Forest Resource Sector Transparency Programme in Uganda 2013-2017

IMPROVING GOVERNANCE IN THE FOREST SECTOR
Approaches, experiences and lessons

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Acknowledgement

The Forest Resources Sector Transparency (FOREST) Programme was a partnership between a wide range of stakeholders.

CARE Denmark with financial support from DANIDA worked with CARE International in Uganda in partnership with Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Anti- Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU), Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition (RAC), Mid-West Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), PANOS Eastern Africa and Water and Environment Journalists Network (WEMNET).

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I would like to thank the staff members of the civil society organizations mentioned above who were able to research, innovate and engage citizens and duty bearers to ensure that citizens enjoy rights and that government fulfils her obligations. Under this Programme we worked under a SLOGAN "SAVE FORESTS, SAVE HUMANITY"

Lastly, I thank the team at CARE International in Uganda who led and or supported implementation of the FOREST Programme at CARE. It was a great success and we have succeeded together.

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Programme Manager
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Foreword

CARE International in Uganda in Partnership with national Civil Society Organizations, implemented the Forest Resources Sector Transparency Programme (FOREST) with financial support from DANIDA through CARE Denmark. The Programme ran from April 2013 to 2017.

FOREST has demonstrated that people have the power to mobilize for action. Uganda was ranked 151 of 176 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) annual report conducted by Transparency International in 2016. This means the country is among the top 25 corrupt countries in the world. Therefore, governance of the forest sector in Uganda cannot be delinked from the broad governance challenges of the country.

CARE and partners implemented the FOREST programme with an overall objective to support civil society and the media, to empower poor and natural resource dependent citizens, to participate in forest governance, monitor implementation of forest policies and laws and advocate for fair and appropriate forest laws and regulations at the national and global level.

The purpose of this publication is therefore to disseminate key approaches that worked in fostering forest governance, share experiences of the various civil society organizations and government agencies, to increase citizen's participation in forest governance issues and thier access to benefits from central forest reserves for improved livelihoods. The publication highlights achievements and challenges during project implementation and makes key recommendations for any civil society organizations to consider in implementing governance initiatives.

The Publication highlights models used to empower citizens such as using information communication and technology to engage duty bearers, building civil society organizational capacity to engage with the duty bearers and claim citizens' rights and build organization legitimacy and support multi-stakeholder platforms for engagement and informing policy processes.

The publication seeks to inform the audience of the role of the media as a partner and an ally in fostering forest Governance and the role of an INGO to build capacity of national CSOs and platforms for advocacy and convening spaces for rights claimants and holders to build consensus.

This publication was put together by a team of diverse people who are staff of the Civil Society Organizations that implemented the FOREST programme. The team was convened in a five day writers' workshop to document experiences and lessons learnt as a result of implementing the FOREST programme with support of independent facilitators, Solomon Kyeyune and James Kiyimba, as well as Lydia Mirembe who managed the editorial, layout and design process. The details of Authors are profiled at the back of this publication. I would like to sincerely thank; Byomuntura Meshack, Marion Iceduna, Sam Nyakoojo, Onzima Patrick Luke, Ronald Lotet, Dr. Ronald Naluwairo, Anna Amumpiire, Mary Bagumira, Dezi Irumba, Kandole Annet Balewa, Ephrance Nakiyingi, Alex Atwijukye, Alex Tumwesigye, Venex Watebawa, Dr. Joshua Zaake and Jolly Bategeka.

The Ministry of Water and Environment has concluded a process of reviewing the good governance action plan, therefore it is important that some of these approaches are adopted for the benefit of Ugandans.

Delphine Pinault
Country Director
CARE International in Uganda

How to improve forest governance for people

A case of Forest Resource Sector Transparency Programme in Uganda

By Kandole Annet Balelwa
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Forest governance is important to communities at local, regional and international level because it directly affects their livelihoods. Apart from the role of forests in carbon and water cycles, forests resources directly contribute to the livelihood of 90 percent of the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty and indirectly support the natural environment that nourishes agriculture and the food supplies of nearly half the population of the developing world.

Since 2013, CARE International in Uganda in partnership with several civil society organizations has been implementing a Forest Resources Sector Transparency programme (FOREST), with funding from DANIDA through CARE Denmark. The main focus of the programme was to improve the governance of Uganda's forest resources in an accountable, transparent and responsive manner and to benefit the country's poor citizens.

Therefore the FOREST programme aimed at:

- Empowering poor and natural resource dependent citizens to participate in forest governance

- Monitoring the implementation of forest policies and laws

- Advocating for fair and appropriate forest laws and regulations at the national and global level.

Empowerment is about the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights. Subsequently, the FOREST programme was working with civil society organizations to address rights of forest-dependent communities.

The empowerment process took into consideration power dynamics within communities. CARE international in partnership with civil society organizations took deliberate actions to build citizen's competencies to realize actions that can improve forest governance and increase realization of benefits for communities. A number of measures were put in place to measure actions of citizens and response of the state through forest management agencies.

Matiri Natural Resources Association members in a community meeting (Photo by Kiyimba James)

The trategies that worked

1. Building citizen's capacity to use Information Communication and Technology tools: CARE International in Uganda in partnership with Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) and Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) established an ICT platform. Citizens and Community Based Monitors send sms text messages to short code 6006 and make telephone calls to a toll free line 0800113322.   The Community Based Monitors would send a message reporting forest illegality. The server would escalate the problem to the focal persons in law enforcement agencies and forest management agencies. Throughout the project life time 550 short messages have been sent and 137 cases resolved by duty bearers.

The platform was later faced with challenges that affected citizen's interest to report; the abrupt shut down of short codes by the Uganda communications commission interrupted the reporting. This challenge was addressed by establishment of a toll free line that later enabled citizens to report promptly. Even when these mechanisms of reporting were available communities often reported to CSOs JESE and Rwenzori Anti Corruption Coalition directly. At least 475 cases were reported through telephone contacts with CSOs. The FOREST programme strengthened the community based monitoring that was piloted by CARE and JESE in 2011-2012 using a closed user group i.e. reporting using telephones within a defined group of CSOs, the police and district officials.

It should also be noted that the capacity gained by citizens from the FOREST Programme contributed to widening their scope of analyzing issues and they have become more desirous of improving their lives exemplified by: (i) Increased enrolment of children in private schools for better quality education, (ii) Advocacy on access to safe and clean water in Kyakamuranda and (iii) upgrading of Kyakamuranda Heath Centre II to Health Centre III level.

2. Use of Media:
In 2013 there was limited coverage of forest governance issues in the media. Through the FOREST programme the media were engaged and were able to increase coverage of forest governance on radio, TV and newspapers. In 2013 there were only 24 articles from nine journalists in 2017 media coverage increased to; 329 newspaer articles,   322 radio debates, 147 Public Service Advertisments, 43 interviews and104 features.

The most biting article in the media was titled: "investors, the catholic church and politicians hold land titles in central forest reserves" The involvement of media in tracking and reporting forest illegalities increased citizens understanding of the do's and don'ts.

3.   Strengthening   the   Community   Based Monitoring system:

Community Based Monitoring (CBM) is anchored in various laws and policies in Uganda referred to as people's participation, community participation. Monitoring of forest crime is anchored on people's responsibility to report abuse, misuse of resources and corruption. These are all protected under The Whistleblowers Protection Act 2010, which provides procedures by which individuals in both the private and public sector may, in the public interest, disclose information that relates to irregular, illegal or corrupt practices.

In order to build citizens' competence to participate

Environmental police, MIRAC, and communiy leaders in a meeting at Kiziranfumbi sub county along Bugoma (Photo by MIRAC)

in accountability, a foundation must be established. For that reason, community based monitors were selected and trained in laws and policies concerning forests in Uganda. The monitors were all selected by community members. The community based monitors increased from 160 in 2013 to 676 in 2016 while over 1000 ordinary citizens reported cases.

4. Convene public forest accountability forums at district/sub reginal and national level

Dialogues are critical aspects for citizen's engagement. Communities are able to share their grievances and agencies are able to respond. In the public accountability fora several issues were resolved for instance the CBMs raised an issue of corruption of the NFA supervisor for Kagorra, and she was removed. CBMs also complained about corruption of UPDF at Kagorra and National Forestry Authority (NFA) transferred them. The representative of the patrolmen for NFA presented a petition at a meeting organised by ACCU. NFA responded by paying some of the patrolmen.

5. Formation of community groups and networks:
The Collaborative Forest Management Groups(CFMs) formed district level networks in the districts of Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa and drafted articles of association in preparation for legitimizing their existence through registration with the respective district local governments. The Albertine Environmental Reporters Network was also formed, comprising citizen journalists and rural media practitioners. The CFM networks have all formed WhatsApp groups and are communicating with duty bearers directly on issues of illegalities and conservation of wetlands and forests.

The monitors also formed a Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) in order to maintain group cohesion. Increased ability for communities, and groups to relate horizontally and vertically as a means of consolidating power and influence decisions that affect them. Networks and coalitions have been formed such as the Community Based Monitors Network of Kyenjojo and Mubende, and the District Environment and Natural Resources Coalitions. These networks have been instrumental in reporting forest crimes.

6. Strengthening Collaborative Forest Management Groups (CBOs)

Access rights to Forest resources is critical for peoples' livelihoods. The National Forest Policy provides for regulated access which is signfied in a Memorandum of Understanding between the communities and NFA. The programme impact study report produced in October 2017 indicates that the programme has contributed to increased levels of awareness and knowledge of forest policies and laws among community members from 35% to 93% representing an increment of 58%.

Community monitors giving feedback on forest management issues (Photo by JESE)

It is especially important to secure women's access to resources since they are more vulnerable. A total of 48,182 women participated and benefited from the programme compared to 114,545 men. This means that women constituted only 29.6% of the direct beneficiaries.

Earlier on there was no organised and legitimate access to forest resources even though the policy framework allowed. NFA signed agreements with Collaborative Forest Management Groups to access forest resources legally and one of the groups' obligation is forest management.

Three CFM groups have benefitted from the support. 4338 individuals have benefited from access to forest land for tree planting of whom 40% are women. These groups have been linked to Operation Wealth Creation Programme to enable them access government livelihood opportunities. Other Groups are the charcoal associations that were linked to the Green Charcoal Programme to enable them benefit from the supply of tree seedlings for establishment of charcoal woodlots and plantations. KIFECA was linked to the Private Sector (Marcloids) in order to access tree seedlings for planting and benefit from the food security programmes being promoted by Marcloids in the communities along green belts.

7. Writing petitions:

Six petitions were written to various duty bearers: One to Office of The Prime Minister (OPM) on land titling; one by patrolmen on non-payment by NFA; one by CBMs on corruption by the forest supervisor Kagorra; three by the inter district forum to NFA and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA). These petitions yielded a number of outcomes but the most noted was the petition to NFA on mechanized harvesting by concessioners in

Kyampisi Central Forest Reserve (CFR), Mubende. The method was seen to be destructive and not comforming to ecological perpetuity of the forest. Subsequently, in one of the inter-district fora the Executive Director of NFA instructed staff to never allow mechanized harvesting in natural forests.

Challenges:

Unmatched response by duty bearers to cases reported by citizens. While the duty bearers may have challenges in response, the citizens expect feedback. The delay or absence of response demoralized citizens.

The breakdown of the ICT platform caused challenges thus reducing the reporting of cases.

NFA has not been very effective in giving feedback to the CBMs and has not met most of her obligations under the Collaborative Forest Management arrangements. Further, NFA has taken time without paying allowances of patrol men some of whom demand payment for over two years. This has caused demotivation among the community based stakeholders.

Lessons Learnt

• Communities are able to engage with leaders and influence actions given the right tools of engagement.

