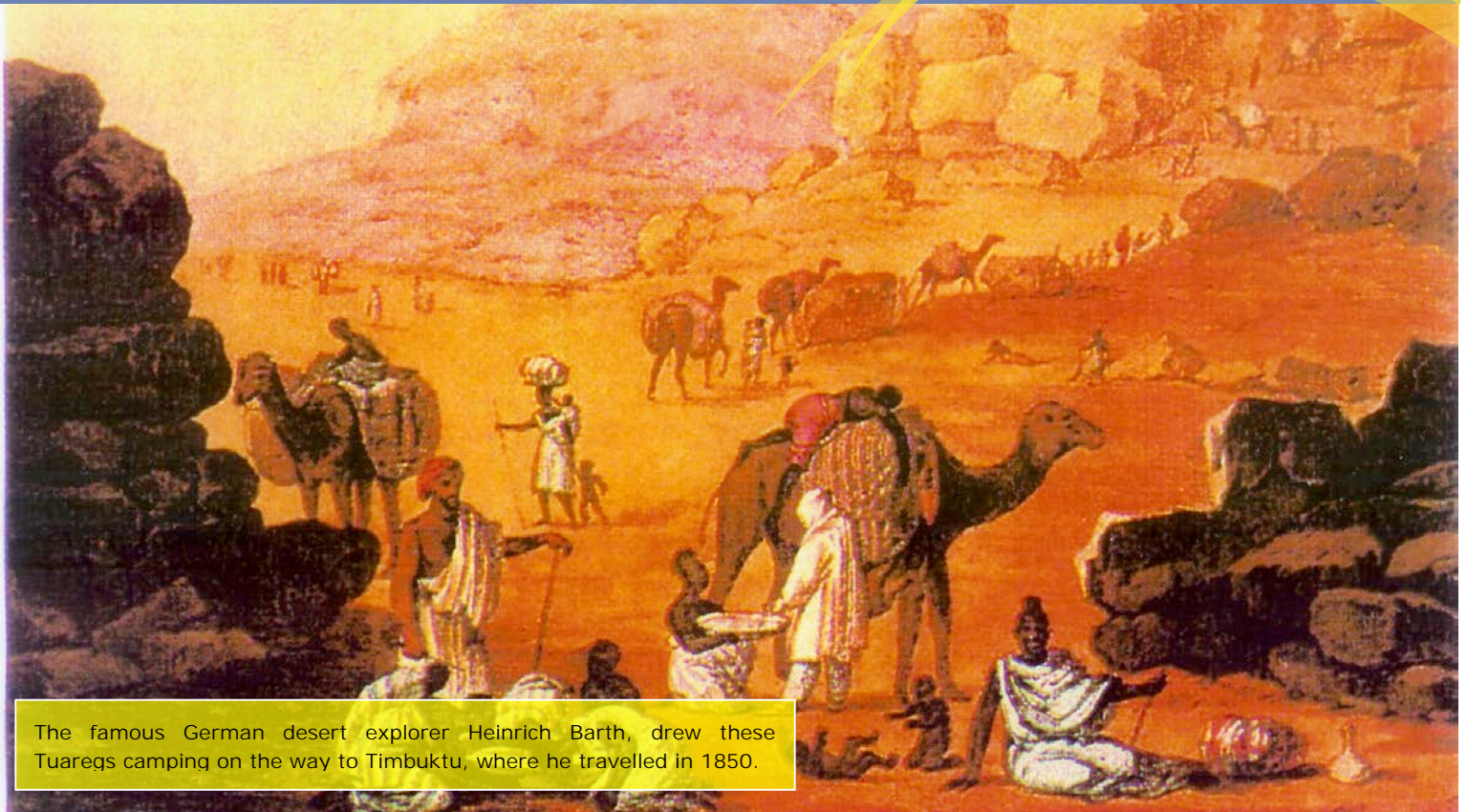




EPES Mandala Consulting Ltd

Annual report 2012



The famous German desert explorer Heinrich Barth, drew these Tuareqs camping on the way to Timbuktu, where he travelled in 1850.

