



Viva Rio Brasil-Haiti – Honra e Respeito por Bel Air

Organization(s):

NGO Viva Rio (Brazil), Canadian International Development Agency, Norwegian Church Aid

Country (ies):

Brazil, Canada, Haiti, Norway (triangular cooperation between DAC donors and Southern partners)

Overview:

The project “Honor and Respect for Bel Air” aims to promote reduction of armed violence and urban rehabilitation in the neighborhood of Bel Air, Port-au-Prince, Haiti. It is led by the Brazilian NGO Viva Rio with the support of the Brazilian Embassy in Haiti, Canada, Norway and international organizations. The areas of intervention are diverse, including water supply, solid waste management and education. Activities are often associated with peace-keeping purposes, women empowerment and youth education.

Background:

--What was the purpose and overall goal of the SSC activity?

- The project is a series of interventions in diverse areas aiming to promote reduction of armed violence and urban rehabilitation in a red-zone neighborhood of Port-au-Prince (Bel Air). It focuses on the guarantee of security, development and human rights of Bel Air’s inhabitants.
- Three criteria were considered for choosing Bel Air: (i) political significance in the pacification of Port au Prince, (ii) urban importance (historic centre of the Haitian capital), (iii) vulnerability of the population of Bel Air to social and natural risks.--

What was the development challenge to which this SSC activity was meant to address?

- The project aims to address the high incidence of armed violence in a context of poverty and socio-economic inequality.

--What were/are the expected results of this SSC activity?

- According to the “Work Plan 2009” (www.comunidadessegura.org/files/work_plan_20092.pdf), it was expected that “water supply, family health, solid waste management, social capital and security conditions will have improved in the neighborhood of Bel Air” by the end of 2009. The project aims to facilitate the transition from a peacekeeping environment to a sustainable community development dynamic and to set Bel Air as an example to other neighborhoods faced with similar problems.

--Why did the partners engage in the SSC activity?

- DAC donors and international organizations support Viva Rio’s projects in Haiti because they

recognize the NGO's valuable experience in working at slums in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), facing security and development challenges in impoverished communities.

- In 2004, Viva Rio won a consultancy contract, within the framework of UNDP's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration program (DDR) related to MINUSTAH. Later, Norway and Canada also recognized Viva Rio's comparative advantage and decided to sponsor its activities in Bel Air – both have long experience of working with Brazilian and Haitian partners.

- As for local partners, in 2007, a household survey was conducted in partnership with the University of Kisqueya and a research study on Bel Air's water market was made before structuring water-supply interventions. The interaction between security and youth networks is also crucial, and Viva Rio made a first set of negotiations with Territorial base groups of Port-au-Prince in 2007. In 2008, Viva Rio negotiated a revised (second) version of a Peace Accord among 14 Territorial Base Groups, and the same happened in May 2009.

- HIP HOP groups were also engaged in the Peace Accord. Although Rapping, Graffitiing and Street Dancing are often associated with the culture of violence, Hip Hop is not so territorially bound as the RARA groups. Bel Air functions as a catalyst for Hip Hop groups from other neighborhoods of PaP, even from other cities, to interact around peacemaking motives.

--How did the political context or previous cooperation influence the planning process?

- Viva Rio explores the advantages of South / South cooperation. It is drawing from know how developed in Brazil, to create closer relationships with local partners in Haiti.

- The Brazilian leadership of the UN mission and the presence of the Brazilian Battalion in the area of Bel Air (since 2004) not only facilitated but actually allowed the engagement of Viva Rio in the neighborhood, especially because of the projects related to security.

- To make it short: although Viva Rio was not invited by Brazilians, it is sure that from the beginning, Viva Rio had institutional support from MINUSTAH and from the Brazilian Battalion and, in this sense, the Brazilian commitment to Haiti played a major role in Viva Rio's engagement in Port-au-Prince.

Implementation:

--What kinds of SSC activities or modalities were conducted?

Viva Rio brings a community development approach originally developed in Brazil. While it has been adjusted to the Haitian context through an interactive learning process in close consultation with Haitian partners (to fit into the context of a UN peacekeeping operation), the basic principles and organizational structure of projects have been adopted from its Brazilian experience. In fact, Viva Rio has mobilised Brazilian expertise in urban renewal, including the former Secretary of Urbanism for the City of Rio de Janeiro, for previous work in Haiti. The Viva Rio team also includes Brazilian experts in urban violence reduction and active police officers, with years of experience working in favelas.

