
Centres for Arbitration and Mediation: Evaluation Report

Global Conscience Initiative

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CAMs: Project Evaluation

Introduction

The Centres for Arbitration and Mediation project is an initiative of Global Conscience Initiative that aims to promote peace-keeping and the use of alternative justice mechanisms for conflict resolution in Southern Cameroon. The project consisted of a one day workshop in which councilors from local villages around Kumba were trained in mediation skills. As part of my internship at GCI, I was given the task of conducting an evaluation of the project and its impact on local communities. Together with another GCI intern, Lydia Bulmer, I collected data via interviews and observations. The following report is an attempt to synthesize this data, analyse it in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of the project and offer concrete suggestions for its improvement.

The CAMs Project

Project Motivation: Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the CAMs was to create spaces for peaceful resolution of disputes at the community level by empowering local leaders, community members and youths through training in anti-corruption and mediation training.

The CAMs project aims to provide an alternative channel for the resolution of low level disputes, enabling those involved to avoid the costly and time-consuming urban judicial system. As such, it hopes to improve the timeliness and quality of dispute resolution on the local level and reduce detention time as well as eliminate costly bail payments.

The main goal of the CAMs is to use mediation to find solutions to disputes which are acceptable to all parties involved.

Periphery objectives of the project include the following:

- To prevent incidences of 'jungle justice'
- To reduce corruption
- To spread good will and peace-keeping within communities
- To improve conflict resolution skills among councilors and help improve the work of quarter councils

Project Description

The first phase of the CAMs project took place over the period May to August 2008 and included the participation of 33 communities. It began with a thorough research process, which consisted of a survey that gathered data on seven areas of interest:

1. participants' view of the council
2. the council's treatment of disputes
3. the council's methods of punishment
4. participants' view of the Cameroonian justice system
5. the types of cases heard
6. alternative methods of dispute resolution used by community members
7. possibilities for training of councilors

Following the feedback from the research process, training workshops for councilors were designed and took place on the 21st, 24th, 25th and 28th of July. Roughly 50 individuals from 13 communities attended these day long workshops. Each village was requested to send 3 representatives, including at least one woman.

The training conducted consisted of modules on corruption, mediation and facilitation. Mediation training, however, formed the bulk of the workshop; modules consisted of mediation theory, mediation skills as well as mediation simulation exercises. The facilitation module was introduced with the aim of encouraging councilors to relay what they had learnt at the workshop back to the other council members who had not attended the workshop.

Project Evaluation

Methodology

Sample

On the whole, approximately 10 individuals (8 men and 2 women) from 4 councils participated in the evaluation process. Two of these councils (namely, Kumba 1 and Mabenda) were traditional councils and two (namely, Kosala 1 and Kosala 3) were quarter councils. The individuals who participated in the process consisted of those members of the council who had attended the CAMs workshop at the GCI offices in July. In one case (Kosala 3), however, all councilors present at the council meeting participated.

When designing the evaluation, we had intended to obtain three sets of participants; namely, councilors who had attended the workshop, community members who had not participated in the workshop, but who would have been influenced by it indirectly through the work of the council, and disputants who were currently seeking out the services of the council. Although we were successful in accessing council members, we were less successful at obtaining the participation of the other two groups. We did manage to include 2 disputants, but unfortunately we were unable to speak to community members.

The absence of community members obviously limits our findings considerably. Most significantly, council members are likely to be biased in their self-evaluations, making more elevated ratings of their own success than what would otherwise be made – especially on issues regarding council corruption or the effective use of mediation skills. Community members would be more objective in evaluating the success of the councils, as well as the influence of mediation on the community at large, than council members.

Another potential limitation of this sample is the size. In each council, only a maximum of three council members attended the workshop and rarely were all three present when we visited councils for evaluations. Furthermore, since the evaluation was conducted close to the festive season, getting hold of potential participants was difficult. The small sample did however give us insight into the successes and weaknesses of the CAMs project, but it is important to keep in mind that the findings of their feedback may not be entirely representative of the entire sample that participated in the workshops.

Data Collection procedures

We used an emergent two-fold data collection process, consisting of interviews and direct observation. Interviews were semi-structured and the interview schedule can be found in Appendix A. This schedule probed CAMs' success on a number of variables representing the project objectives. These included the following:

- Successes and weaknesses of the CAMs workshop
- Successes and weaknesses of the mediation skills taught in the workshop
- Remaining needs of councilors and desired skills
- The impact of mediation on the community
- The influence of mediation on the use of jungle justice
- The influence of mediation on level of corruption

Interviews, however, remained emergent as far as possible; interviewers molded questions to suit individual participants and, when appropriate, added additional questions or removed redundant questions.

All interviews were conducted on site, during visits to council meetings. GCI interns who visited both quarter and traditional councils, requested to interview council members individually. Interviews mostly took place outside the room or building in which the council meeting was taking place. Interviewing participants on site and in a location familiar to them is effective for data gathering because it reduces any performance anxiety associated with the interview process.

In one case, however, a focus group – as opposed to interviews – took place. In this case, all councilors present at the council meeting participated in answering questions. Although the two council members who participated in the workshop contributed the most, many questions were directed to the floor and taken up by the council head or others. This focus group technique enabled us to obtain data on the effects and impact of the workshop on the council as a whole.

One of the limitations of having GCI interns interview participants and conduct focus groups directly is that of possible experimenter bias. Participants may feel compelled to offer answers appealing to the interviewer, or answers that they feel would be best received.

Language, of course, has also remained a problem since interns were able to communicate only in French or English, while participants were more fluent in Pidgin English. Although this did not produce as many problems as expected, it

did hinder the flow of communication somewhat. Interns, however, were accompanied by a GCI staff member who could speak fluent Pidgin English and could translate when necessary.

The second data gathering technique employed consisted of direct observation of mediation processes as they took place within council meetings. Councils were requested to inform GCI when a possible mediation case would be taking place and GCI staff and interns were invited to observe. Direct observation was, in some ways, more beneficial than interviews since it enabled us to witness the implementation – or lack thereof – of mediation skills acquired during the CAMs workshop.

