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# Welcome to the PENetwork NEWSLETTER

We launch this newsletter with a high degree of expectation.

This newsletter is being launched together with our new interactive web-site. Greater interaction and communication between network members will provide additional value to members of this previously rather loose fraternity.

Our high expectation is that many of you will participate in sharing your experiences, lessons and issues with other members of the network, and in so doing keep this newsletter full of new ideas and inspirational thoughts that enable all of us to continue improving our organizations, programmes and impact.

However, we will ensure this newsletter doesn't become a one-way means of communication between PEN and its network members. In this regard I hope you will find time and desire to send us news of recent events, case studies on your work and organization, and ideas for improving and strengthening this network.

The launch of this newsletter coincides with great and rapid change in Kenya, a time in which civil society organizations and networks have major roles to play in ensuring that the people's views and aspirations for a new Kenya are taken into account by decision makers. Following the introduction of the new constitution will be a swathe of new legislation in almost every aspect of governance and economic, social and cultural development. While civil society has many voices these must all be well informed and clearly articulated.

A major role of Civil Society is to ensure people are well aware of their inalienable human rights and that they are organized to defend them and ensure they are reflected in the rule of law and the distribution of national resources. Civil Society also has to ensure that people hold their leaders at all level accountable for their actions and that the people placed in positions of trust and responsibility,

are equal to these tasks.

The largest number of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) exist at the grass roots levels, in urban and rural communities, where Kenyans have organized themselves groups to tackle some of their own priority development challenges. Such energy, commitment and enterprise should be encouraged by the state and we should help each other to ensure that we get the greatest benefits and impact out of these initiatives.

No matter what your role or nature you are welcome to join this network and explore together how we can continue the continuous challenge of poverty eradication.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank Prime Bank Kenya for sponsoring our launch event.

## Plant Trees, Get Water & Feed the

November- December 2009 was a busy season for Community Based Organisations in the greater Machakos district and the PEN staff team. PEN staff, the CBOs , Provincial Administration, the Forestry Department and selected schools in the district took part in a massive tree planting project around public centers such as schools, churches, dispensaries and water points. The two months exercise was aimed at promoting forestation on our farms, community institutions and public lands within the district as a way of protecting, and conserving the environment. The project was also part of the global seven billion tree campaign.

During the year PEN supported 66 self-help groups with tools, seeds and polythene papers to enable them to grow seedlings for planting during the campaign months. PEN also worked with the Forestry Department and the Ministry of Agriculture in training these groups in proper nursery management and the need for planting trees for environmental re-generation and promoting district food security.



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The District Commissioner for Machakos, Mr. Bernard Kinyua and Kalama DO Mr. Macharia Njiru graced the district tree planting day in Kalanzoni, Lumbwa location. In his address the DC emphasized the need of taking care of the environment for future generations and how every Kenyan should participate in the noble duty of jealously conserving our environment. A total of 14,497 trees were planted during this one day and by close of the campaign period a total of 286,731 trees had been planted by the twelve CBOs PEN was partnering with. Based on previous results we expect a survival rate of 80%.

One of the key lessons coming out of tree planting campaign is that communities are now appreciating tree planting as an income generating activity for individuals and groups. For example after training on environmental conservation and value addition, Kyaka self-help group in Kalama CBO sold tree seedlings worth Ks. 47,000 in the two months. "We could not imagine trees could give us such money; and now each one of us received Ks. 1000 to buy seeds and fertilizers. Other groups from the surrounding areas have come to learn from us the magic of getting this amount of money in only one season," reported Sarah Mukumie a member of the group.

The campaign has also increased awareness and motivation on planting trees within the districts to both participant groups and non participants. "I am a traditional birth attendant and have really benefited from the training PEN has been offering to the lia itune CBO. For the last two years now my home is covered by fruits and other agro forestry trees after learning their importance" reported Elizabeth Mwikali Mbindyo of lia itune CBO.

The participating CBOs, Provincial Administration, NGOs and other government ministries have committed themselves to doubling the number of trees planted 2010 and have pledged to organize the campaign in two seasons (March-April) and (November-December). In 2010 corporate sponsors are to be brought on board as well as individual business people in major towns of the district to support the project.



## The CSO Challenge – Being Effective

### Why does it matter?

If you are reading this article you probably work for or support a not-for-profit organization or civil society organization (CSO) somewhere in East Africa. Whether you work for a CSO, support a CSO or both; it would be surprising if you were not asking yourself whether your contribution is really making the impact you desire. Are your contributions really delivering added value to the people or the cause reflected by the purpose of your chosen CSO?

Unlike for-profit companies, CSOs do not make profits or offer dividends to shareholders. The quality of products and services delivered by a for-profit company are judged by the market place; good companies grow and prosper, bad companies close down. Judging the performance of CSOs is not so clear cut.

