



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN  
CAMEROON  
(ELCC)

EGLISE EVANGÉLIQUE LUTHÉRIENNE AU  
CAMEROUN (EELC)

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

PROJET N0 721 601” PROJECT FOR RENFORCEMENT OF  
CAPACITY OF LEADERS” (PRCL)

TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT OF PROJECT FOR REINFORCEMENT OF  
CAPACITY OF LEADERS (PRCL)

By:

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## **1. Executive Summary**

The Project for Reinforcement of Capacity of Leaders (PRCL) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (ELCC) was under implementation since January 2008. It was planned for five consecutive years (2008-2012) and initial started with 3 out of 10 regional synods of ELCC with strategy to extend slowly to all 10 regions. As the title indicates, the project aimed in reinforcing the capacity of the leaders of the church at all levels of the structure through awareness raising trainings and seminars for members of the councils on understanding the missions of the councils as contained in the constitution and the by-laws of the Church, on enabling the members of the councils in understanding their responsibilities and to initiate them with the routines appropriate to the effective functioning of the councils, on enriching and contextualizing curricula by the biblical and theological schools for better answering the challenges of the Church by introducing it into the curricula for example the contents on the development, the leadership, management, etc. , to promote the increasing participation of the women in the bodies of decision as well in the Church as in the society; to work for the integration of the women in the various ministries of the Church, and to fight against their marginalization in the society, by reinforcing the capacity of the direction of information and the communication for a better flowing of information within the Church and in a professional way and developing competences of the staff of the direction of information and communication to promote the culture of filing and conserving the archives in the various administrations of the Church

This terminal evaluation of the PRCL was conducted in April 2013. The evaluation exercise covers the five years project period (2008-2012). The evaluation team was composed of three persons who were selected from outside of the project area and one expert who was especially assigned to work on detail of the financial management aspect. The project staff and other church leaders relevant to the project were participated as resource persons.

Both primary and secondary data were collected during the evaluation process. Qualitative participatory evaluation methods were used for primary data collection. Primary data were collected from target groups of the project (men, women, and youth), project staff, and physical observations. The team planned to visit three regions out of ten and actually visited only two regions, due to changes in travel schedule for the team. Time factor and other security and accessibility issues were some of the causes of limitation for the methodology of the team to reach at least 50% of the target area. The selected and visited regions are Mbere and central region of the ELCC. Secondary data pertaining to the project were also reviewed.

The evaluation team made the assessment based on the tasks given to it and methodologies applied by it and come up with the following findings:

### **Implementation of planned activities**

The planned trainings to internalize the constitution of the church and make it applicable has been conducted at all targeted regions and the constitution is well adhered to and the regional and district councils are following it.

Trainings in relation to leadership and management have also been provided to all target participants and the planned manual on management was finalized and printed under the title 'Improve the

management in ELCC' and is being distributed to the beneficiaries.

The enrichment or contextualization of curricula by the biblical and theological schools for better response to the challenges of the church has been well implemented at Meiganga theological seminary and the first batch of pastors will complete their study soon.

Work of the project in promoting women's participation in decision making bodies was limited only to participating the leaders of women in the training organized for other activities and as a result the participation of women in regional and district councils and other decision making bodies in most of the regions is very low. The same is true in case of youth.

From the discussion made with focus group discussants, it can be understood that activities related to local resource mobilization and fund raising skill development is almost not addressed. Only one of the three visited region has started raising fund and opened bank account as part of ensuring sustainability of the project.

### **Achievement of the goal**

The overall goal of the project is to make the administrative and decision-making bodies of the Church more effective that allows the Church to be more effective in its internal functioning and to be an agent of development in the society.

