

Kolping Society
Tanzania, Burundi and South Africa
Africa I – Programme 2018 - 2020

Evaluation report

Summary



On behalf of
KOLPING INTERNATIONAL Cooperation e.V.

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Context

The concept of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL Cooperation (KIC) in cooperation with its African national associations in South Africa, Burundi and Tanzania is geared to the social challenges of impoverished and disadvantaged population groups, especially small farmers and youth in rural and urban areas.

For more than 30 years, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, together with the Kolping Societies in Africa, has been working for the sustainable development of self-help structures in the cities, but especially in rural areas, where the vast majority of those in need of help live (Tanzania and Burundi). In South Africa (SA), young people and women are the most marginalised who have already fled to the cities and are trying to survive there.

The lives of smallholders are determined by simple and hardly mechanised production methods with poor agricultural inputs and, in some cases, counterproductive land use rules. Unemployment is high and affects young people in particular. In South Africa and Burundi it leads to despair due to a lack of purpose in life, loss of hope, loss of self-esteem, distorted sense of reality, drug abuse, and crime and violence through frustration. Desperation and/or lethargy prevail over the (at best) minimal development progress in the countries, and development of rural communities in particular stagnates.

In Tanzania, the situation with the government under President Magufuli is better and more hopeful than in Burundi and SA. But here too, smallholder agriculture lags far behind potential yields. Smallholder agriculture is characterised by hard physical labour, hardly mechanised practices and a lack of knowledge. Other obstacles to production are the lack of quality seed, high post-harvest losses, improvised harvest management and, as a rule, unfair marketing options which disadvantage farmers.

The rural population is among the poorest in the countries. Often the payment of school fees is already a big burden for many families

and prevents many children from attending school. Often, rural families have no financial means to cover necessary expenses, e.g. for health care.

The goal of the work of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL and its national Kolping Societies in South Africa, Burundi and Tanzania is the active fight against poverty. For this purpose, sustainable social structures are established in the form of self-help groups, the so-called Kolping Families. In Tanzania and Burundi, the focus is on small-scale agricultural production (including livestock farming), the establishment of savings and credit groups (microfinance) and the development of strong civil society self-help groups. In South Africa the focus is on life skills and vocational training.

For several years, KIC has been promoting the implementation of projects in the spirit of its founder Adolph Kolping. The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports these projects 100%.

The aim of the evaluation is a comprehensive assessment of the programme and the national associations according to the five internationally accepted evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. This corresponds to the general requirements of the BMZ regarding accountability and the use of funds. Specific evaluation questions focus on future support: How can Kolping become more attractive and maintain or increase its relevance for the target groups, especially with regard to membership growth?

This programme evaluation covers the three countries Burundi, South Africa, and Tanzania and the programme cycle "Africa I", which runs from 2018 to 2020 (until March 2020). It was managed by an international consultant and three local consultants in close cooperation with the respective project management teams. Care was taken to ensure that the discussions were held with male, female and youth groups, in particular to discuss in detail the aspects of relevance, impact and sustainability. The aspects of effectiveness and efficiency were assessed by the evaluators on the basis of the facts established on site.

The preliminary results were presented at final workshops and discussed with the project

management. The final report was made available to all relevant staff and discussed in a final meeting with KIC. KIC's project managers and the project management staff on site made use of the results of the evaluations. The results should also be used to prepare and plan the next project phase.

The programme and the projects

The national associations have a considerable number of members in all three countries. In South Africa the Kolping Society of South Africa (KSSA) operates in 4 provinces, in 7 of the 29 dioceses and has about 800-900 members. In Tanzania, the Kolping Society of Tanzania (KST) is active in 20 of 32 dioceses and 77 parishes and has more than 10,390 registered members in 201 local Kolping Families. In Burundi, Kolping National Burundi (KNB) is active in 6 of the country's 8 dioceses and has organised around 4,361 members in 52 Kolping Families.

