IMPROVING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN THROUGH PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Regional Intermediate Workshop Held

CCGD Hosted an intermediate workshop for the ongoing regional research project: 'Supporting Business Opportunities for Rural Women in East and Southern Africa': the case of Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya in Nairobi on 5th and 6th March 2018. The meeting brought together representatives from the respective country research partners, the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) Uganda, The Institute of Environmental Studies (IES) Zimbabwe, and development partner (IDRC), the CCGD board, EACSOF Kenya, county government technical officers and farmer group members from Kenya’s study areas in Baringo, Kwale and Bungoma Counties.

This longitudinal action research study aims to support economic empowerment of rural women in agriculture in East and Southern Africa, through identification and promotion of viable rural business enterprises.

Some Women group activities in Zimbabwe

The purpose of the meeting was to provide: an overview of the progress, highlights of the status of the project and the points of synergy among the three research countries.
Professor Njogu Waita of Chuka University made remarks on behalf of CCGD board in which he pledged continued support to action research initiatives with county partners.

Dr. Paul Okwi of IDRC made closing remarks in which he urged the researchers not to stop at the report on findings but to engage policy makers and implementers with evidence from the findings.

**Kwale Women Groups New Dawn for Business**

Women belonging to New Lamkani Women Group in Kwale County have begun a new phase in poultry farming. They have previously engaged in group poultry farming with minimal benefits due to limited skills in poultry management and low production that could not meet existing market demand.

This was evidenced in the project baseline survey which established that low production, lack of finances, poor marketing and failure to give agriculture a business dimension among others as the challenges women in rural areas face in their agricultural initiatives. CCGD with county government coordination has supplied each of the women farmers with seed chicks.

The women poultry farmers took loans from their table banking contributions and bought growers mash as feeds for the seed chicken. The growers mash is expected to increase the weight of the chicken and subsequently their sale price.

This action research collaboration is supporting county government initiatives by building the capacity of beneficiaries and further linking them up with new clients also under the county government support.

Kwale county government extension staff are supported to undertake post training follow-up with the poultry farmers on chicken management and marketing. The project will be handed over to the county government of Kwale at the end of the research period in October 2018 with policy recommendations on how to improve it in order to enhance its sustainability and possibly upscaling to new farmers.

CCGD trained the Sinyati, Nacham Ngare and Teachers Lobby Group women beekeepers in November 2017 with a view to encouraging them to increase production on individual units but pool their production and engage in group marketing to meet market demand for larger volumes.

The women currently produce low quantities of pure honey that is in high demand but they can only satisfy local markets and do not benefit from better paying external markets.

Under the partnership arrangement, CCGD facilitated provision of additional hives while the Baringo county government extension officers gave technical
support. Women who had shown production initiative by individually financing purchase of more hives were motivated by being supplied with two extra hives from the project.

Encouraging diversification of products through value addition has been an integral part of this action research initiative. **Sinyati Women group** has taken this up and are producing milking serve, body jelly, and cough syrup from the honey and by-products for the local market. The expectation is that they will be able to continue increasing production and improving the quality of the products to enable them access outer markets.

**Insecurity & Climate Change Challenge Livelihoods of Women in Baringo**

**Residents of MaKutani in Baringo County run after a truck on June 19, 2014 after eight houses were burnt down by attackers suspected to be from a neighboring community** PHOTO/JARED NYATAYA NATION

Baringo County has for a long time been troubled with insecurity issues emanating from wanton banditry related to competition for the increasingly scarce resources. Pastures are dwindling while unpredictable weather patterns, drought and erratic floods complicate the picture. A culture of cattle rustling to restock after periods of drought or floods means the resident **Ilchamus, Pokot, Turkana and Tugen communities** are constantly in conflict that often escalates into violence.

Insecurity affects women disproportionately as it interferes with their progress at engaging in none traditional (for women) activities such as bee-keeping. The hives they have invested in either as groups or through support from well-wishers are many a time destroyed by bandits from hostile neighboring communities during such periods.

There were attacks in the Makutani area in May 2017 which left some dead, scores injured, hives destroyed among other destructions caused. Specifically, **Sinyati women group** lost 11 of the 15 hives they had. In this regard, CCGD (provided funds for purchase of replacement hives).

Even while CCGD was distributing the hives, there was disquiet in Marigat town as 2 people suspected to be from neighboring West Pokot were killed in a retaliatory attack. The distribution activity had to be carried out in the Sub-County office of Ministry of Agriculture which also houses the police station. This was to secure the safety of the women farmers and other parties involved in the exercise.