• Communities, if well mobilised can create change. The formation of a pressure group called friends of Zoka mobilized citizens and engaged with various stakeholders, including the Resident District Commissioner, NFA and CSO actors to to advocate for conservation of Zoka. The group has been influential in demanding accountability and raising awareness about ZOKA.

• Delayed response to cases demoralizes the communities. It is important for duty bearers to give timely feedback to communities.

• Recognition of CBMs by appointing them in strategic leadership positions such as Sub-county Land Committees, Local Council Courts and Health Committees as was the case in Butiiti Sub-county has motivated others.

• Forest crimes are increasingly getting more sophisticated and skewed to land grabbing. Stakeholders' support and participation in monitoring and taking action against culprits is needed.

• It is important to work with journalists as partners and not just reporting outlets because this enables them get grounded in issues of forest governance, which in turn become part and parcel of their work.

Encroachment and degradation of Zoka Forest (Photo by WEMNET)

Further reading and Reference

i. *http://accu.or.ug/download/the-bugoma-challenge/*

ii. *CARE Denmark, CARE International in Uganda: The Forest Resources Sector Transparency Programme FOREST Programme Document April December 2012.*

iii. *FAO 2012. Strengthening Effective Forest Governance Monitoring Practice, by A.J.van Bodegom, S.Wigboldus, A.G.Blundell, E.Harwell and H.Savenije. Forestry Policy and Institutions Working Paper No. 29. Rome.*

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vii. *Ministry of Water and Environment: The Uganda ENR Sector Good Governance Action Plan 2013.*

Advocating for sustainable funding of the forestry sector in Uganda

By Dr Naluwairo Ronald Senior Research Officer and Anna Amumpiire Research Officer ACODE

Within a period of 15 years from 1990, Uganda's forest cover had reduced by approximately 1.3 million hectares - which represents an average annual deforestation rate of 1.8 per cent. This was reported by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) in the National Forest Plan 2011/12-2021/22. Such a trend has serious implications for sectors like energy, agriculture, food security and the livelihoods of forest-adjacent communities especially.

In 2003, the Parliament of Uganda enacted the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act to reverse the increased loss of forest cover and promote sustainable management and conservation of Uganda's forests. However, these efforts are constrained by the challenge of inadequate, long term and sustainable funding.

The Tree Fund was established by the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act in 2003 to promote tree planting and growing. By 2013, many people had forgotten or even perhaps given up on the fund. There was hardly any discussion on the question of operationalizing this Fund.

In 2013, under the FOREST Programme, CARE International in Uganda and Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) set out to demand for accountability from Government with respect to the question of operationalising the Tree Fund. This was part of the broader campaign to advocate and lobby for increased funding of Uganda's Environment and Natural Resources sector.

ACODE and CARE International undertook a research study to inform advocacy, policy engagements and outreach activities on the matter. The aim was to understand why Government had failed to operationalise the Tree Fund.

Concurrently, ACODE engaged some Members of Parliament (MPs) to raise the issue of operationalising the Tree Fund on the floor of Parliament. The selected MPs committed to raise the issue with the Speaker of Parliament.

The study findings and recommendations were disseminated to policy makers, relevant government agencies, Members of Parliament, selected development partners, CSOs, and local governments.

ACODE wrote to the Minister of Water and Environment, the Prime-Minister, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Speaker of Parliament sharing the research findings and asking them to take action to ensure that the Fund was operationalized.

The Permanent Secretary from MWE acted on one of the letters and instructed the Commissioner, Planning and Policy Department in MWE to meet with the ACODE team. The ACODE team then met with the Director Environmental Affairs (DEA) and Commissioner of Planning to discuss the issue.

At the meeting, the ACODE team was informed that the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development had given the Ministry of Water and Environment permission to operationalise the Tree Fund. The Ministry of Water and Environment had accordingly developed a concept note .

These strategies were complemented by media engagements which included publishing opinions in the newspapers, broadcasting TV features and holding a press conference with journalists from different media houses. The key message was the urgent need to operationalize the Tree Fund.

Finally, ACODE and CARE International engaged like-minded CSOs under the FOREST Programme and the Environment and Natural Resources CSO Network (ENR-CSO Network). They also utilised spaces and platforms like the Uganda Forest Governance Learning Group (UFGLG), the Joint Sector Review, the Forest Forum and the Forest Governance Round Table Dialogue to speak about the Tree Fund. These also amplified the need for accountability from Government and called for action to operationalize the Fund.

In the end, there were calls from different stakeholders including the Speaker of Parliament, officials from National Forest Authority, CSOs, Local Governments and Media to operationalize the Tree Fund.

Advocacy on the Tree Fund also attracted attention of international organisations and other development partners. For instance, in 2017, building on ACODE and CARE International in Uganda's work, the Food

and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) supported the Ministry of Water and Environment to carry out a comprehensive feasibility study on operationalization of the Tree Fund. An inception workshop in which ACODE and CARE International in Uganda were represented took place in June 2017.

The Ministry of Water and Environment has since confirmed that it started the process of developing guidelines and putting in place the institutional framework for the Tree Fund. ACODE and CARE International in Uganda participated in developing the Terms of Reference for the consultant who will support the Ministry of Water and Environment to develop the guidelines.

Below are the links to some of the outputs from the media engagements:

- htt p ://www.mo n i t o r . c o .ug/OpEd/ Commentary/Use-National-Tree-Fund-torestore-our-forest-cover/689364-2399416-3v6edr/index.html

- http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/ National/Environmentalists-push-tree-fund/-/688334/2659752/-/ah0rd3/-/ index.html

-

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo_ CRkZFpZM

- h t t p s : / / w w w . y o u t u b e . c o m / watch?v=JwYbVZuPEI8

- http://muwado.com/happened-uganda-national-tree-fund/

- http://www.chimpreports.com/opinion-what-happened-to-the-uganda-national-tree-fund/

- http://www.newvision.co.ug/new_ vision/news/1443571/kadaga-tree-fundoperationalized

The challenges faced along the way included: the slow pace of government to operationalize the Tree Fund and limited appreciation of the Tree Fund modalities by some of the policy makers. This was overcome by continuous engagements and meetings with the policy makers in the Ministry of Water and Environment.

References and further reading

i. Naluwairo,R.,et.al.,(2014).OPERATIONALIZATION OF UGANDA'S NATIONAL TREE FUND: A Process Audit and Call for Action. ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series, No.29, 2014. Kampala

ii. The Republic of Uganda (2013), The National Forest Plan 2011/12-2021/22, Ministry of Water and Environment, Kampala

iii. The Republic of Uganda (2003), The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act

iv.Feasibility Study for Operationalization of the Tree Fund in Uganda; Inception Workshop Report 2017

v. Feasibility Study For Operationalising the Tree Fund in Uganda, Draft Report November, 2017

WEMNET members prepare for a media presentation (Photo by WEMNET)

The civil society network that improved natural resources advocacy in Uganda

By Joshua Zake (PhD)
Executive Director, Environmental Alert

The Environment and Natural Resources CSO Network (ENR-CSO Network) was established in 2009. It was inspired by the need for the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to get organized and formalize their participation in the annual Joint Sector Review (JSR) process under the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE). This would help in generation and submission of a structured annual report of technical and financial contributions of the ENR CSOs to the Environment sub-sector.

It started as a loose network with a diverse membership of the Environment and Natural Resources CSOs operating at national and district levels. The formation of the network was steered by Environmental Alert, the International Union for Conservation of nature – Uganda (IUCN – Uganda) and Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE). These CSOs had been identified and selected by the Ministry of Water and Environment to represent the ENR CSOs to the ENR Sector Working Group, which provides policy and technical guidance for the sector.

During the period 2009-2011, the network was informal, without neither a memorandum of principles, nor a structured program-based funding to support implementation of its operations. It did not even have a strategy or work plan to guide its operations. Much of the network's operations focused on compilation of the consolidated mini-performance report for the ENR-CSOs for submission to the Ministry of Water and Environment. The network had no running projects, except those being implemented by the individual ENR CSOs across the country.

During this period, the network's operations were largely financed through financial and in-kind contributions from the ENR CSOs as derived from their own respective running projects. This was possible because they had a common interest and all considered the network as a more effective delivery mechanism contributing towards achievement of their specific interests and aspirations.

Through the leadership of Environmental Alert, in 2010, about 30 ENR CSOs representatives were mobilized to participate in a national validation workshop for the ENR-CSO consolidated performance report. Besides, providing further input into the report, the participants discussed and agreed on the network governance and leadership structures.

In this meeting, participants agreed that the network should have a secretariat and five thematic working groups including wetlands; environment; weather & climate; governance, as well as forestry. The thematic working groups were aligned to the Ministry of Water and Environment sub sectors.

Paul Mafabi, the Director Environment Affairs, Ministry of Water and Environment participated in the meeting and provided useful guidance for the network. The participants selected Environmental Alert to host the ENR-CSO network secretariat and also selected the heads and co-heads of the respective thematic working groups for network as presented in **Table 1 below.**

The major challenges of the network at that time were:

a. Limited resources to support implementation of its operations;

b. Weak linkages with the community and local level for generation of information and facts to inform the alternative recommendations to government.

In 2011-2013, the network received the very first financial support to the tune of USD 20,000 from Care International in Uganda. The key outputs from this support included:

i. Development of the ENR-CSO Network strategic plan, 2013-2018. This process streamlined the networks vision, mission, goal and objectives;

ii. Development of the ENR-CSO consolidated annual performance reports 2012 and 2013.

In 2014, selected members of the network i.e. ACODE, Joint Efforts to Save the Environment (JESE), Environmental Alert, Anti-Corruption Coalition

Table 1. Members of the Chairs and co-Chairs of the ENR-CSO Network Thematic Groups.

Thematic Groups	Head	Co- head
Forestry	Environmental Alert	Tree Talk Plus
Wetlands	International Union for Conservation of Nature	Nature Palace Foundation
Weather and climate and climate change	Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement	Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns
Governance	Advocates Coalition for Environment and Development	Green Watch
Environment	Uganda Wildlife Society	Community Development and Conservation Agency

for Uganda (ACCU) worked with Care International in Uganda to develop the Forest Resources Sector Transparency in Uganda (FOREST) Program, which was funded by Danish International Development Assistance (DANIDA) for the period 2014-2017.

The program bridged the key weaknesses of the network in respect to technical and institutional capacity building, but also addressed critical issues emanating from the weak governance in the forestry sub sector at national and local levels. Thus, the FOREST program's goal was, 'Civil society coordination, networking and multi stakeholder collaboration strengthened leading to a more inclusive management of forest resources in the Albertine Rift.'

With support through this program, the ENR-CSO network transformed from an informal loose network and formalized some of its operations.

The network conducted its first Annual General Meeting on 2nd December 2015 during which the network's steering committee was elected and endorsed.

The steering committee provides overall strategic and policy guidance among other roles as stipulated in the memorandum of principles for the network.

During the same Annual General Meeting, the network's organizational structure, and the memorandum of principles were approved. Signed up members of the network were also endorsed. Currently the network has 45 signed-up members.

The support (both financial and technical backstopping) through the FOREST programme enabled the network to expand its operations and engagements at the local level through establishment of five district coalitions on environment and natural resources management. The coalitions were established in Kiryandongo, Kabalore, Hoima, Masindi and Buliisa districts. The objective was to influence decision making and policy implementation for sustainable natural resources management at the local government level.

In 2016 the influx of refugees from Africa to Europe resulted in changes in the priorities of development partners including DANIDA. Subsequently, the financial support from DANIDA to the ENR-CSO network through Care International in Uganda was terminated. Several operations of the network at both the national and district level were halted. This emerging challenge is being addressed through soliciting support (both technical and financial) from

Table 2. Members of the ENR-CSO Network steering committee.