Data analysis

Data gathered from interviews and observations was recorded in handwritten notes on site, and later transferred to computerized documents. This data was mostly analysed qualitatively with thematic and content analysis, which identifies themes in responses across participants. In particular, we were interested in themes that spoke to the successes and weaknesses of the project and the degree to which the outcomes of project activities met project objectives.

Analysis of questionnaires

Successes of the project

Improved mediation skills

On the whole, every council member we interviewed stated that the CAMs workshop and mediation training had been useful, had helped them to mediate disputes and improved the work of the council overall.

A few councilors made comparisons between the way in which the council operated prior to the workshop and its “new ways”. One councilor noted that, since the workshop, the council has been “trying to change old habits”. When probed for specifics, he commented that under “the old system”, everyone at the council spoke at the same time and the opening and close of mediation processes were not clearly defined. What the workshop had emphasized was the need for clear definition, **organisation and clarity**. Following the workshop, he notes that there was more order; councilors take turns to speak and the beginning and close of sessions is clearly defined.

Another beneficial theme that emerged from interviews was the improved **equality** of disputants; following the workshop, councilors made a concerted effort to stress the equality of disputing parties. They noted that they now provide the space for both parties to offer their opening statements and that they listen

to both equally. One interviewed councilor gave the example of a recent case between a woman and her eldest son, who had sold his deceased father's land, without her consent. Traditionally, as the oldest son, her will is subordinate to his. However, following the workshop, councilors treated both the woman and man equally.

Councilors also observed that the workshop had taught them the importance of **clarifying and summarizing** disputants' statements so as to reach the core of the matter. In addition, one councilor mentioned that the council was better able to differentiate between **positions and interests**, and to deal with the underlying needs and desires of informants as opposed to their surface demands.

According to those interviewed, the workshop also assisted with the formation of **judgments**. One councilor noted that, following the workshop, the council has tried to make its judgments very clear and specific, so that disputants understand what is expected of them. Everybody that we interviewed was adamant that, in every case they had mediated since the workshop, both parties of disputants were content with the outcome – the desired 'win-win' ending of mediation achieved. In some cases, this had even lead to real reconciliation between disputants.

Those councils in which mediation skills were best implemented and most successful were those in which the councilors who attended the workshop had been carefully selected. In some cases (e.g. Kosala 3), the council selected those councilors they felt would best be able to relay the information back to the entire group. As such, they selected a teacher to attend the workshop. Since a module on facilitation was taught as part of the workshop, this careful selection proves advantageous to these councils.

From the above feedback, it is evident that, as far as councilors are concerned, the content of the CAMs workshop was appropriated and implemented successfully in councilors personal mediation skills. As for the workshops themselves, most councilors found them to be organised, neatly run and accessible. Those interviewed found facilitators to be knowledgeable and effective, and the language that they used was considered easily accessible and understandable. This was not, however, always the case; see below for weaknesses of the workshop.

Beneficial effect on the community

Some councilors felt that the CAMs project had had a beneficial effect on the community. Although it was still too early to detect whether the actual objective of improved peach-keeping and good will had been achieved beyond the council, councilors did feel that the community's perception of the council itself

had changed. One councilor noted that, when the council used the “old system”, the community paid little attention to the council, taking their disputes elsewhere – mostly to the formal judicial system. “But now that we do things differently, the community respects us”, he noted.

He also observed that the council was more visible in the community than it had previously been and that community members were now more likely to take their disputes to the council than to the police. This is partly due to increased ethics amongst council members. “In the past, we used to ask for payment for what we do and now we don't, so the community respects us more”. This new ethical behaviour also means that it is now less expensive to take matters to the council than the police. “The community trusts us,” he observed.

Reduction of Corruption

Many of the councilors we interviewed felt that corruption had reduced in the past few months, but were not sure whether or not this could be attributed to the CAMs project directly. Only one interviewed councilor specifically stated that corruption had reduced due to the council's “new habits” derived as a result of the workshop.

Most of the people we interviewed denied that the council had ever been corrupt. One man stated that the community in which the council operated (Mabanda) was too poor and that if the council ever demanded financial bribes or other monetary rewards, the community members would not be able to pay. Corruption therefore was assumed to be absent in conditions of dire poverty.

Obviously, council members are undeniably biased in assessing the degree to which the council is corrupt. As a result, these statements should be considered warily; no objective evidence as to the levels of reduced corruption was adequately obtained.

Weaknesses of the project

Training workshop logistics

Although council members who participated in workshops found the content of these useful, they noted room for improvement in the logistics and organisation of the workshop. Some councilors, for example, felt that the workshop was too long. This put a strain on their ability to concentrate and to absorb such a large amount of information in one go. They also felt very tired at the end of the workshop.

Another logistical concern which was raised by all interviewed councilors was that of location. Hosting the workshop at the GCI office meant that only a

maximum of three council members were allowed to attend. Most councils, however, consist of up to 45 members. Despite the fact that a facilitation module was included in the training and trained councilors were expected to train their fellow councilors in what they had learned, this additional training rarely took place. The result was that only three members of a large council possessed effective mediation skills, while the rest still clung to traditional methods and practices. One interviewed councilor particularly stressed this fact and noted that, in the majority of cases, traditional methods of mediation still played out because those who had learned new mediation skills were in the minority. There remains a need therefore to a) change the location of the workshop and b) to train a greater number of councilors (preferably the majority) in each council.

The fact that the workshop was conducted on a once-off basis also presented problems. Although a great deal of useful information was imparted to participants during this workshop, the fact that no follow-ups or refresher courses took place meant that council members quickly forgot the mediation procedures, skills and theory learned in the workshop. We asked interviewed council members what the workshop had taught them about mediation and what mediation actually is. The answers we received to this question revealed to us that most councilors did not remember the core teachings on mediation theory and practice from the workshop.

Finally, although some councilors maintained that they were able to understand facilitators of the workshop, a few interviewed councilors mentioned that the language used in the workshops was difficult for them to follow. This difficulty was composed of a number of factors, including the language itself (English, as opposed to Pidgin), accents of the facilitators (who were mostly from the US and Canada) and the vocabulary and level of English spoken.

