

GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

AVSI – Cote D'Ivoire

Project: Integrated project to support the empowerment of artisans in Cote D'Ivoire

Good Practice: Strengthening and Promoting the Institutional Framework for Handicrafts: Promoting the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy

Key Areas of Good Practice

- Awareness of formalisation to promote the development of craft enterprises (4.3)
- Regulation and enhancement of the quality and status of craftspeople (1.5)
- Regulatory texts on crafts (1.5)
- Advocacy for the facilitation of formalisation processes (administrative documents) (1.2)
- Involvement of stakeholders and stakeholders in the formalisation chains according to their responsibilities (2.2)
- Tax strategies for the craft sector (1.2)
- Development of additional activities to facilitate formalisation (training, equipment) (2.2)

Description: processes and steps involved

Starting point: Identification of the weaknesses of the framework structures of the craftspeople, at the central level (the National Chamber of Trades -CNMCI), at the intermediate level (the Regional Chambers of Crafts -CRM) and at the peripheral level, the OPA. These needs form the basis for the identification of the strengthening methods of the institutional frameworks, i.e., the laws, the craft regulations and the implementing guidelines. Chambers of Trade provide the institutional framework on which the sustainability of the action must be based. Due to the actions on awareness raising, training, health coverage, and distribution of equipment to the most vulnerable, there is a will to transition to the formal economy.

Organisational and operational capacity building actions consisted of material support and training for the CNMCI and five (5) of its CRMs covered by the project, and to eleven (11) Social Centres and 21 NGOs that accompany the artisans on the ground. The strengthening of CNMCI's material capacities and the 5 CRMs resulted in support for consumable office supplies, furniture, computer equipment and subscriptions for internet connections. The training provided helped to strengthen the staff's knowledge on topics related to mastery in the institutional and regulatory framework, the implementation of a monitoring and evaluation plan and data management. The CRMs also benefited from additional financial means (in terms of travel expenses) to supervise and the field activities. Likewise, to enable the Social Centres and NGOs to carry out the activities that ultimately lead to the improvement of the living conditions of craftspeople and their families, these social structures have been supported by computer equipment (including connection to the internet network), financial resources, coaching in terms of training in monitoring and evaluation and data management.

Awareness raising of mass and proximity on the regulatory texts: Awareness raising was needed for the institutional framework development and the dissemination of the new regulatory framework of the craft industry. The focus was on the identification and the registration of the craftspeople with the CNMCI. The project relied on the Directorate General of the Craftspeople of the Ministry. They made experts available and other resources to help master the laws. This was done in collaboration with the legal team of the National Chamber of Trades. CRMs were involved in establishing a program covering their jurisdiction and the different trade.

For mass awareness, the project signed an agreement with the National Broadcasting Ivory Coast (RTI) to disseminate a broadcast in court, on television and on the radio. Local radio stations were also associated. The Secretaries General of the Regional Chambers visited localities once a week to explain the new law on crafts and its benefits. During all meetings of the OPAs or the GESCOs, the theme of identification with the law on artisans was systematically addressed. The dissemination of the new code (the law n ° 2014-338 of June 5th, 2014 relating to the craft industry in Ivory Coast) has sensitized more than 55.000 craftspeople on the registration process with the National Chamber of Trades of Côte d'Ivoire. More than 8000 booklets and 6000 leaflets have been distributed to popularise the terms of the regulations applicable to the craft industry.

The installation of the information windows in the CRMs: To promote the importance of the information on the laws, the project has equipped and installed information counters in the CRM. These counters are access points to all the information on the law and the artisan code as well as on information related to formalisation.

Obvious impact: At the end of the AVSI project, registrations in the Chambre des Métiers increased from 32% to 39%, while membership in Professional Organisations of Artisans increased from 3% to 31% and the number of craftspeople holding a savings account at a financial institution increased from 6% to 24%.

Facilitating the production of formalisation documents: This was a major issue in all the awareness raising sessions, i.e., "To actually be able to produce ID affiliation cards and have a trade register". These documents are equally important because they officially confer the status of craftspeople. Thus in some sites of the project, with the support of the National Chamber of Commerce, the entrepreneur in charge of the production of cards was invited to participate in awareness sessions. This had the advantage of directly referring the craftspeople to the card production table. For vulnerable artisans, AVSI provided support for the cost of producing these documents (card and trade registration).

Monitoring & Evaluation: Each awareness session was accompanied by a participants' attendance list. A local support mechanism was also put in place through the social workers of the social centres and the community advisers of the NGOs. They collect the files of the craftspeople in association with the OPA. On a weekly basis, these actors grouped all the files of the candidates for the registry of trades. These files were then sent to the headquarters of the Regional Chamber of Commerce, which made the cards. All the data at regional level was entered in the directory service database of the National Chamber of Trades.

Sustainability of the Good Practice

Sustainability can only be effective if the Chambers of Trades continue to invest in actions that are useful to its members. The support they received from the AVSI project has enabled the carrying out of the awareness-raising and training activities, the opening of information booths on topics related to the various trades and their general operation. The end of the AVSI project should not result in the cessation of these activities. AVSI, which runs several other projects in Côte d'Ivoire, can provide only minimal support during this transition phase. It is clear, however, that a supplementary project phase would still be necessary to ensure the sustainability of the project. An institutional structure that is still fragile and easily susceptible to falling back into the past needs more support.

Lessons Learned

Formalisation is a complex and time-consuming process for the craft sector. It involves several chain actors (training centres, ministries of economy and finance, the Ministry of Social Protection). It

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remains important to strengthen the awareness-raising mechanisms on the theme that involves artisans at the grassroots level. The strategy can also rely on peer artisans, whose companies are already formalised, to explain to reluctant artisans. In fact, for the most part, artisans are aware of the importance of formalizing themselves, but they expect flexible measures and incentives from government authorities.