Category	Position	Institution	Contact person
Thematic head/ Forestry	Chairperson	Tree Talk Plus	Gaster Kiyingi
New Entrant	Vice Chairperson	Albertine Rift Conservation Society	Alweny Salome
Coordination	Secretariat	Environmental Alert	Dr. Joshua Zake (PhD)
Thematic head/ Environment	Member	Uganda Wildlife Society	Dr. Proscilla Nyadoi
Thematic head/ Wetlands	Member	International Union for Conservation of nature	Sophie Kutegeka
Thematic head/ Governance	Member	Advocates Coalition for Environment and Development	Anna Amumpiire
Thematic head/ Weather and Climate Change	Member	Environmental Management for Livelihood Improvement	Mr. Bakiika Robert
Media	Member	PANOS-East Africa	Mr. Hassan Muloopa
District Coalition	Member	Kabalore NGOs/CBOs Association	Mr. Byakuyamba Peter
Private Sector	Member	Uganda Timber Grower's Association	Mr. Dennis Kavuma

members of the network and other CSOs to facilitate the network's engagements.

Key achievements of the ENR-CSO Network

Over the years, the ENR-CSO Network achievements include the following:

• Considering the Network members continuous participation in Annual Joint Sector Review since 2009 to-date, the Network has influenced some decisions and policy implementation at the national and local level. Several recommendations have been adopted within the annual MWE undertakings. These are available in the various ENR-CSOs annual performance reports and position papers published since 2011 to date.

• Increased participation and use of policy engagement spaces at different levels e.g. in the annual Joint ENR Sector Review. The number of participating ENR CSOs has increased from three in 2008, to an average of 20 CSOs every year. CSOs are also using the space avaialbe at local government level. This includes the Technical Planning Committees and the District Council. The district coalitions on environment and natural resources are taking lead at this level.

• Published ENR-CSOs annual performance reports and positions for six years so far, *2011- 2016.* The performance report is published as a chapter in the annual sector performance report for Water and Environment. This has improved the visibility and credibility of ENR-CSOs among different stakeholders at different levels.

• Increased recognition and request by duty bearers for ENR-CSO Network's contribution to

various policy making processes (e.g. Input into the National Development Plan II; Review/development of the National Forest Plan, 2012-2022; Input into the Forest Investment plan and the Strategic Program for Climate Resilience; Representation of the network on key Government of Uganda led strategic initiatives/committees).

• Establishment and operationalization of district environment coalitions in selected districts in the Albertine rift (including: Bulisa, Hoima, Masindi, Kabalore, Kiryandongo). This has increased presence of the network and its involvement in policy implementation at district level to influence change in policy and practice for sustainable environment management. This also facilitates linkage of the local environment issues into the national agenda for the betterment of the sector through informed decision making by the duty bearers.

• The membership in the ENR-CSO Network was formalized. Currently there are 45 signed-up members. Mobilization of ENR-CSOs continues.

• Increased collaboration among members of the network through joint planning and implementation of ENR programs and projects to address specific issues in the environment and natural resources sub-Sector in different parts of the country.

• Promoted and supported mainstreaming of climate change in local government development planning and implementation. Members of the network facilitated stakeholder engagements that resulted in the establishment of operational district Climate Change Task Forces in Mubende, Nakasongola, Kiboga, Luweero, Nakaseke and Ssembabule. The Task Forces are charged with influencing the incorporation of climate and natural resource agenda into district budgets and planning process.

Key lessons learnt by the ENR-CSO network

  a. The strength of the network is in its members. Hence, there are several opportunities within the members, which should be harnessed to contribute towards achievement of the shared goals and aspirations with the network as a delivery mechanism.

  b. With effective coordination and unity among the network's members, a lot can be achieved through structured engagements targeted towards a shared agenda. This provides motivation for attracting external support from development partners.

  c. The active participation of members based on their mandates, roles and responsibilities keeps the network alive and relevant. This should be upheld to keep the networks focus given its vision and mission statements.

  d. The district coalition on environment and natural resources provide space for leaders to openly voice their concerns and interests in the management and use of environment resources.

Conclusions and way forward

The ENR-CSO network has come a long way since 2009. It has transitioned from a loose network into a formal CSO network with memorandum of principles, leadership & governance structures, a strategic plan and projects and programs. This is largely informed by the experiences and lessons learnt along this trajectory.

The network and its members have made various achievements and challenges, which provide a strong foundation to inform establishment and consolidation of strategic partnerships with the Government of Uganda, International civil society organizations/networks and development partners. For instance, the network is in advanced stages of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Water and Environment.

These achievements should be consolidated to further strengthen the network thereby building into its sustainability for effective engagement in policy landscape and discourse towards sustainable environment and natural resources management and development in Uganda.

The network and its members require the corresponding and requisite knowledge, skills, competences and financial resources to efficiently and effectively engage in the policy dispensation at the local, national and international levels. Besides, the ENR-CSO Network is considering innovative funding mechanisms to enable it to effectively deliver on its undertakings as stipulated in the strategic plan.

The transition into a formal network has been possible due the financial and technical contributions by various players that must be acknowledged and appreciated. The following are some of them to mention but a few:

The leadership of Environmental Alert since 2009 for hosting the ENR-CSO network secretariat.

Members of the ENR-CSO steering committee for the strategic guidance and regular supervision of the ENR-CSO network secretariat.

The Thematic Working Group leaders for demonstrated leadership and guidance.

The signed-up members of the ENR-CSO network and the ENR-CSOs for their active participation and contributions towards implementation of the ENR-CSO network engagements at national and local levels.

The International CSOs including Care International in Uganda, the IUCN and World Wide Fund-Uganda Country Office for the financial contributions and technical backstopping.

The development partners including DANIDA and Food and Agriculture Organization for the financial contributions that have enabled the network to implement its agenda as stipulated in the strategic plan.

The Ministry of Water and Environment for the strategic collaborations towards addressing the critical challenges in the Water and Environment sector in Uganda.

Stakeholders attend a workshop (Photo by Kiyimba James)

A stakeholders' meeting (Photo by Loret Ronald)

FOREST at the centre of institutional growth

A case of Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE)

By Marion Iceduna
Programme Manager JESE

Effective Partnerships can lead to progressive institutional growth among local NGOs. The case of JESE in this article depicts a local Community Based Organisation (CBO) that has progressively risen to a high profile by working closely and learning from its partners. It describes the ingredients necessary for healthy partnerships and how these can be blended and used not only for successful program implementation, but also for the growth of the entire institution.

Partnership Model

The FOREST partnership program of CARE is centred on strengthening Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), with the aim of fostering transparency and accountability. The partnership operates through a participatory approach. CARE initially pays due diligence to the CSO to understand their strategic plan, mission and vision and to ascertain whether the CSOs' strategic plan encompasses CARE's program strategies. The partnership therefore focuses on building on what partners are already doing.

The FOREST partnership comprised of four CSOs together with CARE drawn together by the common challenges in the forestry sector.

By being part of this partnership, JESE has streamlined standards and good practices in institutional management and program implementation. As a result, JESE has turned out to be more accountable in the way it operates.

Back ground

The partnership started in 2013 under the Forest Resources Sector and Transparency Programme (FOREST). Before the FOREST program, JESE was grappling with a number of technical, financial and internal capacity challenges. These gaps were clearly stipulated in the organization's strategic plan 2015-2019, also found at www.jese.org

Through the FOREST program CARE supported JESE to carry out a capacity self assessment to further identify institutional gaps and to plan

The JESE team at their office in Kabarole. JESE has benefitted from their partnership with CARE International (Photo by JESE)

for ways to address them. As part of the process, a capacity assessment tool was developed based on the key themes of Representation, Inclusion, Legitimacy, Transparency and Accountability popularly abbreviated as RILTA.

The RILTA is an Excel based monitoring tool that was designed by CARE for use by its partners to conduct Institutional capacity gap self assessment, planning and evaluation. The tool is used annually to track progress of JESE as an institution and plan for capacity development on specific themes. Most of the gaps and capacity support that later translated into key achievements were based on the RILTA tool

The FOREST Partnership program between JESE and CARE has yielded positive institutional growth outcomes over the last four years. Statistics from the RILTA tool indicate that, JESE's scores transitioned from 30% as the lowest score in 2014 to 80% as the highest score by 2016. These outcomes can be attributed to the continued mentorship; due diligence and coaching that JESE received from CARE as documented in the RILTA follow up plan.

Key contributions of FOREST to JESE's Institutional growth

- Over the four Year FOREST partnership program, JESE's Profile, legitimacy and recognition by the Ministry of Water and

Environment –Forest Sector support Department and other players in the forestry sector has greatly improved. Processes to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with National Forestry Authority are underway, but are largely attributed to the opportunities and strengths within the FOREST program that JESE implemented with CARE.

- In 2017, JESE became members of the ENR-CSO network as a result of the profiling of JESE by the FOREST program during high level engagements. This has broadened JESE's spaces for national level engagement

- Due to close monitoring and coaching from CARE under the FOREST programme, JESE has improved in analysis and documentation of advocacy issues. For instance, JESE has documented several issues around Illegalities in the forestry sector and staff members have been able to present key issues on high level National forums like the National Forestry Stakeholders Forum. This has influenced duty bearers to respond to forest illegalities. For instance the Ministry under FSSD strengthened its monitoring around compliance of timber licenses. With this kind of momentum, JESE has continued

to document with confidence its work with CARE on citizen empowerment in the Monitoring and reporting of Illegalities in the forestry sector.

- JESE now has a robust institutional Monitoring and Evaluation System that was developed based on CARE's Outcome monitoring tool. This has enabled JESE to systematically measure her five-year strategic plan, improved efficiency in resource utilization and has greatly contributed to transparency in the institution, making them more accountable to partners and communities where they work.

- The Finance department has improved based on the capacity building received through FOREST program on issues of procurement guidelines and Accountability. As a result JESE now offer Quality financial management services that provide timely reporting to partners, and value addition to the procurement process through a system of prequalifying service providers. This practice was not tacit in JESE before the FOREST program

- In relation to the amount of funds that CARE sub grants to JESE, we have been able to build and strengthen our financial base. There has been an increment in organizational budget from 2billion in 2014 to as high as 3.5 billion in 2016. In the same year, CARE supported JESE to establish a Business Arm called Jese and Farmers Cooperative (JEFACO). The drop in the curve of JESE's financial envelop in 2017 can be explained by the recent trends in Donor volatility. JEFACO should be able to push JESE's resource envelop curve back to the situation in 2016 or even better.

- JESE has confidently, tendered for consultancies with the Ministry of Water and Environment and with GIZ-RUWASS Water Stewardship Programme. JESE has also won small grants all based on the experiences and added points gained from the long term work with CARE as a reputable organization

Lessons Learnt:

- The horizontal nature of partnership with CARE, where each partner respects the opinions of another has enabled an environment for sharing and planning together to achieve overall program goals as well as institutional Goals. Flexibility in Planning and Budgeting has been a key driver in enabling JESE to grow beyond the program implementation to improving other broader institutional performance aspects

- One-on-one mentoring, coaching and due diligence sessions of the CARE FOREST Program was critical in understanding the holistic institutional gaps of JESE and guided meaningful planning for capacity building.

- A good accounting system presents an institution as legitimate towards its partners, donors and potential funders.

- Participatory collaborations and flexibility to the changes in local context greatly contribute to institutional progress in many aspects, while limited participation and rigid policies and practices hinders the growth of an institution.

- A robust monitoring system enables systematic realization of the institutional strategic plan. Aligns well donor objectives and provided answers to the critical aspects planned in the different programs. Promotes efficiency in resource utilization and attracts potential donors to invest in organizational programs.

- Relations with donors has improved this has built confidence even within the networks of other potential donors. This means that JESE can easily get recommendations from its donor partners to other potential donors.

