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PEN Newsletter 3rd Edition

PEN has been influential in the various programmes especially working with communities and has brought a lot of success. We have had a number of activities going on from the environmental walk held in Kalama to sensitize the community on the need to have rational utilization of environmental resources then the annual tree planting exercise that took place in the month of November.

Many things have been accomplished in the various meetings and born good results. After extensive meetings of the CSO Reference Group came up with a 2010 CSO /PBO draft bill that is being reviewed.

We got a sneak preview of how you can make your communication better and finally Viwango got a new CEO to steer the organization to a greater height.

A highlight of the management services programme during the last quarter where they helped St John Ambulance Kenya come up with a new strategy.

We hope this will enrich your knowledge and grow us as a network.

Faith Thuranira
Communication Officer - PEN Kenya

Finally Viwango is here with us

As stated in our last newsletter, with the leadership of **Poverty Eradication Network (PEN)**, a group of like minded organizations have formed, Viwango. This new organization is as a result of over four years work by leading Kenyan CSOs working in collaboration with many civil society networks.

The size and complexity of the Civil Society Sector in Kenya is changing at a fast rate. The proposed new legislative and regulatory environment for CSOs in Kenya is expected to bring on greater demands for better governance and accountability within the sector. The government, development partners and the general public will demand, and deserve, increased transparency in the workings of CSOs.

All stakeholders expect CSOs to be properly managed and governed by an effective board to best practice standards. The provision of standards and certification mechanism to the civil society sector by Viwango is one of the many ways of encouraging CSOs to adopt best practice in corporate governance. Viwango will be reaching out to all the stakeholders as it prepares to launch it products and services to the sector.

The organization will be responsible for driving a new agenda for professionalism and integrity within the civil society in Kenya. It will also promote adherence by CSOs to generally acceptable ethical standards and operational norms. It will set principles and standards of conduct for responsible practice, to protect the credibility and integrity of Civil Society Sector in Kenya.

The 1st CEO will be joining Viwango very soon. It will be rolling out its pilot certification system for a few selected CSOs before reaching out to the wider civil society sector with both the CSO standards and its first level certification system. The standards are organised under the following groups: legal and statutory requirements; identity; governance; culture and leadership; management; systems and policies; resource mobilization and resource utilization; work planning and programming; partnerships and external relations. These are common standards to which all Civil Society Sectors should aspire, with higher expectations of larger CSOs.

Finally Viwango is here with us

The standards have been produced in consultation with CSOs and stakeholders. It draws from established national and global standards that have proven effective, and has been customized to fit the Kenya Civil Society Sector. The standards and certification system will provide a flexible and proportionate framework for CSOs in Kenya

Viwango will therefore provide a reliable evaluation of a CSO's effectiveness whilst enhancing its capacity. It is also hoped that this initiative will help CSO's diversify their funding base thus increasing their autonomy, their ability to plan ahead and their downward accountability to beneficiaries.

"Business, labour and Civil Society Organizations have skills and resources that are vital in helping to build a more robust global community". Kofi Annan

TIP: Key messages

Clarity is the foundation of effective communication. Too often communication is either not enough or too much. You need to decide what your key messages are. These are the priority issues and ideas you need others to understand, internalize and act on.

Communicating is skills so don't forget to practice! Before any key meetings rehearse your presentation.
A useful exercise to introduce the discipline required in communicating is to use a fire alarm scenario. Imagine that as your meeting is about to get underway the fire alarm goes, concerned you may not get another opportunity you have 2 minutes to get across your 3 key messages, you need to decide what the most important messages to get across are.
It helps to give the messages structure. Use the 3 steps below for each message.

1. What information do I need to share?
2. So what, why should the recipient care or be interested?
3. What action is required of them?

CHRCE PROFILE

Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRCE) is a non-political, non partisan and non profit making membership organization. It began operating in 1996 and has been registered as an NGO in Kenya under the 1990 NGO Coordination Act since 2005.

CHRCE is dedicated to improving enjoyment of Human Rights and rooting for Democratic Governance among the people in Eastern Region of Kenya. Following 15 years of successfully working with communities, civil society and government agencies, CHRCE has developed a reputation as a credible, professional and effective organization.

Programmatically, CHRCE (2008-2009) implemented a one year project to sensitize local community on the concept of social audit as a tool to measure how over 13 different devolved funds have been utilized and the impact to the local citizens, Youth Fund being one of the funds targeted. In the progressive year 2009-2010 CHRCE managed to successfully social audit CDF Funded projects in 4 constituencies and reports are ready for constituency and national launch.

