

EVALUATION REPORT
Agri Business Creation (ABC)
Programme implemented in Burundi, South Sudan
and Yemen by SPARK with local partners
Funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Acronyms

ABC	Agro-Business Creation
BSC	Business Support Centre
CB	Capacity Building
CECM	Caisse Coopérative d'Épargne et de Crédit Mutuel
CO	Country Office
CS	Conflict Sensitivity
DNH	Do No Harm
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HQ	Head Quarters
IPFB	Interprofession des Fruits du Burundi
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MFI	Micro Finance Institution
MSME	Micro and Small and Medium Enterprise
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
MS	Multistakeholder
MTR	Mid Term Review
VC	Value Chain
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

Executive summary

The Agro-Business Creation (ABC) programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by SPARK in conjunction with local partners promotes entrepreneurship and job creation in agricultural Value Chains (VC) in Fragile and Conflict Affected States. It aims to contribute to stability as well as human and food security in three post-conflict countries: Burundi, South Sudan and Yemen. Three main strategies were designed to achieve these goals, namely capacity strengthening, supporting job creation, and increasing government legitimacy. A Mid-Term evaluation took place late 2015, early 2016 and assessed programme achievements against set targets in the three countries. A pre-final evaluation took place in the December 2016 – June 2017 period, looking specifically at lessons learnt, and two country evaluations covering the year 2017 were carried out in Burundi and Yemen late 2017.

During the course of the programme, in the three countries, 192 partner staff were trained, and 6.158 entrepreneurs from selected agricultural value chains involved in processing and farming received business training, coaching and mentoring. In total, 3.650 jobs and 775 MSME's (micro, small and medium enterprises) were created. More specifically, capacities were improved in terms of crop management, agricultural techniques, and in terms of basic business skills, i.e. how to draft a business plan, how to set prices, and how to increase profit margins. Linking capacity strengthening and job creation, business competitions were organized to insufflate a spirit of entrepreneurship in the youth, and stimulate the emergence of VC champions. One of the strengths of the program lies in the combination of the three mutually reinforcing strategies. Capacities of individual farmers as well as of farmers' associations and cooperatives were strengthened which led to the acquisition of new skills, increase in product quality and quantities, and the creation of new businesses and/or jobs. Simultaneously, VC were strengthened by holding Multistakeholder platforms with all relevant actors in the chain where obstacles and issues were discussed and solutions were often found. Organizing Multistakeholder platforms replaced the strategy of increasing government legitimacy because of the difficulties linked to collaborating with governments involved in conflict.

Beyond these impressive numbers, the ABC programme also contributed to social cohesion through fostering a sense of togetherness within cooperatives and associations. Doing so, the programme brought together people from different backgrounds in the pursuance of a common goal, i.e. increasing product quantity and quality in order to make a profit. The evaluation in the three countries recorded numerous qualitative accounts of farmers and youth highlighting the ABC programme's contribution to stability in their communities. A few beneficiaries even alluded to the fact that if it were not for the programme, they would have probably taken the arms. In addition, these impressive results have been achieved in a context of (sometimes extreme) violence in the three countries. In that light, the programme showed a great level of resilience and flexibility. For instance, while the programme in South Sudan started with stimulating the emergence of successful business entrepreneurs in the agro value chain, it gradually shifted its focus to cooperatives and/or farmer associations, instead of individuals. This focus was well perceived by all interviewees and made much sense as it is in line with conflict sensitivity principles of adopting an inclusive approach rather than focusing on 'a few' individuals, which

could have ignited resentment. The second major programmatic and strategic change illustrating the flexibility of ABC was to stimulate the creation of multi stakeholder platforms including a wide range of actors active in the VC, instead of attempting to achieve the goal of increasing government legitimacy. As mentioned above, this change was highly needed given the difficulty to strengthen the legitimacy of governments involved in conflicts and/or human rights violations. The third major change symbolizing ABC's flexibility concerns the shift in VC focus. Indeed, given the recurrent food crisis in the three countries, food security became a focus of ABC. SPARK also adapted its business competition modality (by adjusting some of the competition criteria, such as the age bracket) to increase the number of participants and showed flexibility concerning the financing component of the programme. SPARK offered a mix of instruments ranging from loans, guarantee funds located in various MFI, leasing products, and grants.

However, despite showing high flexibility, SPARK staff and partners did not consistently and systematically apply conflict sensitive and Do No Harm (DNH) principles during the design or the implementation of the programme. For instance, peace spoilers and local capacities for peace, two important components of DNH and conflict sensitivity principles, were not systematically engaged. Although SPARK staff and partners displayed great understanding of the (conflict) context and used 'common sense' to avoid any negative impact of the programme activities on the conflict, SPARK staff 'ad hoc' knowledge and skills concerning conflict sensitivity are not institutionalized. Those crucial skills are retained within individuals, but not necessarily captured within the organization. In addition, there are some concerns as to the sustainability of the jobs and MSME's created through the programme. In such contexts where VCs, even strengthened, are still imperfect in that access to funding remains a challenge (especially in South Sudan and in Yemen), governments are still not functioning, transport is hazardous, packaging or cooling opportunities are limited, the creation of sustainable (i.e. formal and structured) jobs is extremely difficult. The programme contributed to stimulating economic generating activities, and instilled a sense of entrepreneurship more than it created 'official' or 'sustainable' jobs per se.

Nevertheless, these concerns can in no way minimize ABC's impressive achievements in extremely complex circumstances. In that light, the impact of ABC will most likely remain for years or decades to come: skills have been transferred, cooperatives have been strengthened, access to funding has increased, and relationships between groups have improved. In addition, lessons can be drawn from the innovative programmatic approach displayed by SPARK which deserves to be replicated in other parts of the world.

The evaluation encountered a few limitations. The crisis/war context made *tracing important staff* (both SPARK and local partners), stakeholders and beneficiaries extremely *difficult*, especially in South Sudan and in Burundi. Many partners (such as Mobinc in Burundi) and stakeholders fled the country and/or were in refugee camps. Despite the fact that the evaluation covers programme implementation from January 2013 until December 2017 it is possible that this evaluation is biased towards the last years of programme implementation (2015, 2016, 2017).

1. Introduction

a) General

As mentioned in the ToR, “the final programme evaluation, which should cover the implementation period from January 2013 – December 2017, is meant to assess whether the programme adjusted planning properly in order to maximize results in a changing context, as well as identify successes and recommend lessons for learning. It will also highlight issues and challenges affecting effective and efficient implementation of outputs and their contribution to project outcomes and impact and recommend whether results obtained warrant a continuation of this type of programming. SPARK seeks to use the findings of the final programme evaluation to pave the way for improved programme delivery (e.g. project design, implementation arrangements and institutional linkages) of future projects but also, importantly, to further assess the sustainability of the ABC programme with regard to activities implemented and our local implementation partners.” The methodology applied, and the tools used throughout the evaluation in all three countries were consistent with the goals of the evaluation.

b) Methodology

The evaluation was carried out in a few steps and can thus be considered a process. Originally, the ABC program was supposed to end in 2016 but, due to under spending linked to the extreme complex political and security situation in the three countries, SPARK obtained a one year no-cost extension to finish the program implementation in Burundi and in Yemen. A pre-final evaluation covered the period 2013-2016 putting the emphasis on lessons learnt and recommendations. An evaluation in Yemen and Burundi covering 2017 followed the same methodology in order to facilitate the aggregation of results. Two local consultants were hired to conduct these assignments. This final evaluation report is thus based on key external documents already produced, namely the Mid-term review (which covers activities in the three countries until late 2015, early 2016), the pre-final evaluation report (which covers activities in the three countries until the end of 2016), and two recently written evaluation country reports (covering activities in Yemen and in Burundi in 2017). For the provision of figures, the evaluator used SPARK’s internal reports. Finally, a workshop was also held in Amsterdam in December 2007 with SPARK staff from Head Quarter, representatives of the Burundi office and of the Yemen Country Office to discuss the preliminary findings.

In conformity with the Terms of Reference, the evaluation followed the OECD-DAC criteria commonly used for evaluation purposes namely, *effectiveness*, *efficiency*, *sustainability*, *impact* and *relevance*.¹ Relevance is meant to check whether the activity is suited to the priorities of the target group, effectiveness is used to assess whether the objectives have been attained. Efficiency measures outputs in relation to the inputs, or whether the goals have been achieved with the least amount of resources. Impact looks at the positive or negative, intended or non intended, direct or indirect changes induced by the project while sustainability checks whether

¹ For more information on the OECD DAC criteria, please see <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

the benefits of a programme will continue when the funding stops. For each of these criteria, guiding questions adapted to the ABC program have been developed and translated in the questionnaires (see in Annex 2).

Primary and secondary research techniques were applied throughout the evaluation. Secondary research (which was carried out in the three countries) consisted of reviewing programme documentation, such as programme proposals, Mid Term reviews, Value Chain analyses, annual reports, country reports, partner reports, and partner assessments. Primary research consisted in conducting semi-structured interviews and FGDs and was carried out in Burundi, South Sudan and Yemen.

Semi-structured interviews were held with a) *Spark staff and local partners*, b) *VC stakeholders* such as government officials, main buyers (BRARUDI in Burundi), and Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), and c) *targeted beneficiaries* such as farmers, youth and or women beneficiaries/entrepreneurs involved directly in the various VC. This distinction is interesting to make because the perspectives and positions of the parties interviewed were somewhat different. For instance, *local partners and SPARK staff* are directly involved in programme implementation, while the *target group* is more at the 'receiving end' of the programme (partners are more a conduit to reach out to the target group) and *stakeholders* have an important role in the VC (regulate, i.e. government; buy, i.e. BRARUDI; or fund, i.e. MFIs) but did not benefit from capacity strengthening, an important strategy deployed through the ABC programme. Making this distinction also allowed to triangulate the answers. While some questions were targeted to the context of each group, a majority of questions were similar which enabled triangulation as to assess whether perception of programme performance was based on the position of the interviewees. In total semi-structured interviews were held with **61** individuals, 10 in South Sudan, 32 from Burundi and 19 in Yemen.

In total, 20 *Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)* were held with **190** beneficiaries, 23 in South Sudan (during the pre-final evaluation), 95 in Burundi (52 during the 2017 evaluation and 43 during the pre-final evaluation) 72 in Yemen (all during the 2017 evaluation).

Sampling

We used purposive sampling for semi-structured interviews and FGDs. We selected them based on their involvement in the programme. The only criteria applied were availability and willingness to speak. Given the difficulty of accessing stakeholders in the three countries, no random sampling could be applied.[1]

Discretion – confidentiality

Besides the obvious precautionary measures the evaluators took throughout the evaluation process (providing a safe space to speak openly, offering confidentiality), extra care and attention was given to ensuring the safety and security of the interviewees. Given the sensitivity of the topic, the quotes that appear in the report are not linked to a name. Upon request, the consultant can provide more information about the individuals who provided the information.

Limitations - challenges

- The crisis/war context made *tracing important staff* (both SPARK and local partners), stakeholders and beneficiaries extremely *difficult*, especially in South Sudan and in Burundi. Many partners (such as Mobinc in Burundi) and stakeholders had fled the country and/or were in refugee camps. Recently, a mission led by an ex-SPARK employee, under supervision of the SPARK M&E team, was able to track down some valuable data concerning programme beneficiary since programme inception. This evaluation used some of these data, under the caveat that it was captured, processed and categorized by SPARK.
- All output figures on main project indicators were provided by SPARK and come from their own system. While the evaluation has full confidence that the data are valid, it did not and could not verify it as this evaluation was not meant to check the accuracy of the figures
- This evaluation is based on different reports written by different local consultants with, possibly, different interpretations of the qualitative data provided.
- The final evaluation ‘technically’ covers programme implementation from January 2013 until December 2017 in three countries with highly volatile environments. Given the point raised above (participants fleeing the country), it is very possible that this evaluation is biased as it mostly covers the last years of programme implementation (2015, 2016, 2017).
- Sampling bias*: no random sampling could be applied given the absence of stakeholders’ lists. People involved in the evaluation were willing and enthusiastic to talk about the programme, which may have influenced the results for lack of objectivity.

2. Findings

a)Relevance of the programme

To assess the programme’s relevance, we will answer the questions as specified in the ToR (in *italic*).

To what extent the local partners chosen were appropriate in reference to the programme’s objectives.

