

Cameroon: Social Marketing for HIV/AIDS Prevention

Ex-post Evaluation Report

OECD sector	13040/STD control including HIV/AIDS	
BMZ project IDs	1999 65 641 and 2001 66 595 (scaling up)	
Project executing agency	ACMS - Association Camerounaise de Marketing Social	
Consultant	Population Services International (PSI)	
Year of ex-post evaluation report	2008	
	Programme appraisal (planned)	Ex-post evaluation (actual)
Start of implementation	1st quarter 2001	3rd quarter 2001
Period of implementation	48 months	48 months
Investment costs	EUR 6.65 million	EUR 9.4 million
Counterpart contribution	EUR 1.1 million	EUR 1.7 million
Financing, of which FC funds	EUR 6.8 million (4.3 FC)	EUR 7.7 million (4.3 FC)
Other donors/institutions involved	USAID	USAID, Gates Foundation, etc.
Performance rating	1	
• Relevance	2	
• Effectiveness	1	
• Efficiency	1	
• Overarching developmental impact	1	
• Sustainability	2	

Brief Description, Overall Objective and Programme Objectives with Indicators

The programme, Social Marketing for HIV/AIDS Prevention (BMZ nos. 1999 656 41 and 2001 665 95), entailed running social marketing campaigns for the sale of condoms. The overall objective was to make a contribution to stemming the rise in the incidence of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases and to provide support in avoiding unintentional pregnancies while respecting freedom of choice. The programme objectives were to improve the supply of Cameroon's population with good-quality condoms, to make them practically accessible and build up a sustainable distribution system in the private sector. Phase II of the programme scaled up Phase I with the same overall and programme objectives. Programme implementation lasted from July 2001 to June 2005.

The programme was a continuation of the social marketing programme which at the outstart was largely financed by USAID. It provided FC funds to finance the costs of condoms, vehicles, office equipment and materials for information campaigns, for increasing the number of outlets as well as for requisite studies (grant). FC funds added up to EUR 4.35 million (EUR 3.33 million for Phase I and EUR 1.02 million for upscaling).

Programme Design/Major Deviations from the Original Planning and Their Main Causes

All measures were generally carried out as planned, though with some delays. The programme financed the following measures:

- Procurement of 78 million condoms, including quality tests and packaging
- Procurement of vehicles, office equipment and promotion material
- Conduct of studies on user profiles, pricing and the effectiveness of the distribution system and KAP studies
- Development and implementation of appropriate IEC and promotion campaigns
- Provision of a central depot for condoms and extension of distribution system with the inclusion of the private sector
- Personnel and materials overheads of ACMS (the Social Marketing Agency)
- Consulting inputs (international full-time expert) to support ACMS in organisational matters, basic and advanced personnel training and drafting annual plans of operation

The NGO ACMS was responsible for implementing and operating the programme under the management and with the support of Population Services International PSI/Washington. Besides the FC-financed condoms, which are by far the most important product, ACMS also markets women's condoms, hormonal contraceptives, mosquito nets, rehydration salt and water purifier. These products are financed for the most part by other donors, who bear a share of the operating costs, but do not generally provide any ongoing finance and tend to invest less in marketing.

From the beginning of the programme, the condoms were distributed via commercial wholesalers and retailers with initial heavy concentration on urban areas, because that was where the largest turnover could be earned, which is also warranted in epidemiological terms. Sales, however, received approx. 45% support from ACMS up until 2005. This meant that the ACMS sellers regulated sales between the wholesalers and semi-wholesalers and between the semi-wholesale and retail traders, which impeded the extension of the distribution network as turnovers increased. With the assistance of the PSI consultant from Burkina Faso, ACMS therefore switched to having condoms sold largely by the wholesale trade on its own. This enabled the distribution network to expand into rural areas and allowed the sales agents to spend more time on extending and maintaining the retail outlets. Altogether, the number of wholesalers rose from 26 (2002) to 38 (2007), with semi-wholesalers almost doubling from 450 to 800. ACMS estimates that the number of retailers rose to about 22,000 in 2005 compared with 13,000 in 2002.

