



Organisational description

Cordaid combines more than 90 years' experience and expertise in emergency aid and structural poverty eradication. It is one of the biggest international development organisations with a network of almost a thousand partner organisations in 36 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Our counterpart organisations work on various themes, including participation, emergency aid and reconstruction, health and well-being and entrepreneurship.

Context

In late 2010 the ministry of Health in Zimbabwe, the World Bank and Cordaid agreed on the implementation of a Results Based Financing (RBF) project, in order to improve the health system in Zimbabwe. By 2012 a nationwide RBF system is to be installed in order to enhance the quality and quantity of the Zimbabwean Health facilities and district Hospitals in rural areas. The emphasis lies on Mother and Child care.

Analysis of the problem

Along with the agreement came a very tight time path for implementation. Things had to be organized very quickly as a head office in Harare and two operational local purchase units in Marondera and Gweru had to be staffed, trained, equipped and operational by May 2011. It meant less than 2 months to go! In the meantime, interim expatriate staff were already present in Harare in order to prepare the start up phase. However, these staff members did not have time to set up a major recruitment project and no local HR staff were present to offer support.

Here we have the problem: how to get the required quantity of qualified local staff on board, set up a decent HR policy, a job rating and salary system, all within a very tight timeframe?

Solution to the Problem

To tackle the problem, Cordaid chose to hire a HR consultant who had experience working with the organisation before.

"I know Cordaid very well and had seen more RBF projects so, after an open tender procedure, they hired me as HR consultant with HR together consultancy. Within a weeks time I was flown into Zimbabwe. Upon arrival I made a short survey on what was present already and what was to be done before which date. Based on that information I made a sharp time frame of action points and prioritized them".

Roughly, the plan was as follows:

- The first week reviewing and re-writing of the job descriptions, designing the vacancy advertisement and publication and writing the proposals for staff regulations and terms and conditions. A proposal on the organization chart, job rating and salary system were planned while waiting for the responses to the advertisement.
- The second week included viewing application letters, short listing and mailing invitations for interviews. There was great assistance from a recently recruited programme secretary and the administrator.
- The third week, the interviews with the short listed candidates were held and a final selection of candidates to be viewed by the management was made. The proposals on the organisation chart, job rating, salary grid, staff regulations and terms and conditions were also submitted.



“At the end of the three weeks reserved for this mission, I was very pleased with the results of this rapid intervention on the HR side of this RBF project”.

Reflections/Lessons learnt

This study proved how useful it can be to (local) NGOs to have a ‘first aid’ HR intervention team on the shelf. They concluded that the intervention saved the management a lot of time as they needed to get the project launched within the agreed time frame.

“At first we thought it would be hard to meet the deadline for having qualified staff in place. In the end we were satisfied with the results. The biggest challenge was to meet the deadline without hampering the quality of the process and the people hired. We succeeded to do this. In my opinion it was a good choice to hire a specialised consultant for this job, as he was able to focus solely on the project during his assignment.”

Frank van de Looij
Project Director at Cordaid Head Quarters in The Hague