As indicated in the pre-final report, use of partners was adequate to meet programme goals as most respondents from each category in the three countries (SPARK staff, local partners, beneficiaries and stakeholders), were of the opinion that ABC had the “right number of partners and of partner mix”. Although partner type (farmers associations, cooperatives, MFIs[2]), level of involvement in ABC (in South Sudan, partners became engaged in the programme at a later stage than in Burundi), and partners’ capacity differ per country[3], one major strength of the programme was to involve successfully most, if not all, relevant actors in the selected VC, including partners. Most interviewees indicated that the choice of partners was relevant especially in terms of “entering the communities” and that partners were committed and motivated. ABC worked on improving partners’ capacities (see under) as to remedy the gaps identified (usually M&E and finances/bookkeeping). An institutional flaw observed which was

common to many local partners (especially in Burundi) was the absence of a strategic plan. SPARK staff suggested that, while working with partners is sustainable and effective in the long run, it costs a lot of time, accompaniment and coaching.

In Burundi, the country evaluation report (2017) confirms that local partners were adequate. The two partners still involved in the project, UMUCE and IPFB (Interprofession des Fruits au Burundi), contributed greatly to the success of the program. Concerning UMUCE, the report suggests that it was “well known and succeeded in identifying entrepreneurs needing credit and was instrumental in assisting those entrepreneurs with their business plan.” Regarding IPFB, SPARK contributed to building its institutional capacities, which enabled IPFB to play a strong advocacy role (defending and promoting the rights of small fruit producers) vis-à-vis the government despite difficult circumstances. For example, IPFB facilitated the acquisition of infrastructures to stock fruits (such as cooling devices) after negotiating with local government authorities. As will be seen throughout the report, strengthening IPFB’s capacities was highly relevant as it provided local organizations with tools and capacity to discuss with the government value chain development and food security policy.

Interestingly, it must be mentioned that when there were no local existing partners or capacities available, SPARK contributed to the emergence of ‘partners’ or local ‘organizations’. In South Sudan, for example, a Business Support Centre (BSC) was set up by SPARK to facilitate business development. BSC offered coaching and training to young entrepreneurs, which was unique in South Sudan at the time. In Yemen, the agricultural experts council was also set up, an institution regrouping 40 agricultural experts. This council was highly relevant as one of the beneficiaries suggested that “the idea of establishing this council was an excellent idea; for it is the first council, it will definitely make a turning point in Yemen agriculture history”.

Has the programme successfully targeted conflict-prone individuals and groups?

As written in the pre-final evaluation report, although “conflict prone and vulnerable groups are mentioned as the main target group, ABC failed to make a clear distinction between conflict prone AND vulnerable groups.” In the three countries, the youth, and to a lesser extent women, especially at the end of the programme, were the main target group of ABC. Interestingly, the youth were considered conflict prone, under the assumption that idle youth is prone to seize the arms and thus needs to be provided with economic opportunities to defuse potential violent behavior, while women were considered part of the vulnerable group[4]. As will be seen throughout the evaluation, no special strategy or approach was devised to cater for or reach out to conflict prone groups. Overall, there were many ‘entry points’ or ‘target groups’ in the program (conflict prone, youth, entrepreneurs, women, ex-combatants, etc.) some, but not all, overlapping. The Burundi 2017 evaluation report states that SPARK identified “vulnerable groups as ex-combatants, repatriated, IDPs, with a special focus on women, young girls and young boys” although not all categories can be qualified as “vulnerable”. Nevertheless, the evaluation observed that in Burundi, there was more of a conscious effort to identify regions and VC with the most potential to engage conflict prone individuals, than in South Sudan and, to a lesser extent, Yemen. As an interviewee put it, there was a need to “look for the regions and the crops that had the potential to bring combatants together,” which led to

choosing two VCs (fruit and white sorghum) in two provinces (Cibitoke / Bubanza) where nearby forests hosted armed groups. In addition, UMUCE mentioned specifically targeting youth from Bujumbura rural who “can easily fall into violence.” Another interviewee also stated that “beyond women and youth, whom we always targeted, we would look for those, who in the past were associated in the conflict”. However, the partner suggested that they could only target them “if we came across them by chance while drafting the lists of beneficiaries.” This statement reinforces the idea that it is extremely difficult to properly target ex-combatants. As mentioned in the Burundi report, “in 2017, the concepts “repatriated” and “ex combatants” were not appropriate anymore in a development program because many consider reintegration as already achieved”. Keeping such a distinction could have been a source of conflict, which can explain why criteria as youth and women were kept throughout the project life.

In South Sudan, although participants in FGDs indicated that ex combatants “were welcomed in their cooperative”, no conscious and proactive efforts were made to work with them. The original entry point of the project was nurturing youth with entrepreneurial spirit through business competition. Gradually, the focus shifted to entrepreneurs with potential to hire women and youth, given the fact that the criteria (being literate, having a computer) were too strict and prevented ‘actual’ vulnerable from participating directly in the program. In addition, it is important to underscore that ex-combatants have specific needs such as being provided with direct support and grants instead of loans, and having a guaranteed market to buy their products (the absence of market may fuel resentment if their produce cannot be sold).

In Yemen, the focus was more on vulnerable people than on conflict prone (ex-combatants) with special attention dedicated to the youth. Indeed, throughout the project, as will be seen hereunder, the youth (and women to a lesser extent) were the target of all interventions. More specifically, the Ignite Village was chosen (as a group) precisely because it was one of the most vulnerable and destitute villages in AlMahweet (one of the 4 targeted regions). The Ignite Village programme established 10 agricultural green houses, granted poultry hatching machines, rehabilitated a well and provided a technical farming training to the most vulnerable and marginalized. It must be mentioned that the focus on vulnerable/marginalized groups in Yemen, according to the evaluation 2017, mostly took place in 2017.

Concerning women as a (vulnerable) target group, they were not systematically reached out to in many training sessions in the early phases in the programme, nor in the Business Competition nor as Micro Finance beneficiaries. In South Sudan for instance, only 12 women were trained between 2013 and 2015. At a later stage, a more deliberate focus was placed on women (through the VSLA[5] intervention, for instance, whereby women were trained on how to use saving for their credit). In Bar el Ghazal, for instance, the last year of the programme, 60 women received training *and* loans, as opposed to men who only received training. In addition, as will be seen hereunder, few companies and few jobs were created by and for women: in 2014 alone in South Sudan, only six jobs were created for women through ABC. Many interviewees confirmed a finding of the MTR according to which, in South Sudan, “more effort was required towards reaching out to women and the marginalized.” Nevertheless, overall, in the last years of the programme, more attention has been given to women. In 2016 for instance,

out of the 276 businesses coached and trained, 191 were owned by women (who thus benefited from the training/coaching sessions). In addition, the evaluation in Burundi recorded that, through the project, cooperatives had to formalize their bylaws which stipulate a quota of 30% for women. According to FGDs in Cankuzo, this quota is met by all cooperatives. In the same line of thought, some cooperatives in a few VC's have more women members than others. While men typically dominate the white sorghum VC, many women are active in the fruit VC. For instance, FAFFIFRUITROBU, a fruit producer federation, has 3 men and 110 women as members, of whom two young girls who had left school. According to the president of the Federation, a woman, "since joining the federation, they produced and sold fruits and vegetables which enabled them to earn an income with which they were able to pay their school fees and go back to school."

To what extent has the programme been conflict sensitive?

Before answering this question, it is important to clearly define what conflict sensitivity actually is and how does it relate to Do No Harm principles. **Do No Harm (DNH)**[6] is a framework, or an approach, to learn more about how developmental or humanitarian assistance that is given in conflict settings interacts with the conflict(s). It is based on the assumption that assistance can be used (and misused) by people in conflicts to pursue political and military advantage. It is aimed at understanding how this occurs in order to be able to prevent it. It is based on 7 steps: 1) understanding of the conflict context, 2) analysis of the dividers and tensions, 3) analysis of the connectors and local capacities for peace, 4) analysis of the programme, 5) analysis of the programme impact on dividers and connectors, 6) (re)consider programming options, 7) programme redesign. **Conflict sensitivity** is based on the assumption that any programme in a conflict-affected area will interact with that conflict. It also assumes that this interaction will affect the conflict and the programme, positively or negatively and that the programme can be adjusted to minimize the potential for negative effects. The conflict sensitive approach involves how the programme cycle is planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated. This approach is a way of thinking about how programmes address the impact of their presence, rather than a tool or checklist. The (slight) difference with DNH is that conflict sensitivity is less a framework for programmes and more an analytical lens that does not only focus on a programme or programme, but can be applied to an organization as a whole, and thus include elements such as process, procedures (hiring, procurement) and staff competencies.[7]

When looking at the DNH steps above, one can conclude that steps 1, 2, 6 and 7 were carried out consistently throughout the ABC programme. Conflict analyses were done regularly, program options were often re-considered and the program showed great levels of flexibility. One could argue that the conflict sensitivity of the program was ad hoc and 'on the job' given the staff knowledge and skills on how to appreciate the local context and ensuring the activities would not cause any harm and contribute to enhanced livelihoods for the marginalized. Staff and partners in Yemen, South Sudan and Burundi displayed skills in navigating through extreme conditions and adapting to an ever changing environment. Nevertheless, conflict sensitivity was a 'side thing' as one interviewee put it. The Burundi 2017 evaluation report confirms that "conflict sensitivity was not an important aspect of the program interventions". The report also adds that conflict sensitivity was not integrated in the M&E system, which makes it difficult to

assess how and whether staff and programs were actually conflict sensitive. However, most staff interviewed insisted that SPARK was not a peace building organization, and that peace building was thus not to be considered as the main goal of their intervention. While the last statement is true (SPARK is not a peace building organization), the evaluation is of the opinion that more attention could have been placed on identifying peace spoilers and local capacities for peace as to increase the chance of the program to (directly or indirectly) contribute to peace.

According to one partner, the lack of conflict sensitivity in ABC was a missed opportunity as “SPARK could have made a clearer relationship between peace and development” and “should have placed more emphasis on peace building”. Nevertheless, the impact of ABC on the conflict context, in terms of contributing to peaceful relations, has been stressed by most interviewees and participants in FGDs. A great majority of respondents concurred in stating that when “everybody is busy engaging in the agricultural sector in a specific VC, people are so focused they can’t even think of making war” or “if I’m doing well, why should I go to the bush and fight?” Participants emphasized the importance of joint activities to foster social cohesion: “although we come from different backgrounds, we work in one association, so it forces us to collaborate”. Other comments made ranged from “when we are together, pursuing the same goal, we don’t fight” to “we have an interest to protect our investment together”. In Burundi, it was also added that thanks to the revenue increases linked to the participation in the sorghum VC, “people had enough to comply with social obligations which strengthened social cohesion”. Business activities promoted through cooperatives have the potential to contribute to peace because they bring people together and foster trust between people from different origins. One local official also stressed the fact that the youth needs to be “occupied, so that it is not tempted to commit acts of violence” which indicates that unemployment per se is one factor, yet not the only factor accounting for youth engagement in violent activities. Providing the youth with a sense of value, of belonging, increasing their self-worth and offering them an occupation are equally important. In that light, finding those VCs that offer the most potential to giving youth a sense of belonging, value and security is crucial.

In Yemen, the 2017 report also suggested that the ABC program “strengthened the community connection among the beneficiaries by making all their goals the same which helped the community be stable and self-sufficient”. In addition, SPARK staff was also able, in a few cases, to identify peace spoilers and engage them. In the Al-Mahweet region of Yemen, before implementing its activities, SPARK staff conducted a study and paid field visits to the area so as to identify potential peace spoilers and engage them. A man, known to create trouble in the area, was engaged by SPARK and became a program beneficiary. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the programme was not fully designed and implemented in a conflict sensitive manner, its flexibility and adaptability are to be praised.

To what extent was the programme flexible and adjusted to the country high volatile environment?

As indicated in the pre-final evaluation report, the program did not shy away from changing approaches. For instance, in South Sudan, the focus on enterprise creation through stimulating individual entrepreneurship via business competition gradually shifted to a more *inclusive*

approach of engaging groups through cooperatives. In addition, while ABC's original focus was on engaging the youth and conflict prone groups, more efforts were spent to include returnees and women. Gradually, *urban farming* activities were implemented in IDP camps, and women groups benefited from training sessions on saving, loan management and business skills. In the same line of thought, the *shift in funding mechanism* is also to be praised. In South Sudan, it evolved from bank loans (with a SPARK guarantee), to regular loans, to leasing and to giving out grants in kind[8]. This funding flexibility was appreciated by all parties involved. In addition, leasing, a 'new' funding mechanism is prone to contributing to peace because it fosters trust and long term commitment. Leasing is not only a funding technique which is economically sound and well adapted to the context (freed cash of lease, helped farmers increase their income through selling their produce), it also accounted for vegetable production increase, income improvement and food security. In that light, in South Sudan, the adapted funding technique meshed with ABC's shift to respond to the food crisis, which is another example of the high level of adaptability of the programme.