Like in Brazil, Viva Rio works from within the neighborhood rather than from without, confronting its "outsider status", being more spatially and socially connected to ground truths than most other external actors in the country.

The "Report 2008" (www.comunidadessegura.org/files/Bel_Air_report_20081.pdf) describes the main activities (1 January 2008 to 31 March 2009). The main areas of intervention were water

supply, sanitation and peace and security. Activities in the area of water supply included the establishment of water distribution centers - "kiosks" - managed by the local community, purchase of water trucks to supply the water kiosks, construction of water harvesting systems, and partnership with the local water supplier (CAMEP) for increasing water distribution. On sanitation, Viva Rio collaborated with local and international stakeholders for improving solid waste management, recruited local population and worked together with local government to conduct cleanup and recycling operations, and built a biodigester for processing organic waste. Finally, on peace and security, Viva Rio negotiated peace agreements among rival groups and rewarded the local community for reduction of violence with grants such as professional training and scholarships. Women empowerment and youth education are mainstreamed in most activities. For instance, women are in charge of water quality management and students are involved in local water management committees. Other actions included information campaigns on HIV/AIDS targeting young population.

--Please describe the roles, responsibilities, interests and interrelations of the involved stakeholders.

- Viva Rio leads the actions in coordination with local authorities (CAMEP, City hall, etc) and institutions (schools, church). The Brazilian NGO also facilitates the engagement of local leaders and community through intense dialogue about the project implementation.
- Local leaders and networks actively participate in all events and activities, under the supervision of Viva Rio.
- DAC donors and international organizations finance the project. Norway channels around USD 1.5 million/year and Canada will provide USD 4.4 million over three years (up to 31 August 2011). The Norwegian Church Aid supports Viva Rio's activities more closely, helping Viva Rio to prepare applications for Norwegian funding and providing advice in areas such as gender, conflict and security and involvement of Haitian government.
- The Brazilian embassy in Port-au-Prince gives institutional support to Viva Rio since the NGO's arrival in the country. The embassy facilitates relations with the Haitian government, UN, UNDP, MINUSTAH, and the Brazilian troops in Haiti.

Viva Rio faced some challenges in the implementation phase, such as: dependence vis-à-vis external military presence: In-depth connections with youth groups and territorial groups will be explored, in order to increase independence. Also, partnerships with local civil society and Government institutions serve the same purpose.

Furthermore, from April to September, the political crisis created limitations concerning state action. This implied slowing down the rhythm with some government players. Viva Rio responded by continuing the work at nongovernmental level. On the other hand, changes in the direction of CAMEP had a positive impact in the works, both for the Contract and for the training of the Community Committees in the Kiosks.

Outcomes:

- Did the relation between the providing and receiving countries / governments / organizations change with this experience? Why and how?
- The project aims at the empowerment of local actors and institutions. This is a long term

process, which starts with leadership within the project. Community leaders are key players in the process of design and implementation of projects. Informal cultural groups (Hip Hop) gained recognition. Local institutions, such as schools and churches, anchor key activities, such as water supply and distribution. State institutions, such as CAMEP and CNDDR, are partners with great visibility in the actions.

--What were the planned and unplanned achievements of the SSC experience?

- In 2008, good results were achieved in the areas of security, water distribution and solid waste management. There was an important reduction of urban violence after the signature of the Peace Accord: the homicide rate in Bel Air decreased from 26 in 2006/2007 to 17 in 2008/2009, which is lower than in other Latin America cities. In addition, access to water has increased after the improvement of distribution channels and the reduction of prices. Today, the distribution of potable water is managed in partnership with Bel Air community and reaches nearly 24,000 people. Finally, waste collection also improved. The cleanup operations, carried out in cooperation with Haitian authorities, made it possible to unclog waste-filled water mains, making the neighbourhood healthier and safer.

--Are these outcomes sustainable? Could they be replicated in similar contexts?

