

LESSONS LEARNT LECTURE ON GoGo-PROGRAMM WITH CSPR IN THE PROVINCES: GTZ OFFICE, LUSAKA, 31TH JULY 2009.

Presented by Bettina Schoop (capacity building advisor PPMT Western Province) and Andreas Kahler (capacity building advisor PPMT North Western Province)

Opening remarks

Programm Coordinator, German Development Cooperation – Mr. Dedo Geinitz.

- Welcoming of participants.
- The purpose of the lecture was to learn from the experience made in the province in regards to the work with the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR). Not only professionally but also emotionally.
- A prosperous atmosphere of a comfortable and informal discussion round should be the setting for the day.

Presentation of work in North Western Province

Capacity Building Advisor Solwezi, German Development Cooperation – Mr. Andreas Kahler

- Indicating the contrasts in Solwezi since the coming of the extractive industry: traditional and rural vs. modern and capitalist world
- highlighting of main CSPR activities from 2007 – 2009, such as:
 - Information Dissemination during public shows or traditional ceremony
 - Conduction of the “Civil Society Day”
 - NGO Districts Tours 2008 / 2009
 - Advocacy & Research Project “Mining Watch”
 - Establishing and maintaining of notable relationships to media, government or other CSOs (CSPR has become “household name” in NW Province)
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Presentation of work in Western Province

Capacity Building Advisor Mongu, German Development Cooperation – Ms. Bettina Schoop

- Structure of the presentation was according to the results of the overall work plan.
- 4 of 5 indicators for the measurement of the results according to the overall work plan were achieved:
 - ✓ CSPR-PPMT and CSO’s identified as competent and capable to serve on important bodies at the local and provincial level
 - ✓ Civil Society Organisations in all districts of the Province actively participate in pro poor development at the local level and are permanent Members of all DDCC through district contact persons
 - ✓ Enhanced influencing of decisions/directions made by DDCC
 - ✓ Complete and effective use of the operational guidelines
- NGO Coordinating Committees for different rural districts were founded.

Conclusion / Lessons learnt

Ms. Bettina Schoop and Mr. Andreas Kahler

- “Plea for internal decentralization”: The communication flow from or between the CSPR board and secretary in Lusaka to the PPMT’s in the province has still a lot potential for improvement (not only valid for CSPR, in fact it has improved, others are much worse – see NGOs with no or insufficient support of their local structures). “Bottle neck” phenomenon and “Black Box” were mentioned concerning the relationship between sub-national network structures and “headquarters” in LSK.

- The “trickle down myth”: A “trickle down” effect to district level just does not exist in terms of information AND RESOURCES!) As few as 22 % of interviewed NGO-Representatives in the districts of Western Province, for instance, know the meaning and / or the content of the FNDP or APRM. This is also valid for NGO funding which does not reach the district level.

Difficulties momentarily experienced in the national decentralization process can also be found in the decentralization process within the CSPR network. Recommendations: Strengthening the decentralization process internally within the network structures and communication could enhance decentralization in the society in general: (1) Re-focus the organization’s channels like its website to distribute information and inform the target groups about the organization’s work results on province level. (2) Improving effectiveness through more autonomy for provincial structures.

- The working relation towards Government: When CSPR is perceived as “watch dog” it is sometimes considered as opposition to the government and therefore risk. But to be an effective contribution to the FNDP the relationship between CSO’s and the government should be understood as a partnership, CSOs are “counterpart” (complement & correction) vis-à-vis government.

Recommendations: (1) conduct a role clarification, and (2) increase sharing of experience with media, and learn from them how to work professionally and stay independent while being critical.

- CSPR operates more like an umbrella cooperation and does not use all of its social capital. As a network of more than 100 member organizations, it has a large potential. Key question: “Does the network want to be stage or actor?”

Recommendation: make full use of the expertise, capacities, contacts of single member organizations. Thereby connectivity and communication flow are the key factors. (Good examples: CSO cooperation on Civil Society Day; Solwezi CSPR in conjunction with CARITAS has successfully carried out its “Mining Watch”, CSPR in conjunction with NGOCC and media has fruitfully implemented its recent Districts Tour”.)

- Zambia’s economy has focused mostly on mineral exploitation and has neglected its agricultural sector to feed its people.

Recommendation: CSPR should support CSO's trying to educate and increase a farmer's workforce, in order to take advantage of Zambia's rich (agricultural) resources.

- There is a myth that assumes that the local NGOs can generate their operational funds through membership contributions or income generating activities. But local NGOs/ branches of national offices ("everybody for themselves and god for all") are being run by volunteers who too often belong to the 68% of Zambian households that live below the poverty line – that has implications on its funding base and on the management standards.
- NGOs in Zambia depend on outside funding, only very few functions of the government are being outsourced to NGOs
- It is often seen, that small NGO's cannot manage large amounts of financial aid given by international donors.

Recommendation: Either to have small amounts regularly then large amounts once.

- Due to the complexity of formal requirements of proposal letters, sometimes even experienced development workers of donor organizations know about the difficulties of writing according to the specific procedures. Additionally almost every donor has its own formats and in the end it is unpredictable if the NGO gets the needed funding. Even to DW's the decision over the funding often seems to be just a "Proposal Lottery".

Recommendation: Enhance the donor harmonization process.

DISCUSSION: REACTION ON LESSONS LEARNT

Acting Executive Director of CSPR – William Chilufya

- CSPR knows about decentralization challenges within its organization but compared to other NGO's its decentralization process is much more advanced. And after the evaluation of CSPR the secretary is working on the communication flow between Lusaka and the PPMTs. A change has already happened. But it remains a shared problem and both sides (Lusaka and the PPMTs) have room for improvement.
- The capacity of keeping the staff has been the problem.

Several participants responded to observations regarding the lack of political information/knowledge in the provinces, it was taken as a crucial challenge. One view was that also with local government the level of "functional literacy" was not better than with CSOs or the general public.

Participants agreed that the sub-national presence of CSO structures without visibility or activity cannot be enough.

- Make CSPR's work seen in public by action.
- Improve Internet use and communication flow by investing in computers in the provinces.
- Invest in information technology, since the distribution of information and the improvement of access to information is an important task of CSPR. Make participation possible for interested and active people.
- How to increase the amount of interested people? And how to increase the absorption capacity?
- One view was that the Western concept of "civil society" does not really fit when it comes to rural areas in Zambia. A kind of common ground however were efforts to articulate communal interests. (Also the concept of the APRM should be questioned whether it shows that same mismatch concerning rural contexts.)
- Is CSPR serving the needs of people on province level? Can people articulate their needs?
- One person recalled the original, centralized network structure was due to its previous membership which was mainly in LSK. He proposed to accelerate the development of criteria in order to clear the provincial membership structure and to make the work of PPMTs more autonomous ("control mechanisms are there").

CLOSING REMARKS ?????

It has been a productive sharing of experiences made and all sides