Basically, programme adaptability was motivated by *market shifts* (market shortages for staple foods led to the development of two new value chains, cereals and legumes[9]), *access to finance* (it was limited due to the bank's reluctance to lend), and *responding to the humanitarian crisis*. The flexibility translated in shifts in *target group* (from individuals to groups, from youth only to IDPs and other 'vulnerable groups'), in *approach* (first stimulating youth entrepreneurship through business competition, to providing employment through cooperatives, to tackling food security), to *funding methods*, (lease, grant, loans) to *adapting business competition modules*, (removing 'high tech' language, lowering the criteria). In addition, beyond the programme's flexibility, it is noteworthy and highly laudable that SPARK maintained a (well needed) developmental focus during the many humanitarian crises that ABC faced. SPARK adapted its approach or 'changed' target group, or switched focus (to food security) as to better respond to the crises, yet it did not become a humanitarian NGO. Keeping its VC development mission during humanitarian crises was a challenge as beneficiaries expected grants (or returned to a 'receiving' mode, instead of a 'business' mode), yet SPARK maintained its developmental philosophy throughout the years.

To what extent was the programme's objective of increasing government legitimacy feasible and whether the MS approach that was eventually applied instead was appropriate and effective given the country context?

All evaluation reports emphasized that the goal of increasing government legitimacy was not feasible, given the involvement of those governments in the conflicts. Increasing their legitimacy would have tarnished the reputation of SPARK and hampered its role and reputation as NGO involved in the development field. In Burundi for instance, as of 2015 the situation changed drastically. Under normal circumstances, government involvement is needed to create a conducive environment as to remove obstacles for all actors in the VC to thrive, which would increase its legitimacy[10]. However, the crisis that erupted in 2015 put a halt to the feasibility of this goal. Not only was the government and the militias it supported increasingly involved in human rights abuses, it became more and more difficult to work with local governments because the latter either required funds to participate in the activity or demanded to have full

control of the programme (requesting beneficiary lists, etc.). Interviewees stated that “if we involve the government, everything will collapse” or referred to the government’s “lack of motivation” or to “the fact they are poorly paid which explains why they don’t show up at meetings”. Other interviewees emphasized that the relationship with the government consisted in information sharing rather than full collaboration. Nevertheless, a difference can be made between the local and central administration. At the local level, the relationship between the authorities and the programme seemed to have been closer. In Gihanga for instance, the administrator interviewed showed commitment to the programme, was quite informed, and helps by sensitizing farmers about the necessity to reimburse the credit that farmers obtained. In addition, local (public) agronomists were also often present in meetings and training sessions organized by the programme. Besides, the evaluation carried out in 2017 also indicated that local administration made land available on which stands were erected to show cold evaporators. More generally, the role of the government in South Sudan was found by half of the respondents as fair, especially at local level, where, as an interviewee put it, “they were rather supportive”.

As an illustration of the program adaptability, the program shifted its goal to working through Multi-stakeholder process (MSP) rather than aiming at improving government legitimacy. Working with all relevant actors within the chain (including the government) was a very smart move as it prevented SPARK from having a direct contact with a Human Rights violating and corrupt government, but involved all actors in the chain.

To what extent the programme’s approach to capacity building, job creation and MSME’s creation/growth related to the local context and real needs?

The program’s approach to capacity building, job creation and MSME’s development was related to the context, adapted to the changing environment and followed a logical order. For instance, building capacities was the entry point of the program. It can be considered as a goal, an overall strategy, yet was also translated at the grassroots in specific training activities (providing marketing techniques, farming techniques, but also M&E and business skills). Most training activities met the needs of the beneficiaries and served the purpose of building capabilities to pursue or strengthen an economic activity in the agricultural sector to obtain a job or to start a MSME. In Burundi, the evaluation carried out in 2017 highlighted that this linkage approach (capacity building, job creation, MSME development) was adapted to the context precisely because many field visits preceded project implementation as to analyze the training needs of beneficiaries. It also noted that this approach resulted in breaking the initial defiance of MFIs, organizing/strengthening cooperatives, as well as local partners, which also contributed to the strengthening of the VC.

Capacity building was a comprehensive strategy involving most actors in the chain. In addition, the mix of approaches used (training, accompaniment, award provision, use of consultants, regional learning exchange sessions) was very relevant and the wide range of topics addressed through the sessions was greatly appreciated. While job creation targets have not (always) been met in all countries, and MSME creation has also been constrained by the context and the limited access to funding (which ABC tried to deal with), the approach used in South Sudan

linking MSME creation and capacity building was the business plan competition. Interestingly, as indicated in the pre-final report, the business plan competition[11] was an important part of the capacity building strategy deployed by SPARK and functioned as a link between skills transfer, access to fund, coaching, entrepreneurship and job creation. SPARK staff suggested that it “introduced the idea of business among people” and “was quite revolutionary in the context of South Sudan.” The business plan competition was aimed originally at improving the VC and stimulating the creation of processing plants (i.e. add value, and create jobs) for the youth (18 till 35). A jury was set up to help select the entrepreneurs with the best agro-processing ideas, after which a 10 day Business Skills training was organized for those selected. After the training, candidates were encouraged to write a business plan, the best ones would then be eligible for a loan.

While the concept was sound, it did not ‘fit’ the volatile context as challenges were numerous: lengthy procedures and rigorous criteria (contestants needed to be literate and have computer skills) which led to the drop out of many potential applicants. As an interviewee put it, the business plan competition was a “strenuous process that required a lot of stamina”. One could argue that the business plan competition rested on an ambitious market based ideology predicated on stimulating excellence and proclaiming winners in a volatile context marked by recurrent tensions, failed markets and non-functioning governments. In addition, the business plan competition was considered by some interviewees as ‘elitist’ as it was mostly meant for higher university graduates, excluding those potential candidates with great ideas, yet without enough competencies to write business plans. Nevertheless, the approach was eventually adjusted: the age bar was gradually raised to older people (40-45), and agro-processing was no longer a requirement[12] because of the lack of participants with agro-processing ideas. From supporting youth, the goal of the business plan competition shifted to supporting ideas with the potential to employ youth.

Furthering the link between *capacity building, business plan competition, entrepreneurship stimulation* and *job creation, access to funds* was supposed to be the ‘glue’ reinforcing all these strategies. Through business plan competitions, farmers gained skills and capacities to start a business, become entrepreneurs and create jobs in the VC. This concept was theoretically sound but overly ambitious given the hurdles that business plan competition winners experienced in accessing funds. Although business plan competition winners in South Sudan were referred to banks (and despite the fact that SPARK had a guaranteed fund located in a bank,)[13] no loans were given by formal banks to those winners. As a result, in the 2013/14 period, SPARK gave 8 direct loans to champions to cover costs such as personnel employment, securing a location and procurement of machinery. Keliko farmers association was granted such a loan and subsequently lent inputs and cash to farmer members to increase production. 30 farmers were supported, and a tractor was purchased. In Yemen, SPARK implemented the Elite Program, similar to the ‘business plan competition’ in South Sudan, which also involved training potential candidates in developing a business case, through incubation services, training, and mentoring sessions. Successful business plans would also attract a loan and accompaniment to supervise, observe, review, and modify their business plans. These sessions lasted for 17 days after which the mentors selected 32 successful business plans to apply for a loan from

Tadamon Bank. Although not all loans were given, one of the beneficiary of the incubation program stated that "I was able to sell my products through spreading my business; besides the technical training, I also received help in marketing, which increased my client base all over the governorates." Another beneficiary indicated that, through the Elite program, "she will join the incubator activity to get a loan and establish her own business". Another beneficiary stated that "my plan was successfully selected, now I am waiting to get a loan to establish my business, besides I am planning to hire five people in my project." In Burundi, as explained in other parts of the report, ABC used CECM and COSPEC, two MFIs, which did provide loans, which turned out to be a successful strategy thanks to the guaranteed fund provided by SPARK, and to the existence of a secured buyer, BRARUDI.

b) Effectiveness of the programme

To review programme effectiveness, we reviewed achievement of each objective as stated in programme proposal. Concerning the first goal of **strengthening the capacity of partners and stakeholders** in the selected agricultural value chains, achievements noted are the following. Capacity building covered many different themes, encompassed different strategies (training of beneficiaries, training of trainers, mentoring, accompaniment, competitions, knowledge exchange visits) and catered to different groups. Indeed, capacities were built at the level of beneficiaries involved in the chain, and at the level of local partners.

Concerning beneficiaries, a total of 6.158 individuals have been trained. Training sessions were tailor made to the targeted group (farmers, entrepreneurs) and covered many aspects from *farming or agricultural techniques* as to increase production and improve quality (how to use fertilizers and pesticides, how to process input, how to cultivate, how to use treadle pumps), to *marketing techniques* (how to storage, not to sell to middle men, how to access markets directly to obtain higher prices), *basic business skills* (how to keep records, what to buy, when to sell, how to write a business plan, how to maintain profitability), as well as on the importance of *working together and forming cooperatives*. Partners mostly provided training on agricultural techniques and SPARK staff on business skills and basic knowledge about cooperatives. In some cases (when dealing with specialized knowledge like beehive management) consultants were hired to provide training.

Concerning the different strategies used, the following examples from Yemen shed light on the value derived from using various methods as to build capacities. For instance, most capacity strengthening activities were built on existing knowledge and skills. For instance, through the Council of Experts, SPARK built specific presentation and communication skills of 40 experts in agricultural and agri-processing domains in order to strengthen the experts' knowledge transferring skills to farmers. This strategy proved very relevant instead of using international consultants to bring knowledge to Yemeni farmers and entrepreneurs. The training given to the experts in various fields strengthened their exposure, visibility and credibility, as the extensive local knowledge they already had was easily transferred to a wide audience. FGDs and interviews revealed that "their skills can be used during any activity, they are real experts in green housing, in harvesting, in anything". One of the experts working in the Ignite village

program said “we have practiced what we learned, we are the experts working on the ground ourselves so as to deliver a high quality training”. During a FGD, one of the experts mentioned that “SPARK had established this council for the interest of our country, and SPARK definitely will not keep supporting forever, that is to say we need to care about it and push it forward by delivering intensive courses .” Another expert suggested that “connecting the council closely to local partners rather to the government was effective” in order to deliver training sessions that meet the needs of the partners’ constituents. At the other end, a beneficiary stated that “we have learned a lot from the experts, which was more beneficial than what we received from the agriculture college.” Another beneficiary stated that “we have benefited a lot, especially from the honey expert who gave us lots of information such as the types of honey, the operation of taking the bee's venom out so that we can make medicine for chronic diseases ”. In the same line of thought, ABC contributed to certifying 30 trainers and 30 mentors to accompany businesses.

The Burundi 2017 evaluation report also revealed that ABC was highly effective because it specifically addressed critical issues that vulnerable and marginalized people face. For instance, it addressed their need for credit by grouping them and training them, therefore making credit available to them. These training sessions also induced behavioral change as cooperative members started observing deadlines, committed to repaying a loan, adhered to the principles of social caution, paid an interest rate, etc. In addition to these basic financial skills, cooperative members were also trained in cooperative management, conflict reduction, report writing and data collection. All participants in FGDs indicated having learnt about the importance of forming cooperatives. For instance, a farmer who is also a cooperative director indicated that “we went from abstract to a plan with a vision” while another added that “we went from informal to formal”. Recently, in Burundi, new services were developed on how to set up modern beehives, and how to use cooling devices. In 2017, farmers involved in the honey VC participated in two week learning exchange programs in Rwanda as to learn from the Rwandan experience. A few critical points heard from participants from the three countries were related to the absence of payment for participants’ transport, the fact that some sessions were covered too fast (training sessions should last longer), and that the timing of some of the training sessions (during harvest season) was ill suited.

