USAID BURUNDI
YOUTH SUPPORT INITIATIVE ASSESSMENT

NOVEMBER 2018

USAID / BURUNDI
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[DRAFT REPORT]

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DISCLAIMER

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ACRONYMS

BLTP	Burundian Leadership Training Program
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CDA	Collaborative Learning Projects
CEDAC	Centre d'Encadrement et de Développement des Anciens Combattants
CfW	Cash-for-Work
CI	Counterpart International
CMM	Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation
COMPRAC	Communities of Practice
CPAJ	Collectif Pour La Promotion Des Associations De Jeunes
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DG	Democracy and Governance
DQA	Data Quality Assurance
DRG-LER	Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Learning, Evaluation, and Research Activity
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GoB	Government of Burundi
GoN	Government of the Netherlands
HHI	Harvard Humanitarian Initiative
IT	Information technology
JJB	Jumelage Jeunesse Burundi
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NORC	National Opinion Research Center
P2P	People-to-People
PARCEM	Parole et Actions pour le Réveil des Consciences et L'evolution des Mentalités
PMP	Performance Management Plan
REJA	Reseau des Jeunes en Action
RPP	Reflecting on Peace Practice

SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SOW	Statement of Work
UNIPROBA	Unissons-Nous pour la Promotion des Batwa
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
Y4PBB	Youth for Peace-Building in Burundi Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE

USAID / Burundi supports four multi-year projects designed to reduce the risk of youth participation in violence. Involving both rural and urban populations, each supports youth dialogue and joint activities to increase understanding, appreciation of differences, and collaboration among conflicting groups. The projects also seek to nurture youth leaders and empower them with appropriate skills to assist their communities with peaceful development.

This assessment provides the USAID / Burundi Democracy & Governance Office with a more comprehensive understanding of USAID / Burundi's strategic focus on youth as a means of addressing conflict and mitigating violence in the country's volatile, often conflictual political environment. Analytical insights gained from the assessment will also inform future USAID programming in the democracy and governance sector in Burundi. Additionally, lessons learned and good practices identified will help inform USAID's strategic planning in similarly severely under-resourced countries undergoing difficult political transitions.

EVALUATION DESIGN, METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

This evaluation employs a qualitative research methods to assess the approach funded by USAID in Burundi to addressing conflict and mitigating youth violence, including: focus groups (FGDs) among beneficiaries; key informant interviews (KIIs) among cognizant USAID personnel, other donors, international and local implementing partners, national and local officials, community leaders, and beneficiaries; and a literature review.

During the course of evaluation, there were several limitations, as highlighted below.

- Respondents tended to report socially desirable answers to approximate what they perceived as the social norm (*halo bias*). The Evaluation Team provided appropriate confidentiality and anonymity assurances to all KIIs and FGD respondents through an informed consent process.

- Due to the fragile political environment, and the need to provide a comfortable environment for respondents that would encourage candid answers, the assessment team decided that it would be best not to attempt to record interviews or focus groups of people in Burundi. Thus, recorded verbatim responses are unavailable.

- The assessment team had hoped to learn more from the Government of Burundi (GoB) about its evaluation of the challenges facing youth and its strategies for addressing those challenges. Unfortunately, despite observing the protocols set out by the GoB for meeting with national level officials, the team was able to speak with only two government officials, the head of the National Investment Promotion Authority (API) and the newly appointed Permanent Secretary (PS) of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture (the team met with the head of the API in person; the USAID team arranged a teleconference with the PS after their return to the United

States). This limits the inclusion of government perspectives and initiatives regarding youth, violence prevention and social cohesion.

None of the challenges, however, precluded the collection of relevant information and data needed to produce findings and conclusions for this assessment of USAID's approach to addressing conflict and mitigating violence in Burundi.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This assessment found ample evidence to conclude that **USAID's approach to reducing youth violence** as broadly executed in the four programs funded by USAID **brings many positive benefits** to the lives of youth and their communities. These four programs contribute to youths' ability to have greater agency and to their ability to resolve conflicts at the family and community level. Significantly, youth want to be active and constructive members of their society and take great pride in being able to offer their conflict resolution, mediation and dialogue skills to help resolve conflicts in their communities. This finding is very significant because of how it supports youth to overcome barriers to achieving cultural adulthood, which have been well documented for keeping youth "stuck," unable to constructively lead their lives and be contributing members of society.

There was furthermore ample evidence that **youth gain at least limited economic benefit** from these youth support programs. Through lending associations, youth are able to attend to their basic needs and to afford some modest commodities. Several beneficiaries expressed confidence that even if the project stops, the lending associations stand a good chance of continuing, because the members now have the skills to manage their projects going forward. The two most significant barriers to sustaining future economic benefits for youth associations seem to be a lack of sufficient capital to scale up projects (from subsistence to income-generating profitability) and the insufficient enabling environment created by GoB policy. Several interviewees suggested that these barriers might be addressed through **more donor coordination** to reduce duplication and amplify impact.

While the approach contributes to social cohesion, **the links to violence prevention are tenuous** at best. This somewhat contradictory finding can be understood by considering the evidence that areas that stayed calm during the 2015 crisis did so irrespective of program activities. This finding is supported by the broader literature, which cautions against equating employment with violence reduction. The literature also underscores the need for donors to continually test their assumptions about what youth need. Thus, future programming should be driven by more bottom-up diagnostics, which would allow program designers to test their theories of change, in order to ensure that youth needs, and, by extension, the motivators for youth violence, are more effectively addressed.

Significantly, the complementarity of **income generation combined with conflict resolution, trauma healing,** and capacity building activities fosters democratic norms and values. Specifically, how associations are run – rules/protocols/reciprocal responsibility – serves to build trust among members of their respective associations, which in turn builds social cohesion and contributes to the success of the income generating activities. It is a virtuous cycle. This ability to build and sustain trust is at the heart of a community's capacity to create social cohesion and mitigate violence.

Despite ample evidence of the many positive benefits of USAID's approach to youth programming, **structural barriers** and the absence of an enabling environment for economic growth and development are factors that limit outcomes and further success. Taxation, government policies on coffee sales, impunity, and the arbitrary and/or self-serving exercise of power are just some of the issues that serve as barriers to the economic success of youth-led initiatives. These issues were the focus of youth complaints and relate directly to the government's role (or lack thereof) in fostering the conditions for economic growth and development. Youth are keenly aware of these structural barriers. Assessment evidence suggests that these barriers can contribute to feelings of powerlessness and the inability to effect change. For this reason, the youth support projects – which seem to help youth to deal with these barriers more effectively at the local level – offer youth an invaluable lifeline to hope and purpose.

The assessment found that there is **value in building formal linkages at the communal and national levels** despite the challenges underscored above. The introduction of a youth advocacy component to Y4PBB-II provides a promising avenue for creating links between local and national level issues. At the time of this assessment, Y4PBB-II local implementing partner PARCEM was in the process of training youth advocates from selected communes for a national level advocacy campaign. The assessment found that while this initiative holds great promise, it is limited by scale and by a lack of national-level policy structures and mechanisms. A better resourced and more operational National Youth Plan could serve as a functional link between youth advocacy networks and the Government of Burundi. In addition, the assessment found that integrating appropriate GoB actors and institutions seems to positively impact the success of association activities over the long term. As community members and participants alike agreed, constructive working relationships between program partners and local officials enhance trust and facilitate problem-solving, contributing to more propitious conditions for broader social cohesion.

Based on these findings, the assessment team offers the following conclusions:

- The inclusion of personal empowerment and conflict resolution skill building in the architecture of USAID's approach enhances the stature of youth beneficiaries and contributes to larger community cohesion.

- USAID's approach to youth support provides a pathway to adulthood in a context in which that transition has become fraught at best and virtually unavailable at worst. The lack of employment, education, capital, and land all contribute to youth in Burundi being "stuck."

- Assumptions of program partners and implementers underlying program theories of change do not always match those of program participants and beneficiaries.

- The link between these specific program activities and a reduction in violence is ambiguous at best.

- The complimentary architecture of the programs fosters democratic norms and values.

- The addition of trauma healing modules to the curriculum has helped beneficiaries to address issues that might have otherwise hindered the success of ethnically and politically mixed associations.

- The success of this approach is limited by structural barriers and the lack of an enabling national policy environment.

- Making more capital available to beneficiaries later in the project, when they have demonstrated their success in managing both the income generating activities and have built social cohesion amongst association members and between members and their communities, will increase the sustainability of beneficiary projects.

- Youth recognize that there are few opportunities available to them and the USAID-funded programs offer real and tangible ways in which to contribute to their own future well-being.

- While USAID-funded programming has had significant impacts at the local community level, the lack of consistent coordination with other donor programs, the GoB, and other formal institutions limits its impact.

1. ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1.1 ASSESSMENT PURPOSE

USAID / Burundi supports four multi-year projects designed to reduce the risk of youth participation in violence. Involving both rural and urban populations, each project supports youth dialogue and joint activities to increase understanding, appreciation of differences, and collaboration among conflicting groups. The projects also seek to nurture youth leaders and empower them with appropriate skills to assist their communities with peaceful economic development.

This Youth Support Assessment assists USAID / Burundi in its efforts to better understand the relative effectiveness of different peace-building and violence prevention activities. Assessment findings will: (1) inform the design of future projects dedicated to violence prevention and closing geographic, ethnic, political, and economic divides within Burundi; and (2) provide a basis on which to evaluate the relative effectiveness and efficiency of achieving violence and conflict reduction goals by specifically targeting the youth sector and by funding the selected activities included in the USAID/Burundi democracy and governance assistance programs.

This assessment provides the USAID / Burundi Democracy & Governance Office, the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, and the USAID / Washington Democracy, Rights, and Governance Office, with a more comprehensive understanding of USAID / Burundi's strategic focus on youth as a means of addressing conflict and mitigating violence in the country's volatile, often conflictual political environment. Analytical insights gained from the assessment will also inform future USAID programming in the democracy and governance sector in Burundi. Additionally, lessons learned and good practice identified will help inform USAID's strategic planning in similarly severely under-resourced countries undergoing difficult political transitions.

1.2 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

The key assessment questions below address the effectiveness of the Youth Support programs, and are summarized as follows:[1]

(1) Are there any outcomes that might indicate or suggest conclusions on the efficacy of Youth Support programs' approaches to violence prevention in regards to attitudinal change, economic activities, awareness raising, and mobilization around peacebuilding and reduction of violence?

(2) What good practices are identified through the assessment of the four particular programs?

(3) How important was USAID's support for institutional and technical capacity development in facilitating any reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence? / How were

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[1] The original list of assessment questions is longer. In order to avoid repetition, several of the questions were combined for more streamlined reading. The original list of questions is in Annex 1.

USAID programs effective, or not, in increasing the capacity of Burundian civil society organizations (CSOs) to empower and support youth-led community mobilization?

(4) What are the most significant outcomes and the associated implications for peacebuilding and violence prevention among youth?

(5) To what extent will CSOs be able to continue their activities without continued USAID assistance? / And what are the most sustainable aspects of the programs in the view of beneficiaries?

(6) Given the assessment of the literature and of the four youth support programs, what, if any, are key lessons learned that can applied in the future to the USAID and similar programs in conflict-affected areas?

2.   PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 POLITICAL CONTEXT

Burundi is a politically and socially fragile country. Poverty is endemic with nearly 65% of the total population living below the poverty line. Moreover, the population has more than doubled since 1990 and since more than two-thirds of the country is under the age of 25 and the birth rate is extremely high (approximately six children per woman), the political and economic future of youth in Burundi is especially perilous. Roughly 90% of employment is comprised of subsistence agriculture, and opportunities in other industries are weak to nonexistent.

Meanwhile, political opportunities are extremely limited amid weak participation and representation. In Burundi's history, electoral violence and abuses have been sponsored and fueled by politicians who advocate for their own interests. In their personal struggles to maintain or attain power, politicians take advantage of the context of youth unemployment, the population's lack of education, and extreme poverty, to manipulate young people and induce them to engage in politically motivated acts of violence.

The 2015 elections were no exception. The announcement of President Pierre Nkurunziza's candidacy, which some considered to be a violation of the constitution, was followed by protests that turned violent and were severely repressed. The various political parties' youth wings were some of the main actors in the protests and tensions, meaning youth were again the main victims of the violence. Tensions peaked with an attempted coup on May 13, 2015, which was followed by the destruction of the main independent media outlets, repression in the opposition-aligned neighborhoods including many arrests, human rights abuses and alleged use of torture and killing. A fringe of the radicalized opposition turned to armed insurgency in the capital Bujumbura, characterized by heavy night-time shooting and multiple grenade attacks, including attacks in crowded areas. Tit-for-tat assassinations took the lives of many leaders on both sides. Mid- to late-2015, the urban insurgency turned into a rebellion which led an attack on military camps in Bujumbura in the early morning of December 11, 2015. The Government of Burundi's (GoB) response to these attacks turned into revenge killing and violence in opposition-aligned neighborhoods, further traumatizing youth, exacerbating fissures among different parts of society (particularly ruling party-affiliated and non-affiliated youth) and increasing their distrust of the government. The result has been a breakdown in social cohesion among youth and between youth and the authorities across Burundi. By the end of December, violence, fear, and the poor economic situation had pushed over 360,000 Burundians to flee and become refugees in neighboring countries.

The start of 2016, saw a multiplication of high-level interventions to support Burundi's movement towards a more inclusive political dialogue process, amidst continued violence and increased tensions between Burundi and Rwanda. Despite the stalled external dialogue process supported by the East African Community, violence was significantly reduced from the second quarter of 2016, with positive steps taken by the GoB to reopen some media outlets, release prisoners, and re-authorize certain civil society organizations that were previously suspended. Nevertheless, small-scale armed attacks, targeted assassinations (and attempts), human rights abuse and intimidation continued throughout 2016.

The deterioration of the humanitarian situation continued into 2017, as food security worsened, and a malaria epidemic was declared by the GoB in March, followed by severe power and fuel shortages. This general downturn in the economic situation negatively affected youth's ability to recover from the crisis and implement income-generating activities. Throughout 2017, the security situation was relatively calm, but fears remain around a potential resurgence of violence in anticipation of the planned May 2018 constitutional referendum, which granted the president an extended term limit that could keep him in office until 2034. While the referendum took place with little disruption and 2018 has not witnessed the same levels of violence as the previous three years, tensions remain high. The GoB's recent decision to suspend many international NGOs has contributed to political uncertainty and widespread fear that the economic and humanitarian situation in Burundi will only continue to worsen.

2.2 PROGRAM CONTEXT

Four youth support programs are the focus of the proposed assessment. Each are described below.

Youth for Peace-Building in Burundi (Y4PBB)

In July 2014, USAID awarded Associate Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-LA-14-00007 under Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement DFD-A-00-09-00141-00 to Counterpart International, to establish the Youth for Peace-Building in Burundi-I (Y4PBB-I) Program. The goal of Y4PBB was to reduce the risk of youth (ages 18-35) participation in violence in Burundi related to the June 2015 general elections. The project design analysis identified factors that promote peacebuilding and developed activities to achieve the following three objectives:

- Increase capacity of Burundian CSOs to empower and support youth-led community mobilization;

- Enhance economic incentives for youth to participate constructively in society; and

- Support youth-led peacebuilding and violence prevention activities.

In view of the violence that occurred related to the 2015 elections, and to provide long-term, socio-economic opportunities for young people (ages 18-35), Y4PBB-I's activities supported:

- Involvement of both young men and young women in youth-led peace-building and violence prevention initiatives;

- Youth involvement as non-violent actors and key stakeholders in the peace-building process through cash for work programs, technical assistance;

- Organizational capacity development;

- Grant making opportunities for CSOs that are working to mobilize Burundi's burgeoning youth population in a positive, non-violent way; and

- Increased economic access and opportunities for young men and women.

Y4PBB-1 began implementing activities in November 2014, including directly-implemented activities such as cultural exchange days, media campaigns, and the promotion of a Community of Practice (COMPRAC). The Y4PBB-1 program included $695,000 for a Grants Program that funded activities of six Burundian CSOs and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to fund and implement: (i) dialogue and exchange visits; (ii) short-term employment opportunities through the Cash-for-Work (CfW) methodology; (iii) vocational and entrepreneurship training, including an innovation competition; and (iv) the promotion of social cohesion through awareness-raising sessions and other activities, for which SFCG provides technical expertise.