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INTRODUCTION

2012 was rather a sad year for us. EPES Mandala was born in Mali, from the successful Peace of Timbuktu of 1996 when the first-ever Flame of Peace was lit by some of our founders. Flames of Peace – burning rebel weapons as a symbolic and public purging of the weapons of war – have become a staple of peace processes across the world, but we started the concept in 1996. Now the flames of war are raging across the Sahara, and many of our friends have been victims. For years we have warned of the spreading cocaine cancer from Guinea Bissau, a classic ‘failed state’. A decade of neglect, and the cocaine trade has brought West African chaos. We have started a pro bono programme to help Malians displaced from the North, and we are trying to persuade UN and other officials to build on the Mali peace lessons of the 1990s. We propose a series of Concertations Nationales across Mali, with the UN recording people’s statements, where Malian men and women of every place and every race can speak their mind and build together a new consensus for what Mali should become.

RECOMMENDED LECTURES: to learn the lessons of Malian history, you can read the 1998 book online: A Peace of Timbuktu: democratic governance, development and African peacemaking, with a preface by Kofi Annan (in French or in English), available at the following links:

<http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art1806.pdf>

<http://www.unidir.org/pdf/articles/pdf-art1799.pdf>

NEW STAFF MEMBER

EPES Welcomes Carole



Carole Lelarge, Project Manager

Carole Lelarge joined EPES Mandala in April 2012. She holds a Master of International Economics specializing in Development Economics from the University Paris 1 Pantheon Sorbonne. She is in charge of management and monitoring of the implementation of the current ROM missions and on-going projects, as well as business and marketing development of the company. Carole has previous long-term professional experience in Germany, Shanghai, Denmark and France and has lived in Botswana and Taiwan.

INDEX

- INTRODUCTION..... p. 1
- NEW STAFF MEMBER..... p. 1
- REPORT FROM MALI..... p. 2
- MISSIONS 2012..... p. 3
 - ROM Nigeria..... p. 3
 - ROM Rwanda..... p. 4
 - ROM Somalia..... p. 5
- LESSONS LEARNED..... p. 6



Dr Michelle Elcoat and Dr Robin Poulton during a meeting at the University of Ségou.

REPORT FROM MALI

French troops landed, while EPES was at work in Ségou for the building of a new University as part of a new economic plan for the revival of the country.

Dr Michelle Elcoat and Dr Robin Poulton's letter from Mali: <<Mali has been divided into two parts since an army mutiny in March 2012 led to a coup d'état and the overthrow of Mali's fragile democracy that began in 1992. 20 years is not long enough to establish strong governance institutions built on democratic convictions. In the north, Tuaregs from Libya and Arabs from Algeria and Mauritania confronted each other in a fluctuating war of weapons and influence tinged with Islamic fanaticism. Timbuktu - the 'city of 333 Saints' - suffered from the destruction of ancient sufi tombs by Arabs whose desert version of Islam does not tolerate sufism. Yet Timbuktu was a famous centre of Islamic scholarship from 1100-1600, long before the 18th century Muslim reformer Mohamed bin Abdewahhab married a daughter of the al-Saud family and started the minority sect called 'Wahhabism'.

On January 8th the Islamists led by ambitious Tuareg rebel Iyad ag Ghali of Ansar Dine, and drug-smuggling terrorist kidnapper Moktar Benmokhtar, leader in northern Mali of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), started to move two columns of jihadist fighters in the direction of Mopti-Sévaré (where there is an important military aircraft) and Niono-Markala where Mali's primary irrigation system provides the country's rice supply. From there, the road was open to take the main cities of Ségou and Bamako, and to declare the Radical and Expansionist Al Qaeda Islamic Republic of Mali. French and American intelligence were well aware of the threat. The major engineering works undertaken in the Iforas mountains north of Kidal, using machines stolen from mining companies, have created a mountain fortress for AQIM. There are deep caves filled with weapons and ammunition purchased in Libya with money gained from kidnapping Westerners and smuggling cocaine from Colombia to Europe. AQIM is really a group of Algerian rebels, converted into drug smugglers, kidnappers and international criminal terrorists. The growing threat of AQIM was neglected by European leaders for the past ten years.

On January 11th 2013, France's President Hollande decided he could no longer wait for his vacillating allies. French aircraft strafed the Jihadist columns in Konna and Diabaly, and bombed rebel ammo and fuel reserves>>.

Assignments accomplished in 2012.

