

HORIZONT 3000

ÖSTERREICHISCHE ORGANISATION
FÜR ENTWICKLUNGSZUSAMMENARBEIT





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“Thanks to H3000, we were able to visit ‘Restart Africa’ which was indeed an eye opener especially on business matters in an organizational setting. Participating in KNOWLYMPICS was a **good motivational driver for our knowledge management and best practice sharing activities.**” (MCFp, Kenya)

“We loved to participate in KNOWLYMPCIS. **It helped a lot for reflecting on our systematization report** and we also enjoy the prize. We are going to buy a good computer in order to set up our documentation archive.” (CPT, Brazil)

“It was a pleasure to participate in KNOWLYMPICS and we will be delighted to share more experiences in the future. We would like to congratulate the winners of the competition, although all of us have won. **Those who share, always win something – Because sharing benefits us all.**” (Caritas Koalack, Senegal)

Learning from Failure



Teenage mothers recruitment process for livelihood program

What is it about?
Not engaging oneself in the recruitment of ones own clients can lead to series of problems in the implementation of a program.

What problem emerged?
The Teenage Mothers Program is a program targeted at young mother below 20 years with an aim of improving their livelihood situation while creating a forum for them to interact with their children. Being under pressure to kick start the programme, MCFP relied on the referrals done by community leaders and organizations; it networks with to find the beneficiaries, and did no double check on those referrals. Referred "teenage mothers" did to a big part not meet the requirements. They were over 25 years old, girlfriends of community leaders and persons who did not have children.

What has been the impact?

- The clients had expectations that the program could not meet or manage, and there was an overall lack of synergy between clients and staff.
- Drop-out, absenteeism and indiscipline were reasons why the first intake left only two clients who were genuine and committed to the programme.
- Time and resources were wasted, which took a toll on the project. The lack of working trust with the partners who referred the cases led to changes in the network interaction.

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Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society
Period: January – March 2014
Organisation: Mathare Children's Fund panairobi
Further material: www.mcfpanairobi.or.ke
Contact to expert: info@mcfpanairobi.or.ke
Titus Mwangi, titus@mcfpanairobi.or.ke

KNOW-HOW 3000

Learning from failure AT A GLANCE

Why did it happen?

- The main assumption that led to the failure was that the partners would do a due diligence when referring clients. For MCFP network relationships imply the commitment and responsibility to act according to the agreements and requests.
- On the other Hand, MCFP lacked well-drawn strategies for the programme and did not have the criteria documented. Partners were only verbally communicated to what was expected of the clients.
- Together with the pressure to meet a donors time frame, the main reasons for the practice to go wrong were, therefore, the over-reliance and trust on the network/partners and the lack of a logical approach to execute the programme in the initial stage.

What are the key messages and lessons learned?

- The process of execution must be dynamic and adaptive, responding to unanticipated events. Clear responsibilities and processes are a must for effective execution and should be well documented, and there has to be more information exchange, including a consistent briefing of all stakeholders.
- Lessons have been drawn for the future work, such as having a sound strategy first before the programme starts, having an implementation model to guide execution thoughts and actions, as well as having responsibilities and processes well defined and documented.
- Failure is not always bad. Failure is a source of learning. Therefore there has to be a consistent reporting of failures, focusing on "what happened" and not "who did it", when things go wrong.

Who could be interested in the experience?
Organizations working in similar conditions, who focus on vulnerable groups and offer different interventions.



Expulsion of a fishing community from their traditional territory

What is it about?
The expulsion of a community from their traditional territory after having opted for an inadequate strategy to help them defend their land rights.

What problem emerged?
Since the end of the 1960s, dozens of families, who lived in the estuary of the river Sirinhaem were driven from their lands by the Trapiche sugar mill. In 2004 affected families sought help from the land rights organization CPT, who discovered that the legal criteria and preconditions for granting possession rights over lands of the Union (of the Brazilian state) to any person or entity (the sugar mill), were not met in the case of Trapiche. Therefore, CPT requested, that the possession rights of the mill would be cancelled and granted instead to the families who lived in the estuary. In doing so, CPT treated affected families as squatters and landholders, farmers and fishermen, who had the right to possession because they lived for decades on that land.

What has been the impact?
The Brazilian state did not withdraw the concession over land previously granted to the sugar mill, and the sugar mill, in turn, expelled all families living in the estuary. The Brazilian state did not enforce its own laws and it did not ensure the fundamental rights of the families to housing, land possession and food supply. At the same time, CPT was not able to understand and express the demands of the community in a way that would have supported them more effectively in the struggle of defending their territory.

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Sector: Human Rights – Civil Society
Period: 2004-2010
Organisation: CPT (Comissão Pastoral da Terra)
Further material: <http://www.optne2.org.br>
Contact to expert: José Plácido da Silva Junior
placidounir@yahoo.com.br

KNOW-HOW 3000

Learning from failure AT A GLANCE

Why did it happen?

