



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROJECTS IN EAST AFRICA

A REVIEW OF FIVE EVALUATIONS OF  
USAID-FUNDED PROJECTS

January 12, 2005

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Richard N. Blue, Management Systems International.

# **CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROJECTS IN EAST AFRICA**

A REVIEW OF FIVE EVALUATIONS OF  
USAID-FUNDED PROJECTS

January 12, 2005

Richard N. Blue, Senior Associate  
Management Systems International

USAID Contract # 623-N-00-99-00294-00

# CONTENTS

- I. Background ..... 1
  
- II. Key Points Common to East Africa MSI Evaluation  
Certificate Class Evaluations of USAID Conflict  
Management Projects. .... 4
  - A. Main Findings and Conclusions ..... 4
  - B. Issues, Constraints and Concerns about USAID-Funded  
Projects ..... 5
  - C. A Caution and A Recommendation..... 6

## I. BACKGROUND

This report was prepared at the request of Janet Kerley, at the time the USAID Bureau for Africa Bureau Monitoring and Evaluation Officer responsible for evaluation training in the Bureau.

The report reviews five evaluations that were conducted in late summer 2004. Each evaluation was undertaken by a three-person team of USAID staff from USAID/REDSO and USAID Missions in Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda. They were joined by three professionals from two of USAID's implementing partners<sup>1</sup> in that region. All were trainees in an Evaluation Certificate Course taught by MSI Inc. of Washington, DC. The proprietary training was commissioned by the Bureau for Africa and USAID/REDSO.

The training, held in Dar Es Salaam, was comprised of three phases:

- **Phase I** consisted of five days of intensive practical classroom work, during which teams were formed and charged with going through all the steps of preparing a scope of work, deciding on a research design and methodology, and developing a management plan for the conduct of a 'real world' evaluation.
- **Phase II** was the field work phase, in which each team spent one week together conducting data collection followed by report preparation.
- **Phase III** brought the trainees together for an additional week of classroom work, during which they practiced reporting findings, giving and receiving constructive criticism, and revisiting weak points in evaluation practice as experienced by the teams. Additionally a "meta-analysis" exercise compared results of all of the team's findings on three predetermined issues.<sup>2</sup>

The USAID funded projects evaluated were selected by the Africa Bureau in cooperation with REDSO and Missions. These are:

1. POKATUSA - Western Kenya Pastoralists
2. Northern Kenya Conflict Resolution Initiative – Turkana Pastoralists
3. FEWSNET – Karamoja - Regional Early Warning Network
4. NCKK Peace Building and Development Project – North Rift and west Kenya
5. PINGO – Tanzania Pastoralists – Primarily northern border but throughout Tanzania.

---

<sup>1</sup> COMESA and FEWSNET

<sup>2</sup> For a full description of the course, course evaluations, and the substantive conclusions of the meta-analysis exercise, see the MSI report to USAID written by Molly Hageboeck under contract #623N-00-99-00294-00

Most were relatively small projects that could be evaluated in a one-week field trip; in practice some of the projects were part of a larger and more substantial activity.<sup>3</sup> All of the projects focused to a greater or lesser extent on conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution. One was located in Tanzania, two were exclusively in west Kenya, and two involved collaboration between Uganda and Kenya. All involved some form of strengthening of conflict management capacity and the promotion of active involvement of local communities through existing or newly organized NGOs (Nongovernmental Organizations and CBOs (Community Based Organizations)). Major U.S. partners were engaged to provide training and capacity building inputs in four of the five activities. These were the International Technology Development Group (ITDG [Turkana]), Chemonics (FEWSNET), World Vision (POKATUSA), and PACT (PINGO). The Kenyan National Council of Churches (NCKC) did not have an international partner.

After all the reports were prepared, Dr. Kerley asked one of the MSI team to undertake a rapid review of the key issues, findings, conclusions, and recommendations from each team and present them in a single summary report. The purpose was to identify the commonality of the results of the programs, in response to higher-level interest in the effectiveness of USAID's conflict mitigation programs, as well as to enlighten senior staff as to the value of objective, field based evaluations.

It is important to note that the evaluations reviewed here were conducted as training exercises as part of the MSI Evaluation Certificate Course sponsored by the Africa Bureau. Only one week was allowed for field data collection. The projects were not randomly selected, and may not be representative of the body of USAID's efforts in this area. Moreover, as trainees, the evaluators were not expert in evaluation methodology.

The findings, conclusions and recommendations made by the teams nevertheless have considerable validity, and are worth considering for the following reasons:

- None of these projects had previously been evaluated by an independent team;
- The evaluation teams were made up of experienced USAID officers;
- The one week in the field was intensively used and efficiently managed for the most part. In the normal three weeks in the field permitted by most USAID evaluations, much time is taken up with courtesy calls, logistics, and preliminary report preparation, so that actual data collection time may be no more than 10-11 days, compared to the 5-6 days used by the trainee teams;
- The evaluation teams were exceptionally knowledgeable about local conditions and culture, in that most of them were East African nationals. Of the five, the PINGO team was the single "all U.S." team;
- The team's reports were prepared with considerably more expert guidance and feedback than would be enjoyed by most evaluation teams.

