



<b>1. Project Data:</b>		<b>Date Posted :</b> 08/23/2000	
PROJ ID: P000227		<b>Appraisal</b>	<b>Actual</b>
<b>Project Name:</b> Social Action Project	<b>Project Costs (US\$M)</b>	15.68	12.88
<b>Country:</b> Burundi	<b>Loan/Credit (US\$M)</b>	10.36	9.69
<b>Sector(s):</b> Social Funds & Social Assistance	<b>Cofinancing (US\$M)</b>		
<b>L/C Number:</b> C2494			
	<b>Board Approval (FY)</b>		93
<b>Partners involved :</b>	<b>Closing Date</b>	12/31/1997	06/30/1999
<b>Prepared by :</b>	<b>Reviewed by :</b>	<b>Group Manager :</b>	<b>Group:</b>

**2. Project Objectives and Components**

**a. Objectives**  
(i) involve larger segments of the population in the growth process by encouraging a deeper participation of poor individuals in small-scale productive activities; (ii) improve the living conditions of the population through employment generation and better social services and infrastructure; (iii) foster the participation of local governments and non-governmental agencies in development-related activities; and (iv) improve government capacity to formulate and implement economic and social policies through a better monitoring of the social situation and a better knowledge of the patterns of poverty in the country .

**b. Components**  
(i) Social Action Program which included four types of micro -projects (income generating activities, enhancement of economic infrastructure, social infrastructure, and social activities ) and general support to the non-governmental sector; and (ii) monitoring of poverty and living conditions .

**c. Comments on Project Cost, Financing and Dates**  
The total project cost was US \$12.88 million (original estimate: US \$15.68 million). The Bank provided US \$7.8 million for the social action program component (original estimate: US \$6.82 million), US \$0.61 million for the poverty monitoring component (original estimate: US \$2.12 million), and US \$0.89 million for project management and implementation (original estimate: US \$1.02 million). The project closed 3 years behind schedule (12/31/2000 instead of as originally planned on 12/31/1997). The project was approved on 5/13/93.

**3. Achievement of Relevant Objectives:**  
The objective of creating employment and building/rehabilitating infrastructure through the social action program was accorded priority during project implementation and this objective was achieved with outputs exceeding the original appraisal estimates -- the number of subprojects completed (566) for social and economic infrastructure was more than twice the number estimated at appraisal and the employment generated (1,685,000 person/days) was more than three times the appraisal estimate . Other project objectives were partially achieved or largely unachieved : (i) The objective relating to involving larger segments of the population in the growth process through small -scale productive activities was partially achieved, with financing from AfDB; (ii) The objective of fostering the participation of local governments and non-governmental agencies in development-related activities was generally achieved for NGOs, but only marginally so for local governments . (iv) The objective of improving government capacity to formulate and implement economic and social policies through a better monitoring of the social situation and a better knowledge of the patterns of poverty in the country was largely unachieved .

**4. Significant Outcomes/Impacts:**  
The ICR cites the 1998 technical audit and beneficiary assessment as pointing to a "significant beneficial impact" from project activities in the project area although living conditions of the population nationwide worsened over the project period. It also cites the technical audit and beneficiary assessment as confirming the "very positive impact of the project on employment" (ICR page 4). While the outcome of the poverty monitoring component was limited overall (ICR page 6), one positive impact was that the priority survey supported by the project has enabled a ranking of communes according to their poverty level which is being used to identify priority interventions to be financed under the follow-on project. The project contributed to the development of the local contracting and consulting industries; the ICR cites the 1998 technical audit and beneficiary assessment as confirming the satisfaction of the

contracting and consulting industries with the project, although they believed that more could have been done with respect to training and capacity strengthening .

**5. Significant Shortcomings (including non-compliance with safeguard policies):**

1. This review concurs with the ICR that the quality-at-entry of the project was unsatisfactory : project preparation underestimated the time and effort required to mobilize the population to participate and contribute to the implementation of subprojects; the operational manual was not sufficiently precise and detailed on implementation arrangements. Project objectives were not monitorable and the monitoring system was weak; and institutional capacities of key agencies were not adequately assessed or supported in a timely manner .
2. The project experienced a slow start-up (disbursements were insignificant in the first two years, ICR page 7) largely explained by the difficult country circumstances, but partly also by the lack of early attention to implementation issues. The ICR notes that at the beginning of implementation neither the government nor the social fund agency, Twitezimbere, had a clear strategy on how to carry out the project effectively . It is only at a later stage that all parties involved could decide what type of actions would have the maximum impact in view of the country context, for example, what should be the priority projects and their specifications, how should the priority projects be replicated and implemented quickly, the roles of the different actors, the planning of activities, and what should be the monitoring and evaluation procedures (page 10).
3. The technical audit and beneficiary assessment highlighted the following areas as needing improvement : technical aspects of construction and rehabilitation (such as materials to be used for roofs and the importance of using dry wood for woodwork) and the need to broaden the menu of eligible subprojects (to include, for example, housing for teachers, sanitary installations and water in some schools and health clinics, and medical personnel in health clinics) in order to support more complete investments that can enhance development outcomes . Several of these issues have informed the design of the follow -on (BURSAP II) project.
4. The ICR notes that the project responded to requests from the population, but it is not obvious that those requests always represented the priorities of the intended population -- the ICR recognizes that the requests may have been influenced by communal administrators or NGOs, and the intended population may not necessarily have known all the choices available to them (page 12).