Marketing is the second pillar of social marketing activities. Of particular note here is the youth campaign "100% Jeune" which has been running since programme start. There is a steadily increasing demand for the accompanying magazine, which is now the second most widely read print medium in the country. The programme also runs youth clubs and radio programmes and works with posters, T-shirts and radio commercials. Besides "100% Jeune", the following publicity campaigns were already ongoing during programme implementation and most have continued to the present day or have been resumed:

- Allaying misgivings towards condom use (2003, aimed at women aged between 15 and 39, radio and TV advertisements, posters)
- “Pincez Dérouler” (2004-05, targeting truck drivers, dock workers and prostitutes, involving radio and TV advertisements, calendars, booklets and promotion material as well as interpersonal communication)
- “Cross-generational Sex” (2005, addressing young women between 12 and 24 and men over 30, radio and TV advertisements, posters, booklets, focus group discussions).

Altogether, the ACMS HIV/AIDS prevention marketing can be judged to have been successful, considering the development of the condom market, progress in overcoming reluctance and the higher rates of condom use, especially among young people.

The marketing campaigns were largely based on research studies. There has been little action research on the effects of individual marketing instruments and the impact of the campaigns. A KAP study was not carried out in the course of the evaluated programme as planned, for example, but during the sequel programme. Action research is still a shortcoming of ACMS, especially for the systematic evaluation of studies for marketing planning and performance assessment.

Key Results of the Impact Analysis and Performance Rating

Altogether, the programme performance has been very good, in excess of expectations, and it makes a major developmental contribution. In all, we assess the developmental efficacy of both programme phases as follows (rating 1):

Relevance (sub-rating 2): The programme addresses a developmental priority, since with an HIV prevalence rate of over 5% Cameroon still belongs to the high-prevalence countries, where HIV/AIDS has social and economic repercussions beyond the effects on individual health. The programme fits in with the National Strategic AIDS Plan. Cooperation functions very well between ACMS and the National AIDS Control Committee, CNLS, which supports the ACMS information campaigns with vehicles and personnel for AIDS tests, for example. Cameroon is currently a partner country of German Development Cooperation and health is still a priority sector. As one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG 6), fighting HIV/AIDS is a key aim of German Development Cooperation. We assess the relevance of the programme overall as good.

Effectiveness (sub-rating 1): The programme objective consisted in improving the supply of Cameroon’s population with affordable and high-quality condoms and setting up sustainable channels of distribution. The corresponding indicator was the sale of 65 million condoms over the programme term of 4 years. With altogether 78 million condoms sold, this was exceeded by 20%. The reorganisation of the distribution system in 2005 marked a decisive step towards sustainable condom sales in the country and their expansion into rural regions has also accessed the market for commercial brands. Modern contraceptive prevalence almost doubled between 1998 and 2004 from 7% to 13%, with condoms being the most frequent method in Cameroon. Programme effectiveness is thus assessed as very good.

Efficiency (sub-rating 1): The programme merits a rating of very good by all efficiency indicators. The cost per couple-year protection amounts to EUR 14, total cost recovery comes to 18% and operating cost recovery to 82%. The reorganisation of the distribution system, enabling larger quantities to be sold with the same personnel input and the extension into rural zones, was a key factor in increasing efficiency, although this was not effected until the end of the programme phase under evaluation. Programme efficiency is assessed as very good.

Overarching developmental impact (sub-rating 1): The available information indicates that the programme has made a contribution to attaining the overall objectives (stemming the increase in the rate of HIV/AIDS infection and reducing the birth rate while respecting individual freedom of choice). The HIV prevalence rate in Cameroon has declined from approx. 6.2% to 5.1% (2007) since 2000 and the condom market has expanded considerably. The contribution to birth control is more of a by-product, since condom marketing is aimed solely at preventing HIV/AIDS and condoms are still used mainly in extramarital sexual intercourse. The number of children per woman has, however, also dropped slightly in the period under review from 5.2 to 5. The overarching developmental impact can thus be gauged as very good.