Out of all the projects successfully completed during the year, including a DfID funded mission to Congo, we have here selected a few reports by our experts on some of the Result Oriented Monitoring missions done, to continue our special section on ROM already started with our Annual Report 2010 and disseminate information with regard to the implementation of the service contract that was awarded in 2010 to EPES, as part of a consortium led by EPTISA International.

ROM NIGERIA

In June Kemi Okenyodo monitored two projects in Nigeria: "Empowering Less Privileged South Eastern Nigeria Women through Human Promotion and Professional Acquisition" and "Preventing Women's Ill-treatment/Rehabilitating widows in Cross River State and Ebonyi State".

Empowering Less Privileged South Eastern Nigeria Women through Human Promotion and Professional Acquisition. The project was implemented by Institute European de Cooperation et de Development (IECD) and Women's Board, Nigeria in Enugu State. The project was aimed at raising the living conditions of the population of the South East Region of Nigeria by developing the capabilities of less privileged women and young people for the target area, raise their standard of living and assist them to enter the hospitality job market. The beneficiaries were women from Amokpo and Eziana which comprises of 24 villages made up mainly immigrant farmers. Most of them married early and therefore were unable to complete their education and they did not have accesses to qualitative educational services / facilities. The project partners provided support to these communities to improve their literacy level and provide skills that would make them marketable in the tourism sector based on the identified need for skilled manpower in the sector as identified in the National Tourism Development Master Plan. The manpower development was done through outreach programs in the communities, schools and public events in the State and its environs. The young girls were also trained in Lanterna Centre - which is the vocational training centre provided by the EU.

Preventing Women's Ill-treatment/Rehabilitating widows in Cross River State and Ebonyi State. The project was aimed at contributing to the eradication of women's rights abuses in 24 communities in 4 local government areas in Cross Rivers and Ebonyi States namely: Yakurr and Obubra in Cross River and Izzi and Ikwo in Ebonyi State. Different activities were carried out with a view to raising the awareness of the community members, building partnerships between CSOs, CBOs / community groups and policy / law enforcement agencies. It also provided support to victims of physical and mental abuse. There are advocacy plans aimed at improving legislations to prevent women's ill treatment and rehabilitation of widows in the focal states.



Trained community peer educators getting sex education tips from the Program Manager, Concern Universal.



ROM RWANDA

In November 2012 Katerina Jelissejeva travelled to Rwanda to monitor the capacity of Non-State torture rehabilitation and prevention services (part of a project covering Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda). The project contributes to health service development and strengthens community integration in Rwanda, rehabilitating victims of torture and sexual violence from the genocide of 1994.

This regional project is implemented by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) together with the partners in the Great Lake region: local rehabilitation centres in Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. Working in such a sensitive area is complex. Rehabilitation centres in the project apply a holistic approach to rehabilitation, including medical treatment, trauma treatment, legal services and social reintegration. High disciplinary professionalism has to be adapted to the specificity of the local contexts. The field-based organisations involved in the project address the real needs of people, while IRCT provides capacity building and resources for medical and legal support. This combination creates a very strong potential for better access to torture rehabilitation services.

Torture rehabilitation is a very complex process. Much depends on socio-economic and cultural contexts in each country. Research and needs analysis are necessary, to develop a realistic and functioning rehabilitation methodology. In Rwanda, the results of the work are very inspiring. Women are major beneficiaries, since so many have been victims of sexual violence. The high enthusiasm and long-term experience of rehabilitation centre staffs show how valuable it is to help the victims of torture. Trauma-counselling, social reintegration programmes and developing entrepreneur skills for children (survivors of genocide) changes their lives, helping them to move on and live, even if their trauma can never fully be healed.

ROM SOMALIA

Report from a war-zone by EPES expert Anne Slamen-McCann.

This ROM mission starts as usual in Nairobi, meeting Delegation managers for the projects being monitored. Not so usual was the extensive security briefing and very sobering facts about abductions. Also unusual were the instructions for moving around. We were told the EC plane was the only safe travel option. **Already we had lost some of our monitoring independence due to security.**

Somali projects are mainly implemented from Nairobi. Frustration with long distance project-management is intense, and everyone was very keen to hear our monitoring reports. My projects included EC, UN and Somalia government officials attempting to organise projects together.