Concerning the training of partners, 192 partners’ staff were trained and the focus of the training was on M&E, financial skills, how to write proposals, and how to report. Most partners suggested having learnt a great deal from these sessions, but needing more. Partners’ skills increased, as evidenced by partners’ leaders comments. IPFB for instance, thanks to SPARK’s accompaniment, became a credible interlocutor to the government and other international agencies thanks to their increased lobby, convening and research skills. FAF, a partner in Yemen, mentioned having been able deliver better training to their constituents, thanks to the capacity building interventions supported by SPARK. FAF stated that “we really did a better job in implementing than before, and we are expecting to do much better in 2018”. Besides, one of FAF beneficiaries claimed that “FAF really did their best to provide us with trainings we benefited a lot from because we felt the quality of the trainings delivered”. Only in a few cases did partners regret not having benefited from more training sessions. [14]

In order to measure partners' capacity development progress, the 5C methodology was adopted. The exercise registered an increase in capacities for most partners (see Double Loop reports for more detailed information). In Yemen for instance, it was mentioned that in 2017, SPARK strengthened the capacities of its main partner Vision, by providing training to 11 staff members on management. According to the 2017 evaluation, "50% or more of their core capabilities improved, and members' capacities improved from 65% to 90%". Vision staff indicated that "the experiences we gained from the previous projects helped us meet the beneficiaries' needs to start their businesses easily, yet they need to receive more trainings on business skills such as planning". However, structural constraints of accessing markets (especially for women members) to sell their dairy productions are still a bottleneck in Yemen.

In addition, the MTR and the pre-final evaluation observed a few flaws concerning the 5C methodology and how it was applied throughout ABC. First the MTR suggested that "the baseline study conducted prior to the trainings did not correctly record partner competencies." Second, the pre-final evaluation also highlighted that "a few core competencies linked to the VC or to operating in a conflict environment were not captured." Lack of clarity as to which indicator was used to measure progress, and absence of beneficiary involvement were also observed. Despite these methodological issues, partners appreciated the 5C exercise as some claimed "it made us open our eyes on certain aspects of our organizational capacity we were not conscious of." In addition, overall, and despite the flaws inherent to measuring capacity increase, numerous qualitative accounts of improved capacities have been recorded by most participants in the evaluation.

Concerning the second goal of supporting **job creation and enterprise development**, the evaluation recorded qualitative and quantitative accounts illustrating the achievements, as well as the challenges related to job creation and enterprise development. Regarding figures, in total, 3,650 jobs and 775 MSMEs were created. In 2017 only, 559 jobs were created in Burundi (mostly in the sorghum value chain thanks to BRARUDI), and 298 in Yemen. Of the 3,650 jobs, 2,233 were created in Burundi, which represents 63% of all jobs. In Yemen in 5 years and in South Sudan in 4 years, 722 and 695 jobs were created respectively. Most jobs in South Sudan were created prior to 2016, thanks to a few entrepreneurs nurtured by the project. For instance, more than 300 small holder farmers were put to work by the sun flower entrepreneur who provided those farmers with seeds, bought their harvest, and processed it into oil. Although a few problems were encountered the sun flower entrepreneur was able to 'create' a local demand as "the local population really likes this oil." According to many interviewees, it was the first oil of good quality produced in South Sudan, with good packaging. In Burundi, most 'jobs' created were through the cooperatives operating in the sorghum VC. In Yemen, in 2017, a total of 298 jobs were created (for 195 males and 103 female) in Sana'a, Taiz and Almahweet, within the selected value chains of coffee, dairy, strawberries and vegetables.

Table 1: jobs in Yemen in 2017

Country	Region	Year	VC / activity	# of jobs

Yemen	Sana'a	2017	Strawberry/vegetables (cart)	16
Yemen	Almahweet	2017	Agricultural tunnels, vegetables, poultry	60
Yemen	Taiz	2017	Strawberry and dairy	222

One issue mentioned by the Yemen evaluation is that not all jobs are well remunerated, as income levels have not necessarily improved. In Yemen, it looks as if certain value chains were more profitable than others (strawberry, and potentially coffee[15]). While jobs did not necessarily lead to substantial increase in incomes, the provision of a relevant technical agricultural training resulted in the pursuance of an economic activity, and in learning how to become resilient and adapt one's business to the market. For instance, a training beneficiary suggested that, "having had a technical training on the types of strawberry production helped me come up with an idea to provide myself with an income, although irregular." One of the beneficiaries in Yemen confirmed that ABC "helped us become entrepreneurs: I have used the bicycle cart to sell bread, and the others are selling vegetables and ice-cream. Additionally to the training on marketing and selling, we received help to come up with constructive ideas so as to increase our income." The Bicycle Carts program for instance enabled beneficiaries to "keep their activity going". For that matter, one of the beneficiaries alluded to the fact that "selling strawberries had been profitable for about two days; later we realized that selling strawberry is not that profitable because people couldn't afford it due to the very difficult circumstances, so we had to come up with ideas to sell products pertinent to the basic necessity of people, such as bread, vegetables, and ice-cream. It was easy to do so as we had already received a training of marketing and selling." Another beneficiary added "selling strawberry became a loss, but I didn't give up but rather I changed the product, thus I have made profits out of ice-cream, which really increased my income thanks to the marketing and selling training we received by ABC program." These stories give insights into the strategies devised by beneficiaries, with the support of ABC, to adapt to the market as to earn a living.

Overall, it must be stated that, in the three countries, very few businesses created recruited more than 5 employees (mostly actually recruited only one, often within the families). In addition, the assumption according to which agro-processing businesses would create sustainable jobs did not really materialize, because agro processing businesses did not take root and created few jobs compared to seasonal jobs in the agricultural sector which tend to be more numerous. In general, and specifically in Yemen, enterprise development and job creation are intimately related. Most jobs were 'created' after a project intervention, such as the provision of carts, or of agricultural tunnels to carry out an economic activity.

Concerning the third goal **to increase the legitimacy of government authorities and enhance its role in economic and food security**, the evaluation observed the following. As mentioned previously, the program shifted its goal of increasing government legitimacy to

promoting multi stakeholder platforms. As the pre-final evaluation indicated, such multi stakeholder platforms were organized to identify factors hindering the smooth functioning of the chain. In total, throughout the course of the programme, 41 official roundtable sessions or multi stakeholder platforms (MSP) have been held with stakeholders comprising of government officials, private and public actors to tackle main issues that VC actors faced. One issue effectively addressed through a platform in South Sudan was related to blockers' behavior. Blockers (or market porters) practiced inconsequential pricing and showed aggressive behavior towards other VC actors. Subsequently, blockers were invited to help find solutions to the issue. Conversations within the platform revealed that blockers missed recognition for the important work they did, complained about not having access to savings and loans, and about not having a pension. ABC asked the government to regulate their situation as blockers' associations were not incorporated as a legal entity. Blockers were subsequently trained, and arrangements were made to officially register them. The emphasis was placed on giving them legitimacy within the VC. In total, 66 blockers received work ethic training, and 16 participated in an apprenticeship programme (in nursery agronomic practices). In addition, blockers became organized in an association, and their overall capacities were built. Thanks to the training and the MSP organized within ABC, as well as to the loans offered, blockers changed their behavior, stopped harassing market traders and standardized their prices.

In Burundi and Yemen, similar experiences have been recorded. In Burundi for instance, IPFB organized a number of round tables to discuss issues relevant to the VC, such as packaging or export. Most interviewees indicated that these round tables were instrumental in fostering a climate of trust between all parties. In the sorghum VC, meetings were regularly organized between the contracting parties (cooperatives, MFI, SPARK and BRARUDI). The need was felt to create a multi stakeholder platform to create a common understanding and discuss openly any issue arising. One such issue is 'miscommunication'. For instance, most farmers engaged through the evaluation claim that BRARUDI sets the price unilaterally, while BRARUDI and the MFI's argue that the price is 'negotiated'. As will be seen hereunder, the prices have increased steadily the past few years, which illustrates the bargaining power cooperative leaders have. Despite such issues, trust between involved parties has greatly improved, as evidenced by the fact that BRARUDI ceases to pay field visits to 'check' the quantities (have the quantities agreed upon in the contract actually been produced and delivered according to the terms of the contract). In Yemen, SPARK worked with the Cooperative Association of Yemeni Beekeepers in organizing workshops aimed at finding ways to overcome the obstacles of exporting Yemeni honey. For that matter, SPARK mobilized Yemeni beekeepers association and organized public-private-civic community sessions including 75 representatives from the civil society sector, public, and private sectors. During these workshops, discussions were held concerning the role of international organizations and government and recommendations were given to help improve food security in Yemen and to adopt a policy for regulating beekeeping in Yemen.

c) Impact of the programme

Impact, although difficult to measure in the absence of baseline data, was generated in terms of increased production, improved livelihoods and strengthened capacities (both at individual, i.e. farmer's level and organizational level, i.e. improved functioning of cooperatives and associations). Many personal accounts captured through the evaluation highlight the economic impact (improved business skills, increase in jobs and in economic generating activities) as well as social impact (improved social cohesion and increase in trust). During FGD's, farmers suggested that "they now work together as a team" or that "training sessions offered were a way to network, to share services and to build relationships". In Burundi, besides job creation and production increases, livelihood improvements were also mentioned as a major impact of the programme. Through learning about business as farming, participants in many FGD's indicated being able to sell and keep some for own production, as well as pay for school fees. Although difficult to measure, most stakeholders (SPARK, IMF, BRARUDI, local partners) reported an *increase in quality housing* (using bricks, plus having roofs), in *use of motorbikes*, in *sending children to school*, and *increase in marriages*. A beneficiary in Burundi stated that "with the increased income linked to selling the harvest of white sorghum, a few of us were able to buy a cow, send their children to school, build a house, buy a means of transportation, such as a bike, a motorbike or even a car". Besides those numerous qualitative accounts, the two IMFs (Cospec and CECM) also indicated having registered an increase in farmers' savings. In addition, farmers are receiving more credit, and keep on extending the surface areas to cultivate their crop (mostly sorghum). In addition, the increase in cooperative membership (13 cooperatives are now full members of IPFB), is a testimony of the project's impact. Farmers now know that the cooperative "is from them and for them, before they did not care that much about cooperative life."

Assess the programme's contribution to food and human security in each country

Concerning human security, the programme contributed to developing peaceful relations among those involved by creating a sense of togetherness and shared purpose. For that matter, the Burundi case deserves special attention. In Burundi, cooperative formation triggered social contacts, sometimes between diverse or even previously hostile groups, while stimulating profitable joint economic activities. For instance, the Federation of fruit producers in Bubanza made a profit of 4.4 million FBU in 2016, and is expected to make between 6 and 7 million in 2017. Besides generating economic gains, cooperatives also contribute to peaceful relations as illustrated by a comment made by a IPFB member: "grouping people with potential to create conflict and vulnerable people and making them work together in the fruit chain around economic activities contributed to their (re) insertion in their communities and to social cohesion." Another partner stressed that "stimulating joint cooperation of people from different backgrounds with different views and having them work together around a common economic project within a cooperative gave them hope and made forget what divided them." This point of creating a common future and hope for people who at some point were enemies through pursuing joint economic activities has been also mentioned in the literature in Rwanda and the DRC (e.g. Boudreaux, 2007).

Similarly, in Yemen, a link was made between training, which induced an economic activity, and peaceful behavior. The 2017 evaluation indeed revealed that ABC "strengthened the community

connection among the beneficiaries by making all their goals the same which helped the community be stable and self-sufficient". In addition, ABC also contributed to stability as a participant in a FGD indicated that "the « Rigara», or gatherings of idle youth who spend the whole day playing cards on the side of the road, are slowly dwindling in areas where white sorghum is grown. These youth can easily be employed, even temporarily, given the many tasks that need to be undertaken in the sorghum VC, plowing, sowing, weeding, chasing birds, sieving, drying, weighing, loading unloading, etc." In the same line of thought, a survey held in Yemen indicated that 80% of the respondents were of the opinion that ABC contributed to stability. In addition, one of the beneficiaries stated that "the training helped us create jobs and avoid the specter of war we have been going through". Others went even further and declared that "had the program not delivered such grants, we would have been in the battlefield fighting, however now we got involved doing something." Again, it is not the job per se, but the activity stimulated that defused violent behavior.

As for food security, the programme (somewhat) contributed to increasing food security by shifting its focus to food crop. In Burundi, while contracts were met and cereals were increasingly grown, hard figures concerning quantity increases were difficult to obtain. Data on production recorded by the evaluation were an increase from 15 to 25 tons per ha (in the pineapple VC), to 5 t per 12,5 ha to 73 t per 17,5 ha (in the sorghum VC). The 2017 evaluation in Burundi also revealed that 20% of the white sorghum production is consumed in the households. In addition, in Burundi, thanks to increased income, a few cooperatives were able to buy land and grow other crops, such as rice, which contributed to fighting hunger. In South Sudan, in Bar El Ghazal, farmers indicated having experienced a production increase from 5 sacs per sedan to 15 sacs per sedan (thanks to the capacity strengthening activities). In Yemen, FGDs conducted during the 2017 evaluation revealed that honey production increased, but not figures were provided.