In summary, the programme has many very good sub-modules (measures and activities) which are extremely relevant to the target groups and indispensable for improving living conditions and, especially in Burundi and Tanzania, for the further development and modernisation of small-scale farming, but also for vocational training and assistance for vulnerable groups (South Africa). The relevance of the programmes for the direct target groups is high. For Kolping, the programme could be developed into a successful social business model and thus help to enhance its reputation and visibility.

Kolping Families are a solution to real problems of the target groups in the partner countries. The people are supported in their faith and do this in order to help themselves and others. Genuine solidarity, concern for others, especially the poor and marginalised, is practised in rural, semi-urban and urban areas. This creates trust in the church. People generally trust the church to help them when they or others are in need, because it has a long tradition of helping in all areas, such as

hospitals, schools and nutrition. This is more than pious groups can offer.

A consistent and convincing strategy was developed in close cooperation. There are still some deficits in the implementation. Particular attention should be paid to the systematic alignment of the strategy with priorities and available resources. Strategic plans should be operationalised and annual activity plans developed. These should serve as a guide for the staff, but can also be used to follow up on interim results. The development of specific indicators for the objectives (specifications that are measurable) is particularly important in this respect. Due to different prioritisation of projects in the individual countries, a portfolio with a clear focus should be developed, adapted to the country and the available budget. An effective programme strategy and the complementarity of the planned results (*outcomes*) are generally not sufficiently visible. Logframes are not structured consistently and logically enough, and output sets must be defined clearly and quantitatively sufficient. This would support *output* and results-oriented project management and, above all, impact monitoring. All countries would benefit from the introduction of an impact-oriented M&E system. This would support the steering of the projects in order to detect possible weaknesses in the concept at an early stage, to take countermeasures in time and to enable successful project cooperation. Insufficient analysis of the results will make it more difficult to identify and extend successful approaches. The projects succeeded in carrying out a number of activities which led to satisfactory results at the level of the target group.

The organisation has a considerable interest in increasing the number of members. This is also expressed in the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the evaluation, where the second specific evaluation question is: What can Kolping do to remain/become helpful and attractive for its target groups in order to grow further. Especially in Tanzania there is a large number of people interested in becoming active as members of Kolping. In order to meet the interest of membership growth Kolping Tanzania would benefit from introducing an efficient admission procedure. In Burundi the

admission procedure seems to work well, but there is reason to believe that not all of them are active members. In South Africa, as the country with the lowest number of members of the three countries, the expansion of the member association plays a special role. Improved promotion of the projects taking place is being sought.

Indeed, the interest should be in the strongest possible active membership, not in the largest possible number and astonishing growth figures. Passive members usually do not pay membership fees. Membership fees could make a significantly higher contribution to the respective national Kolping budget than the current average of 22%, if a higher percentage of members would pay their dues. A large number of passive members indirectly consume scarce human and financial resources, but do not generate any income. Furthermore, a high percentage of passive members also demotivates active group members.

Common to all three countries is that the attention currently paid to Kolping Families is not sufficient. The favoured growth in membership is not accompanied by the necessary increase in qualified personnel and effective expert support.

With the increasing diversification of the programme's specific portfolio and the corresponding work priorities, an increase in skilled personnel is essential, e.g. for vocational training, value chain processing and development, agricultural production and productivity, savings and loan associations, and for the support of girls affected by teenage pregnancy.

The package of measures must be attractive and above all effective in order to provide reliable support for Kolping Families (the self-help groups). This would lead to the groups becoming more active and reliable members of the association.

With the support of international donors such as the BMZ, contractual obligations include transparency and aspects of accountability. Monitoring, evaluation and proof of the socio-economic impacts of the work and the synergies achieved must be ensured in the context of project implementation and

reporting. The social and ethical commitment of the employees of the Kolping Societies is the passion and dedication to work with and for people in poverty and need. It is not always easy to reconcile this passion with the institutionalised procedures for using public funds. The proper use of funds by Kolping is confirmed by regular external financial audits.

