



## **Voz di Paz Programme**

Management Response to the Key points and Recommendations  
of the 2009-2010 External Evaluation

July 4, 2011

## 1. Introduction

### *Voz di Paz*

The Voz di Paz programme was set up in 2006 after Interpeace first came to Guinea-Bissau at the invitation of the UNOGBIS (now renamed the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau –UNIOGBIS). The aim of the programme is to make a tangible contribution to the consolidation of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau as pre-requisites for sustainable development. The programme seeks to remove the obstacles to peace in Guinea-Bissau by encouraging dialogue and by engaging with a wide range of actors, influential persons and ordinary citizens throughout the country.

In 2008-09 the programme carried out country wide consultations on the root-causes of conflicts. The consultations were carried out in 38 administrative areas in all regions of Guinea-Bissau and aimed at identifying the peace-related issues as seen by Bissau-Guineans. In 2010, the programme validated the findings of this first phase in meetings across the nation with over 6,000 Bissau-Guineans including, for the first time, members of the military and the police. The purpose of the validation process was to discuss and choose four main priorities most relevant for the consolidation of peace. These are:

1. Ineffective State institutions and bad governance;
2. Poverty;
3. Poor administration of Justice; and
4. Tribalism.

Since 2010 marked the end of the first phase of the Voz di Paz programme, Interpeace and the Voz di Paz team considered that evaluating the 2009-2010 period<sup>1</sup>, would be an appropriate time to reflect on the achievements to date and consider recommendations for the second phase. This new phase, which was initiated in 2011, will focus on establish Working Groups for each of the 4 priority issues and who will be charged with the identification and articulation of solutions relevant to the priorities.

### *The evaluation*

From 21 April until 02 June 2011, the evaluation the Voz di Paz programme was carried out by an external independent evaluator, Mrs. Annette Englert. Mrs. Englert was selected for her extensive experience in conducting evaluations. Her prior evaluations of peacebuilding programmes in Northern Uganda for the United National Development Programme (UNDP), in Kenya for the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and for Misereor in Western Tanzania, as well as her consulting work for Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), suited the requirements put forward for this evaluation.

The evaluation included a desk review and was carried out using programme documents and reports provided to the evaluator by Interpeace and Voz di Paz. Consultations and field work in Guinea-Bissau were also conducted by Mrs. Englert who, with the help of a translator, participated in team meetings,

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<sup>1</sup> A first evaluation, which was part of a contractual agreement, assessed the achievements of the programme from 2007 to 2008.

interviewed Voz di Paz staff members, Interpeace staff as well as many stakeholders who were key actors involved in the first phase. Members of the Regional Spaces for Dialogue (RSD) and participants in the countrywide consultations on the main obstacles to peace, that took place during 2009-2010, were also interviewed. The evaluator also interviewed staff from the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), other associated NGOs and International Organizations, Members of Parliament and ordinary citizens<sup>2</sup>. At the end of the field visit, the evaluator presented to the Voz di Paz team the preliminary findings of the evaluation. The draft evaluation report was commented by Interpeace, the Voz di Paz team and its Board. The comments made were integrated in the report by Mrs. Englert.

The evaluation findings will now be shared with the programme's main donors, Interpeace and Voz di Paz staff and colleagues, especially those involved in programme operations and development. The evaluation of the Voz di Paz programme is meant as a public document and will be available to consult on the Interpeace website.

## **2. Response to key points and recommendations formulated by the evaluation**

Voz di Paz and Interpeace largely accept and very much appreciate the key points and recommendations provided for in the evaluation report. The findings of the evaluation and the recommendations formulated have provided the programme with key insights that will help shape and strengthen the intervention design and related activities for its upcoming phase. The following are clarifications that the management felt necessary to highlight to bring greater accuracy to the report and indicate how recommendations will be integrated into the programme.

- ***Quantitative Performance***

In the section assessing the programme's quantitative performance, the evaluation suggested a total number of participants to the programme's first phase to be 23,100 people. These figures were based on evidence-based attendance of financial records which recalled the number of participants that were given a travel allowance to make the trip to the consultations. However, upon review the programme realized that participants that took part in the consultations who did not receive a travel allowance because of their proximity to the venue, which represents approximately 50% of the total of participants, were not accounted for in the financial reports. Had documentation of all the participants been recorded, regardless of whether people received a travel allowance, Voz di Paz estimates the total number of participants that took part in the consultations would be nearly 40,000. The same circumstances account for the disparity in attendance of the military consultations.

The disparities encountered have clearly highlighted the need to establish comprehensive attendee lists for all future meetings.

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<sup>2</sup> A full list of interviewees is found in Annex of the evaluation report.