Assess the programme's success in creating/developing agricultural value chains in each country

A major impact of the programme was the strengthening of VCs through *bringing all actors together*, through stimulating *partnerships* and creating *multi stakeholder platforms*. ABC was seen by many respondents as an "innovative and bold programme" that made value chains more effective and efficient. The strengthening of the VCs was especially notable in the sorghum VC in Burundi. Producers were accompanied, a positive dynamic was created through organizing roundtables where information was shared, problems were discussed, credit was made possible, (through encouraging farmers to form a cooperative, through placing a guarantee fund within two MFIs, CECM and Cospec and through a guaranteed market, i.e. BRARUDI). Collaborating with different types of actors through an innovative partnership also contributed to capacity strengthening and to improving farmers' livelihoods. Producers receive seeds (from BRARUDI), technical support (from SPARK and local partners) and financial assistance (from Cospec and CECM). The partnership enabled the farmers to improve their business skills and negotiating skills (farmers were able to negotiate price increases from 450 in 2011 to 670 in 2014 to 800 in 2016, and finally to 850 in 2017).[16] In addition, Cospec also gained confidence to negotiate 'penalties' with BRARUDI when the latter does not transfer funds

on time.[17] Interviewees also indicated that the programme broke farmers' fear of credit. In addition, some level of transparency has been achieved. Contracts are open and the "result of open and fair negotiations", as a MFI representative put it. An interviewee also mentioned that there is no real power abuse in the VC, as producers try to "get the most out of it". Another interviewee stated that relationships "may not be equal, they are nevertheless balanced." This could also be due to the tri partite nature of the partnerships, and is different than other VC study results which highlighted the power differential in partnerships between producers (smallholder farmers) and buyers (companies). [18]

Despite a more rudimentary stage, the fruit VC has also improved in Burundi, mostly through the setting up of small transformation units which allows to add value and, eventually, to make a profit[19]. Fruit transformation cooperatives buy directly from producers' cooperatives with quantities and price being negotiated in a contract. Positive relationships between transformers and producers are established, as illustrated by the fact that transformers provide farmers with 'credit' (with no interest), which is a sign of trust. The agricultural export ban, enacted by the government during the course of ABC implementation to prevent a food crisis, and the cost of packaging are two major challenges that the fruit VC is still facing, which IFBP attempts to tackle. This point underscores the coherence of the program, the relevance as well as the effectiveness of the different strategies set in motion and of the activities carried out: technical and business training sessions are provided, capacities are strengthened, the bargaining power of cooperatives/farmers in the chain has increased, access to credit is enhanced, and issues faced in the VC are dealt with through MS platforms. All these activities mutually reinforced each other and ultimately strengthened the respective VCs.

d)Sustainability of the programme

Review the status and assess the sustainability at the end of the programme of jobs created, MSEMs created, local partners (BSC) value chains?

In South Sudan, while during the pre-final evaluation, most respondents indicated that only three businesses were found successful and sustainable (cassava business, Keliko farmers association and the sunflower business), more recent data obtained through SPARK[20] give insights into the resilience of MSME's. Of the 298 MSME's reached out to by ABC since the project inception, 149 are still active which is remarkable given the challenging environment in which they had to operate. Of these 149 MSME's, 106 are female, 43 are male run, and about half are engaged in the horticulture sector (77) and the groundnut value chain (61). Business types are production (not processing) and the average number of employees is 2.9. Another interesting fact is that businesses with the most clients (on average 6) are in the groundnut VC: they produce and sell groundnut and sorghum to retailers, the general public and to wholesalers, and seem to be making the most profit, whereas those involved in the horticulture and vegetable VC mostly sell to the general public. Most of the non-active 149 MSME's were run by IDP's or refugees, and were operating in the oil seeds and horticulture VC. While these quantitative data are interesting, more qualitative data on the factors that contributed to the businesses remaining active would have been interesting. Of the 149 'still active' businesses, it

is difficult to assess which ones are 'successful' and sustainable business operations and which ones are merely 'survival' entrepreneurs barely getting by.

In Burundi, for instance, many interviewees argued that the sustainability of 'jobs' is heavily dependent on a guaranteed market (i.e. BRARUDI) because the latter ensures access to micro-finance. However, one could argue that the guaranteed market in the sorghum VC did not lead to the creation of MSMEs or jobs per se, but to the strengthening of cooperatives and to an increase in cooperative members. In that light, the sustainability of the ABC program in Burundi is illustrated by the fact that credit provided to farmers keeps increasing because IMF's trust in farmers' repayment capacities has improved, and because cooperatives are becoming stronger. In the same line of thought, a remarkable development is the fact that the IMFs will keep on providing loans to cooperative members even without the existence of the SPARK guaranteed fund, which is also a sign of sustainability. In the same line of thought, the 2017 Burundi evaluation also suggested that ABC instilled a mentality change among institutional donors and IMFs in that funding agricultural activity is no longer exclusively considered as risky and hazardous. In the fruit VC, the presence of IPFB can contribute to the sustainability of the fruit VC by conducting research on market opportunities and offering a platform to discuss (and find solutions to) issues pertaining to the VC. Concerning the honey VC, although cooperatives seem the least organized, SPARK is actively looking for other NGO's or programs to keep supporting them[21]. In addition, honey cooperatives farmers as well as fruit farmers can also be linked to the ABIN program as to keep on benefiting from SPARK support. In terms of what is needed to improve the sustainability of those jobs and businesses created, most respondents indicated a need for more market studies, structural access to finance and for more skills training.

Another assumption that is worth unpacking is whether a focus on transformation businesses is appropriate (or not) in volatile environments, and will lead to the creation of more and sustained businesses and/or jobs. This evaluation cannot bring any definite conclusion on that matter yet it can give interesting insights from the three countries. In Burundi for instance, although few businesses[22] had been created in 2016, respondents indicated that the honey VC had too many producers and the focus should be placed on transformation units to bring 'structural' jobs instead of 'survival' jobs. However, while transformation per se may increase the sustainability of the employment, it does not always lead to higher employment levels. In South Sudan for instance, the groundnuts paste making 'units' were led by one person only. In addition, jobs in the transformation units are scarce. It is therefore a trade-off between job security/sustainability and numbers of people involved in an economic activity (even seasonal) providing them with an income. Too great of a focus on 'formal' sustainable job creation through transformation units can prove misguided, as those units not only typically lead to the creation of relatively few jobs and because they require somewhat long, well-functioning and well-structured VCs. The sorghum VC on the other hand is relatively short and has little transformation potential, yet it led to the creation of many 'jobs' (through the cooperatives), that are sustainable as long as the partnership with MFIs, SPARK and BRARUDI holds (existing cooperatives cannot produce the quantities needed by BRARUDI, which indicates that BRARUDI is looking for more partnerships[23]).

e)Efficiency

Efficiency can be measured through *upholding the financial and administrative procedures*, *cost effectiveness* (or value for money), and *overall project management* (including collaboration with HQ and relationships with partners). Regarding the first point, financial and administrative procedures are in place and respected as evidenced by the audited financial statements. All country offices ask for pro format for purchases above a certain amount. Regarding project financial management, a recurrent problem was the late arrival of payments due to the difficulties of transferring funds to 'complex' areas. Despite the late arrival of funds, partners were satisfied with SPARK support and few complaints were registered. Concerning the flexibility of partners' planning, the evaluation in Burundi conducted in 2017 found out that funds being transferred in EUR turned to higher amounts in FBU given the constant appreciation of the exchange rate. Some 'extra' funds were used to finance the agri-business fair. Partners also stated that SPARK Country Offices' support was swift and adequate, communication lines were open, responses were given in reasonable time and care was shown for the difficult context in which they were operating. On the other hand, the Yemen evaluation conducted in 2017 stated that correspondences between SPARK and partners took quite some time, on various occasions, which affected the spontaneous flow of the activities and created some degree of misunderstanding among the parties.

Concerning cost effectiveness, the programme applied value for money principles. Training sessions often took place in communities "where things are quite cheap". In Burundi, SPARK proceeded with payments to partners once reports accounting for funds disbursed during the previous period were received and analyzed. Every activity partners organized was checked (venue, use of consultants, prices). The evaluation in Burundi in 2017 confirms that partners showed some degree of dissatisfaction with SPARK for not funding coffee breaks during (some) workshops. SPARK seemed to have been quite concerned with keeping a strict focus on 'activity' funding, with a limited overhead. In addition, SPARK learnt from the financial problems that New Generation (a previous partner) faced during the YEP programme implementation[24] and was committed not to overload partners with funds. As an example of being cost conscious, when Mobinc, a Burundian partner, left for security reasons, local government agents who were also members of the sorghum cooperatives part of the programme were asked to give training to sustain the activities at low cost. However, one issue observed in Burundi was the construction of the 'hangars' for the bikers transporting pineapples, which was not a wise investment as it did not strengthen the position of the bikers, nor did it increase their income. It 'only' allowed them to rest and to keep the fruit, yet transporting pineapples on the bike for 5 hours partially ruined them, which made finding buyers difficult. This activity (thought of by Caritas) was not structural and sustainable and funds could have better been used for other purposes.

The Yemen 2017 evaluation confirms the view according to which efforts were made to achieve as many results as possible in the most efficient manner. Indeed, concerning the Ignite village,

one Spark staff mentioned that "the intervention was efficient because it accomplished more than it was budgeted for". Beneficiaries indicated having "received everything transparently and trustfully, so everything was clear to us", which points that value for money principles were applied reasonably and did not lead to resentment from partners or beneficiaries. SPARK staff interviewed indicated that other interventions in Yemen such as the costs of erecting the agricultural experts council, or conducting the strawberry technical training were adequate and reasonable. For instance, SPARK staff quoted that "even though the training did not cost that much, it achieved a lot by delivering the information and knowledge to a lot of beneficiaries." Concerning the carts and the marketing and selling activity, SPARK staff indicated that "delivering the carts and conducting the training of marketing and selling did not cost a lot, but it made a fingerprint on those youth as it helped them open up new opportunities."

Regarding the collaboration between SPARK headquarters (HQ) and SPARK country offices (CO), all respondents across CO appreciated SPARK support which was qualified as "open, frank and flexible". Specific comments shared by SPARK CO staff ranged from "our hands were never tied," or "HQ was always supportive and understanding". COs enjoyed leeway in implementing their yearly budget, as SPARK allowed for budget reallocation within the spirit of the programme. Proof hereof was the flexibility shown by SPARK when agreeing (in South Sudan and Yemen) to provide grant instead of loans, or to provide leasing instead of supporting IMFs through guaranteed funds, or to use own funds to pre-finance some activities. The few areas of improvement mentioned concerned the *time it took to receive funds*, and the need to receive more regular *training or meeting sessions* (at HQ or across country offices). Learning events across countries could have been done more structurally as to foster learning and improve practice. All interviewees also expressed the wish for more visits from directors and not only consultants as to ensure HQ is fully aware of the local realities in which CO's operate.

f) Lessons learnt

Flexibility is key: one of the major strengths of the program was its flexibility and adaptability to a volatile environment. Throughout the project lifetime and in the three countries, the project showed great versatility and constantly adapted to the environment, which can account to the program's success. Daring to shift target group, approach, funding mechanism, without compromising the project's philosophy of strengthening value chains is a lesson for the whole NGO community.

Strengthening the VCs requires involving all relevant actors in the VC (transporters, local government, farmers, MFI's, buyers, agencies involved in warehousing, in cooling, etc.) through Multistakeholder platforms as to discuss, and find solutions for, bottlenecks hampering the proper functioning of the VC. The blockers' experience in South Sudan is a case in point. By engaging them through a MS platform including various actors, a solution to the blockers' problems was found (i.e. recognition and access to funding). In the same line of thought, engaging in multiple partnerships (Brarudi-MFIs and local cooperatives; SPARK and MFIs; and

SPARK and local partners that support cooperatives) was also crucial, in the case of Burundi, to strengthen the white sorghum VC.

Combining three mutually reinforcing strategies also proved instrumental in achieving many of the ABC goals. ABC *capacity strengthening* interventions stimulated *entrepreneurship, job creation and MSME's development* while *engaging in MS platforms* was highly relevant in such volatile contexts to build trust among stakeholders and jointly find solutions to issues encountered.

Creating/strengthening MSMEs and creating 'jobs' is not necessarily the same as promoting economic and income generating activities. MSMEs and jobs created do not necessarily result in income increases. The project started (quite ambitiously) with the idea of creating jobs and small businesses as main indicators for success. The evaluation shows that there is a need to make a distinction between 'job/employment' creation and 'business' development on the one hand, and stimulating 'economic or income generating activities' on the other. 'Jobs' created through cooperatives concern mostly self-employed farmers. This issue may be semantic but is important to clarify as 'formal' jobs in imperfect VC's in conflict contexts are extremely scarce.

