



EXTERNAL EVALUATION - END OF PROJECT EVALUATION RWANDA– FIRST AID

PROJECT CODE: FIRST AID 2017-2021 – 2017-13-RW-DGD FA

DATE OF EVALUATION: JANUARY-MAY 2022

EVALUATOR(S): KEY AID CONSULTING (INFO@KEYAIDCONSULTING.COM)

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT TEAM (EMT):

- BRC-FL: PELLO MUGICA GONZALEZ (PROJECT MANAGER), ELKE WEYENBERGH (FIRST AID FOCAL POINT), DIDIER VAN AERT (HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS), YOUSRI EL ADAK (EVALUATION MANAGER)
- RRCS: PAMELA RUGABIRA (PROJECT COORDINATOR), JEANNE MUKESHIMANA (HEAD OF COFA), THIERRY UWAMUNGU (RESPONSIBLE FOR FIRST AID APPLICATION), EMMANUEL NTAKIRUTIMANA (PMER)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The evaluation is part of the programme 2017-2021 of the BRC-FL International Cooperation department financed by the Belgian Development Cooperation (DGD). The evaluation is focusing on the relevance, effectiveness, contribution, efficacy and sustainability of the First Aid (FA) program in Rwanda.

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

We found the recommendations of the external evaluator useful and to the point. Most of the recommendations were actionable and relevant for the Rwandan context. Although, many of the recommendations require full buy-in of our implementing partner and extra resources to work on the recommendations. We will continue to advocate for the improvement of different systems in future first aid programs in alignment with the policies in place and priorities of our implementing partner. In summary, the biggest challenge is currently in the installation of a centralized database system which will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of volunteer management. Also, we will continue to put efforts in co-creating extra policies, for example to respect equal gender distributions and data regulations. For many of the recommendations, a joint effort has to be made through participatory meetings with RRCS staff, volunteers, trainers and master trainers.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TABLE

Recommendation 1: Develop a volunteer retention policy used to identify and harnesses opportunities for volunteers to grow within the organization.					
Management response:		Response rationale:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted		<p>We acknowledge that a volunteer retention policy can be useful to identify and harness opportunities for volunteers to grow within the organization. To make this possible a more professional and centralized database system needs to be in place with sufficient support of technology and automation to manage the number of people. Therefore, we have already taken a first step towards installing a more centralized database system in this project, but more efforts are needed to achieve this objective in future projects. Once this is being installed a retention policy, flexible and applicable to all kind of of volunteers, can be drafted. As FA grows, it is important that volunteers retain their motivation. It's worth mentioning that the cascade system in which we work helps to follow-up volunteers as the trainers are in direct contact with the volunteers to coach them and communicate challenges between the staff and volunteers. Even though good coaching is in place, more individual growth plans (in a standardized approach) can be motivational for volunteers to stay. Finally, it is important to mention that in Rwanda we do target often volunteers with pedagogic background to become a trainer as it's been proven in the project to be more effective and help to retain the volunteers.</p>			
Key action(s)		Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
				Status	Comments
1.1 Implement a centralized database		Q1 2023	RRCS		
1.2 Draft a volunteer retention policy		Q1 2023	RRCS		
1.3 Present a volunteer retention policy to the RRCS board		Q2 2023	RRCS		
1.4 Ensure dissemination of volunteer retention policy		Continuous	RRCS		

Recommendation 2: Formation of Peer Exchange groups.				
Management response:		Response rationale:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted		<p>Although we really acknowledge the added value of peer exchange groups, it is very expensive to let tens of people meet periodically at one central place and thus this would not be sustainable at this point. Currently, it is hard to organize this physically, but we do facilitate this digitally (through WhatsApp groups) where trainers and master trainers can exchange lessons learned and challenges they collected from their trainees and thus other volunteers. Also, when a first aid project of ours organizes a refresher training for trainers, we make use of this activity to sit together and exchange like peer exchange groups would do. Because we doubt on the sustainability and have already similar methods in place in Rwanda, we partially accept this recommendation.</p>		

Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
2.1 Use refresher training to let trainers exchange on lessons learned and challenges from their trainees (other volunteers)	Q4 2022	RRCS		
2.2 In a centralized database store lessons learned linked to trainers and volunteers to facilitate follow-up and engagement	Q1 2023	RRCS		
2.3 If need arises, set up separate voluntary peer exchange groups	Q2 2023	RRCS		