Characteristics of the mediation context

Apart from any problems associated with the workshop itself, certain characteristics of the context in which traditional and quarter councils resolve disputes limit the potential impact of the CAMs project in so far as they hinder the implementation of skills taught. One of these characteristics is the levels of attendance at council meetings. Although some councils can be composed of up to 45 members, often less than 10 will arrive at meetings. Attendance is both minimal and sporadic; different councilors show up at different meetings. Timeliness is also a problem; councilors arrive at different times throughout the meeting, rather than at the beginning. One interviewed council head noted this as a particular problem for implementing mediation skills because often those who had attended the workshop were not present, or arrived late. It also meant

that it was difficult to train the entire council in the skills they had learnt at the workshop, as GCI had intended.

Another interviewed councilor mentioned that the education level of many councilors was very low. Those who had been selected to attend the workshop were those who had levels of education sufficient to understand the content. However, because of the education levels of the rest of the council, it was difficult to carry forward the training on mediation.

The head councilor of Kosala 3 also pointed out that they had had difficulty in implementing mediation skills in difficult cases. On the ground, cases are not as clear cut as the workshop made them out to be; positions and interests are not as easy to discern. He particularly made note of cases involving minors, in which case parents are held accountable, yet often they have done their best in directing the child.

Councils also suffered from financial burdens following the CAMs workshop. The head councilor at Kosala 1 mentioned that, prior to the workshop, the council had requested payment for their intervention into disputes and for successful resolution of disputes. This money went to covering operational costs of the council. Since the workshop, however, they recognize this as corruption and no longer request money to intervene in disputes. As a result, they experience financial burdens. If these burdens continue, it is likely that councils will resort to old means in order to cover their costs.

Impact on community

Few councilors were able to answer the question as to whether the CAMs workshop has had an impact on the community. Although one councilor mentioned that it had changed the way in which the community perceived the council, this does not necessarily align with the original objectives of actually impacting on peace-keeping and improving good will amongst community members at large.

When asked about jungle justice, most interviewed councilors thought that jungle justice was the same following the workshop as it had been prior to it. They did not believe that their own mediation training had necessarily had any impact on jungle justice or the community at large. Many felt that jungle justice had reduced in the past few years, but this was due to factors external to the CAMs project.

In Mabanda, one interviewed councilor mentioned that the community at large had very low levels of education, and that community members would not be able to understand mediation theory even if exposed to it. He also thought that

that mediation is not congruent with cultural practices of the community and this was why it would be difficult for CAMs to have a wider impact beyond the councils themselves.

Analysis of observations

It is important to note that observation data was difficult to analyse because there was no baseline data against which to assess improvement; in other words, no observations had been conducted prior to the designed intervention and for this reason data gathered from observing councils post-intervention could not be used comparatively.

Successes

Characteristics of mediators

In both observed mediations, councilors remained neutral and objective for the most part. They allowed both parties to provide statements without interruption and treated both parties as equals. Where mediators were able to remember certain workshop concepts, these were employed, or at least attempted to be practiced. For example, in some cases, councilors did attempt to re-frame positions or to clarify statements. Probing questions were asked and controversial points were identified.

Most importantly, in both cases, councilors acted as one body and did not divide opinions or disagree amongst themselves, promoting a united front to the disputing parties. Not only does this inspire confidence in the councilors' skills, but it also encourages impartiality and objectivity.

In one case, councilors were also able to diffuse hostility. In a tenant and land-owner dispute, a side issue emerged which was not central to the case, but would possibly have evoked hostility and anger in both parties. The councilors however, dealt with the matter swiftly, diffusing the hostility and bringing the mediation process back on track to the issue at hand.

On the whole, councilors were skilled in mediating disputes. However, this appeared to be more a result of experience, than the actual workshop training.

Outcomes of mediation

In both cases the final judgment and its outcome was the most successful of the entire mediation process. Judgments were given in clear terms; they were specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed. Both parties understood what was required of them and both were satisfied to comply. In one case, parties ended their dispute with a handshake – an indicator of reconciliation.

Weaknesses

Structure and organization of mediation process

On the whole, the mediation process was poorly organized and structured in both cases. Since both cases observed were continuations of cases that had started prior to the CAMs project, we did not observe any preliminary activities that would usually set the scene for mediation to take place (such as agreeing mutually upon ground rules, conducting introductions, presenting space for opening statements etc).

Although, in interviews, councilors stated that they felt that council meetings were more organized following the workshop, this did not appear to be the case upon observation. No set agenda was followed, and councilors often spoke over each other, without giving each other space to be heard.

Characteristics of mediators

It is clear that councilors often have a great deal of experience in mediating the disputes of local community members. To us, it appeared that councilors drew more heavily upon this experience than upon the new skills they had learnt at the workshop. Despite the fact that the councilors we spoke to insisted that the workshop had helped them and had improved their skills, from observations, it seemed to us that councilors were merely continuing using whatever skills and experience they had previously possessed, without integrating workshop material. Although councilors did, at times, re-phrase or ask probing questions these activities seemed more instinctual, than a conscious re-enactment of what they had learnt at the workshop.

Since the outcome of both cases was successful, it does seem as though whatever methods are being used are having the desired effect. However, there is still much space for improvement. The workshop material, if assimilated, could have enormous benefits for the skills of council members.

Mediation theory and context

In observing the mediation process as it is practiced in quarter and traditional councils, it became clear that the type of mediation model so commonly employed in mediation manuals, designed by the West, ignores the fact that mediation in such councils is conducted intersubjectively, with multiple mediators. Western models of mediation assume a single mediator, which itself constructs an entirely different mediation context. In quarter and traditional councils, however, all councilors participate in mediating a dispute; parties present themselves to the entire council and the matter is discussed amongst

councilors as well as parties together. This is a much more diplomatic and democratic means of conflict resolution that is less practiced in the West where a single judge or mediator makes an ultimate decision.

A great deal of mediation activities taught in the workshop and documented in the manual are difficult to conduct with multiple mediators all acting at the same time.