Sustainability of jobs / MSME's can be interpreted differently. Related to the above, the evaluation pointed at the need to clarify the difference between sustainable vs seasonable jobs in (post)-conflict contexts. ABC's philosophy seemed to prioritize 'sustainable' jobs, while the latter are extremely difficult to foster given the imperfections of the VC and the limitations of SPARK's interventions. The evaluation is of the opinion, that while sustainable jobs ought to be prioritized in 'normally' functioning VCs in stable contexts, the focus in post-conflict contexts ought to be placed on promoting sustainable economic processes with the potential to provide an economic and income generating occupation to as many beneficiaries as possible. In some cases, a mere economic occupation provided to hundreds of beneficiaries in an inclusive and fair manner may be more relevant and effective in such volatile contexts than providing a handful of secured and sustainable (i.e. formal) jobs. This is all the more relevant in post-conflict areas where jobs are scarce and can be the source of resentment and conflict if not properly redistributed among different groups.

Revisit the assumption according to which agro-processing units lead to higher job creation. In the fruit VC in Burundi for instance, some transformation units were set up (some small other large such as Fruito) yet they recruit few people.

The choice of VC is challenging and needs to be done carefully. The potential to create jobs may have been the 'overarching' criteria (among the 32 in the matrix originally used), the MTR argued that in some cases "the matrix favored market opportunities rather than employment creation through the chain. For example, horticulture in South Sudan and fruits in Burundi have tremendous market potential but limited employment potential for youth due to the use of foreign, cheaper labor in the case of South Sudan and employment being limited to the transformation unit sites in Burundi." On the other hand, the sorghum VC in Burundi was short,

yet created many employment opportunities, thanks to a fixed market (BRARUDI) and the possibility of obtaining credit.

Revisit the assumption that the youth needs jobs to defuse violent behavior. The ABC programme was based on the assumption that idle youth are prone to seize the arms, and that providing those youth with jobs would deter violent behavior. This assumption is partially revisited by this evaluation, and has also been criticized by recent studies in Africa. For instance in Mali, lack of future prospects and of proper education opportunities, absence of self-esteem and of community support, were seen in a recent study as more important factors accounting for youth violence than the absence of jobs per se. [25]

A market based approach has its limits in highly volatile contexts. For instance, the business plan competition, geared towards selecting the best business proposals, nurturing the business plans of those literate candidates de facto excluded the poor and most marginalized and was ill suited in the context of South Sudan. The assumption that all 'marginalized groups' would benefit from the positive effects generated by carefully selected and nurtured chain champions did not prove correct. In addition, helping the youth (i.e. the main target group) to elaborate a business plan and accompanying them in their business activities is very demanding and requires sustained coaching and mentoring skills, which were offered in Yemen quite successfully, more so that in South Sudan. In South Sudan, the business plan competition logic was difficult to apply because entrepreneurship within the youth has not taken root yet. The youth seemed to be more interested in stable public type of employment rather than undertaking risky entrepreneurship type of activities.

The ambition level was too high. Value chain development is extremely difficult in a context of war and/or widespread violence. Many respondents indicated that the programme was "too ambitious and too high tech for the local context". Through ABC, SPARK attempted to implement a developmental programme in a humanitarian, crisis like context. Compounded by the low literacy level of beneficiaries, the creation of sustainable enterprises was extremely challenging. As an interviewee put it, most businesses were in "a survival mode rather than in an entrepreneurial mode with growth opportunities". Even in a 'regular' post-conflict environment (with absence of acute crisis) it is feasible, yet challenging, to instill the idea of farming as a business[26], or to introduce the concept of lending (instead of granting). This is all the more difficult in a context where most NGOs operating in the area do relief and humanitarian work. In such a context, it is very worthy of SPARK to have kept its developmental approach, while adjusting some of the programme components.

Adopt a collective approach: the example of Burundi highlights another (more collective) approach to stimulating entrepreneurship and economic activities through strengthening cooperatives as to ensure most members can participate in the economic activity and access credit. Stimulating the emergence of *cooperatives* or associations enables combining economic goals and a social mission. Cooperatives and associations have the potential to contribute to peace by promoting social cohesion through sharing a common interest. Cooperatives also facilitate the provision of technical skills which result in production increases. Through improved

capacities, cooperatives become self-reliant and are on the path of becoming profitable economic entities. In that light, cooperatives can function as a transition phase or a necessary step between subsistence farming and farming as a business. Although the collective approach was more emphasized in Burundi than in other countries, a few collective initiatives have also been supported in Yemen and South Sudan (Ignite Village in Yemen and women's associations in South Sudan, to name a few).

Access to funding is critical. No full VC development can happen without proper access to credit. As illustrated by the Burundi case, a secure market combined with a guaranteed fund located in two MFIs enabled farmers to access credit. This experience can serve as a model for future programmes. BRARUDI, as lead firm, securing a market for farmers based on negotiated quantities and prices; SPARK offering a guaranteed fund; two MFIs providing credit. The model encourages cooperative adhesion, which is also positive, and accounts for most of the job creation in Burundi.

In the same line of thought, future Business Plan Competition related activities should have a clear link with access to funding. Very few 'winners' obtained access to funding from banks, despite SPARK's efforts, which limited the sustainability and the effectiveness of the activity. In addition, it forced SPARK to engage in MF activities, which is not its core business.

Capacity building is key: as illustrated throughout the evaluation, strengthening capacities, both at collective level (local partners, associations and cooperatives) and individual level (farmers, entrepreneurs) is crucial. It enables the transferring of skills, which can be applied beyond the life of the project. The example of the council of experts deserves to be followed because it made use of local knowledge to reach out to entrepreneurs and farmers. The communication skills provided to the experts in various fields strengthened their exposure, visibility and credibility, as the extensive local knowledge they already had was easily transferred to a wide audience. In addition, the council, given its proximity to local partners, was able to deliver trainings that met the needs of the partners' constituents. Similarly, it is crucial to spend enough time on specific topics (according to partners' wishes) in order to ensure the knowledge is well captured.

In the same line of thought, partners should be encouraged *to design a strategic plan*. Operational capacities of partners are important and should be improved in order to enhance their implementation capacities. However, for sustainability purposes, it is also crucial to enhance their strategic capacities by encouraging them to design a strategic plan.

The 5C methodology is a good starting point to establish a baseline of partners' capacities and to measure the evolution of their capabilities. It is also important to ensure that new elements/indicators are added to the methodology as to reflect ABC's goal, as well as the conflict context (such as capacity to adapt to the conflict, capacity to stimulate enterprise development, capacity to engage local capacities for peace, etc.). In the same line of thought, it is also crucial to involve partners' constituents in the assessment of partners' capacities.

Target group identification is challenging: ABC struggled with identifying and engaging the target group (youth, women, ex-combatants, vulnerable people, conflict prone). From the beginning, it should have been clear what the entry point of the programme was: a Value Chain, a target group, or a region. Some of these elements can be combined or ranked per importance. In South Sudan, the original entry point of the programme (or main focus) was enterprise creation through the business competition while in Burundi, the focus was on job creation through strengthening cooperatives[27]. In the same line of thought, the Burundi case shows how difficult, and even inappropriate, it is to engage ex-combatants, as the 'concept' can become irrelevant (everybody was at some point 'combatant') and can even reignite the conflict.

Gender balance was not achieved due to some initial programme design faults (for instance, focusing on 'educated' youth for the business competition in South Sudan) which de facto excluded women. Given the difficulties to reach out to women in countries where women do not own land and have no or little collateral to access loans, new strategies had to be devised for reaching out to women. A more targeted focus on women was symbolized by the introduction of the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) in South Sudan in 2015 which provided loans mainly to women.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Despite extremely difficult circumstances, the ABC programme achieved many of its goals in the three countries. Throughout the five years of implementation, value chains were strengthened, local partners' and farmers' capacities were built on a variety of topics, ranging from farming techniques, marketing, writing business plans and/or M&E, jobs were created and multi-stakeholder platforms were set up and able to solve a few issues. One of the major strengths of the programme was its flexibility and capacity to adapt. For instance, *choices of VC* were often reconsidered (adding cereals as a VC for instance, as a SPARK officer claimed that "if we had only focused only poultry and horticulture, it would have been a disaster"), *target group* shifted (from individuals to cooperatives), *business competition modalities* changed (increasing the age of contestants, lowering the criteria for participation), and *funding modalities* were adapted (from gifts to loans to leasing).

Throughout ABC, *building capacities* was a major success as illustrated by accounts from farmers and entrepreneurs in all three countries. A variety of skills were transferred at individual/farmer level and at organizational level. Capacity and institutional strengthening are known to be crucial in fragile environments. Many different capacity building venues (accompaniment, mentoring, training, award giving, use of consultants, exchange visits) were used which made the capacity building interventions relevant but also effective. Some organizations may have collapsed, and trained/skilled individuals may have failed to make their business a success in the short run, skills at the individual level remain and can serve in the future. In addition, ABC succeeded to create 3650 jobs and 775 MSMES. While these figures are quite impressive, many jobs and MSME's are seasonal and businesses that emerged are

not always sustainable. The ABC programme was overly ambitious and did not fully take into account the fragility of the 'ecosystems' surrounding the VC in the three countries. However, thanks to its flexibility, the ABC programme was highly successful in strengthening a few VCs, and for that matter, deserves to be replicated.

Recommendations:

Lower the ambitious nature of such programmes. Start with low level of funds, do careful assessments of VCs using economic, social and conflict reduction criteria. Be realistic about the level of 'maturity' of the VC selected, and about the growth possibility taking the socio-economic and political context into account (level of violence, government functioning, transport and storage capacity, etc.).

Look more closely at the relationship between job provision and stability. This relationship needs to be unpacked as an 'occupation', even poorly remunerated but offering a sense of togetherness, may in some contexts be more effective in defusing youth violent behavior. It is also key to better explore the peace promotion value of certain value chains, not only looking at economic criteria. Key question would be which value chains are economically viable AND have some peace building characteristics or attributes (such as coffee in the DRC).

Strengthen and institutionalize conflict sensitivity of staff: while most staff have rudimentary knowledge of DNH and conflict sensitivity principles, they have extensive knowledge of the context and have 'conflict sensitivity' antenna's ensuring that the program does not fuel conflict. However, this conflict sensitivity practice is not institutionalized. By institutionalizing conflict sensitivity of staff (ensuring it becomes part of job descriptions for instance) and strengthening conflict sensitivity skills and knowledge through the provision of training, SPARK would ensure the conflict sensitivity of its programs for years to come. Such training would need to identify tensions, dividers as well as local capacities for peace, with the help of a peace building / conflict transformation expert/facilitator.

Organize exchange programmes, across countries for staff and partners. Despite the differences in context, the three countries shared similarities. Given the different approaches applied in each country (training and business skills development in Yemen, cooperative – partnership with BRARUDI and MFIs in Burundi, and business competition for youth in South Sudan), exchange visits, although potentially costly, could have fostered greater learning and may have resulted in earlier/more structural programme adjustments.

Organize more visits from HQ to the field. While most SPARK staff appreciated greatly SPARK support, they regretted not receiving more visits from HQ.

Reflect on / study in more in details what are the factors that underlie the success and resilience of certain businesses. Why do certain businesses survive and actually function better than others in times of crisis? What are the ingredients, the leadership skills that account for such success? Such (short) studies would be shared with other programmes and could be used to strengthen the resilience skills of other potentially 'successful' entrepreneurs in conflict areas.

Adapt the M&E indicators to properly assess the sustainability of the jobs and of the MSME's. What are the criteria defining the sustainability of a job ('still being in business' or 'making sufficient income' or 'having x number of employees')? In addition, as alluded above, devise qualitative indicators to understand the factors that lead to businesses and jobs being sustainable.

Integrate Conflict Sensitivity in the M&E system, as to capture Conflict Sensitivity in all facets of the program, monitor its progress, and institutionalize it. It can be done at different levels, program level (# of activities where peace spoilers were identified and engaged), or at staff level (# of staff trained in DNH or conflict sensitivity principles).