Challenges and how JESE overcame them

- We are faced with donor volatility in the recent years leading to a drop in JESE's resource envelope. The challenge is that JESE for many years has been dependent on donor funds. In response to this state of affairs, the organisation has opened up a business arm called JESE and Farmers Cooperative (JEFACO), which owns a coffee processing factory thanks to the contribution from the FOREST Program of CARE.

- Despite the fact that JESE has achieved some milestones in its institutional growth, she still needs to strengthen her internal capacity in some specific areas including but not limited to; Advocacy and policy influencing for change, private sector engagement, and documentation of best practices. The good news is that these same issues came through during a recent capacity assessment and have been incorporated into the institutional capacity building plan 2018.

For Further Reading

i. *CARE RILTA tool for tracking institutional progress 2013-2017*

ii. *JESE strategic Plan 2015-2019, available at www.jese.org*

iii. *CARE PQL Guidelines version March 2013: program Quality and Learning guidelines*

How CARE supported WEMNET's Institutional capacity building

By Venex Watebawa
Member, WEMNET

The story of the relationship between Water and Environment Media Network (WEMNET) and Care International began in 2013 with the plan to bring issues of the environment on the country's national agenda. Water and environment journalists had realized the need to come together and light the candle for environmental journalism as a group rather than as individuals.

In August 2013, the journalists attended a CARE International capacity building workshop where they had an opportunity to profile WEMNET and its activities. This formed the first steps of institutional capacity building for WEMNET provided by CARE International in Uganda.

WEMNET is a Civil Society Organization (CSO) that seeks to work through the media to document key issues in the water and environment sector. It was formed in the year 2013

At the time, CARE International was working with a few media houses in the country side. They quickly realized that much as WEMNET was a potential partner, they lacked solid structures. This meant that no donor could easily trust the network as a potential partner.

Care International in Uganda availed WEMNET the first opportunity for a possible partnership. WEMNET took advantage of this to build a working relationship with Care, sharing their experience in reporting and covering environment issues. They showed their relevance in the Environment and natural resources sector.

All these developments were happening at a time when there were concerted efforts to curb encroachment on the Matiri Forest and the Misizi River Range.

WEMNET Uganda was engaged to run a media campaign around the Musizi River Range, highlighting the governance deficits and exposure of encroachers. The successful implementation of this campaign encouraged CARE International to engage WEMNET for another six months and while at it, contributed to the strengthening of the WEMNET Secretariat's capacity. A number of capacity building interventions were undertaken including:

• Building the capacity for the secretariat to handle project funds

• Donation of office furniture

WEMNET member, Venex Watebawa attending a research training workshop with other stakeholders (Photo by Kiyimba James)

• Setting up sound management and financialsystems which include; capacity back stopping of the finance and administration program.

These interventions prepared WEMNET for their very first development partnership, with Independent Development Fund (IDF). In 2015, WEMNET received USD 100,000 from IDF to consolidate the achievements attained after the Matiri Forest campaign, and to scale up best practices in the Sector

This engagement led to the birth of the Eco-Guardian magazine that WEMNET has continued to publishe to date. It was followed up by the research book titled "Behind the Scenes: Is this a case of management or mismanagement"? , which has been widely shared in the sector.

Distribution of the WEMNET publication, Eco Guardian (Photo by WEMNET)

The partnership from CARE International provided WEMNET with the platform to showcase their comparative advantage over the other media organizations. It transited us to engagements with other CARE International partners such as Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), Anti-Corruption Coalition in Uganda (ACCU) and ACODE. This enabled us to expose the illegalities that were taking place in forests, leading eventually to their being handled by the line duty bearers. Evictions were carried out and the forest boundary opened for Matiri which today has regenenerated and is free from encroachment.

To further build on those achievements Care International in Uganda engaged WEMNET- Uganda with another six-months grant in 2016 to expose the challenges faced by the Bugoma Central Forest Reserve (CFR). WEMNET exposed the illicit dealings behind the leasing of the forest reserve to Hoima Sugar Ltd for sugarcane growing. This culminated into a Cabinet resolution directing the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to cancel the lease.

WEMNET- Uganda also exposed the challenges faced by Zoka Central Forest Reserve in Adjumani district which was faced by heavy encroachment from the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The forest was also faced with illegal timber logging and harvesting, as well as encroachment from the local population for farming and settlements.

Milestones:

• Published seven editions of the *Eco-Guardian* building on the maiden edition that was supported by CARE International in 2014. Some of the regular recipients of the *Eco-*

Guardian are members of the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources.

• Published a researched publication titled *Behind the Scenes*

• Written position papers on environment specifically on why the management of NFA should not be transferred to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) titled: WHY DECISION TO TRANSFER FORESTS TO UWA IS HOGWASH.

• Documented and published the stories of change under other CARE International programs viz Women and Youth financial inclusion titled "VSLAs Making Everyone Bankable";

• WEMNET-U now sits on the national committee for Redd+ in Uganda representing the media.

• Increased media coverage of issues on the environment both in the local and national media.

• Strengthened the capacity of up-country reporters and have amplified the need to sustainably conserve the environment especially by journalists and media houses

The biggest task ahead of us is to consolidate the tireless efforts to build the capacity of environmental reporters in evidence based reporting, personal and institutional safety and security of all environmental human rights defenders as well transforming the Eco-Guardian into an innovative environmental media Hub in Uganda that will ensure that issues of the environment remain high on the national agenda.

Building media capacity to amplify the forest governance agenda in Uganda

By Kandole Annet Balelwa
Manager, Women Empowerement and Natural Resources Governance

Media practitioners participate in a forest management exercise (Photo by WEMNET)

The media are critical allies in creating change. CARE International in Uganda in partnership with government agencies and CSOs worked with media organizations and practitioners to increase citizens' awareness on forest laws and policies, securing rights of forest dependent communities and increasing transparency in the sector.

The journey to building capacity of media started with CARE Engaging with PANOS East Africa, an organization involved in development communication but not in forestry governance issues. PANOS brought on board 10 rural radios, one Urban Television and one newspaper. These acted as learning labs for media engagement. CARE and PANOS supported the media to conduct debates, investigate and publish content as well as raise critical issues. Later CARE engaged with the Water and Environment Journalists Network (WEMNET), registered in 2013 with a membership of 32 journalists.

Under the collaboration with WEMNET, journalists were expected to undertake investigations and publish outcomes in various media houses to create change. There was training for journalists in forest governance and forest laws that set ground for investigation.

CARE has been able to nurture the network in organizational development to set up structures and systems. With established structures and systems WEMNET was able to secure funds from the Independent Development fund to implement a forest governance project for 18 months in Kibaale, Kagadi sector. The network has constantly run feature stories and articles in the media houses and as result forest governance issues have gained prominence over the four years.

Indeed the journalists ensured that information was investigated and exposed to the public domain and set an agenda for forest governance. The main outcome from investigation was the exposure of how Central land was being titled to businessmen and powerful politicians without knowledge of the National Forestry Authority or with knowledge of NFA in a fraudulent manner. The story that changed the land scape of understanding the drivers of forest degradation in Uganda was the story published by the New Vision September 2015 on Illegal land titles in central forest reserves, the story revealed powerful politicians and business people owning land titles in central forest reserves. The findings were subsequently published in a booklet titled **Behind the Scenes**, which continues to shape discussions around drivers of deforestation and land grabbing.

Through the publication, the journalists touched the "untouchables". No one ever imagined that Uganda Peoples Defense Forces would be exposed for plundering forest resources. "We all feared to talk about UPDF" said an NFA staff who preferred anonymity. "You would lose your job or see the creator the next day." Many other stories that exposed corruption of staff, connivance of forestry staff, politicians and timbers dealers changed the landscape of managing forest estates.

Later on Civil Society Organizations picked up the stories and conducted further investigations. They also held a series of meetings with Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development demanding cancellation of land titles in central forest reserves.

Further the civil society organizations such as Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda and Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment built upon the evidence to submit petitions to the commission investigating land matters thus cases of forest land grabbing have been prominent among those being investigated by the commission.

WEMNET triggered a debate, the CSOs picked up. Action has been taken for instance on 5th December 2017, the Ministry of Lands made a press release cancelling 92 land titles in central Forest Reserves.

Police recruits destroying Budongo Forest

Simon Musasizi

8-11 minutes

Denis Opida collects some firewood from a tree that has been cut into logs

Recently, Denis Opida saw some unfamiliar people in their hundreds trooping into Budongo central forest reserve at Bulwango cell in Karujubu division, in the western Masindi district.

Clad in army-brown clothes, armed with pangas and some with guns – the strangers one-by-one vanished into the dense forest.

Daily Monitor NEWS BUSINESS OPED SPECIAL REPORTS MAGAZINES SPORTS LIF

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TUESDAY MAY 12 2015

Strengthen environment protection organs

By Editorial

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The Daily Monitor report about wetland operations in western Uganda on Monday should prompt the line ministry as well as environment bodies to push for similar actions countrywide.

In an effort to save wetlands, security forces in Mbarara District have launched an operation to stop encroachment on the fragile ecosystem. As a result, the army and police last week arrested at least seven people. The suspects were found mining sand on the banks of River Rwizi and two lorries and mining tools were impounded.

The Observer

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Kaazi scouts' land under threat as Chinese move in

June 12, 2015 Written by Simon Musasizi

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A Water and Environment Media Network Publication

Eco-Guardian

November 2015 | Issue 004.

Arabica coffee faces bleak future

Uganda's Arabica coffee is tittering on the brink of extinction due to dire effects of climate change. Research by Makerere University shows that this is already impacting on production and production is predicted to drop by as much as 50% by 2050.

New Vision UGANDA'S LEADING DAILY Tuesday, January 30, 2018 18:42 PM Search

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Home > West > Kadaga wants Tree Fund operationalized

Kadaga wants Tree Fund operationalized

By Ismael Kasooha, Andrew Musinguzi Added 8th January 2017 11:52 AM

"We need to replace the trees being cut for charcoal and other purposes in our country for the good of our generation."

Daily Monitor NEWS BUSINESS OPED SPECIAL REPORTS MAGAZINES

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SUNDAY MARCH 22 2015

National Tree Fund is long overdue

In Summary

The issue: Restoring our forests
Our view: It is important to preserve what is left of our forests, but it is more crucial to start massive tree-planting across the country from rural communities...

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Environmental activists last week appeale Parliament to investigate the delay in the operationalisation of the Tree Fund. This should not be left to environmentalists alo Ugandans should be concerned about the dwindling forest cover and join various ca aimed at boosting tree planting.

In 2003, Parliament enacted the National and Tree Planting Act. Under Section 40 o

Samples of the articles that were published in the newspapers

Reducing forest degradation through stakeholder collaboration

By Kandole Annet Balelwa
Manager, Women Empowerement and Natural
Resources Governance

A Swahili proverb says *"Pamoja tunasimama, Imegawanyika sisi Kuanguka. "* Its English equivalent is: United we stand, divided we fall. The proverb has been aptly applied to the forestry sector whereby different stakeholder in the three Districts of Kyenjojo, Mubende and Kyegegwa came together to jointly curb illegal trade in timber and charcoal.

The National Forestry and Tree Planting Act (NFTPA) 2003 part II section 4 established a number of forest ownership types under a generic umbrella concept of "Responsible Bodies"(RBs). These include: National Forestry Authority (NFA), District Forest Office (DFO), Specified Registered groups of local community, registered forest owners, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

While multiple agencies seem to be a strength in managing the forest estate, Uganda has continued to lose its forest cover at a rate of 120,000 ha/year (State of Forest Report 2016) The Ministry of Water and Environment, under its good governance action plan 2012-2015, cites lack of coordination among agencies and political interference as some of causes of forest degradation.

