CASE STUDY

Improving the Cross Border Trade Environment through Improved Research and Advocacy on Cross Border Trade Issues

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Executive Summary

Funded by Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA), Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is implementing a regional project targeting small traders crossing the borders between Rwanda and DRC. These borders are Goma / Gisenyi and Bukavu / Rusizi. The project began in July 2016 and finishes in June 2017.

The overall objective of the project is to support peace through economic development and improved citizen-government relations in the area of cross-border trade, supporting enhanced confidence in traded goods and services between Rwanda and DRC. This overall objective will be achieved through the achievement of three specific objectives:

1. To improve relations and collaboration on border regulations between border officials and petty traders;
2. To enhance stakeholders’ research-based awareness of cross border trade (CBT) related issues faced by small traders (petty traders, local CSOs/PSOs, border officials, government officials, and other relevant parties); and
3. To empower petty traders, cooperatives/associations, and related CSOs to work together to improve livelihoods for petty traders

In order to achieve these objectives, the project aims at bringing together petty traders from both countries, organizing Town hall meetings, producing and broadcasting a radio program on cross-border trade and building entrepreneurial capacities of small traders.

The main targets of the project are petty traders, with particular emphasis on women, as well as customs officers. Indirectly, the project will affect the listeners of the radio programs produced and disseminated within the framework of this project.

Methodology

This case study used a purely qualitative approach. Three focus group discussions were conducted with women and men small traders who attended forums and town hall meetings and three interviews were conducted with key informants (Migration officers and presidents of women petty traders associations). The target groups for this case study were the Rwandans petty traders crossing the borders between Rwanda and DRC at Gisenyi/Rubavu border.
Limitations

During the data collection and analysis, it was not easy to analyze gender data due to the limited number of men petty traders crossing the border between Rwanda and DRC. For this reason few men attended forums and town hall meetings.

Also due to the small budget allocated to this activity, this case study covered only Rwandans petty traders on the Gisenyi border. Therefore, it is not easy to compare data by border and by country.

Findings

The findings of this qualitative research show that the forums and town hall meeting were very useful to address key cross border trade issues. These meetings helped bring together petty traders and border officials to discuss things in person.

Concerning the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials, we found that forums and town hall meetings contributed a lot in improving relational and collaboration between them by providing a platform for discussion between border officials and petty traders.

In terms of improvements in the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials, the findings show that the discussion during forums and townhall allowed for the following improvements: a decrease in the amount of time spent at the border, decrease in the amount of time spent in MAGERWA due to the increase of the staff, a decrease in the number of children who were left at the border by their mothers while crossing the border, and an increase in the awareness of petty traders of some cross border trade regulations and policies.

Overall, the town halls and forums provided a platform for discussion, allowing border officials to sensitize petty traders on policies as well as to receive the complaints of petty traders. For example, petty traders were made aware of the procedures to buy laisser passer for their children in order to cross the border with them.

As far as vulnerability is concerned, Petty traders and Migration officer, insist that the financial support given to petty traders to increase the capital of their business is very important to help petty traders to redress challenges they face in their business. Therefore, the results of this case study show that petty traders with small capital are the one who are much affected by challenges on the border, especially illegal taxes in DRC.

In terms of the impact of SFCG work, despite the clear impact of the town halls and forums, when asked about the impact of SFCG work on their business, many petty traders insisted on the importance of the financial support they received from SFCG in the previous project.
Lessons and Recommendations

This case study shows the importance of forums and town hall meetings in bringing together petty traders and border officials to discuss cross border trade issues. This case study helps us formulate the following recommendations:

Sustainable Organization of Petty Traders

- In order to strengthen their voice, petty traders should group themselves into cooperatives in order to increase their capital and to have their voice heard;
- Petty traders are encouraged to look for more information on cross border trade regulations and see if they can change business and opt for more lucrative business that does not have high taxes.

Information Sharing and Advocacy

- According to the suggestions raised by petty traders and border officials, programs like SFCG’s should work in enhancing capacity building in advocacy for petty traders so that their challenges are heard and resolved.
- Capture and share stories of success that can serve as models for other petty traders and border officials.
- Border officials should organize regular meetings with petty traders in order to inform them about cross border trade policies and regulations.
- Taxation rates of different products should be made public, so that petty traders are informed about them.