In achieving the aforementioned goal, the project has exerted its utmost effort in reinforcing the capacity of leaders through training on different topics of leadership and management. The strategy and approach applied by the project in grouping the participants to address them in consequent years starting from the executives to the grass roots level and using local internal human resources for facilitation of training (skill transfer), preparation of manual which can be understandable by all users, working on constitution of the church and focusing on leaders has helped the project in achieving its main goal of reinforcing the capacity of leaders in management and leadership. However, the initial goal of promoting women's participation in decision making bodies of the church has not been fully achieved.

### **Impacts**

The results of the assessment of the visited regions and information from the various reports show that the project has shown significant impact in the work of the church especially in improving leadership and management skills of leaders at all levels. This is reflected in that the constitution of the church is strictly adhered to and followed by the concerned organs in the church, leaders know their roles and responsibilities and rights and obligations, improved skill in planning, budgeting, financial management, properly conducting meetings and documentation of results and reporting. The concept of accountability and transparency is understood by most of the leaders at various levels and they have started exercising it practically. The impact of the project is seen even beyond the church environment as most of the participants of the project are part of the entire society and civil servant. Some of them witness that they use the knowledge they acquired in their daily work and life.

## **Sustainability**

Though from the assessment and discussion with participants it is understood that the sustainability of some of the activities are possible, the evaluation team could not get any plan from the church on the strategies the project should continue. All trainings on leadership and management can be sustained if there will be proper planning and strategy to follow up. Leaders have been trained in management and leadership and the manual is already prepared and in use by most of the regions and districts. Leaders at various levels are exercising planning, budgeting, leading meetings properly, and understood and adhered to the constitution of the church which indicates that skill is developed among the leaders through knowledge transfer by the project. However, the participants raise certain challenges which may affect the sustainability issues. These are the current conflict within the church, high turnover of staff and limitation of resources.

## **Project management**

In general the project management is efficient in that there is a good harmony among the actors (stakeholders) due to the high commitment of the coordinator and support from the others. There are adequate office facilities and logistics for the project management purpose. The evaluation team has learned that in year 2011, there was a theft of computers and other essential documents from the office of the project coordinator which to some extent affected the commitment of the coordinator and implementation of activities.

The technical input from the external consultant and NMS has highly contributed to the success of the project.

## **Financial management.**

The funding partner committed to allocate 242.950.000 CFA for the five years implementation of this program. But budget revisions have been made annually from the main plan document. Accordingly, the total amount since the beginning of the project in 2008 until 31 December 2012 was 201.647.040 CFA. Hence, the annually allocated budget has been transferred on quarterly basis. From January 2008 up to December 2012, 223.496.343 CFA has been transferred to the project office and utilized for the planned project related activities and services. It is 11% more, because the exchange rates benefited by the project at the time of the transfer.

The general observation regarding the financial management of the project is that the project management and the decision making structures of ELCC has established routines and employed competent staff, in order to adhere to the requirements of the donors (Norad, Digni, NMS), and to fulfil the internal regulations of the church.

The project has financed the development of a handbook which comprises administrative guidelines, based on the constitution, to be used by the different leadership levels of ELCC, including financial management. This handbook was released at the end of 2012, and will be an important tool for the administration of the church in the future.

Financial reports and Audit reports are prepared according to agreed formats, and sent to Digni in due time to meet the required deadlines.

The assessment has however identified some areas where improvements and clarifications are desired which is elaborated further in a separate report.

The technical input from the external consultant and NMS has highly contributed to the success of the project.

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

From the assessment conducted and revision of the documents the evaluation team concludes that the project has achieved the desired goal through successful implementation of the planned activities. It can be concluded that most of the activities have resulted in good impact and also seem to be sustainable given the ELCC design strategies for follow up and ensure the sustainability.