In July 2017, Counterpart International was awarded a new grant to undertake a series of activities entitled the Youth for Peacebuilding in Burundi II (Y4PBB-II). The program was designed to improve the livelihood and peacebuilding skills of youth, and their enabling environment, with the hope of reducing the risk of youth becoming involved in conflict, and contributing to peace and stability in Burundi. The 18-month program will come to a close in January 2019, and has worked to: (1) build the capacity of local CSOs to empower and support youth-led, positive civic engagement; (2) enhance economic incentives for youth to participate constructively in society; and (3) support youth-led peacebuilding and violence-prevention activities.

For the implementation of Y4PBB-II, Counterpart partnered with three local CSO partners, Jumelage Jeunesse Burundi (JJB), Parole et Action pour le Reveil des Consciences et l'Evolution des Mentalites (PARCEM), and a third, Centre d'Encadrement et de Développement des Anciens Combattants (CEDAC), all of whom had the expertise and access to effectively engage and mobilize youth. The local CSO supported youth in building consensus around youth priorities and conducted advocacy initiatives within their communities around key issues.

The program goals included strengthening the organizational capacity of its partners to:

- Support youth-led advocacy at the communal/municipal and national levels;

- Provide long-term socio-economic opportunities for young people through entrepreneurship, and vocational trainings;

- Facilitate access to startup capital (via microfinance institutions and cash-for-work (CFW) activities;

- Support youth-led grassroots dialogues and outreach activities; and

- Promote cross-learning through exchange of experiences on entrepreneurship.

Amahoro Iwacu – Peace in My Home

In September 2015, Search for Common Ground (Search) entered into an agreement with USAID to implement a 36-month project with the overall goal of "Enhancing the resilience of urban and rural youth against political, communal and interpersonal violence (Cooperative Agreement AID-695-A-1500004). The three-year project – implemented jointly with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Reseau

des Jeunes en Action (REJA) and Collectif pour la Promotion des Associations de Jeunes (CPAJ) – has two objectives:

- To build skills and alternative channels for dialogue and decision-making on key issues that involve young people.

- To support youth in mobilizing local resources to invest in productive activities that strengthen social cohesion and economic integration.

Expected outcomes include:

- Increased community awareness of the key drivers of youth vulnerability and violence;

- Increased portion of youth have the skills and networks needed to constructively engage with their communities;

- Increased portion of target "at-risk" youth capable of managing their social and financial resources to promote economic well-being and social cohesion;

- Increased portion of target "at-risk" youth have the entrepreneurship skills to make profitable investments in livelihoods that promote their economic integration.

Project activities targeted seven provinces of Burundi, including Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza, Cibitoke, Kayanza, Kirundo, and Makamba. Activities included:

- Youth-to-youth research;

- Inclusive youth community roundtable discussions;

- Community youth fairs to celebrate social cohesion and highlight youth role models;

- Interactive media programming;

- Youth entrepreneurship training; and

- Establishment of savings and internal lending community groups.

SFCG and its program partners completed their program activities in September 2018.

Dukire-Tubane

Implemented by Catholic Relief Services, this activity aims to strengthen the resilience and cohesion of Burundian youth in Bujumbura Mairie and Bubanza, two provinces most directly affected by violence. Dukire-Tubane brings together diverse youth from across Burundi's political, social and ethnic divides for intensive, repeated interactions designed to break down divisions by emphasizing connectors and developing a shared vision of the future. Activities feature trauma healing and social cohesion workshops among youth, as well as between youth and local authorities, while forming youth savings

groups and developing entrepreneurial skills to strengthen resilience. Dukire-Tubane has completed one year of program activities and will continue operations through March 2020.

Gira Ejo – Burundi Leadership Training Program (BLTP)

This activity targets youth from two communes of Bujumbura Mairie and two communes of Bujumbura Rural. The BLTP combines capacity building in leadership, conflict management, communication, negotiation skills, and entrepreneurship with a small grants program in which youth acquire project development skills and immediately apply those skills to the development of revenue generating projects designed to serve the specific needs of their communities. Gira Ejo had only just completed the first of its two capacity building workshops for beneficiaries at the time of this assessment. The majority of its program activities are yet to be implemented. Gira Ejo is projected to complete its program activities by September 2020.

3. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

To gather data required for this evaluation, NORC's assessment team used several techniques, discussed below, which entailed a combination of mutually reinforcing qualitative and methods that reflect the program design and research questions being addressed. We integrated the results of each technique to capture the diversity of opinions and perceptions of beneficiaries and stakeholders about the program and progress made thus far. The qualitative analysis, which includes key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), provides the local context and represents concrete examples that illustrate in greater detail than would quantitative findings. A literature review, meanwhile, offers the theoretical basis for youth violence prevention programs on the whole, and also provides trends to youth prevention found in the international development sector.

In-country fieldwork implementation was conducted over a three-week period, from August 06 to August 24, 2018. Our approach to selecting the appropriate methodology is based on the USAID Evaluation Policy as well as our experience conducting evaluations in the field. NORC assessment team conducted the evaluation in a participatory manner which involved engaging USAID, implementing partner CPI, program beneficiaries, and other key stakeholders operating in the youth violence prevention space in Burundi.

3.1 ASSESSMENT MANAGEMENT

The assessment team included Drs. Audra Grant (Evaluation Specialist), Marie Pace (Principal Investigator and Subject Matter Expert), and Elizabeth McClintock (Principal Investigator and Subject Matter Expert). Local data collection was executed in collaboration with CARD Engineering (CARD) who provided in-country logistical support and assisted with the FGDs and KIIs and language translation.

3.2 STUDY DESIGN

As USAID / Burundi seeks to understand the strategic landscape of donor practices around Burundian youth conflict prevention and conflict management, and to acquire a broader understanding of what has worked well with current USAID practices, NORC drew on a multidimensional methodological approach that included a combination of mutually reinforcing qualitative tools that reflect the activity logic and research questions being addressed. Thus, the evaluation employed: activity document and literature review; in-depth key informant interviews (KII); and focus group discussions (FGD).

The literature review is based on an analysis of the academic studies, as well as the donor organization research and policy institution reporting. While the literature emphasized youth violence prevention in Burundi, the overview, adopted a global approach, exploring best practices in diverse conflict-affected settings in various regions. Although the main intent was to inform practitioner understanding of existing approaches and strategies, the literature review also informed the interview protocols and the overall approach to the assessment research.

The questionnaire development for the KIIs and focus groups was led by NORC, and designed to reflect and address similar themes. Instruments were translated into Kirundi and implemented in the language as appropriate. Interviews were conducted in French, English or Kirundi.

3.3 TARGET POPULATIONS

Data collection for the assessment emphasized KIIs among members of international donor organizations (such as the European Union, UNICEF, and the Government of the Netherlands), implementing civil society organization partner staff, other local and international NGOs (such as CARE and IRC), as well as cognizant USAID personnel. The KII pool also included community leaders and CSO implementer focal points. In total, the team conducted 52 KIIs.

The assessment also targeted the various beneficiary groups associated with the four USAID Youth Support projects, in order to capture a diversity of experiences and viewpoints among those directly influenced by program interventions. In addition to KII among youth support program beneficiaries, the assessment included focus groups among beneficiaries who were exposed to both skill building in trauma healing, dialogue and conflict resolution skills, as well as training in developing and managing income generating projects through associations. The NORC assessment team conducted a total of 10 focus groups comprising six to 10 individuals, aged 18 to 36 years old, for a total of 95 focus group respondents. Groups were divided in male and female dependent on the activity, with the aim of capturing potentially unique experiences by gender (see Table 1, below).

Table 1. Focus Group Structure

Commune	Program	Number of FGD Participants
Buterere - Bujumbura Mairie	AMAHORO IWACU (Mixed)	9
		10
Kayanza - Kayanza	AMAHORO IWACU (Female)	8
	AMAHORO IWACU (Male)	8
Gihanga - Bubanza	DUKIRE-TUBANE (Female)	10
Gihanga - Bubanza	DUKIRE-TUBANE (Male)	10
Muhanga - Kayanza	Y4PBB (Female)	8
	Y4PBB (Male)	8
Kanyosha – Bujumbura Rural	GIRA EJO (Mixed)	10
Kamenge – Bujumbura Mairie	PARCEM (Mixed)	6
Kinama – Bujumbura Mairie	DUKIRE-TUBANE (Mixed)	8

3.4 SAMPLING

Prior to selecting the sample for the FGDs, NORC determined the sites for the focus groups, which were determined by the loci of program activity. Focus groups were conducted in Kirundi by the assessment team and translated into English by the CARD translators. Each group was observed by one of the NORC assessment team members, and each group facilitated by a trained Burundian moderator.

After each focus group, the moderator debriefed with the NORC assessment team member to discuss observations regarding the general trends in responses and whether any changes needed to be addressed by the protocol. Notes of each focus group discussion were recorded by hand by a note taker, and transcripts translated into English for analysis. The team reviewed each transcript culling the documents for themes and patterns in responses.

Both focus groups and KIIs were based on purposive sampling, with beneficiary respondents chosen from existing beneficiary lists provided by implementing organizations. KII among donors and other partners were selected by the assessment team based on previous work experience in Burundi and in collaboration with USAID. The assessment team used a variation of snowball sampling for KIIs with additional donors, international NGOs and interested observers, asking each interviewee to recommend other useful interlocutors with whom they should speak.

3.5   LIMITATIONS

The assessment team encountered some limitations inherent to the design of this evaluation and during its fieldwork in Burundi. Some of the more relevant limitations are listed below:

- **Social desirability or halo bias.** There is also a tendency among respondents to under-report socially undesirable answers and alter their responses to approximate what they perceive as the social norm (*halo bias*). The extent to which respondents shared their true opinions may have varied for some questions that call upon the respondents to assess the attitudes and perceptions of their peers or people on whom they depend upon for the provision of services or support. To mitigate this limitation, the assessment team provided appropriate confidentiality and anonymity assurances to all KIIs and FGD respondents through an informed consent process. Interview protocols were also adjusted to include probative questions that served as a check on responses.

- **Political instability in Burundi.** One significant constraint in relation to the KIIs conducted with Burundians, particularly community members and local officials, was the political context in the country at the time of data collection. Burundi has a fragile political history and was in a post-crisis phase during the time of data collection. Given the tense environment, particular attention was taken to avoiding any questions that might seem to expect a "political" opinion. Consequently, some views on the impacts of violence on communities or the role of government policy in alleviating poverty, for example, may have been self-censored.

- **Inability to record KIIs and FGDs**. As a result of the sensitive political situation and the need to make respondents feel comfortable, the assessment team determined it would be best not to attempt to record interviews or focus groups. This decision was made following discussions with the project implementer, CPI, and USAID. Thus, recorded verbatim responses were unavailable and responses were recorded by a note taker instead.

Overall, none of the challenges prevented the assessment team from gathering relevant information and data needed to produce findings and drawing conclusions for this assessment.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following section summarizes USAID Youth Support Program assessment findings and conclusions based on the fieldwork. The analysis of the qualitative data collection from the field research is informed by a review of existing literature relevant to USAID / Burundi's strategic focus on youth as a means of addressing conflict and mitigating violence in the country's volatile, often conflictual political environment. In order to assess the extent to which USAID Youth Support programs' economic interventions contribute to the prevention or reduction of violence among youth beneficiaries, the team reviewed existing research and reports examining approaches to youth violence prevention. What follows is a summary of this review of the literature.

4.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The aim of this Youth Support assessment is to contribute to an enhanced understanding of the effectiveness of USAID investments in youth programming in Burundi that combine economic and peacebuilding activities (the programs were designed and implemented in response to USAID's RFA-OAA-16-000007)[2]. Each of the multi-year projects is designed to reduce the risk of youth participation in violence by encouraging youth to engage constructively with one another, across social divides. This approach entails combining income generating projects with dialogue and other joint activities that promote mutual understanding, appreciation of difference, and collaboration among conflicting groups. The projects further aim to nurture and empower youth leaders with the skills needed to help bring peaceful development to their communities.

In addition to occupying a sizable portion of USAID Burundi's Democracy and Governance (DG) portfolio, this complementary approach to peacebuilding is utilized by a number of donors in Burundi, and elsewhere in the world. Our overall task was to take a broad look at this approach to determine what has worked well, what has not worked, and to provide some guidance to USAID as they consider future programming options. For this, we turned first to the existing theory and research, along with documents available from donors and other relevant organizations, which informed our research and analysis.

This review of literature considers a range of issues and questions relevant to this approach to peacebuilding in Burundi and elsewhere in the world. While the primary focus is Burundi and the Africa region, the literature also considered efforts beyond the African continent that emerged as informative and relevant to the assessment. Programming is placed in an historical perspective and then provides a brief sketch of the landscape of donor interventions utilizing this approach. In particular, the review

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[2] For example, the BLTP's Gira Ejo project is designed to "increase the resilience of and social cohesion among youth" most affected by the 2015 crisis in Burundi (AID-695-F-17-00001). Counterpart International's program is designed to "improve the livelihood and peacebuilding skills of youth, and their enabling environment, thereby reducing the risk of youth becoming involved in conflict, and contributing to peace and stability in Burundi" (AID-695-A-17-000001).

observes key factors that influenced peacebuilding efforts in Burundi and the rationale and assumptions that help to elucidate why this approach is so commonly used.

Setting the Context

Some historical perspective is helpful for understanding current peacebuilding efforts in Burundi. It is significant that today's youth in Burundi grew up with the Arusha Peace Agreement, signed in 2000. This document not only provides the basis for the current constitution, but it also offered a framework for the international community to respond to the episodes of mass violence that have characterized Burundi's history and punctuated its civil war. In part, that framework included a focus on healing the wounds of violence, building skills to constructively engage social differences, and to building social cohesion.

At the time of the 2015 crisis, Burundi had had the benefit of a decade of peacebuilding. Informed observers argue that the gains from this decade of peacebuilding interventions helped Burundi get through the 2015 crisis without collapsing into out-of-control violence.[3] There are many anecdotal accounts that demonstrate how ordinary Burundians had the courage to say 'no' to violence in 2015. At the least, evidence suggests that through their experience with peace education and skill building, Burundi youth came to value the tools they gained and were eager to apply this learning to improve their own lives and the lives of their families and communities.[4]

The current iteration of peacebuilding programming that is the focus of this report emerged from consultations, research and reflections during the run-up to the 2015 elections. External partners working on peace and security engaged in extensive consultations with youth regarding the risks of being involved in political violence. This period of consultations revealed the acute reality of poverty and how the lack of opportunity and resources for youth was not adequately addressed in the earlier peacebuilding period. When asked about ways to avoid violence in the 2015 elections, youth were clear about the linkage between poverty and political manipulation (Impunity Watch Report, 2015). Youth asserted that providing a measure of economic well-being is a valid approach to violence prevention, in addition to being a good end in itself. The approach to youth support under examination here was therefore formulated to respond to youth concerns and analyses about political manipulation and poverty as drivers of violence.[5]

Regular reflection about the relevance and efficacy of programming approaches is a keystone to effective programming, especially in dynamic, complex operating environments. Autesserre refers to this as "continuing the battle over ideas" in order to raise awareness about what is working and what is not in peacebuilding environments and then integrating that learning into new programming (Autesserre 2014,

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[3] Interviews with Burundian interlocutors (August 2018).

[4] This was a core finding from a National Perceptions Survey conducted for UNICEF by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) in 2014. This corresponds to one of the key findings in the mid-term performance evaluation USAID/Burundi's Y4PBB project. As cited in T. Dexter (2017), unpublished report for UNFPA and the UNPBSO.

[5] See, for example, an Equal Times report on the causes of the 2015 crisis, which cites youth as stating poverty, unemployment and hopelessness about the future drive conflict, not their differences about the country's political future (https://www.equaltimes.org/poverty-and-unemployment-fuel?lang=en#.W6pA_i2ZORs).

256). It is furthermore endemic to USAID culture to continually seek ways to better understand the environments where interventions are taking place and to continually improve the quality of its interventions. This commitment to learning has only increased with the growing acknowledgement that iterative learning is vital to keeping attuned to complex, dynamic realities on the ground.[6] The research conducted for this report has been designed precisely for this purpose.

Having situated this approach in its historical context, we turn now to the theory and research that can help us to assess the relevance and efficacy of this approach to youth support in today's context. It is to their credit that donors adapted youth programming in light of research and youth consultations in advance of the 2015 elections. Three years out from the crisis, (and three years into this approach to youth programming), this research creates another appropriate reflective moment to inquiry about how this approach is meeting its objects, and to consider ways it might make sense to adapt to the continually shifting social and political context.

The Present Landscape

The combination of economic incentives and some form of youth empowerment that enhances social cohesion is a programmatic approach popular among donors in Burundi at present. Given the current context, donors seem to agree that this is the most viable approach to assisting youth. This is particularly true in an environment where donor-GoB relations are fraught and the GoB's ability to invest in its youth is extremely limited, raising the risks that vulnerable youth can be politically manipulated.

