



# Programme briefing

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## Lessons from a post-intervention study in Taita-Taveta District, Kenya

### Highlights

- Post-intervention studies are new to Plan and relatively new within the NGO sector.
- Plan completed two pilot studies in India and Bolivia in 2010. The lessons learned were fed into Plan's first full study in Kenya in 2011.
- The study analysed the extent to which the situation of the communities had changed over time, the main reasons for these changes and Plan's contribution, if any.
- Evidence was found that many of the physical inputs provided by Plan had contributed to increased resiliency and well-being of individual families and, in some cases, of the wider community.
- Community ownership of projects was often found to be lacking.
- Plan Kenya changed its approach in the late 1990s to develop and work through community-based organisations. The majority of these have not survived.

In 2010, Plan decided to carry out post-intervention studies to improve our understanding of the organisation's contribution to long term changes in the communities we work with. The studies, new to Plan and relatively new within the NGO sector, involve returning to communities around 5 years after we stop work with them to analyse the sustainability of specific interventions. This paper provides a summary of Plan's first full study carried out in a district of Kenya in 2011.

The study found evidence of Plan's contribution to increased resiliency and well-being of individual families and, in some cases, of the wider community. The majority of community-based organisations developed by Plan to represent and advocate for the interests of the community and its children have not survived.

### Background

Plan ran two pilot post-intervention studies in India and Bolivia in 2010. Lessons from the pilots informed the design of a first full study, conducted in Kenya in 2011.

The study was co-ordinated by Plan's international headquarters, in partnership with Plan Kenya, and conducted by UK based consultants INTRAC, following an open selection process. The study focused on two former programme areas, Bura and Voi, located in Taita-Taveta District in the South East of Kenya where Plan worked between 1986 and 2004.

### Purpose

The study's main aim was to assess the sustainability of Plan's interventions and the role that Plan had played in any of the changes

(positive or negative) that had occurred in the communities during this period. The findings from the studies are intended to provide valuable input for programme managers on future programme design and inform how Plan decides to start and finish work in specific areas.

### Methodology

The study team used a rights-based lens to analyse changes amongst rights holders, duty bearers and civil society organisations. The team examined the current situation of the community in terms of empowerment, child centredness and the role of government. The study analysed the extent to which the situation had changed over time, the main reasons for these changes and Plan's contribution, if any.

The tools used included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations and larger group meetings. A range of informants and stakeholders participated in the study. The team consisted of three consultants and they spent 12 days conducting field work in Bura and Voi, plus a pre-study visit of two days to set up meetings with key stakeholders.

## Groups consulted

- Primary school children
- Parents
- Village chiefs
- Village elders
- Women's group members
- CBO committee members
- Farmers
- Nurses
- Head teachers, deputy head teachers and teachers
- District and divisional officers

*Total number of informants: 165*

The only data source available on which areas Plan covered in Bura and Voi was a listing of individual budget lines for projects by village. This indicated that Plan programmes covered 110 villages – 54 in Bura and 56 in Voi. Building on the knowledge of two former Plan staff, villages were selected to represent the different topographical areas and the different types and durations of programmes undertaken by Plan.

## Key findings

Plan's early programming in Bura and Voi (1986–1998) focused on providing direct inputs to individual households and communities. Informants such as the two head teachers at Lushangonyi and Kishusche Primary Schools, together with the Wudanyi Public Health Department Officer, said Plan had played a major role in providing physical inputs which are still intact and in use, such as water tanks and new improved latrines. It was reported that Plan introduced VIP latrines which then became the model of a good latrine, and many other households in the area benefited by copying them. The houses visited by the study team were of families previously supported by Plan and, without exception, they appeared to be in good states of repair, with toilets, water supplies, well-tended shambas (farms) and increasingly with electricity, for those who can afford to pay.

*“Livelihood projects supported by Plan... made a difference to families, both nutritionally, and as a generator of cash to pay school fees”*

Livelihood projects supported by Plan, such as dairy projects, were reported by several respondents to have made a difference to families, both nutritionally, and as a generator of cash to pay school fees. In addition, respondents commented that Irish potatoes are still being cultivated as the result of Plan's promotion and training.

