findings:

- Very good alignment between planned programme outcomes, outputs and positive impact
- Relationships between NCA and partners are characterised as being positive, open and transparent
- An excellent basis for consolidation and improvement of the programme exists in the consultant's opinion
- Community ownership and sustainability of support in Cibitoke appeared limited – this may be due to the severity of the war in this province; proximity to insecurity in South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo; limitations of original needs assessment in relation to community priorities; constraints in community mobilisation (dialogue) and / or; alignment of partner experience and competencies
- NCA has a relatively small NCA office in Bujumbura with limited staff
- Substantial focus has been on signing contracts, monitoring and reporting on activity implementation and financial control. The focus has been on these aspects due to high risk of corruption and mismanagement in society in general
- With the limited number of staff at the NCA office, there has not been enough capacity to give significant added value and strengthen partners programme quality, project planning and implementation over the longer term
- No member of the NCA senior management team has been in place for more than 3 years and there have been a number of transitions at this level
- There has been consecutive late annual signing of partner contracts and release of funds – sometimes as late as July leaving partners only 6 months to implement 12 months of activity
- This has been contributed by two main issues; the fact that the office is small with few programme staff and the limited knowledge and exposure of most partners as it relates to programme planning. In most instances, the initial project proposals received from the partners needed further follow up and adjustments in order to adhere to minimum standards. Contract proposals have been going back and forth between NCA and partners until the necessary level of quality was in place; much time is lost in the process. In general terms this has left very little time for lifting up the programme to work on partner and NCA capacity building and programme quality - further underscoring the need for additional staff

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- While protocols with local authorities are respected it did not appear that they were viewed in themselves as having the potential for partnership and greater levels of collaboration
- Office sharing with ACT Alliance members is positive – wider synergies, learning and collaboration beyond administration functions could be further developed (likewise with the Burundi Forum)

Recommendations:

1.	Increase community participation at all stages
2.	Improve long term planning
3.	Increase synergies / learning / exchanges between partners
4.	Stabilise NCA long term leadership - minimum 3-5 years for director level
5.	Review definition & understanding of partnership
6.	Increase positive collaboration with the local authorities
7.	Fine tune vulnerability criteria with community input
8.	Diversify funding base to ensure longer term support
9.	Build policy advocacy rooted in programme experience
10.	Maximise potential synergies with other ACT Alliance members

Comments from Norwegian Church Aid (if any):