

USAID/BURUNDI

RESULTS REVIEW AND RESOURCE REQUEST (R4)

April 2001

Information Annex Topic: Non-presence Countries (npcs) - Burundi

Burundi Annex

to the

REDSO/ESA

Results Review and Resources Request

FY 2003

Part I: Overview and Factors Affecting Program Performance

Burundi is pivotal to fostering peace in the Great Lakes region of East Africa. The conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi communities has caused massive displacement within Burundi and into neighboring countries. A drought that endured over several growing seasons into 2000 affected 700,000 people and caused near-famine conditions in parts of the country. The Arusha Peace Accord, brokered by Nelson Mandela and signed in August 2000, failed to secure a cease-fire and identify a transitional government acceptable to all parties. All of these conditions make Burundi a flash point that will continue to affect large parts of East Africa.

The continuing armed conflict and the failure to forge a successful peace accord are twin obstacles to reestablishing peace in Burundi. Yet in this challenging environment, USAID partners are made progress to help prepare the ground for civil society forces to play an important role guiding the country towards a peaceful transition. They also helped alleviate the privations thrust upon vulnerable groups afflicted by war, drought, and a deteriorating economy.

Despite rebel incursions into the capital, and continuing clashes between the army and insurgents in five provinces, USAID partners have been able to maintain or adapt their activities to meet the changing situation on the ground. Because USAID's program was designed to provide emergency assistance and to reinforce civil society in an environment of conflict, these security and operational challenges were anticipated. Whether security is disturbed in some areas or gradually becomes more stable, USAID partners will make the necessary changes to implement programs within the parameters of safety and operational requirements.

Factors that have most influenced progress are the continued fighting highlighted by rebel incursions into and around the capital and intermittent engagements between the army and insurgents in about 30% of the countryside. The fighting has forced more Burundians to flee their homes and internally displaced population that is now more than 400,000.

Insecurity has also restricted freedom of movement by air and road and raised the cost of fuel and other imported commodities. Partners providing assistance for health and food security are often forced to respond to emergency needs instead of carrying-out long-range programs. These constraints have complicated the planning process for demobilization and the implementation of follow-on development activities to solidify the peace accord and a transition to democracy.

A widespread malaria epidemic and increasing rates of HIV/AIDS infection in the countryside diminished the productivity of the workforce and impoverished surviving family members. A series of inadequate harvests depleted food stocks and contributed to malnutrition in several provinces. Along with the many other negative conditions, declining educational standards -- at every level -- have spurred many of the most qualified Burundians to leave the country and made civil service recruitment and relations with counterparts more difficult.

The United States cannot solve Burundi's problems. But the USG assistance program can assist Burundians trying to lessen the conflict to build bridges between Hutus and Tutsis and encourage democracy as a means to ending the ethnic strife. At the same time, targeted humanitarian relief,

including food aid, will help the most vulnerable communities affected by the conflict and lack of rain. If a genuine cease-fire takes hold, the USG assistance program can expand to address the fundamental inequalities in Burundi that impoverish rural people and feed the cycle of conflict and violence.

Part II: Results Review for the Transition Action Plan Objective

COUNTRY/ORGANIZATION: Burundi

OBJECTIVE ID: 695-005

OBJECTIVE NAME: Foundation for a Peaceful Transition in Burundi Established

Operating Unit Self-Assessment: Exceeding Expectations

Primary Links to Agency Strategic Framework:

20% 2.1 Rule of law and respect for human rights of women as well as men strengthened
10% 2.2 Credible and competitive political processes encouraged
40% 2.3 The development of politically active civil society promoted
10% 2.4 More transparent and accountable government institutions encouraged
10% 6.2 Personal security and basic institutions to meet critical intermediate needs and protect human rights re-established

Link to National Interest: Democracy and Human Rights

Primary Link to MPP Goals: Democracy and Human Rights

Secondary Link to MPP Goals: Regional Stability

Summary:

In spite of the partial success of the Arusha talks facilitated by Mr. Mandela, an increasing intensity characterized the civil conflict in Burundi in the 2000 review period. Nonetheless, the achievements of USAID partners exceeded expectations, given the context in which they operate. Conflict mediation partners promoted the spread of democracy and the rule of law through work with civil society organizations, training, and broadcasting; launched advocacy programs to promote equal status for women and children; and initiated activities which help bridge the ethnic divide. U.S. NGOs fostered increased food production through agriculture extension services and women's cooperatives. Partners funded by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance reached vulnerable groups most affected by displacement from their homes and hardest hit by a malaria epidemic and malnutrition. Food aid provided by the Food for Peace Office targeted provinces severely afflicted by the conflict and by draught.

Thus, a multi-faceted program of activities helped to create a foundation for achieving USAID's objective of helping to prepare the country for a transition to peace.

Key Results:

Accomplishments that improved the environment for conflict reduction via strengthening civil society and independent media surpassed USAID expectations. And USAID's partners that provide emergency and food aid performed under severe conditions to ease the suffering of vulnerable groups.

