



Evaluating health development programmes in West Africa

Challenge

UNIDEA – Unicredit Foundation is an Italian funding body linked to the Italian Unicredit Bank that supports development programmes in developing countries.

For a number of years it has supported development work in West Africa – with two of its projects focused on improving maternal and child health care, access to health care for poorer members of the population, and training local health workers in a range of skills.

However UNIDEA–Unicredit Foundation was unsure of the impact its work was having and identified an ongoing need to have their funding characterized and quantified before planning their future Development Aid strategy.

In 2006 the Overseas Development Group (ODG), the consulting arm of the University's School of Development Studies, was asked to evaluate two health care programmes, funded by UNIDEA–Unicredit Foundation, in Burkina Faso and Benin.

Solution

ODG formed a team comprising a lecturer in health and development from the School of Development Studies with two external consultants from Burkina Faso, one of whom was a medical doctor with experience of primary health care in developing countries.

The team worked on the evaluation of the UNIDEA programmes over a two year period, first designing and agreeing an evaluation methodology with the client and then carrying out the evaluation, analyzing the results and presenting the reports and recommendations in Milan.

Project workers were trained in simple survey techniques, and workshops were also held in West Africa. The work required building trust with people involved in the programmes at NGO, Government and Ministry level, and ensuring data was accurate and cross referenced where appropriate.

A number of recommendations were made on strengthening existing work and building on the capabilities of existing staff. The comprehensive evaluation has helped UNIDEA–Unicredit Foundation undertake informed strategic planning of their future development funding in the region.