Several informants, including the chief from Mwakitau and participants from a Women's Group in Manangwe, commented that Plan came with its own blue-print of projects, and had not attempted to understand the local community and its needs, nor to involve them in planning. The provision of grain stores to households was reported as misconceived by most respondents. Plan was seen as 'a bringer of things', but had not built a sense of ownership or responsibility for them.

Plan also provided resources (and often adopted the role of duty bearer) for some larger scale projects, many of which were seen to have benefited the wider community. For instance, the large water projects supported by Plan are still operational and generally valued. It was reported that the provision of water supplies to smaller communities in the highlands of St Johns, had probably been key to improving quality of life for families. Previously they embarked on a two-hour round trip to collect water in the dry season. Now water is at their door.



*The study team found that livelihood projects have made a long-term difference to families.*

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Services rendered	Beneficiary	Cost	Waiting Time
Attendance and Customer Care (all services)	Patient/Client	Free	Upto 5 minutes
Child Health Services # Vaccines and Vitamins Immunisation	Cooperation from mother/child/relatives	Free	Upto 30 minutes
Maternal Health Services # Delivery Service # Antenatal Clinic # Post-natal care # Prevention of Mother to child Transmission of HIV	Delivery card Antenatal card & Cooperation from client	Free	Upto 30 minutes
Curative & Diagnostic Service # Adults & Children above 5 yrs # Children below 5 years	Health centre rxn card Dispensary rxn card	10/- 10/-	Upto 30 minutes
Prevention & Response to Disease & Environmental hazards Environmental care	Report of disease Public health concern Application by client	Free	Upto 30 minutes
Health Promotion & Information	Public health issues & easy access to information	Free	Continued
Community Health Services Household Visits by Community Health Workers Antenatal Counseling & Referrals Public Health research & development	Participation of the community & cooperation with the community health workers Client request & cooperation Public health and environment & health	Free	1 Hour 30 Minutes Continued

Accountability systems are now in place in health centres and government administrative offices.

Some of the larger systems remained incomplete at the time of Plan's withdrawal and the Water Department was critical of Plan for leaving many water projects 'hanging' i.e. incomplete and without a proper hand-over. Community members in Mwakitau stated that they should have been involved in the planning and budgeting for the project. The Chief explained that Plan had completed an extensive survey for extending the system but withdrew before work was completed. Plan took the survey findings with them and the community felt unable to undertake the work themselves.

Other larger scale projects discussed by informants included the construction of new classrooms, upgrading of existing rooms and provision of furniture, books and toilets. Infrastructure projects included the construction of at least one health dispensary and two buildings for Financial Services Associations (FSAs). The majority of these were seen to be in a reasonable state of repair and in use. The staff at the dispensary stated that since it opened, people have been seeking help before their illness becomes serious. According to an internal District Health report there had been a drop in children's diarrhoeal diseases, from third in the list of most common diseases, to fourth, by the time Plan left the area. Dispensary users told the study team that the dispensary had boosted dignity and pride in the area. The previous Chief of Buguta said that the FSA building made a big difference by bringing services to the village and saving people the time and expense of travelling.

In the late 1990s Plan Kenya changed its approach, aiming to develop and work through community structures. Plan sought to give greater decision-making

power on the management of projects to committees, and encouraged them to register as community-based organisations (CBOs) and work with sector specific sub-committees. Plan also provided training and capacity building support to these groups, in areas of child rights and related topics. This capacity building tended to be ad hoc and unrelated to wider strategic approaches.

The model introduced by Plan has not survived and almost all Plan-supported CBOs are no longer in operation. This may be due to the largely instrumental way these committees were set up, in order to distribute Plan projects to selected families. They did not appear to have the ability, motivation or capacity to adopt a role representing and advocating for the interests of the community and its children. Also, Plan staff were thinly spread on the ground. Much of their work focused on ensuring the smooth running of relationships between communities and child sponsors. Little time was available to support the development of the CBOs. Although Plan had laid plans for the continuing operation of the CBOs through a federal structure, this was rushed and not well understood by the CBOs which were meant to become members.