Four Democracy and Governance partners completed legal registration in Burundi and became fully operational. Each has met or surpassed the tasks specified in their respective work plans. They are fully engaged in outreach training and public information activities. Each has established a base in Bujumbura, focusing on target groups of youth, women, and jurists, and they began to expand their presence into secure areas of rural Burundi's countryside. Partner field offices in southeast, center, and northern provinces jelled into a network which promotes synergy, technology exchange, training activities, and the dissemination of information throughout Burundi.

Several examples illustrate achievements:

Search for Common Ground's multi-ethnic youth group, "Gardons Contact", launched a series of soccer matches which enabled young people from the capital and provincial towns to meet and compete for the first time. "Gardons Contact" members also served on the frontline of coordinating emergency assistance and helping to resettle their neighbors displaced by fighting.

Search's Women's Center opened a breach in the polarized political environment to provide a secure and widening forum where women from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds can meet, exchange views, and organize self-help activities. A Search-assisted agricultural association linked Hutu cultivators and Tutsi marketwomen for the first time since the 1996 war. At their year-end gathering a peasant woman spoke about the effects of HIV/AIDS on family stability and outlined an economic strategy to address the consequences. A group of educated women in the meeting were initially skeptical that they might learn anything from an illiterate woman but changed their views after her eloquent intervention.

IFES began implementation of a step-by-step outreach program to encourage young people to discuss issues which fuel acts of violence. Their trainers opened up communications to youth from relatively stable backgrounds who were still in school and to current or former street gang members who had spearheaded attacks on ethnic/political rivals. After a well-conceived series of discussions IFES succeeded in bringing the two groups together to discuss their problems. The young people expressed a common concern of being marginalized or manipulated by political chiefs -- from both ethnic camps.

During frank workshop discussions, and later in their first meals together, Hutu and Tutsi street fighters admitted that they participated in specific acts of violence and examined the consequences. As the details of specific incidents came out, the emotional level of the discussion rose. Family members and comrades of those involved were present. After several of these sessions, a form of mutual acceptance and recognition emerged among the former adversaries. One unexpected result of the process was a bond of trust between Tutsi and Hutu gang leaders. Their relationship became a key factor in confronting and preventing acts of violence advocated by political extremists.

Partners providing food and emergency assistance also produced concrete results. In the southeastern part of the country bordering Tanzania, Catholic Relief Services provided seeds to refugees returning from the cross-border camps so that they were able to plant new crops in their

home fields. In central Karuzi province the poorest in Burundi, OFDA's food security program helped improve food production for 9,000 farm families. Due to drought and insecurity, the program fell short of the planned indicator for seed availability and production. But implementation partner World Vision Relief and Development partner met its objective of providing micro-enterprise loans to 500 households. To address a rate of infant malnutrition up to 23.8 percent in the province, USAID partners responded with emergency feeding assistance and increased food stocks in an effort to reduce the incidence of malnutrition to five percent.

Despite official intimidation, an independent radio station, Ijambo, continued to produce objective, insightful programming, exploring security-related, political, and historical topics that Burundians care about most. The impact of USAID's programs is reinforced by radio broadcasts which cover and connect inter-related activities. These are as diverse as a women's initiative to reach across the ethnic divide to identify consequences of the violence, and the creation of self-help solutions for reconciliation such as voluntary assistance, childcare, and support visits to the recently displaced. When, for example, women hiked into the hills to support rural families displaced in the fighting whose plight was less visible than those left homeless in the capital, the gesture paid off. Such solutions, small as they may seem, helped bridge the ethnic and regional fault lines and will provide a long-term payoff..

Performance and Prospects:

The performance of USAID's partners has exceeded expectations. The on-going conflict makes working in the countryside dangerous and most of the expatriate NGO managers cannot personally monitor field activities. Nonetheless, all partners seem to have assembled highly competent and dedicated staff -- local and expatriate -- and implementation proceeds. Democracy and governance activities increased and partners began to expand geographically, responding to USAID's interest in correcting the imbalance of assistance targeted to the capital city versus what goes to rural areas.

Partners are steadily developing the skills of a cross-section of civic activists in three areas: inter-communal conflict mediation, issue advocacy vis-a-vis the media and government officials, and project identification and execution for local NGOs. In an initial implementation phase, USAID partners helped participants open dialogues with recent adversaries, confront past acts of violence, and focus on common concerns and aspirations. Participants began to develop communication and mediation tools. In the follow-on phase participants began to apply these skills in their neighborhoods and hill villages to help alleviate inter-communal tensions and threats of violence. Given the reception by target beneficiaries of these interventions, USAID expects them to increase and diffuse among greater numbers of people and wider geographic areas.

Without changing overall activity objectives, individual partners may need to adapt their interventions, if access to certain areas of the country be closed, if fighting in the capital disrupts normal working life for an extended period, or if the current -- or successor -- government restricts the operations of a USAID partner.

Prospects for a cease-fire, implementation of the peace accord, and a transition to democracy appear mixed in the short-term. USAID will continue to implement activities to promote reconciliation, justice system improvement, civil society expansion, public education via peace radio, and a greater engagement of women in the process of reconciliation, rehabilitation, and development. A significant portion of FY 2001 program funds will be devoted to rural areas. Emergency and food aid activities and funding levels and activities targeting the most vulnerable groups will remain similar to FY 2000 levels.

Part III: Resource Request

The FY 2003 and out-year resource request for Burundi is seen in the consolidated REDSO request.