- The good results achieved in 2008 may be partially due to Viva Rio's choice of focusing its attention on only one neighbourhood and not the whole city of Port-au-Prince. Thus the NGO could invest in a comprehensive development project that addresses many of Bel Air's problems and achieves more and better results in the shorter term.
- The main challenge is Haiti's political instability. Since the project depends on strong participation of local government, political crises affect its implementation. Viva Rio has been responding to this challenge by enhancing its work at the non-governmental level.
- Ideally, the project should be replicable. One of the expected outcomes is to set Bel Air as an example for other neighbourhoods in PaP. However, it is not clear if the Haitian government or Viva Rio will be able to scale it up. Extending the activities to other communities will probably depend on additional funding and stronger engagement from Haitian government and civil society.

--For longer-term projects, could you describe (both positive and negative) impacts?

- This project is relatively recent.

Aid Effectiveness:

--How can this experience help to understand the possible synergies between SSC and aid effectiveness principles?

Three principles of aid effectiveness seem to be particularly relevant to the success of this triangular cooperation: ownership, alignment and harmonization. Active participation of Haitian government and population in the project (ownership) facilitated adaptation of plans to local reality. Close dialogue with local leaders and local administration favoured alignment with local development priorities and reinforced adaptation to local development challenges. Finally, delegation of responsibilities based on each partners' area of expertise enabled the use their comparative advantages at best.

--Was national leadership and ownership supported?

This project aims to empower local actors and institutions. Community leaders are key players in the process of project design and implementation. Other local stakeholders include schools, churches and the City Hall. Women, young people and children are active in most activities and Viva Rio employs a majority of Haitians among its staff. From a total 70 staff, 6 are Brazilians and 64 Haitians. Moreover, most project coordinators are Haitians.

--To which extent was the experience aligned to national priorities and systems?

- Viva Rio's attention to understand Bel Air's context before designing its activities facilitates alignment to local development priorities. They often conduct preliminary research so as to learn more about local needs and priorities. For instance, the NGO has conducted an extensive household survey (with more than 10,000 families) in 2007 and also a research study on Bel Air's water market before structuring water-supply interventions.

- Viva Rio has a close dialogue with the representatives of the Haitian government and civil society organizations participating in the project's Steering Committee. This contact also facilitates alignment to local development priorities.

--Has there been an effort to harmonize and coordinate with other programmes and development actors?

- There is an effort to coordinate all actors participating in this triangular co-operation, especially with regards to a clear assignment of roles and responsibilities. Viva Rio is in charge of the project's formulation and implements the activities in partnership with local public administration and civil society. DAC donors sponsor the project, and the Brazilian embassy gives institutional support to Viva Rio.

- However, co-ordination appears to be less efficient with regards to evaluation and co-ordination of different sponsors. Working with many donors requires lots of effort from Viva Rio, which has to negotiate small-scale contributions several times. Moreover, each donor has requested individual monitoring reports from the NGO, and they have been planning to conduct separate project evaluations. Donors are considering the possibility of harmonizing their evaluations and it would be interesting if they could also co-ordinate for the approval of work plans.

--Was managing for results included in the experience?

- Unknown.

Capacity Development:

--Describe any specific capacity development benefits from this SSC activity at the individual, organizational or systemic level.

--Are there any lessons learned from this SSC activity that improve the overall enabling environment, especially through improved incentives for better public services?

Viva Rio functions as a catalyst element, mediating among various actors and stimulating cooperation for the achievement of common goals. The active participation of the Haitian Police, CNDDR, community leaders and civilian institutions are contributing to a positive social transformation. Examples:

- Monthly meetings engage PNH, the Military and Community Leaders to consider security challenges. Regular events bring the police and the community together in constructive situations

- Water: community committees and CAMEP are working together to reach self management and quality of water.
- Solid Waste Management: the population provided a positive response, depositing in the proper places (transformation).
- Approx. 5,000 students are active in several activities, such as water monitoring, tree planting, Bel Air Vert campaign, and sports competition.

Duration: Activities started in 2007 and the project is still in implementation (new activities are regularly planned and presented to stakeholders and continuation depends on support from each partner involved in the triangulation)

Budget (Optional): USD 3,606,695.00 (from 01/January/2008 – 31/March/2009; combined contributions from Canada, Norway and United Nations)

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