

## BANA DUKINE: USING TECHNOLOGY TO TEACH CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

**Bana Dukine (Kids, Let's Play!)** is a computer game designed through a partnership between Serious Games Interactive, Search for Common Ground (SFCG), and the Rwandan Ministry of Education with the financial support of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP). The main purpose of the game was to teach conflict resolution skills and create a space for Rwandan primary school students who are in the fourth or fifth year (9 – 11 years old) to practice these skills with the following objectives:

- Increase understanding among Rwandan schoolchildren of the causes of conflicts, constructive strategies to resolve them and apply these approaches in their daily lives.
- To develop interactive, new, and replicable conflict resolution tools that leverages the Government of Rwanda's national rollout of ICT and can be adopted in comparable contexts.

In June 2012 SFCG conducted a mid-term evaluation for the over-all project but a final evaluation for SFCG since the work of SFCG was completed on the project. The primary goal of this final evaluation conducted by SFCG was to assess whether the computer game was appropriate for the students and to understand if and what they learned through playing the game.

**Focus Groups Discussions, Interviews, and Observations** were three methods used to evaluate the results of this project. 400 students and 40 teachers participated either in interviews or in focus groups. The evaluation was conducted in two primary schools in two districts within each of the four provinces of Rwanda and Kigali.

Overall, the evaluation found the game is appropriate based on the students' ability to understand it as well as their desire to play. No significant change in knowledge levels of conflict resolution techniques was detected, however, and it was noted that students already had a significant knowledge-base of such techniques.

## APPROPRIATENESS OF THE GAME

The data shows that students understand the basic design of the game (only two students in the focus groups did not understand how to play the game), and the role the main character in the game (the little lion, who must make decisions on the sharing of water and conflict resolution).

The criterion of appropriateness was defined, for the purposes of this evaluation, as "the ability of students to understand the Bana Dukine computer game, their enjoyment of the game, and the overall relevance of the game within their specific context." In line with this definition, the evaluation found the majority of students understood and enjoyed playing the game and that it is, therefore, appropriate for P4 and P5 students.

It is interesting to note that many students did not like that there was conflict in the game to begin with (mentioned in 14 of 20 focus groups). This data appears to confirm previous research conducted by SFCG that Rwandan students are more conflict-adverse than other nationalities.

## CREATING SPACETO PRACTICE CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

Bana Dukine served as a practice space for Rwandan students' conflict resolution skills. Both students and teachers reported that the skills learned in the game related to the student's real life, demonstrating the efficacy of the game in designing a space where students can explore conflict resolution that resonates with the situations they confront in their daily lives. The data is inconclusive whether the game itself taught students conflict resolution skills.

The results do show, however, that students have a complex and dynamic understanding of conflict and conflict resolution skills, suggesting previous education and/or exposure to such knowledge and skills either formally or informally. For example, students were more likely to identify certain conflict resolution skills after playing the game, such as reconciliation (+3), reporting the conflict to leaders (+2) and punishing the person who caused the conflict (+1), than before. Correspondingly, there were frequent decreases in the identification of certain skills or approaches after playing the game, such as the creation of unity (-3), encouragement of dialogue (-3), and forgiveness (-3). The design of the game is therefore conducive to the *practice* of specific conflict resolution approaches and skills.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are the key recommendations for follow-up:

- Bana Dukine should be further rolled-out on the national level by One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) and the Rwandan Ministry of Education.
- Additional implementation and evaluation of Bana Dukine by the Ministry of Education is necessary as it will demonstrate if knowledge and skills are gained through playing the game and whether or not they translate into behavior change within students' lives.
- Observations from the evaluation revealed that students have a high level of understanding of conflict resolution. Therefore, the game should be introduced within the classroom as a complement to ongoing curriculum.
- The program should be publicized more by Search for Common Ground along with presenting the program and evaluation findings to USIP and other partner organizations.

*Source: The majority of this document was taken verbatim from the Evaluation of Search for Common Ground Activities in Rwanda, June 2012. A copy of this document can be acquired at <http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/rwanda.html>, or by contacting Lena Slachmuis, Chief Programming Officer at Search for Common Ground at [lenas@sfcg.org](mailto:lenas@sfcg.org).*

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