Summary of observation and interview data analysis

In essence, there is a discrepancy between interview data and observation data; while data gathered from individual interviews with councilors suggests that councilors benefited from the mediation training of workshops, observations did not see this training implemented.

On the whole, the main areas that need improvement are that of the structure and organization of the mediation process, and the skills of individual mediators. The component of the mediation process which were most successful, was that of the final judgment and the ability of councils to reconcile community members in dispute. The successful outcome of the process indicates that councilors experience and traditional methods may be working, but could nevertheless benefit from re-fresher training in mediation skills.

On the whole, however, most councils did not appear to employ mediation as it had been taught in the workshop and relied more heavily on traditional methods of mediation. It was apparent, however, that councilors, aware of our presence, did attempt to replicate workshop concepts which they could remember (which were essentially few). The main problem with implementation of workshop material is that workshop training has been conducted on a once-off basis with no refresher courses and councilors have forgotten the concepts taught to them in the workshop.

Meeting Objectives

The objectives of the CAMs project have been stated above. They are namely:

- To use mediation to find solutions to disputes which are acceptable to all parties involved.
- To reduce the number of disputes entering the formal justice system
- To prevent incidences of 'jungle justice'
- To reduce corruption

- To spread good will and peace-keeping within communities
- To improve conflict resolution skills among councilors and help improve the work of quarter councils

From this evaluation, it appears that the CAMs project has been successful in meeting the first of these two objectives, but has only partially achieved the remaining four objectives.

From observation data, it appears as though the mediation techniques used by councilors to resolve the disputes of community members are successful in finding solutions with which both parties are content. Whether these techniques are specifically a result of the mediation training of the CAMs workshop, or the result of tradition and experience, however, remains questionable.

Secondly, it is true that the traditional and quarter councils reduce the number of disputes entering the judicial system. Councilors did feel that community members were more likely to bring their disputes to the council as opposed to going to the police or other formal bodies. Again, however, it is impossible to tell whether the CAMs project itself has reduced or increased the number of disputes taken to the quarter council since baseline data in this regard was not available.

As for whether the CAMs project has reduced instances of jungle justice, most councilors felt that there had been neither an improvement nor an increase in jungle justice, or denied the extent of jungle justice in their communities. The same can be said for the state of corruption in councils.

From interviews and observations, it is possible that the CAMs workshop did impart some mediation skills to councilors, but the implementation of these skills in actual council settings has been hindered by a number of factors.

It is important to remember, however, that the CAMs project is in its early phases. One of the reasons that it has failed to meet its declared objectives is because these objectives are too broad for a once-off workshop, and many of the content of the workshop has since been forgotten by councilors. If these objectives are to be met at the scale at which the CAMs project originally intended, it is vital that a sustainable, continuous system be set in place to support training on an ongoing basis.

Strategies for Project Improvement

With the above evaluative data in mind, strategies for improving the CAMs project would consist of a) additional research on conflict mediation, specifically

in the African context, b) improved workshop logistics and training strategy, c) improvements in sustainability and d) simplification and increased readability of the training manual. Details of these four strategies are outlined below.

Mediation theory and model: research process

Since the mediation theory and model taught at the workshop and contained in the training manual draws largely on Western culture and cultural traditions of conflict resolution, assuming a single mediator, it has its weaknesses when applied and implemented in African contexts such as Kumba. It would be beneficial to the project to initiate a brief research process in which an intern, or other member of staff, conducts research into the following:

- **Theories of mediation and conflict resolution developed by African scholars.** There is a wealth of literature that is growing and emerging out of African universities, particularly in the area of African Psychology and the Anthropology of Conflict Resolution. A literature search and review that compiles the ideas of this body of knowledge would offer a useful theoretical background to the design of any mediation model that is implemented in Kumba.
- **Mediation models that assume multiple mediators.** Mediation is a wide area of research and practice, and many different types of models have been developed. The model employed within the workshop and manual assumed a single mediator; i.e. that one person is responsible for mediating a dispute. This assumption also inevitably constructs the context in which mediation takes place. In quarter and traditional councils, however, mediation is an intersubjective process that takes place with multiple mediators or councilors. It would be helpful to research models of mediation that take this multiple-mediator context into account.
- **Case studies of similar projects in African contexts.** Around the continent there has been many alternative justice projects and many which deal with conflict resolution. Compiling a database of case studies of projects similar to the CAMs project that have been successfully implemented around Africa, would greatly add to the improvement of the CAMs.

This process of research would, however, be fairly intensive and would require consistent and fast access to internet. It would also require access to international journals, which can often be accessed via university library databases. This kind of access may not be possible from the GCI office. For these reasons, it may be best to get a GCI intern in the office to work in liaison with an intern abroad – perhaps an intern who has returned to their university after an

internship in Cameroon, or an intern recruited via Idealist.org who could be a research intern for GCI from their own country.

Mediation Training

Consistency and sustainability

The most important aspect of the training strategy is consistency. Training should be **on-going** and **regular**. From our evaluation data, it was clear that the main problem hindering the project's success was the fact that most councilors had forgotten what they had learnt at the workshop. **Sustainability** is the most important aspect of any project and in this case, sustainability is achieved through regular and consistent training and contact with councilors.

Since the CAMs workshop took place a few months ago, a one-day intensive workshop will again be required, in a similar manner to the previous one. This would be a re-cap workshop to re-familiarize participants with the mediation skills and would not necessarily introduce new material.

Following this intensive workshop, GCI should conduct brief (approximately 2 to 3 hours) 'refresher' courses that, again, do not introduce new material, but revise the content taught in the intensive workshop and provide opportunities for councilors to practice their skills in a context in which an expert is present, who can offer advice and suggestions for improvement. GCI could divide the theory and practice components of mediation and provide regular brief workshops on 'mediation theory', and then also offer 'practice sessions' which could take place in each village.

