



Capacity Transfer in Action: Leadership Program Stirs Small Revolution in Burundi

The Rapid Results Institute makes good on the capacity transfer promise. Here is an example of the RRI "pebble-in-a-pond" phenomenon at work.

The Rapid Results Institute, sponsored by the World Bank and the World Bank Institute, dropped a pebble in a Madagascar pond in 2005. Three years later, the waves are being felt in Burundi...

For two years, we worked with Office of Good Governance in Madagascar to help a group of Malagasy consultants develop into Rapid Results coaches. Some, like Mr. Randrianarevelo (featured in the attached World Bank article), and Mme. Andriamiasoa (center) are now spreading the



knowledge—and the results—in Burundi, Rwanda, and other countries.

The article that follows appeared in the World Bank's Today Publication (April 28, 2008).

Leadership Program Stirs Small Revolution in Burundi

April 28, 2008—*Bujumbura, Burundi:* Rosette Nizigiyimana's government office here is dominated by neat towers of files—dossiers of personnel records of some of the 40,000 teachers employed in this small central African nation still recovering from a decade of civil strife. The soft-spoken, clear-eyed manager has scored a small victory in a bureaucratic battle, and she has become an unlikely champion of transparency and efficiency in a system long considered sluggish and secretive.

Her modest success is encouraging others to challenge habits of unresponsive and unaccountable governance. Nizigiyimana's small revolution is one of eleven pilot projects within a larger leadership development project spearheaded by the World Bank Institute.



Rosette Nizigiyimana, Director General of the Fonction Publique, applies the Rapid Results methodology to remedy the problem of delayed payments to teachers

Rapid Results Model

Burundi's political leaders embraced a new approach at a high-level retreat in May, 2007, empowering operational managers to set priorities under a "rapid results" model where specific objectives are reinforced with close tracking of progress, and active efforts are taken to address obstacles and institutional constraints.

For years, development agencies have struggled to support improved outcomes in fragile, post-conflict countries where prolonged political and institutional instability is usually a fact of life, along with low capacity throughout government. Too often, strategies and plans sputter out with little improvement in living conditions for the people. WBI's Leadership Development Program builds on the idea that high-level leaders can make a measurable difference if they can project a clear vision, make government operations more effective, and be fully accountable for delivering tangible results.



Benjaminina Randrianarivelo, senior advisor to a national team of coaches, brings expertise and experience in introducing the Rapid Results methodology to

The Problem: Long Wait for

Teachers' Salaries

Nizigiyimana's story centers on a staggering, but long-accepted, inefficiency in paying teachers: newly-recruited teachers worked a full year before receiving their first salary payment. The delay was vaguely explained as a problem with the dossiers, which traveled slowly through the Ministry of Education and on to the Fonction

Publique, where the teachers' wait was demoralizing, leading to frequent days away from the classroom. Some of the off-time would be devoted to researching the mysterious dossiers, which held the key to freeing up the salaries.

As the frustrated teachers struggled to pry loose information about their dossiers, a money-making venture materialized in the form of a small enterprise that, for pay, provided morsels of information on the paperwork. Many teachers complained, and Madame Rosette began working to remedy the problem using the rapid results methodology advanced in the leadership development program.

Transparency Led to Solution

The culture of accommodating delays, and the emergence of a group profiting from the inefficiency, together pushed the dossier mess into the sphere of the "non-dit"—things widely known about but never openly discussed.

The silence was broken at a public meeting in January, when Madame Rosette, as she is known, presented the facts, and secured a green-light from senior government leaders to solve the problem. "It would have been impossible without the support of the leadership," she says, "but we also needed energy at the operational level." Indeed, when waves of backlogged dossiers flowed into the Fonction Publique, she had to redeploy workers to process them.

The effort paid off: the year-long delay was cut to three months, and teachers recruited in November started getting paid at the end of February.

Other Pilot Programs

The other pilots in the WBI program followed a similar pattern of small revolutions, in which tangible goals were set and progress in meeting them was measured. The Environment Ministry launched an anti-erosion project on one of the hills surrounding this capital, where about 400 people were struggling with low crop yields from thin, exhausted soil. By raising local awareness, and involving the communities to plant trees and terrace the land, the project was completed three months ahead of schedule.



Benjamina Randrianarivelo: "Changing methods of work is not always easy but it can be achieved with a knowledgeable coach, an engaged leader, and an accountable team working together".

The Education Ministry ended a crippling delay in distributing schoolbooks in one area, and scaled up the approach nationally. The Defense Ministry collaborated with the Solidarity Ministry—for the first time—to reintegrate 782 families living in military camps since 1993. The process is likely to be completed in March, six months after it was launched. The Agriculture Ministry completed a tree-planting program on schedule, and a national aid coordination committee established a system for pulling together active foreign assistance programs.

"These experiences support the premise that when the political leadership weighs in constructively, operational teams supporting national priorities with a rapid-results-initiative can accomplish things, including unblocking longstanding bottlenecks," said Moira Hart-Poliquin, manager of the Leadership Development Program at WBI.

Good Political Leadership is Key

"It is about political leaders understanding the critical role they play in the implementation process when seemingly impossible outcomes are targeted in a concerted and transparent process. If people can do this on something small, they and others can begin to apply the approach to larger reforms, and to the overall challenge of governing," Hart-Poliquin added. Versions of the program also have been run in Madagascar, Morocco, and the Central African Republic.

Beyond paying teachers and fighting land erosion, the leadership program is designed to encourage a change in mentality and behavior. Dismas Baransaka, who works as a coach with Burundi's government teams, says the enemy of constructive change is a sweeping acceptance of avoidable shortcomings. Too often, he adds, people respond to inefficient or corrupt behavior with a resigned, "C'est normal." Once a few longstanding frustrations are lifted, "I think we can see a changing mentality, changing behaviors, and changed outcomes. "



Sélius Nezerwe, coordinator for PAGE (Projet d'Appui À la Gestion Economique), focuses on the role of leaders in solving tough problems by concentrating on concrete result.