Dear readers,

Welcome back to our Belgian newsletter, the second edition and with the same focus on the cooperation of Belgium with Rwanda in all its aspects.

This edition elaborates on the work around capacity building throughout the sectors of the Belgian bilateral development cooperation in Rwanda executed by BTC. The capacity building agenda is not only supported in the three sectors of the bilateral cooperation (energy, health, decentralization) but also cross-cutting through support at the ‘Capacity Development and Employment Support Board’ since almost 10 years.

The work of the 17 Belgian non-governmental partners for the period 2017-2021 will be presented from now on in the coming newsletters, starting this edition with the Belgian Red Cross – Wallonia & Brussels region. Similarly, we will keep you informed on the regular ‘Forums’ organized by the Embassy with all Belgian Actors and starting with the Forum of March 23.

Some reflection is also made on the Agenda for Reproductive Health and an online e-tutorial ‘Body & Rights’, and on the ‘Trade for Development’ program and their work in Rwanda. Finally, the creative industry remains well on our radar, the Embassy received amongst others a contemporary dance performance in February.

Arnout Pauwels, Ambassador
@ArnoutPauwels

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Rwanda Red Cross’ Model Village approach: harnessing the people power to cause transformation

A global movement working on building community resilience

The Rwanda Red Cross is one of the 190 Red Cross/Red Crescent societies operating worldwide. These societies, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) compose the Red Cross Movement, the world’s biggest humanitarian network.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that strengthening community resilience is an essential component of both emergency and development programming. Within the Red Cross Movement operations, there is only a thin line that separate the two areas of interventions.

As has been discovered, communities/households with sustainable livelihoods, good levels of health care and access to a strong and accountable civil society are less susceptible to natural hazards and faster to recover. Through a quality partnership, the Belgian Red Cross has been working alongside the Rwandan Red Cross for several years in improving the resilience of Rwandan communities using the village model approach.

The Belgian Red Cross provides its partner with technical and financial support.

An integrated approach for building resilience

The Model Village represents a holistic approach intended to strengthen capacities and to combat vulnerabilities, while taking into consideration the situation of individuals, households and the whole community. The approach is based on the insight that the vulnerability of Rwandan communities is the product of interdependent factors.

The Rwandan Red Cross targets these vulnerability factors through an overall response that includes a simultaneous and coordinated intervention in several sectors including: access to water, hygiene and sanitation, health, nutrition, disaster management and preparedness, improvement of economic conditions and, more generally, improving the capacities of the beneficiary communities, of its network of volunteers and of the local authorities.

This integrated and multi-sector approach works on all the elements that will help a community to be more resilient. Under the approach, the Rwandan Red Cross has identified 18 villages in each of Rwanda’s 30 districts. Areas of intervention are determined by systematically targeting the country’s most vulnerable communities.

The Red Cross defines resilience as the ability of individuals, communities, organisations or countries exposed to disasters, crises or underlying vulnerabilities to anticipate, reduce the impact, deal with and overcome the effects of adversity, without compromising long-term development potential.

A resilient community is therefore qualified according to the following criteria:

1. … is well-informed, in good health and able to meet its essential needs;
2. … is organised and characterised by social cohesiveness;
3. … has economic possibilities and prospects;
4. … has properly managed and accessible infrastructures and services;
5. … is able to manage its natural resources;
6. … is connected and is part of a network.
**Solutions by and for the community**

Involved from the very first steps and supported by Rwandan Red Cross volunteers, the community performs its own analysis and assessment of abilities and risks. It defines its own needs and priorities, based on locally available resources and solutions.

From a national classification, the community confirms the selection of the most vulnerable families that will require specific support and individual accompaniment.

Involved in improving its own living conditions, the community assumes responsibility when faced with the areas of action that it has chosen. It participates in the monitoring and assessment of the implemented activities.