The projects in the countries achieved good results and contributed to significant changes in the respective communities. In Tanzania and Burundi, remarkable increases in yields were achieved, particularly through the use of animal manure and the use of adapted high-yielding varieties. Yields of some crops (e.g. cassava) increased five to seven times. In particular the seed multiplication and certification measures have been a great success and should be consolidated as a programme strategy. Other (non-quantifiable) economic successes are:

- Increased income and a strong interest in re-investment in agricultural innovation, and a growing demand for improved marketing;
- Acquisition of new assets and better living conditions (e.g. additional land, bicycle, mobile phones, improved housing, improved storage facilities, etc.);
- Convincing culture of saving and repayment;
- Increased awareness of the importance of good agricultural practices (spreading manure, timely planting, planting in rows and at intervals, etc.).

Other social achievements are:

- Strong empowerment of women with increased self-confidence, the ability to articulate their own needs, self-confident decision-making and control over resources
- Increased social responsibility, especially towards the poorest and weakest in the community;
- Increased food security with the recognition of the need for nutritional advice;

- In Tanzania, the activities have opened the eyes of district agricultural advisors and made them aware of what small farmers can achieve.

Furthermore, the Kolping Programme directly supports the priorities of the government, such as:

- Economic change and job creation
- Education, skills and health.

Life skills training in South Africa is a unique selling point compared to other organisations. It creates social upswing through the group, a feeling of belonging and solidarity and more social cohesion.

There Kolping takes care of school dropouts, school leavers who cannot find any income opportunities, as well as abused girls, young mothers and defenceless, unprotected children, the most vulnerable young people in society.

The extent to which the project contributes to the SDGs could not be quantified. The evaluation is therefore based on the statements of the target groups and on the observations made during the interviews and on-site visits. Concrete contributions to the SDGs can be confirmed for poverty reduction (SDG 1), alleviation of hunger (SDG 2), gender equality (SDG 5), improvement of health (SDG 3) through better nutrition, and education (SDG 4) (more children attend school). A contribution was also made to SDG 8 (economic growth), SDG 11 (sustainable communities) and SDG 16 (strong institutions).

The demand for sustainability is the biggest challenge for the implementation of rural and economic development programmes, as many measures need time to establish themselves and achieve a sustainable impact. The key question is how durable the results and outcomes achieved will be.

The strongest drivers of sustainability are (i) the structure and professionalism of the organisation and its funding base, (ii) the functionality of self-help groups and the empowerment of farmers (beneficiaries), (iii) the empowerment of women, and (iv) the reproducibility of project measures. Kolping has a strong association structure, with a potential for efficiency and financial

improvement. The functioning of the SHG is quite strong, but could be further improved by closer technical cooperation. Women make up on average more than 60% of the members and have a strong role in group leadership and management. Replication effects with regard to the measures were observed in all communities visited.

Up to now, the National Kolping Societies have been largely dependent on external donors. Generating their own income does not appear to be a realistic and substantial option for the Kolping Society and is not strategically promoted by KIC. There is a lack of a convincing business plan which, for example, addresses the fair marketing of agricultural products for the members, offers management and coordination tasks to the members, and provides other important consulting and services, thus making it attractive for the target group. Kolping Families and communities (e.g. in Tanzania) could pay considerably higher membership fees, as productivity, marketing and income have improved.

Synergies are not always used efficiently; in South Africa, for example, the Ministry for Social Development has funds, services and its own experts, which are also needed for Kolping members. The same applies to Tanzania, where existing government programmes to support small farmers could have been used. Kolping Tanzania has developed good relations with the University of Morogoro, and should also use these to obtain support, e.g. for carrying out market studies etc. Additional synergies could be achieved through cooperation with the Innovation Centre in Arusha.

