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Introduction

This final intern report details my six-month internship, from November 2012 to late April 2013. As an intern for the CAM's project my work for that took place in two communities: Mofako Bekondo and Bombe Bakundu. Despite being a CAM's intern I was also given the role of communications officer. On top of these two duties I also worked in an administration capacity, and I was involved in some Human Rights advocacy. This report summarises and evaluates my activities in these roles and notes my recommendations for the GCI management and any future interns.

Mofako Bekondo

Background

Mofako Bekondo had been subject to the full CAM's timeline in 2011 and had also received various sensitisation workshops both before and after the timeline. The impact of the project in Mofako had been overwhelmingly positive. Thanks to a good relationship with the Chief, the project brought changes to Mofako that included:

- The inclusion of women on the council.
- Prohibiting the consumption of alcohol during a council session until after all important matters had been resolved.
- Increasing the capacity of the council to mediate effectively, thus creating an effective forum for justice. This had the knock-on effect of restoring the community's faith in the council, which had eroded over some time.
- Making the council more transparent and accountable.

Despite this there were some lingering problems especially in regards to the participation of the women on the council, and in the peacekeeping force's level of responsibility towards their work.

Review of Activities

I visited the community on several occasions. I once took part in a workshop, in which I presented a section on power and responsibility, aimed at the peacekeeping group.

Evaluation of Activities

I felt during my visits that I successfully helped the CAM's team maintain its positive relationship with the community and the Chief. My workshop was well-received, particularly the activity that I devised which gave the peace-keeping group a hypothetical situation, and required them to think carefully on what was the most appropriate course of action. Despite this I felt that the group did not take all of the messages on board, and it was not until the activity stage of the presentation that they began to be more interested and engaged.

More information about this workshop can be found in the Dropbox under Mofako Bekondo/2012-11 workshop mini-report.

Recommendations

In order to better engage the youth groups, and even more so the peace-keeping force, it is imperative to have activity-centric workshops. These activities should be fun but also put the participants in testing situations, challenging them to think hard on how to deal with potential conflict situations.

Further, the women's council should not have their meetings at the same time as the regular council, it means that there involvement in community decision-making will continue to be limited.

Finally, the CAM's project should actually look to expand out of Mofako. Despite the project being a major success within the community, the team too often conducts workshops there, while they could be engaging with other communities. It would be more useful for other communities to benefit from the CAM's project.

Bombe Bakundu

Background

In 2009 the CAM's team was active in Bombe, holding a small number of sensitisation workshops there. Sometime in early 2012 the Chief replaced a large number of the council and so they appealed to GCI for new workshops. It was thus decided that Bombe would receive the full CAM's timeline in 2013.

Review of Activities

I was involved in the implementation of phases 1 and 2 of the timeline in Bombe. This essentially consisted of meeting the Chief, the Chairman and the Council, conducting an introduction workshop, interviews with the Chief, Councillors, and Community members, and observations of council sessions. At the time of finishing my internship the team is still gathering data and in phase 2 of the timeline.

Evaluation of Activities

Our initial introduction workshop was successful in that it enthused the Council for further workshops. It is difficult to gauge whether it was effective at transmitting its messages because we had not conducted any council observations beforehand. The team established a positive relationship with the Council, and especially the Chairman. However from the beginning it was difficult to establish a strong rapport with Bombe's Chief Itoe. I had the impression that he was slightly uneasy with our presence in the community, but this may have been mistaken and not too much should be read into it.

The research that we conducted was at times too cumbersome, and we may have visited the community too often. The surveys (which had newly been created, more discussion of which will follow) worked well with the Chief and the community members, but for the councillors they were too long and risked alienating them from the project.

The results of the surveys, although presently not complete, so far illuminate a conflict between the indigenous and non-indigenous in the community. As the Chief is a member of the Bakundu tribe (indigenous), without his non-partisan support, nothing can really

be achieved in this matter. This raises the question of what our project can achieve in Bombe, and a re-evaluation of the areas that the project can be a success may be beneficial. Unlike in Mofako there does not appear to be any glaring deficiencies in the council or their methods, the problem with the community lies in the higher authority of the Chief and the Council of Elders (about which data has been hard to gather).