**Support from the Belgian cooperation**

Since 2014, the Belgian cooperation, through the Directorate General Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid action plan has supported the Belgian and Rwandan Red Cross by co-financing their operations in 30 villages of 5 districts. The first phase (2014-2016) allowed the improvement of livelihoods of 1,637 very vulnerable households and strengthened overall resilience in these villages reaching 5,852 households.

For example, the community mobilisation and the sensitisation conducted by the Rwandan Red Cross volunteers led to construction and use of latrines, strengthened handwashing and other hygiene and sanitation practices, led to the creation of over 3,600 kitchen gardens to supplement access to food and fight malnutrition, increased crop productivity, and generally led to communities more informed on good health, nutrition and hygiene practices.

The Red Cross also improved water distribution to remote villages, distributed livestock, planted trees, created savings associations and supported development of income generating activities for various target groups.

A second phase (2017-2021) of the project is expected to consolidate the results already achieved and will add 16 more villages in 2 districts.

Resilience considers the individual, household, community, and institutions. In support of this approach, funds from the Belgian Cooperation have also supported the development of technical and financial capacities of the Rwandan Red Cross thereby increasing skills of staff and volunteers and creating income generating activities.

**The Red Cross, its expertise and the volunteers network in community resilience programming**

The Rwandan Red Cross owes the success of its approach to many factors including the following:

- **Easy to implement** actions, with a low degree of technical skills, easily replicable, lasting and inexpensive, which encourage the adoption of best practices by the community and their duplication within the surrounding communities.

- **The high level of professionalism** of the Red Cross that provides quality support and training for the involved Red Cross volunteers.

- The strength of the Rwandan Red Cross community-based volunteers network, trained in many fields, which provides for tailor-made follow-up and support.

- The status as government auxiliary that allows for **easier collaboration with the local authorities**, while guaranteeing the durability of the action.

- **Partnerships and synergies** with specialised organisations that make it possible to access additional areas of expertise, as required.

- **It is part of the biggest humanitarian movement**, it gets support from several national Red Cross societies throughout the world including but not limited to the Danish RC, Spanish RC, American RC, Belgian RC, Austrian RC, Finnish RC, Japanese RC, and ICRC, and IFRC.

**For more info about the work of the Belgian Red Cross and of the Rwanda Red Cross, contact:**

- Mathieu Demoulin, country representative of Belgian Red Cross, mathieu.demoulin@croix-rouge.be

- Matthew Rwahigi, head of communication of Rwanda Red Cross: matthew.rwahigi@rwandaredcross.org
Will the empowerment to exercise individual rights to plan reproduction on its own stabilise population growth at sustainable levels in Rwanda?

More pertinent; should population control be one of the drivers behind efforts to increase the uptake of family planning?

Projected population growth is the resultant from three important statistics:
1. The average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime;
2. The average life expectancy and;
3. Migration.

The National Institute for Statistics Rwanda estimates the migration balance as negligible, leaving the other variables driving population growth. Rwanda has made great strides in health service delivery and economic development.

Life expectancy has steadily increased, narrowing the gap with industrial countries. On average men in 2015 were expected to live to 60.9 and women to the age of 71.1 compared to Belgium with 78.6 and 81.1 years respectively. Fecundity came down sharply from around 6 children per woman in her lifetime in 2000 to around 4 in 2015.

Strong population growth will be inevitable in the foreseeable future. The increasing life expectancy combined with the already born will cause older age cohorts gradually to contain larger numbers. Rwanda has the second highest population density in Sub-Saharan Africa. Pressure on available resources cannot be overestimated and regional sustainability, read stability, is arguably at stake.

Lay knowledge that poverty produces large families – an 'insurance' mechanism – may well hold true and there are demographers that predict the increase of family sizes when population growth is not matched by economic growth.

In contrast, growing economies increase opportunities to reduce dependency (the proportion of not ‘productive’ people that are dependent on the working population) reducing the need for big families, further reducing dependency, etc.

