



Report

Evaluation:

“Integrated Climate Change Adaption Project” (ICCA) – Uganda

URCS Uganda / DRK/GRC Germany

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Report - May 2016

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0. Executive Summary

0.1 Introduction

The evaluation (MTR) has been carried out by **Theo Mutter** as the international consultant (team leader) and **Joshua Opio** as the national consultant. The field phase has been realised between April 1 and April 14, 2016.

The objective of the "Integrated Climate Change Adaption" project (ICCA) is to strengthen "the resilience of selected communities and the capacities of the URCS for CCA and DRR, targeting 40,000 people in Karamoja and Teso region by 2018". In the log frame four expected results have been defined as follows:

- **Result 1:** The target communities and public authorities at the local level are aware of climate risks and are timely informed and prepared to effectively respond to extreme weather events.
- **Result 2:** The livelihood situation of the targeted communities is improved through better and more diversified agricultural production and access to water.
- **Result 3:** The vulnerability of the targeted households is reduced through applied climate- sensitive Natural Resource Management techniques.
- **Result 4:** The capacities of the Ugandan Red Cross Society (URCS) are strengthened to support the communities and Government in Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction.

The project is being implemented in the two targeted regions in close cooperation with governmental ministries and district administration offices. The project management follows the URCS organizational structure with a centralized financial and procurement administration. The project team with two project officers and a GRC delegate is based in Teso, one of the project regions, at the URCS branch office in Soroti.

A total of 36 target communities/villages has been divided in two groups. The project has been rolled out in 16 villages since it started in 2103; in the 20 'new' communities, project activities are due to begin this year. In Teso, 4 'old' villages are located in Katakwi district and 4 in Soroti district; of the 8 'new' villages, 4 are located in Katakwi and 4 in Amuria. In Karamoja, 4 'old' communities are evenly distributed in Abim and Kotido district; of the 12 'new' communities, 4 can be found in Abim and 8 in Kotido.

0.2 Main facts and findings

Most of the planned activities and quantitative indicators have been achieved with few delays despite ongoing restructuring and internal problems at the URCS since 2013. To assess the performance and strength of CBDRR committees, the monitoring system needs to focus more on output and result. CBDRR committees are the main actors in the completion of activities in the beneficiary communities and the key to sustainability, in particular. The integrated approach has a clear bias in favour of technical aspects (water, WASH agriculture, natural resource management) with the result that community development aspects and organisational empowerment still need to be focussed on. In relation to ownership, there is plenty of room for improvement within communities and

CBDRR committees. Committees in the villages visited unanimously admitted to not being strong enough to continue without project support. A phasing-out strategy to prepare target communities for their independence after project funding has stopped still needs to be elaborated.

This integrated project concept with its pro-active focus on enhancing the resilience of the population concerned in the poorest and most affected regions of the country are in line with the official policy. This approach that not only addresses the emergency aspect but also food security, hygiene and health issues meets the needs of the target population and is therefore **relevant**. As a baseline for specific and tailored activities, VCA's analyses clearly showed the needs of the target communities.

Despite internal problems at the URCS, the project team was able to realise most of the activities planned to a large extent and with few delays. In all visited communities, CBDRR committees have been **effectively** set up, but their organisational structure is still weak, an effective EWS is not properly in place and SOPs are not known in detail because they only exist in English. The participatory approach should be applied in a more consistent way with a changed didactical concept aiming at reducing direct guidance by facilitators in favour of more supervision. This will create ownership and boost independence by making the actors concerned aware that they are the change agents within their communities.

A success story is the close cooperation with district administration and relevant technical offices dealing with water supply (rehabilitation of boreholes), to some extent, with agricultural support, WASH, natural resource management and some income-generating projects. The villages visited are well organised and clean with latrines available to almost every family. Beneficiaries confirmed a clear reduction in the number of diseases. Due to adverse climate conditions and lack of rain in certain areas, some beneficiaries lost their harvest and could not save seeds for the next season. As a result of a misunderstanding, communal gardens with rain-fed cultivation were set up instead of kitchen gardens next to homesteads.

In terms of **Efficiency** and **Cost-effectiveness** in general, improvement is possible. One could have expected better performance and stronger structures in the communities and committees considering that staffing was adequate and the visit schedule to the villages was tight. Reorganisation in the staff structure and staff cuts combined with adjustments to the didactical approach will enhance efficiency.

Another inefficiency factor can be found in the heavy and time-consuming URCS procedures applied in financial administration and procurement. They are binding for the project and do not allow the project coordinator nor the delegate to manage the project budget directly. On the other hand, this bureaucratic burden is a consequence of past financial problems and irregularities.

Real and especially structural changes can be only measured in the long term. However, first indices of an **impact** have been identified as a result of project interventions thanks to the VCA who assessed the situation at the beginning. As reported in the interviews, the

implementation of hygiene and WASH activities has plausibly contributed to disease reduction. Improved water supply (boreholes and water-user groups) and latrines has played a key role in achieving this impact.

Strengthening CBDRR committees and creating ownership still remains a challenge. Yet, committees as change agents are a precondition for achieving the desired impacts.