One idea for consistent training which would also improve regular attendance of participants, would be for GCI to establish a credit system. In this system, each training session would count towards a certain number of credits. For example, the intensive workshop would count 10 credits, while various refresher courses would count 3 or 4 credits, depending on the intensity of the course. As councilors attend these workshops and courses, they would build up credits. Once they've built up a certain number of credits, they could get a certificate from GCI and these certificates could qualify them at different levels; for example, after 20 credits, they would receive a 'GCI mediator' certificate or GCI qualification, and once they obtain 30 credits then they would receive a 'GCI advanced mediator' certificate.

Ultimately, GCI would provide workshops in which they train trainers (e.g. 40 credits would qualify a councilor to train other councilors in mediation). This idea was partly integrated into the previous workshop with the 'facilitation component'. The idea was for councilors who attended the workshop to return

to their villages and train the other members of the council. This, however, did not work; none of the councilors we spoke to had facilitated a mediation workshop with their fellow colleagues. It is unrealistic to expect people who have only just learnt new content and have not even properly appropriated it themselves, to train others. For this reason, councilors should perhaps only be qualified to train others in mediation once they have attended a fair amount of workshops and have gained guided practice in mediation skills – hence the credit system.

Workshop focus

The focus of the initial intensive workshop should be very narrow, and content should be kept specific and to a minimum. People often find it hard to take in too much information at one time; for this reason, only the essentials should be conveyed and repeated. In the previous workshop, a module of corruption was inserted. While this is obviously a relevant issue in Cameroonian justice, it is periphery to mediation skills as such. We propose that the workshop focus solely and entirely on mediation skills and practice, although it might draw upon examples of corruption to stimulate discussion.

From the evaluation data, it appears that what is needed in this intensive workshop is an emphasis on the following:

- Characteristics of mediators
- Mediation skills
- The structure and organisation of the mediation context
- How to deal with controversial issues

The focus of follow-up and refresher courses should be even more narrow, with minimal content and maximum space to practice mediation skills.

Training logistics

The main logistical problem with the training workshop was attendance. This was mostly due to location – holding it at the GCI office, which made transport a problem and an inconvenience for many invited councilors.

Most councilors have suggested that future workshops be held on site, within villages themselves. This would greatly improve attendance and would also increase the number of people within each council that GCI could train. Some councilors also suggested inviting members of the community to these workshops.

Obviously, hosting workshops and refresher courses on site will mean increased transportation costs on the part of GCI. For sustainability purposes, multiple visits will have to be made to each council.

We also suggest making regular contact with invitees and telephoning all invitees at least two days before each workshop or refresher course, to remind them of the day and time.

Improvements for training manual

At CAMs workshops, each participant received a CAMs manual that they were allowed to take with them and use at council meetings. These manuals were composed of three sections: an anti-corruption module, a mediation module and a facilitation module.

The strength of this manual is that the language is simple, accessible and thus easy to understand – even for those for whom English is not a mother tongue.

On the other hand, however, there is a great deal of unnecessary information and at times, the content is repetitive. Given that most people will only skim through any reading material presented to them, it is best to include only the core content and essential information in a manual.

The visual layout could also be improved. Times New Roman is not the easiest font to read; a rounder font with more open space would be easier on the eye. The writing, furthermore, is very compact, which saves on printing costs but reduces readability, and would benefit from being spread out more.

The usefulness of the manual could also be improved by reducing text and increasing reliance on diagrams, graphs and pictures that assist the reader with core information. Diagrams would be especially useful when describing the steps of the mediation process.

Finally, it would be useful for the manual to provide a concrete example with every practical direction it offers for mediators. For example, when advising mediators to use concepts such as 'paraphrasing', 'appreciating' and 'reframing', an example of each of these should be provided.

Extending the importance of examples, it would also be useful to include a detailed case study, with examples drawn out of it.

Sustainability

The major problem currently with the CAMs project is its lack of sustainability. Currently, the project is carried by interns who work on it for between 2 – 6 months and then leave. This breaks the consistency of the problem; the skills and

experience that interns gain through working on the project are lost when they leave, and new interns spend a great deal of time becoming acquainted with the project and the context in which it is situated before they can make a real contribution. Furthermore, international interns have no intrinsic understanding of local cultural conditions and customs around conflict mediation, and remain heavily reliant on local volunteers who are few.

If the CAMs project is to have any real impact at all, it will need to be sustainable and this sustainability will only come from having at least one person dedicated to the project for a lengthy period of time (at least one or two years). Ideally, this should be a local resident of Kumba, and not an international intern or volunteer. This person would be responsible for establishing a 5-year action plan for the project and for documenting and accumulating all the work and lessons learnt through the project. International interns would then feed into a long-term vision and would work under this permanent person.

We suggest that a detailed job description be drawn up for such a position. This job description would include a detailed account of the activities this person would be expected to perform, and the ways in which these activities feed into a long-term vision for the project.

One of the primary responsibilities of such a person might be to establish and maintain relationships with villages and councils through continued contact – regular visits and telephone calls. When we visited the Kusala 3 quarter council, the head councilor mentioned that he would like to have more contact with GCI. Establishing regular, consistent and long-term relationships with councils is vital for the success of the CAMs project.

Strategies for an improved Monitoring and Evaluation system

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is integral to the success and impact of any project. If a project is functioning, but not successful in meeting its objectives or having its desired impact, then it constitutes a waste of valuable resources – both financial resources and human resources. For this reason, monitoring and evaluation should be a continuous process around which the entire project is structured.

A successful M&E system would be:

- Regular and consistent
- Measurable according to specific and clear objectives
- Inclusive of both qualitative and quantitative data

- Easy to execute and light on resources

It is also of the utmost importance that the CAMs project remain **emergent**. In other words, GCI interns and other staff appointed to the project should ensure that the strategies it employs remain flexible enough to change at the recommendations that the M&E system feeds back. The CAMs project should be consistently in process, continually improving, and not remain static. In order for this to be the case, however, regular feedback is vital.

We propose that the next phase of the project be build around a continuous and regular monitoring system, with the above characteristics, and this system also function to support sustainability by contributing to the continued contact with local villages.