CSOs come in all shapes and sizes, from self-help groups and community based organizations (CBOs) in your village or neighbourhood, to Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) registered nationally, and multi-national or International NGOs. This non-profit sector accounts for a large part foreign direct investment to the region and significant levels of employment creation. It also accounts for the provision of large parts of national education and health services; investments in development research; facilitation of cultural, spiritual and social development; and is a major contributor to the advancement of our god-given human rights. Not to forget humanitarian assistance in time of man-made and natural disasters.

The effectiveness of CSOs is therefore a critical component of national and regional development.

### What is CSO effectiveness?

CSO effectiveness depends upon two sets of factors, those controlled by the CSO itself (internal factors) and those largely outside the control of individual CSOs (external factors). His Highness the Aga Khan referred to the quest to influence and establish a more conducive and facilitating set of external factors, as the creation of an 'enabling environment' for CSO effectiveness. Today very many CSOs are working together to achieve this goal on a global basis.

### Taking control of your environment!

CSOs can only thrive and make their optimum contribution to development if a political, cultural, social and economic environment exists that encourages and facilitates self-determined action by the people. In some countries CSOs are deliberately discouraged, or limited in what they can contribute; the legal framework may be overly controlling, or the national security apparatus too invasive. On the other hand insecurity, corruption, economic stagnation and weak governance, all undermine performance of an effective civil society.

Resourcing of CSOs is also a critical factor in determining CSO effectiveness. Levels, types and conditions applied to both internal and external resourcing have a direct bearing on CSO

effectiveness. If there is no culture of local giving and no incentives to promote it there will be an over-reliance on external aid. External aid has great bearing on the growth and strength of civil society. Where external aid excludes local CSOs and gives preference to international and multi-national actors; where such aid is expensive to access and account for; where such aid promotes dependency and supports the entrenchment of corruption and bad governance; such resources actually work against effective development.

Collectively, CSOs play a significant role in positioning their sector in the eyes of the public. CSO networking is fundamental to the creation of a voice for civil society, a credible reputation for an accountable and transparent sector, and a sector that is capable of effective self-regulation.

### Getting your house in order

The primary determinant of CSO effectiveness is the level of competence, commitment, character and creativity in the leadership of CSOs. 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions' and there is no question that even the most devoted individuals also require qualified and experienced workers and strong accountability systems if they are serious about CSO effectiveness. There is certainly no room for self-centred individuals masquerading as CSOs to pray on the good-will of others for their personal political and economic objectives. CSOs are just as vulnerable as other companies and agencies to criminals and criminal activity, and diligence must always be observed to prevent such practices.

Competence is required in both the design of appropriate interventions and the professional implementation of agreed plans and budgets. Commitment is needed to ensure CSOs perform at the highest levels and use their scarce resources for optimum impact. Character, integrity and honesty is fundamental to CSO growth and sustainability. Creativity is always required in dealing with the dynamics of social change.

While programme implementation and financial accountability receive most attention when assessing CSO effectiveness, there are three other major determinants of CSO effectiveness: CSO governance, CSO leadership and CSO sustainability that have huge influence over CSO effectiveness.

*In future articles! We will explain how to take control of these determinants and become an effective CSO.*

Get in touch!

In your opinion, what are the 3 most important factors affecting a CSO's internal capacity?

email: [comments@penkenya.org](mailto:comments@penkenya.org) or go to our network discussion forum.

## Reviewing the NGO Act. 2<sup>nd</sup> CSO Leaders' Workshop.

On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2010 the Poverty Eradication Network organised a half-day workshop for CSO leaders on the status of the review of the 1990 NGO Coordination Act. This was a follow-up to the CSO Leaders' workshop held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 whose aim was to agree on the involvement of the civil society sector in the review of the NGO Act.

This workshop aimed to re-engage CSO leaders in the participatory review of the NGO Act and generate consensus on material to be included in the first draft of a framework document for consultations with CSOs.

42 CSO leaders attended the meeting, including: representatives from 9 regions, 12 CSO networks, the team from the NGO Coordination Board, two representatives from the Charity Commissioners of England and Wales team (who funded this event) and the PEN support team. Mr. Eliud Wakwabubi, PAMFORK, was the meeting moderator.

After providing a status report on action taken since the last CSO leaders' meeting, future consultation plans were presented and discussed. Workshop participants advised that the number of regional consultations should be increased from 8 to 16 and the workshops expanded from 1-day to 2-day events. It was suggested that the PEN secretariat send out information and education materials before the regional workshops so participants could come better prepared. It was also suggested that the CSO leaders' group be expanded and activated.

A full workshop report and the CSO consultation document will appear on this web site by the end of this month and CSO leaders will be invited to participate in an on-line discussion about the revised Act. The workshop evaluation was overwhelmingly positive.