As part of the overall project strategy to deal with male resistance, women have had to work with “supportive men” to ensure fair play in harvesting as well as support from their spouses and other relatives to conduct the activity. **Nacham Ngare** women group members reported that their husbands contribute towards their savings and loans in the table banking and allow them to attend the project meetings. **Sinyati** women group also said they enjoy the support of their spouses.
Some members of one of the women groups have however made an effort to learn and apply honey harvesting skills that they are using to do the harvesting themselves against cultural expectations and as a result avoiding dependence and conflict. It is expected that the example set by these women will enable more women to overcome cultural fears related to harvesting of bees and engage in it much more.

Women within the research cohort have also had to grapple with financing sources since inputs needed means increased investments. The group initiated table banking in 2017. Members meet once a month, contribute shares and take loans with the latter paid at a 10 percent interest. Members say there have been no cases of default. The group members have reported that the money they borrow has benefited them immensely with regard to buying farming inputs and catering for investments in dairy.

**Male Gender Champions**

One of the immediate impediments to the women dairy farmers at increasing production is the limited access they have to family resources- in particular land. Land is traditionally owned, controlled and inherited by men. Women have access to it as wives and daughters or sisters. Even widows still have to consult their in-laws or mature sons on matters land.

Discrimination against women in land matters largely remains the case in spite of progressive constitutional and legal provisions that have been buttressed by favorable policy framework and relatively women friendly affirmative measures.

The research project adopted a strategy of working with men “champions for gender equality” to reach out to fellow men in general but in particular spouses and close relatives of the women in the research to explain objectives and get their buy-in. The champions reach out to men/families that present specific problems to the women or in cases where she may need something such as access to additional land to increase production. Good results have been noted with some women getting access to more land for cattle feeds.

**Feasibility of Partnerships with Government Agencies**

The ongoing participatory action research was premised on a sustainability model where interventions are based on real time needs and project initiatives that arose from the same. It anchored itself to project activities that already had the recognition and support of county governments and active engagement of respective women groups sampled by the study. This means that most of the activities would have been undertaken even without the additional interventions of the action research project.

To date, partnership with technical departments of respective County Governments has served women participants very well as they have realized increased focused support to their income generating activities. The project has enabled county officials to access additional resources to do on-farm visits and
inspections of activities undertaken by women and give timely support.

Ultimately the partnership is intended to facilitate evidence based reflection on respective project initiatives and articulation of policy briefs that will change the way county governments engage on similar projects for the better, using lessons learned from the ongoing research.

It is also expected that respective counties will allocate more resources to similar initiatives in a more cost efficient manner since policy makers and planners will have learned from the action research experiences and outcomes be more precise in design for similar groups of stakeholders trying to transition from subsistence farming.

**SUPPORTING COUNTIES TO LEGISLATE, ENACT POLICIES AND PROVIDE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT INITIATIVES AGAINST SGBV**

**Progress in adoption of County SGBV Prototype Bill**

CCGD collaborated with the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), county officials of State Department of Gender Affairs (SDGA) and county governments of Kwale, Wajir, Baringo and Bungoma under the Jamii Thabiti project to develop a prototype bill on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

The bill proposes funding and institutional mechanisms at county level to support SGBV initiatives on a sustainable basis. It has provisions for counties to: establish and support One Stop Gender Violence Centers at County/Sub-County and Referral Hospitals; establish and support Shelters/Safe Houses; support research units to conduct regular studies and store/utilize the data; develop monitoring and evaluation framework towards the Prevention of and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Counties. Further, the bill guides on the formation and establishment of avenues of addressing SGBV at the County level. Most importantly the bill proposes county budgetary allocation to support these initiatives that are very key in addressing SGBV.

Target Counties have domesticated the prototype bill to reflect their local contexts. Bungoma County has included the role of the Gender Technical Working Group (GTWG) which has members of CSOs and private sector in the expectation that responsibilities will be better managed using a multi sector approach.

There is commendable synergy between government officials and members of CSOs. Respective County Assemblies and GTWGs are counting on these synergy to popularize the bill during public participation so that it has critical support from stakeholders and the general population who are expected to spearhead awareness raising support throughout the legislative and implementation process.

**Gender Technical Working Groups (GTWG) Take Shape**

A section of the Bungoma GTWG & CCGD staff, from left: Juma,– Gender & Culture officer, Kabuchai Sub-county, Ag. Chief officer Gender & Culture - Sella Mutsotsa, County Director Gender Development – Moses Chebonya, Milka - CCGD, Gladys Situma – County Welfare officer, John Owegi CCGD, Alice Wafula – County Director Culture.

Members of Nakuru GTWG take group picture with NGEC and CCGD staff at a capacity building workshop in Naivasha in 2017.
Modelled on the multisector National GBV Working Group hosted by NGEC, county GTWGs are at different stages of development in most of the counties. CCGD and NGEC with Jamii Thabiti program support and SDGA county officials provide technical resources towards ensuring constitution and sustainability of GTWGs in selected counties.