Reflecting on sustainability, economic development that creates employment opportunities compatible with the education and skills' level of the population and vice versa, finds itself thus on the flip side of population growth.

Does the current economic growth in Rwanda – strong by any measurement; the GDP growth rate averaged 5.44% between 2000 and 2016 – create sufficient employment that keeps pace with exponential population growth, given that reliance on natural resources will reach its limits?

As argued, there is no choice, future population growth has already happened. How does rigidly maintaining a liberal human rights development approach measure up to Malthusian geo-political arguments that prioritize environmental and societal sustainability?

Irrespectively, the point of departure will be to provide access to the roughly 20% of women that currently demand but don’t get family planning and, while creating a favorable economic development environment, invest in education that anticipates necessary future skills. Will this be sufficient?

“Body & Rights” is a free tutorial. Short modules, videos and multiple choice questions offer an introduction to topics such as safe motherhood, HIV, STIs, family planning, abortion, sexual violence, early marriage, genital mutilation, and the rights of adolescents and sexual minorities. Each module lasts twenty minutes. At the end of the seven modules, a certificate of participation recognized by the Belgian Cooperation is given to you!

www.bodyandrights.be

French and Dutch version available now, English version available in June 2017
Technical assistance is provided by local or international specialists. It can take the form of sharing information and expertise, instruction, skills training, transmission of working knowledge, and consulting services. The RDSP project is providing technical assistance to two national institutions: the Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA) and the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB). To better understand how it works in practice, we decided to visit both institutions and meet with governmental partners and the technical assistance team.

LODA is fully involved in the recruitment of its technical assistants (TAs). Once a TA is hired, he/she will have a counterpart from the LODA staff. “We are working as one team, striving for the same goals. TA and LODA staff sit in the same room and partner in order to achieve the objectives of the projects they are working on. They jointly develop action plans, evaluate their achievements together and discuss on a daily basis what they have to do and how to deal with the challenges they face. Engaging on a daily basis makes the on-the-job coaching, capacity building and knowledge transfer much more efficient” explains Deputy Director Saïdi Sibomana. “I expect TA to have an added value to the organisation and I personally check their work on a weekly basis. Through an agreed template with RDSP I am involved in their evaluation. This process is essential to make sure that we all are on the same line”.

LODA staffs learn a lot from being in contact with TA’s but this is not a one-way process. “I like to sit with TA’s so that we can have debates. But they also learn from me because I know the context. We discuss together how we can take advantage of their experience, concepts and ideas in the Rwandan reality. It is an exchange” states Saïdi Sibomana.

This philosophy is confirmed by International Technical Assistant Sofie Geerts: “This experience contributes to develop my professional capacities. We learn so much from working with people from another background, another culture to really understand the context we are working in. It helps me to become more flexible”.

Like in LODA, RGB is involved in the selection and evaluation of TA’s. RGB is providing inputs to RDSP through commonly agreed templates. This allows RDSP to capture the quality of the work provided by the TA’s and helps to understand the expectations of the partners.

Last but not least, the presence of TA’s contributes to developing trust between the implementing partner and BTC. “We both learn from this cooperation. As a LODA staff, I learn from the procedures of BTC and better understand the request of our partner. Thanks to its TA’s, BTC as a unique insight of what it is doing and can acknowledge the work of the government. Technical Assistance contributes to confidence building and makes the project move forward more easily” concludes Saïdi Sibomana.

Faustin Minani & Alexis Afrika © BTC Rwanda

Faustin Minani is a national technical assistant working within RGB on a capacity building programme to local government for improving service delivery. He confirms what has been said at LODA: “I work closely with the implementing partner so that he complies with the requirements of the programme. It is an interaction and by working and handling challenges together I also develop my own professional capacities.