Recommendations:

1. The evaluation team recommends that the project be terminated according to the plan stated in the project document.
2. The ELCC should design strategy of ensuring sustainability of the achieved results in collaboration with project within the remaining months of the project extension period.
3. According to the assessments and information from various documents, participation of women in decision making bodies of the church is very low and the condition of women in the society is very poor. Therefore the evaluation team recommends that the ELCC and NMS should work on empowering the women and address the wider gender issue. NMS has excellent experience in addressing gender issues and empowering women with its partners and should arrange replication of these experience in Cameroon through initiating comprehensive gender and development and women empowerment project.
4. Developing local resource mobilization and fundraising skills can be considered in line with the recommendation under 3 above.
5. It is also recommended that enriching or contextualizing of curricula by theological schools which is currently successful at Meiganga should be expanded to other Bible schools using the remaining month of the extension period.



## **2. Introduction and Background**

### **2.1 Background to the project**

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (ELCC) is divided into 10 regions, in districts and congregations. There are a total of more than 1500 congregations. The head office, situated in Ngaoundéré, coordinates the ecclesiastical and development and social services activities of the church.

It is expected that the central administration assist and strengthen the work of proclamation in the congregations. But the administrative structures do not seem to function properly to achieve the desired goals. In addition to the problems in the administrative structures, the main leaders at various levels are not sufficiently competent to assume their responsibilities. The members of the various councils and committees are not always well chosen and often do not know their obligations. All these inadequacies cause a dysfunctioning of system within the Church.

To address this vital problem, ELCC and NMS have prepared a project for reinforcement of capacity of leaders of ELCC at all levels and solicited fund from Digni/NORAD and started implementation of the project in January 2008.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (ELCC) is responsible for the project management and implementation. The Centre for Intercultural Communication (SIK) has since the beginning in 2008 been responsible for the monitoring, while NMS has been the responsible partner in relation to Digni/NORAD. SIK planned to visit the project twice a year for the first two years and then once a year while NMS has to closely follow up through their presence in Cameroon and visits from the head office.

### **2.2 Project goal and objectives**

The overall goal of the project is to make the administrative and decision-making bodies of the Church more effective that will allow the Church to be more effective in its internal functioning and to be an agent of development in the society. It was noted that the Church loses much time and resources because the decisions are not always properly made and not carried out accordingly.

The specific objectives to achieve the goal are:

- To enable the members of the councils to understand the missions of the councils as contained in the constitution and the by-laws of the Church;
- To capacitate the members of the councils to understand their responsibilities and to initiate them with the routines appropriate to the effective functioning of the councils
- To enable the members of the executive to understand the missions of the executive bureaus as contained in the constitution and the by-laws of the Church;
- To capacitate the members of the executive bureau to understand their responsibilities and to master the appropriate routines
- To enrich and contextualize curricula by the biblical and theological schools for better answering the challenges of the Church

- To promote the increasing participation of women in the bodies of decision as well in the Church as in the society and strengthen the integration of women in the various ministries of the Church, and to fight against their marginalization in the society.

### **3. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology**

#### **3.1. Evaluation objectives**

The major objective of this terminal evaluation is to assess the project's progress, covering such aspects of the project's implementation as planned versus implemented activities and their contributions to the set objectives, major challenges encountered and lessons learned, and to identify key performance and recommendations. To that end, the evaluation exercise focused on the following items, being framed in the terms of reference:

- To summarize shortly the activities in the project.
- To assess whether the project reached its goals
- To assess the impact of the project
- To assess whether the church has sufficient plans on how to maintain and further develop the work that the project has focused on and give recommendations for the future.
- To assess how the project is managed, financial routines included.
- To assess in what way has the project promoted gender equality
- To assess the consultancies done by NMS and SIK.

#### **3.2. Evaluation approach and methodology**

A multi-stakeholder participatory approach was used for the evaluation exercise. Directed by ToR, the target groups of the project, persons representing the stakeholders of the project and the donor were given the opportunity to take part in the exercise. The evaluation exercise involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources. Basically relating to the ToR, the following methodological elements were used to gather the required data/ information:

**Desk review of relevant documents:** Project proposal and plan documents, progress and other monitoring reports, constitution document of the ELCC, the newly printed manual by the project and audit reports were reviewed.

