

**Knowledge network  
Dutch Consortium for Rehabilitation  
Research brief #12**

**Hybrid partnership  
approach and  
sustainability of the  
results in the Pamoja  
project  
(Lubero, DRC)**

**Research led  
by ANTEA PAVIOTTI  
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*This brief is part of a series of research briefs of the DCR consortium. The purpose is to communicate lessons and corresponding recommendations for programme quality improvement. For information on the research methodology please refer to the full report, available upon request.*

This research, carried out in the intervention area of the Pamoja project in the Lubero health zone (North Kivu, DRC), focused on the "hybrid" partnership approach of the DCR's member organisations. Capacity building is carried out by the DCR on behalf of its local partners through this partnership approach. The objective of capacity building is to help weaker organisations become strong enough to achieve results that are of better quality and more sustainable. The DCR hypothesizes that some factors which interfere with partnership practices can influence the achievement of sustainable results. This research allowed us to identify factors, internal and external, related to partnership practices that facilitate or hamper the achievement of sustainable results, the final objective of the DCR. It is important to note that the results of this research can be exploited for any future intervention of the DCR and/or its members.

***Lesson 1: The DCR operates on factors that facilitate result sustainability***

The main factors that are perceived as favouring sustainable results are: a long-term contract, organisational and financial autonomy of partners, understanding of the importance of capacity building and its application by staff members, understanding of the soundness of the project by the village communities targeted by the project, and the increased awareness of partners their responsibility. These are aspects that the DCR has implemented or reinforced to different extents, depending on the various member organisations.

***Recommendations:***

Maintain the policy of adopting long-term contracts, building organisational capacity of partners, progressively responsabilising partners, and raising staff awareness on the importance of exploiting strengthened capacities.

### ***Lesson 2: The exit strategy of the DCR members is not always known***

The DCR's interventions aim to progressively hand over responsibility to partners so that, at the end of the project, they can take over the functions that were filled by DCR members under Pamoja (i.e follow-up on the management of revolving credit, training educators, financial management etc.). However the exit strategy of the DCR members, the management of activities after Pamoja and the division of labour are often not clearly defined or known. In December 2014, this was primarily expressed by the DCR's state partners, who did not always feel involved in the management of the project's activities.

### ***Lesson 3: The possibilities to access funding outside of the DCR are perceived as being reduced***

For DCR members and local partners, the main concern in terms of sustainability of the results (and the existence of partner organisations) is the ability to find funding, outside of the DCR, to support activities already initiated. During the Pamoja 5-year period, DCR members have strengthened the capacity of local partners to connect, negotiate and communicate, but the majority of capacity building efforts targeted staff performance, project management and administrative procedures. In addition, the availability of donors in the intervention zone of Pamoja is perceived as being reduced.

### ***Lesson 4: Logistical resources could help partners ensure sustainability of results***

Local partners often don't have logistical resources (wheeled machinery and computers) other than those that were loaned or given to them by members of the DCR. These resources help them perform activities they are tasked with, in particular conducting field visits and writing reports. If these resources are withdrawn at the end of the project, the results will suffer, and this could hamper the ability of local organisations to find other donors as they would not be able to judge the good work performed already accomplished. Logistical resources also encourage the autonomy of partners in their work, which is perceived as a characteristic of a "strong" organisation.

### ***Recommendations:***

- Better define the division of labour among partners that will be involved in managing activities started under Pamoja after the project ends. Attempt to involve state partners more broadly in activity management, since they will remain in the field after the departure of the DCR, as state institutions, and are therefore among the partners that will be able to follow-up with the activities.
- Increase the number of interventions that enhance the ability of local partners to access other funding sources: put them in contact with the greatest possible number of organisations and donors, show international organisations the good work they have performed and the importance of their continued efforts to satisfy the needs of the population.
- Give partners the logistical needs to ensure better work quality and leave these means behind at the end of the project, so that the work can be sustained and endorsed by other donors, who can maintain funding for activities they have witnessed as being sound. It is also recommended to implement good management practices for materials already given to partners, so that they can pursue the activities.

### *Lesson 5: The responsibility of state authorities must be emphasized and encouraged*

The DCR supports state authorities in implementing activities under their competence, through payment of teacher salaries and the provision of necessary materials for the activities of teachers, doctors and agricultural inspectors (for instance, school textbooks and medical supplies). Organisations involved in these activities worry that after the departure of the DCR, the state authorities will not meet their responsibilities, so that the continued performance of the work will be hampered due to a lack of economic motivation and material assets. This possible outcome is made even more likely due to the difficulty on finding other funds, independent on the DCR, for local partners remaining in the field.

### *Implications of the research results in the implementation of the DCR programme*

*This section summarises the positions of the DCR members concerning the lessons learned and recommendations listed above.*

The aim of this research was to provide results and recommendations that will continue to guide the implementation of the DCR programme in 2015. Members of the consortium will integrate the following strategies in the implementation of their activities:

1. To further strengthen one of the factors that favour sustainability of the results, namely capacity building (CB), ZOA will establish CB plans based on a written contract with the partner, which will represent a binding agreement for both parties to carry out the capacity building activities as planned.
2. To strengthen strategic and organisational capacities of partners, ZOA plans to continue institutional support, providing funds to partners so they can organise annual member meetings, and to contribute through capacity building of the partners' ability to develop strategic plans.
3. To further involve state partners in the exit phase of the project, Save the Children plans to perform joint monthly activities overseeing missions with state partners, allowing them to become more familiar with activities and understand their role in the continuation and follow-up of these activities. In addition, CARE, having defined in specific meetings the roles and responsibilities of each partner in supporting communities after Pamoja, will also carry on joint missions in the field to facilitate the transfer of

### **Recommendations:**

- Make a strong plea to state authorities in charge of education, health and agriculture and encourage them to be accountable and fulfill their responsibilities to ensure the sustainability of results of the activities undertaken until now and to secure their continuation.

responsibilities to state authorities. In order to facilitate follow-up, CARE will provide a motorcycle to each of these partners. For its part, ZOA will continue to train volunteer veterinary assistants and agricultural inspectors from local development committees (LDC) who will work in synergy with AGRPEL (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, state partner of ZOA) after Pamoja ends.

4. To enhance the access of local partners to other funding sources, ZOA will continue to share with them information on calls for projects launched by other donors; in any case, ZOA and Save The Children feel the need to urge local partners to take advantage of their enhanced capacities in fund raising in order to favour sustainability of results.
5. To ensure the continuation of follow-up and report writing by local partners, CARE will donate all materials that were purchased or loaned during Pamoja for the implementation of activities. A new three-year project that CARE will initiate after 2015 with one of its local partners, in the same intervention zone as Pamoja, will also help ensure the sustainability of the results achieved in the DCR's project.
6. HealthNetTPO plans to organise a workshop in Kinshasa with the Ministry of Public Health and some mental health organisations to present the results of the project and validate the tools used for integrating mental health. In addition to stimulating the interest of other organisations in this domain, this workshop will also encourage the Congolese state to take responsibility for the results achieved during the DCR project.