Annex 1: names of people involved in the pre-final evaluation (Dec 2016 in South Sudan, January 2017, Burundi)

Semi structured interviews			
	name	organization	country
	Robé Jean Bosco Nintunze	Caritas – Secrétaire général	Burundi
	Jean Chrisostome	Caritas – Directeur programme	Burundi
	Estère Nduwayo	Caritas - Chargé sécurité alimentaire	Burundi
	Ital Bancako	SPARK, Chargé de programme	Burundi
	Adia Nintunze	SPARK, Directrice pays	Burundi
	Priscille Bizimana	SPARK, Responsable finances	Burundi
	Chris Ngabire	SPARK	Burundi
	Florise Mureranyana	SPARK, Représentant régional	Burundi
	Emmanuel Ntakirutimana	SPARK Coordinateur	Burundi
0	Christophe Bigirimana	SPARK, Comptable	Burundi
1	Abrice Mutekano	MUCE, programme director	Burundi
2	Marie Louise Nsabiyumva	ECM, Sec executive	Burundi
3	Charles Itangishaka	SPARK, Gérant	Burundi

4	asha Rwamibango	RARUDI, Corporate Affairs advisor	Burundi
5	anisius Ntahe	RARUDI Consultant	Burundi
6	leopold Ndayisaba	Commune Gihega, Chargé éco	Burundi
7	enovat Nsabimana	FR, Responsable	Burundi
8	oriane Favie Kaneza	PARK, ex intern	Burundi
	Focus Group Discussion Burundi		
	membres (5 H + 3 F)	Associations de producteurs d'ananas	
	membres (3 F + 1 H)	Coopératives d'ananas de Bubanza	
	membres (5 H + 1 F)	Producteurs de Sorgho de Bubanza	
	11 membres (4 F + 7 H)	Producteurs de Sorgho de Cibitoke	
	4 membres (12 H + 2 F)	Association de transporteurs	
Total : 43 participants			
	Semi structured interview South Sudan		
9	Donnie Smith	PARK, Country Director	South Sudan
10	Maila Nichola	PARK, ex intern	South Sudan
11	Emis Joel	AAO (local partner), Coordinateur formation	South Sudan
12	Rosés Bidal	AO (local partner), chargé programme	South Sudan
13	Edelmo Justo	PARK, ex programme manager	South Sudan

4	SharMakthi	rua government representative	outh Sudan
5	ose Marie Puru	SC programme officer	outh Sudan
6	William Butti	SC programme officer	outh Sudan
7	aiQuan	CDF programme manager	outh Sudan
8	Joseph Baak	aison Officer	outh Sudan
	ocus Group meeting		outh Sudan
	members (6 women + 1 man)	Women's Union (WCDC, Juba)	
	members (6 men+ 3 women)	farmers' association supported by ACTF	
	members (6 men + 1 woman)	farmers' association Koboko	

Annex 2 List of participants in the Burundi evaluation 2017

Numéro	Noms et prénoms	Institution/Organisation	Fonction	Numéro de téléphone
1.	Floriane Favie KANEZA	SPARK / Programme ABC	Assistante au Programme	
2.	Nadia NINTUNZE	SPARK/ Programme ABC	Chargée de Programme	76 356 188
3.	Joris INGABIRE	SPARK	Directeur Pays	

4.	Marie Jeanne NDIKUMANA	Banque Nationale pour le Développement Economique (BNDE)	Directrice du Département Crédits	79 993 008
5.	Marie Louise NSABIYUMVA	Caisse Coopérative d'Epargne et de Crédit Mutuel (CECM)	Directrice Générale	75 829 620
6.	Thérèse BARABWIRIZA	ICCO TERRAFINA IMF	Conseiller	75 748 742
7.	Juvent NTUMIGOMBA	International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC, en français : Centre International de développement des engrais)	Economiste	79 452 457
8.	Emmanuel NTAKIRUTIMANA	Inter Professions des Fruits du Burundi (IPFB)	Président	79 465 207
9.	Fabrice MUTEKANO	UMUCE	Managing Director	79 562 444
10.	Stany NIYONKURU	BRAURUDI	Directeur du Projet « KAZOZA »	71 422 000
11.	Fidèle NDUWIMANA	BRARUDI	Responsable de la Recherche et Développement au Projet « KAZOZA »	79 400 852 75 400 852
12.	Joseph ITERITEKA	Province Cibitoke	Gouverneur de la Province Cibitoke	
13.	Astère NTUNGA	Province Bubanza	Conseiller Principal de la Province Bubanza	

14.	Eliphaz NTAKARUTIMANA	Province Ruyigi, Commune Gisuru	Conseiller Technique chargé des questions administratives et sociales de la Commune Gisuru	71 455 680 68 482 654
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FGD fruit cooperative members (04/11/2017).

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de téléphone
1.Evode NIKIZA		TEZIMBERIGIHUGU	Muramvya		79 180 961
2.Etienne BRARANIKANDI		MIMOSA	Ngozi		79 653 485
3.Dany BIBONIMANA		KEREBUKA	Rumonge	Burambi	79 491 983 69 575 722
4.François BARIGORA		DUFASHANYE			75 668 369 76 171 257
5.Gloriose MURERANYANA		FAFIFRUITROBU	Bubanza	Bubanza	69 643 819
6.Masudi NTAHOKAGIYE		TUG			69 657 970
7.Jean Claude NZISABIRA		AKANOVERA K'INANASI	Cibitoke	Murwi	68 555 484 71 706 632

8.Jean De Dieu NGENDAKUMANA	DUHURIKIREHAMWE	Cibitoke	Murwi	68 180 753 79 562 243
9.Jacques NIMPAGARITSE	AKARUSHO			
10.MBITEZAMASO	EJOHEZA	Cibitoke	Mabayi	69 919 915 77 872 483
11.Philibert HIMBAZIMANA	NKORERANGUKIZE	Cibitoke	Mabayi	69154 410 79 469 683
12.Adios DUSABE	ALCORU- Bujumbura	Bujumbura (Rural)	Kabezi	79 782 625
13.Thaddée NGENDAKUBWA YO	DUTEZIMBERE IVYAMWA	”	Mubimbi	79 003 346 68 894 780
14.Callixte NSHIMIRIMANA	« CAAP »	Bujumbura (Rural)	Kabezi	71139 497
15.Christophe HAKIZIMANA	« CAAP »	Bujumbura (Rural)		71381392

FGD honey cooperative members (04/11/2017)

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de téléphone

1.Viator NDAYISEN GA	COOPACI (Coopérative des apiculteurs de Cibitoke)	Cibitoke	Rugombo	69 135 187
2.Léonce NDUWIMAN A	FABU (Fédération des apiculteurs du Burundi)	Bubanza	Bubanza	69 362 531
3.Divine MUNEZERO	DUKUNDIBIKORWA	Bubanza	Mpanda	71 540 615 75 432 805

FGD white sorghum cooperative Cibitoke(08/11/2017)

NOMS ET PRENOMS	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de téléphon e
1.Sylvestre MANIRAMBONA	MASAKA YERA	Cibitoke	Rugombo	61 613 123
2.Rosine NZOYIHAYA	TUGWIZAMASAKA	“	“	69 661 588
3.Charles NDIKUMANA	AMASAKA IWACU	“	Buganda	69 137 313
4.Abraham NTWENGERABEN SHI	TUGWIZAMASAKA	“	Rugombo	69 245 554

FGD women involved in fruit cooperatives in Bubanza(09/11/2017).

NOMS ET PRENOMS	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de Téléphone
1.Gloriose MURERANYANA	FAFIFRUITROBU	Bubanza	Bubanza	69 643 819

2.Anitha KWIZERA	“	“	“	
3.Daphrose BAGWIZAMAKURU	“	“	“	
4.Rénilde NKEZIMANA	“	“”	Mpanda	
5.Alima KANEZA	“	“	“	
6.Anne-Marie NIZEYIMANA	“	“	“	
7.Béatrice NIYONKURU	“	“	“	
8.Francine NDUWIMANA	“	“	Bubanza	
9.Gloriose NIJIMBERE	“	“	“	
10.Euphémie NYANDWI	“	“	“	
11.Claudine BUKURU	“	“	“	
12.Aline NIZIGIYIMANA	“	“	“	
13.Fabiola NDAYISHIMIYE	“	“	“	
14.Fidélité MPAWENIMANA	“	“	“	
15.Agrippine NIBARUTA	“	“	“	

16.Jacqueline NYABENDA	“	“	“	
17.Asia TABU	“	“	“	

FGD with white sorghum producers in Bubanza(09/11/2017)

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de Téléphone
1.Ezéchiél KWIZERA		DUTEZIMBERE AMASAKA	Bubanza	Gihanga	79 377 233 69 220278
2.Laurent BAHIZI		KORA EJO NI HEZA	“	“	79 297 449 68 849 036
3.Oscar NTACONAYIGIZ E		TUGWIZUMWIMBU	“	“	69 690 064
4.Jean Marie NTAHONKURIYE		DUFASHANYE DUTERINTAMBWE	“	“	68 853 450
5.Darci NZIKOBANYANK A		KORA EJO NI HEZA	“	“	69 612 615
6.Jérémie NDABARINZE		KAZE RUBERE	“	“	69 615 152
7.Innocent NIJIMBERE		DUTEZIMBERE AMASAKA	“	“	69 220 115 79 611 893
8.Augustin SHAKIYE		KORA TWUNGUKE	“	“	69 220 312

9.Pascalie MANIRAKIZA	"	"	"	69 422 475
10.Michel MATOROSHI	TERIMBERE MASAKA	"	"	69 549 423
11.Anne Marie NKENGUBURUN DI	KARORERO K'ABARIMYI	"	Mpanda	79 728 605 69 743 407
12.Oscar NIYONZIMA	"	"	"	79 317 252 69 207 750

FGD with white sorghum producers in Ruyigi – Gisuru (le 10/11/2017)

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de Téléphone
1.Mathieu HAKIZIMANA		NTEZIMBERE RUBERE	Ruyigi	Gisuru	68 734 854
2.Sylvestre BIZABISHAKA		"	"	"	69 046 816
3.Silas HARUSHIMANA		"	"	"	68 925 864
4.Sixte MINANI		"	"	"	69 913 625
5.Pie Pacifique KANGETE		"	"	"	69 150 367

FGD with white sorghum producers in Cankuzo (11/11/2017)

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE	Numéro de Téléphone

1.Alexis MUGABONIHER A	GWIZA URUBERE	Cankuzo	Mishiha	69 1222 427
2.Cléophas MINANI	"	"	"	69 571 391
3.Bella BASABOSE	URUBERE IWACU	"	"	68 396 661
4.Joselyne NIYONZIMA	TUBERE RUBERE	"	"	68 054 689
5.Gertrude NIYONZIMA	TUGWIZURUBERE	"	"	69 275 213
6.Amouri KIBWIGITI	GWIZUMWIMBU	"	"	71 014 137
7.Daniel NZOYA	URUBERE IWACU	"	"	69 176 937
8.Léopold GAHUNGU	TUBERE RUBERE	"	"	79 314 191 69 110 146
9.Cyprien NZAKAHA	TUGWIZURUBERE I MUGERA	"	"	76 492 208 69 418 647

FGD with fruit producers in Bujumbura (Rural) ; (13/11/2017)

NOMS PRENOMS	ET	NOM DE LA COOPERATIVE	PROVINCE	COMMUNE
1.Floride HARERIMANA		DUTEZIMBERIVYAMWA	Bujumbura (Rural)	Mubimbi
2.Daphrose NIYONZIMA		"	"	"
3.Gaspard Rwajekera		"	"	Isare

4.Raphael NSENIGYUMVA	"	"	"
5.Innocent NDUWAYEZU	"	"	"

Annex 3 Data collection tools

Questionnaires

Overall

- Describe main results/achievements? (per result area: CB, job creation; gvt legitimacy)
- Describe main strengths/weaknesses
- Describe main challenges the project encountered?

SPARK Staff

- To what extent the local partners chosen were appropriate / relevant in reference to the program objectives?
- Has the program successfully targeted conflict prone individuals and groups?
- How would you describe your collaboration with the HQ (i.e. in terms of communication, delegation of tasks and chain of command)?
- How have this collaboration impacted the implementation and the results of the programme? What could have been done in order to increase the flexibility of the programme and its performance within the highly volatile context that it was implemented?
- What programme processes could be adjusted/included in order to increase the flexibility of the programme and its performance within the highly volatile context that it was implemented?
- How would you assess the sustainability potentials of the selected VCs, supported businesses and jobs created? Could these be sustainable in the long-run, i.e. without further development interference?
- How would you describe the LPs' appropriateness in participating in the programme, in terms of their organisational capacity and motivation?
- How would you describe the programme's performance in contributing to the stability and security (i.e. human and food) of communities?
- How would you assess the programme's allocated budget, in terms of its appropriateness and flexibility in covering required costs?