Such a system would include the following:

- Weekly telephonic contact with the council head of each participating council
- Fortnightly or monthly visits to councils, particularly to observe the mediation process in context
- A monthly monitoring report. This could consist of a questionnaire conducted with a sub-sample of participating councils (e.g. 4 or 5 council members – one from each council). This questionnaire could be conducted telephonically and should then be analysed and written up into a report.
- Every 4 months, a thorough evaluation should be conducted and should gather both quantitative and qualitative data. This evaluation should consist of a survey, interviews and mediation observations. The feedback of these evaluations should be carefully considered and fed back into the strategic direction of the project.

Conclusion

The CAMs project has the potential to have a significant impact on councilors and the wider community. However, this evaluation has demonstrated that it has struggled to meet some of its objectives, primarily due to the lack of project sustainability. This report contains a number of suggestions for improvement, which will hopefully be considered by new interns or staff members working on the project in the future. If implemented, the success of the CAMs project could be greatly enhanced.

Appendix A: Interview Schedule

CAMs Follow Up Questions for Mediators

1. Have you used mediation to resolve disputes?
 - IF YES:
 - a) How many times have you used mediation to resolve disputes?
 - b) Did you find it successful?
 - c) What were the benefits?
 - d) What were the disadvantages?
 - IF NO:
 - a) Why have you not used mediation?
 - b) What would you need to do in order to successfully implement the mediation skills taught to you at the workshop?
2. What do you understand 'mediation' to be?
3. Do you feel as though you need more training?
 - a) If so, in what specific areas do you need more training in?
 - b) Can GCI help or assist you in any other way?
4. Has mediation had an impact on the community?
 - a) If yes, has this impact been positive and how so?
5. Has mediation reduced jungle justice?
6. Has mediation reduced corruption?

Appendix B: Observation Sheet

Evaluation Sheet for CAMs Observations

This form consists of questions that include the criteria for successful mediation as taught within the workshop. When observing mediation in process, GCI interns should pay careful attention and be on the look out for these criteria. Try to include concrete examples when answering these questions so that we have reliable data to include in the final report.

Preparation for mediation

1. Has everyone agreed to participate fully in the process? (i.e. Is everyone there willingly of their own accord?)
2. Are the appropriate introductions and welcoming statements made?
3. Are ground rules agreed upon prior to the mediation process? (i.e. confidentiality, protection etc.)

Characteristics of the mediators/councilors

1. Are the mediators impartial?
2. How often do the mediators attribute blame, instead of speaking in neutral/objective terms?
3. Do the mediators pay attention to the positions (what parties want) or the interests (the feelings, concerns or needs that lie behind the position) of the parties?
4. How often do mediators draw on the following mediation techniques:
 - Paraphrase, summarize, reframe and clarify
 - Appreciate parties, encourage and support
 - Conduct reality control and look for facts
 - Ask probing questions and identify controversial points
 - Defuse hostility
5. Do the mediators suggest agreements that are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed?

Characteristics of the mediation case and situation

1. Is the case appropriate for mediation? (i.e. Are parties involved in a continuing relationship? Are the mediators legally allowed to handle the case?)
2. Were both parties given the chance to express themselves adequately and fairly?
3. Was any corruption involved in the process?

Outcomes of mediation

4. When the final judgment is given, is an explanation also provided?
5. Were both parties content with the outcome of the mediation process?
6. Did the overall process deflect the possibility of jungle justice?

Record the following information: Name of village/council

Name of party members

Provide a brief overview of the case's opening statements i.e.
the conflict

Record the final agreement and outcome

Appendix C: Interviews

Interview 1 at Kosala 3 Quarter Council

Name: Chief Foma Gnoa (head council)

Successes of the workshop

I very much enjoyed the workshop. I am a teacher and thus, a good student. I took careful notes during the workshop and so was able to relay back all the information to the rest of the councilors here.

Since the workshop, we have been trying to change old habits. Now we listen to everybody and give everybody a chance to talk. People are equal before the council. We have also learnt how to clarify and summarise. All parties are usually happy after the judgment is passed. We have had no complaints.

Our secretary has even changed how he takes down the minutes of the proceedings.

Our judgments and suggestions are also now more clearly phrased and directed – more specific. Because of this, people know what is expected of them and are happy with the outcomes.

Under the old system, everyone spoke at the same time and the close of the discussion wasn't defined. Since the workshop, the council is more organised and there is more order to speak.

The language of the workshop was also easily accessible. Everyone understood the content. The people who were selected to attend the workshop were also specifically chosen based on their ability to relay information back to the council.

Weaknesses of the workshop and suggestions for improvement

The main problem is that the council consists of approximately 45 people and only 3 attended the workshop. There is also a lot of absenteeism – not everyone shows up at council meetings and so not everyone was there the day I presented the workshop to the council. As a result, when we mediate, some people are still using the old system. So this makes it difficult.

The other weakness is that now we have more financial burdens, because in the past we used to ask for money and this money would go towards covering our

expenses. Now that we no longer do this, we need to find money from elsewhere to support our activities.

Would you like more training?

Yes, we would like more training. We were actually going to write to GCI and request more training.

It would be best if training takes place out in villages instead, because then all members of the council could attend and then everyone would be on the same page when doing mediation.

It would also be good for outsiders to attend these workshops as well – youth and women.

The workshop really needs to be repeated. After a once-off workshop, we end up forgetting after a while, and we need to be reminded.

What do you understand mediation to be?

In mediation, we form groups of complainant and defender and we listen to both sides. Give time to all parties to express themselves, and then we speak amongst and reach a conclusion.

What has the impact of the workshop been on the community?

The workshop was definitely useful. Beforehand, nobody really paid attention to the council. But now that we do things differently, the community respects us.

The council now is also more visible. It is also more ethical. In the past we used to ask for payment for what we do and now we don't, so the community respects us more. People are more likely to bring their complaints to us than to take them to the police, because now they trust us. The police also cost people too much money.

Has the workshop reduced jungle justice?

The quarter head is, and always has been, against jungle justice. We try to spread the message of reconciliation and I think it has worked.

Has the workshop reduced corruption?