Members of Wajir GTWG take photo with NGEC & CCGD staff in a capacity building workshop in Wajir 2018

CCGD/NGEC technical support includes training on operational guidelines, SGBV concepts and ethical procedures, GTWG coordination and terms of reference and resource mobilization.

**Jamii Thabiti Program: Programatic Umbrella for countering Insecurity Affecting Women and Girls**

Jamii Thabiti is a UKAID/DFID funded programme that is managed by Coffey International. It aims to improve community security by reducing criminal violence, inter-communal violence and violence against women and girls (VAWG) through three thematic areas:

- Policing, Security and VAWG Mitigation. Jamii Thabiti engages authorities, service providers and CSOs at national and county levels. The program management signed an MOU with NGEC and CCGD (technical resource partner) on the VAWG mitigation thematic area. Under the partnership CCGD/NGEC partnership is working with County Governments to build their capacity at understanding and implementing national legal policy framework on SGBV as well as assisting them to develop county specific policies and laws aimed towards response to and prevention of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

- CCGD conducted a desk study on the status of SGBV legal and policy frameworks in Kenya as a precursor to related interventions. A publication from the findings:
The Status of Sexual and Gender Based Violence Policies and Laws in Kenya (2016) was launched by NGEC.

To support implementation of SGBV sector policy guidelines, Jointly with NGEC, and the office of Public Prosecutor (ODPP) CCGD facilitated workshops that equipped prosecutors with updated knowledge and skills on prosecuting cases of SGBV.

CCGD also facilitated NGEC led National GBV Working Group process of conducting baseline research and developing Guidelines on protection of survivors of SGBV in Safe Houses.

The draft was subjected to validation by a selected group of stakeholders with expertise on the subject matter in February 2018. Views and comments were accommodated in the revised final draft of the guidelines in readiness for publication. It is envisaged that the guidelines on safe houses will be instrumental in ensuring allegiance to accepted standards and ethical practices in the management and safety of survivors.

**FACILITATING CSOS PUSH PEOPLE CENTERED EAC REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

**Hosting/Overseeing Management of East African Civil Society Forum (EACSO) Secretariat**

CCGD continued to carry out its responsibilities as the host organization for EACSOF. Among activities facilitated in the immediate past include completion of a research: Facilitating Citizen Participation in Port Reforms and Integration Process, validation of the findings and publication of the final report on the EACSOF website. The findings inform advocacy work by EACSOF Kenya through the Mombasa based CSO Port Platform.

Other EACSOF-K activities include facilitation of the National Dialogue Committee (NDC) meetings in preparation for the 2018 EAC Secretary Generals Forum and EACSOF Meetings on the Legislative Environment for Civil Society Organizations in the East African Region. EACSOF is lobbying the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) to partner on developing a bill that shall protect CSO space in East Africa.

EACSOF members from the region at CSO space workshop in Nairobi 2017

Joint preparations with Ministry of East African Community, and Northern Corridor Development for the 2018 National Dialogue Forum and the EAC Secretary General's Forum are ongoing.

Kenya Validates the Draft EAC Gender Policy 2017

The State Department of Gender Affairs and Ministry of East African Community, and Northern Corridor Development mobilized government stakeholders while EACSOF targeted CSOs and private sector organizations to send delegates to participate in the validation of the draft EAC Gender Policy in March 2018. As the EACSOF thematic lead for gender issues CCGD was tasked with leading the consolidation of the CSO position and negotiating to have it reflected in the final policy document.
AMPLIFYING VOICES OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN 2018 AU ANTI-CORRUPTION YEAR

Planned activities include: a special session of the National GBV Working Group to discuss effects of corruption on women and girls and organize for a public demonstration in Nairobi to spearhead awareness and a regional conference on “Impact of Corruption on Women and Girls in EAC” under the theme: “women and girls against corruption”.

As EACSOF (K) host organization, CCGD ensures program and administration oversight, fund raising, supervision of secretariat staff, managing finances and timely program and finance reporting to donors and partners.

Women and Girls Seek to Have their Distinct Voice heard in the Marking of AU 2018 Anti Corruption Year

EACSOF(K) partnering with its Anti Corruption thematic Lead- Transparency International and CCGD on gender in partnership with Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) through the regional Girls Advocacy Program (GAA) program to implement a series of activities to mark the 2018 AU anti corruption year.

The main idea of the regional conference is to highlight forms of corruption that affect women and girls disproportionately such as sexual exploitation, but are often not the focus of anti-corruption campaigns. Awareness on such forms is also is also low.

CCGD Diary Highlights

JUNE- Mombasa CSO Port Platform Workshop on Enhancing Participation of the Port Community in Security Arrangements at the Mombasa Port and Adjacent Areas (Mombasa)

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