In 2012 CARE International in Uganda in partnership with Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) facilitated the establishment of an Inter-district Multi-stakeholder Forum. The forum comprised members representing a cross section of all stakeholders in forest governance from Mubende, Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa in the Albertine Rift in Western Uganda.

The stakeholders include: District Chairpersons, The sub county chairpersons, Resident District Commissioners, Staff of NFA, District Forestry Officers, Natural Resources Officers, Environmental Officers, Uganda Police Force, Private Sector (especially Tea companies), Civil Society Organizations and members of Communities represented by community based monitors and collaborative Forest management groups.

The Forum is an Advisory Body on Environment and Natural resource issues in the three districts, it provides a platform for all agencies in the district to share information on accountability and environmental natural resources management, monitor the implementation of ENR related policies and programs in the respective districts

Restoration of Kaweri Central Forest Reserve

Before the formation of the Inter-district multi stakeholder Forum National Forestry Authority (NFA) had given up on Kaweeri Central Forest Reserve (about 1235 Hectares). Encroachers had taken over about 70% of the forest and converted it into maize gardens. Some 90 families had personalized the land. Several attempts by NFA to evict the encroachers had been futile. The encroachers were had become more stubborn and were no longer bothered by eviction notices. Moreover, Kaweri where the illegal activities were thriving, is located about 2 KMs from Mubende District Offices and not far away from the NFA office which is located in the reserve.
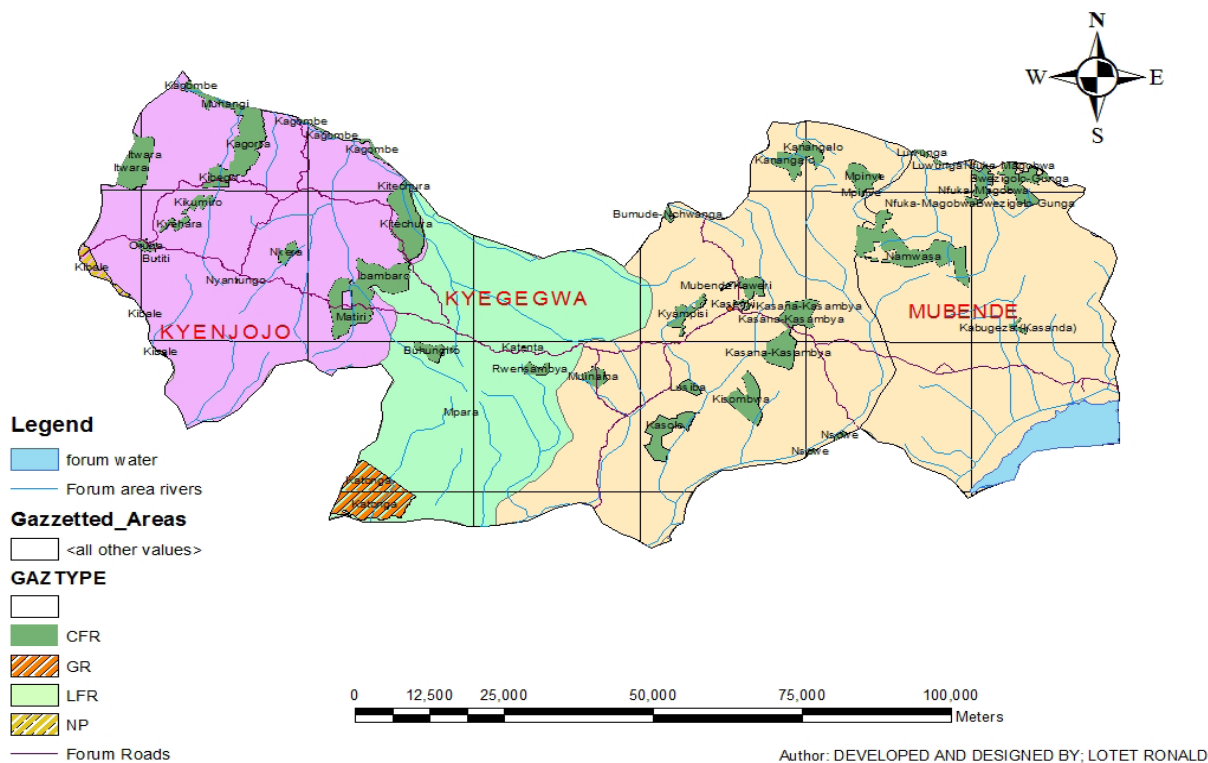
In 2014, Tumwesigye Alex was posted to Mubende in the position of NFA sector manager. His first task was to locate Kaweeri CFR, but he found it difficult to tell NFA land from private land. Often times, Tumwesigye thought this posting was a demotion. "How can I be transferred to a place with no forests and I still think I'm working for NFA?" he wondered.

Then Tumwesigye started attending the Inter-district-multi-stakeholder Forum where the issue of Kaweeri was put high on the agenda. Finally a strategy was adopted to redeem the NFA land in Kaweeri. The community members were mobilized through the local leadership, and invited to a public dialogue to discuss the matter of Kaweeri CFR. All the 70 members of the Inter-district Forum participated in the dialogue, along with the District Chairpersons of Mubende, Kyenjojo and Kyegegwa; Resident District Commissioners and District Police Commanders. The encroachers then realized that the issue was serious It was now a sub-regional issue, not just restricted to NFA. Discussions were held between the leaders and the community members.

The presence of the actors from other districts showed that the leaders were not just being unreasonable. The encroachers agreed to a deadline to harvest their maize. Any maize that would be found in the fields after the agreed deadline would be donated to inmates. Two days before the deadline all the maize had been harvested.

A portion of the land approximately 200 hectares was allocated to Green Charcoal project for private tree planting. The forest had been so destroyed that that natural regeneration would take a very long time. Allocation of the land to the Green Charcoal project was also intended to prevent the return of encroachers. Green Charcoal has already planted about 200 hectares of the land and is also encouraging the community members to plant their own trees by giving out seedlings through the District Green charcoal coordination office. So far a total of 1.2 million seedlings have been supplied by Green Charcoal free of charge to the communities.

MAP OF THE FORUM (IDMFFE) AREA SHOWING CONSERVATION AREAS

Legend

- forum water
- Forum area rivers

Gazzetted_Areas
- <all other values>

GAZ TYPE
- CFR
- GR
- LFR
- NP
- Forum Roads

Author: DEVELOPED AND DESIGNED BY; LOTET RONALD

Apart from sensitizing communities and encroachers, civil servants in other sectors have also become more aware of the need to stop illegal activities in forests. "Since I started participating in forest management meetings, I got to understand the need to conserve the forests, and the extent of damage caused by illegal forest users. I now expeditiously handle files to do with forest illegalities. However the investigation part is still lacking," said Resident State Attorney, Kyenjojo

Alex Tumwesigye, NFA Sector Manager says the forum has strengthened collaboration between actors across sectors. "It is only in this region where NFA staff are on talking terms with District Forest Officers, The District Forest Officer calls me and I am able to respond appropriately in other areas I would not even have his telephone contacts," said Alex Tumwesigye Sector Manager.

With the help of JESE, A team of 258 community based monitors have been established in 16 sub counties in the three districts. They work as 'feelers' for the Forum. Their main function is to report illegalities in the forestry sector but also look at other cross cutting issues of the environment. This has helped increase vigilance and participation of the communities on ENR issues especially with use of the ICT platform

The ratification of the inter district collaboration (formation of the inter-district forum) by the District council of Mubende, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo has promoted more sense of belonging amongst the various stakeholders as they come together to discuss matters of common interest in the annual general meeting. This has increased the level of vigilance among member district and promoted sustainable management of the natural resources in the district. As a matter of fact, Kaweeri Central forest reserve,

part of Kibalinga wetlands were saved due to the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders.

After realizing the need to grow bigger and make work more visible, the forum organized a bench marking trip to Imarisha Naivasha in Kenya an organization that had similar objectives. This was quite fruitful as the forum came back rejuvenated with the urge to redefine the scope of resources and engage more stake holders. As a result we developed a resource map indicating major forests and wetland ecosystems. This will help establish resource user committee and locate the CFM groups.

Subsequently, the forum has helped initiate five Collaborative Forest Management groups. However only two of Matiri CFR named Matiri natural resource users and income enhancement association (MANRUIA) and Itwara CFR known as Kajuma Itwara farmers and forest conservation association have successfully signed the agreements and the remaining three are underway.

A stakeholder's engagement meeting was also organized and several companies have since pledged to support the forum. This collaboration has increased unity and secured sustainability of the forum in the region. As a matter of fact most companies have pledged their support mostly in kind to boost forum activities. Out of the many pledges CUDWELL industries has offered two laptops to facilitate the forum's secretarial works.

Realizing that the forum derives its financial support from CARE through JESE, the forum has come up with a sustainability strategy which envisions the forum without external funding. This has been used to map stakeholders, their potential role and future fundraising strategy. In the future the cause of the forum can still be propelled to self-perpetuation.

To further strengthen this potential, the forum with support from CARE organized a study and exposure visit to MIJUMITA in Tanzania to benchmark community engagement and self-support by an organization that is similarly striving to conserve the forest estate in part of Tanzania. This has given the forum a directional perspective of networking and letting the forum operate as a loose network. We also learnt that communities around forests can be empowered to sustainably manage their resources while deriving livelihood without compromise.

Despite the achievements, the forum is challenged with uncertainty of funding and cannot access some opportunities because it is not legally registered. In addition, there is poor staffing and funding for Natural Resources Sector in all the three districts. This affects natural resources management and by extension the work of the Forum.

Lessons learned

- Over the period of existence of the forum, we have come to learn that indeed *''Umoja ni nguvu*" translated unity is power. So many things especially governance challenges can be effectively addressed as a team.

- It is key to map resources of interest and closely engage the adjacent communities. This will help increase sustainability

- Involvement of political leaders has made decision making easy and integration of forum activities into the routine duties for the

various duty bearers to ensure effectiveness. This has led to more responsible action by duty bearers thus increased response yielding into efficient and effective conservation of forestry and Environmental resources.

The way to go therefore is increase on number of stakeholders and Identify more areas that need conservation and engage communities for better management. There is need for continued involvement of political leaders since they deal with policies in their day to day activities

Umoja Ukweli

Further reading

1. *CARE International in Uganda; Uganda Forest Watch V O L U M E 1; I S S U E 1 – June 2 0 1 2*

2. *CARE International in Uganda; Uganda Forest Watch V O L U M E 1; ,I S S U E 2 – September 2 0 1 2*

3. *CARE International in Uganda; Uganda Forest Watch V O L U M E 1; I S S U E 1 - 2 0 1 2*

4. *CARE International in Uganda: Forest Resources Sector Transparency (FOREST) Programme Annual Report 2015*

5. *CARE International in Uganda: Forest Resources Sector Transparency (FOREST) Programme Annual Report 2016*

Mubende District Chairperson plants a tree (Photo by JESE)

From illegal timber dealing to conservation advocacy

By Jolly Bategeka
Mid-Western Anti Corruption Coalition (MIRAC)

Seka Tumwesige Denis comes from Kisaaru village, Kabwoya sub county Hoima District adjacent to Bugoma Central Forest Reserve. Early in 2016 he was identified by Community Based Monitors (CBMs) as one of the people involved in illegal timber cutting.

The CBMs reported Tumwesige to Mid western Region Anti-Corruption Coalition (MIRAC), to the Sub county Local Government and to NFA officers. NFA picked interest in the matter and worked with the area Environmental Police, to conduct investigations which concluded with the arrest of Tumwesige. The culprit pleaded guilty and asked for pardon. He argued that there was no other way he could earn a living apart from illegal timber dealings.

NFA and MIRAC embarked on a process of rehabilitating Tumwesige, and taught him about the value of conserving forests. They involved him in different activities and meetings. For six months, he was put under strict monitoring by the MIRAC CBMs working together with the NFA authorities and the local leadership of the village.