In addition to USAID support to youth, a number of donors and partners have embraced a similar approach, including but not limited to UNWOMEN, UNICEF, UNFPA, the European Union, and the GoB. Funding from these partners supports projects implemented by a number of international and Burundian NGOs. With some variation in project design, the approach is uniformly similar, combining some type of life skills and/or group conflict management skills training with economic empowerment. "The combination of activities - social cohesion, economic development, tools to know self - all lower tensions between youth" (Interview with UNICEF officials, citing CENAP Report on Youth Aspirations 2018).

Even when the focus is not specifically peacebuilding, projects use a similar logic and theory of change. The Dutch for instance, are gearing their strategy to focus on providing youth with skills and capacities to assume greater responsibility for their lives. Importantly, they believe that when this kind of programming is successful, it will help to reduce violence. In the case of UNWOMEN, their work expanded from a successful mediation project, to now also include a successful micro-lending program. This new component was added to give the women who have been volunteers in the project a means to support themselves. The women mediators themselves make up the 15,000 members currently engaged in these microfinance operations. Even the UNFPA, which generally focuses on reproductive health, HIV-AIDS education, and access to health services by youth, has partnered with UNDP on a peace

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[6] See, for example, https://usaidlearninglab.org/faq/collaborating-learning-and-adapting-cla.

consolidation program designed to build youth resilience and social cohesion--through activities such as participatory theater and intergenerational dialogue--along with income generating activities.

Economic development is an important prerequisite for sustainable peace and development in Burundi. Research underscores the value of integrating an economic component into peacebuilding projects aimed to address the prospects of youth violence. The lack of opportunity and resources has been well noted as a peace and security issue for youth in Burundi. Peter Uvin states this clearly in a research paper published by the World Bank in 2006. In a subsequent paper, he further characterized the issue like this:

> For young Burundians, one crucial element of peace is economic well-being. This is not because they make complicated assessments that poverty causes violent conflict; it is because they think that peace includes an element of social justice, period (Uvin, 2007)[7].

Marc Sommers affirms this finding in his 2013 research for UNICEF that looks at the conditions and trajectories that help promote or reduce prospects for violent conflict in Burundi. His research clearly linked poverty and hunger to violence (Low Horizons, Conclusion pg. 35). His research consistently found young Burundians and adults alike are haunted by feelings of hunger in a context where possibilities are eroding and threats expanding (pg. 38).

Further compounding the risks posed by the dire economic situation of youth, Sommers has written extensively on the conditions where youth become "stuck" in a situation where they are unable to achieve cultural adulthood. For males these conditions result in a situation of frustrated masculinity, with youth unable to achieve any of the cultural prerequisites of manhood, such as building a house, getting married and starting a family. These conditions have consequences for young women as well, by the direct effect of poverty on their own fates and by the various effects of the frustrated masculinity of young men (Sommers 2012, pg. 7). All this points to the paramount need to incorporate an economic element into youth support programming.

However, researchers are not uniformly in agreement regarding the link between unemployment and violence. Amarasuriya et al (2009) suggest that *not* having a job does not necessarily make youth more vulnerable to committing acts of violence. According to their research, there is little evidence to support the contention that the availability of jobs impacts violence reduction. This research raises questions about programming that target youth employment as a means of violence prevention and reduction.

A Decade of Peacebuilding

The current approach to youth programming was adapted from peacebuilding approaches utilized during this earlier decade of peacebuilding. This inquiry, therefore, must look at what is known about the efficacy of the approaches utilized during that phase of peacebuilding in Burundi. A core element of this approach is the people-to-people focus at the community level. There exists ample evidence to suggest the effectiveness of this approach to programming in Burundi. Notable in this regard, in 2013, USAID's

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[7] Uvin, Peter *Human security in Burundi: The view from below (by youth),* in African Security Review**,** June 2007, p. 45.

Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM) conducted a global review of its people-to-people (P2P) programming, which included a case study of P2P programming in Burundi. This report concluded that this type of community level programming is "appropriate, relevant and necessary" in Burundi. They saw that these approaches are well placed to identify, strengthen, and bolster existing informal and formal local approaches for conflict mitigation. They cite how the most enduring of these mechanisms is the support of existing local peace structures and the establishment of new ones.

However, while this study further found that these USAID / CMM funded community level programs made very real local-level contributions to peace, the programs did not effectively articulate and leverage linkages to higher-level impacts (CMM report pg. 10). In the case of Burundi, the CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA) Reflecting on Peace Practice (RPP) project found the link between community level peacebuilding and larger goals of peace for the country to be weak (Sebundani et al, 2008). According to this research, local conflicts do not have strong impacts at the national level. Efforts to improve the ability of youth and other members of the community to resolve local disputes have value for the communities in question, but this is unlikely to impact national-level politics.

In an Issues paper on the links between local and national level peacebuilding efforts, CDA sums up this situation in Burundi like this:

> ...in the past, national level politics have proven quite influential on local level dynamics, as politicians have manipulated local people to attack people of different ethnic groups. Thus, [we observe] a strong downward influence from national to local but only a weak influence from local to national. This example relates to the theory regarding the containment of violence. While the work is effective at reducing violence and discontent at the local level, this appears to have very little influence at higher levels (from RPP issue paper "Claims and Reality).

These conclusions are drawn from the broader RPP project. This research, involving multiple country-level case studies, was designed to examine the common peacebuilding assumption that community level peacebuilding efforts (they dubbed these the peace writ littles) would automatically add up to broader peacebuilding goals (referred to as peace writ large). The RPP research demonstrated that the linkages between community and national level peace is nuanced, complex and not automatic, and that more to the point, peace writ large is not the given result of a critical mass of peace writ littles. Autesserre's research (2017) reinforces this finding, underscoring that the link is often assumed by peacebuilders, rather than definitely proven through research findings.

While community level successes matter, the little progress made in addressing the larger socio-economic drivers of conflict in Burundi also has had significant implications. Hindsight on the decade of peacebuilding prior to 2015, affords some vantage on what may have been missed. While many political analysts and Burundi experts have praised the Arusha Accords as an exceptional political instrument, their focus was on reforming the country's security services and achieving more ethnic parity across institutions. Much hope was placed on this ethnic/gender power-sharing formula to address the historic drivers of conflict. This focus may have blinded the international community to other issues, such as where the balance of economic power lay or widespread institutional weakness that would eventually lead a back-sliding on stability.

Although critical, the institutional priorities put in place by the Arusha Accords were not well aligned with bottom up approaches that supported peacebuilding at the community level. The lack of focus in the Accords - which served as the basis for much of the future government's programming - on the issues most directly related to youth (employment generation, real reform of the education system, agrarian reform) inspired youth to engage in active - and initially non-violent - protest in 2015. These protests took place within a context of perpetual impunity, which had been undermining and eroding the conflict transformation process and youth trust in government.

After more than a decade of peacebuilding, youth influence on macro decisions that impact their immediate lives has not increased. At the same time, little real progress has been made to address the barriers facing youth, as they seek to realize their aspirations for a better future for themselves and their country (Julia Grauvogel Report, 2016). Confronted with the intertwined dynamics of poverty and despair for their future, youth were ripe for political manipulation, contributing to the transformation of political protest into a violent rebuke of the current administration.

The widespread and varied peacebuilding programming implemented throughout Burundi since 2005 offers several important lessons for current peacebuilding efforts. Culling from relevant literature, three key lessons stand out as helpful to evaluating the current generation of donor-funded, youth focused programs: 1) the need to test assumptions; and, 2) the need to make the link between top-down and bottom-up more explicit; and, 3) the causal linkage between youth employment and violence reduction needs to be questioned and examined.

Peacebuilding programming is rife with implicit and explicit assumptions. These need to be fleshed out and examined both in terms of how the programs are conceived by international donors (Autesserre 2017) and in terms of ensuring that actual youth interests and aspirations inform that process (Sommers 2012). In Autesserre's words, "Assumptions ….shape people's views on what counts as a problem: They affect which events will be noticed and which will not, as well as how these events will be interpreted… Ultimately, assumptions authorize, enable, and justify specific actions while precluding others" (2017, 122). The challenge is often that these assumptions are held by those developing RFPs and interpreting the need for peacebuilding, yet are not necessarily shared with local peacebuilding actors or tested in the field. Thus there is risk of a mismatch between donor aspirations and local needs.

This potential mismatch between donor aspirations and local needs provides just one important reason that the link between top-down and bottom-up needs to become more explicit. According to the CMM study, the vast majority of Burundi APS projects did not adequately describe or explain the linkages between their activities and linkages to peace writ large, even though they all have mechanisms that would allow for higher-level impact (CMM report, pg. 10). This would suggest that programs can be served by better leveraging existing mechanisms.

At the same time that programs identify and build vertical linkages into their community level programming, success for community level programming needs to be aligned with local realities. Thus, definitions of success should also be grounded in local indicators for peace, rather than only *peace writ large* definitions (Firchow and MacGinty 2017). One of these local indicators may well be economic well-being. The link between economic development/progress and peace is real and relevant to Burundian

youth (Uvin 2009). As donors and program developers more effectively understand the link between economic development, youth transition to adulthood, and the ability to envision one's future, the more sustainable social cohesion and peacebuilding in post-conflict contexts will be (Sommers 2012/2017; Amarasuriya et al 2009). Critically though, without the state's engagement in creating an enabling environment for programming, even the most innovative, well-resourced projects will struggle to have long term success (Firchow and MacGinty 2017).

Finally, while donors and implementers alike hope that youth employment will directly reduce violence perpetrated by youth, that causal chain is weak at best. There is a need to delink job creation as a strategy from violence reduction. The evidence does not bear out the assumption that one (jobs) prevents the other (violence) and the two should therefore be evaluated separately (Amarasuriya et al 2009).

The Current Approach to Youth Support

One outcome from a decade of peacebuilding in Burundi is that there is a large cadre of youth with both the desire and capacity to create the conditions for lasting peace. Evidence suggests that Burundi youth highly value peace education and skill building. This was a core finding from a National Perceptions Survey conducted for UNICEF by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) in 2014. This corresponds to one of the key findings in the mid-term performance evaluation of USAID / Burundi's Y4PBB project. The approach to youth support that combines social cohesion and income generating activities has remained very popular among youth beneficiaries and other stakeholders. Evidence also suggests that this kind of programming is contributing to social cohesion at the community level.

However, data show that there is little to no success impacting larger structural and political realities at the national level. Importantly, this same cadre of youth that are enthusiastic about contributing to peacebuilding, do not currently perceive that conditions enable them to do so (Small Arms Survey Report, 2015). While peacebuilding at the community level has achieved success and is popular among youth in Burundi, long term sustainability of these gains are questionable without comparable gains at the national level. As underscored above, the work of Firchow and MacGinty (2017) supports this conclusion, arguing that bottom up and top down approaches need to be made complementary. Community level programming needs to consider national level progress being made that will enable more generative possibilities for youth. In this context, it is appropriate for donors to be to asking how well government policies and programs respond to youth needs and aspirations. We learn from Amarasuriya that governments tend to focus on security measures to address what are often termed to be youth "problems" (2009). The risk in Burundi is that this potentially exacerbates frustrations while not addressing real issues.

As Burundi's political situation has continued to evolve, we can ask whether this programming is working on the right issues, at the right time with the right constituencies. This question points to the heart of program relevance. Mark M. Rogers looks into the matter of relevance in a Working paper produced for CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (2012). He stresses the importance of asking whether project objectives address the key driving factors of conflict. In Burundi, most community members and policy makers no longer identify ethnicity as a salient driver of conflict (Uvin 2009). Other

more systemic factors like inequality, exclusion, poverty and unemployment are more widely recognized as the key historical (and current) sources of conflict. And youth are particularly impacted by these factors as they strive to create more productive opportunities for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Thus, does the current programming address a centrally important question for this study: the reduction of youth violence in Burundi? Counterintuitively, while seemingly widespread, youth expend a great deal of energy *avoiding* violence in Burundi. The resort to violence is more often motivated by a desire for self-protection or as a way of securing daily income to survive, rather than as a political statement (Sommers, Low Horizons 2013).

Research from Sri Lanka compliments this perspective, demonstrating that youth don't always turn to violence to mobilize against unfair or unjust systems (p. 26). This has led to an implicit bias in programming, where youth are being supported to "cope within the [existing] system" and are not encouraged to be agents of change. Sommers (2012) reveals the degree to which youth are often perceived as a threat, especially when they mobilize for change, even for peaceful means. This reveals deeper problems of governance, but also raises cautions surrounding other hidden assumptions behind the goals of violence prevention programming - occupying youth to deter them from mobilizing because of the fear that this inevitably lead to violence.

There is a range of factors that impact the success of youth employment and peacebuilding programs. Sommers (2012) details how, beyond the level of survival--the ability to buy food and soap--youth need access to land, housing and education. They need government policies and frameworks to be pro-poor, and backed by well targeted budgets. He challenges whether employment alone is what is needed to promote peace. According to his research, policies that might negatively impact perceptions of identity (e.g. how history is taught; what values are emphasized) could have a greater impact on violence than economic programming - offering different incentives for violence if youth feel their identities or their history are unacknowledged. Programming that does not recognize this reality will not successfully impact levels of violence. Without the appropriate policy environment (access to credit, access to materials, pro-poor and/or pro-business legislation), then youth programming may not succeed and/or there may be contradictory incentives for violence.

More pointed in this regard is the work of Elizabeth King looking at similar programs in Kenya. King asserts that the international aid community has placed undue faith that support to youth participation in economic empowerment activities will mitigate youth participation in violence.

This study investigates this disconnect between faith and evidence. It argues that education and employment programs are commonly built on an economically-focused "dominant discourse" that makes presumptions about youth and their interests. Based on qualitative research with youth in Nairobi, Kenya, it further argues that this dominant discourse overlooks self-identity and social connectedness factors that are crucial to youth, as well as the limitations imposed by governance and structural conditions (April 2018).

The approach utilized by USAID's support to youth aims to address the interrelated challenges of poverty and violence prevention by coupling social cohesion and economic incentives. The reasoning in

part is that poverty and unemployment are paramount challenges for youth and this makes youth vulnerable to manipulation. Using this inverse logic, it might be tempting to conclude that unless these efforts serve to address poverty and unemployment, they are not achieving peace. (See USAID Chief Economist Trip Report from Wilton Park Dialogue on Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa.) While these approaches may have little impact on the larger youth employment challenge facing Burundi and countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, we must be careful about using this macro-level indicator to measure the success of community level interventions.

These studies reinforce the notion that these kinds of programs are not intended to address poverty. It further begs the question of how violence prevention at the community level – through economic empowerment and social cohesion initiatives – addresses the real needs of youth. In Sommer's research on the linkages between youth and violence in Burundi, he concludes that to support social cohesion and peace in Burundi youth need to be provided with self-reliance and, indeed, hope (2013). Arguably, current USAID programming in Burundi speaks to self-reliance. What remains to be seen is whether it is also able to generate the hope that will necessarily respond to the real needs of Burundian youth.

4.2   GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

In conclusion, this literature review played a critical role in shaping how the fieldwork for this assessment was conducted. More importantly, the review has provided important good practice guidance for USAID programming going forward. Specific guidance to USAID and other donors includes:

- Economic development is an important prerequisite for sustainable peace and development in Burundi. Integrating an economic component into youth-focused peacebuilding projects is one way of addressing youth violence.

- However, job creation, in and of itself, does not reduce youth violence. Programming should focus on building youth capacity to more actively and constructively participate in the social and political lives of their communities, in addition to developing strategies to address youth unemployment in order to more effectively prevent violence.

- Peacebuilding at the community level has achieved success and is popular among youth in Burundi and beyond. However, the longer term sustainability of these gains is questionable without comparable gains at the national level. Donor aspirations and local needs need to be linked more explicitly, including increasing donor support of national strategies to address youth issues.

- Finally, it is important to test assumptions about the causes of youth violence. Counter-intuitively, youth expend a great deal of energy *avoiding* violence in Burundi and in most countries. The resort to violence is more often motivated by a desire for self-protection or as a way of securing daily income to survive, rather than as a political statement (Sommers, 2013). As a result, programming should be driven by more bottom-up diagnostics in order to ensure that youth needs, and, by extension, the motivators for youth violence, are more effectively addressed.

5. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the guidance provided by the literature review, the assessment team spent three weeks in the field in Burundi, gathering data to assess USAID's approach[8] to supporting Burundian youth initiatives. The following section is a deepened look into our specific findings, concluding with lessons learned and recommendations to USAID for future programming.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 1: Are there any outcomes that might indicate or suggest conclusions on the efficacy of USAID Youth Support programs' approaches to violence prevention in regards to attitudinal change, economic activities, awareness raising, and mobilization around peacebuilding and reduction of violence?