It used to be very difficult to lecture people on corruption. In the old days, there was corruption. Now, we try hard to remain honest.

Interview 2 at Kosala 3 Quarter Council

Name: Epie Ntoko Florence

Have you used mediation?

Yes, we do use it. We don't have cases very often, but when we do, we use mediation.

Was the mediation workshop useful?

Yes, the workshop was successful. It helps us to stay on track.

Were there any disadvantages to the workshop?

No.

What do you understand by 'mediation'?

Mediation gives us a template to use for resolving conflict.

Has the workshop had an impact on the community?

Yes.

Has the workshop reduced jungle justice?

Yes, we had it at first, but no longer.

Has the workshop reduced corruption?

I don't know whether it has reduced corruption overall. There is no corruption in the community.

Do you need more training?

Yes, we definitely need more training. The difficulty with the last workshop was mainly the language and need for interpreters. The exercises were good – the simulations – because they showed us mediation in practice.

Interview 1 at Kumba 1 Traditional Council

Council member: Njang Issac

Have you used mediation to resolve dispute?

Yes, we use it often. But sometimes it is not conscious. We don't say 'now we are using mediation'; we use it very regularly without even knowing it.

How many times have you used mediation to resolve dispute?

Very often, almost all the time. When appropriate.

Did you find the mediation workshop useful for your council work?

Yes, very useful and helpful. We now allow everyone to talk and have their say. We are more aware of ensuring that everyone is equal. For example, in this case (a case currently in progress) a woman brought her son to the court for selling her husband (his father's) land against her wishes. Traditionally, as the eldest son, he would be in the right. But the council has ensured that both the woman and the son are considered equal in this proceeding and is listening to both sides fairly.

We have also learnt to distinguish between interests and positions. For example, we had a case between two men and we realized that the real reason behind the demand for money was fear. The one man was afraid of losing what he had. We addressed the interest rather than the position.

We have also learnt to be more neutral.

The mediation manual that GCI gave to us was especially helpful.

Did you find mediation successful?

Yes. We had people who came back afterwards to thank us for helping them solve the dispute.

Were there any unsuccessful cases?

There was just one where we tried to use mediation, but it didn't work at that moment. We didn't resolve anything. The one man came and broke the doors of the council. He was very drunk at the time. Later, he realized that his behaviour had been inappropriate and he came back to apologise. We resumed the mediation later and then it was successful.

What do you understand mediation to be?

Mediation is listening to both sides of the story equally and then trying to find a compromise that both parties would be satisfied with.

Do you feel as though you need more training in mediation?

Yes, we need more training. We need a follow-up workshop. It would be good for the follow-up workshop to go re-cap the mediation process and remind us of the steps. It would also be especially helpful at this point because we now have concrete examples that we could bring with us and discuss.

Has mediation had an impact on the community?

I'm not sure what the impact has been. After we pass a judgment or suggest an agreement, we do not follow the parties to see what happens further.

Has mediation reduced jungle justice?

There is not a lot of jungle justice in the village because everyone knows each other so it will not work. Both before and after the workshop, this was the case. So there has been no real change.

Has mediation reduced corruption?

Yes, it has reduced corruption within the council, but corruption is such a big problem in this country. It is bigger than the council.

Interview 1 at Mabanda Traditional Council

Name: Ekoko

1. Have you used mediation to resolve disputes?

a. How many times have you used mediation to resolve disputes?

A lot, they have used mediation to resolve all of their disputes since they attended the workshop

b. Did you find it successful?

The mediation was very useful

c. What were the benefits?

A good judgement was achieved.

d. What were the disadvantages?

Both parties are not always satisfied

2. What do you understand mediation to be?

To be able to fully settle dispute between two parties.

3. Do you feel like you need more training? yes

a. If so what do you need the training in?

I would like a follow up of the mediation process and information on acquainting small legal means to implement

b. Can we help you in any way?

Would like some more handouts on mediation

3. How has mediation had an impact on the community?

Yes because parties are satisfied with the outcome.

a. Has it been positive and if so how?

4. Has mediation reduced jungle justice? Yes positively

5. Has mediation reduced corruption? Yes it has

Interview 2 at Mabanda Traditional Council

Name: Mukwelle

Have you used mediation?

Yes, we do.

Did you find that the mediation workshop was helpful for the work you do on the council?

Yes, very useful. We spend a lot of time deliberating over a judgement. We are very fair.

What have been the disadvantages of the mediation? Have you had any cases that have not worked?

The people here are not very educated, so it's difficult to explain complex ideas to them. The other difficulty we have is that, after we've made the judgment, we have no control over whether it is implemented. It is a slow process.

What do you understand by mediation?

It is a way of bringing two parties to the same understanding so that they can solve their problems.

Do you think that mediation has reduced jungle justice?

Not really. Not yet. It is a slow process and will take time, but over time jungle justice should reduce.

Has mediation reduced corruption?

In this area, people are very poor and can't afford bribery, so the council here is not very corrupt. Corruption is minimal.

What could GCI do to assist with making mediation more effective?

GCI should run mediation workshops with the womens' groups and with the youth. They transmit it into the community.

Focus Group 1 with Kosala II Quarter Council

They like to sort out disputes through reconciliation.

Yes they have been using mediation and have put into practice what they learnt at the workshop

The mediation was important and has been very successful. There has been 2-3 cases where the mediation was very successful. Everyone has been happy.

They define mediation as a case with two parties where you have a mediator who listens carefully to what both parties are saying. It is important not to judge even if you know someone and just take into account the facts of the case.

They would like more training so that they can improve there skills.

They want us to continue teaching people what mediation is. They feel it would be good if all the councilors could attend the workshop on mediation so that they all have a better understanding.

As far as the community is concerned lots of people do not know what mediation is. It is only those who have had cases who understand the importance of mediation.

Some of the councilors noticed some changes in the community.

Jungle justice has not happened

They felt that the corruption training was helpful as it is important not to be bribed.

Other Issues:

There has been a change as the councilors are more efficient than they were before. There has been a good improvement.

They think we should hold regular seminars on mediation so that people can update their skills.