In the long run, Tumwesige was converted and became an advocate of forest conservation. He regularly contacted the Community Based Monitors for more information about forests and how he could become an agent for conservation and protection.

He was very proud to be a role model of change in his community. His testimony demonstrated that it was possible for a person to stop illegal timber cutting and start advocating forest conservation.

Tumwesige is now working with local musicians, composing songs with forest conservation messages. He has also gone ahead to stage concerts at community level encouraging people to protect the environment especially forests and also condemning all forms of forest degradation and illegalities. Tumwesige is now a popular local musician, which earns him a lot of money for a living but also has interested himself in doing agriculture to sustain his family.

This achievement is largely built on MIRAC's foundational work of community sensitization. This is aimed at raising a critical mass of communities and activists to address illegal activities in Central Forest Reserves.

MIRAC now refers to Tumwesige as a conservation advocate and engages him regularly to amplify the good forest governance message and the hope with alternatives that timber cutting is not the only source of livelihood and forest/ timber dealers can do better to sustain the forests.

Tumwesigye Denis used to carry out illegal timber dealing in Bugoma forest, now he is converted and free (Photo by Kiyimba James)

How stakeholder cooperation improved forest governance in Mubende district

By Lotet Ronald
District Environment Officer, Mubende

Achieving stakeholder's cooperation is key to forestry and environmental management. For a long time there was hardly any collaboration and coordination between the lead agencies in the forestry sector.

To promote transparency, good governance and accountability in forestry and environmental management in the districts of Mubende, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo, JESE with funding from CARE initiated efforts to improve stakeholder cooperation and communication through the establishment of the inter-district forum.

It all started as a one year pilot project aimed at Combating illegal Trade in Timber and Charcoal (COTTCH). Even after the COTTCH project, there was limited communication and coordination, until the introduction of the FOREST project, which aimed at promoting transparency, accountability and good governance. Communication under the FOREST project improved to the extent that the District Environment Officer would receive an average of two calls a week, with community based monitors reporting illegal activities in the Central Forest Reserves. The District Environment Officer would then share the report with the Sector Manager at NFA. In turn, the NFA Sector Manager would respond and act upon the information received, in consultation with the District Forest Office and the District Environment Office.

For example, on 21st of July 2014 the NFA Sector Manager called the District Forestry Officer (DFO) on a case where he found a charcoal transporter from Kiyuni suspected to be from Kaweri CFR with a forged district receipt. This case was followed up by the Sector Manager in courts of law with support from the DFS.

In a similar development, on the 16th July 2014, the Sector Manager impounded three chainsaws that were being used to cut timber on private land which he handed over to the DFO. The owners were fined a total of 200 USD which was recorded as revenue for the district. These are small but practical changes towards effective stakeholder coordination in tackling forestry governance issues.

A truckload of charcoal being transported to Kampala. (Photo by RAC).

How did the cooperation translate into an inter district forum?

The inter-district Forum which started in 2011 brought stakeholders together for a common cause in the districts of Mubende, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo. Later in 2012 the forum was boosted by the FOREST program implemented by CARE international in Uganda in partnership with JESE with funding from DANIDA through CARE Denmark.

The forum spearheaded the mapping of stakeholders to include in the forum. Today, the forum associates with 153 community based monitors and five tea companies of Mpanga, Mabaale Macloid and Mukwano. The forum also attracted CUDWELL industries who are dealing in **Prunus Africana** (*Entaseesa-Luganda and Engote)* barks in Kyenjojo and Kaweeri coffee in Mubende. All these are private companies that have direct link with natural resources management and use.

With the rise in the number of stakeholders from about 49 to 69, the management of the natural resources has become almost every bodies business. Previously, everyone pointed fingers at duty bearers. Now they all take responsibility by either reporting or taking action.

Does it benefit to have a cooperation?

The forum has achieved much more than what a single duty bearer or single organization would. The forum presented a petition to the National Forests Authority (NFA) against the mechanized harvest of Kyampisi Central Forest Reserve which was a threat to biodiversity and forest regeneration. The Executive Director of NFA responded by banning the activities.

The Forum also engaged private sector actors to interest them in its activities. As a result the NFA gave the forum 67 Kg of assorted seeds which amounted to about UGX11 million. The seedlings were given to communities to boost the forest cover that the forum is struggling to restore.

The forum also received two laptops from CUDWELL to aid the team document and store information. Each laptop was values at UGX1.5 million.

The forum jointly facilitated the peaceful eviction of long-standing encroachers in Kaweeri Central Forest Reserve. The involvement of many stakeholders made it possible for NFA to successfully evict without force.

Through stakeholders cooperation the forum now associates with regional organizations whose activities are similar to those of the forum, particularly Imarisha Naivasha in Kenya and MIJUMITA in Tanzania. Because of this relationship, the IMARISHA Naivasha team also paid a visit to Uganda to see how the forum coordinates forestry and environmental governance issues.

A timber logger in action (Photo by Kiyimba James)

Achieving the stakeholders' cooperation within the forum has not been a bed of roses. The forum has gone through a number challenges, transformations to realize the current level of success. There was logistical huddles, soliciting for political will, technical capacity gaps in stakeholders engagements to mention but a few. CARE International bridged most of the gaps and made the cooperation a success story.

''A true architect is not an artist but an optimistic realist. They take a diverse number of stakeholders, extract needs, concerns and dreams, and then create a beautiful yet tangible solution that is loved by users and community at large. We create vessels in which life happens''
Cameron Sinclair

Community empowerment through collaborative forest management

A case of Kabukwiri Village, Rubirizi District

By Tumwesigye Alex
Sector Manager, NFA Mubende

Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) is a forest management approach gazetted in the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003 where a legally registered group of a forest adjacent community enters into a memorandum of co-managing part of a forest reserve with NFA. Through this arrangement, the two parties i.e. Government (NFA) and the community agree to share responsibilities, rights and roles in managing the forest after negotiating on the benefits from the forest resource.

However, this arrangement has not been given a lot of attention it involves a lengthy process and sometimes the benefits are viewed as too small because of poor negotiation capacity between the two parties.

My story starts with a community from Kabukwiri village, Rubirizi district, which is adjacent to Kalinzu Central Forest Reserve (CFR). What started as a big fight between NFA and forest encroachers ends in happiness and community transformation.

In 2012 while on my routine field inspections in Kalinzu CFR, Compartment (CPT) 43, I discovered that part of this CPT which was the furthest and covered by grassland had been encroached on by Kabukwiri community. They had planted trees and cultivated crops.

The sight disturbed me so! At that moment if I had capacity I would have destroyed everything along my way from gardens to trees planted by this community in the forest. By the time I was half way the inspection, I had got information that some community leaders were involved in the encroachment. I made my way to the councilor's residence to get more information but it all ended in a hot exchange.

After two days, I called this councilor and instructed him to stop his community from doing any other activity in the forest. In the meantime, I would inquire from my supervisors on what to do next.

The councilor did as I requested him and people left the forest. A series of community meetings were held as a result community members agreed to form and register a Community Based Organisation (CBO) and submitted their application for CFM to NFA.

My challenge came in when the reply took long yet we had to ensure that these people didn't go back in

Alex Tumwesigye NFA official who worked with local political leaders to ensure community participation (Photo by Kiyimba James)

the forest. Finally a positive reply came, this made the community more manageable and obedient and ensured protection of the forest.

Reaping the fruits:

The CFM process started with two parties engaging each other fully. In the negotiations for resource utilization, they were offered land for Ecotourism in the same locality. These communities were also offered the area where they had illegally planted trees for firewood and for sale mainly to the neighbouring tea factories and schools.

These communities have been enrolled on carbon credit funds and are already receiving money. The community is earning income from Ecotourism and camping. This community had very poor road access because the place is very hilly, on rift valley escarpments but now because of big business in firewood and Ecotourism, new roads have been constructed and old ones repaired by the Local Government. The communities can now sell their agricultural produce in downhill towns on good prices.

The women and children can access good medical facilities in Rubirizi Town and Rugazi Health Centre. The village has started getting Hydro Electric Power (HEP) power and small-scale coffee factories are being constructed by community members. The forest is now jealously protected by the same communities. Around 120 households have benefited in this CFM arrangement.

The result therefore is that the communities have been empowered economically with a sense of ecosystem management. The formally encroached area is now fully stocked. It is therefore a win-win situation

Key lessons

It's always important to collaborate with community members in forest management and conservation. This process empowers community members to appreciate the interventions.

I applaud CARE international for the efforts put in the area that I am now working. I believe that I can replicate those approaches in the problem areas of Mubende Forest.

Community members discuss the management of tree plantations (Photo by JESE)

Involving Private Sector entities in forest monitoring and governance

By Alfred Agiro Okot
Programme Specialist, Care International

Private Sector Entities (PSE)in Uganda have focused on business without bearing in mind the social, economic, and environmental aspects. Governance issues in the forestry sector investments have contributed to illegal acquisition of land in forests and wetlands forceful eviction of local communities and bribery.

CARE International in Uganda, through the Forest Governance Project supported participation of PSEs in monitoring and reporting of illegalities in the forestry sector and to create awareness on the importance of adhering to social and environmental standards while doing business.

Engaging Private Sector Entities

 The FOREST programme focused on critical elements on governance of forest resources, and environmental actions, an area where private sector entities have to play a role in adhering to national and international standards of conducting business. It was therefore, important to develop astrategy on how to interact with PSEs systematically. The interaction with the private sector takes various forms including holding them accountable for respecting Ugandan law and for implementing the voluntary commitments they have signed up to. The strategy had the following key steps:

- Appreciate their roles and responsibilities in ensuring a responsive and transparent manner of developing and managing forest investments.

- Take stock of in-country challenges, lessons, and best practices of conducting forest based business responsibly.

- Develop partnerships, by conducting due diligence, so as to appreciate the companies' dynamics in relation to key aspects doing business such as governance, corporate social responsibility, social commitment, ethics, human rights, gender, climate change and environment, and companies' business compatibility.

- Conduct a thorough review and approve the due diligence report, develop and define scope of engagement and how to manage the implementation. And ensure close monitoring of the improvement plan, and conduct DD assessment when there is need.

Roles and Responsibilities

During implementation of the FOREST governance project, some private sector entities were proactive and instrumental in monitoring and reporting illegal activities in forests and wetlands. They implemented corporate social responsibility actions in a bid to incentivize communities adjacent to their business operations to monitor and report any wrong issues relating to management of forests. The private sector entities developed their own coordination mechanism which strengthened the development of a partnership with the inter-district forum.

FOREST programme collaborated with the private sector, especially at the district and inter-district level, to continue monitoring and reporting illegal forest activities. For example;

- McLeods Tea Company was a strategic partner in resource mobilization in order to implement the livelihood initiatives (sustainable agriculture—food security)—aimed at ensuring out-growers do not sell tea to other companies for quick cash to meet household food security needs, and also incentivize them to be vigilant about ecosystem degradation.

- Global Woods (GW) was also a strategic partner in showcasing their business model that appreciates economic and environmental concerns and social dynamics. GW has since been monitoring and reporting illegal activities in forests and wetlands. Currently they are nurturing a relationship with CARE International in Uganda to jointly mobilize for resources to boost their forest security system which involves monitoring and reporting forest illegalities. They are also intend to undertake a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative on sustainable agriculture and livelihoods including health, Water Sand Hygiene (WASH) as well as financial inclusion (Village Saving and Loan Association).

- Cudwell Company dealing in Prunas Africana bark (for medicinal purpose—treating prostate cancer) provided the inter-district forum with two HP Laptops and pledged to give UGX 1,000,000 to facilitate coordination meetings. The meetings provide a platform for dialogues amongst stakeholder and promote tree planting of the Prunas Africana species. This contributes to the sustenance of the company's core business and controls illegal forest acivities.