Building on and Strengthening Current Programming

- To continue forums and town hall meetings and check with petty traders and border officials if concerns raised in the previous meetings were addressed;
- SFCG should put more focus on financial support, because it is a crucial component to improve cross border trade.
1. Background Information

Introduction

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is an international non-profit organization that promotes peaceful resolution of conflict. With headquarters in Washington, DC and in Brussels, Belgium, SFCG’s mission is to transform how individuals, organizations, and governments deal with conflicts - away from adversarial approaches and toward cooperative solutions. SFCG seeks to help conflicting parties understand their differences and act on their commonalities. Since 2006, SFCG has worked in Rwanda to support the post-conflict society’s peaceful transition by encouraging dialogue and strengthening capacity for peaceful conflict resolution.

SFCG, funded by Trade Mark East Africa (TMEA), is implementing a regional project targeting small traders crossing the borders between Rwanda and DRC. These borders are Goma / Gisenyi and Bukavu / Rusizi. The small traders are predominantly women. This project will cover the one-year period between July 2016 and June 2017.

The goal of this project is “Support peace through economic development and improved citizen-government relations in the area of cross-border trade, supporting enhanced confidence in traded goods and services between Rwanda and DRC.”

The goal will be achieved through the achievement of three specific objectives:

1. To improve relations and foster collaboration between border officials and petty traders on border regulations;
2. To enhance stakeholders’ research-based awareness of CBT related issues faced by small traders (petty traders, local CSOs/PSOs, border officials, government officials, and other relevant parties); and
3. To empower petty traders, cooperatives/associations, and related CSOs to work together to improve livelihoods for petty traders.

In order to achieve these objectives, the project brings together small traders from both Rwanda and DRC by organizing town hall meetings, producing and broadcasting a radio programs on cross-border trade and entrepreneurial capacities of small traders. The main targets groups of the project are small traders, especially women, and customs officers. Indirectly, the project also targets the general population through radio programming.

This case study aims to highlight the impact of forums and town hall meetings in strengthening relationships and collaboration between petty traders and border officials. While forums are meetings organized separately with petty traders or border officials to identify issues affecting cross border trade and how they can be solved, Town Hall meetings bring together petty traders and border officials to discuss issues affecting this field.
2. Methodology

Objectives

The overall objective of this case study is to investigate the role of the town hall meetings and forums in improving collaboration on cross border trade issues and relations between Rwandan petty traders and border officials. This case study will also inform recommendations on how to improve the relations and collaboration between border officials and Rwandan petty traders thereby improving cross border trade.

Specifically, the case study has the following objectives:

1. Explore if Townhall meetings and forums have improved the relations between border officials and cross border Rwandans petty traders on Rwanda side;
2. Measure the contribution of town hall meetings and forums organized by SFCG on the ability of Rwandan petty traders to address challenges they face;
3. Draw lessons learned and recommendations on the improvement of relations and collaboration between petty traders and border officials on the Rwanda side of the border.

The case study report will be shared with the Rubavu District authorities and all authorities with responsibilities on cross border trade issues. The report will be published on SFCG website and will be shared with the donor, TMEA.

Research Questions

The research questions were developed jointly by the program team, the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DM&E) Coordinator in Rwanda and in DRC as well as the Regional DM&E team. These questions are intended to guide the development of data collection tools.

The general research questions were:

- To what extent have collaboration and relation between petty traders and border officials changed since the beginning of the project? On which aspects did they improve and on which did they stay stable or worsen? Were these aspects dealt with during the forums and town hall meetings?
- To what extent have cross border trade policies mitigated or increased the vulnerability? Is there a link between these changes and the forums and town hall meetings held by SFCG?
- Are border officials aware of the challenges petty traders are facing at the borders? How border officials are dealing with these challenges? Was their participation in SFCG’s activities useful?
- What do petty traders and key informants suggest to strengthen the relations and collaboration between petty traders and border officials?
What are the strengths and weaknesses of town hall meetings and forums? What can SFCG improve in its approach?

What are the main lessons learned and what recommendations can we draw for the next project activities?

**Approach**

The approach of this case study was qualitative, based on interviews with key informants (KII) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with women and men petty traders on the Gisenyi border. The development of the case study was overseen by the SFCG Project Coordinator (Nicolas Gatambi) and the DM&E Coordinator in Rwanda. The SFCG Rwanda DM&E Coordinator (Theogene Mugisha) was responsible for data collection, data analysis and reporting.