CHRCE Operational Areas

CHRCE targeted operation area is Eastern Region of Kenya. CHRCE has worked in the region with high presence in Kitui, Machakos and Makueni counties.

CHRCE Major Targets are:

The local Women, People With Disability, Children, Men, Youth, Community Based Organizations, Governance institutions at local levels managing decentralized funds , the Judiciary, the Legislative, Local Authority institutions within the area of operation.

CHRCE Funding Partners

The following Donors/partners have continued to fund CHRCE work USAID, Action AID, TROCAIRE of Ireland, Open Society Institute (OSI) in collaboration with Open Society initiative for East Africa, UNDP, Government of Finland, National Civic Education Program-URAI, CoE- GOK, Amkeni waKenya DGCS Facility in collaboration with Netherlands, Norway, SIDA and EU.

"Working and partnering with PEN brought esteem and desired results on what we have been looking for in our 15 years existence. While our members are knowledgeable on making a strategic plan, PEN brought participatory approach ingredients that lacked from many; hence we are proudly in possession of a five years strategy that PEN facilitated. It is a document which every staff, board members, development partners and stakeholders can read with ease and understanding".

Peter Mutemi
Executive Director
Centre for Human Rights and Civic Education (CHRCE)

Civil Society Finally Develops a draft CSO Bill

Under the leadership of the CSO Reference Group, Civil Society Organizations in Kenya have finally developed a draft CSO Bill after extensive series of consultation meetings both nationally and regionally across the country. The 2010 draft CSO Bill is expected to repeal the current NGOs Co-ordination Act no. 19 0f 1990.

NGOs Co-ordination Act no. 19 0f 1990 was enacted at a time when there was a lot of suspicion and mutual mistrust between the government and the NGO sector. Indeed, the sector was not able to contribute to the formulation of the legislation. It was placed in the position of reacting to draft legislation and only managed to have a few amendments effected later on.

As it turned out, the legislation was greatly flawed with the result that the sector was neither protected nor aided to grow positively. However, with no provision for its review and no national policy on NGOs, it became difficult to address some of the issues that arose from the implementation of this law. Consequently, Sessional Paper no.1 of 2006 was formulated to prepare the ground for comprehensive reforms to the 1990 Act as well as the government/NGO sector relations. In addition to the 2006 Sessional Paper No 1, we now have the new constitution which contains some provisions pertaining to the creation of an enabling environment for CSOs.   In particular, article 36 on the freedom of association is outlined below.

(1) Every person has the right to freedom of association, which includes the right to form, join or participate in the activities of an association of any kind.
(2) A person shall not be compelled to join an association of any kind.
(3) Any legislation that requires registration of an association of any kind shall provide that—
   (a) registration may not be withheld or withdrawn unreasonably; and
   (b) there shall be a right to have a fair hearing before a registration is cancelled.

The major issues that have been addressed in the draft CSO Bill include registration of CSOs, benefits and incentives for registration, self-regulation, the size and functions of the regulatory authority, disputes and resolution tribunal, and CSO accountability among others.

The draft CSO Bill will be on PENs website soon and we are inviting all the interested parties to participate in the process by making their contribution to the bill.

Government decentralised funds.

The government of Kenya channels alot of money in all districts annually through different ministries. For example, the constituency development fund allocated in all the constituencies every year has found its roots in   many communities. Others include the authority transfer fund, roads levy fund, rural electrification fund and the Njaa Marufuku Kenya which have benefited all corners of the country.

The community of Kikumbo through Kyamusau and Kikumbo SA self help groups prioritized their projects during a baseline survey program organized by PEN and the Kalama CBO in August 2004. In the following months within the same year three trainings followed covering advocacy, lobbying and networking,resource mobilization and development strategies. Members from the community attended in particular Mr Richard Muiva who is a member of the Board and the vision bearer of Kikumbo Secondary School.

Challenge

Despite the availability of the government devolved funds and local resources within different societies, the communities have less knowledge to tap into the funds and to responsibly utilize the local resources within their areas. In Kikumbo village after students completed their

primary education, they used to walk to either Iiuni or Kyangala secondary schools which is an average distance of 6 kilometers from the school. This caused most boy students to drop out of school to join sand harvesting activities. More girls also dropped out of school leading to very low transition rates from primary to secondary.