- Mabale Tea Company is promoting monitoring of illegal environment activities in the surrounding forests and wetlands using environmental scouts; they have been linked to the Community Based

Monitors (CBMs) to appreciate digital reporting of illegalities and engaging of duty bearers.

Challenges

Despite the private commercial sector being a driver of the country's economy holding immense opportunities for employment and revenue growth, they need to improve on approaches for fostering accountability and transparency. Some best practices demand that corporate companies are transparent with their profits, how they conduct business, and how they use their profits visa vis worker's salaries & supporting community welfare through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). They are expected to support food security initiatives, agriculture and ecosystem-based value chains, water sanitation and hygiene and health issues.

PSEs are protected by legal clauses in their business and this is not a demonstration of transparency. This could be due to corruption that looms in the Uganda investment climate, where compliance and adherence of companies to social and environmental standards are not closely monitored by duty bearers and government line agencies and ministries such as Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), National Forestry Authority (NFA) and Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB).

They do not observe the Code of Ethics for Private Sector in Uganda 2014, which articulates and emphasizes "striving for balancing ecological, social and economic impacts in all business activities". Although a few PSEs genuinely conduct an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Analysis, there are no social contracts with companies to appreciate that they are bound by social and environmental standards.

There is limited participation of PSEs in policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring including reviewing in order to, not only strengthen their appreciation of the policy environment but take ownership of various aspects therein.

Lessons Learnt

To match the focus of forest governance, the intersect of actions requires analyzing, mapping, identifying and carefully selecting private sector entities to be mobilized for awareness creation through meetings and workshops as well as face-to-face outreach in order to create their buy-in. It is important to engage relevant PSEs, especially those that understand the forestry sector and required investment standards and compliance issues. This will make it easy for synergy building and complementarity and therefore ownership and sustainability.

It is important for PS to get involved in the programme thinking and design, in order for them to appreciate its philanthropy and use it as an opportunity to integrate their ideas in transparency and accountability in the forestry sector.

There's need to create accountability platforms (sharing of performance and agreed investment milestones) to ensure legitimate PSEs are conducting their business responsibly and are adhering to social, and environmental standards. It will also facilitate identification of PS entities, that demonstrate best practices, and enhance sharing and dissemination of knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

• Develop meaningful private sector partnerships and foster engagement platforms that will amplify the role of these entities in forest governance.

• Build capacity of multi-stakeholders, for routine monitoring, reporting and follow-up on recommendations at national and district levels.

• Broaden the participation of the private sector in public policy formulation, mobilizing their input through chambers of commerce, trade unions, producer associations and groups.

• Government has to ensure that all public and private sector entities are registered and supported to have inbuilt mechanisms that support corporate social responsibility and related best practices leaning on international codes and standards.
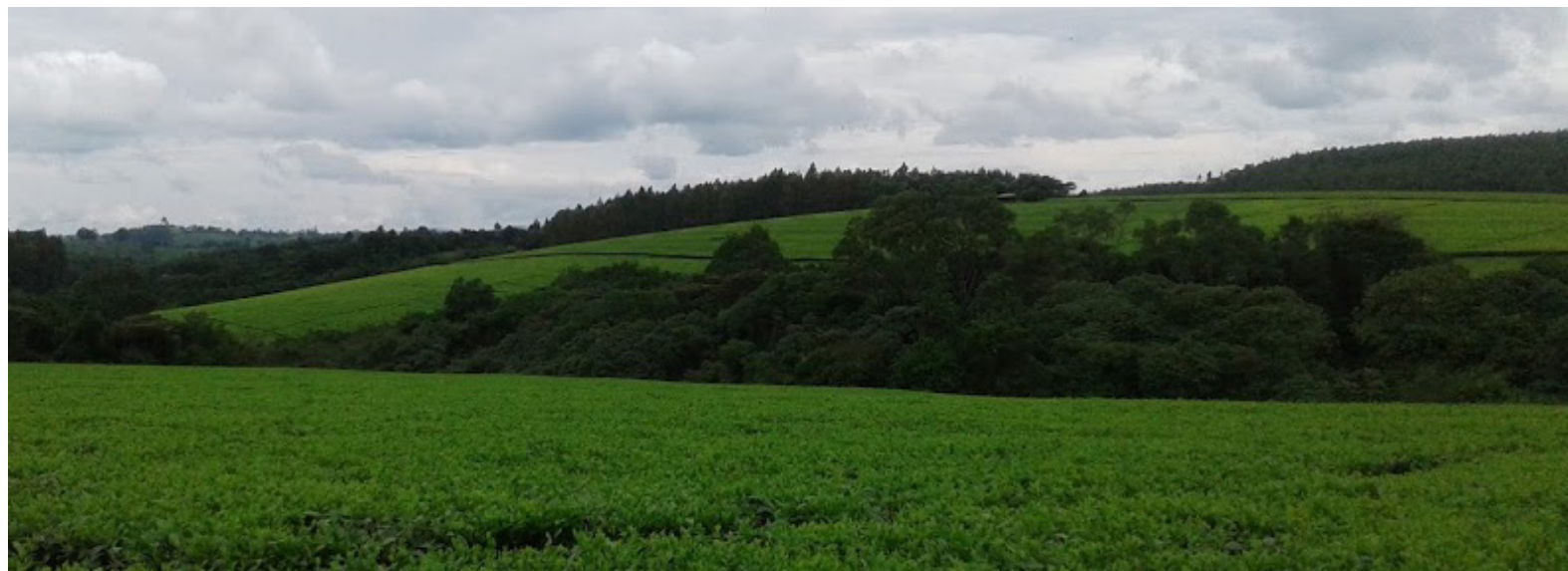
Use of Information, communication technology to fight forest illegalities

By Atwijukye Alex -
Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU)

Communities adjacent to forest reserves adopted the use of mobile phones to report forest illegalities to National Forestry Authority and District Forestry Officers.

Forests are of high economic importance and contribute 13.5% to the GDP (Word Bank 2015) They further contribute Uganda shillings 332.3billion (US 173M) to the total annual incomes of households in Uganda

Despite its importance and the existence of clear institutional, strategic and operational arrangements, Uganda's forestry sector is challenged by governance deficits manifesting in form of weak law enforcement; impunity by individuals; low levels of transparency in the management of forest resources; limited responsiveness by the duty bearers to address forest abuse;, contradicting political directives such as forest giveaways; illegal possession of land titles in Central forest reserves; and limited citizen participation. Currently, the reduction in forest cover estimated is estimated at over 92,612 hectares per annum. This was reported in the 2016 State of Uganda's Forests report issued by the Ministry of Water and Environment.

In an effort to address the situation, Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) with funding from CARE International in Uganda implemented a project codenamed "Deepening Democratic Governance in the forestry sector

The ICT-based project involved the creation of a platform to enable the use of mobile phones to report forest illegalities. The platform operated a toll free line as well as a short code SMS. This was anticipated to improve information flow, participation of the citizen in forestry governance decision makings, trigger action from duty bearers by offering real time responses to the cases reported to them as well as improve on transparency and accountability in the Sector.

This ICT platform was code-named Forest Community based Monitoring system (FCBM)and anchored on the Community Based Monitoring (CBMs) structures that promote citizens participation through monitoring and reporting any suspicious forestry activity observed within their vicinity as well as providing practical solutions to reported cases.

The system ensures that people can report the forest destruction using mobile phones. The citizens are empowered to participate in community based monitoring using a tested system.

This system is based on interaction between community monitors, Police, a Civil society that houses the server where SMS is conveyed , District Forest Officer (DFO), National Forest Authority Officers(NFA), Resident District Commissioner (RDC) and Local Council (LC) Members.The selection of community monitors involves holding community meetings to identify and select volunteers from forest neighboring cmmunties. This is then followed by the selection of the duty bearers (NFA, DFO,RDC, and police).

Capacity building of users

Community members and leaders were provided with mobile phones and given training on using them as a reporting tool. In addition selected community members were equipped with basic knowledge on forest illegalities like timber cutting and transportation without license, encroachment, grazing, lack of follow-up on forest cases at Police and court, non-compliance with the Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) agreement and licences and corrupt National Forestry Authority (NFA) staff.

The training further equipped community monitors with reporting skills, based on the the "3W" rule of "WHAT" describing the type of activity observed, "WHERE" name of the sub-county and forest where activity is and "WHO" describing any recognizable characteristics of offender. Duty bearers including NFA Ranger Managers and Sector Managers, Resident District Commissioner, District Forest Officers and Police were also given training on how

Illustrations on the Overview of the CBM

KEY
Urgent
Phone
SMS
Updating/Reporting
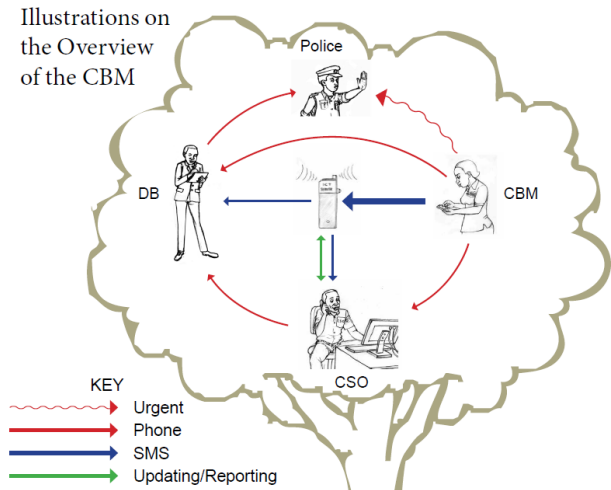
Community members undergo training in use of ICT to improve forest management, Mubende District (Photo by ACCU)

to access , handle and give feedback to the cases received to ensure that the required action is taken.

Information transfer

With this model, when a monitor observes a suspicious activity, he or she writes a report and sends it by SMS to the server. The information is then relayed to a broader list of duty-bearers who all have access to the report through the server.. The duty bearer verifies the report and responds directly. Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda follows up and make sure that duty-bearers take action.

After the trainings the community monitors started using their mobile phone to report cases by sending SMS to 6006 or by directly calling 0800113322. The call or a message received by Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda is recorded in detail and ACCU takes a responsibility of forwarding the reported cases to Range Managers, District Forest Officers, and police for follow up to make sure that the reported cases are worked on .

Throughout the project community members were were able to report 996 cases of forest illegalities to ACCU and 354 illegality cases were resolved by Range Managers and Police by taking a number of actions including impounding of trucks carrying charcoal and timber, evicting people from forest in case of encroachment, destruction of charcoal kilns and impounding of power saw machines.

All the information collected is analyzed and plotted on graphs and Google maps to show the most affected areas according to the type of cases reported. The information is availed and shared with

the responsible people like Range manager, Police and District Forestry Officers through direct access to the website. The reports are then used to inform ACCU's advocacy as far as forestry is concerned.

Action on cases reported is motivation for the public to volunteer in monitoring and reporting of forest illegalities within the forestry sector and to continue demanding for transparency and accountability. This contributes to restoration of the deforested forests thus increasing carbon sinks and reducing the effects of climate change.

One of the challenges affecting the initiative was a directive from the Uganda Communication Commission that led to suspension of the short code.

Additionaly, the platform had an app for uploading photos that did not work due to the capacity of the CBMs. A toll free line was established to beef up ther reporting. Indeed it was a preferred medium because the CBMs were able to report cases without fearing that anyone would victimise them.