Many activities of Kolping change the municipal level for the better. However, there is still a high potential for networking with the national level (e.g. with the National Council). Here Kolping could benefit from closer contacts with parliamentarians who know about specific government programmes to promote the target groups.

Of course, financing is not a separate issue. Networking, cooperation and partnerships are topics that go beyond the issue of sustainable financing, but where there is great potential for national associations.

Conclusions and main recommendations

Recently, the people of South Africa and Burundi have increasingly lost hope that they will actually have access to what has been promised by governments, national development plans and poverty reduction strategy papers. They increasingly doubt that what was promised during the election campaign and what they voted for will actually be realised. This is a socio-political opportunity for Kolping, in cooperation with the Catholic Church, to proactively mobilise the existing self-help potential in the communities. However, in all three countries there is an urgent need to support Kolping Families in coping with their internal group dynamics. Kolping should help to shape this conceptually and must find efficient ways of providing targeted support to groups. This can be done through the social media, networking of local activists, but above all, tailor-made effective concepts for measures to strengthen sources of income are needed.

Overall, the evaluation has shown that many of Kolping's initiatives have not yet fully exploited their full potential. In order to increase effectiveness, the organization needs 1) the willingness to try out new strategies and approaches; 2) the awareness that this also entails the risk of failure; and 3) the willingness to engage in a longer-term strategy beyond three-year project cycles. Kolping needs more specialised staff for the respective departments.

Successful rural development is based on the triangular combination of access to resources, appropriate technologies and fair marketing options. Furthermore, specifically adapted local solutions and a sufficient understanding of local socio-political dynamics are crucial. Kolping has the best conditions for this. A data-based, intelligent and strategic approach is essential to effectively combat widespread poverty, especially in rural areas. However, with a powerful concept, one can also quickly

get into the disapproving focus of the powerful. But Kolping is in an excellent position in this respect due to its embedding in the Catholic Church and its support.

Therefore, a long-term programme strategy and an approach with a lean but effective portfolio are recommended. This must operationalise annual objectives and milestones, as well as helpful activity plans. Clear and realistic objectives should be formulated, which can be verified by an internal M&E system and external evaluations.

At the management level, qualified personnel is needed for both communication and technical support. The follow-up project should be better coordinated with the management team as well as with the members. In any case, a kick-off workshop at the beginning of a project phase is extremely helpful to coordinate the implementation strategy, develop an operational plan and establish the M&E system.

Basically, the organisation has to decide whether it wants to work as a charitable NGO (e.g. distribute, give away, promote and train) with marginal effectiveness and fragile sustainability, or whether it wants to develop a more business-oriented approach (*social enterprises*), which would mean an enormous development step for the organisation itself and the target group. An approach that focuses more on the economic development of the farmers and the organisation itself and also aims for success at the meso and macro levels would require a different portfolio and different modules of measures and would also place new demands on the development of the organisation.

The quality of planning can be improved by systematising the planning process and procedures. This must be reflected in the improvement of planning documents, in particular the logframe. The results should be clearly defined and cover the core areas of expected changes. The outcomes should lead logically to the results and indicators at all levels should be formulated in such a way that they are specific enough, measurable, achievable and relevant. Core activities and milestones should be defined for each output.

In the future it will be important to provide more evidence of results (qualitative and quantitative) and to discuss progress at regular management meetings. It should be ensured that the results of M&E are used to steer and manage the programme (e.g. to make the necessary adjustments).

Promotion of small-scale farm production should no longer be conceived without promoting value chains and fair marketing options. To this end, a market analysis in the sense of *"making markets work for the poor"* is urgently needed in order to identify the marketing problems of the target group precisely and to develop possible solutions together with them. The dissemination of quality seed should always be accompanied by professional seed propagation and seed selection, including certification and (Kolping) branding. Food security is not only generated by increased agricultural productivity, but always includes nutritional advice to convey the need for a balanced diet. The new programme strategy should definitely include this aspect.