**Target Population and Sampling**

**Key Informant Interviews**

In order to collect more information on petty traders crossing the border, the following key informants were interviewed using open questions.

- 1 president of association/cooperative of petty traders crossing the border
- 1 Migration officer in Rubavu district

**Focus Group Discussions**

Three FGDs at Gisenyi (Rubavu) border were conducted with 10 participants in each:

- 1 FGD with young women petty traders
- 1 FGD with adult women petty traders
- 1 FGD with men petty traders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Key Informant Interview</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisenyi/Rubavu</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Search for Common Ground | RWANDA**
**Data Collection Area**

The data collection activities targeted the Gisenyi border. Participants in focus group discussions were Rwandan men and women petty traders crossing the border between Gisenyi/Rubavu and Goma. Local organization partners Action pour le Develepement du Peuple (ADEPE) in Rwanda facilitated selection of the women to be participants in FGD using the attendance lists from forums and town hall meetings.

**Limitations**

During the data collection and analysis it was not easy to analyze data gender due to the limited number of men petty traders crossing the border between Rwanda and DRC. For this reason few men attended forums and town hall meetings.

Also due to the small budget allocated to this activity, this case study covered only Rwandans petty traders and in Gisenyi border. Therefore, it is not easy to compare data by border and by country.
3. Findings

This report presents findings from the qualitative research conducted to highlight achievements of town hall meetings and forums bringing together cross border petty traders and border officials on the Rwanda side of the Rwanda-DRC border.

3.1 Changes in Border Practices and Relations

This section describes the improvement in the relations and practices between petty traders and border officials after attending forums and town hall meetings organized by SFCG. Petty traders crossing the border who participated in the FGDs all agreed that the forums and town hall meetings were a platform to discuss with borders officials about their challenges and worries regarding cross border trade. They said that, normally, it was not easy to find border officials to speak to in person and that, in comparison to last year, there was an improvement in the relations and collaboration between petty traders and border officials. However, while on some aspects of relation and collaboration an improvement was observed, on others, the situation remains stagnant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Observed</th>
<th>No Improvement Observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time spent crossing the border</td>
<td>High taxes in Rwanda for second hand clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in MAGERWA (Magasins Generaux du Rwanda) while checking products and paying taxes</td>
<td>Illegal taxes in DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of children left on the border</td>
<td>Beating and harassment in DRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between petty traders and border officials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Improvement Observed**

*Time spent crossing the border*

The time spent crossing the border was one of the topics discussed during forums and town hall meetings. This was especially relevant for petty traders who carry heavy bags and experience delays on the border because their products need to be inspected. All FGD participants, men and women, unanimously agreed that the time they spend crossing the border has decreased since the town hall meetings, especially on the Rwanda side. They said that this decrease in time was due
to the installation of many automatic machines giving exit permission (*jetons*) and the simplification of the process for those carrying heavy bags.

A male focus group participant stated:

> *In Rwanda we don’t encounter problems any more, we are no longer delayed; we can’t spend more than 10 minutes while we exceeded half an hour before. Tokens and Automated Passenger Clearance Machines have facilitated our movement on the Rwanda side since when you have your ID you cross the border easily.*

Another woman petty trader explained, “In Rwanda, a sheet or token has solved the delay problem we used to face; passengers carrying things on the heads are facilitated and cross directly without queuing.”

This change was clearly linked to the town hall meetings in that during the course of the meeting the petty traders raised the issue of long waiting times for those who have to carry heavy bags. While the automatic machines were not installed because of this complaint (they were observed during the baseline evaluation), the permission for those carrying heavy bags to be given priority to cross without waiting was a result of this discussion and has had a clear impact on crossing times for petty traders.

**Time spent in MAGERWA**

MAGERWA (Magasin Generaux du Rwanda) is a place where all imports to Rwanda pass through for inspection and tax payment. Both male and female participants including, youth (young women), claimed that the time spent in MAGERWA while paying taxes has also decreased as a result of the town hall meetings and forums. They reported that this was because, after the town hall meetings, the MAGERWA increased the number of employees and when a petty trader arrives her/his products are screened and checked immediately without waiting for other petty traders to arrive, which used to be required. They said that in the past it could have taken them up to two days waiting for many petty traders to come, because MAGERWA staff said that they could not serve one or few persons.