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Total estimated by the evaluator</b> <i>(official)</i>	<b>Voz di Paz estimation</b> <i>(unofficial)</i>
Members of the Regional Committees of the Regional spaces for Dialogue	135	135
Participants in of the regional consultation meetings	3,280	6,640
Participants to awareness raising events	3,000	15,000 <sup>3,4</sup>
Representatives directly involved in conflict mitigation activities	300	300
Members of the General Assembly /Board, formerly National Orientation Forum	11	11
Sector level participants to consultations in Bissau in co-operation with the youth organisations	600	600
Participants at the public event at the French Institute	175	175
Security Sector Participants the security forces in Bissau	400	1000 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Participants to other public events</b>	15,000	15,000
Diaspora	200	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,101</b>	<b>39,061</b>

3 Voz di Paz incorporated an estimate of the total number of participants involved in activities implemented in partnership with the Voz di Paz Regional Spaces for Dialogue, such as 6 reconciliation<sup>3</sup> football tournaments in Bissau, Mansoa, Djendu, São Domingos, Bula and Tam and one cross border meetings in Candjambari and Mansaba, and an inter-island meeting in the Bijagos Arquipelago amongst others. These events may not have been taken into account during the evaluation, failing to include some 12,000 people which were estimated to have participated in these community reconciliation and awareness raising events.

<sup>4</sup> The football tournaments are a tool to unite communities in an unthreatening way, in order to solve rising tensions or long term disputes. For example, in Mansoa, the football tournament united two villages that were involved in a serious and violent conflict which led to the death of a young footballer. Other examples includes: a women's football tournament for peace organized in Bissau, a football camp for children in Bula, a 12-village football in Djendu, Peace tournaments in Bolama and São Domingos, cross country (Guinea-Bissau/Senegal) football tournament for peace in Mansaba, a mixed school football tournament in Cacheu and Tam, a relay race run for the military and civilians in Bafata, Inter-Island meeting in Bubaque, etc.

<sup>5</sup> There were two big consultation meetings organized in December 2009 and January 2010 both sessions gathered more than 1000 participants from Bissau and various barracks of the so called military regions.

- ***Ensuring a more sustained contact with International Agencies and Donors***

The evaluation pointed out that while having formed strong relations with the international community, the programme did not create sufficient links with departments dealing with peace and security sector reform, in particular with UNDP and the EU. While Voz di Paz has had working relations and interactions with these organisations since the establishment of the programme, it will seek to strengthen this relationship by engaging them both bilaterally and collectively in the dialogue and debate with respect to key findings and outcomes of the dialogue process.

- ***Updating the format of the Radio shows***

As noted by the evaluator, radio features are a key component of the Voz di Paz outreach strategy to raise the population's awareness to peacebuilding issues in Guinea-Bissau. Within this framework, the evaluation report rightly suggests extending the reach of Voz di Paz's media tools through innovative techniques such as broadcasting in creole and local language or, involving local journalists in commenting on peace issues or providing the opportunity to participate in the radio broadcast live.

In its new phase, the Voz di Paz will work towards consolidating and expanding its use of the radio and media tools. In this framework, the recommendations made in the evaluation will be assessed and integrated where benefitting to the programme's objectives. Beyond regular radio broadcasting of shows, a new awareness campaign is now underway on different topics relating to peacebuilding issues in Guinea-Bissau. In the coming weeks Voz di Paz will provide specific updates on the programme's activities such as to gather momentum and keep the population which participated in the first phase involved and informed on an on-going basis.

- ***Strengthening the engagement with key stakeholders***

The evaluation refers Voz di Paz to be more extensive in its involvement of key stakeholders in the programme, especially the security sector and civil society organisations. Voz di Paz's goals since the inception of the programme have been to seek to involve all sectors of Guinea-Bissau's society within the formulation of a peaceful future for Guinea-Bissau. In this context, the inclusion of key stakeholders such as the political elite, the security sector, and civil society organisations in the national dialogue is recognized by the team as a prerequisite for achieving long-lasting peace.

**Engagement with the military.** In the analysis of the security sector's inclusion in the Voz di Paz programme, the evaluation rightly suggests that highly ranked military officers are not engaged in the consultations. More high level military participation in the Voz di Paz consultations is one of the key recommendations on the security sector mentioned in the evaluation report.

Contrary to many other models, the Bissau-Guinean army is composed mainly of high ranking military officers rather than soldiers<sup>6</sup>. Throughout the consultations carried out with the military during the first

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<sup>6</sup> Establishing a standard proportion between high ranking military officials and soldiers is one of the main issues of the security sector reform process.

phase of the programme, the panel of military staff which took part in the activities was actually composed of a large number of highly ranked military officials, up to the level of Colonel. In terms of responsibilities, the sample of the military hierarchy involved in the consultations represents the most active and significant component of the army. Above the level of Colonel, there are only a small number of Generals who were not involved in the programme before the evaluation took place. During the first phase of the programme, it was important to reach to as many army representatives as possible in order to generate a large amount of inputs.