**Participatory discussion and reflection:** For the participatory discussion and reflections, the evaluation team initially selected three regions that were able to qualitatively represent the different characteristics of the project target but due to the factors stated below, it could have visited only two regions. The relevant variables used for the disaggregation and selection of the three regions were project components, road access/distance, security issue and time factor. The selected and visited regions are Mbere (Meiganga) and central (Ngaoundere).

Specific methods used under this methodology include general and focused group discussions with the representatives of project stake-holders; key informants' interview, project staff and final consultation/debriefing meeting with project staff, the executive board, representative of the donor and external advisors for the project.

**Observation of project sites and/or physical characteristics:** The evaluation team did also make efforts to capture specific and rather detailed information on some project activities, to help understand their operation and success.

## 4. Project Holder Analysis

### 4.1. Project organization and management

The ELCC is the project implementing body. The actual implementation and management of the project is handled by a Project leader and project coordinator and the financial management is supported by the project accountant. One expatriate and local external project advisors are also providing technical and advisory support to the project management.

**Table 1: Project Staff**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Year and experience</b>	<b>Remark</b>
HAMIDOU DJOULDE	- General Secretary of the ELCC - Administrative Responsible of the project	Age: 47 years Secondary school teacher of general education. Professional expérience: 18 years. Holder of a diploma DIPES 2	Responsible for the Project since January 1, 2012.
BASSANE JEAN CHRISTOPHE	Project Leader	Age: 33 years. Professional Experience: 8 years. Thorough Studies Diploma in Management Sciences (DEA en sciences de gestion).	Project leader since July 2008.
TAKI TOMKAO	Assistant to the Finance Director of the ELCC. Project Accourtant.	Age: 42 years Professional experience: 13 years. Degree: Certificate of higher accounting technician (BTS en comptabilité).	Project Accountant since January 1st, 2013.

The project is overall led by ELCC general secretary, but day to day routine is handled by the coordinator who is covering roles of all other positions including that of driver. These few project staff are highly committed and very much organized in using the existing local resource especially human resource for facilitation of trainings and workshops. The project mostly uses the existing ELCC facilities for transfer of knowledge which contributes to sustainability of the project. The project staff is highly overloaded and this especially true for the coordinator. It was recommended in the midterm evaluation to recruit additional staff who can share the load of the coordinator, but this was not materialized as the project management related the reason with shortage of budget. Cooperation and collaboration of the project stakeholders with the project staff has highly contributed to the success of the project management.

## **Project assets**

The PRCL was provided with office space within the head quarter of ELCC. The project uses one four wheel drive vehicle and has adequate office equipment. The computers and other office materials which were stolen from the office of the coordinator in 2011 were replaced by purchasing new ones. However, at a time the loss of the equipment and documents affected the implementation process and motivation of the coordinator.

## **Finance and administration**

The general observation regarding the financial management of the project is that the project management and the decision making structures of ELCC has established routines and employed competent staff, in order to adhere to the requirements of the donors (Norad, Digni, NMS), and to fulfil the internal regulations of the church.

The project has financed the development of a handbook which comprises administrative guidelines, based on the constitution, to be used by the different leadership levels of ELCC, including financial management. This handbook was released in 2012, and will be an important tool for the administration of the church in the future.

Financial reports and Audit reports are prepared according to agreed formats, and sent to Digni in due time to meet the required deadlines.

The assessment has however identified some areas where improvements and clarifications are desired. These are described in more detail in a separate report.

The funding partner committed to allocate 242.950.000 CFA for the five years implementation of this program. But budget revisions have been made annually from the main plan document. Accordingly, the total amount since the beginning of the project in 2008 until 31 December 2012 was 201.647.040 CFA. Hence, the annually allocated budget has been transferred on quarterly basis. From January 2008 up to December 2012, 223.496.343 CFA has been transferred to the project office and utilized for the planned project related activities and services. It is 11% more, because the exchange rates benefited by the project at the time of the transfer.(Refer to annex 1 for detail budget summary).