FINDINGS

- *The USAID Youth Support Program approach to reducing youth violence as broadly executed in the four programs funded by USAID, contributes to youth ability to have greater agency and to resolve conflicts at the family and community level.*

As was highlighted in the literature, youth struggle to achieve cultural adulthood in countries across Africa, as traditional means of making the transition from youth to adult disappear and modern means (finding a job, buying property, completing one's education) become increasingly difficult to attain. The assessment team found ample evidence that the combined architecture of peacebuilding programming and income generating activities as executed in the four programs funded by USAID contributes to youth ability to assume greater responsibility in their lives and to become constructive agents within their families and communities. This finding is significant because of how it supports youth to overcome these barriers to achieving cultural adulthood. The results of these barriers have been well documented for keeping youth "stuck," unable to fulfill the aspirations they – and their families – hold for their personal lives, but also inhibiting the possibilities for contributing to the betterment of their communities and to the society as a whole.

Significantly, youth want to be active and constructive members of their society and take great pride in being able to offer their conflict resolution skills. Many boast about being valued in their community as someone who can mediate conflicts, illustrating how acquisition of these skills can contribute to changing their attitudes and behaviors.

> "In my community they know that I can help. Many people come to me to seek mediation."
> (Female youth beneficiary, 28, Kanyosha, Bujumbura Rurale)

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[8] The "approach" that is referred to in the findings below is USAID's programmatic approach to combining income generating activities with some kind of conflict resolution training and capacity building for dialogue and social cohesion. Throughout the text, when the term "approach" is used, it is referring to this approach. If more specificity is required, i.e. reference to a specific program, it will be included in the text.

> "I used to be a troublemaker in my neighborhood, but now I have given this up. Now, I am rather the one to help settle conflicts in my community." (Male youth beneficiary 24, FGD Gihanga, Bubanza)

> "Before this program, I used to quarrel very much, but after being taught, I cohabitate well in my community and I know [how] to apologize and provide forgiveness." (Youth beneficiary FGD, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie)

In more poignant account, a young man reports with pride how the training he received helped him to stand up to an abusive parent.

> "My father used to harm my mother. Because of the teachings I got, I can stand between them and solve the conflict and show my father the wrongs he committed. He wanted to use force on me but he didn't. Instead he has given up alcohol and being with other women." (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Several youth we listened to told us about how the trainings provided them with an inner strength that enabled them to engage across social fissures in new ways. In one account, we hear about the challenge of engaging with Imbonerakure. A male youth speaks to discovering his own innate skill set -- referring to the "gold inside"[9] (Male youth beneficiary, 26 Gihanga, Bubanza)--that allows him to resist a sense of victimhood and humiliation that was a feature of his previous experience. Here is how this youth describes his experience and how it made him feel:

> "Since I was trained, I can sit, share and chat with the Imbonerakure without any problem whereas before I considered them as enemies and I could not even get close to them. The training helped me know I have gold inside me and that I do not need to seek this elsewhere. I feel proud of this and it has significance for me….There are Imbonerakure in my community who are today my friends and we discuss issues well together. Before I could not talk to the police but I realized that ignoring and escaping is not a solution but that we should build friendships." (Male youth beneficiary, 26, Gihanga, Bubanza)

Several also expressed the view that the project came at **just the right time.** For one female beneficiary of Y4PBB this meant relief to her acute situation of poverty, at the same time that she credits the training received on peaceful coexistence as one of the key reasons her commune remained calm, and the youth kept united during the 2015 crisis (Female youth beneficiary, 26, Muhanga, Kayanza). In another reference to acute poverty, a focus group discussant gave thanks to Amahoro Iwacu, saying also that the association came just in time, providing some ease to their situation, "the Association came at the right time. We are still poor but it is not comparable to [my situation] before" (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie).

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[9] The Dukire Tubane project emphasizes that each youth needs to find the "gold" inside of them: self-esteem, inner strength, and self-worth.

These sentiments were echoed by a focal point, who said, "This wonderful project came at the right time…, because of the impact of the recent political crisis, but it needs to reach even more youth" (Focal Point, Dukire-Tubane, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie).

- ■ *The current program approach inspires a range of positive behavior changes in youth.*

The assessment team found a volume of testimony to affirm that the complementary architecture is valued for just what it is intended to do: inspire youth to conduct themselves in ways that both improve their economic prospects and build community, rather than contribute violence.

For instance, in Kanyosha we spoke to a young man who participates in the Gira Ejo program who sees social cohesion as the core foundation for economic development. He stressed that unless people can get along, the projects cannot succeed. When asked what the most significant effect of the training was, his list of benefits--learning to solve conflicts; knowing how to plan and realize a project for economic gain; and, gaining know-how and access to peer-to-peer support--highlight the integrated nature of economic project planning and self-development. One of the incentives in all this is the promise of serving as a model for other youth. These benefits accrue to a better life for himself and his circles: "I have so many friends now. I visit my new friends and we plan projects together" (Male youth beneficiary, 23, Kanyosha, Bujumbura Rurale).

The value of working together was expressed repeatedly, and is summed succinctly in this account:

> "Young people tend to want to work in isolation, but they cannot succeed alone. It is the goal of the association to share experiences and ideas. New ideas lead us to a high standard of living. You can own cattle instead of engaging in risky behavior." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

There was additional evidence of behavior change as related to managing money and planning for the future. As one beneficiary stated:

> "Before when I earned 2000F I would go to the pub, but now I save my money to buy livestock." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza).

He went on to say, "Before, we were satisfied to eat once a day and participated in risky behavior. But now, even when I have a large amount of money, I focus on work and building my savings" (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza).

- ■ *USAID's program approach seems to contribute to changing society's views of youth.*

In addition to changing youth perceptions of their own role, the USAID program approach seems to contribute to changing society's views of youth. As one interviewee expressed, "Youth don't see things in the same way as their peers; Nor in the same way as authorities. They don't have good relationships with the authorities or the police. The authorities have perceptions about youth in other neighborhoods that are not necessarily based in truth…. We want to restore confidence and trust" (CRS staff member).

As youth change their behavior, the community begins to consider youth in a positive light. One community leader recounted,

> "Concerning relationships, we have had good relations with the youth of our neighborhoods. We have often called them and asked them to give the lessons about what they had gone through [in the training with Amahoro Iwacu]. For instance we organized a youth meeting and we invited young people who had participated in violence to testify what they used to go through and the bad side they saw in that. So they encouraged their friends to prioritize preparing their future." (Community leader, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie)

And another community leader complimented the beneficiaries in his commune saying,

> What surprised me most about the project is the behavior change of some beneficiaries. When you realize that someone who had been marginalized has changed their behavior in a positive way, you are right to be surprised! We really appreciate these results [of the Y4PBB project]."(Community leader, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Importantly, community leaders recognized the value that youth can bring to their communities. One commented enthusiastically that youth "contribute a lot to the consolidation of peace in our zone; they have been very excited to join this project [the advocacy portion of Y4PBB-II lead by PARCEM] and to participate in these activities." She went on to underscore that if it were her decision, she would include youth more formally in the zone's administration saying, "we would like to integrate them [into the zone development planning process], however the elaboration of development plans happens at the communal level." (Female local official, Kinama, Bujumbura Mairie).

One program staff reported, "In the Dukire-Tubane project, youth work in collaboration with local administrators. For example, there was a water channel that was blocked [in the town] and youth beneficiaries suggested to the authorities that they could help to unblock it. This prevented flooding and demonstrated that they can solve problems together (Focal point, Gihanga, Bubanza).

These improved relationships result in a virtuous cycle, as expressed by another participant, "I feel proud and respected because I don't have to depend on anyone for my basic needs." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

This account echoes others that we heard about how relations within the communities have been impacted positively. Many link this with wanting to share the benefits of their experiences and what they learned, so that the community is better off as a result.

> "I thought I could share my knowledge with others by telling them that everyone has gold in him." (Male Youth beneficiary, 26, Gihanga, Bubanza)

As with the above account that gave testimony to improved relations with police, many claimed that relations with community leaders have also been improved. One female youth from Kayanza asserted:

> "We are in permanent contact with [community leaders]. They ask what problems we encounter and provide us with advice." (Female youth beneficiary, 27, Kayanza, Kayanza)

Another interview with a male youth in Muhanga we heard something very similar:

> "We build deep relationships with community leaders because they sustain us in the project. They still visit us once a month and give us advice about on how to manage our [tree planting] project. We are in permanent contact with local authorities for we cannot realize anything without their consent." (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza)

- ▪ ***Importantly, Burundi youth benefit economically from the USAID-funded approach to youth support programs.***

There is consistent evidence in three of the four programs assessed that youth benefit economically from this approach to youth support programs. (The fourth program, Gira Ejo, however, has not had sufficient time to implement all of its program activities and so the assessment cannot determine the economic benefit to youth in who are participating in that specific program.) Through the lending associations, youth are able to attend to their basic needs and to afford some modest commodities.

As members of the lending associations, youth report being able to buy items such as food, clothing, shoes and soap. There are also several accounts of larger purchases, such as livestock, and many examples of success with small business enterprises. To offer one example, a young woman in Muhanga used the profits from the sale of a pig to buy land and continue the business (Female youth beneficiary, 26, Muhanga, Kayanza).

One female participant compared the association to her husband because she "relies on both to live". She goes on to share her happiness over how the benefits are shared in the community, giving emphasis to how women benefit especially:

> "I am happy to see that the members help each other, and give one another loans. It is really a family, and even a woman can have a goat to breed. She can buy a plot of land for her farming activities. Moreover, she can give loans to the others in the community." (Female Youth Beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

Many take great pride in reporting how they have been able to move ahead economically as a result of the program.

> "I am more financially stable compared to the situation before. I am no longer totally dependent on my parents. I buy my own clothes. When I want to eat or drink something, I don't depend on anyone else. Everyone who participated in this program has moved forward economically." (Male Youth Beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza).

One strong pattern throughout the interviews is the value placed on extending personal benefits to the level of the community. In the example below, this young woman draws linkages between what she (and for her family) gained, to what women generally gain, to the benefits reaped by the community as a whole:

"...And the community, they can notice significant outcomes because when they have problems they can come to us and we can take small loans on their behalf." (Female Youth Beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

And another woman emphasized how the association can benefit the larger community:

"I am one of this association's members and we intend to share what we gathered; we will gain a small capital. From that, will buy a goat, if possible two to raise them. I also hope our supporters will come and our dream will become wide and real." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie).

- ***Structural barriers and the absence of an enabling environment for economic growth limit further success of USAID's combined approach.***

While USAID's programmatic approach to violence prevention yields tangible benefits, there are structural barriers that limit its outcomes and further success. Taxation, government policies on coffee sales, impunity, and the arbitrary and/or self-serving exercise of power are just some of the issues that serve as barriers to further economic success of youth economic initiatives. These issues were the focus of youth complaints and relate directly to the government's role (or lack thereof) in creating an enabling environment for economic growth.

Several participants report how the burden of taxation has caused many small business to fail, or at best has hindered the ability of these businesses to grow. In some accounts, a sense of outrage, unfairness and oppression are all clearly expressed.

"Those who sell banana beer pay 7000F of tax per week. If you do not pay on time, you are fined. If you close your pub, you are imprisoned." (Male Youth Beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

They haven't even paid us for our coffee and they are asking us to contribute to 2000FB for the elections. They have no pity on us (Male Youth Beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza).

These barriers contribute to feelings of powerlessness and the inability to effect change.

"We have ideas to change the situation but for fear of death, we keep silent." (Male Youth Beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

Regarding how violence affects the community, one group expressed resignation about the reality of violence as long as there is poverty. Poverty was cited overwhelmingly as the biggest problem that the people of Burundi face.

"What can you do with those who inflict violence? You live with them, that's all. Youth will remain violent as long as poverty remains a reality." (Male Youth Beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza).

"We agree that there are many challenges, but these are all linked to poverty. There are rich people who profit from this to fool the youth and use them in evil deeds. Youth get tricked by

offers of material things, and even jobs. This results in some of us who have and some of us who don't have. This is what divides us." (Male Youth Beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

The assessment team had the opportunity to speak with two national-level government officials. In a telephone interview, a representative of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture enthusiastically shared his vision for youth. The GoB has developed a National Youth Policy, which includes many innovative policies and structures meant to further youth aspirations. The GoB representative is clearly inspired to support youth to contribute to development of the country. Yet, he is focused largely on technology as a solution for the problems facing youth, and few ideas that might help rural youth were discussed. The National Youth Policy is equally unbalanced and could be more strongly aligned with the real issues facing the wide swath of both urban and rural youth. Interviews with other donors revealed a desire to work more closely among partners and with the GoB to more effectively address this lacunae.

CONCLUSIONS

- The inclusion of personal empowerment and conflict resolution skill building in the architecture of this approach enhances the stature of community members and contributes to larger community cohesion.

- The combined architecture of this approach enables the success of the economic component, from which beneficiaries receive tangible benefits.

- This approach to youth support provides a pathway to adulthood in a context in which that transition has become fraught at best and virtually unavailable at worst. The lack of employment, education, capital, and land all contribute to youth in Burundi being "stuck."

- The success of this approach is limited by structural barriers and the lack of an enabling national policy environment.

- The Government of Burundi and the private sector have an important role to play to create an enabling environment for economic development at both the local and the national levels in Burundi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID should continue funding this combined approach because it provides real economic value to youth as individuals and offers tangible benefits to the community.

- USAID should work with other governmental and non-governmental partners to build their knowledge of the issues facing youth. This knowledge generation process should include a focus on bottom-up diagnostics - meaning, begin assessments at the grassroots level, with youth themselves. This diagnostic process will offer program designers more nuanced information about the challenges facing youth and the motivations for violence.

- Future USAID programming should focus on enhancing the capacity of the GoB to create an enabling environment for youth development – through improved policies and other

institutional mechanisms - in addition to USAID's continued direct assistance to youth beneficiaries.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 2: What good practices are identified through assessment of the four particular programs?

While each USAID-funded program has generated some important lessons learned, the assessment team culled more comprehensive good practice recommendations from the two programs that will conclude this quarter: Search for Common Ground's Amahoro Iwacu program and Counterpart International's Y4PBB-II program.

FINDINGS

- ***Income generation and conflict resolution capacity building activities are complementary, and more effectively contribute to social cohesion when combined because they serve to build trust between participants.***

The combination of dialogue skills-building income generation seems to provide participants with opportunities to effectively structure their relationships with each other, building trust between them. This ability to build and sustain trust is at the heart of a community's capacity to create social cohesion and mitigate violence.

As the following examples demonstrate, trust is the key to the associations' success:

> "There is a change that has taken place in my heart...I feel proud to find myself with people from areas we had been mistrustful of, we learned about anger to know how to handle it... We managed to be brought together by the development in the community. There is no more mistrust on ethnic or religious grounds. We could sit with those with whom it was not possible before, and we talked and ate together." (Female youth beneficiary, 20, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

> "Since I began to participate in the SILC, it has helped me. They believe in me! They believe that I can pay [the loan] back. They have confidence in me and then I got something that I could [use to] feed my family." (Female beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "Amahoro Iwacu association helped us to know one another and to unite us, before we knew each other as inhabitants of the same hill and nothing more, but now we can give mutual loans and support one another." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

Youth are so enthusiastic about the approach that they insist that it be shared more broadly. In response to the question, "What are the economic prospects for youth in Burundi?" one young woman replied:

> "If I give an example by referring to the training we received on savings and credit, we must multiply this type of training because it also contributes to the consolidation of peace." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

Having acquired the interdependent capacities of conflict management and income generation, youth have the opportunity to positively influence decisions within their associations. According to interviewees, this productive role contributes directly to community social cohesion. One young woman said, "The project has raised the score [that I would give to the state of social relations in my community]. The teachings have opened our eyes and we respect the principles we have learned" (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

- *How the associations are managed is key to their success.*

More specifically, having a clear structure and set of institutional regulations enhanced both individual and group success, and built participants' confidence in the associational model. There were several references to different models of lending associations that were less successful and less popular, in large part due to their lack of regularly enforced rules.

> "There are people who do not like associations because many associations do not have rules. In this case, members take loans and do not pay them back. This is discouraging for people." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

> "And still others do not like associations because they have not yet understood their importance." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

One beneficiary clearly articulated the link between the management structure and her association's success saying, "Before, we participated in another association but the funds were mismanaged. Now, we have principles to follow; we have a good group leader; we have learned how to manage our funds" (Female beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie).