Faustin has a direct counterpart, Alexis Afrika, the Director of the Local Governance Capacity Building Unit. Alexis Afrika explains why this working relationship is so enriching: “With other RGB colleagues, there is a hierarchical relationship. It is not the case with Faustin. We are partners and it makes work more efficient. I can reach out to him directly, in a very straightforward way. Faustin has expertise in planning and is a very good help. He coaches me and I learn a lot from him. If he wasn’t there, I do not think I would be able to comply to all the requirements. He is of a great value.”

For more info about RDSP, contact Laurent.Messian@btccrb.org
On the 20th of January a new Local Government Coaching programme was launched at Hotel Portofino in Kigali. The programme is implemented by the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) with support from the Belgian Government through the Rwanda Decentralisation Support Programme (RDSP) which is jointly implemented by the ministry of local government (MINALOC) and the Belgian development agency (BTC).

The programme aims improving service delivery to citizens as a result of capacity building at individual, organisational and institutional level of the districts. As recalled by Ambassador Fatuma NDANGIZA who officiated the launching ceremony on behalf of RGB, the new programme builds on lessons learnt from the two previous phases of the coaching programme that were concluded in 2015.

These include special attention to the suitability of the approach to the Local Government set up/environment, the prominence of an advisory role of coaches instead of gap filling/ substitution, evidence based monitoring and evaluation of achievements.

**Lessons learnt: demand driven design**

Building on these lessons learnt, the design of the new programme emphasises a demand driven approach for the coaching services; technical coordination by Provinces which have among others the mission to coach and provide advisory services to the districts; a clear Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework with SMART indicators; and regular information sharing among coaches and with other stakeholders.

The demand driven nature of the new design resides in districts formulating requests for support further analysed by coaches before formulation of a tailor-made intervention.

The focus of the programme is organisational performance with Imihigo as the entry point. Specifically, the support targets addressing gaps in processes as per the request by Local Government (lesson learnt from previous phases: addressing gaps instead of filling them). Coaches support districts in analysing and prioritising identified gaps, in designing the interventions required to address the gaps; and also advise the districts on how best to implement the interventions and monitor implementation progress.

**Programme background**

In 2011, the Local Government Capacity Building strategy recommended diversification of Capacity Building approaches. The Coaching programme was one its priorities. As an attempt to address identified capacity needs, a pilot programme was implemented in 10 districts with BTC support., followed by a one year programme with the support of UNDP through the National Capacity Building Secretariat (currently Capacity Development and Employment Service Board/CESB). After an evaluation of these phases, a new 2-year programme aiming at supporting Local Governments in organisational performance was developed by RGB with support from BTC through Rwanda Decentralisation Support Programme (RDSP).

**Implementation status of the coaching programme**

RGB implements the new programme which avails 10 coaches based in the provinces and City of Kigali.

A coordination unit comprising of the programme coordinator and one M&E specialist is based in RGB.

As the provinces and City of Kigali play a key role in the management of the programme, RGB and provinces/City of Kigali signed a memorandum of understanding to specify respective roles and responsibilities in the implementation.
During consultative sessions and the official launch at Province and City of Kigali level, beneficiaries expressed their expectations in the programme as well as their readiness to use the opportunity to boost district performance. “The programme will certainly help us unlock our potential and raise our performance towards better service delivery to our citizens” said Mr. JABO Paul, Northern Province Executive Secretary during the launch of the program in Northern Province.

Cyprien Nsengimana, one of the coaches supporting in the Southern Province praises the programme “It is highly appreciated by the beneficiaries who consider coaching as a mean to solve organisational performance problems. Since we started, local officials express different needs that we address through interactive sessions with coaching counterparts, peer learning among coaching beneficiaries, close collaboration with other partners, and advocacy institutions concerned with local government capacity development”. The coaching programme - among RDSP’s key activities under partnership with RGB - is expected to substantially contribute to the improvement of service delivery through enhanced Local Government organisational performance.