Recommendations

It is likely that the CAM's project will continue in Bombe and implement the full timeline regardless of whether or not the core issues are addressed. My recommendations for this are simply to learn from it. The project needs to better assess where its strengths lie: in communities more similar to Mofako Bekondo, where the capacities of the council are more limited. This will be discussed in more detail later in the section 'Other CAM's work, recommendations'.

Despite this I think that there is room for the project to have a positive impact in Bombe, mainly in regards to community cohesion at large. Perhaps two workshops focusing of cohesion, participation, and responsibility would have more effectiveness than other workshops, for example on human rights.

Other CAM's work: Project redesign and admin

Background

On my arrival the CAM's project had been implemented in the community Mbalangi. However due to poor workshop attendance and poor cooperation within the community authorities no impact evaluation was completed and the project was effectively abandoned there. At that time there seemed to be a dissonance between the CAM's material (i.e. the project goals and objectives, the Grand project, the workshop series, etc) and what was being implemented on the ground.

Furthermore, the previous work that had been done on the CAM's project since 2008 did not follow a clear or linear pattern. This meant that getting any sense of the continuity of the project was very difficult. Various pieces of work had been completed by past interns, but without a sense of continuity it seemed as if they had just conducted random work that did not fit into any larger pattern.

Added to this there was no real administrative system for the project. The work that had been completed was scattered over various computers in various files, therefore it meant that all new work often had to be produced from scratch, and there could be no progressive build-up of good ideas.

Review of Activities

As part of the wider administrative and organisational work that I did for GCI (discussed in the next section) a CAM's filing system was developed within the GCI dropbox. Within this, all previous CAM's work that I could find was organised into this new CAM's administrative system, organised first by community, then date.

In addition to this all-existing project documents were updated to reflect where the project now stood. This included the CAM's grand project and the workshop series. The timeline, and thus the project itself, was redesigned to be more flexible and to enable it to function irrespective of any limits in finances or personnel. This project redesign also included the sensitisation series, which, on request from Ebeny, was designed to hold one-off workshops in different communities and form the second, quantitative part of the CAM's project.

Finally new project documents were created that both gave more depth to the project, and facilitated its support more thoroughly. These included the Intern Brief (designed to give new interns are better idea of how the project functions), the sensitisation series, various posters, a CAM's brochure intended for the communities, a CAM's hardcopy folder, and templates for various reports or mini-reports (necessary for record keeping and the implementation of the project).

Finally, also on initiative from Ebeny, I redeveloped the CAM's section on the website. The main idea for this was the new 'live status' page, which gave up-to-date information about the different communities that the project was active in and the phase of operations that it was in.

Evaluation of Activities

By and large, the re-organisation and administration work that I did was successful. I managed to gather a large amount of the previous work and then file it without problem. In doing so the project gained a tangible sense of continuity, and a system by which the project could continue to build on the success of the past, rather than glazing over past initiatives.

The documents that I updated successfully reflected the project. In particular, the Grand Project is much more useful in helping new interns grasp the project quickly. The workshop series is more flexible; rather than using pre-set curriculum staff are now encouraged to choose their workshops on the basis of the needs assessments.

The needs assessment and impact evaluations were also redesigned but as I was not involved in this I cannot comment on the success. It should be noted that at the end of my internship these monitoring evaluation tools had not been completed. If they remained incomplete it would be detrimental to the function of the project.

In terms of the project design work that was completed I have mixed feelings. On the one side I think we did positive work in making the project more intuitive and flexible. We succeeded in making the project match up in theory and in practice. The addition of the sensitisation series added a quantitative edge to the project. However I do feel that CAM's can still be slightly re-shaped. I will spend some time discussing this in detail.