Questions concerning **sustainability** are difficult to answer in the course of a project. Nevertheless, some indications of a continuation past the donor-funding period could be identified. Regarding felt needs, water supply installations and existing user groups are a positive sign of sustainability which is well supported by good cooperation with district administration.

To secure sustainability, further strengthening of CBDRR and ownership is required. The committees do not show enough responsibility nor initiative by taking independent action without facilitators' guidance.

There are no specific policy or activity addressing the issue of **gender equality** in the project. Nevertheless, the project team tries to sensitise the target population to the gender issue and encourage women to apply for posts within the project. In the villages, women are deeply involved in and committed to completing the activities planned. First and foremost, the participation of women and men in the communities follows cultural traditions.

0.3 Main recommendations

The following recommendations are aimed at improving project implementation mainly in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. To do so, changes in the logframe structure and the activities listed are not necessary. The goal of the recommended actions is to adjust the form and the approach followed for achieving planned activities. This requires the creative adaptation of didactical methods used in training and a flexible response to changing conditions along the process.

Approach

This project cannot compete with other donors in terms of material support and handouts. The technically biased approach therefore has to be adjusted and clearly emphasise community development and empowerment. The creativity of project management is required to prioritise more so-called 'soft skills' in training programmes and adapt the didactical concept correspondingly. The main goal is to achieve ownership of the project by CBDRR committees and their communities. The key target of the approach is to make the committees understand that they are key players in village development and therefore have to be pro-active as change agents for their communities. These are the preconditions for sustainability.

To enable the committees to fulfil their role, they need to be strengthened. The educational method of paying regular visits to villages needs to be changed towards reducing direct guidance by facilitators while focusing more directly on supervision, independence and self-confidence.

The lesson learnt from the first three years of the project is that it is essential to put more emphasis on organisational development in order to strengthen community structures and reduce guidance in favour of supervision.

CBDRR

As mentioned above, it is recommended to empower CBDRR committees as crucial pillars (change agents) in the achievement of project objectives. The approach and the training strategy shall be giving them more responsibility. To do so, guidance in different activities has to be reduced and the focus placed more on supervision, as explained above.

To help CBDRR committees to become more effective and efficient in their work, it is necessary to allocate tasks, specific duties and responsibilities to every single member. This is especially critical for the EWS. In fact, the SOPs shall be explained more in depth to communities (including translating them into their local languages). In addition, regular simulation exercises (without facilitator presence) are recommended.

EWS

In order to run an effective EWS, it is recommended to restructure CBDRR committees in the above mentioned direction. One option is to clearly define - and allocate - specific duties and responsibilities to every single member. The other option is to create a sub-committee exclusively in charge of the EWS.

It is urgent to translate SOPs into the relevant community language(s) to make sure that they are understood by committee members and explained properly to communities. Besides SOPs, a consistent emergency and evacuation plan needs to be drawn up by CBDRR committees with facilitators' support. Regular simulation exercises are critical to prepare for any disaster. They ought to be routinely and independently conducted in the villages also without facilitators' participation.

Exit strategy

After more than three years' work with the 'old' communities, it is urgent to start the third phase, which means phasing out and preparing target communities for their independence and the time without project support. For this purpose, the weak points in communities and committees need to be assessed and a consistent strategy elaborated on the basis of this information and with communities' involvement. In this respect, an important starting point is about strengthening CBDRR committees by creating ownership (⇒ see above). Ongoing refresher training provided to water user groups is a key element of this.

Staff structure

The structure of the project implementing team comprises four organisational levels: community facilitator (1), focal person (2), project officer (3), project coordinator and delegate (4). To obtain a leaner structure, the evaluation team recommends merging Level (1) community facilitator and Level (2), focal person. To do so, roles have to be redefined as well as the job descriptions of the two functions left that are already fairly similar at present. According to the needs in the field, some staff cuts will hence become possible as well as adjustments to the approach (⇒ see also 4.1). Furthermore, the availability of resources in the budget has to be considered. During restructuring, it might be worth reflecting on the responsibilities shared between the two project officers, one for Teso and the other one for Karamoja.

The evaluation team also recommends regular staff monitoring at all levels to assess the performance of staff members and guarantee the achievement of project objectives.

A new and leaner structure is likely to ensure more immediate and seamless reporting in order to obtain the necessary information at field level (villages). In this context, it is recommended to restructure the reporting template and focus more on 'outcome' and 'impact' (the changes observed in the villages) in order to obtain a realistic picture of project progress.

General recommendations

The VCA reports are documents that contain a wealth of valuable information but at the same time, they are very detailed. It is therefore advisable to issue a concise version for partners who are not so deeply interested in methodology but more in results.

The contribution of RCCC should remain an important element of this project but it needs to be more integrated in project plans and routine. To do so, RCCC's participation and plans need to be adapted to the project planning which is hardly flexible due to institutional involvement, the situation in the country and the project area. The questionnaires shall be less complex and shorter.

Evaluation workshops of trigger events should be held shortly after the occurrence of such events (Step 3) in order to analyse activities in emergencies and adapt the SOP accordingly.