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CITIZENS' ENGAGING IN GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT IN NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



PROJECT BRIEF | 2013 - 2017

By

Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT)

INTRODUCTION

Lawyers' Environmental Action team (LEAT) is the first public interest environmental law, management, and protection organization in Tanzania. It was established in 1994 with the mission of ensuring sound natural resources management and environmental protection in Tanzania. It carries out research, advocacy and selected public interest litigation on matters of environmental protection and democratic governance in Tanzania.

Since its formation LEAT has successfully managed to carry out a number of projects on natural resources management which in one way or another led to policy and legal changes in the country and have increased awareness to many Tanzanians in sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection. Among the projects implemented include **Citizens' Engaging in Government Oversight in Natural Resources Management (CEGO-NRM)** which is briefly explained hereunder.

CEGO-NRM PROJECT

The Citizens' Engaging in Government Oversight in Natural Resources Management is a natural resources management and environmental protection project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Department.

The project aims at empowering citizens of Iringa and Mufindi districts in Iringa region to actively engage in sustainable conservation of natural resources and environmental protection and improve accountability and oversight of public resources at the local level.

Scope of the Project

This is a four year project which is being implemented in Iringa and Mufindi district in Iringa region from November 2013 and will come to an end in November 2017. The project is implemented in 12 Wards (7 in Mufindi and 5 in Iringa districts) and 32 villages, 16 villages in each district. Mufindi and Iringa districts were selected because they contain wildlife management areas, wildlife resources, forests, and protected areas. Other criteria for selecting these districts include: the networks that LEAT has established in these districts stemming from related past projects, trainings, and research it has carried out on public resources management and monitoring.

Project Goal

Citizens' Engagement in Government Oversight in Natural Resources Management sector improved.

Project Objectives

The Project strives to attain the following objectives:

- To advocate for proper management of natural resources in order to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable conservation of biodiversity;
- To inculcate a culture of public participation in matters related to natural resources conservation and management;
- To increase local communities capacity in holding accountable government institutions entrusted with the duty to conserve and manage natural resources;
- To promote effective enforcement and implementation of laws and policies that integrate natural resources and climate change;
- To build the capacities of individual citizens to conduct oversight of management of public resources.

Project Activities Implemented

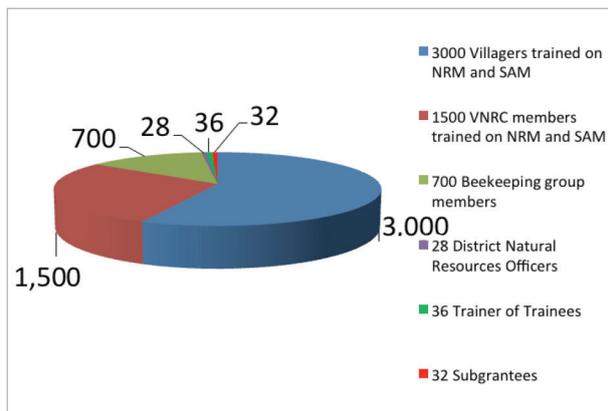
- Training of citizens both men and women on natural resources management (NRM) and social accountability monitoring (SAM);
- Training of beekeeping group members both men and women on beekeeping activities;
- To facilitate villagers to promulgate comprehensive village by-laws on NRM in 24 villages;
- To prepare and disseminate information, education and communication (IEC) materials;
- Build the capacities of subgrantees on governance, administration, human resources management, financial management, advocacy, program management and project performance management;
- Formation of SAM teams facilitate them to conduct SAM exercises at the district and village level;
- Formation of two theatre groups, one in each district and facilitate them to conduct performances;
- Conducting ward councillors workshop on NRM and SAM in Iringa and Mufindi districts;
- Conduct issue based dialogue on NRM and SAM; and
- Procurement and distribution of bee hives to 32 beekeeping groups;
- Preparation and documentation of project success stories;
- Air out radio programs, prepare and disseminate newspaper featured articles;
- Conduct project follow up and monitoring activities;
- Conduct organizational capacity development activities;

Project Expected Results

- Increased Citizens' Awareness on proper management of forest and wildlife resources at district, ward, and village level;
- Citizens' engagement in demanding accountability and transparency in the management of forest and wildlife resources enhanced; and
- Policies and Laws that regulate forest and wildlife resources management are effectively enforced and implemented.

Project Target

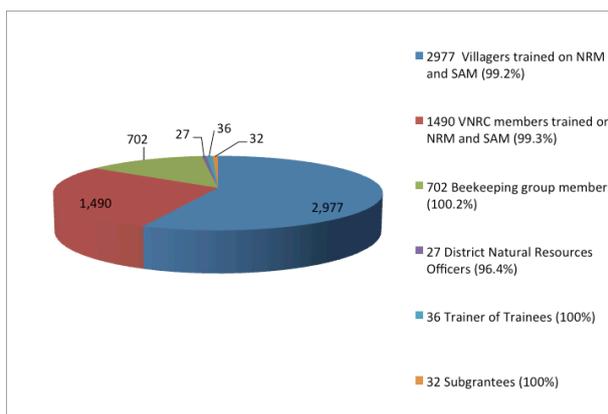
LEAT planned to achieve the following target as shown on the pie chart below;



Pie chart showing the project target to be reached through trainings for four years.