CAM's currently engages communities under the banner of human rights and mediation. It attempts to correct deficits within the justice system that have led to episodes of mob justice. In seeks to correct these deficits by holding workshops in the rural communities. These workshops promote themes such as transparency, accountability, human rights, and gender equality while teaching practical skills in mediation and educating on the intricacies of the Cameroonian legal system. I think that there is a danger in presenting

these buzzwords, often alien to the community, in that they can become abstract. They can easily be manipulated, forgotten, changed, or transformed.

While these workshops have had some success in creating community cohesion and in creating effective traditional councils, in communities that lack a strong and engaged Chief the project has not been as successful (see Bombe Bakundu). Even in the successful communities there is a danger that the ideas that have been promoted will not endure. In part this is because there is nothing tangible in them, in their definitions. You cannot hold transparency, it can slip away very easily.

Recommendation

I will start by outlining my suggestions continuing from the subject discussed above. One way of making an effective, lasting impact is to target the specific types of conflict. By focusing on these practical issues and creating frameworks and procedures to deal with them, you can then later draw on issues like leadership, transparency, or human rights. This would make CAM's more valued to the communities, providing more valuable practical-based information.

For example, an episode of Mob Justice occurs in Kumba in which a youth is beaten to death for stealing Cocoa. Did this event occur because those involved had not been sensitized on the negative effects of mob justice, or did it occur because there was no procedure or mechanism in place that could deal with theft of Cocoa by a minor? In all probably both points are important and are contributing factors. However which of the following is more likely to prevent similar outbursts: 1) telling people that mob justice is wrong, it is a human rights abuse and it legitimises violence or 2) helping put procedures and structures in place on how to deal with theft of Cocoa, taking into consideration the amount of Cocoa stolen, the age of the offender, and any other important factors. I believe it is likely that by focusing on the latter approach, and then bringing in the former in an expanded elaboration, the instances of mob justice occurring as a result of cocoa theft would diminish.

Like Cocoa theft, there are many areas of conflict in Cameroon. These practical-based workshops could address areas such as:
- Theft
  - Cocoa theft
  - Theft of other produce
  - Motorcycle theft
  - Property theft
  - Monetary theft
- Land disputes.
- Property damage.
- Breaking and entering.
- Assault and physical abuse.
- Adultery.
- Rape.
- Murder.
- Embezzling community funds.
- Alcoholism.

In each one of these issues all the themes of the current CAM's project could be utilised. Again we can use the example of cocoa theft. A practical workshop would present formal structures but draw on themes of mediation, justice, transparency and accountability, human rights, and equality.

As such **it seems a more viable approach would be to create, alongside the timeline and the sensitisation series, a third initiative, a *response series*.** This would still have a set curriculum, but it would challenge workshop participants on specific issues like those outlined above. Importantly, these workshops would only be implemented in response to conflict occurring on a specific issue, communities would come to CAM's and ask for workshops rather than GCI asking to hold workshops in communities. Thus CAM's may be more valued and you would not get situations occuring like that in Mbalangi.

This would give CAM's a three-pronged approach to conflict resolution, attacking the root source of the problem (the timeline), creating practical procedures to deal with problems that have recently arisen(the response series), and sensitising the communities on the CAM's themes (the sensitisation series).

Beyond these ideas for project design it is imperative that the CAM's administrative systems are maintained and that they do not revert. New interns and staff members should continue to add to the living documents like the workshop curriculum.

Other GCI Work (Fundraising, Human Rights, Communications, etc.)

Background
Beginning my internships there were two main issues to be dealt with. The GCI website had been closed down, possibly indefinitely, by our hosting company webnode, and, like the CAM's project, GCI was suffering from a lack of proper administrative system. There was little fundraising going on. Finally the Social media platforms had been neglected for some time. On the other side Human Rights advocacy had been on going for some time.

Review of Activities
Human Rights
For the first half of my internship I was responsible for preparing the radio shows, and I also frequently took part in them. Beyond the radio work I took part in the planning and execution of GCI's international human rights day celebrations.