Sustainability (sub-rating 2): The availability of commercial brands in the retail trade in particular indicates the impact and sustainability of the awareness messages largely imparted by ACMS in the country. They also attest to the programme's successful, sustainable accessing of the condom market in rural areas. The financial sustainability of ACMS' condom business is comparatively high (see efficiency indicators). Moreover, there is a good chance in future of being considered in applications to GFATM, so that additional finance seems probable outside of FC as well. There are general sustainability risks for effective health education, which must be repeated simply to address the next generation of teenagers. This also calls for further finance. The steady influx of donor funds or their possible termination poses an institutional sustainability risk for ACMS. Condom sale is largely autonomous, but due to its heavy subsidisation, it does not earn enough to be able to cofinance education. These are typical features of social marketing programmes. The sustainability of the programme is rated as good.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Condom marketing with the overall objective of preventing unintentional pregnancies is not particularly effective in Africa, since condoms are not generally used for family planning (but rather for extramarital sexual intercourse) and are not promoted for this purpose. This also holds for Cameroon, although unlike in other countries the condom is the most frequently used modern contraceptive.

The community-based education and sales strategy aimed at reaching remote rural regions should be subjected to an impact and efficiency assessment before it is extended to other regions in the country or to other countries.

As part of the regional programme, care should be taken to avoid giving the lead executing agency extensive approval powers that could hamper speedy and smooth programme implementation.

Notes on the methods used to evaluate project success

Assessment criteria

Projects are evaluated on a six-point scale, the criteria being relevance, effectiveness, overarching developmental impact and sustainability. The ratings are also used to arrive at a final assessment of a project's overall developmental efficacy The scale is as follows:

Developmentally successful: ratings 1 to 3	
Rating 1	Very good result that clearly exceeds expectations
Rating 2	Good result, fully in line with expectations and without any significant shortcomings
Rating 3	Satisfactory result – project falls short of expectations but the positive results dominate

Developmental failures: Ratings 4 to 6	
Rating 4	Unsatisfactory result – significantly below expectations, with negative results dominating despite discernible positive results
Rating 5	Clearly inadequate result - despite some positive partial results, the negative results clearly dominate
Rating 6	The project has no impact or the situation has actually deteriorated

Sustainability is evaluated according to the following four-point scale:

Rating 1	Very good sustainability	The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to continue undiminished or even increase.
Rating 2	Good sustainability	The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline only minimally but remain positive overall. (This is what can normally be expected.)
Rating 3	Satisfactory sustainability	The developmental efficacy of the project (positive to date) is very likely to decline significantly but remain positive overall. This rating is also assigned if the sustainability of a project is considered inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation but is very likely to evolve positively so that the project will ultimately achieve positive developmental efficacy.
Rating 4	Inadequate sustainability	The developmental efficacy of the project is inadequate up to the time of the ex post evaluation and an improvement that would be strong enough to allow the achievement of positive developmental efficacy is very unlikely to occur. This rating is also assigned if the developmental efficacy that has been positively evaluated to date is very likely to deteriorate severely and no longer meet the level 3 criteria.

Criteria for the evaluation of project success

The evaluation of the developmental effectiveness of a project and its classification during the ex-post evaluation into one of the various levels of success described in more detail above focus on the following fundamental questions:

Relevance	Was the development measure applied in accordance with the concept (developmental priority, impact mechanism, coherence, coordination)?
Effectiveness	Is the extent of the achievement of the project objective to date by the development measures – also in accordance with current criteria and state of knowledge – appropriate?
Efficiency	To what extent was the input, measured in terms of the impact achieved, generally justified?
Overarching developmental impacts	What outcomes were observed at the time of the ex post evaluation in the political, institutional, socio-economic, socio-cultural and ecological field? What side-effects, which had no direct relation to the achievement of the project objective, can be observed?
Sustainability	To what extent can the positive and negative changes and impacts by the development measure be assessed as durable?