Project Achievements

- LEAT provided trainings to a total of 5,264 citizens namely: 27 district natural resources officers, 1490 village natural resource committee members, 36 trainers of trainers, 702 members of beekeeping groups, 32 members working for subgrantees, and 2977 villagers and subgrantees as clearly illustrated in the pie chart below.



Pie chart showing the number and percentages of project target reached through trainings on NRM and SAM

- Increased citizens knowledge and awareness in natural resources management and social accountability monitoring which has resulted into holding accountable village leaders for misuse of public offices and involvement in corruption related practices;
- Establishment of tree nurseries and planting of trees on degraded and bare lands in Kiwere village as the result of NRM and SAM trainings;
- Increased community participation in taking actions to stop illegal forms of utilization of forest and wildlife resources. For instance, arresting of illegal charcoal traders and illegal loggers and stopping illegal mining operations in project villages;
- Generation and increase of household income from environmentally friendly beekeeping activities through selling honey and other bee products. A total of 512 litres of honey have been harvested from different beekeeping groups where 206 litres were sold and generated a total of TZS. 2,060,000/=
- Promulgation of comprehensive village by-laws on natural resources management in 24 project villages (13 in Mufindi and 11 in Iringa districts). The promulgated and approved by laws are being implemented in different villages in Mufindi and Iringa district and has resulted to improved natural resources governance at the village level;
- Two district SAM teams and 32 mini SAM teams have been formed to undertake oversight roles in the management of natural resources in the 32 project villages. For example, SAM teams' exercises at the district level have revealed a number of management, governance, and legal challenges which were later on addressed by the leadership of the project districts including increasing the budget for beekeeping department from TZS 3 million in 2015 to 20 million in 2017 for Mufindi district and the review of district by-laws on revenue collection;
- Strengthened the capacities of the project subgrantees on governance, administration, human resources management, financial management, advocacy, program management, and project performance management;
- Strengthened working relations between LEAT, subgrantees, Local Government Authorities (LGAs'), and other conservation partners;
- Settlement of the protracted villages boundary conflicts and land conflicts between villages and investors due to the increased knowledge acquired by citizens through NRM and SAM training and capacity to assert rights and demand action;
- Strengthened LEAT capacity in areas of advocacy and governance as well as human resources, project, organizational and financial management through Organisational Capacity Development activities conducted by Pamoja Twajenga program;
- The produced newspaper featured articles and IEC materials and the radio programs aired out disseminated information and increased awareness to a large part of the community;

Project Sustainability

LEAT has deployed a number of players on the ground who will be directly involved in furtherance of the project activities even after the end of this project. The following are the key players involved:

- LEAT subgranted some of the activities to its four subgrantees namely: MBOMIPA, MJUMIKK, MUVIMA and ASH-TECH during the implementation of the project. Subgrantees were trained on organizational, financial and project management. They will thus further the project activities even after the phasing of this project. LEAT will continue working and mentoring them on technical areas.
- The formed district SAM teams will also continue to collaborate with district councils to work on accountability and transparent issues even after the phasing out of the project. These teams have organized themselves and registered as Accountability and Oversight Organisations and thus legally recognized by the government authorities;
- Mini-SAM teams at the village level are also part of the village governance structures recognized by the village by-laws. The teams will be working closely with the village government leaders on matters relating to natural resources management.
- Ward leaders and ward councillors have been actively involved during the implementation of the project. They will continue to address NRM challenges during their political meetings and thus further the project objectives.

Challenges calling for solutions.

During the implementation of CEGO-NRM project, LEAT recognized some of the critical issues which need to be addressed by the government and development partners.

- A pernicious problem of encroachment of water sources, forest reserves, and wildlife resources' habitats;
- Intensification of land use conflicts;
- Competing mandates of the newly formed wildlife and forest management institutions Tanzania Wildlife Authority (TAWA) and the Wildlife Division one hand and Tanzania Forest Service (TFS) against District Forest Officers on the other;s
- Allocation of meager budget to the natural resources sector both at national and district level;
- Misuse of public offices by some dishonest leaders particularly at the village level;
- Lack of village land use plans in many villages in the region the absence of which triggers increased land conflicts;
- Demarcation of villages to assuage or placate political interests resulting without taking into account the impacts on revenue sharing arrangements to the demarcated villages; and
- Inadequate means of addressing human-wildlife conflicts coupled with little payments to individuals whose crops and farms are destroyed or damaged by wildlife and lack of compensation to the families who lose their loved ones at the hands of wildlife.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed actions to address the challenges through CEGO- NRM II

- Expand CEGO-Project to other villages that were not touched by it and carrying it out in other regions in the country;
- Demand driven income generating alternatives (IGA's) to increase household income and thus discourage illegal practices on forest and wildlife;
- Increase budget allocation on the natural resources sector particularly at the district level;
- Increase resources to support villages to prepare and adopt village land use plans in areas with intensive land conflicts;
- Preparation of Village Forest Management Plans; and
- Support more villages to promulgate and enforce NRM by-laws.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT US:

Lawyers' Environmental Action Team (LEAT)
Mazingira House, Mazingria Street, Mikocheni B,
P.O. Box 12605, Dar es Salaam
Phone/Fax: +255 22 2780859
Email: info@leat.or.tz, Website: www.leat.or.tz



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