

**INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION  
PEACEBUILDING FUND PROJECTS IN BURUNDI**  
Summary

**Key findings and conclusions**

- PBF in Burundi developed “several truly innovative peacebuilding projects that made an important contribution to peace consolidation”. It provided quick targeted funding to contribute to several critical drivers of peace – fostering open political dialogue, reform of the security forces, management of land conflicts for returning refugees, access to justice, and the formation of transitional justice mechanisms. It filled critical funding gaps that other donors were not willing or able to fill, and even catalyzed funding by other donors for activities that they had previously deemed risky. It strengthened the UN’s capacity, helping to make it an important and influential actor in Burundi and providing urgent support needed to help it fulfill its Security Council mandates. It helped to improve the strained relationships between the UN and the GoB, as well as between civil society and GoB. It also built the capacity of most national, and some international, actors who were actively involved in the PBF projects, both in the Joint Steering Committee and in various project management teams.
- The projects varied significantly in their effectiveness. This evaluation found that seven out of 18 projects were both effective in contributing to their project-specific goals and the goals of the PBF: the Dialogue Forums, the Land Disputes Project, a portion of the Local Public Services Project, the Military Barracks Project (including the Displaced Families Project), the Morale Building Project, the National Intelligence Service Project, and the Transitional Justice Project.
- UN, GoB, national and international actors involved experienced a steep learning curve and invested an enormous amount of time in the PBF process, with insufficient guidance or support.
- Three main overarching lessons emerge from the challenges of focus, design and implementation of PBF projects: (i) the PBF’s comparative advantage; (ii) the importance of including non-governmental organizations, civil society, and communities throughout the PBF program cycle; and (iii) the necessity of adapting standard capacities, routines, and procedures to meet the specific challenges and opportunities of implementing PBF-funded interventions.
- First, the PBF has a comparative advantage in funding interventions that: i) target institutions critical to the prevention of violence in the near future that are ready for peacebuilding intervention; ii) fill a critical or temporal funding gap (i.e., other donor restrictions prevent them from funding it, or other donors are unable to fund at that time); and iii) enable national actors to sustain project outcomes. In addition, other funding sources should fund longer-term peacebuilding programming and conflict-sensitive development programming. The need for good peacebuilding programming is much greater than what the PBF can support, and the added value of the PBF will be wasted if it does not focus on the innovative, highly political, short-term, and timely programming that it has the comparative advantage to assist.
- Second, the PBF projects that were most successful in achieving their outcomes were able to maintain equal partnership and continuous dialogue between the national and

international partners during the design and implementation of the project. Civil society, non governmental organizations, and communities were part of the project design, implementation, and monitoring. In addition, several community members who had either benefited from PBF projects, or observed the projects, strongly requested that they be involved to a greater extent in project monitoring, as they really wanted the best possible outcomes and were frustrated when they saw money wasted or not used in the most effective way. The inclusion of civil society, non-governmental organizations, and communities throughout the PBF project cycle not only provides highly valuable data, it also increases national capacity to and investment in sustaining outcomes. Thereby fostering badly needed downward accountability and local ownership, both of which can be perceived as important peace dividends.

- Third, most successful PBF projects were those that differed significantly from traditional humanitarian and development programming, and embodied peacebuilding best practices. They were experimental and innovative. They addressed an important politically sensitive need, and built the capacity of national institutions to sustain the results. They adapted to changes in the political climate at the same time that they addressed likely root causes of conflict and peace. In many cases, they listened to and learned from beneficiaries and observers, and they adjusted their approach in response. Innovative and adaptable programming requires organizational systems and staff capacities that can support and enable this innovation and adaptation. As a result, normal development, humanitarian, and even peacekeeping systems and staff profiles are likely to encourage effective peacebuilding programming. For the UN to capitalize on the opportunity offered by the PBF to engage in effective and timely peacebuilding programming, it needs to develop corresponding systems, procedures, and capacities. Without these changes, success may too often occur in spite of the organization and its systems rather than as a result of them. All PBF projects in Burundi suffered from two significant design flaws: the absence of planning for the sustainability of results after the PBF supported ended; and limited programming or monitoring experience.

### **Recommendations to PBSO**

- Alter some of the principles that govern the allocation of PBF funding and support to Burundi (around program selection, partnerships, reporting and success criteria, and capacity);
- Develop well researched Guidelines on PBF Program and Project Selection that would articulate the comparative advantage of the PBF and how to select corresponding interventions;
- Develop well researched Guidelines on PBF Program Design and Implementation that would include a description of the characteristics of effective PBF programs;
- Develop well researched Guidelines on PBF Monitoring and Evaluation specifying the best practices in monitoring and evaluation
- Develop well researched Guidelines on PBF Roles and Responsibilities clarifying roles and responsibilities of all actors involved in PBF funding and programming.

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