A young woman FGD participant said:

> *After we conducted meetings with border officials, on the Rwanda side, the service delivery improved. We used to spend a very long period of time in MAGERWA for declaration and tax payment since there were insufficient personnel. You could get there at 14h00 and leave at 16h00. You could see only one employee serving us but currently it is 3 or 4 who serve us so that you are served within so few minutes- not going beyond 10 minutes. Machines used to sometimes stop working, but we no longer see this. Problems remain in DRC.*

Participants in FGDs also reported and appreciated the change in the border operational because it was easy to cross the border since it started to work until 22:00. A male petty trader participant
in FGD stated, “We however rejoice over the border working hours since the border has been opened until 22:00 since the Championnat d’Afrique des Nations de football (CHAN) championship held in Rwanda.” This particular change, however, was not the direct result of town hall meetings and forums.

**Number of children left at the Rwanda border**

Women petty traders crossing the border used to leave their children at the border while they crossed the border to sell their products in DRC. Participants in FGDs, mainly women petty traders, said that the number of children left at the Rwanda border has dramatically decreased. According to them, and to the Migration Officer in Rubavu District, this decrease is due to the fact that during the town halls and forums, the border officials explained to the women how to buy laisser passer for their children so that they could cross the border with them. He said that they had mainly been leaving their children at the border due to the fact that many of the petty traders are single mothers and their children were not legally registered.

During the town hall meetings the attendees were also informed that there was a civil registration week country wide to register all children who were not registered. Once children are registered, it is easy to get a laisser passer and passports because there is a proof of who the child’s guardian is.

A woman FGD participant explained the discussion with the officials:

> We have also obtained time to talk about the problem of children who were staying at the border without anyone looking them after. The great number of children who were left at the border depended on the fact the mothers didn’t know the price required to get a pass-permit/pass-ticket. From these meetings and forums we benefited to know that a pass-permit for a child costs 5000 Rf and that this permit remains valid for two years. This actually is such a small amount of money that we attribute the decrease of children at the border to this amount.

However, another reason that the number of children left at the border has decreased, some women reported, is that in the previous project some of them got the financial support from SFCG and with it they were able to hire someone to take care of their children at home. In the previous cross border trade project (from 2014-2015) 100 women petty traders in Rubavu District were given a grant equivalent to $100 each to reinforce their business.

Before your intervention, there were so many children left at the border. But the number of children has considerably decreased since we currently see around 5 children at the border while in the last year more than 100 children were left at the border by their mothers. ... 5% of children are still being left at the border by their mothers. 95% children are left at home.

Female petty trader, FGD, Rubavu
The migration officer echoed this change saying, “Before the forums and town hall meeting, we received many claims from petty traders asking procedures to get documents for their kids to cross the border, but now we receive claims related to the taxes only.” It was not possible to determine the extent to which the newfound awareness of petty traders about the laisser passer and the previous projects grants each contributed. However, both clearly contributed.

**“Meeting with different authorities- officials from Rwanda Revenue Authority and border officials, among others, we learned that we are really also cared about, especially as there are products we attempted to conceal because of not knowing that they are legal or that their tax is not heavy.”**

Female petty trader, FGD, Rubavu

**Relationships**

Overall, forums and town hall meetings had a positive impact on a number of issues regarding cross border trade. But, more generally, research participants said that they gained self-confidence because they found that their business is recognized by many different people and organizations (SFCG, migration officers, Rubavu District). One female respondent said:

*We discussed issues around the cross-border trade so that this discussion challenged stereotypes reigning on both sides. Subsequent to these discussions, these Congolese petty traders have become our collaborators and friends since they assist us in avoiding or dodging challenges.*

This quote highlights the feelings of recognition and accountability that are fostered through the town halls and forums, as well as the role they can play overall in communication of policies and encouraging collaboration among petty traders.

The migration officer said that the forums and town halls provided a good opportunity to talk directly to the petty traders. He said that the meetings allow them to receive claims from petty traders and to sensitize them on cross border policies and regulations.