On day 2 we fly across the parched Somali landscape, with rare scrub patches, The rains have just started. There are inevitable goats, some rare signs of people and water. How do Somalis survive? Arriving in Puntland (one of three regions), I am driven to fortified, secure accommodation with armed local security escorts weaving and speeding around our vehicle. The view from my room is a street with concrete homes and household compounds. I can see women at home managing their children and animals, and I wonder how they view their lives. I would like to wander across the street and include their opinions in my monitoring. But I am told to stay put! At night there are sounds of gunfire close by – brief, minor, but deadly.

The planned meetings begin – always moving with the armed escort. Most government people speak English, so conversations are direct and intense. I meet a mixture of local and returnee Somalis - always from the same tribal group - who impress me with their intelligence and determination to move forward. Even with low economic resources, Puntland has managed to unify tribal groups to form their own Constitution. They proudly show me the Assembly Hall, being renovated to welcome its newly elected representatives.

Normally a Monitor asks similar questions in each meeting, in order to verify facts and points of view. With the intense strong opinions being expressed, this is proving difficult. Many Somalis feel that donors should just give money to the Somali Puntland government, to spend as they deem fit. They do not understand Western rules about training, learning processes, project cycles or meeting contractual agreements.

Mogadishu is my next stop. As an active conflict zone, it makes me nervous. Always modestly covered in my shawl, I demurely follow my escort through customs (separate visa, some say separate country) then out through an airport side gate for transport to the military base where I will be housed for the night. Now I have to sit through a military security briefing. Meetings will be held in a building by the airport terminal. People from Mogadishu government departments come to me. Normally, I would visit them and we would actually see the two projects I am monitoring here. Severe limitations are my new reality. No verification can be made of any activity or result, because I cannot meet any other stakeholders. Everything is political. There are factions, and they are all dangerous. A neutral technical support project has become 364% political in nature. The intense opinions expressed to me cannot be verified sufficiently for the monitoring purpose; therefore I must be careful to balance my conclusions. Well, the EC is doing the best it can for Somalia, and so must I. Returning to Nairobi to debrief the EC Delegation and project implementing-partners, I wonder how Somalia can ever be a single country again.

LESSONS LEARNED

LESSONS LEARNED: EPES Mandala on Monitoring, Evaluation and Action-Research.

Our 2010 Annual Report looked at Monitoring Criteria, adding Do No Harm analysis, the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda to Accelerate Progress. In 2011 we considered how to use these criteria with Results-Oriented Monitoring. This year we look at how participatory action-research methodologies can reinforce monitoring.

What is evaluation? We are looking at project performance, results and impacts, but who is looking? Should it be an outside 'expert' visiting at a project for a day or two, or a more drawn-out process? Or should it be a participative process involving all the actors and players, as well as the funders? It can of course be all and any of those. We offer some images to help readers appreciate what M&E systems are, what they can do, and what they should do.

The Quick and Informal Snapshot

ROM (results-oriented monitoring) described in our 2011 Annual Report provides a project snapshot. The EC gets very good value from the ROM picture, but any 3-day M&E visit is bound to remain superficial.

The Photo Series

An external evaluator brings experience (provided you choose the right evaluator) to enrich a project's awareness of its progress, testing its strengths and weaknesses. His report is like a series of integrated snapshots that tell a story and offer insights to project managers and funders - but the evaluation is often ignored by the actors.

The Formal Studio Set

The project Logframe (logical framework) acts like a stage-set, providing structure for an evaluation, setting limits, measurable objectives and the expected results to be evaluated. A Logframe is prepared before work begins in the field; it needs up-dating as things change and the project evolves. Often the Logframe leaves out important elements: unexpected results and hidden impacts an external evaluator may miss.

The Family Video

In-built M&E systems that generate regular data, follow guidelines in a Logframe and provide a video of a project's progress. The external evaluator then acts like a 'freeze' button, allowing project staff and stakeholders to focus on one frame, then on a series of frames - each offering new insights. But still within the Logframe.

The Film Series

To achieve a more intimate understanding of progress, we recommend a built-in, participative action-research methodology that involves all the actors. Like the television viewer watching a series, action-research brings familiarity with the issues and the people, enriching understanding. RA is the Downton Abbey of M&E, taking project analysis beyond the Logframe and bringing new insights from women, youths, fieldworkers... **EPES Mandala is specialized in action-research. If you would like to know how we could help you build your monitoring process into a 'project film series', give us a call!**