



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

APROCOBU (Association for the Promotion of Cooperative Stores for Production, Selling and Supplying in Burundi)

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| Region | Middle East and North Africa |
| Award Scheme | Guangzhou Award |
| Sustainable Development Goals | Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable |

Summary

The postwar period in Burundi is marked by the policy of repatriation of refugees, reconciliation, integration and demobilization. It is also characterized by dispersed habitat, social context dominated by visible tension and/or latent taking origin from the relationship between quick overpopulation, overexploited lands that are more and more dwindled everyday and the attachment of Burundians to their motherland etc.

Background and Objective

SITUATION BEFORE THE INITIATIVE BEGAN KIREMBA was a site sheltering 150 families of displaced TUTSI (minority ethnic group) who have feared to go back to their origin hills accepting to live in slums as evidenced by the enclosures. On the other side there were many repatriated from TANZANIA. The Association APROCOBU has benefited the area to experiment the initiative that has the vision to put together all components to make an experimental village for an integral development. **ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITIES** Exchange between the population and opinion groups (churches, associations of development, the Administration...); Organisation in association of beneficiaries convinced of the project; Establishment of a regular plan of village buildings. Search for funds to set up the first operations a) The building of social infrastructures like schools to familiarize the various components to live together; b) The exploitation of the agricultural and livestock area; c) The improvement of vulnerable habitat. These priorities have been established by us together with the beneficiaries during week sessions from 16 to 23 June 2002 following raised questions. **FORMULATION OF OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES** After analysis of socio-economic situation in Burundi, the managers of the Association APROCOBU have elaborated goals and strategies aiming at bringing rural populations to improve their life style in making the village the pole of development with water reticulation and electricity, setting up income generative activities in sight of secondary cities. The improvement of productivity and profitability of the agricultural and livestock sector to transform the subsistence agriculture into a market agriculture making people to be aware of promoting the industrial and food agriculture in great quantity. All this requires mastery of preservation techniques, transformation, selling circuits and the change of mentality of people by creating production cooperative stores that coordinate associations and development groups. **MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES** From the registration of the Association APROCOBU, we have met all international NGOs working in Bujumbura to explain them our goals and strategies. So, PREBU and CTB have accepted to support respectively in the building the primary school and the teachers' house and in the building of the secondary school, the administration building, the multi-service hall and the playgrounds. We have made trips abroad to explain the initiative particularly in the American Foreign affairs Department, in HollandBelgium. Only the commune of Willebroek has replied favorably. Concerning the management, The PREBU and the Belgian Technical Cooperation (CTB) have from our plans preceded to the situations vacant and controlled themselves the execution of the works. They handed us the schools after building works. Concerning funds from Willebroek, we have made agreement how to manage the funds via a regular control of their accountants who effect visits of missions in Burundi three times a year (visits of Madam Lydia Maximus). We specify that the building works of the houses are led by a woman who is a Civil Engineering Holder (NDYABANIGWA Spès), also women are responsible of management of the herd in the agriculture and livestock area

Actions and Implementation

(at NOVIB Headquarter) During the setting up of the initiative, we have encountered the pessimism of the future villagers because the project was so good that it seemed not to be feasible. With time, the project has been politicized by the party to power which instead of copying it was fighting it. For overcoming resistances, we have made talking with the future villagers to get the first ones that would start to live in the village. We got 850 families over 680 available pieces of land. Concerning the politicization of the initiative, we have invited the president of the senate to come to visit the new village that he has followed it from the beginning and who is a member of the party to power to help to convince their militants. Also, the local administration has been contacted to help to dissipate the misunderstanding but to give a strong support to the good initiative. The initiative has benefited an infatuation of all the future beneficiaries in particular the women of the site in question who have no husbands because of war. Also the Minister of Public works has encouraged the project by coming to celebrate the World Day of Habitat in the dawning village of KIREMBA. Mr. NDIKUMASABO Helménégilde has



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endowed the initiative a Manual Brick Pressing Machine whereas the Loterie Club of Poperinge has given to the initiative a semi-industrial machine for fabrication of bricks. The village has also been visited by the President of Republic, the vice-presidents, the representatives of churches, European delegations to follow the putting into actions of the project and the use of means provided. The people who have financially and technically intervened, the beneficiaries, the administration all have contributed through periodical meetings at the resolution taking to give orientation to the actions to do as it is the first initiative in the country. The question raised is to know how to register the pieces of lands to use them as a guarantee in the financial institutions. A legislative question in land domain is raised in the perspective basing upon this initiative. Concerning the tools and methods used we put into evidence the existence of committee of management of the village that organizes meetings always as needed. We involve in this duty the provincial and communal authorities. The village chief makes coordination of all these instruments and gives report to the main administration of the village.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