Participants in another focus group corroborated the importance of this structure:

> "The way in which one should manage accounts, recording income and expenses when managing a business, has helped me. Before, I conducted my business without calculating or controlling what I spent, but now I record both revenue and expenses." (Female beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

This theme was repeated across the assessment team's interviews and, as cited above by the youth beneficiary in Buterere, the rules developed to manage the lending process built trust between participants and by extension, in the association.

However, buy-in to this model has been slow, highlighting that there is still work to be done to promote the associational model. As one interviewee underscored, Burundians do not traditionally share resources beyond their family, saying

> "Cultural change is happening: some of the savings groups have stayed together an entire year without incident. This is unusual in Burundi. As Burundians, we don't often trust those outside of our family with money. The groups have stayed together, working toward a common goal and increasing their incomes together – that is a big success." (Search for Common Ground, Staff Member)

■ *Project flexibility to adapt to new learnings and shifting factors is important to project effectiveness.*

Program implementers had several good practice recommendations for USAID on the need for programmatic flexibility, based on their field experience. Two themes arose that seem particularly pertinent for USAID - one substantive and the other operational - both of which require USAID to be more flexible during program implementation.

First, program partners identified a need to incorporate more substantive training content on trauma healing for youth. Interestingly, this theme was not only raised by CRS, but by other implementing partners as well. While conflict management skills are important, without the ability to manage trauma, program implementers have found that the dialogue training does not stick as effectively.

> "Address trauma! Trauma within leadership of the country. There is a cyclical nature to the violence that is related to trauma." (Y4PBB Staff Member)

This sentiment was reinforced by another implementing partner who said, "Trauma is [a] major issue; [I] would like to see our project address this". He went on to say, "All fifteen major ministries are led by traumatized people. They are not making good decisions!" (JBB Staff Member).

Program beneficiaries underscored the importance of the trauma healing to their own success in the program:

> "A great challenge is that among youth, some of them were born in war, there are those who are traumatized. They do not trust each other to work together. This project should be extended to reach them with these teachings, so that they can work together." (Male youth beneficiary, 25, Gihanga, Bubanza)

The Dukire-Tubane program explicitly addresses trauma in order to help participants better manage the relationships necessary to exploit the associative structures. As one female beneficiary described,

> "Income generation and social cohesion are both important program [components], especially the trauma healing teachings. I learned things that helped me at home [where we suffered great trauma] and it helped my heart to heal. I used to be alone in my community but now I meet with others and share ideas about projects." (Female youth beneficiary, 27, Gihanga, Bubanza)

This programmatic addition - no other program addresses trauma explicitly- is considered an important contributor to the success of CRS' project. As a Dukire-Tubane participant concluded, "Youth participate in violence because they are manipulated, but it is not easy to fool [manipulate] someone who has participated in this training (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

A second good practice related to programmatic flexibility is the need to have more leeway from the donor during program implementation in order to adapt to changing realities on the ground.

> "[Our previous donor] was so flexible. USAID needs to be more flexible. [The previous donor] was also more involved in project, which I liked. USAID should put more focus on where it is

important - not on contracts and procedures but on improving programming. [Focus on] flexibility, engagement of donor etc." (Y4PBB Staff Member)

The staff member goes on to say,

"Doing the right thing for the project can sometimes count against you with USAID. For example, we have included the same person in several of our dialogues because he is an important higher up of the Imbonerakure in the commune. His presence is necessary to really resolve some of the conflicts because the youth at the colline level report to him. Yet, we get negative feedback from USAID because each dialogue does not reach entirely new populations. That would not be right decision for the efficacy of the project!" (Y4PBB Staff Member)

This perception is affirmed by another partner, who said, "sometimes we find that we are more responsive to the donor needs that to those of the participants, especially regarding the design of the program" and this should change (CRS Staff Member).

Another way in which this flexibility could be manifested is in the active coordination with other projects. Implementing partners would like to ensure the coherence of interventions on the ground, in order to improve program effectiveness but efforts are ad hoc and uncoordinated. "If a small amount of funds were made available for both periodic and spontaneous meetings of MEL officers, for example, that could facilitate the exchange of experiences, help to avoid project duplication, and ensure complementarity across donor programs" (Y4PBB Staff Member). This sentiment is underscored by other donor partners. As one expressed it, we need to "coordinate donors to invest long enough in the same places to actually change behavior [of youth]; coordination across all sectors [in which donors intervene] is key to success" (EU staff member).

- ■ *Longer activity duration will help to internalize concepts and lessons and allows for credit cycles to adapt to activity-specific needs.*

Program implementing partners expressed the desire for longer time frames for project implementation. This recommendation echoes good practice in the field of conflict transformation, which underscores that while the concepts and theory behind conflict resolution, dialogue and social cohesion can be learned fairly quickly, these are skills and capacities that require reinforcement and practice over a period of time to become fully internalized. For this reason, longer activity duration would help to support youth in applying these capacities in the context of their lives. The current USAID approach is designed to provide youth with opportunities to apply these capacities to problem solve and collaborate, but the assessment team found that the timeline should be longer:

"The two year period [of the project] is not enough time to heal the trauma. A second phase is needed to evaluate what we have done during the first phase." (Focal point, Dukire-Tubane, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie).

"Youth who were involved in economic activities and established income generating activities over time are the ones who feel the strongest about sharing the peace lessons and building social cohesion. Once their immediate needs are met, [the youth] can develop agency, take own

decisions and their positive acts are more rewarding. In addition, because collaboration was required for economic success, [the youth] now feel differently about others and about their own role in the community. They can have a positive impact on their own entourage." (JBB Staff Member).

"Resilience – and reduced potential for violence – is more than economic benefit. It is openness to the community. This engagement with the community will help [youth] to ensure the sustainability of their investment. [With practice] they will gain the skills to better manage their own projects, as well as their environment." (BLTP Staff Member)

The recommendation for extending program timelines also reflects the reality that many income generating projects in rural Burundi are dependent on successful and sufficiently numerous growing seasons for projects to turn a profit and thus permit timely repayment of credit. Several interviewees underscored the need for a more expansive timeline:

"Projects with USAID money are too short. [We] need [a] 3-4 year timeline at least. Currently, there is no ability to renew credit, nor to draw lessons from experience and adapt projects. In particular, agriculture projects need a longer timeframe." (JJB Staff Member)

At the end of the day, [USAID-funded projects] are not targeting enough youth and they aren't accompanying them adequately. The time frame of the intervention is too short." (Y4PBB Staff Member)

"Shorter credit timeline is much bigger risk and youth will abandon effort. However, over a longer period, there is a way to more effectively manage risk. At least youth know what they are considering vis a vis the risk - so it is understandable when they give up if they only have 6 months or less to repay their credit (depending on the project). [We would thus like to] adapt credit timeline to the nature of the project." (JJB Staff Member).

- *Provision of capital is vital to the success of entrepreneurial initiatives.*

Lack of capital was cited as a core challenge everywhere the assessment team traveled for fieldwork. Youth name this as a barrier to achieving their aspirations generally in life, but it shows up more specifically as a barrier to achieving greater economic gains within the context of the project. A conversation between different members of the Amahoro Iwacu project underscores this challenge:

"What I like since I get in this group, it is so helpful. Before, I was staying at home, wasting my time, but since I am integrated, I borrow little amount of money, I use it and get something to save. I just do a limited project for the capital is low. I hope to do more being helped by supporters." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

"It is so helpful to be in association but we encounter the problem when we come being six or seven to ask for a loan. We cannot get it as we need. But since we hope that tomorrow is better than today, may be the capital will be increased." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "Many [of us] need credit at the same time; someone can get angry because it is too little. It would be helpful to have more capital to lend." (Female beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

Elsewhere, participants expressed the same frustration at their lack of capital, saying things like, "Please provide us with more capital so that our small business can provide jobs for the other unemployed" (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza), or "we have projects, but since we have limited capital, we would like you [the interviewer] to please on our behalf for support, because we have the strength to work" (Male youth beneficiary, 24, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

Provision of capital is a key to sustaining the income generating activities over the long-term and extending them to achieve community-level benefits, as one female beneficiary eloquently expressed, "I would like to employ more people with my sewing, set up a real business. But I need more capital than our microcredit [SILC] can offer" (Female youth beneficiary, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie).

- ■ *Advocacy efforts provide one promising avenue for creating linkages between local and national levels.*

Another good practice identified by the assessment team was the introduction of a youth advocacy component to Y4PBB-II. The overarching objective of this component includes, "Building the capacity of local CSOs to empower and support youth-led, positive civic engagement" through the establishment of a network of youth advocates at the local/communal level, ultimately feeding into a national level youth advocacy network (Y4PBB-II program documents). This innovative activity explicitly recognizes the need to connect community-level youth programming to national policy through the voices of youth themselves as they advocate for their own needs.

Y4PBB's approach corresponds to one of the key findings from the literature review: the need to engage youth in the identification of their own problems and in the search for their solution. As expressed by multiple beneficiaries, the inability of youth to play a role as decision-makers in their communities creates a psychological and functional barrier to their transition to adulthood. In a focus group of young men in Gihanga, Bubanza, every single one of the 10 participants said that they would rate their role in decision-making in their community as a 1 (out of a possible score of 10). "The doors are closed to us" one young man concluded.

At the time of the assessment, PARCEM, the local implementing partner, was mid-way through its efforts to train up the youth advocates identified at the communal level and beginning to prepare for the national level advocacy campaign. The assessment team spoke with members of the communal-level youth advocacy network, all of whom praised the PARCEM training as providing them with the skills to speak on behalf of youth.

> "The most important part of the project is what we studied about the Platform, Leadership, and Advocacy. We were already leaders and we wanted to go deeper into these teachings. The advocacy project is very good and it helps us very much. We will go on applying on behalf of youth." (Mixed FGD, Kinama, Bujumbura Mairie).

PARCEM's work as part of the Y4PBB-II program meets a need at the local level in providing youth with the tools to advocate. At the same time, while the literature supports the need for such a linkage between local and national levels efforts to address youth challenges, there is currently a lack of evidence to demonstrate that the Y4PBB-II project has successfully created such a link. Even as local-level advocacy networks become more operational, there are two challenges to efficacy of the advocacy approach.

First, the advocacy network participants themselves underscore that the advocacy program targets too few youth. As one interviewee suggested, "Fifteen youth is not enough". He went on to say, "We serve as models but we cannot make an impact in such an overpopulated zone" (Male youth beneficiary, Kinama, Bujumbura Mairie).

Second, the project's goals are stymied by the lack of an operational National Youth Plan, which would offer a logical avenue for the proposed national level youth advocacy network. The National Youth Plan exists, but to date has few resources behind it and seems to focus on technological solutions to youth challenges. Thus, there is no real mechanism within the GoB into which the advocacy efforts can be fed. As one local implementing partner remarked, we need to "change leaders' way of thinking, change the policy. They have created new government structures but have not allowed youth to run their own centers. Need to change the way in which policy is implemented [by the GoB] (JBB staff member). These lacunae need to be addressed before the youth advocacy networks can bear fruit.

- ***Linkages with an existing formal institution will support community-level economic growth.***

All of the program activities conducted by all four implementing partners were executed in cooperation with both national and local level officials. The relationship between the program partners and local officials, while generally functional, has suffered from the vicissitudes of the larger political context. For example, despite having all the necessary formalities completed, local officials in Buterere (Bujumbura Mairie) harangued the assessment team and demanded additional paperwork to justify the interviews with program beneficiaries.

This tension at the local level was rare, however, and generally, local officials and participants alike agreed that a constructive working relationship between the associations and the local GoB institutions was important for economic success and for promoting social cohesion.

> "We realized that we were also supported by the government's local leaders and they appreciated the project. When government authorities support the project, the results are achieved." (Focal Point Y4PBB, Muhanga, Kayanza)

> "They are very brave young men [the Y4PBB youth leaders]. I am never worried when I ask them to represent me in certain activities. They contribute very much to the consolidation of peace in our zone." (Local leader, Kinama Zone, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "We benefited from lots of trainings. We were empowered in how to create an association and run the projects we are implementing. We were also trained in the relationships we need to

have with other members of the community and we are in good relationships with neighbors and community leaders. Our families get benefit in sharing interests." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

The importance of this institutional relationship to program success is not surprising. However, due to the weak national youth policy mechanisms (see finding above), the positive impacts of the programs and by extension, USAID's approach, remain limited to the local community level.

CONCLUSIONS

Program implementers and beneficiaries alike have learned important lessons from the implementation of these programs. There are seven operational lessons that stand out as critical for the success of USAID's approach:

- The addition of trauma healing modules to the curriculum has helped beneficiaries to address issues that might have otherwise hindered the success of ethnically and politically mixed associations.

- The complimentary architecture of programs fosters democratic norms and values. Specifically, how associations are run – rules/protocols/reciprocal responsibility – serves to build trust among members of the association, which in turn builds social cohesion and contributes to the success of the income generating activities.

- Flexibility in allowing programs to respond to lessons learned plays an important role in ensuring that programs adapt to changing conditions on the ground.

- Related to the lesson above, short program cycles have prevented beneficiaries from fully internalizing the approach promoted by USAID and its implementing partners, and in particular, has made it difficult for beneficiaries and program implementers alike to adjust repayment timelines to the realities of different businesses (e.g. agricultural growing seasons, animal husbandry requirements, the ebb and flow of market conditions).

- Making more capital available to beneficiaries later in the project, when they have demonstrated their success in managing both the income generating activities and have built social cohesion amongst association members and between members and their communities, will increase the sustainability of beneficiary projects.

- Those projects that are more fully embedded in the larger national youth policy context and its implementation at the local level are more sustainable because they encounter fewer obstacles from local administrators

- Finally, related to the good practice mentioned above, coupling specific income generating activities with advocacy has succeeded in bringing attention to the challenges facing youth in a constructive way, thus increasing the possibility that national policies will reflect the actual needs of rural and urban youth. However, advocacy efforts need to be expanded in order to have real impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID should consider offering program funding for longer project cycles (e.g. 4-7 years) – this complements a recommendation from the Y4PBB-I program team, which recommended longer loan periods for microfinance projects to ensure their success at the conclusion of Y4PBB-I.

- USAID would benefit from developing a closer relationship with program implementation teams, allowing them to be more responsive when program teams request changes or adaptations to program content in light of lessons learned in the field.

- USAID should encourage implementing partners to include trauma healing activities to complement other program objectives.

- USAID should coordinate more actively with other donors and partners on both the development and implementation of youth programming, in order to reduce duplication and encourage complementarity and to maximize the impact of limited resources devoted to this sector.

- USAID should consider follow-on funding in the form of capital investment to support successful projects and ensure that they become self-sustaining.

- USAID should support more expansive advocacy networks, which can facilitate the transmission of youth challenges from the grassroots to the national level.

- USAID should work closely with the GoB to ensure that programs are nested in the larger framework of GoB National Youth Policy in order to contribute to the impact of program activity and its sustainability.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 3: How important was USAID's support for institutional and technical capacity development in facilitating any reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence? / How were USAID programs effective, or not, in increasing the capacity of Burundian CSOs to empower and support youth-led community mobilization?

Youth involvement in politically motivated violence is due to several factors, only some of which the USAID programmatic approach can address. The main factor is the dynamic within political parties, which often manifests as violent power struggles within and between Burundi's main political parties. However, USAID, along with other donors, have limited influence over this factor in the current context. That said, the assessment team learned that there are several ways in which USAID-funded programs have successfully contributed to a reduction in youth participation in politically motivated violence in those communities in which the programs have been implemented. In the words of one program partner, "If we provide youth with productive ways of earning more than they might get from the political parties to participate in violence, then we will reduce youth violence" (SFCG Team Member)

- ***The complementary combination of income generation and social cohesion is greatly valued by youth beneficiaries in all three programs that had completed sufficient program activities at the time of the assessment.***

Youth do not focus only on income generation as the key benefit to the USAID-funded programs. As reported to program partners, youth acknowledge an important link between program activities and choices to not engage in violence:

> "They can now say "alternatives to political manipulation/violence now exist for me". Project has helped those individuals to understand this." (Amahoro Iwacu Team Member)

The value that youth place on having alternatives to manipulation and violence is very high. The data gathered by the assessment team suggests that the program activities promoted by each of the four implementing partners offer youth the means to focus their energies on more productive endeavors.