In general, the comparison of PRCL activities from budget (according the activity plan) has only exceeded by 10, 25% by the effort of the project management in carefully monitoring of allocated budget taking into account actual realization of planned activities.

However, some activities such as training at the district level have seen remarkable overrun, due to underestimation of number of participants during budget plan when compared with the actual realization which exceeded the plan by 24.06%.

The other budget item which was not considered at the initial planning stage is maintenance and repair of the vehicle, despite the existence of a car at the level of the PRCL. Later on in the process of project implementation, the management included this budget item under administration which actually exaggerated the realization under this budget item.

The ELCC executive board decided in 2002 and 2004 in the Synod Council, that all departments and projects should participate in cost sharing of the operation of the EELC by charging 4% administration cost. This decision also includes projects supported by Digni/NORAD through NMS, though the

policy of these partners do not allow such direct deduction, but local partners should charge based on the service they render to the project/program.

The financial management of the PRCL is provided by the financial Manager of the ELCC. There is a manual of procedure for implementation of activities. This aspect shows that the existence of the PRCL does not alter the structure of the Church. This is really one of the strengths of this program. However, some weaknesses show that the financial Manager must make close collaboration with the Project management, for the follow-up of the recommendations provided to the project by the external auditor in the management letter of the audit report. These comments were not dealt with and they are pending for several years un attended and reappear on the audit report each year of the project duration.

The existence of the system of internal control in the EELC also deserves to be mentioned in this assessment. The Controller General and his Assistant have made remarkable works in monitoring and follow up of the financial management of the Church in general, and in the departments and projects in particular. However, their roles must focus on monitoring and advising and supporting but not become blocking factors in the realization of daily routines. The important thing is to schedule periodic control more frequently.

The project is externally controlled by an audit firm called Africa Review Council (ARC) every year. The Synod Council of the ELCC as the highest decision making body of the project is mandated to choose the audit firm.

## **5. Project Strategies and findings of the Assessment**

### **5.1 Implementation strategies**

The main strategy the project applied is genuine participation of the project stakeholders. The project implementation based on the previous experience of ELCC in implementing the project all against aids and the Literacy project financed by the former BN and now Digni. These experiences of how to encourage and work through the local stakeholders to promote development was used in this project.

The training were done by internal and external personnel according to different themes. Missionaries and staff from NMS head quarter, as well as external consultant have assisted in the training.

The project in collaboration with women for Christ have included women representatives in trainings.

The other strategy the project used to minimize cost is arrangement of various meetings using other events of the various councils of the church. This is explained in that the councils of the church at head office, regional, district and congregational level have regular meeting time and the project uses the opportunity by arranging the training or seminars for additional day or days through covering the expense for these extra days only.

### **5.2 Findings**

The evaluation team made the assessment based on the tasks given to it and by using the methodologies mentioned above and come up with the following findings:

### **5.2.1 Implementation of planned activities**

A summary of plan versus implementation performance for the project period (2008 - 2012) is presented as annex 2 and in this section analysis of plan versus implementation of major project activities are discussed by component:

The planned trainings to internalize the constitution of the church and make it applicable has been conducted at all targeted regions and the constitution is well adhered to and the regional and district councils are following it.

Trainings in relation to leadership and management have also been provided to all target participants and the planned manual on management was finalized and printed under the title 'Improve the management in ELCC' and is being distributed to the beneficiaries.

The enrichment or contextualization of curricula by the biblical and theological schools for better response to the challenges of the church has been well implemented at Meiganga theological seminary and the first batch of pastors will complete their study soon.

Work of the project in promoting women's participation in decision making bodies was limited only to participating the leaders of women in the training organized for other activities and as a result the participation of women in regional and district councils and other decision making bodies in most of the regions is very low. The same is true in case of youth.