For more info about RDSP, contact Laurent.Messaen@btctb.org

The Institutional Strengthening and Capacity Development of the Electricity Utility Project (CDEU)

The purpose of the BTC funded CDEU project is to contribute to the provision of reliable energy to the Energy Utility Corporation’s customers by strengthening infrastructure, central management and support functions and Human Resources staffing and competence development.

Towards the setting-up of a capacity development system

The capacity development system is a part of the central HR system designed to ensure that the Energy Utility Corporation has a coherent way of assessing and planning how it will ensure that its staff have the skills, knowledge and abilities it needs to successfully deliver its goals and objectives as measured by key performance indicators. Capacity development needs assessment and planning are integral elements of the performance management process and are completed yearly in conjunction with the performance evaluation programme.

To ensure that organizational and department goals and objectives are clearly understood and act as the basis of capacity development plans, an individual and his/her immediate supervisor discuss and assess the individual’s capacities with reference to the business plan, department’s key results, the job description and performance contract. In the discussion, they decide the individual’s specific needs, the method that is most appropriate, assign a priority rating, decide when the capacity development should take place and estimate the cost to the organisation. This plan is then monitored on a quarterly basis and its effectiveness assessed during the following year’s performance evaluation.

The Energy sector in Rwanda

The Rwanda Energy Group Limited (REG) is mandated to expand, maintain and operate the energy infrastructure in the Country through its two subsidiaries the Energy Utility Corporation Limited (EUCL) and the Energy Development Corporation Limited (EDCL). The objective of creating these subsidiaries amongst others was to ensure focused attention to enhancing efficiency in utility operations on one hand and ensure more timely and cost efficient implementation of development projects on the other. Moreover the REG holding structure provides the overall coordination and ensures effective development of energy and investment plans. The CDEU project is working with EUCL.

Find out more on www.reg.rw

For more info about CDEU, contact Eileen.Woods@btctb.org
On the 10th of December 2016, the Government of Rwanda approved the National Capacity Development Policy, Strategy and Implementation Plan. By endorsing the National Development Policy, Rwanda became one of few African countries having an overarching policy framework to regulate Capacity Development across the country. In Africa, only Liberia, South Africa and Uganda currently have a similar Capacity Development framework.

With support from the Belgian Development Agency (BTC), the policy has been developed by the Capacity Development and Employment Service Board (CESB).

Through the Strategic Approach to Capacity Building project (SACB), BTC provided technical and financial supports to facilitate policy analysis and writing sessions, including consultation with key stakeholders. The policy analysis and writing exercise resulted in a green paper of the policy which was taken up by the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) for the remaining stages for the cabinet approval.

The National Capacity Development Policy is a guiding framework for all capacity development interventions in Rwanda. It will contribute to Rwanda’s ambitions to become a middle income country and service based economy.

This Policy will ensure that there is a skilled workforce to propel private sector led growth, capable and accountable organizations to provide public services to Rwandan citizens as well as an enabling environment for private sector and civil society organizations development.

The purpose of the Policy is to create an enabling framework for an inclusive national capacity development driven by sectors, integrated into sector and facilitated through a national coordination mechanism.

**The Rwandan Capacity Development Policy contributes to a capable workforce and strong organizations for improved lives of Rwandans**

1. **Institutionalised coordination mechanisms** are in place to facilitate the oversight, implementation and reporting of capacity development programs and initiatives;

2. Capacity development is **mainstreamed** within sector and district planning, budgeting and reporting frameworks;

3. Capacity development is delivered through a **network of capable, knowledgeable and quality assured service providers**;

4. Sector and district actors have the capacity to diagnose, demand, manage and monitor capacity development programmes and initiatives;

5. Capacity development supported by **Evidence-Based Learning and knowledge Exchange**;

6. **Engagement with the regional and international community** to mobilise expertise and financial resources, advocate for capacity development and share good practices.
Mechanisms and capacity development guidelines

The policy proposes mechanisms for coordination, planning, budgeting and reporting, policy analysis and knowledge management of Capacity Development initiatives. It also addresses the need to strengthen the local capacity development industry, including knowledge on good capacity development practices. It sets guidelines to support capacity of public, private and civil society actors to identify their needs and take ownership of the capacity development process.