PENs intervention

PEN conducted training in local resource mobilization laying an emphasis on decentralised funds. Skills on advocacy, lobbying and networking were one of the major components of this community training. The main focus was to enlighten community members on the available resources locally and how they can tap on them.

Result

After the trainings the community developed proposals and forwarded to CDF committee for funding. They also organised a local fundraising event and the money raised was used to start the school construction.According to the report given by Paul Kilote the school environmental club patron, the number of boys and girls joining secondary has increased. Income levels have ALSO increased since farm products have ready market in the school. Creation of employment opportunities and finally drop out cases reduced by a great margin.

Community Environmental Walk – Kalama

Kalama division in Machakos has been facing various environmental challenges such as deforestation, soil erosion, and sand harvesting, all leading to environmental degradation. However, the issue of commercial sand harvesting has been one of major problems leading to drying of streams, damage of access roads, loss of agricultural land and other social problems such as drug abuse and prostitution in the area. This called the community members to come together and have their voice heard by organizing a peaceful environmental walk in the area with a clarion call of "our sand our water". With over 100 participants, the activity was meant to sensitize the community and other leaders on the need to have rational utilization of environmental resources such as sand for their benefit and for future generations.

After the awareness, community members agreed not to allow any commercial sand harvesting in the area. It would only be allowed for subsistence use, such as construction of community projects. As a way of reclaiming degraded sites, community members planned to get involved through establishing community tree nurseries and organizing tree planting campaigns. This was a clear sign of community participation and cohesion to enhance smooth development.

Members of Kalama carrying posters during the environmental walk

CSO Effectiveness: Good Programming

The first article of this series suggested "CSO Effectiveness" is the result of successfully managing both internal and external factors: factors controlled by CSOs (internal factors) and those largely outside the control of the CSOs (external factors). This article elaborates on a critical internal factor; effective CSO programming; in particular, the potential of CSOs to pursue sustainable, locally owned development initiatives that build upon people's knowledge, needs and locally available resources. While many CSOs are comfortable reacting to donor agendas, doing so invariably leads to weak organizations and unsustainable grassroots development. CSOs have a strong, potential, competitive advantage as a result of being an integral part of local communities; this advantage should be used to develop strategies and project interventions based upon community felt needs and utilizing community resources.

Effective Programming is a central aspect of CSO Effectiveness. CSOs committed to pursuing people-centred or people-driven development understand that lasting development only takes place when the people have ownership of their development process, when they build upon their indigenous knowledge, and build upon the use of locally available resources.

On the other hand, CSOs that are driven by external priorities and donor opportunities see little relevance for coherent, people-driven, programme strategies and find it difficult to sustain their interventions after donor withdrawal. This business-oriented approach to development tends to deliver short-term outputs rather than fundamental change. In this context 'peoples participation and empowerment' are used selectively, in a few steps of the project cycle, and within tight time lines. Such approaches rarely lead to effective programming.

Key Elements of People-Driven Development include: Community Based Needs and Resource Assessment; Community Determined Problem Identification; Community Consensus on Appropriate Solutions; Joint Planning, Budgeting, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation; and Community Learning Lessons that inform their future development initiatives. The role of 'outsiders' in the development process is to release the people's innate potentials; it is to enable them to understand their poverty and grasp the resources they have (and those available to them) to change their own lives for the better. In this context the development project is primarily a vehicle for empowering people to pursue their own development on an ongoing basis. The extent individual projects are sustainable, reflects the extent to which a truly developmental process is taking place.

The challenge for CSOs is to use their close relationships with communities to design people driven interventions, to learn from their effective approaches and to document the long term impact that results. This knowledge and evidence can then be used to educate and convince potential donors of the value-added of such effective development approaches.   Effectiveness and efficiency must be viewed in the long term and value given not only to short term results, but also to the community's ability to sustain those results, replicate similar development processes and access more local resources to support their ongoing development. Cost/benefit analyses on community impact must also include: institutional strengthening, environmental regeneration and protection, and the protection of human rights.

Effective CSOs need to articulate their development philosophy, live by their agreed organizational values and pursue their own strategies. In this way they can start where communities are at and enable them to build upon their past experience. If their strategies and governance are strong they will be also be empowered to negotiate with potential donors on an equal basis and find ways to fit donor expectations into their own implementation designs.

John R. Batten,
Executive Director, PEN