- How conflict-sensitive has the programme been (CS, a) context analysis (pol/eco/socio cultural) b) impact of the project on the conflict c) impact of the conflict on the project d) local capacities for peace identified (if yes engaged?) e) peace spoilers identified (and engaged); ? What additional planning and measures could have been taken in order to increase the conflict-sensitivity of the programme?
- How flexible was the programme, in terms of its capacity to accommodate the high volatile context into which it was implemented? What additional planning and measures could have been taken in order to increase its flexibility?
- What role and participation, if any, of the local/regional government played in the programme's implementation?
- Was the programme's objective in increasing local government's legitimacy/role feasible?
- To what extend the multi-stakeholder approach that was instead adopted was justified/appropriate/effective (in reference to the previous question)?
- What factors influenced the time and cost effectiveness of the programme's interventions? What relevant mitigation actions could have been taken?
- Which programme interventions were the most effective in terms of job creation and why?
- What types of supported businesses performed the best and why?
- What type of programme activities show potentials for upscaling?
- What measures could have been taken to improve the sustainability of jobs created, businesses supported and local partners?
- What was the most significant challenges the implementation of the programme faced and what alternative measures could have been taken?

Local Partner Organisations

- After receiving capacity building support through the ABC programme in what areas have you experienced the most significant developments?
- After receiving capacity building support, have you identified new areas that would be beneficial for your organisation to receive training in? If yes, in which areas?
- What role and participation, if any, the local/regional government played in the programme's implementation?
- How would you describe the overall transparency and trust levels embedded in the selected VCs?
- How would you describe the programme's performance in contributing to the stability and security (specifically human and food) of communities?
- How would you assess the programme's allocated budget, in terms of its appropriateness and flexibility in covering costs?
- How would you assess the effectiveness of the VC actors, in terms of their organisational capacity and the communication processes that they have established, as well as their motivation and long-term perspective?
- How would you assess the programme's performance in bridging the gap between the farmers and the imperatives of the market?

- Under the programme's support, how successful your organisation was in reaching marginalised groups?
- If your organisation was given the opportunity to design the programme from scratch, what current features of the programme you would still incorporate and what you would alter?
- Are all, some or no members of the VC motivated to invest (i.e. individually; outside of the programme's support) in activities within the value chain?
- How would you describe the programme's performance in contributing to the stability and security (i.e. human and food) of communities?
- How conflict-sensitive has the programme been? What additional planning and measures could have been taken in order to increase the conflict-sensitivity of the programme?
- Was the programme's objective in increasing local government's legitimacy/role feasible?
- What factors influenced the time and cost effectiveness of the programme's interventions? What relevant mitigation actions could have been taken?
- Which programme interventions were the most effective in terms of job creation and why?
- What types of supported businesses performed the best and why?
- What type of programme activities show potentials for upscaling?
- What measures could have been taken to improve the sustainability of jobs created, businesses supported and local partners?
- What was the most significant challenges the implementation of the programme faced and what alternative measures could have been taken?
- How your collaboration with SPARK impacted the implementation and the results of the programme? What could have been done in order to increase the flexibility of the programme and its performance within the highly volatile context that it was implemented?
- What programme processes could be adjusted/included in order to increase the flexibility of the programme and its performance within the highly volatile context that it was implemented?
- How would you assess the sustainability potentials of the selected VCs, supported businesses and jobs created? Could these be sustainable in the long-run, i.e. without further development interference?
- Did the programme promoted the professionalism of the farmers that it supported?

Entrepreneur Beneficiaries

(Likert scale questionnaires, if sample allows it)

- (By being supported by the ABC programme) have you experienced an increase/decrease/no-change in the **volume** of your production/services you offer?
- (Since being supported) have you experienced an increase/decrease/no-change in the **costs embedded in your production/provision** of services?
- (Since being supported) do you perceive your business more/less/the same risky?
- (Since being supported) were you able to establish (new) partnerships?
- (Since being supported) were you able to employ people in your business? If yes, how this benefited your community?
- (Since being supported) were you able to modernise your production/services you offer by using new methods/processes/technologies?

- (Since being supported) were you able to identify and benefit from new market opportunities (differentiated products, new markets, etc.)?
- Do you think the overall support that you and the other actors of the selected VC have received promoted transparency and trust? If yes, do you think that such development reinforced the stability of your community?
- (Since being supported) have you **received credit** in order to invest in your business? If yes, have you experience any benefits from the investment?
- (Since being supported) have you received capacity building support? If yes, do you think that it has benefited your business? If yes, in which aspects of your business?
- In case you have received capacity building support, have you identified any other areas that would be beneficial for your business if you receive training in them? If yes, in which areas?
- In case you have close partner-relationships with the VC's farmers, how successful do you think was the programme in bringing them closer to what the market demands, in terms of the quality characteristics of their product?
- (Since being supported) how motivated you are to invest in *other* activities within the selected VC (i.e. provide credit, input, knowledge and training to farmers)?

Farmer Beneficiaries

- (By being supported by the ABC programme) has the volume of your production increased/decreased/remained the same?
- (By being supported by the ABC programme) have the quality characteristics of your produced product improved/deteriorated/remained the same?
- (By being supported by the ABC programme) the price you receive for selling your product has increased/decreased/remained the same?
- (By being supported by the ABC programme) do you think that you use inputs (e.g. land, water, fuel, electricity, fertilisers, pesticides, etc.) in a way that is the same/more/less profitable for your farm's production?
- (By being supported by the ABC programme) have you minimised/increased/did not change your post-harvest losses?
- (By being supported by the ABC programme) have you established new post-harvest processes in your production?
- How successful was the support you have received in strengthening your production against its various risks (weather, pests, diseases, price changes, etc.)?
- Do you think there is enough trust/confidence between all those who buy and sell your product (i.e. along the selected VCs)?
- By being supported, has your income from farming increased/decreased/remained the same?
- Considering the support you and other neighbor farmers have received, do you think that your community has more/less/the same food available for your households' consumption?
- Considering the support you and other neighbor farmers have received, do you think that your community has more/less/the same stability?
- Have you received credit? If yes, how was this credit used?

- Have you received training? If yes, in which areas (good agricultural practices, postharvest, marketing, farm-management)? In which of these areas do you think your skills and knowledge have improved the most?
- In case you have received training, have you identified any other areas concerning your production and selling of your product that it would be beneficial for you to receive training in?
- Do you participate in a farm cooperative? If yes, how actively you are engaged in the decision-making and in the implementation of its activities? If not participating, why?
- Have you introduced any new methods/processes/technologies in producing and handling (storing, sorting, grading) your product? If yes, has your income from farming increased/decreased/remained the same?
- Have you experienced any other benefits (new partnerships, more trust between you and those who buy your product, more traders willing to buy your product, more consumers willing to buy your product) by such introductions?

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[1] In “normal” cases, a list of all stakeholders is provided from which the consultant chooses randomly.

[2] In Burundi SPARK considered MFIs such as CECM and Cospec as partners, although their role, legitimacy and capacity is typically larger than that of rural farmers associations

[3] In South Sudan, local partners were involved rather late (2014 / 2015) once the strategy shifted from an individual to a group focus, while in Burundi partners were involved since the beginning.

[4] The pre-final evaluation referred to the fact that conflict prone include those individuals and groups that are engaged in a conflict, mostly pro-actively, or are susceptible to engage in violent activities because of intrinsic characteristics (unemployed youth; ex-combatants roaming around with arms) whereas vulnerable groups typically refer to elderly, children, and women, those who suffer the most from conflict outbursts.

[5] Village Savings and Loan Associations

[6] Inspired from CDA, 2004. “The Do No Harm Handbook”, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, Canada

[7] This part has been taken ‘as is’ from the pre-final evaluation report, 2017

[8] In South Sudan grants were given not in cash but in-kind in form of equipment that could have been used as collateral for repayment had the program continued.

[9] The presence of WFP which acted as a major ‘buyer’ of the food items was also a factor

[10] Under normal circumstances, in countries with functioning state authorities and governments, given that regulatory authorities are needed to provide the right socio-economic and political conditions for the value chains to thrive, the mere fact of involving those authorities may have improved the legitimacy of the government by increasing the trust of the citizens in their government, thereby reinforcing accountability and enhancing state-society relations.

[11] In Burundi, only one BC (2016) took place about packaging in the fruit VC. A Batwa cooperative won and obtained assistance to make 200 packages (for fruit) to meet a demand from fruit buyers (to keep their fruit clean).

[12] The requirement that all business had to operate in the agricultural sector remained. This only refers to no longer requiring agro-processing only. Therefore, activities such as crop production, honey production, etc. could be supported without having a processing component like oil extraction, feed mill, cassava drying, etc.

[13] In 2013, SPARK and Equity bank signed a contract with equity bank for a guarantee facility that would share risk with 70% guaranteed by SPARK and the remaining 30 % by Equity bank. Because of the war, the contract was never respected.

[14] Nevertheless, some partners mentioned not having received all training sessions as planned. In South Sudan, ACDF for instance was ‘promised’ a training on M&E and fundraising which it has never obtained, and in Burundi, many partners engaged through the evaluation regretted not having received more training sessions, especially in the honey VC. In Burundi, in the case of IPFB, the involvement of Caritas was not appreciated as Caritas acted as an intermediary between SPARK and IPFB. IPFB experienced the involvement of Caritas Burundi as negative. When IPFB had a direct relationship with SPARK, IPFB appreciated its accompaniment. Thanks to the training sessions organized by SPARK, IPFB improved its overall institutional functioning: they were able to draft better operational manuals and procedures, which also led to improved visibility and recognition.

[15] Coffee being a new VC, no data on income or few qualitative accounts concerning increase in income have been recorded, yet the potential seems to be there, based on the 2017 Yemen evaluation. In the coffee VC, interventions geared towards improving product quality during the technical training of coffee beds, introducing a new coffee drying technique and coffee trimming scissors, how to install and disassemble those sets seems to meet market requirement and have the potential to contribute to increase farmers’ income.

[16] Brarudi indicated that they were reluctant at first , but ‘gave in’ because they were in a rather ‘weak’ position given the fact that most of the sorghum was sold to Tanzania; i.e. the conditions were ripe for the producers to demand higher prices. Although Brarudi agreed with the increase, they did not expect to give in to such a high increase

- [17]Brarudi sends a message to the IMF to pay farmers 'in advance' once the sorghum has been delivered and approved by Brarudi
- [18]Exploring the potential of intersectoral partnerships to improve the position of farmers in global agrifood chains: findings from the coffee sector in Peru V Bitzer, P Glasbergen, B Arts Agriculture and Human Values 30 (1), 5-20
- [19]Transformation cooperatives in the fruit VC have 3 machines yet need packaging as they have to import bottles from Tanzania (and pay up to 250 or 300 per bottle). With 400 pineapples (bought at 500) they can make 1.488 bottles which they sell at 1000 per unit. They employ 3 people per transformation unit.
- [20]These data have been captured and compiled by an ex SPARK staff in the region and processed and analyzed by SPARK M&E staff.
- [21]SPARK and IPFB are/were talking with the World Bank to include the fruit cooperatives in their « Projet de Développement Local et de Création d'emploi » (Employment Creation Local Development Project).
- [22]6 small 'mielleries' help extraction; farmers produce, manage the beehives, and bring the product for extraction to the miellerie.
- [23]In the pre-final evaluation report, BRARUDI had mentioned that SPARK could/should be involved in strengthening the capacities of farmers to increase productivity, by increasing sorghum productivity (it is on average 950 kg per ha in Burundi, while other countries have ratios of 3 or 4 t per ha), ensuring the renewal of seeds (seeds degenerate after a period of time), and improving disease control (an estimated 30% of the harvest is spoiled/lost).
- [24]Ending the relationship with Caritas is a testimony to how strict Spark is with partners. Caritas sold a vehicle to Spark which was not in good condition. After negotiations, the vehicle was sent back and reimbursed.
- [25]Interpeace and IMRAP (2017) "Beyond ideology and greed trajectories of young people towards new forms of violence in Côte d'Ivoire and Mali"; <http://3n589z370e6o2eata9wahf14.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-Au-del%C3%A0-de-l'id%C3%A9ologie-et-de-l'app%C3%A2t-du-gain-ExecSum-ENG-002.pdf>
- [26]Farming as a business (FAAB) skills trainings, employability training for laborers and training in improved practices for increasing yields.
- [27]Cooperatives, in Burundi, are allowed to make profit. They can function as commercial enterprises, yet with a social purpose.