Key institutions for policy implementation

The policy identifies key institutions responsible for policy implementation. The capacity Development and Employment Services Board (CESB) and the Capacity Development Coordination Forum (CDCF) are given the coordination roles. Sectors, districts, Civil Society platform and the Private sector federation are seen as principal recipients of Capacity Development support. Development Partners and Ministries are identified as Capacity Development Responsibility Centers.

Capacity development guided by sectors

The policy emphasises that sectors are the prime movers and focal points for capacity development. Support needs to be owned and guided by sector stakeholders and should be anchored in sector and district development plans.

At the same time, the national level plays a critical role in coordinating overall capacity development support. It sets norms and standards, provides technical guidance, promotes innovation and learning and provides a framework for monitoring and evaluation.

The policy does not prescribe specific interventions to address identified capacity challenges nor does it set specific capacity development targets. These are addressed in complementary national and sector policies, strategies and plans. Examples include the National Employment Program (NEP), the national policy on workplace learning and the public sector reform strategic framework, and the Capacity Development plans of all Ministries and Development Agencies in Rwanda.

Trade Development Centre reflection workshop in Kigali

On the 3rd of February 2017, Ambassador Arnout Pauwels participated in the opening of a reflection workshop organized by BTC Trade for Development Centre (TDC).

The aim of this reflection workshop was to bring together for discussion the key stakeholders (public, private and CSOs) that are involved in promoting local agriculture producer cooperatives and small and medium enterprises, with the aim to increase production and exports, especially in the coffee value chain. The focus of TDC is to support fair trade value chains.

The reflection workshop gathered different stakeholders namely the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources, the National Agricultural Export Development Board and CSOs. Fairtrade Africa sent a delegation from Kenya to share information on their activities in Rwanda in partnership with TDC. The representatives of cooperatives who also participated in the workshop thanked TDC and other partners for their role of coaching and helping them to access the market.

The participants congratulated organisers and wished to have more of such meetings to exchange on challenges and opportunities associated with market access at local and international level for cooperatives in Rwanda.
The overall vision of the Capacity Development Pooled Fund (CDPF) is to strengthen and develop capacities within the health sector in line with the Health Sector Strategic Plan and Rwanda’s Human Resources for Health (HRH) Strategic Plan. CDPF contributes to enhanced quality outcomes in the delivery of health services. By choosing the modality of a basket fund, we aim to contribute to the health Sector Wide Approach enhancing the aid effectiveness environment through enabling pooled funding for capacity development initiatives.

Capacity development is understood as “the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time” with capacity being defined as “the ability of people, organisations and society as a whole to manage their affairs successfully”.

**CDPF is building capacity strategically by:**
- Ensuring a coordinated approach to HRH planning across the sector, thereby strengthening the overall service delivery capacity;
- Increasing the quantity of HRH through increased numbers of trained and equitably distributed staff at all levels;
- Increasing the quality of HRH, including improved productivity and performance of health workers;
- Increasing capacity to plan, develop, regulate, and manage HRH.

**An alternative aid modality for DPs**

The CDPF aims to offer an aid modality targeted at capacity development for Development Partners that are unable to contribute to Sector Budget Support and to function as entry point for a joint, coordinated and flexible financing mechanism that supports a national health sector programme using country systems.

The CDPF initially aimed to provide a long-term basket, with easy and flexible access to funds for priority activities in health sector capacity development.

**A flexible pooling fund instrument**

The CDPF focuses on approaches that identify training gaps and unmet training needs as defined in the HRH strategic plan. It targets specifically human capacities at the district level that face greater challenges than at the national level. Due to its flexibility the CDPF is also able to support other components beyond formal education and training of health professionals.

