

Fostering Resilience: strengthening municipalities and local economies in Burundi

Support for Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction (ADLP)

Situation

After the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of 2000, and the free elections of 2005, Burundi had been regarded as a successful example for peace and stability in the region. The government committed itself to reducing poverty and making peace sustainable by decentralizing administration and improving communal governance structures. A legal and institutional framework has been created to transfer competencies from the national government to local authorities.

However, in the last years, and especially since the political crisis in 2015, Burundi has entered a phase of economic fall-off and political repression that threatens the outcomes of the peace process. The poverty rate has significantly worsened. The United Nations' Human Development Index of 2018 ranks the country 185th out of 189 countries.

The political and economical crisis is putting stress on the nascent and fragile communal structures. Tax revenues have declined drastically, communal development and investments are stagnating.

Although local authorities have gained some autonomy, they are too weak to manage the new competences effectively, as they lack well-trained personnel.

In addition, municipalities have not yet been able to build a system of trustful participation with local citizens and civil society organisations. Therefore, civil society is only marginally involved in decisions concerning communal development.

Objective

The technical cooperation programme "Support for Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction" (ADLP) aims to strengthen the resilience of local governments. It supports communal structures, citizen participation, and improves local economies in 17 municipalities in the Gitega and Mwaro provinces of Burundi.

Approach

The programme offers consulting and financial support to Burundian municipalities and other stakeholders. It strengthens social cohesion by including all relevant interest groups on the local level. The programme develops the skills of decision-makers and key actors so that their positions in local development issues can be coordinated with the overarching poverty reduction goal. It also supports partners in elaborating and implementing communal development plans.

Project name	Support for Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction (ADLP)
Commissioned by	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Project region	Provinces Gitega und Mwaro, Burundi, Central Africa
Stakeholders	Communal administrations, Burundian Association of Local Elected Officials (ABELO), local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), private sector, sectoral technical services
Duration	2017-2020



L. to r.: Local governance; Promotion of the local economy.

The programme operates in three spheres:

1. **“Local governance”** improves the conditions for decentralisation. In this approach, local civil servants are offered support in the fields of administration, delivery of registry services to citizens, preparation of participatory budgets, and collection of communal taxes. They also receive support to elaborate communal development plans.
2. **“Involvement of citizens”** fosters the participation of civil society in local decision-making processes and accountability meetings. Citizen’s initiatives and civil society groups receive consultation and training on how to effectively network to improve the representation of local people’s interests. Women and young people are particularly encouraged to participate.
3. **“Promotion of the local economy”** improves the local business environment. Relations between the private sector and public entities are reinforced to stimulate economic development. Small-scale farmers receive advice on how to increase yield and food safety. In addition, young people and women learn how to start their own businesses.

To foster the digitization, the programme promotes digital tools and offers IT training. This has helped to increase transparency in local governance, and allow civil servants to improve the delivery of services to citizens. Important documents are now archived digitally and farmers receive valuable information on cultivation methods via voice and text messages or chat applications.

Benefits

The programme has measurably strengthened municipalities and improved living conditions of local population:

1. More than 1,200 civil servants have participated in trainings in 2017 and 2018. As a result, **local authorities are working more efficiently**. Public procurements are carried out competently and civil servants are paid on time. Tax revenues increased by 20 percent through advice on taxpayer inventories, account-

ing, and tax collection. Communal investment in infrastructure and basic services have tripled.

2. **Citizen participation has increased** significantly. In Gitega and Mwaro, more than 70 percent of the population feels well-integrated into communal decision-making processes. In 2017, 44 percent of men and 48 percent of women members in civil organisations attended communal accountability meetings.
3. More than 23,000 **farmers adopted more efficient cultivation methods** and, as a result, increased their yields and created new jobs. Farmers in Gitega and Mwaro have harvested four times more potatoes and five times more bananas than the national average.
4. More than 430,000 people increased their income; 32 percent are women, 22 percent are young people. At least 535 jobs have been created through trainings in basketry, brick-making, and local retailing.

Planting a better Future: How a small-scale farmer overcame poverty and inspired a whole community

For many years, Tharcisse Ntahomvukiye harvested just enough fruit to sustain his family in Bugendana commune in the province of Gitega. His banana plants yielded only five kilogramm. This all changed when the small-scale farmer began working with ADLP. He learned about efficient cultivation methods and introduced a new cultivar. Today, his banana plants yield more than 50 kilogramm. “I increased my monthly income from 10,000 Burundian Francs to 100,000”, he describes. Together with his wife Joséphine, he built a new house equipped with solar energy and purchased two retail stores. In one structure, he runs a barbershop, and in the other, he charges phone batteries with solar energy. The impacts are already rippling. Tharcisse Ntahomvukiye encouraged 74 other farmers to follow his example and advised them on how to best adopt the new cultivar and methods.

Published by Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
Programme d’Appui à la Décentralisation et à la Lutte contre la Pauvreté
P.O. Box 5180
Dag-Hammarskjöld-Weg 1-5
65726 Eschborn
Germany

mamadou.diarrassouba@giz.de
www.giz.de

As at August 2019

Photo credits Evrard Benjamin Ngendakumana

Text Mirco Lomoth

GIZ is responsible for the content of this publication.

On behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Addresses of BMZ
BMZ Bonn
Dahlmannstraße 4
53113 Bonn
Germany
www.bmz.de

BMZ Berlin
Stresemannstraße 94
10963 Berlin
Germany