They liked the last workshop and thought it was just right in information and speed of delivery. Also people were free to ask questions.

Appendix D: Observations

Evaluative Observation: Kosala 3

Case: The case observed had been going on since March of this year. A tenant owed his landlord rent for the past few months. The landlord had brought the case before the council previously and the council had instructed the tenant to pay. After that council meeting, the tenant still did not pay. His girlfriend had a baby and because of this, the landlord gave him some extra time. However, the extra time had passed and still no payment had been received. As a result, the landlord was bringing the tenant to the council again.

Judgment passed: The council instructed the tenant to bring the money to the council that Saturday, because by then, as a farmer, he would have made his money from his cocoa. They also instructed the tenant to start looking for another place to stay and move as soon as he was able.

Observation

Preparation for mediation

The case that we observed was a continuation of a case that had begun in March. For this reason, the council did not spend much time on preliminary activities. Presumably these had already taken place earlier in the year – for example, agreeing upon ground rules.

Everybody appeared to be there of their own accord. However, the tenant arrived rather late, perhaps indicating a reluctance to attend. His lateness was interpreted by the mediators as a sign of guilt.

The head councilor read out the name and details of the case from a sheet of paper, as way of introducing the case to the council, while another councilor turned off the radio to better hear the statements of the two parties.

Characteristics of the mediators/councilors

The mediators tended to speak over each other a lot, and even disagree. This relays conflicting communication to parties and can be difficult to hear.

Before mediation even started, furthermore, the councilors stated that the tenant was already in their bad books. This does not convey the impression that both parties are equal and attributes blame before even hearing the

statements. It also does not give the impression that the council is neutral and objective from the beginning.

Both parties, however, were allowed to tell their side of the story and mediators listened carefully, without interrupting them with questions. Following the opening statements, the mediators seemed to have already made up their minds about the judgment and spent the rest of the time trying to convince the tenant to agree to the terms.

In this case, mediators paid attention to positions as opposed to interests.

Occasionally, mediators did interject to clarify and summarise. They also worked very well to deflect hostility. At one point, it came out that the landlord had entered the property, which is illegal. This would have given the tenant reason to continue hostility and withhold payment. However, mediators quickly reprimanded the landlord for taking the law into his own hands, and then deflected the matter back to the case at hand. Mediators, on the whole, were very good at making sure that the council dealt with one issue only and did not get side-tracked by distracting facts or other issues.

When issuing the final judgment, the head councilor asked both sides what they thought was most appropriate for an agreement. This drew both parties into the judgment and should increase feelings of responsibility and accountability. The final agreement, furthermore, was measurable (an exact amount was agreed upon), timely (a specific deadline was issued) and specific (both parties clearly understood what was required of them).

Characteristics of the mediation case and situation

The case is appropriate for mediation. Although both parties are not necessarily bound in a close relationship, they live within the same community as neighbours and therefore maintaining good will between them is a benefit. The council, furthermore, is legally allowed to handle such a case, and it detracts it away from the formal justice system and police.

As far as we could tell, no corruption was involved in this case.

Outcomes of mediation

An explanation for the final judgment was provided and both parties agreed to the final agreement. The tenant and landlord also shook hands to demonstrate reconciliation and agreement to the terms discussed.

Jungle justice did not appear to be a threat either before or after the mediation process.

Evaluative Observation 1: Kosala 2

Case: The case we observed was a continuation dating back to June 2007. One woman owed another woman 100 000 CFA. Over the course of the past year, she managed to pay back 50 000 CFA. When she went to the woman to pay back the remaining 50 000 CFA, the other woman told her to come and present the money at the council. On the day of the council, however, the woman owing the money arrived, but not the woman to whom the money was owed.

Judgment passed: Because the other woman did not arrive, the council told the woman owing the money to pay the 50 000 CFA to the council and the council would give her a receipt and pass on the money to the woman concerned.

Observation

Preparation for mediation

There were few preliminary activities partly because the case was a continuation (i.e. not a new case), but mostly because one party was absent. Presumably, most preliminary activities took place (if at all) at the first hearing of the case back in June 2007.

The party that was there appeared to be so of her own accord.

Characteristics of the mediators/councilors

The mediation process was not long enough to adequately observe the mediation skills or characteristics of individual councilors.

There were, however, two points of concern. Firstly, as was the case with other quarter councils, councilors tended to interrupt and speak over each other. Secondly, at one point, some of the councilors were trying hard not to laugh at the defendant. Not taking the defendant seriously undermines her part of the story and could even evoke shame, leading to rage and anger, which hinders the mediation process.

Councilors, however, were good at acknowledging equality of parties and recognizing that there are two sides to the story. Although they only had the opportunity of listening to one, they made reference to the possibility of another side and were careful to make any solid judgment based only on one party's account.

In this case, mediators paid attention to positions as opposed to interests – they were more concerned with the money owed as opposed to what the money represents and what needs or fears it speaks to.

Because of the simplicity of the case, mediators did not do a lot of summarizing and clarifying.

Characteristics of the mediation case and situation

The case is appropriate for mediation. Although both parties are not necessarily bound in a close relationship, they live within the same community as neighbours and therefore maintaining good will between them is a benefit. The council, furthermore, is legally allowed to handle such a case, and it detracts it away from the formal justice system and police.

As far as we could tell, no corruption was involved in this case.

Outcomes of mediation

The motive for the judgement passed was self-evident (the defendant was absent) and thus no explanation was given. The party that was present accepted the judgment and paid the council the 50 000 CFA. She appeared content with the outcome.

Jungle justice did not appear to be a threat either before or after the mediation process.

Other notes on Kosala

Relationship with GCI: Kosala quarter council would like to improve their relationship with GCI. GCI will be available by telephone or by email and would be willing to come to Kosala to meet with councilors whenever they would like to communicate face to face.

The Rights of the Child: The council also requested a special module on the rights of the child and how best to deal with child perpetrators and their parents – something that they struggle with on a regular basis.

Time management: One council member came late to the council meeting and was reprimanded by the council head. The council head stated that time management was important and they were strict on it because councilors should be setting an example for members of the community.