The CDPF should be able to adapt to continuous changes upon assessment and deliberation of a Steering Committee of all stakeholders. The day to day management of the fund resorts under the Single Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Health.

**Lessons learnt for future similar initiatives**

With December 2017 as the cut off point for the current CDPF budget and training portfolio, it is opportune to make an inventory of the lessons learned. An independent evaluation will be commissioned this year.

The fund has not been able to secure funds beyond December 2017. Sustainability is at best doubtful. What is the value a pooling fund instrument in the current aid environment?

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<th>Number of students</th>
<th>CDPF % vs HRH targets</th>
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<td>Nursing programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upgrading to registered nurses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trained midwives</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trained midwifery teachers</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>107%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trained Clinical Officers</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trained Hospital Managers</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>126%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trained Biomedical Technicians (advanced diploma)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trained Medical Laboratory Technicians</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
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In February 2017, the Belgian Embassy was delighted to host the “Hors les Murs” contemporary dance performance by a dozen dancers and choreographers from five countries of the region at the Ambassador’s residence.

Twelve young African contemporary dancers participated in a two week-long choreography training workshop in Kigali. The sessions opened on February 6th at the Kigali Sports Club in Kiyovu. The workshop culminated in a performance at the residence of the Belgian Ambassador in Rwanda on Friday February 10th, where participants showcased solo and joint pieces created in the course of the workshops.

The training brought together a total of twelve dancers from Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and the DRC. Rwanda had the biggest representation, with four participants; three boys and a girl.

It was organised by the Rwandan contemporary dance troupe, Amizero Kompagnie, in collaboration with Ecole de Sables, a dance school based in Dakar, Senegal.

The training aimed to equip participants with critical skills and by extension raise the profile of the African contemporary dance scene for it to gain wider public acceptance.

On March 23rd the Embassy organised the first of three ‘Forum des Acteurs Belges’ of 2017. The forum is a consultative event for all Belgian actors working in Rwanda, funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation or through other sources. The Agenda is agreed upon between the Embassy and the participants, and often tackles matters of common interests or current affairs.

The Forum on March 23rd covered three topics: (i) administrative matters related to taxation (income taxes on foreign employees of NGOs, social security contributions) and offices (City of Kigali instructions to move from residential to office buildings), (ii) Network of International NGOs (NINGO) - organisation and activities, and (iii) Rwanda Bribery Index 2016 presentation by Transparency International.

Recently, Belgium approved funding for the country programmes of 17 organizations of non-governmental cooperation in Rwanda: 11 NGOs, 2 institutional actors on Education, 2 umbrella organisations on university cooperation (both Flemish and Walloon), and 2 partnerships between labour unions for a total amount of 27.7 million EUR for the period 2017-2021.

Activities in these programs cover health, agriculture, social protection, education, access to justice and academic research. The selected organisations collaborate with about 50 local partners.

The 17 selected organisations are the following in alphabetical order: 11.be, ADA (Auto-Développement Afrique), Africalia, APEFE (Education-Wallonia), ARES (Universités-Wallonia), Broderlijk Delen, Caritas International, Croix Rouge de Belgique, Handicap International, IFSI-ISVI (L'Insitut de Formation Syndicale Internationale, local partner CESTRAR), Light for the World, RCN Justice & Democratie, Rode Kruis Vlaanderen Internationaal, VLIR (Universities-Flanders), VSF (Vétérinaires Sans Frontières), VVOB (Education-Flanders) and WSM (Solidarité Mondiale, local partner COTRAF). In this newsletter, the programme of one of these organisations is presented and in subsequent newsletters other programmes will be highlighted too.

Should you be interested to know more about these organisations or would you like to look into synergies, you can always contact the Embassy.

Finally, the next Forum in 2017 will be held on June 15 with the main focus on ‘Digitalization for Development’. Local CSOs with experience in this area are welcome to join.
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