Recommendation 3: Management and optimization of volunteer databases.				
Management response:	Response rationale:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	<p>We accept the recommendation to improve the management and optimization of volunteer databases. In fact, we in Rwanda already work together with the Disaster Management volunteer teams as we often train them in our projects too. Even though this is done in practice, without a decentralized database in place it is hard to monitor or improve the exchange. The optimization of current databases would improve the working of the FA-department and would benefit also from a clear retention policy.</p>			
	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
3.1 Install a centralized database system that makes monitoring of volunteers easier, also of the DM department	Q2 2023	RRCS		
3.2 Follow up usage of improved volunteer databases	Continuous	RRCS + BRC-FI		
3.3 Add in future project agreement a clause to advise our implementing partner to follow the General Data Protection Regulation directive	Q2 2022	BRC-FI		

Recommendation 4: Strike a balance between enough trainers and not too many trainers to reach training quotas.				
Management response:	Response rationale:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted	<p>We partially accept the recommendation to balance between enough trainers and not too many trainers to reach training quotas. Our mandate is to be active in all regions of Rwanda and to make first aid knowledge available to anyone. To make this possible a high number of trainers are necessary to be able to respond to the demand of the market. Actually we do know that the demand is high in the country (as proven in the market research done in 2019) and therefore we also need to install a high number of trainers and a good system is in place to follow-up these trainers. But we do acknowledge that it</p>			

	would be useful to identify an optimum ratio in participatory discussions with master trainers, trainers, and educators, and reflect on the turnover rates.			
Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
4.1 Guidance from BRC-FI to be developed on optimal ratio of trainers/trainees	Q3 2022	BRC-FI		
4.2 Organize participatory discussions to identify an optimum ratio of trainers / volunteers	Q4 2022	RRCS + BRC-FI		

Recommendation 5: Develop a strategic approach to engage with government departments.				
Management response: <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	Response rationale: As identified and reported in the project, we acknowledge the importance of engaging with government departments to install structural partnerships. As during and in the end of the project some of these partnerships have started to kick-off, we will continue our lobby through senior management to formalize them. It is important to recognize the specific structure of the Rwandan Government and engage with every level: central government and local government.			
Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
5.1 Continue lobby with government departments	Continuous	RRCS		
5.2 Formalize structural partnerships with government departments where possible	Continuous	RRCS		

Recommendation 6: Scaling FABL to volunteer training.				
Management response: <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	Response rationale: We do agree that effects of this digitalization on the course accessibility and learning retention need to be further explored. Therefore we will conduct also academic research in Rwanda to study the effectiveness of this blended learning approach. To maintain its relevance and effectiveness, we will also always retain our capacity to facilitate the delivery of both face-to-face and FABL courses.			
Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
6.1 Conduct academic research on the effectiveness of the first aid blended learning approach	Q1 2023	BRC-FI		

6.2 Retain both face-to-face and first aid blended learning courses in the portfolio of first aid	Continuous	RRCS		
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Recommendation 7: Integrate explicit efforts to encourage the participation of women in FA training as volunteers and trainers				
Management response: <input type="checkbox"/> Accepted	Response rationale: We acknowledge and completely agree with the importance to encourage the participation of women in FA training as volunteers and trainers. Although, we have always advocated for this, we learned that it remains challenging to engage women for different (cultural and practical) reasons in first aid activities. Because it was hard to recruit the same number of women for first aid activities in the beginning of the project, this unequal distribution remained the same in the rest of the project as for efficiency and retention reasons it was important to continue working with the same volunteers. Although the recommendation gives some ideas on how to include women more in first aid activities, we prefer to plan participatory meetings with existing women first aiders to identify potential solutions and draft a strategy.			
Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
7.1 Organize participatory discussions with women volunteers to draft a strategy to include more women	Q4 2022	RRCS		
7.2 Continue to set gender equal criteria in the selection of volunteers for first aid activities	Continuous	RRCS + BRC-FI		

Recommendation 8: Synergize the ToT and volunteer training calendar				
Management response: <input type="checkbox"/> Partially accepted	Response rationale: We do appreciate the recommendation to develop an operations calendar for FA trainers. Although this is good in theory it is still hard to make a promise to all trainers to conduct training within 2 weeks after their training and give training periodically. This is mainly since it's often not possible from a logical and practical point of view. But as the recommendation is there to improve it, we are willing to make an extra effort to discover if other opportunities can be identified and a co-developed operations calendar can be produced to improve on this point.			
Key action(s)	Deadline	Responsible	Tracking	
			Status	Comments
8.1 Organize participatory discussions with first aid trainers to co-develop an operations calendar	Continuous	RRCS		