



CASE STUDY: Medair Madagascar Beneficiary Accountability Update for 2009

Introduction

*Medair has 'Accountability' as one of its core values and the development of our beneficiary focus as a main strategic objective. Beneficiary Accountability (BA) has therefore rightly received a lot of attention over the last years and is encouraged to be developed in all country programmes. Being accountable for actions decided on by Medair is however not enough. It is Medair's obligation to include the beneficiary in programme decisions and involving them in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project. Beneficiary accountability is thus an important element in the project's course and as the beneficiary's input feeds into the design and implementation of the projects we also speak of participatory monitoring.*¹

The Medair program in Madagascar consists (at the moment) of 3 projects. Rano Tsara, the 'good water' project, Fiaro Tsara for disaster risk reduction in the face of cyclones, and most importantly the (currently nameless and dormant) project for emergency response in the occurrence of a cyclone. The latter is the main reason for Medair's presence in the Maroantsetra district of Madagascar and corresponds closest to the emergency relief and rehabilitation mission of Medair.



The Fiaro Tsara and Rano Tsara projects which are run in Madagascar concern community development. Medair's role is mainly to come alongside the communities, and support them in identifying their needs, elaborating responses and implementing them. This means Medair is not only accountable to beneficiaries, but the beneficiaries themselves are the centre, or heart, of the project. Beneficiaries are not involved in the Medair project, but instead Medair is involved in supporting the communities' projects.

At the entrance of every village where Medair has a construction site in progress, beneficiaries see a big white signboard. It provides information about what is under construction, the name of the project, the donor's name, the executor (Medair), the commissioning authority (commune name), the company in charge of the work, and the duration of the construction.

The Medair Capacity Building team is in charge of improving communication between partners. At every step of the process, the team accompanies the community. A local committee chosen by villagers represents their interests of to the local authorities and to Medair. The committee tasks are clearly defined: reporting problems, complaints, ideas from beneficiaries, discussing matters, supervising decisions and reporting to the villagers on decisions taken during meetings.



¹ Extract from *Study for improvement of Beneficiary Accountability*, Medair MDG Maroantsetra, Henk van Maanen, September 2009

Medair has several procedures implemented to guarantee transparency about who is responsible for what: e.g. selection of the drilling company, construction site supervision, repairing and maintaining infrastructure, raising contributions, roles and responsibility of Medair, of the committee, of the private enterprises. All these procedures are clearly explained during the meetings, written up and distributed.

Radio programmes have also allowed problems and misunderstandings to be clarified. Medair teams have gathered feedback from beneficiaries in the field, reported them to sectors managers, and reactions have been shared during the programmes, in order that all beneficiaries should have a better understanding of the project. In one of our radio programmes, we have tried to give the beneficiaries the opportunity to call the radio and ask their question or give their comments 'on air'. It needs further improvement but was a good trial.



Looking ahead: Beneficiary Accountability in 2010

For 2010, Medair Madagascar plans to set concrete tools in place in order to improve BA

- ◆ **Signboard:** in 2 villages (test period) with information concerning the committee and Medair activities.
- ◆ **Suggestion box:** in 2 villages (test period), where people can anonymously give their written opinion, complaints or observations. This feedback will be analysed and answered by the BA officer, in a first period.
- ◆ **Radio programme:** once a month, Medair answers beneficiaries' questions, observations, complaints or suggestions. Several ways are proposed to give feedback: online comments, committees' reports, letterbox at Medair office and in villages. This method will also be used to share information from Medair to beneficiaries.



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