Recognizing the importance of ensuring the participation and support from the highest ranks in this new phase of the programme, the programme had recently (in 2011) started to move towards including these very top level army Generals into the Voz di Paz activities and discussions. For example, in May 2011, the programme organised an information session with the military on the state of the security sector reforms in the country, which was attended by some 500 military. General Miguel Gomes of the Air Force Chief of Staff inaugurated the event.

As suggested by the evaluation, Voz di Paz anticipates seeking out the top ranking military officials and the other high ranking security sector officials in order to better ensure their full participation in the national dialogue. Their participation is even more important in the framework of improving dialogue and creating shared visions between politicians, the military and the Bissau-Guinean society as a whole.

**Engagement with the civil society.** One of the evaluator's remarks specified the need for Voz di Paz to engage more thoroughly with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) such as to create linkages, share experiences and attenuate potential rivalries that may emerge from an environment prone to competition for funding.

Since its inception the Voz di Paz programme has based its work on the principle of inclusiveness, where the broadest representation and engagement is sought everyone is involved. Widespread inclusion ensures that the solutions that are identified and implemented are representative, legitimate and owned, which makes them less likely to be ignored or undermined. As such, Voz di Paz has made sure to include in its activities members of other civil society organisations, especially those involved in the development and peacebuilding fields. For example, in 2010, Voz di Paz worked with civil society organisations working with youth groups in a joint awareness raising event to sensitize youth in the use non-violent means to solve disputes. This event was held in the Bairro Militar, the most violence-prone district in Bissau. Voz di Paz will continue to engage with other civil society organizations in its second phase, in particular through its role of facilitator at the National Conference for Peace and Development. Another example, is the collaborative work between Voz di Paz and the NGO Djemberem di Kompu Kombersa and the programme Mom ku Mom where joint activities were organized on the issue of Security Sector Reforms.

While Voz di Paz believes it has demonstrated significant commitment to engaging key stakeholders, it will continue to look for ways to be more inclusive and more coordinated in its engagement with the

military leadership, the business sector and CSO's in the future, as it was suggested in the evaluation report.

- ***Setting up a Regional Space for Dialogue in the capital city Bissau***

At the end of first phase (December 2010) Voz di Paz also recognized the need to set up a Regional Space for Dialogue in the capital city Bissau. Having anticipated this need, Voz di Paz has started to take steps to establish four new Dialogue Spaces to cover the extent of the city. The establishment of these new chapters is in concordance with the evaluation's recommendation to implement RSD structures in Bissau.

- ***Increasing the reach of the Regional Spaces for Dialogue***

The evaluation recognises the importance of the Regional Spaces for Dialogue in gathering support for the programme at the regional level and providing assistance to immediate conflict mediation needs. As a result, the evaluation's suggestion that a fair amount of the population interviewed at the regional level is unaware of the existence of the Regional Spaces for Dialogue may be due to a confusion surrounding the naming convention of these dialogue structures. The use of the term *Regional Space for Dialogue* is at times considered too technical. Consequently, the team will now assess how to adapt the terminology to popular use in order to avoid future confusion.

Notwithstanding the confusion surrounding the naming practice, the evaluation rightly points to the disproportionate number of RSD members and the large population they have to cover at the regional level. Consequently, the suggestion was made to increase the number of RSD members, to enable them to target a larger audience. However, Voz di Paz feels that this recommendation touches upon the strategy of the programme itself. While aware of the logistical difficulties of RSD members to cover wide regions, the choice of RSD members was not associated to a quota per regional population but to the individuals' capacity to influence and be widely respected by the population. An example of the strengths required of RSD members can be illustrated by the RSD of Mansaba-Farim in the Oio region. The four current members of the RSD, through their association to the largest farmer's network in Guinea-Bissau, KAFO, are able to access to some 24,000 people who are members of this network.

With these considerations in mind, the team does not feel that an increase in the numbers of RSD members would lead to a greater involvement of the local population since the participation of the population is responsive to RSD member's influence rather than physical presence. However, Voz di Paz appreciates the recommendation in that it highlighted the need to extend the capacity of RSD to have a greater outreach role.

### **3. Conclusion**

The evaluation was a very useful reflective exercise in that has provided Interpeace and Voz di Paz with constructive insights on how to intensify the programme's performance and impact in the next phase. Both reflections on the programme as a whole, as well as focused recommendations on the

management of information and research, have been appreciated as tools to improve the level and quality of the programme's outputs.

As it continues to work towards the consolidation of peace, Voz di Paz will seek to incorporate the recommendations stemming from the evaluation, specifically in improving support to the RSDs, expanding its media strategy and broadening the range and levels of key actors in the formulation of a locally owned peacebuilding process in Guinea-Bissau.