> "Before we joined this program of Dukire-Tubane, you could find us as youth fighting because of ethnic, religious differences or different political parties...Since this program, were are changed and we are going to change our neighbors. Before we participated in this program, none of us thought of preparing a project. Since [beginning the Dukire-Tubane program] we became aware that we can cooperate with people of different ethnic groups and develop a project [together]." (Male youth beneficiary, 24, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

The link between having a productive role in society and the confidence that brings to make positive changes in their lives was discussed in a focus group in Buterere:

> "Youth outside of our association don't know how to behave or to develop themselves. The teachings [we receive] are very important; they teach us principles that allow us to avoid violence. And we want to protect our investment [from] the violence that can destroy it." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "Yes! To be employed gives you the power to make decisions." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "We now have the courage to make decisions because we are engaged in a process of self-development. This helps us to eliminate poverty - there is a lot of conflict because of poverty - but if people are busy with good work, youth will not cause trouble." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

Interestingly, youth (and other community members) identify poverty as the key driver of conflict in Burundi. As one youth in Kanyosha described, "The problem for all of us [youth] is poverty; it causes youth to engage in bad behavior" (Female youth beneficiary, 20, FGD, Kanyosha, Bujumbura Rurale). This perspective was reinforced by other youth,

> "The greatest challenge that we have as youth is poverty." (Male youth beneficiary, 20, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

> "The young person accepts any offer to kill, his afraid of nothing, he kills, and he steals. Unemployment is at the root of all the problems faced by young people." (Female youth participant, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

> "Violence will always be in the young people as long as poverty remains a reality. When [youth] make mistakes, they are fined or imprisoned." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

This last comment reveals an intuitive understanding by youth that violence in Burundi is not only physical, it is structural, which can have a debilitating impact on youth aspirations and their survival.

> "Things are going from bad to worse. If I am in conflict with someone else, they look first at his political affiliation. I can be unjustly imprisoned [if the other is in the ruling party] and I have to sell my property to get out of prison. They have even closed the offices of the human rights organizations who defend our rights!" (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza)

> "When applying for jobs, there are many cases of injustice based on gender." (Female, youth beneficiary, mixed FGD, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie)

Which prompted the response:

> "When a boy achieves secondary school, he is allowed to continue his university studies, but girls are not allowed. This is real violence." (Female, youth beneficiary, mixed FGD, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie)

When given the opportunity, youth would like to address the causes of poverty and violence, seeking ways to fulfill their aspirations.

> "The main challenge of youth is poverty, so [if I had the power] I would bring them together and teach them to protect themselves." (Youth beneficiary, mixed FGD, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie).

> "Here in Kinama, young people try to fight against poverty by doing small business trade as a means of self-development. PARCEM trains us to identify problems and manage our business by addressing these problems." (Male youth beneficiary, Kinama, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "During the project activities, we mobilized youth from different political parties to participate in the same activities together. They realized themselves that they are the same and that belonging to different political parties doesn't matter. Young people came to the training with resentment and rejection but they attended peacebuilding training and they hugged each other before the end of the training. Activities of the project contributed to reducing violence as they contributed in peace consolidation." (Focal point, Y4PBB, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Thus, youth ascribe their ability to avoid violence not only to their participation in income generating projects, but to the skills acquired, values reinforced, and the self-worth they gain through their participation in the USAID-funded program.

However, the challenges of addressing violence in Burundi go beyond addressing poverty or changing the behavior of political parties. There is a more deeply-rooted set of values that tolerate violence, "One surprising and distressing finding from our study is that social norms in Burundi are somewhat violent. For example, many think that gender based violence is okay. There is a lot of tolerance for different forms of violence, such as violent ways of disciplining children (UNICEF Staff member). This suggests that the social cohesion aspects of USAID's approach need to be expanded and deepened in order to positively influence the evolution of these norms and values.

- *Youth who participate in lending associations are effectively empowered to mobilize other community members.*

The assessment team heard ample testimony from youth about how much they appreciate the support they received to form associations. In addition to economic benefits that came with this, youth had much to say about the how the trainings they received supported them to play a constructive role in their communities.

> "We were empowered in how to create an association and run the projects we are implementing. We were also trained on the relationships we need to have with other members of the community. Now we are in good relations with neighbors and community leaders." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

A young man in Bubanza attributed his ability to positively influence his community to his participation in the program, saying "the factor of behavior change that we see is the way [the program, Dukire-Tubane] brought us together; so we will teach others and help them to understand; we will put together the means at our disposal and we hope you will support us!" (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

This theme was echoed in Muhanga, where members of a focus group discussion shared their pride in their ability to offer advice to others in their community:

> "I gave advice to the young boys who were considering migrating to Bujumbura, inviting them not to cross their arms but rather to have entrepreneurial attitudes and to associate with other young people. My advice was heard and the young people started an association and they have just bought five goats." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Another focus group member added:

> "I give advice to friends who were in conflict, applying what I learned through the project. After a few days, they came to testify and to thank me for the advice." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza).

Without the participation in the USAID-funded programs, youth suggest that they would not survive. As one beneficiary said,

> "We are properly taught about responsibility in our association. Poor youth indulge in violence. They use violence to take property. The association brings help: poverty is reduced, it helps

> people to have means, and it reduces violence. By participating in the association, we bring peace to the country." (Female beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

As youth gain skills in dialogue and conflict resolution and enhance their economic prospects through participation in USAID-funded programs, their self-confidence rises, as does their ability and willingness to productively mobilize their community members. This appears to have mitigated violence in those communities in which the projects are active.

- ■ *Three of the USAID-funded programs succeeded in increasing the capacity of Burundian CSOs to empower and support youth-led community mobilization.*

In three of the four programs funded by USAID, the assessment team found evidence to suggest that youth more actively participated in community mobilization after having participated in program activities (the fourth program, Gira Ejo, has not yet reached the stage where this question can be answered) Youth have led advocacy efforts, participate in structuring the life of their associations and SILC, and have served as mediators in their communities. This is largely due to project design. As one local partner expressed,

> "SILCs are designed to continue. This should help youth to resist violence." (Amahoro Iwacu Team Member).

Another focal point shared that she feels empowered to help youth because she, "gained the ability to train others in youth economic development activities [and] peaceful cohabitation". According to her, other associations have approached her to do the same, because "they have realized that Amahoro Iwacu's approach is the best" (Focal point, Amahoro Iwacu, Kayanza, Kayanza).

According to interviewees, local partners will be able to sustain their efforts because of the way in which focal points were chosen (selected by youth themselves; received training and follow up visits) and in the way program design privileges collaboration with local authorities,

> "When government authorities support the project, the results are achieved. The project was supported by authorities because it was introduced to them early on. The attitude of the project designers towards the authorities [one of respect] is very important in order to have more influence in the future." (Focal point Y4PBB, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Implementing partners have also learned from each other. As a CRS staff member underscored, "Amahoro Iwacu's experience with the SILC inspired us to change our model, integrating conflict resolution into the Dukire-Tubane project" as this is a more sustainable model for SILC (CRS staff member). Indeed, their hope is that the SILC model is a pathway to accessing government regulated credit after USAID funding has ended. With their colleagues at SFCG they are discussing several models of sustainability, including integrating the PSPs into the government, integrating the SILC/PSP model into the Communal Development plans, or continuing to promote the PSPs as private sector actors.

However, despite these hopes, long-term sustainability remains a challenge, as is addressed below (see question 5).

CONCLUSIONS

- During the assessment process, the most commonly cited reason for violence in Burundi was poverty – even violence that is politically motivated is ultimately related to poverty because youth have few options for employment or income generation. The USAID funded projects offer beneficiaries the chance to both enhance their own self esteem (facilitated by social cohesion workshops) by exercising agency in their communities and earn desperately needed income, thus providing an escape from the poverty trap.

- Youth want to be productive members of their communities and their participation in the associations allows them to engage effectively with each other and with members of their communities, with whom they might not otherwise have associated.

- Youth recognize that there are few opportunities available to them and the USAID-funded programs offer real and tangible ways in which to contribute to their own future well-being.

- Violence is a result of several, intersecting factors in Burundi. USAID's approach contributes to mitigating both political and structural violence.

- The structure of USAID's approach allows local Burundian CSOs to more effectively support youth aspirations but sustainability of program investment remains a significant issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID should continue to fund programming that combines social cohesion and income generating activities because it contributes to reducing poverty at a local level and it serves to enhance the possibility for youth to play productive roles in their communities. Ultimately, this contribution may have an impact on politically motivated violence.

- USAID should consider expanding its programming using this approach. Only a small number of youth are reached by USAID-funded projects. This number is not sufficient to reach a critical mass of youth and thus have a measurable impact on politically motivated violence.

- USAID should work with implementing partners to more effectively diagnose and address both structural and political violence in Burundi's communities.

- USAID should encourage program implementing partners to explore creative mechanisms to ensure program sustainability after funding has ended.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 4: What are the most significant outcomes and the associated implications for peacebuilding and violence prevention among youth?

FINDINGS

As underscored in the findings in response to question 4, youth who participate in the USAID-funded programs seem to benefit greatly from the dialogue and peacebuilding skills, describing how they used to

be troublemakers and are now mediators. This in turn has a significant impact on their role in their communities, as they are sought out for their ability to resolve conflict.

- ***The peacebuilding component of USAID youth support initiatives delivers tangible benefits to the lives of the beneficiaries.***

Several youth shared examples how the training supported them to resolve family-level disputes. Here are some examples of testimony to this effect:

> "I had a neighbor who was always in conflict with his spouse. Once he came to the association, he changed his behavior radically and is now a good example to follow." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

> "There was a change [in my behavior after the training] because there were people who killed [members of] my family but we learned to forgive. I feel proud to find myself with people from areas we had been mistrustful of and we learned about anger and how to handle it." (Female youth beneficiary, 20, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

> "We welcome the training received on peacebuilding. We were asked to supervise other young people. We were very happy to train other youth." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

- ***Youth empowerment training/support is highly valued by youth and other stakeholders.***

Several youth interviewed by the assessment team likened participation in the program and joining an association to having their "**eyes opened up.**" One female youth put it like this:

> "There is something that has changed because before joining the association I could run out of soap. But after joining my eyes were opened. I now sell avocados and I can afford soap. The association helps its members when there is illness or another problem." (Female youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

In response to the questions about where economic opportunities or prospects are for youth in Burundi, one focus group participant named the lending associations. In this case, the lending associations are considered as a means to overcome the lack of capital. Again highlighting how what they learned has opened their eyes, here is how one young man put it:

> "Being in associations goes on opening our eyes. We learn how to prepare projects. Without projects, there is no possible develop due to the lack of capital." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

The conflict resolution methods provide youth a means to be ability to live well, "no matter if we are poor or rich" (Female youth beneficiary, 28, Kanyosha, Bujumbura Rurale). The trainings are attributed to new ways of managing relations without resorting to violence, and to problem solving. In one example, we see these abilities are applied to political conflict. She goes on to say,

> Now the youth who are in different political parties can talk and feel united, but this was not possible before because they viewed one another as enemies, as if always ready to fight. We spent a lot of time disputing over political matters. These conflicts have decreased. (Female youth beneficiary, 28, Kanyosha, Bujumbura Rurale).

- ***USAID's approach to youth support contributes to social cohesion.***

The architecture of the programs provides a mechanism that facilitate better relationships within communities. These trainings provide complementary skills that support youth to solve problems more effectively, whether these are problems encountered in designing and implementing an income generating scheme or small business, or whether these are problems that have to do with relationships. The problem solving (and project planning skills) support youth agency. The human relational skills enable this agency to get channeled in constructive ways, and they enable success. There is ample evidence that youth understand the reciprocal and reinforcing nature of these programs and are eager to put these skills to constructive use.

In the following account, a one male beneficiary in Gihanga reports how the most important part of the project was for him how it contributed to better relations with youth across political party differences:

> "The most important result of this training is that I can sit, share and chat with the Imbonerakure without any problem, whereas before I considered them as enemies and I could not even get close to them." (Male youth beneficiary, 26, Gihanga, Bubanza)

And another participant in Kayanza reported, "I appreciate the training sessions for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the [lessons on] management of credit" (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza). Several female rural youth also emphasized that the social situation in their community is good because "cohabitation is peaceful and [our] neighbors help neighbors, [peace] is a reality in our community" (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza).

Clear linkages were made between individual and social benefits accrued from participation in the associations. Many expressed this in terms of relations with local leadership.

As one beneficiary explains:

> "Now there are better relationships in the community because many people have joined associations. Even the relationships with leaders have improved. When we want to organize a meeting, we do it through the local leaders who help us find our members." (Female youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

Another shared:

> "We collaborate very [well] with the administration. We even call the zone leader our mom. She helps us a lot with our activities." (Male youth beneficiary, Kinama Bujumbura Mairie)

When asked whether they have observed changes in the way that youth and the administration behave with one another, several beneficiaries refer to the way that leaders work side by side during summer camp activities organized by the administration.

Still others claim that the cohesion among members of the lending associations result in better relations generally within the community:

> "Although we are separated by many things, like ethnicity, people come together and share ideas. Things are okay even in our community because there used to be a dangerous social segregation but now people cooperate without difficulties." (Female youth beneficiary, 27, Gihanga, Bubanza)

Taking this further, a male youth from Muhunga linked the tree planting activities he was engaged with as part of the Y4PBB project to his community's response to the 2015 crisis. He describes how youth doubled down on these economic activities, almost as an act of defiance against the risks of being manipulated by politicians:

> "Rather than respond to politicians' solicitations, youth instead united in associations to produce more trees than ever." (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza)

On aspect of the success of the tree planting project is in how it leverages local leadership and additional local structures to address challenges. The following example demonstrates buy-in and support for the project, by community leaders:

> "Thieves are a big problem. At one point I asked the community leaders to protect my nursery. When I suspected this risk I let the local leaders know. I was given 20,000FBu to pay for security guards. We were grateful for this support. People in the community like the avocado seeds and want to steal them instead of buying them." (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza)

At the same time that this same youth received support to protect his trees, the one big thing he said he would change is impunity. He made direct reference to the judicial system by saying that "currently, it is the abused person who loses the lawsuit. If I could, I would do justice" (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza). Taken together, these remarks demonstrate the apparent disconnect between the increasing social cohesion encouraged and enhanced by USAID-funded programming, which has positively impacted local systems and processes and the larger structural dynamics that shape the judicial system, which remain relatively untouched by program activities.

- ***The link between programming and violence reduction is ambiguous, at best.***

One of the aims of this current iteration of programming is to mitigate violence. While some beneficiaries link program activities to the mitigation of violence following the 2015 crisis, other evidence suggests that areas that have stayed calm, have done so irrespective of program activities, especially given that other factors also contributed a reduction in violence (not the least of which was the government choosing not to foment additional violence). As one participant suggested, "During the demonstrations, we had the administrator's support and the situation in this area was good" (Male youth beneficiary, Kinama, Bujumbura Mairie).

When asked about levels of violence in their communities, some beneficiaries said that such violence is increasing, because when there is no food or poverty in the family, acts of violence can occur. Another participant also said that family violence still persists because there is poverty and the heads of families leave homes to search for food. Therefore, "the remaining families could be manipulated by other men who have money". Others disputed this characterization, saying that violence is decreasing for families in Muhanga, as there are committees for child protection, and there are other bodies nearby for the protection of the population. What actually needs to change, participants suggested, are the institutional factors, such as the more just application of existing laws and the adaptation of other laws so that "everybody feels integrated, to eradicate corruption, and a seek gender representativeness in the CDFCs or in other committees charged with protection of the population" (Male youth beneficiaries, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza).

This discussion reflects a similar debate with program partners and in the donor community, where interviewees suggested that, while important, most peacebuilding programming in the aftermath of the violence that accompanied the 2015 protests and subsequent repression was not extensive enough to have had a national impact. Although most agreed that local level programming likely contributed to local level violence reduction. In addition, as one interviewee put it, "if the government wanted more violence, they would encourage more violence" (Local Burundian observer).

One interviewee insisted that there is "an informal link between this approach of combining income generation and social cohesion programming and a reduction in violence. But it is not a clear link. We want to study this too (UNFPA staff member). Another was more positive, suggesting that the "link between this kind of programming [income generation combined with social cohesion] and a reduction in violence exists, but it needs to be reinforced... our offerings are still quite limited, relative to the need" (Dutch Official).

A third seemed more pragmatic, stating, "Dialogue is not happening at the national level so there is no social cohesion message at that level either. Instead, we work at the communal level because we know we can have impact there." He goes on to say, "social cohesion is necessary for the income generating projects to be sustained but since social cohesion is a mindset, it is hard to measure on its own. So the projects [at the local level] serve as proxies [for measuring that cohesion]" (EU Official).