---

<sup>3</sup> Several projects were from USAID/REDSO's Conflict program.

Although faithful to the final reports' findings, recommendations and conclusions, this report does not attempt an exhaustive summary of each, but rather strives to identify some of the key features that cut across several or all of the reports, as well as put forward some additional thoughts based on the meta-analysis requested by Dr. Kerley.

## II. Key Points Common to East Africa MSI Evaluation Certificate Class Evaluations of USAID Conflict Management Projects.

### A. Main Findings and Conclusions

1. The details of conflict patterns can be complex, but may be reduced to one of three types for comparison purposes:
  - a. Within a state: usually inter-ethnic or tribal, but limited to organized banditry and raids on property and resources;
  - b. Cross-border conflict similar to above, but with the added dimension of two governments, and with somewhat greater scale than within state conflict over property;
  - c. Political conflict over control of 'the state.' often involving cross border movements and persistent high level violence.
2. All of the conflict situations involved in the East Africa evaluations were of type a or b.
3. Within these types of conflict, causes are multiple and complex including:
  - Traditional enmity between warrior cultures with semi-ritualized behavior for raiding and for reconstituting balance through some form of justice and compensation;
  - Pressure on natural resources and competition for them (water/forage);
  - Economic incentives such as rising demand for beef in urban areas;
  - Low levels of development including transport and communications infrastructure;
  - Low levels of formal schooling and literacy, especially for young men in herding cultures.
4. The scale, intensity, and frequency of conflicts are aggravated or accelerated by other factors:
  - Easy availability of modern weaponry;
  - Tensions arising from large scale refugee movements;
  - Manipulation of local conflicts by outside persons in position of economic and/or political power.
5. USAID funded projects contained several common elements:
  - Capacity building for local CBOs through various types of trainings provided by the implementing partner;
  - Focus on a variety of 'joint events' bringing conflicted groups together in common experiences (peace rallies, cultural events, sports and games);
  - Emphasis on better communications, especially between groups and between local people and authorities;

- Shifting power and responsibility to local groups as much as possible so that both problem and solutions are locally owned;
  - Efforts to reformulate local culture supporting warrior behavior toward more peaceful forms of male expression (changing songs sung by young women praising returning warriors, for example).
6. Most projects had completed planned activities and had achieved output level objectives in the near term.
  7. Most projects were found to be useful to a greater or lesser degree in mitigating conflicts.

#### B. Issues, Constraints and Concerns about USAID-Funded Projects

1. The project activities, while having merit, did not seem to be linked to a consistent peace building strategy. In west Kenya especially, there seemed to be considerable overlap in the activities of different groups funded by USAID and other donors.
2. Solutions to conflict have to be holistic and multi-faceted if they are to deal with structural causes of persistent conflict.
3. Conflict mitigation without links to active development programs is of limited impact and is palliative in nature; it does not build Peace.
4. Activity goals and objectives seem extraordinarily ambitious, given very limited funding and durations, giving the appearance of ad hoc “we need to do something” character.
5. Funded activities do not seem to be based on solid assessments of causal factors underlying patterns of violence; they appear somewhat like “We have a hammer, let’s find a nail.”
6. Single dimension projects such as early warning systems, work only when closely linked to other activities.
7. Early warning systems have to be timely in projecting possible impending conflict if they are to be useful; current efforts, while having other benefits, are not performing the “early warning” function.
8. Government has to be part of the conflict prevention and mitigation process. NGOs do not have the kind of authority necessary for dealing with the immediacy of conflict situations.
9. There is evidence that local authorities do not trust NGOs and CBOs, seeing them as competitors for power, or are otherwise dismissive of their efforts. Authorities have been slow to respond to intelligence about looming raids in some cases.
10. Sustainability of the local level efforts is a key component of long-term impact, but all reports questioned whether most of the local CBOs organized by the projects would survive and remain functional.
11. One report suggested that Peace, the other side of Conflict, had been neglected, and more needed to be done to engage in Peace Building efforts.

Other activities (i.e. those found in the ITDG and NCKK projects) attempted to address Peace Building, but with limited resources and results. This may be more than a semantic difference, as a Peace Building Strategy might engage in a much broader array of programs usually found in the USAID portfolio.

12. Cross border conflict is difficult to deal with, especially when one side lacks capacity and/or commitment.
13. Some evidence suggests that the frequency of raids and related incidents is declining in eastern Africa, but the data are partial and do not permit direct attribution to the USAID funded activities as a primary cause of this decline.

### C. A Caution and A Recommendation

Again, it needs to be said clearly that **these observations are based on a very limited set of field evaluations of, for the most part, relatively small activities.** They may not hold up if a more comprehensive assessment of USAID's overall conflict prevention and mitigation program in East Africa were to be conducted.

However, given the consistency of these reports on the issues raised, there is enough here to recommend that USAID undertake such an assessment, hopefully one by which the questions raised above and many others could be more satisfactorily addressed. Given the interplay between conflict and development, such an assessment might point toward a more comprehensive strategy for dealing with both.