**No Improvement**

**High taxes in Rwanda**

Participants in FGDs, both men and women, who import second-hand clothes from DRC said that they still pay high taxes on used clothes. Women participants insisted that they experienced losses in their business because

*“The only extremely difficult problem we are facing is a tax which has risen; besides, we are obliged to pay taxes twice- in Rwanda and DRC. Before we paid 500Rwf as a tax per 1 kilo of clothes but we now pay 2600Rwf, a kilo of shoes was 1000Rwf but it is 5000Rwf currently.”*  

Female petty trader, FGD, Ruvabu
the tax had increased for second-hand clothes and clothes made in Rwanda are not available.

A male participant in a focus group also reported that they face a heavy tax for used clothes and shoes and constitutes the only burden on the side of Rwanda. He reported that a kilo of shoes is taxed 4500Rwf while it was 500Rwf before. A kilo of clothes/ bed-sheets is 2800Rwf where it was 500Rwf. Both women and men petty traders have reported high taxes in Rwanda for used clothes they import from DRC.

To address this, the Migration Officer in the Rubavu district said that petty traders need to have enough information on laws and regulations on cross border trade so that they can change their business and go to the business where taxes are not high. However, petty traders said that it was not easy to change the business you started when you were a child and the business you learned from your parents.

**Illegal taxes in DRC**

Men and women FGD participants said that they face payment of illegal taxes in DRC and do not receive receipts. A woman participant in the FGD said, “Problems occur in DRC, but there is no problem in Rwanda. When authorities in DRC take you, you hand them money equaling about 500 or 1000 RwF; this affects your profit severely.”

During the discussion we observed that women petty traders who sell foods in small quantities in DRC are more likely to face losses due to the payment of illegal taxes because they have small capital. Participants in a FGD said that there are no men who sell foods in DRC.

Men who participated in the FGD said that male petty traders are familiar with the practice and therefore have reserved a budget to pay for these illegal taxes. They incorporated this payment in their business expenses. Consequently, men petty traders are not affected very much by these illegal taxes. They have more capital compared to women who sell foods. However, women who sell food in large quantities are not affected by these taxes very much because they can pay and still have other money left for business.

**Harassment on the DRC side**

Some men and women FGD participants said that there had been an improvement on the DRC side in terms of harassment. They explained that after they attended forums and town hall meetings there was a decrease in the harassment by authorities on DRC side. However, there was no consensus on this. As many FGD participants said that there was an improvement as that there was none.

Women participants in the FGD stated, “We used to be beaten and robbed of money in DRC, but this is diminishing; it isn’t as acute as before. An issue still prevailing is that some Congolese swindlers disguise themselves as legitimate authorities so that they charge unjustifiable cash.”
The decrease is not related to the gender of respondents because men and women both have reported decrease and increase. This is why this was not considered to be an improvement: an equal number of respondents, men and women, have reported a decrease and increase in the harassment by Congolese border officials and authorities.

Another woman petty trader explained that, “When demonstrations take place there (DRC), any person comes and takes your bucket of tomatoes from you.” This underlined the face that traders are harassed not only by border officials, but also by people who are disguised as police officers in order to take advantage of them and rob them.

Another, woman who participated in a FGD said that in DRC they face harassment and sometimes they are beaten by security forces. She said, “Once a policeman requested 30 dollars; when we asked him the reason, he beat me in an attempt to rob me of the money and he pushed me. But, I told him that I would not give him the cash. I, however, had my national identity card and token (jeton) as required documents to cross the border.” From this discussion, this issue emerged as a priority to be addressed by DRC authorities.

**Vulnerability**

Despite the clear impacts of the town halls and forums, when asked about the impact of SFCG work on their business, many petty traders insisted on the importance of the financial support they received from SFCG in the previous project.

A female petty trader FGD participant said:

*SFCG has elevated us: for example, I could neither buy clothes to myself nor take care of my children, I always waited for my husband’s intervention. But now, thanks to SFCG’s cash free of interest and training on financial management (saving, accounting, etc.), I am currently satisfying my needs. Yet, I view that the capital is still so small that we suggest that SFCG should give us another 200 000Rwf. We see this amount as money, which can sufficiently assist us financially in strengthening our cooperative. Yet, I still appreciate the financial assistance SFCG has provided to us.*
4. Conclusions

The findings of this qualitative research show that the forums and town hall meeting were very useful to address key cross border trade issues. These meetings helped bring together petty traders and border officials to discuss things in person.

Concerning the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials, we found that forums and town hall meetings contributed a lot in improving relational and collaboration between them by providing a platform for discussion between border officials and petty traders.