<b>6. Ratings:</b>	<b>ICR</b>	<b>OED Review</b>	<b>Reason for Disagreement /Comments</b>
<b>Outcome :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	The priority accorded to different project objectives was changed during project implementation. Outcome is rated satisfactory based on the newly prioritized objective of creating employment and building/rehabilitating infrastructure. However, it is not clear that the change in the prioritization of objectives was appropriately formalized. This assessment gives the project team the benefit of the doubt.
<b>Institutional Dev .:</b>		Modest	Equivalent ratings.
<b>Sustainability :</b>	Likely	Unlikely	There were problems regarding the ability of beneficiaries to undertake periodic maintenance (ICR pages 8-9). The ICR points out that in some cases the lack of ownership of the project investments by beneficiaries (which resulted from insufficient beneficiary participation in the selection, financing, and management of the infrastructure) has led to shortfalls in the provision of construction materials by beneficiaries (ICR page 5). The insufficient beneficiary participation is also likely to have a negative impact on the willingness of the communities to maintain the completed subprojects (ICR page 5). The ICR notes problems in the availability of teachers and nurses (ICR page 8) and health personnel (ICR page 5) raising doubt about the service flow from the infrastructure. The ICR's reference to mixed performance on

			operations and maintenance of project infrastructure confirms doubts about fully sustainable results.
<b>Bank Performance :</b>	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
<b>Borrower Perf .:</b>	Highly Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Overall the government performed well under this project, but did not participate fully in project design ("preparation was basically done by two consultants with some minimal contribution by the initial staff of the social fund agency, Twitezimbere" (ICR page 10)), and neglected the project in its early implementation period when the government was pre-occupied with the crisis. The highest rating is also not warranted as the implementing agency, Twitezimbere, faced initial problems of weak administrative and financial management. Furthermore, there was lack of a clear strategy to carry out the project on the part of both the government itself and Twitezimbere, especially in the earlier years of the project. One outstanding feature is that Twitezimbere staff displayed noteworthy dedication in the face of the crisis and undertook visits to project sites despite the precarious security situation.
<b>Quality of ICR :</b>		Satisfactory	

**NOTE:** ICR rating values flagged with '\*' don't comply with OP/BP 13.55, but are listed for completeness.

#### **7. Lessons of Broad Applicability:**

1. Up-front investments in information dissemination and community mobilization are necessary to ensure that intended beneficiaries participate effectively in decision-making processes. Beneficiaries must be well-informed about all choices and options offered through the social fund project as well as the terms on which they are offered.
2. The provision of tangible investments in a crisis situation is appreciated by beneficiaries. Speed is of the essence and the benefits of quick, localized interventions should not be underestimated in such situations.
3. Beneficiary contributions toward subproject costs are one indicator of demand and proxy "ownership". The level of beneficiary contribution should be monitored and appropriately enforced. Ownership of investments by beneficiaries is critical to ensuring their operations and maintenance.
4. An up-front and realistic assessment of the institutional capacity of organizations charged with implementation can prevent subsequent delays and implementation problems. Where capacity is weak, special attention should be given to systematically outlining early on a strategy for project implementation including attention to issues noted above in Section 5, point 2 above, such as what the priority projects are, how they can be replicated and implemented quickly, the roles of the different actors, and what monitoring and evaluation procedures should be.

#### **8. Assessment Recommended?** Yes No

**Why?** Verifying ratings, extent of the relevance of all project objectives throughout the life of the project, and extent to which the new prioritization of objectives was adequately formalized. Distilling lessons for Bank support in other countries experiencing insecurity and civil disturbance. Examining the issue of the appropriate timing for Bank intervention -- should it intervene in conflict situations or only in post-conflict situations, and what criteria should it use for distinguishing between conflict and post conflict situations?

#### **9. Comments on Quality of ICR:**

Satisfactory. The issue of whether the changed prioritization of objectives was adequately formalized should have been examined. Some assessment of the scope, methodology, and analytical rigor of the 1998 technical audit and beneficiary assessment would have been useful. It would also have been useful to have the Borrower comments translated into English in the ICR.