CONCLUSIONS

- Participation in the associations offers youth an alternate picture of their potential role in their communities, one that is less violent and more productive, as a result of the social cohesion skills that they learned.

- The programs offer youth an avenue to exercise agency within their own communities, contributing to their sense of being productive members of society.

- The link between these specific program activities and a reduction in violence is ambiguous at best. Because much of the programming was designed in the aftermath of the 2015 violence, it is as yet virtually impossible to determine if this programming has prevented subsequent violence

on a large scale. Certainly low level violence continues - but this is motivated by very different factors, most of which USAID programming is not meant to address.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID should consider investing more in evaluating these programs to better understand the possible link between programming and a reduction in violence.

- Longer investment timelines would allow program participants to inculcate the skills, tools and values shared during the social cohesion trainings with the broader community, increasing the likelihood of mitigating political violence.

- USAID should consider working more closely with other donor partners to determine how their coordinated programming targeted at youth will successfully counteract political manipulation.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 5: To what extent will CSOs be able to continue their activities without continued USAID assistance? / And what are the most sustainable aspects of the programs in the view of beneficiaries?

FINDINGS

Ongoing program sustainability is not a challenge unique to USAID-funded projects. Most donors in most countries struggle to find creative ways to ensure that the results of their investments outlive the funding they provide. The structure of the associations and income generating projects in at least three of the four projects seem to have laid the groundwork for certain benefits to persist.

- ***Lending associations have good potential to endure beyond the life of the projects.***

Several beneficiaries expressed confidence that even if the project stops, the associations will continue because of the direct economic benefits they provide.

> "People will remain united through the associations. We will help one another through the support of our members." (Female youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

> "We have received enough teaching to enable us to continue." (Female youth beneficiary, 27, Gihanga, Bubanza)

> "Relations based on solidarity and mutual assistance between members of the association or members of the community will continue even if the project ends." (Female youth beneficiary, 26, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Certainly those who have participated longer in the USAID-funded projects seem to have more faith that they will be able to achieve their aspirations, even after the funding cycle has concluded, as one youth suggested, "I will teach that development comes from you and comes back to you" (Youth beneficiary, Mixed FGD, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie).

■ *Projects are creating valuable community resources.*

Direct beneficiaries, as well as community members, acknowledge that the social cohesion training and income generating projects together create important resources for the larger community. In the words of one beneficiary from Gihanga,

> "The first thing is that I understood the teachings [on trauma]. When I joined the SILC, I helped my neighbors [learn] how they can handle somebody [who is traumatized], and then we go on living together harmoniously." (Male youth beneficiary, 20, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

His colleague went on to say, "I took these teachings [on trauma] to my neighborhood and went on sharing them as I continued to learn and kept showing [my neighbors] that we can overcome our former suffering and share everything in total peace and understanding" (Male youth beneficiary, 24, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza).

As underscored in the findings to question 2 above, many communities in Burundi do not benefit from trauma healing and other social cohesion skills because of a lack of resources, yet trauma often prevents youth from effectively participating in potentially life-changing activities such as the SILC. As one interviewee shared, "Youth are practically suicidal in their behavior because they can't see a future for themselves, so they take risks, like having unprotected sex" (UNICEF Staff Member). When youth are trained to better recognize trauma, they can become valuable resources for the broader community.

Youth associations have also had a salutatory impact on more concrete problems, like deforestation. As a community member in Muhanga reported,

> "The lesson learned is that [the project] has helped us a lot in protecting the environment. If you look at the hills of Muhanga commune, they are all covered with trees. In addition, there is no longer theft. The cohabitation between families is peaceful. There is harmony within families because of poverty reduction [due to project activities]. If the project ends, we advise the young people to remain in solidarity and always remember the acquired skills." (Local official, Muhanga, Kayanza)

■ *Sustainability is defined as a relationship between social cohesion and economic development.*

Several of the key informant interviewees underscored the need to think of sustainability in terms of beneficiaries' ability to engage dialogue effectively, manage conflict, and co-exist with others, as well as manage their ongoing economic development.

> "Youth who were involved in economic activities and established [income generating projects] are the ones who feel strongest about sharing peace lessons, building social cohesion." (JBB Staff Member)

Going further, one interviewee clearly articulated the link between enhancing youth agency and decision-making to economic development, saying, "[We] need a minimum of economic success to be able to participate in decision-making, otherwise, always focused on survival rather than your future.

Once you have that minimum, you can apply the governance and social cohesion principles to all aspects of your life" (BLTP Staff Member).

The youth agree with these sentiments, saying "joblessness and decision-making do not meet… you cannot take decisions when your pockets are empty. It is good to have [economic] power and then to take decisions" (Youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie).

- ■ *Long-term sustainability of program investments is threatened by lack of resources.*

Yet sustainability is not a given and it is threatened by a lack of ongoing investment from both the community and the program implementing partners.

> "The SILCs are too poor to sustain the PSPs [as the program is currently structured]. I earn nothing now and the SILCs will not be able to pay me a living wage. Their resources are too limited to sustain me." (Amahoro Iwacu Focal Point, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "[The program] needs to work with more young people. The limited numbers are limiting the impact of project and ability to mobilize youth across community… In addition, the age criteria are too broad. 15 year old is still a minor and they don't understand adult problems, this may discourage older youth. Investment in local staff is variable and could be improved - the kinds of collaboration demanded by the project require resources and as the trainers are not salaried, many volunteer [some of] their time. This is not sustainable." (Dukire-Tubane Focal Point, Kamenge, Bujumbura Mairie)

Several focal points and local implementing partners underscored that improved physical infrastructure could also greatly contribute to their ability to sustain their work with youth and to multiply program investment.

> "Youth centers are currently being used as military camps. There is not space for the youth to meet and share." (JBB Staff Member)

> "To keep these relationships with the youth at the end of the project, a meeting room could be built at the district headquarters to bring them together." (Community leader, Kayanza, Kayanza)

> "We would most like to see our youth centers revitalized as spaces for young people to flourish." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Sustainability is not a challenge faced only by USAID-funded programs in Burundi. Interviews with other donors and UN implementing partners highlighted a similar conundrum. At UNWOMEN, female mediators are now receiving training in how to undertake income generating projects in order to contribute to their own survival. They have also successfully integrated themselves into the hill-level development process, supporting local officials in conducting community dialogues for the purposes of addressing hill-level challenges.

The current relationship between international donors and the GoB also threatens sustainability, as programming has been stopped or delayed by new regulations. As a result, there may be fewer resources in the short term to devote to training or to supporting associations, throwing project timelines into doubt and perhaps negatively impacting projects that rely on the growing season, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

- Beneficiaries judge the programming to be effective because it combines social cohesion skill building *and* training in developing and managing income generating activities

- The training of mentors/PSP in both the Amahoro Iwacu and the Y4PBB projects is a step in the direction of sustainability; however, many communities are too poor to sustain those mentors/coaches without additional funds.

- There is not enough money to sustain these efforts and keep them alive even though they are proving their worth and contributing value to the communities

- Local NGOs who are being supported through capacity development will not survive without external support, at least in the short term (next 3-5 years).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID Youth support projects should build in more funding and/or plan for follow up, especially by supporting those they've trained to serve as community resources.

- Connecting program-specific sustainability strategies with GoB policies could enhance the overall possibility that program benefits will endure after USAID funding has ended.

- USAID could invest in more cross-donor coordination in order to amplify the impact of donor resources, contributing positively to program sustainability.

ASSESSMENT QUESTION 6: Given the assessment of the literature and of the four youth support programs, what, if any, are key lessons learned that can applied in the future to the USAID and similar programs in conflict-affected areas?

FINDINGS

- *Assumptions that underlie the programs' theories of change may not be shared or equally valued by beneficiaries themselves.*

People derive meaning in complex ways and reality is always more complex than it may first appear, especially to program designers and staff who sit on the outside of the communities that these projects are meant to serve. Many youth clearly asserted that this project has helped establish peace and security in their communities. But, in some cases, the meaning being ascribed to events is not always clearly linked to social cohesion curricula.

For instance, during an interview with one male youth from the province of Kayanza, he asserted on the one hand how ethnic difference no longer matter. He is taking a long view of history here, integrating lessons passed down from those that lived through violent periods in the past:

> "In the community we have kept in solidarity and we have taken care of peace and security. If we slept at 7:00 pm before the events of 2015, we could sleep at 9:00pm now as we consider what has divided Burundians in the past under the leadership of Micombero. We have agreed to stay united." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

He goes on to tell the story of how his grandfather, a Hutu, had fled to Rwanda. When he did so, he had a Tutsi friend who guarded his house so that when the grandfather returned, he found it in good condition. This story imparted on him the value of ethnic solidarity, of not being divided over ethnic differences. But when he then applies this meaning to current events, he reveals that solidarity can be easily conflated with authoritarian rule. The high premium he places on solidarity is what undergirds his fears that the ones who organized the coup in 2015 threaten to plunge the country into a new crisis. When asked if he had the power to change one thing that would impact the future, here is what he said:

> "I will ask foreign countries to condemn the coup planners. I would suspend any political party that does not share a vision with others. For example, if there is a political party that does not converge with the six other parties and see things the same way, I will suspend it." (Male youth beneficiary, Kayanza, Kayanza)

In a different example, we learn how trauma is linked to violence from the past, but is experienced in present as a form of social isolation. One beneficiary tells a dramatic story about how her participation in Dukire-Tubane project helped with this:

> "Before joining the program, I could not go among other young people because I did not feel good about it. This all stemmed from the way I had grown up. Since my childhood, I hear people saying that our neighbor, whom I know very well, had poisoned my mother to death. Based on this, I feared people. With the trauma healing, this fear was released in me one step at a time and now I am free." (Female youth beneficiary, 27, Gihanga, Bubanza)

Unity and cohesion become the synonyms for predictable and stable. The challenge is that the vision for unity and cohesion has not been fully fleshed out and articulated. As one interviewee put it, "People are being asked to get on a bus [by the GoB] without knowing where it's going" (Burundian observer/private sector). Thus, it is understandable that people prefer stability over unpredictability, which they associate with violence.

One final learning regarding assumptions relates to the perceptions of youth needs. Much emphasis has been placed on the need for employment and its role in reducing youth involvement in political violence. However, youth underscore that that is only one of a set of challenges that they face. The lack of participation in decision making; other kinds of structural and personal violence; institutional barriers; lack of access to land; etc. all figure strongly into their perceptions of the problems that must be overcome in order to achieve their aspirations. Current programs do not adequately reflect this range of challenges. As a result, programming should be driven by more bottom-up diagnostics in order to

ensure that youth needs, and, by extension, the motivators for youth violence, are more effectively addressed

- ***Youth are keenly aware of the structural barriers to their growth and development.***

As described above, the number one barrier to growth as identified by youth is poverty. When asked if they had the ability to change one thing that would impact their future, youth in every focus group discussion suggested that they would put an end to poverty.

However, there are several other structural barriers that were highlighted by youth as contributing to their inability to achieve their dreams. These barriers range from a lack of access to education to a lack of availability of the infrastructure necessary to get their products to market (grinding mills, markets), an unpredictable and unfair tax system to pervasive impunity, from inadequate social services to nepotism.

> "Violence has another tendency. Sometimes, those who commit such acts [of violence] manipulate the victim and the authorities (police, lawyers, even the family) by giving them money. This can only reinforce the behavior." (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Muhanga, Kayanza)

> "In the employment sector, there are many job seekers and it is clear that there is discrimination in the granting of work because we often put ahead "aka mwana wa mama" or nepotism, which proves again that the social situation is not good."

Several interviewees suggested that if there were a means for youth to share their ideas with leaders, they could improve their own and their community's situation, "Another thing to take into consideration [is that] the youth be represented in new projects and programs of the Government" (Male youth beneficiary, FGD, Kayanza, Kayanza). But they note that rarely happens:

> "Even when a there is a young person who is promoted to a higher position, he does not share the challenges of the youth because even when he speaks, he is not listened to [by the leaders]." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza)

Incredibly, however, despite the sometimes desperate circumstances, with just a bit of encouragement, youth share their enthusiasm, ideas and energy. They frame their hopes for themselves in collective terms,

> "If I had the power, I "would give youth the money to do commerce, and I would create jobs for the unemployed." (Female youth beneficiary, FGD, Gihanga, Bubanza) "If I had the power, I would look for the main problems which cause troubles in Burundi and I would solve them." (Youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

> "If I had 100% power, I would use 20% to chase away hunger, 20% to strengthen peace and security, 20% to help orphans, and 40% to modernize Burundi." (Youth beneficiary, FGD, Buterere, Bujumbura Mairie)

Or, youth link their aspiration to dreams of a better life for their children, in spite of the structural barriers they face.

"I hope to make progress so that my children have a better life." (Female youth beneficiary, 26, Muhanga, Kayanza)

Thus, the assessment team found that inspiring hope in youth by addressing some of these structural barriers was almost as important as providing youth with material support.

- ▪ *Projects that integrate appropriate GoB actors and institutions seem to have more potential for success over the long-term.*

The current political context in Burundi influences the nature of relationships between donors, implementing partners, local CSOs, and local and national government officials. Many recent programs have been implemented with minimal GoB involvement, in an attempt to circumnavigate challenges such as corruption and the politicization of aid. Yet donors, partners, and beneficiaries all agree that those programs that more fully integrate the appropriate GoB institutions enhance the success of the respective program, increasing its potential impact and improving the prospects for sustainability.

The assessment team found that all four program implementation teams acknowledged the need to integrate local officials in order to facilitate their work and contribute to program success. Program staff recognize that their projects don't operate in a vacuum. From security concerns to access to more formal credit institutions, all four implementing partners emphasized the need to work in concert with the government.

> "We realized that we were also supported by the government's local leaders and they appreciated the project...what we did well was to present our project to them early on [in the process] and we shared our objectives. Then they worked hard to help us to publicize the project to the target beneficiaries." (Focal point, Y4PBB, Muhanga, Kayanza).

> "[We expect that the] youth will eventually learn how to develop a financial relationship with formal microfinance institutions, to enhance [sustainability] of their projects." (Gira Ejo Staff Member)

> "We have had a big problem with thieves. In the past, I have asked the administration to protect my nursery from the thieves. There was one attempt and I immediately informed the administration, who then gave me 20000 FBU to pay for guards. I thank them for this effort." (Male youth beneficiary, 28, Muhanga, Kayanza)

However, the Dukire-Tubane project seems to have most successfully worked with government because they have an explicit objective of improving youth-administration relationships as a means of reducing violence and increasing the success of the associations. This focus seems to be bearing positive fruit, especially with regard to improving social cohesion:

> "In the Dukire-Tubane project, youth work in collaboration with local administration. I contacted the administration to [get their approval for youth participation] in this program and we have invited them to come and see and participate in the different teachings that we've provided to the youth. There is collaboration between the youth and the administration and [we

see that] the Bubanza administrator is on the youth's side." (Focal point, Dukire-Tubane, Gihanga, Bubanza)

"Already, the social cohesion workshops have brought together youth with local administrators and their perceptions [of each other] have begun to change for the better." (CRS Staff Member)

Other donors and partners also recognize the importance of coordinating with the government in order to best support youth and to achieve their programmatic objectives.

"We want to complement other donor work with local officials. For example, two European donors are working with local officials to enhance their capacities, so we want to coordinate our programming with theirs and build on that work. We should not all be working on the same thing, but we should be investing sufficiently in a place to effect real change." (EU Official)

"[The success of our program was also dependent upon] legitimizing the [women] mediators by getting the local administration to formally recognize them. They are now referred to as the 'trio' - with National Women's Forum members and the Women's Council Local Representatives - and work together [to manage community dialogue processes]." (UNWOMEN Official)

According to the UNWOMEN staff, this model has been extended across Burundi, as there are trained women mediators working in every commune of the country. They have succeeded in getting buy-in at all levels of government, through their work with the National Women's Forum, as well as their process of integrating government officials from the Governor to the hillside level into their approach to community dialogue and conflict management.

This multi-level approach is supported by other donors:

"We have a three-pronged approach, [which is executed through an international NGO] focusing on two government institutions - health centers and schools - and the community. Our assistance [influences and is influenced by] government policy. We work closely with national level officials to ensure broad and even impact of our programming across Burundi. We would like to add the private sector to this mix as well in order to increase our impact." (Dutch Official).

These findings suggest that more explicitly integrating local and national level GoB officials into program design and implementation of USAID-funded projects can positively contribute to more effectively addressing the complex problems facing youth in Burundi. This in turn may enhance the possibility that program investments will be sustained long after program funding has ended.

CONCLUSION

- Assumptions of program partners and implementers underlying program theories of change do not always match those of program participants and beneficiaries.