Administration
I brought all GCI work I could find together and put it into a new system that I created. I put this system on dropbox so that it would be accessible to all employees, and in the event that a computer broke, all work would not be lost. I suggested that job roles be more clearly defined to ensure higher productivity.

Communications

In partnership with Kala I helped in the creation of our new website (in light of the difficulties with webnode). I updated the website and reorganised it slightly, even adding a human rights quiz in order to try and boost traffic further. Our facebook page was reactivated thanks to Kala, and I tried to boost our twitter profile. I created a monthly newsletter, beginning in March, and managed to publish two editions before the end of my internship. I regularly monitored the local media.

Fundraising

In collaboration with the other interns and GCI staff, I helped create a global giving page and fundraise during our open challenge month.

Evaluation of Activities

Human Rights

I felt the Human Rights work we did was broadly successful. For international Human Rights Day we executed many of the events that we planned, although turnout was not as high as was expected. Our Human rights radio shows often went well, although there is more to scope to make them more engaging for the listenership.

Administration

By and large I think that my creation of a new system of admin was successful. My only worry is if it is not maintained. It needs to be expanded upon more, as much of the work I did on it was for the CAM's section. If the organisation grows then the system may need a few adjustments.

Communications

Work on the website was successful. Traffic certainly seemed to increase during my time. Twitter followers increase from 10 to 23, which was slightly disappointing considering I was posting a few times a week. The newsletter received some good feedback and boosted our profile. Again I am concerned that without more interns the production of a newsletter will be put on hiatus.

Fundraising

Our Global Giving target was reached and a significant amount of money was raised that can be put to good use. Having a permanent spot on will also provide GCI with a mechanism to receive donations in the future. Also there is an application ready to go of for another funding grant in June. Hopefully GCI can take advantage of that.

Recommendations

Human Rights

GCI used to work with Human Rights clubs in schools around Kumba. Restarting that initiative is a good way to raise human rights awareness, create more local partners, and boost GCI's profile. Human rights hour works best when it is giving practical advice and also discussing topics, like witchcraft, that are salient to the local population. The show would perhaps benefit from mixing up the format more often, either by having a few more guests (from different walks of life), or by having some debate style shows.

Communications

Except from Kala there is nobody who really knows how to update the website and

social media. There is a worry that this front will stagnate somewhat. The same is true of the newsletter. The only way around this is to hire a permanent communication's officer, someone with experience, although this is not possible in the current financial climate at GCI.

Administration

The admin system I set up needs to be maintained. If not there is a danger of things reverting back to how they were before; no record-keeping, no continuity, and files spread over many different folders in many different computes- this is not compatible with positive organisational development or growth. GCI would also benefit from a few new items in the office: an external hard-drive to back up all GCI files and admin system, and a white board.

Fundraising

Without a permanent fundraiser it seems like the amount of money that GCI will also be limited, and the organisation will always be more reliant on intern fees. In the future I would recommend that this change, and that a permanent fundraiser be hired. International intern fees could then be redirected into supporting more Cameroonian interns.

Personnel

Presently GCI had three permanent staff and four international interns. While the intern systems has some benefits, in funding, and in the constant flow of new energy and initiatives that runs through GCI, there are also some negatives. At times GCI is too reliant on interns, in that when interns leave, the initiatives that they create are sometimes liable to not being continued. Further it leads to a lack of continuity. GCI would benefit from a couple more permanent members of staff working in clearly defined job roles. However to do this GCI would need to have a source of funding.

Conclusions

I very much enjoyed my time at GCI and my work on the CAM's project. I still have a lot of optimism that the project can do a lot of good in the region, and with a few tweaks to its structure, I believe it will. GCI as an organisation is rare, and I again believe, in time, it will flourish.

As you can see my main areas of concern are with the CAM's project and with maintenance of the work that we carried out. While this report may focus on many of the problematic areas of GCI that still need improving, it should not take away from the successes that the organisation has had, nor the position that it is in. GCI is well-placed to continue its expansion well into the future, and will continue to positively impact the lives of the local population.