In terms of improvements in the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials, the findings show that the discussion during forums and townhall allowed for the following improvements: a decrease in the amount of time spent at the border, decrease in the amount of time spent in MAGERWA due to the increase of the staff, a decrease in the number of children who were left at the border by their mothers while crossing their border, and an increase in the awareness of petty traders of some cross border trade regulations and policies.

Overall, the town halls and forums provided a platform for discussion, allowing border officials to sensitize petty traders on policies as well as to receive the complaints of petty traders. For example, petty traders were made aware of the procedures to buy 
 *laisser passer* documents for their children in order to cross the border with them.

As far as vulnerability is concerned, respondents insist that the financial support is very important to help petty traders to redress challenges they face in their business. Therefore, the results of this case study show that petty traders with the smallest capital are most affected by challenges on the border, especially illegal taxes in DRC.

In terms of consequences of SFCG work, despite the clear impact of the town halls and forums, when asked about the impact of SFCG work on their business, many petty traders insisted on the importance of the financial support they received from SFCG in the previous project.
5. Lessons and Recommendations

This case study shows the importance of forums and town hall meetings in bringing together petty traders and border official to discuss cross border trade. Based on the data presented above the following recommendations are put forth:

**Sustainable Organization of Petty Traders**

- In order to strengthen their voice, petty traders should group themselves into cooperatives in order to increase their capital and to have their voice heard.
- Petty traders are encouraged to look for more information on cross border trade regulations and see if they can change business and opt for more lucrative business that does not have high taxes.

**Information Sharing and Advocacy**

- According to the suggestions raised by petty traders and border officials, programs like SFCG’s should advocate for petty traders so that their challenges are heard and resolved.
- Capture and share stories of success that can serve as models for other petty traders and border officials.
- Border officials should organize regular meetings with petty traders in order to inform them about (new?) cross border trade policies and regulations.
- Taxation rates of different products should be made public, so that petty traders are informed about them.

**Building on and Strengthening Current Programming**

- To continue forums and town hall meetings and check with petty traders and border officials if concerns raised in the previous meetings were addressed.
- SFCG should increase focus on financial support, because it is a crucial component to improve cross border trade.
6. Annexes

**FGD guide**

Province:

District:

Border:

Type of participants:

Number of Participants: Homme.........................Femme:.................. TOTAL:...

Name of moderator:

Name of note taker:

Date:

- What do you think about your collaboration and relation with border officials? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, why?
  - On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen?
- Have you participated to townhall meetings and forums organized by SFCG? What were they about? What did you learn/know already?
- Do you think the townhall meetings and forums had an impact on border officials?
- What are the main vulnerabilities and challenges that you face crossing the border? IS there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- What do you think about the cross border trade policies? Are they helping you or do you think it’s an obstacle? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- Are you satisfied with the changes in collaboration and relation between you and border officials?
- What do you suggest to be done to improve your relation and collaboration with border officials?
- How satisfied were you with SFCG’s work and what do you suggest to improve it?

**KII Guide for border official and district officials**

Name of Respondent:

Name of Interviewer:

Function of respondent:
Age:

Phone number:

- What do you think about your collaboration and relation with petty traders? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, why?
- On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen
- Have you participated to townhall meetings and forums organized by SFCG? What were they about? What did you learn/know already?
- Do you think the townhall meetings and forums had an impact on the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials?
- What do you think are the main challenge that different group of petty traders crossing the border face? Is there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- What do you think about the cross border trade policies? Are they helping you or do you think it’s an obstacle? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- Are you satisfied with the changes in collaboration and relation between you and petty traders?
- What do you suggest to be done to improve your relation and collaboration with petty traders?
- How satisfied were you with SFCG’s work and what do you suggest to improve it?

**KII guide with leaders of associations of petty traders**

**Name of Respondent:**

**Name of Interviewer:**

**Function of respondent:**

**Age:**

**Phone number:**

- What do you think about your collaboration and relation with border officials? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  - If yes, how?
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  - On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen?
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• What are the main challenges that you face crossing the border? Is there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during town hall meetings and forums?
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• Are you satisfied with the changes in collaboration and relation between you and border officials?
• What do you suggest to be done to improve your relation and collaboration with border officials?
• How satisfied were you with SFCG’s work and what do you suggest to improve it?