From the discussion made with focus group discussants, it can be understood that activities related to local resource mobilization and fund raising skill development is almost not addressed. Only one of the three visited regions has started raising fund and opened bank account as part of ensuring sustainability of the project.

### **5.2.2 Achievement of the goal**

The overall goal of the project is to make the administrative and decision-making bodies of the Church more effective that allows the Church to be more effective in its internal functioning and to be an agent of development in the society.

In achieving the aforementioned goal, the project has exerted its utmost effort in reinforcing the capacity of leaders through training on different topics of leadership and management. The strategy and approach applied by the project in grouping the participants to address them in consequent years starting from the executives to the grass roots level and using local internal human resources for facilitation of training (skill transfer), preparation of manual which can be understandable by all users, working on constitution of the church and focusing on leaders has helped the project in achieving its main goal of reinforcing the capacity of leaders in management and leadership. However, the initial goal of promoting women's participation in decision making bodies of the church has not been fully achieved.

### **5.2.3 Impacts**

The results of the assessment of the visited regions and information from the various reports show that the project has shown significant impact in the work of the church especially in improving leadership and management skills of leaders at all levels. This is reflected in that the constitution of the church is strictly adhered to and followed by the concerned organs in the church, leaders know their roles and responsibilities and rights and obligations, improved skill in planning, budgeting, financial management, properly conducting meetings and documentation of results and reporting. The concept of accountability and transparency is understood by most of the leaders at various levels and they have started exercising it practically. The impact of the project is seen even beyond the church environment as most of the participants of the project are part of the entire society and civil servant. Some of them witness that they use the knowledge they acquired in their daily work and life.

#### **5.2.4 Sustainability**

Though from the assessment and discussion with participants it is understood that the sustainability of some of the activities are possible, the evaluation team could not get any plan from the church on the strategies how the project should continue. All trainings on leadership and management can be sustained if there will be proper planning and strategy to follow up. Leaders have been trained in management and leadership and the manual is already prepared and already in use by most of the regions and districts. Leaders at various levels are exercising planning, budgeting, leading meetings properly, and understood and adhered to the constitution of the church which indicates that skill is developed among the leaders through knowledge transfer by the project. However the participants raise certain challenges which may affect the sustainability issues. These are the current conflict within the church, high turnover of staff and limitation of resources.

#### **5.2.5 Project management**

In general the project management is efficient in that there is a good harmony among the actors (stakeholders) due to the high commitment of the coordinator and support from the others. There are adequate office facilities and logistics for the project management purpose. The evaluation team has learned that in year 2011, there was a theft of computers and other essential documents from the office of the project coordinator which to some extent affected the commitment of the coordinator and implementation of activities. The management in regard to finance will be presented separately.

The technical input from the external consultant and NMS has highly contributed to the success of the project.

## **6. Conclusion and Recommendations**

From the assessment conducted and revision of the documents the evaluation team concludes that the project has achieved the desired goal through successful implementation of the planned activities. It can be concluded that most of the activities have resulted in good impact and also seem to be sustainable given the ELCC design strategies for follow up and ensure the sustainability.

### **Recommendations:**

1. The evaluation team recommends that the project be terminated according to the plan stated in the project document.
2. The ELCC should design strategy of ensuring sustainability of the achieved results in collaboration with project within the remaining months of the project extension period.
3. According to the assessments and information from various documents, participation of women in decision making bodies of the church is very low and the condition of women in the society is very poor. Therefore the evaluation team recommends that the ELCC and NMS should work on empowering the women and address the wider gender issue. NMS has excellent experience in addressing gender issues and empowering women with its partners and should arrange replication of these experience In Cameroon through initiating comprehensive gender and development and women empowerment project.
4. Developing local resource mobilization and fundraising skills can be considered in line with the recommendation under 3 above.
5. It is also recommended that enriching or contextualizing of curricula by theological schools which is currently successful at Meiganga should be expanded to other Bible schools using the remaining month of the extension period.