- Developing a process focussed merely on the struggle for land and the right to possession was not enough; CPT did not understand the complexity of the community and of the struggle they were involved in. CPT did not only deal with squatters, landholders, farmers and fishermen, but with a traditional community, who is involved in a specific struggle.
- The struggle for land was merely a part of a broader struggle for their traditional territory. The struggle for their territory goes beyond the struggle for land and possession as it implies the struggle for their traditions, for their way of being, their way of production, their religions and beliefs, and the way they treat and interact with nature.
- The struggle for their traditional territory implies a specific legal basis, which, in turn, requires a different strategy.

What are the key messages and lessons learned?

- It is important to remain open to new situations and to be able to reshape methodologies of assistance, while also remaining loyal to one's own principles
- It is important not to start right away from the first and most apparent demands, but to begin by understanding the community in order to be able to identify possibilities to overcome the problem.
- Accessing the mystic universe and getting to know the way of living of the communities in question, provides crucial elements for supporting them more effectively.

Who could be interested in the experience?

- Movements and communities involved in land right struggles
- Human Rights Organizations
- Nation states who tend to ignore the diversity within their population
- Church-based organizations who work with rural communities





Talking with MCFp about failures and the benefit of learning from them

by Kristina Kroyer

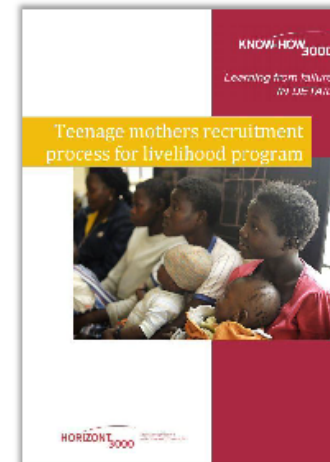
Gespräch mit

- Titus Mwangi, Projektmanager bei MCFp
- Britta Wulfekammer, HORIZONT3000 Projektberaterin bei MCFp

Im HORIZONT3000 Blog:
<http://www.horizont3000.at/blog/ueber-das-lernen-aus-erfahrungen-mathare-childrens-fund-panairobi/11903>

The Mathare Children's Fund panairobi (MCFp) was one of 7 organizations who participated in our KNOWLYMPIC GAMES 2015, where we invited partners to hand in a relevant experience in their working field and gave them the chance to win great prizes. We sat together with **Titus Mwangi**, project manager at MCFp, and **Britta Wulfekammer**, HORIZONT3000 Technical Advisor at MCFp, to speak about the experience they contributed, called "Learning from failure: Teenage mothers recruitment process for livelihood program", and about the exchange visit, they won as their KNOWLYMPICS prize.

MCFp was one of two organizations who decided to share a negative experience, and not a positive one. Why did you decide to do so and what have you gained from it?



Titus: Well, first and foremost: Why not? It was a learning experience for us, which allowed us to develop lessons learned and help us to avoid more failures in the future. We did not see the experience necessarily as a failure, but rather as a process. It did not only end up as being a disappointment or negative experience, because we learned from it and we grew from it. Disappointments are part of every program once in a while. If you look at implementation processes, it is always about having some failures, too. So, why not put up a negative experience for the others to learn from?

I think dealing with failure is a culture we need to cultivate – otherwise there will be no vision. By learning from failure, we get to build resilience and it also acts as a motivation. We get to learn skills to be tolerant to frustrations, to approach a task, to find different solutions to different problems and also to seek help from different people. It is a learning life skill, as you learn how to deal with frustrations and disappointments.

What do you think is the main difference between reflecting on a positive and a negative experience? What is the benefit of each?

Britta: In short, the positive experience is creating motivation and confidence, but the positive experience might also let you stagnate, it might not bring you any further. If you only have positive experiences, you do not grow, because you continue to do what you used to do. But a negative experience is also about learning and creating a dialogue. You have to sit down with your staff and stakeholders to discuss about what went wrong. You don't do that necessarily after a positive experience.

It seems that you have already thought a lot about the process of learning from negative experiences. Was analysis and sharing of experiences important to MCFp before?

Titus: Analysis and sharing of experiences has been there, but we never really documented it. We would analyse and share experiences on a need-basis. If there is a difficult case we are dealing with, we would sit



Aus Fehlern Lernen

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Titus Mwangi



Konstruktive Fehlerkultur entwickeln

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Titus Mwangi



Erfahrungen und Prozesse dokumentieren

“If processes are not put down for the purpose of the future, they can turn out unclear for the person who comes after me. People tend to forget, and **documenting allows us to look back and see what happened.**

Furthermore, once you write things down, you think about it in a different way, because you have to think on how to put it in words. **It helps to prevent misunderstanding**, because once you put it down, you have to write it in a way that’s understandable and logic.”

Britta Wulfekammer