Terms of Reference:

CASE STUDY ON CROSS-BORDER TRADE BETWEEN RWANDA AND THE DRC

The role of SFCG town hall meetings and forums on improving relations and collaboration between petty traders and border officials on Gisenyi (Rubavu) border

Théogène Mugisha,

DME Coordinator – Rwanda
January 2017
Context

About Search for Common Ground

Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground (SFCG) is one of the world’s largest conflict prevention and transformation NGO.

SFCG has been active in the Great Lake Region since 1995 and has developed a regional strategy across its programs in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi. SFCG in the region seeks to empower key people from diverse groups, including petty traders operating along the border between Rwanda and the DRC, to become actors for social change and actively contribute to both peace and prosperity in their communities. SFCG is conducting a case study as part of its project "Improving the Cross Border Trade Environment through Improved Research and Advocacy on Cross Border Trade Issues".

This case study will show the role of townhall meetings and forums on improving relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials on the Border Rubavu/Goma.

About the project

SFCG, funded by Trade Mark East Africa, is implementing a regional project targeting small traders crossing the borders between Rwanda and DRC. These borders are Goma / Gisenyi and Bukavu / Rusizi and mostly involve women. This project will cover the one-year period between July 2016 and June 2017.

The overall objective of this project is

Improving the Cross Border Trade Environment through Improved Research and Advocacy on Cross Border Trade Issues

This objective will be achieved through the achievement of three specific objectives:

1. To improve relations and collaboration on border regulations between border officials and petty traders;

2. To enhance stakeholders’ research-based awareness of CBT related issues faced by small traders (petty traders, local CSOs/PSOs, border officials, government officials, and other relevant parties); and
3. To empower petty traders, cooperatives/associations, and related CSOs to work together to improve livelihoods for petty traders

In order to achieve these objectives, the project aims at bringing together small traders from both countries by organizing Town hall meetings, producing and broadcasting a radio programs on cross-border trade and entrepreneurial capacities of small traders.

The main targets of the project are small traders, with particular emphasis on women, as well as customs officers. Indirectly, the project targets the listeners of the radio programs produced and disseminated within the framework of this project.

**Case study**

The overall objective of this case study is to investigate the role of town hall meetings and forums in improving collaboration on cross border trade issues and relations between Rwandans petty traders crossing the border and border officials.

This case study will also help us establishing recommendations on how to improve the relations and collaboration between border officials and Rwandans petty traders and how to improve cross border trade.

Specifically, the case study has the following objectives:

4. Explore if Townhall meetings and forums have improved the relationship between border officials and cross border Rwandans petty traders on Rwanda side.
5. Measure the contribution of town hall meetings and forums organized by SFCG on the ability of Rwandans cross border petty traders to redress challenges they face.
6. Draw lessons learned and recommendations on the improvement of relationship and collaboration between petty traders and border officials on Rwanda side.

The case study report will be shared with the Rubavu District authorities and all authorities having responsibilities on cross border trade issues. The report will be published on SFCG website and will be shared with the donor, TMEA.
Research Questions

The research questions were developed jointly by the program team, the Design, Monitoring and Evaluation (DME) Coordinator in Rwanda and in DRC as well as the Regional DME team. These questions are intended to guide the development of data collection tools.

The general research questions will focus on knowing:

- To what extent have collaboration and relationship between petty traders and border officials changed since the beginning of the project? On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen? Were these aspects dealt with during the forums and town hall meetings?
- To what extent have cross border trade policies mitigated or increased vulnerability? Is there a link between these changes and the forums and town hall meetings held by SFCG?
- Are border officials aware of the challenges petty traders are facing at the borders? How border officials are dealing with these challenges? Was their participation in SFCG’s activities useful?
- What do petty traders and key informant suggest to strengthen the relations and collaboration between petty traders and border officials?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of town hall meetings and forums? What can SFCG improve in its approach?
- What are the main lessons learned and what recommendations can we draw for the next project activities?

Methodology

Approach

The approach of this case study will be qualitative, and essentially built on the organization of interviews with key informants and focus group discussions with women and men petty traders in Gisenyi borders. The development of the case study will be overseen by the Project coordinator and the DME Coordinator SFCG in Rwanda. DME will be responsible for data collection in collaboration with facilitator of the FGD.
Data collection area

The data collection activities will target Gisenyi border. Participants in focus group discussions will be Rwandans women and men petty traders crossing the border between Goma and Gisenyi/Rubavu. Local Organization partners ADEPE in Rwanda will select women to be participants in FGD.