*"Almost all Plan-supported CBOs are no longer in operation"*

The study team found that there had been significant progress in these communities in recent years. The principle that people have to be consulted and to participate was frequently articulated by parents and District Officers, often in reflection of its absence in Plan's work. The team found that systems of accountability were now in place and being established in areas such as administration offices and health centres. Children understood their rights, as did teachers and some parents.

Local structures, such as the police and health care facilities also demonstrated awareness of child protection issues. The progress in these areas was largely seen to be the result of changes in government policy since 2002, including the introduction of free primary education, the increasing focus on 'child friendly' school environments, increased attention to accountability of state actors and the introduction of legislation and policies related to rights and specifically child rights. These changes could not be linked back to Plan's work.



There was no evidence that local institutions and organisations focused on issues of equity and provision for the marginalised. Child participation and the institutionalisation of children's views into decision-making processes at community and district levels are only now being introduced by the government. There was little interest amongst government officials interviewed in children's participation.

## Recommendations

A set of recommendations were put forward by the study's authors. The headlines were:

- Undertake a Situation Analysis in prospective programme areas before establishing a programme, in order to ascertain local context and needs.
- Align Plan programme objectives with national commitments to children's rights.
- 'Phasing out' needs to be regarded as a process which requires both time and context specific analysis and design of the process. Communities need to be involved in the process and there needs to be community buy-in and ownership of post-Plan structures.
- Continue to support past partners, for instance through mentoring or referral mechanisms (e.g. support sessions at periodic meetings).

## Plan's response

In 2003 (around the time Plan Kenya left Bura and Voi) the international organisation officially adopted Child Centred Community Development (CCCD), a rights-based approach. This had significant implications for the nature of Plan's development programmes and for its planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. In 2009, Plan introduced a new Programme Accountability and Learning System (PALS), in response

to initial experience in implementing a CCCD approach. PALS is inspired and guided by human rights instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

The PALS cycle addresses the first two recommendations. Plan countries, in partnership with stakeholders, undertake a multi-level Situation Analysis from a child rights perspective prior to developing their country strategies. This provides information on what rights are not being realised for which children, and the structural causes and consequences at different levels. The analysis also considers the wider context of what is or is not being done to realise these rights and how Plan fits into this context – including national Poverty Reduction Strategies, CRC monitoring and other actions by government, private sector and NGOs. Countries are encouraged to review this analysis annually, to ensure Plan's response remains relevant.

Plan welcomes the suggestion to continue to support past partners. A review of Plan's process of phasing out from communities is planned, which will consider these suggestions.

## Next steps

The lessons learned from the study in Kenya will inform a second post-intervention study in 2012, which will focus on an area that Plan left in 2006/7. This allows enough time for long term changes to take shape and, unlike the Kenya study, means the study will concentrate on areas that may have been exposed to rights based programming from Plan. This should enable Plan to explore its contribution to community empowerment and resilience in more depth.

## Further reading

Giffen, J., Dixon, P. and Wangui, R. (2011) *Post Intervention Study - An assessment of the long term impact of Plan's work in the Bura and Voi region, Kenya*. Oxford: INTRAC

Programme Effectiveness Team (2010) *Reflection on the post-intervention pilot studies, 2010*. Woking: Plan International

[plan-international.org/effectiveness](http://plan-international.org/effectiveness)

## Credits

This Briefing was written by Matthew Riley, Programme Effectiveness Officer, Plan.

The study was a joint venture between Plan's international Programme Effectiveness Team and Plan Kenya.

The following consultants from INTRAC conducted the study: Janice Giffen, Peter Dixon and Rose Wangui.

## Programming and effectiveness

This Briefing is published by Plan's international Programming & Effectiveness Department. Plan is one of the largest children's development organisations in the world, working in 50 developing countries. The Department develops systems to manage the quality of Plan's programmes worldwide. We also produce global reviews and support field teams.

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