References

1.   Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE) state of Uganda's Forestry 2015

2.   ACCU publication on Best practices and Lessons learnt from Forest Governance Project (2011-2013)

3.   ACCU project proposal to CARE International in Uganda (2013-2017)

4.   CARE CBM training Manual.

Research: the cornerstone for advocacy

By Ephrance Nakiyingi
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Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda

Introduction

This article presents one of the approaches used by Anti Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) to improve transparency and accountability in the forestry sector. It underpins investigative research as a means of gathering empirical evidence that strengthens advocacy work. It highlights the contribution of the various players towards well researched work.

Back ground

The current institutional, strategic and operational arrangements in the forestry sector are supported by a range of enabling policy and legal frameworks since 1994 including but not limited to;

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act 2003 ,the Uganda Forestry Policy and the general guiding principles of 2001,the the Local Government Act 1997.

However, Government efforts towards good governance in Uganda's Forestry sector differ from policy and practice. The current forest cover stands at 9% dropping from 24% in 1990 (MWE, 2015) and this is a true reflection that there is a very big gap between policy and practice. The practice is marred by encroachment, harvesting of forest resources without licenses, use of chain saws, and ownership of forest land with titles in forest reserves, corruption both grand and petty among other factors.

The reducing trends of forest cover over the years further underscore the widening gap between policy and practice.

In a bid to deepen democratic governance in the forestry sector, ACCU and CARE in 2013 initiated the forestry governance project with an objective to improve transparency and accountability in the forestry sector.

In 2014, ACCU applied investigative research to establish why specific individuals possessed land titles in Central Forest Reserves (CFR) without following the due degazettement procedures. This undertaking was partly motivated by a media publication by Water and Environment Media Network (WEMNET) in August 2014 which highlighted that over 52 land titles had been issued in Central Forest Reserves to high profile individuals. ACCU was particularly interested in undertaking investigations in selected Forest Reserves of; Kyewaga, Gunda, and Nonve in Wakiso District.

The investigation team involved undercover researchers who had expertise in conducting similar work. Findings from the investigations revealed that,

Forest ownership	Forest type	1990	2000	2005	2010	2015
PRIVATE	THF well stocked	172,274	127,022	79,789	50,662	20,439
	THF degraded	175,052	160,883	149,008	50,423	35,400
	Woodland including montane	2,971,763	2,258,873	1,948,534	945,221	605,146
	Plantation	12,000	7,000	11,000	19,000	37,000
Sub total		3,331,089	2,553,778	2,188,331	1,065,306	697,985
PROTECTED	THF well stocked	419,456	549,140	419,972	431,259	410,449
	THF degraded	83,911	57,792	36,536	55,160	100,880
	Woodland including montane	1,028,027	842,756	907,752	703,113	556,464
	Plantation	18,000	15,000	21,000	38,000	64,000
Sub total		1,549,394	1,464,688	1,385,260	1,227,532	1,131,793
Grand total		4,880,483	4,018,466	3,573,591	2,292,838	1,829,778
% of total land area		24	20	17	11	9

approximately 24619.82 hectares of forest land had been converted to freehold without following the due degazettement procedures with a total of 64 illegal Titles issued in these CFRs. Findings further indicated that ownership of this land was in the hands of influential personalities including politicians. Some of the most affected Central Forest Reserves include:- Kyewaga , Gunda, Nonve,Sango Bay,Kajjansi , Namanve, Kitubulu, Bufulu ,Mugomba, Matiri, Kyewaga Zirimiti ,Bukaleba.

The research findings were disseminated in various forums and the debate over the same spread at different levels. For-example in Hoima, the issuance of land titles in Bugoma CFR was discussed during the Bunyoro district forestry governance forum. At national level the research findings continued to be shared during the high-level engagements and the major objective was to solicit commitment to cancel all land titles in Central Forest Reserves. This highlevel engagement was held on 23rd May 2017, attended by officials from Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Ministry of Water and Environment, Forest Support Sector Department, National Forestry Authority, among others who committed to ensuring the end of illegal activities in forests.

Other CSOs also joined in the campaign. ACODE through their State of the Nation meetings, at national level, as well as Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) and the regional coalitions at local level. The engagements were enhanced with position papers and policy briefing series produced by ACCU summarizing a civil society position over the matter. The voice became strong and so loud as the media houses continued amplifying the findings from the research and this to a certain extent triggered action.

As a result of the campaign, various duty bearers spoke out against the illegal issuance of land titles in CFRs and committed to cancelling the titles. The Minister of Lands Housing and Urban Development, pledged to share the list of 96 illegal land titles that had been canceled. Then an opportunity arose following the establishment of the commission of inquiry on the effectiveness of laws, policies, and processes in land acquisition, land administration, land management and land registration in Uganda by H.E the president of Uganda. ACCU submitted a memorandum to the commission as well as the reports from the investigative research initiative. ACODE also submitted on the same which cemented all the evidence submitted earlier to the commission. Submission of the petition also led to increased visibility of key issues around central forest reserves.

Lessons drawn from such experiences include;

1. Legal frameworks can be abused especially by those that are mandated by Law to enforce them and put them into practice.

2. Where mandates are not clearly defined there are likely to be overlaps as reflected in the issuance of land titles by the MLHUD yet the MWE is there to enforce forest conservation.

3. Government responds to stronger and organized voices.

4. Research of any nature is key in creating empirical evidence for any advocacy intervention

5. Once the research is commissioned, and undertaken, findings should be disseminated to the rightful stakeholders and recommendations followed up to conclusion.

The most outstanding challenges were the fact that the committments to cancel these illegal land titles were never easy to come by. Some duty bearers feared for their jobs as some of the identified issues were still in court for example the land titles issued in Bugoma CFR,where the Kingdom of Bunyoro and NFA were battling out a case in court.

Getting participation of the members from the issuing agency for these land titles was a hard process as they kept sending junior officers to attend our engagements and they could hardly commit to anything.

Despite the above challenges,ACCU with support from Care international in Uganda, sustained the campaign through availing information from the research to all the relevant players both state and non state, using the media.

For further reading and Reference:

i. *Illegal issuance and possession of land titles in CFRs, by ACCU,2014*

ii. *Position Paper on illegal possession of land titles, by ACCU,2017*

A. *The Bugoma Challenge, by ACCU,2017*

B. *Behind the scenes booklet by WEMNET*
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Using outcome monitoring to measure processes

By Irumba Deziderius
Programme Quality and Learning Coordinator
Care International in Uganda

Before the introduction of outcome monitoring within the Forest Resources Transparency Programme it was difficult to track and document progress from advocacy efforts at CARE International in Uganda and indeed in governance projects implemented by partner organizations. The monitoring systems in place at that time focused on measuring absolute results of advocacy efforts not the process milestones. There was no proper mechanism for monitoring the advocacy efforts and capturing the changes overtime before achieving the ultimate results. This presented a lot of challenges because some project based advocacy processes would end before the ultimate results are realized creating a scenario of poor performance in the implementation of the project or programme.

In 2013 the Forest Resources Transparency Programme started with the conventional monitoring and evaluation system which also focused on measuring ultimate results without due consideration of the key processes that would lead to the ultimate results. The anticipated ultimate results for example included: Number of forestry policies, guidelines, regulations and laws produced; improved collaboration between government and civil society organizations in addressing forestry issues; improved coordination among forestry mandated agencies. CARE and partners realized that this system of monitoring on its own would not help to track and document the process outcomes. In 2014, CARE International in Uganda and partners embraced the outcome monitoring approach as solution to the challenges in monitoring forest governance. This was rolled out after training by CARE Denmark.

Key achievements realized in the use of outcome monitoring

The achievements realized in the use of outcome monitoring include its adoption by partner institutions such as Joint Effort to Save the Environment and Anti-corruption Coalition Uganda as a monitoring approach in programmes and projects beyond those funded by CARE international in Uganda.

According to Ephrance Nakiyingi of Anti-Corruption Coalition (ACCU), it is sometimes difficult to track achievements in the fight against corruption because the results are not easy to come-by. However, since we started using outcome monitoring we have been able to track small gains in our work which add up to bigger achievements in the long run. For that reason, ACCU has embraced the use of outcome monitoring in all her programmes and projects.

Through the use of outcome monitoring CARE and partners have been able to understand the various social actors, the factors that influence their behaviors, attitudes and actions. This understanding continuously shaped the strategies employed in implementing the programme.

The tool motivated partner organization to focus on every single outcome of the programme thus demonstrating the value for money invested. In this respect, outcome monitoring contributed to improved accountability and transparency of partner organizations.

CARE and partners were able to track and document the process achievements of their advocacy efforts during the implementation of the FOREST programme. These were documented in form of outcome journals and trends for each social actor. Before the efforts of the programme in 2013, the level of addressing key selected issues was between 0-10%. By December 2016 the level of progress towards addressing the issues had increased to between 35% to 85%.

Lessons learnt in the use of outcome monitoring:

Outcome monitoring and documentation can be a motivating tool for implementing of advocacy/ governance programmes because it helps implementers to realize that even though the ultimate results are not yet achieved there is progress being made and can be tracked easily.

Outcome monitoring is a good accountability tool for funds invested in advocacy processes whose end results take a long time to be realized. The outcome journals and trends documented if accompanied by the financial reports help to answer questions on value for money invested in advocacy processes.

The continuous documentation of outcomes and progress trends provide an avenue for real time identification of challenges and barriers towards achievement of the programme or project activities. This helps implementers to seek for quick solutions to identified challenges.

Challenges of using outcome monitoring

Outcome monitoring cannot stand on its own, it requires support of the conventional monitoring approaches to capture figures to support some of the

outcomes. This increases the workload. To overcome this challenge CARE and partners also maintained the quantitative monitoring system where results in form of figures were recorded.

The documentation of outcomes and the rating of the significance of the changes can be subjective as it has been dependent on individuals in partner organizations. It is at the discretion of that individual to give a small or a big percentage rating on the realized outcomes or changes. In some cases these may not present a true picture of the progress being made.

The outcome monitoring tool has been confused to be a performance monitoring tool. In this respect high ratings of progress may be exaggerated to demonstrate good performance.

Outcome monitoring requires resources in terms of time, funds and personnel. Under the FOREST programme especially at partner level this is a challenge because there are no specific staff for monitoring and evaluation due limitation of funds. The project officers also play the role of monitoring and evaluation. This creates a heavy workload on an individual and consequently effectiveness of tracking, documentation and analysis of outcome trends.

Outcome monitoring is a useful tool in tracking, measuring and documentation of process outcomes. It demonstrates that an ultimate result of an advocacy /governance programme is a sum total of several other outcomes along the process. Outcome monitoring requires resources in terms of time, funds and personnel. There is need for commitment on the part of the staff involved in monitoring and a high level of integrity in order to minimize bias when rating the results. Outcome monitoring process can be improved through formation of programme or project teams to help in documentation, rating and analysis of the various outcomes. This will help to reduce bias in the level of significance of the results being documented.

Further reading and Reference

    i.   *FOREST Programme partner quarterly reports*

    ii.   *FOREST Programme level outcome journals*

    iii.   *Forest Programme outcome monitoring trends*

Step 1: Selection of the social actors by identifying who would be influenced by programme activities to cause change. Specific social actors were identified and selected for each objective of the programme. These for example included National forestry authority, Local Governments, Forest Sector Support Department.

Step 3: Developing a vision for each of the social actors demonstrating the desired change as the issues get addressed.

Step 2: Formulation of progress markers for each social actor to help track progress towards the vision

Step 3: Implementing programme activities to bring about the desired change

Step 3: Documenting outcomes related to a given social actor arising from the activities implemented every Quarter under each progress marker in form of a journal.

Step 5: Rating the documented outcomes using the ratings: *Low = 0-30%; Medium 31-69%; High 70-100%* and compiling quarterly outcome journals

Step 6: Reviewing quarterly Journals and consolidating them into bi-annual journals. This is repeated every six months and are referred to as monitoring cycles.

Step 7: Analyzing the bi-annual outcome journals, plotting and production of progress trends.

About the authors

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