a) Our initiative has inspired itself from the failure of the experience of Prince RWAGASORE who was the first to initiate the notion of cooperative stores. The same has benefited the experience of President BAGAZA between 1976 and 1987. We have applied the different methods especially in putting the cooperative store in the village from which village have to be started the social infrastructures for the populations have the tendency of not returning to seek the services they have left behind them. We have also worked with an executive coming from working in RWANDA in the domain of villages. We made profit of his know-how. In fact in that country, the concerned people have the tendency of returning to their lands of origin for lacking the social infrastructures. Our experience has not been reproduced. But many people come to our office to get theories about our initiative. But we have to emphasize that a governmental service for reintegration and repatriation (PARESI) has inspired itself from our initiative 2004. What we reproach them they build a two room house to mean a room for parents and a room for children (boys and girls sleeping together) which is anti-cultural. We have programmes two days a week on the Radio CCIB FM+ to inform the most possible fellow-citizens. b) Apart the intern experience in Burundi, we have benefited the experience of Willebroek, one of the communes of Belgium originated from village. We spent a time in that commune to internalize the process that was going to lead us to the same issue. We believe it. The goal of the transfer is to master the process of transforming the village into a secondary city with all involvements on the social level and above all cultural level. The goal of the transfer is built on learning trip, the transfer of technologies like those related to the machines for brick fabrication. The exchange we have had with communal authorities has enabled us to benefit a financial support of 18,500 Euros per year from 2004. If we had to transfer the initiative of KIREMBA (Province of MUYINGA in the North-East of the country) to ITABA (Province of GITEGA Central part of the country) for example, the organizers of the work will have to move to train the local teams. The training, the transport of the technical staff would require a 10th of the budget according to the calculations. If this operation is taking place inside the country, we would not be in need of great modifications to adapt in the new place because the country is very small and has not various cultural diversities. Concerning the issues and lessons obtained it is not time to appreciate as we are at the experimental phase. Results achieved. Approximately 100 families of the most vulnerable have benefited of good houses. Forty of those families have wives or children as head of the family. The boys and girls altogether go to kindergarten (50 kids), primary school (552 boys and girls) and secondary school (400 pupils). There exists a pacific cohabitation among the different ethnic groups (Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa) but also between the displaced (accusing ethnic minority) and the repatriated (Accused ethnic majority). The demobilized in small proportion (5% i.e. 100 families) have also settled in. The committee of management and coordination representing the different groups constitutes a form of integration and reconciliation. The breeding of cows together with the use of organic manure to improve the yield of the land of experimentation for agriculture and livestock has got a great influence in the region. In the same respect, the milk of those cows will help to overcome some deficiency diseases in the region. The distributed goats in the frame of solidarity chain constitute a resource of protein. We recognize that the availability of the land to set up the village, the presence of a needy category of people, the availability of the administration were important trumps to experiment the initiative. On the field, the beneficiaries work by groups of specialization: breeders, smiths (using archaic methods) and the masons. The money gained from the agriculture practice is kept in a common account. It is used to satisfy other needs; this leads to evident mentality change like socialization prelude to community life after the life in dispersed habitat especially the activities of women from domestic activities to profitable activities. Durability. The granting of financial means is followed by verifiable management conditions after use. This creates a certain habit to perpetuate the associative activities especially the management of the cows and the agriculture harvest. The building of houses provides to smiths and their co-workers, carpenters, perch sellers, water drawers, beer sellers agricultural products and money, social consideration and hope to people participating in those activities. Despite the integration that leads to community life among HUTU, TUTSI, TWA, the habits of the TWA who have a micro-culture compared to the two others will not change in one day. They will keep it and the change will come by the time. In the frame of respecting the culture, we propose a house of three rooms for boys and girls they have not to sleep in the same room according to the tradition. Concerning the reduction of the dependency on non-renewable resources, it is important to notice that the houses are endowed of water tanks to keep it for sunny season. We have proceeded to plant trees to fight against desertification and shortage of pure air. We are not coming back to the second objective that is: land conflict resolution in a country of 7,000,000 of people for 27,834 km². We project to use solar energy to enable people to have power in their houses. The increasing of the production incites us to require for a machine for food transformation of peanuts and sunflower oil. As we are at local level, we are not in a necessity legal document or a new legislation, apart from the programmes of high authorities of State who are taking into consideration the management of lands in the coming days. We are giving pieces of advices to high authorities not to find the lands conflicts solutions by decree but by a deep exchange in order to find solutions to problems of the future following the reality about lands like in KAYANZA Province, then Burundians will change their mentalities like the village of KIREMBA.



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Innovative Initiative

The first lesson to withdraw is that initiatives of the kind calling profound reforms of the society like the experience of KIREMBA require the commitment and determination of the government to follow this way. Also in the context where opportunities like narrowness of cultivating field and the policy of repatriation such initiative is a warning towards the government which instead of supporting it tries to destroy it as well as its initiators. That is why we have settled up steps towards former and new dignitaries of the country to serve as mediation between our Association and the authorities of the country to explain them the good of the association. On the side of the beneficiaries, the resistances come frequently from extremist minded people who are guilty of massacres who had fought the regain of harmony among the different components of the population. For this reason, we have resorted to the administration to get encouragement to those first pioneers of the mentality changes the only condition to development in having in mind the idea of starting by social infrastructures to overcome the beneficiaries resistance and escape the errors of the policy of village encountered in the second Republic. All these reasons explain the hesitations to take the option of establishing people in village like in RWANDA. To be sure of the success of the coming initiative, we have the minimum of means and the total support of the government. But it is not evident in a postwar country like ours where the government is hesitating to take great political options like especially agrarian reforms. What to avoid is to go quickly to the work if you are not sure of the adhesion of various partners.

Resources devoted to delivery

Apart from the programmes on the Radios and television in Burundi and a booklet of a journal in Belgium that talk about the initiative, we cannot answer to that question in other way. Title of the article - Author : INGE VAN DEN HEUVEL ; - Title : Willebroek verzustert met BURUNDI ; - Volume : more than 16 pages ; - DINSDAG du 22 JUNI 2004 - Page 16