**Re-engage CSO leaders in the participatory review of the NGO Act and generate consensus on material to be included in the first draft of a framework document for consultations with CSOs.**

## Want to be successful at change?

In a "A force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management" (1990) John Kotter identified **EIGHT** reasons why change processes can fail:

- ◇ Allowing too much complacency
- ◇ Failing to build a substantial coalition
- ◇ Understanding the need for a clear vision
- ◇ Failing to clearly communicate the vision
- ◇ Permitting roadblocks against the vision
- ◇ Not planning and getting short-term wins
- ◇ Declaring victory too soon
- ◇ Not anchoring changes in corporate culture

To be successful at change processes, Kotter created the following eight steps to change model:

1. Establish a sense of urgency
2. Create a coalition
3. Develop a clear vision
4. Share the vision
5. Empower people to clear obstacles
6. Secure short-term wins
7. Consolidate and keep moving
8. Anchor the change

Kotter concluded that it is **crucial to follow the eight phases of change in the above exact sequence.**

**Want to know more about successful change processes?** Before you start, get in touch with PEN's Management Services Team.

ianv@penkenya.org

## PENetwork Profile

### COMMUNITY RESEARCH IN ENVIRONMENT & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES (CREADIS)

#### Who are we?

Community Research in Environment and Development Initiatives (CREADIS) is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to empowering communities by building their capacities to enable them become self-reliant and drive their own development process. It was established in 2000 and registered by the Kenyan NGO Coordination Board in the same year. CREADIS is based in Bungoma town and mandated to operate in the Western and North Rift Valley provinces of Kenya.

Its vision is "for the people of Western Kenya to achieve sustainable development" and its mission is "to enable communities to mobilize resources to achieve and sustain a better quality of life for all." The organisation has an overall objective of reducing poverty and empowering the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable communities in order for them to achieve sustainable livelihoods and live dignified lives by building their capacities to enable them exploit their full potential and drive their own development process.

#### What we do?

CREADIS works with a number of different partners in order to achieve its overall objective. It works in four programme areas; Community Health and Nutrition; Governance, Gender and Advocacy; Sustainable Agriculture and Environmental Management and Promotion of Income Generating Activities. It is also involved in Research, Training and Consultancy.

Currently the projects we have underway are:

**Enhancing Community Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) in Bungoma District** a project aimed at improving the living standards and development of OVC through holistic support, including supporting the caregivers and guardians of OVC.

**Building Local Democracy and Making Local Government Accountable.** This project strives to ensure that Citizens especially the marginalised like women and youth increasingly benefit politically, socially and economically from services of decentralized line ministries and local authorities by 2012.

**The Biodiversity Conservation through Conversion of Sugarcane Waste (Baggase) into Charcoal Briquettes as Alternative Fuel** and its objectives are to reign in the prevention of forest degradation in designated areas, provide alternative fuel for use in the ear-marked areas, River bank protection and silting cutback.

In collaboration with the International Potato Centre (CIP), Kenya Agricultural Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Farmers Groups and other NGOs) CREADIS is undertaking a project called **Transfer and Dissemination of Proven and Emerging Agricultural Technologies in Orange fleshed Sweetpotato (DONATA)**, a four year project. The goal of this project is, through applying the best bet technologies, improve household nutrition, food security and incomes.

Also in collaboration with the International Potato Centre (CIP), APHIA II, PATH and Researchers), called the **Sweet Potato for Security and Health in Africa (SASHA) Western Kenya PoCP** project was also commissioned in October 2009. The long term goal of this project is also to improve food security, nutrition and incomes, but with a research component, and targeting pregnant women and children aged 6 months - 2 years, with involvement of health centres / facilities where the women go to the clinics.

These two projects are promoting the Orange Fleshed Sweet Potato (OFSP) varieties which contain high amounts of Vitamin A.

CREADIS is working on a UNIFEM funded project called **Enhancing Women Participation in Decision Making and Access to Service Delivery** and the goal for this project is to

champion for equal (and active) representation in local governance and development and gender mainstreaming in all spheres of development.

#### Latest News from CREADIS

During the year just ended (2009) CREADIS noted a high demand from the communities it operates from for continuation of their projects in those areas as well as starting up of new ones. The communities disclosed that the projects were helping them get empowered to driving their own development process hence lessening poverty.

CREADIS also received a communications expert volunteer from its partner organisation MS Kenya. This volunteer is generally called an Inspirator and will be with CREADIS for six months helping to improve the organisation's communication department as well as helping the organisation in utilising the media in their projects. Consequently, development of CREADIS website has been initiated and is being developed right now. Pretty soon CREADIS is going to be on the web!

All the donors that supported CREADIS last year (2009), have committed to continue supporting the organization in 2010. The key donors that CREADIS is currently working with are: **AED CAP- Kenya, Stephen Lewis Foundation, MS-Kenya, UNIFEM, AMREF (Maanisha) and International Potato Centre (CIP)**. The organization is also waiting for TOWA funds from the **National AIDS Control Council (NACC)** to undertake a project at district level, aimed at prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, targeting sex workers, their partners and long distance transporters

Alongside donors, other partners and collaborators that CREADIS is or has worked with, the Poverty Eradication Network (PEN) since starting the partnership in 2002, has been walking side by side with us in building our capacity to offer better services and build community and institutional sustainability.