

FINAL EVALUATION

COMMUNITY RESPONSES FOR KEY POPULATION ACCESS TO CARE (RIPOSTE PROJECT)

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EVALUATION DATES : DECEMBER 2022 - MAY 2023

**COUNTRY:**

BURKINA FASO,
BURUNDI, MALI,
MAURITIUS

**BUDGET:**

€1 100 000

**LEAD****ORGANIZATION:**

RESPONSABILITÉ ESPOIR
VIE SOLIDARITÉ (REVS
PLUS)

PARTNERS:

ASSOCIATION NATIONALE
DE SOUTIEN AUX
SÉROPOSITIFS ET
MALADES DU SIDA
(ANSS), ASSOCIATION
PRÉVENTION
INFORMATION LUTTE
CONTRE LE SIDA (PILS),
ASSOCIATION FOR
COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
FOR ACCESS TO
DEVELOPMENT AND
HEALTH (ARCAD SANTÉ
PLUS)

**START DATE:**

APRIL 2019

END DATE:

DECEMBER 2022

THE PROJECT

Background

The RIPOSTE project funded by Expertise France aimed to strengthen the capacity of key populations in relation to advocacy with decision-making bodies in the AIDS response. In this sense, the project is an extension of community synergy for greater efficiency and complementarity with Global Fund (GF) interventions. RIPOSTE established an empowerment mechanism for key population (KP) leaders so that they can have a greater impact on AIDS control decisions that relate to them, with the objectives of «direct action to better take into account community expertise on the ground and improve functioning of CCMs through the effective role of Key Population Representatives (KPRs)».

Project leads and implementation approach

RIPOSTE is a multi-country project across four countries: Burkina Faso (REVS PLUS), Burundi (ANSS), Mali (ARCAD Santé PLUS), and Mauritius (PILS).

The project was developed based on work by community focus groups in all the countries involved. A community mobilization methodology based on achievements from structuring advocacy was due to identify problems and areas of dysfunction. The provision of human resources to work with communities coordinated by partner organizations aimed to create conducive conditions for community requests to be formalized in the context of implementing national public AIDS response policies relating to KPs and the GF programs working with these groups.

OBJECTIVES

Overall objective

Structure the community contribution to better reflect the needs of key populations in national policies and Global Fund grants.

Specific objective 1

Ensure key population participation in the development of advocacy strategies in response to identified barriers.

Specific objective 2

Ensure capacity building of key populations representatives on the CCM to maximize their role on national platforms.

Specific objective 3

Facilitate multi-country coordination to contribute to sub-regional roll out of community approaches that have an impact on accelerating the response.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Relevance

RIPOSTE has helped to overcome challenges relating to the visibility and legitimacy of key populations (KPs) by providing a framework for consultation with KP representatives in the countries where it has been implemented. The project's relevance lies in the fact that it enabled KPs to structure their voices for advocacy purposes, meaning they are able to have political influence through their interventions.

Effectiveness

The program as a whole has been effective. Its effectiveness is primarily due to ongoing capacity strengthening of KP Representatives (KPRs); the creation of a consultation framework to evaluate current KP programs in the four countries and the development of recommendations; active participation in the process of developing the 2021-2023 GF concept note; the consideration of recommendations made in the context of response-driven community forums in the 2021-2023 GF concept note; enhancing field expertise at the local level and peer educator costs being covered by the GF grant.

RIPOSTE reached 1,815 people directly through 106 civil society organizations. 455 activities were carried out, including 37 skills-building webinars with the KPRs, 621 cases of gender-based violence recorded, 90% of victims were provided with support, 3 annual KP fora in each country, 3 national KP community reports per country.

The overall effectiveness of RIPOSTE was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which limited face-to-face training and coaching.

Efficiency

An internal restructure took place at REVS PLUS towards the mid-term of the project and the RIPOSTE coordination officer was not replaced. This has had an impact on the project at different levels. Regional dynamics have been weakened and have relied more on the initiatives of individual officers between themselves who have tended to find synergies within their own organizations rather regionally. Ongoing support from the advocacy department has been mixed depending on the country.

Impact

The project has had a tangible impact on the implementation contexts in the four countries: i) Impact in terms of the representation and leadership of KPs and their participation in GF mechanisms, ii) Impact on structuring the cross-organization dynamic: one of the prominent features of the project is its central role in establishing a cross-organizational dynamic through the creation of coalitions and networks of key populations, iii) Impact on the collective approach to structuring advocacy, iv) Impact on increasing legitimacy and community expertise: participation in dialogue and negotiation spaces (CCM/National AIDS Committee) at the national level has meant that KPRs and RIPOSTE partner organizations have gained the recognition of national authorities and other organizations.

Sustainability

The new skills transferred will be sustained as long as KPRs that have benefited from capacity strengthening in advocacy are present in the organizations supported. Advocacy tools that were co-created during webinars and trainings can be easily replicated. Cross-organizational collaboration has been systematized, through in particular collectives of identity associations, which still require some consolidation. Several obstacles to the sustainability of RIPOSTE's impact have been identified: i) Turnover of KPRs, ii) Impact of the external environment, for example socio-political instability and decreasing international funding, which will also likely challenge RIPOSTE's impact in the medium or long term, iii) Some KPRs not being present on CCMs, iv) The fact that leadership is concentrated among a small number of KPRs, v) The need to integrate coaching and community advocacy.



Conclusions and recommendations

Overall, the RIPOSTE project has contributed to structuring community advocacy in implementing countries, which in turn has enabled greater consideration of the needs of key populations in policies.

Recommendations:

At the strategic level:

- ▶ Strengthen community leadership to i) increase the number of leaders who can lead advocacy, ii) diversify areas of sensitivity and approaches in line with the profile of leaders, iii) consider developing a mechanism to develop roles collectively.
- ▶ Establish a pool of expert trainers to continue advocacy work in the long term, ensure advocacy messaging is shared, and ensure internal expertise in order to be less dependent on external expertise.
- ▶ Continue to strengthen peer educators (paralegal and human rights focused) so that they know how to talk to the media, produce press releases and write project proposals to mobilize domestic funds.
- ▶ Improve the level of commitment and ownership among the leadership of RIPOSTE implementing partners.
- ▶ Develop advocacy plans: RIPOSTE has significantly strengthened how community advocacy is structured through webinars on self-esteem and GF knowledge in particular, but it is necessary to do more and strengthen how advocacy is structured by supporting KPRs to develop action plans in line with their profiles and capacities.

At operational level (national partners):

- ▶ Progressively empower cross-organizational collectives: in line with the strategy around sustainability and diversification of support, it is recommended to support the collectives under RIPOSTE (the Arc-en-ciel network in Burkina Faso and the UBUNTU collective in Burundi) to structure their governance and progressively mobilize international funding in alignment with global strategies. In order to do this, it will be necessary to formalize these collectives and their governance and targeted training and support will be needed.
- ▶ Build new alliances and synergies with other committed actors: in addition to financial autonomy, the collectives and their members would benefit from developing more partnerships. New alliances will help to lend more weight to cross-organizational advocacy.

SEPTEMBER 2023