Target groups

The following groups will be targeted by the case study.

Key Informant Interviews

In order to collect more information on petty traders crossing the border, the following key informants will be interviewed using open questions.

- In Rwanda
  - 2 (1 man and 1 woman) presidents of associations/cooperatives of petty traders crossing the border
  - 1 In charge of Good governance in Rubavu district
  - 1 Joint Action Development Forum permanent Secretary in Rubavu district
  - 2 border officials

Focus Group Discussions

4 focus groups at Gisenyi (Rubavu) border with 10 participants in each one:

- 1 FGD with young women petty trader
- 1 FGD with adult women petty traders
- 1 FGD with adult men petty traders
- 1 FGD with young men petty traders

Sample for data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus group</th>
<th>Key Informant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gisenyi</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data collection tools

Interview and Focus group discussions guides will be developed by the DME Coordinator SFCG in Rwanda based on the research questions developed as part of this methodology and reviewed by the regional Institutional Learning Team.

Work schedule

The following table shows the calendar for data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3th to 26th January 2017</td>
<td>Design Terms of References</td>
<td>Theogene Mugisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31st January to 3rd February 2017</td>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Theogene Mugisha and Jean Baptiste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th to 10th February 2017</td>
<td>Data entry in MS Word</td>
<td>Theogene Mugisha and Jean Baptiste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20th February 2017</td>
<td>1st draft of report</td>
<td>Theogene Mugisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th February 2017</td>
<td>Final report</td>
<td>Theogene Mugisha</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Human resources

To conduct this case study the following human resources will be needed in data collection and data entry.

In Rwanda/Gisenyi border
• DME coordinator SFCG Rwanda to conduct KII and facilitate FGD
• Ndabananiye Jean Baptiste who will cofacilitate FGD and conduct KII

**Deliverable**

A report of 15 pages will be done in English at the beginning of March 2017.
## Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TMEA case study</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th># of days</th>
<th>Unitary cost (USD)</th>
<th>Total cost (USD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perdiem for DME and Jean Baptiste in Gisenyi and driver</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomodation for DME, Jean Baptiste and driver in Gisenyi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport for Participants in FGD</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex - Tools

FGD guide

- What do you thing about your collaboration and relation with border officials? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, why?
  - On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen?
- Have you participated to townhall meetings and forums organized by SFCG? What were they about? What did you learn/know already?
- Do you think the townhall meetings and forums had an impact on border officials?
- What are the main vulnerabilities and challenges that you face crossing the border? Is there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- What do you think about the cross border trade policies? Are they helping you or do you think it’s an obstacle? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
- Are you satisfied with the changes in collaboration and relation between you and border officials?
- What do you suggest to be done to improve your relation and collaboration with border officials?
- How satisfied were you with SFCG’s work and what do you suggest to improve it?

KII Guide for border official and district officials

- What do you thing about your collaboration and relation with petty traders? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  - If yes, how?
  - If not, why?
- On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen?
- Have you participated to townhall meetings and forums organized by SFCG? What were they about? What did you learn/know already?
- Do you think the townhall meetings and forums had an impact on the relation and collaboration between petty traders and border officials?
• What do you think are the main challenges that different groups of petty traders crossing the border face? Is there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
• What do you think about the cross border trade policies? Are they helping you or do you think it’s an obstacle? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
• Are you satisfied with the changes in collaboration and relation between you and petty traders?
• What do you suggest to be done to improve your relation and collaboration with petty traders?
• How satisfied were you with SFCG’s work and what do you suggest to improve it?

KII guide with leaders of associations of petty traders:

• What do you think about your collaboration and relation with border officials? Do you see an improvement compared to the last year?
  o If yes, how?
  o If not, why?
  o On which aspects did they improve and on which ones did they stay stable or worsen?
• Have you participated in townhall meetings and forums organized by SFCG? What were they about? What did you learn/know already?
• Do you think the townhall meetings and forums had an impact on border officials?
• What are the main challenges that you face crossing the border? Is there an evolution? What strategies do you use to deal with these issues? Were these issues mentioned during townhall meetings and forums?
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