- Structural issues present significant barriers to the success of programming for youth and youth understand the impacts of these barriers but feel unable to address them.

- While USAID-funded programming has had significant impacts at the local community level, the lack of consistent coordination with GoB and other formal institutions limits its impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- USAID and its program partners should revisit program assumptions frequently throughout program implementation.

- USAID should encourage program partners to test their underlying assumptions with program beneficiaries.

- It is important for USAID and its implementing partners to establish more explicit horizontal and vertical linkages to GoB policies and programs to address the multi-faceted problems facing youth and to contribute to longer term sustainable change.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

(1) As underscored in the literature review, job creation alone does not reduce youth violence. Programming should focus on building youth capacity to more actively and constructively participate in the social and political lives of their communities, in addition to developing strategies to address youth unemployment in order to more effectively prevent violence. The architecture of the USAID programs assessed for this report provides a mechanism that facilitate better relationships within communities. These trainings provide complementary skills that support youth to solve problems more effectively, whether these are problems encountered in designing and implementing an income generating scheme or small business, or whether these are problems that have to do with trauma healing and building relationships. The problem solving (and project planning skills) support youth agency. The human relational skills enable this agency to get channeled in constructive ways, and they enable success. There is ample evidence that youth understand the reciprocal and reinforcing nature of these programs and are eager to put these skills to constructive use to the betterment of their individual lives and that of their families and communities.

(2) The combination of dialogue skills-building income generation seems to provide participants with opportunities to effectively structure their relationships with each other, building trust between them. This ability to build and sustain trust is at the heart of a community's capacity to create social cohesion and mitigate violence.

(3) However, the challenges of addressing violence in Burundi go beyond addressing poverty or changing the behavior of political parties. There is a more deeply-rooted set of values that tolerate violence. One distressing finding from a CENAP/InterPeace study is that social norms in Burundi are somewhat violent, such as condoning violent ways of disciplining children or tolerating gender based violence. (UNICEF Staff member). This suggests that the social cohesion aspects of USAID's approach need to be expanded and deepened in order to positively influence the changing and contested nature of these norms and values.

(4) Peacebuilding at the community level has achieved success and is popular among youth in Burundi and beyond. However, the long term sustainability of these gains is questionable without comparable gains at the national level. While USAID's programmatic approach to violence prevention yields tangible benefits, there are structural barriers that limit its outcomes and further success. Taxation, government policies on coffee sales, impunity, and the arbitrary and/or self-serving exercise of power are just some of the issues that serve as barriers to further economic success of youth economic initiatives. These issues were the focus of youth complaints and relate directly to the government's role (or lack thereof) in creating an enabling environment for economic growth. Donor aspirations and local needs need to be linked more explicitly, including increasing donor support of national policies and strategies to address youth issues.

(5) Experience in Burundi confirms the findings from the literature that it is important to test assumptions about the causes of youth violence. Counterintuitively, youth expend a great deal of energy *avoiding* violence - in Burundi and in most countries. The resort to violence is more often motivated by a desire for self-protection or as a way of securing daily income to survive, rather than as a political statement (Sommers, 2013). Much emphasis has been placed on the need for employment and its role in reducing youth involvement in political violence. However, youth underscore that that is only one of a set of challenges that they face. The lack of participation in decision making; other kinds of structural and personal violence; institutional barriers; lack of access to land; etc. all figure strongly into their perceptions of the problems that must be overcome in order to achieve their aspirations. Current programs do not adequately reflect this range of challenges. As highlighted in the literature, programming should be driven by more bottom-up diagnostics in order to ensure that youth needs, and, by extension, the motivators for youth violence, are more effectively addressed.

(6) The assessment team noted some evidence that programs should take into account the differences between rural and urban youth populations. Claims by program staff that urban youth are less reliable than rural youth in loan repayment, or that rural youth receive more support from their families, for instance, have consequences for project effectiveness. Other contextual and demographic differences have equally important implications for how programs might frame their focus (an emphasis on information technology infrastructure versus agricultural inputs, for example), in order to assure relevance to addressing youth challenges. Due to constraints of time and scope, the assessment produced limited data on rural/urban differences. Given how consequential these differences may be to the success of future programming, this is one area that merits further attention by USAID as it contemplates funding youth support programs in the future.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: ORIGINAL ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

KEY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS (from the Concept Note)

(1)   Are there any outcomes that might indicate or suggest conclusions on the efficacy of Youth Support programs' approaches to violence prevention in regards to economic activities, awareness raising, and mobilization around peacebuilding?

(2)   Based on an assessment of existing literature related to peacebuilding and youth violence prevention in Africa, as well as existing donor programming in the issue-area, particularly in Burundi, what good practices can be identified?

(3)   What good practices are identified through the assessment of the four particular programs?

(4)   How important was USAID's support for institutional and technical capacity development in facilitating any reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence?

(5)   How were USAID programs effective, or not, in increasing the capacity of Burundian CSOs to empower and support youth-led community mobilization?

(6)   What are the most significant outcomes and the associated implications for peacebuilidng and violence prevention among youth?

(7)   What activities were viewed by beneficiaries and program implementers as most effective in achieving the objective of reducing youth involvement in politically motivated violence and enhancing peacebuilding?

(8)   To what extent have USAID/Burundi's four youth support programs contributed to the reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence and enhancing peacebuilding capacity?

(9)   In what ways have broader attitudinal change occurred (e.g. norms and values) around peacebuilding and violence?

(10)   To what extent will CSOs be able to continue their activities without continued USAID assistance?

(11)   Are any identified changes in youth behavior with regards to participation in politically motivated violence and peacebuilding likely to be sustained after USAID program support ends?

(12)   Given the assessment of the literature and of the four youth support programs, what, if any, are key lessons learned that can applied in the future to the USAID and similar programs in conflict-affected areas?

ANNEX 2. SCOPE OF WORK

STATEMENT OF WORK

USAID / BURUNDI – BRIDGING DIVIDES: ENHANCING YOUTH CAPACITY TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES WITHOUT VIOLENCE

I.   ASSESSMENT PURPOSE AND USE

USAID/ Burundi funds four multi-year Projects designed to reduce the risk of youth participation in violence. Involving both rural and urban populations, all four Projects support youth dialogue and joint activities to increase understanding, appreciation of differences, and collaboration among conflicting groups. The Projects also seek to nurture youth leaders and empower them with appropriate skills to assist their communities with peaceful development.

The purpose of this firm, fixed-price, and Youth Support Assessment is to assist USAID/Burundi to better understand the relative effectiveness of different peace-building and violence prevention activities. The Assessment findings will be used by USAID/Burundi (i) to inform the design of future Projects dedicated to violence prevention and closing geographic, ethnic, political, and economic divides within Burundi; and (ii) to provide a basis on which to evaluate the relative effectiveness and efficiency of achieving violence and conflict reduction goals by specifically targeting the youth sector and by funding the selected activities included in the USAID/Burundi democracy and governance assistance programs.

This Assessment will provide the USAID/Burundi Democracy & Governance Office, the U.S. Embassy in Bujumbura, and the USAID/Washington Democracy, Rights, and Governance Office, with a more in-depth understanding of USAID/ Burundi's strategic focus on youth as a means of addressing conflict and mitigating violence in the country's volatile, often conflictive political environment. Analytical Insights gained from the Assessment will inform future USAID programming in the democracy and governance sector in Burundi. Additionally, lessons learned and best practices identified will help inform USAID's strategic planning in similarly severely under-resourced countries undergoing difficult political transitions.

II.   BACKGROUND

A. Development Challenge

Burundi is a politically and socially fragile country. Poverty is endemic with nearly 65% of the total population living below the poverty line. Moreover, the population has more than doubled since 1990 and since more than two-thirds of the country is under the age of 25 and the birth rate is extremely high (around 6 children per woman) the political and economic future of youth in Burundi is especially perilous. The economic future is similarly bleak, because 90% of employment is comp0rised of subsistence agriculture, and opportunities in other industries are weak to nonexistent.

In Burundi's history, electoral violence and abuses have been sponsored and fueled by politicians who advocate for their own interests. In their personal struggles to maintain or attain power, politicians take advantage of the context of youth unemployment, ignorance of the population and extreme poverty, to manipulate young people and induce them to engage in acts of violence.

The 2015 elections were no exception, and the announcement of President Nkurunziza's candidacy, which some considered to be a violation of the constitution, was followed by protests that quickly turned violent and were severely repressed. The various parties' youth wings were some of the main actors in the protests and tensions, meaning youth were again the main victims of the violence. Tensions peaked with an attempted coup on May 13, 2015, which was followed by the destruction of the main independent media, repression in the opposition-aligned neighborhoods including many arrests, human rights abuses and alleged use of torture. A fringe of the radicalized opposition turned to armed insurgency in the capital Bujumbura, characterized by heavy night-time shooting and multiple grenade attacks, including day-time attacks in crowded areas. Tit-for-tat assassinations took the lives of many leaders on both sides. Mid to late 2015, the urban insurgency turned into a rebellion which led an attack on military camps in Bujumbura in the early morning of December 11. The Government's response to these attacks turned into revenge killing and violence in opposition-aligned neighborhoods, further traumatizing youth from these areas and breaking the trust with the population. By the end of December, violence, fear, and the poor economic situation had pushed over 360,000 Burundians to flee and become refugees.

It is in this climate of heightened tensions, violence, and fear that the Y4PBB r4eceived a one-year cost extension to continue working with youth to rebuild and strengthen social cohesion and non-violent conflict resolution skills, support the resolution of local-level conflicts and offer alternatives to violence through livelihoods activities.

The start of 2016, saw a multiplication of high-level interventions to support Burundi towards a peace process, amongst continued violence and increased tensions between Burundi and Rwanda. Despite the stalling of the external dialogue process supported by the East African Community, violence was significantly reduced from the second quarter of 2016, with positive steps taken by the Government of Burundi around the reo-opening of some media, release of prisoners, and re-authorization of certain CSOs that had been suspended. Nevertheless, small-scale armed attacks, targeted assassinations (and attempts), human rights abuse and intimidation continued throughout the implementation of Phase Two.

Year 2017, began with the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, especially around food security, and a malaria epidemic was declared by the Government in March, followed by severe power and fuel shortages. This general downturn in the economic situation negatively affected youth's ability to recover from the crisis and implement income-generating activities. Before the last quarter of 2017, the security situation was relatively calm, but fear remains around a potential resurgence of violence linked to a possible attempt by the Government to modify the constitution and to the 2020 elections.

B. Youth Support Programs to be Assessed

1. Youth for Peace-Building in Burundi (Y4PBB) – In July 2014, USAID awarded Associate Cooperative Agreement #AID-OAA-LA-14-00007 under Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement #DFD-A-00-09-00141-00 to Counterpart International, to establish the Youth for Peace-Building in Burundi (Y4PBB) Program. The goal of Y4PBB was to reduce the risk of youth (ages 18-35) participation in violence in Burundi related to the June 2015 general elections. The Project design

analysis identified factors that promote peacebuilding and developed activities to achieve the following three objectives:

(i) Increase capacity of Burundian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to empower and support youth-led community mobilization;

(ii) Enhance economic incentives for youth to participate constructively in society; and

(iii) Support youth-led peacebuilding and violence prevention activities.

In view of the violence that occurred related to the 2015 elections, and to provide long-term, socio-economic opportunities for young people (ages 18-35), Y4PBB's activities support:

(a) Involvement of both, young men and young women, in youth-led peace-building and violence prevention initiatives;

(b) Youth involvement as non-violent actors and key stakeholders in the peace-building process through cash for work programs, technical assistance;

(c) Organizational capacity development;

(d) Grant making opportunities for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that are working to mobilize Burundi's burgeoning youth population in a positive, non-violent way; and

(e) Increased economic access and opportunities for young men and women.

Y4PBB began implementing activities in November 2014, including directly-implemented activities such as cultural exchange days, media campaigns, and the promotion of a Community of Practice (COMPRAC). The Y4PBB program also includes $695,000 for a Grants Program that funded activities of six Burundian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) to fund and implement: (i) dialogue and exchange visits; (ii) short-term employment opportunities through the Cash-for-Work (CfW) methodology; (iii) vocational and entrepreneurship training, including an innovation competition; and (iv) the promotion of social cohesion through awareness-raising sessions and other activities, for which SFCG provides technical expertise.

The roles of the six CSO grantee partners in the Program are specified below:

(1) Support for Communication as a Peace-Building Tool – PARCEM, AGB, RENAJES

(2) Support for the Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence and Social Cohesion – PARCEM, AGB, RENAJES

(3) Socio-Economic Initiatives (strengthening the socio-economic empowerment of at-risk youth)

UNIOPROBA, RENAJES, Fontaine Isoko

(4) Support for the Promotion of Responsible Leadership and Local Good Governance – PARCEM, UNIPROBA

(5) Support for the Development of Local and Regional Partnerships – JJB

(6) "Kazoza" Innovation Grants – Support for innovative quick impact initiatives on reducing the risk of violence among youth – RENAJES

(7) Institutional Service and Strengthening (ISS) Grants – PARCEM, AGB, RENAJES, UNIPROBA, Fontaine Isoko, JJB

2. **Amahoro Iwacu – Peace in My Home** – In September 2015, Search for Common Ground (Search) entered into an agreement with USAID to implement a 36-month project with the overall goal of "Enhancing the resiliency of urban and rural youth against political, communal and inter-personal violence (Cooperative Agreement #AID-695-A-1500004). The three-year project – implemented jointly with the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Reseau des Jeunes en Action (REJA) and Collectif pour la Promotion des Associations de Jeunes (CPAJ) has two objectives:

(1) To build skills and alternative channels for dialogue and decision-making on key issues that involve young people.

(2) To support youth in mobilizing local resources to invest in productive activities that strengthen social cohesion and economic integration.

Expected outcomes:

(a) Increased community awareness of the key drivers of youth vulnerability and violence;

(b) Increased portion of youth have the skills and networks needed to constructively engage with their communities;

(c) Increased portion of target "at-risk" youth capable of managing their social and financial resources to promote economic well-being and social cohesion;

(d) Increased portion of target "at-risk" youth have the entrepreneurship skills to make profitable investments in livelihoods that promote their economic integration.

Project activities targeted seven provinces of Burundi, including Bujumbura Mairie, Bujumbura Rural, Bubanza, Cibitoke, Kayanza, Kirundo, and Makamba. Activities included:

- Youth-to-youth research

- Inclusive youth community roundtable discussions

- Community youth fairs to celebrate social cohesion and highlight youth role models

- Interactive media programming

- Youth entrepreneurship training

- Establishment of savings and internal lending community groups

3. Dukire-Tubane – Implemented by Catholic Relief Services, this activity aims to strengthen the resilience and cohesion of Burundian youth in Bujumbura Mairie and Bubanza, two provinces most directly affected by violence. Dukire-Tubane brings together diverse youth from across Burundi's political, social and ethnic divides for intensive, repeated interactions designed to break down divisions by emphasizing connectors and developing a shared vision of the future. Activities feature trauma healing and social cohesion workshops among youth, as well as between youth and local authorities, while forming youth savings groups and developing entrepreneurial skills to strengthen resilience.

4. Gira Ejo – Burundian Leadership Training Program (BLTP) – This activity target youth from two communes of Bujumbura Mairie and three communes of Bujumbura Rural. Gira Ejo combines capacity building in leadership, conflict management, communication, negotiation skills, and entrepreneurship with a small grants program in which youth acquire project development skills and immediately apply those skills to the development of revenue generating projects designed to serve the specific needs of their communities.

III.   GENERAL ASSESSMENT PARAMETERS

A. Research Questions:

(1) To what extent have USAID/Burundi's four youth support programs contributed to the reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence?

(2) How important was USAID's support for institutional and technical capacity development in facilitating any reduction of youth involvement in politically motivated violence?

(3) Were USAID Programs effective in increasing the capacity of Burundian Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to empower and support youth-led community mobilization?

(4) To what extent will the CSOs be able to continue their activities without continued USAID assistance?

(5) What activities were viewed by beneficiaries and program implementers as most effective in achieving the objective of reducing youth involvement in politically motivated violence?

(6) Are any identified changes in youth behavior with regards to participation in politically motivated violence likely to be sustained after USAID program support ends?

B. Identification of Best Practices

C. Lessons Learned

D. Recommendations

IV.   TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

(a) Team Leader/Principal Investigator

(b) Evaluation Experts (2 local or regional)

(c) Data Analyst/Logistics Coordinator (1)

V.   SERVICES/TASKS REQUIRED

(a) Tasks Required

(b) Deliverables

(c) Management Information

(d) Estimated Level of Effort and Task Duration