

Featured Articles

- PEN Management Services
[page 2](#)
- COMMUNITY BASED FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE
[page 2](#)
- COMMUNITY BASED FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE
[page 2](#)
- PEN CBP Case Study
[page 4](#)
- EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF GRANT MAKERS (EAAG)
[page 4](#)
- "VIWANGO" Is here!
[page 5](#)
- A new NGO Act
[page 6](#)
- CSO Effectiveness: Good Governance
[page 7](#)

Welcome to the PENetwork NEWSLETTER

This is the second edition of the PEN Network quarterly newsletter.

The last quarter has been full of exciting developments at PEN. Community empowerment and grassroots institutional strengthening in Lower Eastern region has led to a highly successful community advocacy campaign to reduce the negative impact on the environment and natural resources of irresponsible sand harvesting in that area. Good rains, effective soil protection, and improved marketing have also enabled many farmers to increase production and income levels. Examination results in local primary schools continue to show improvement after improved governance and management of Primary Schools in the area. Local community groups and CBOs have continued to access local development funds through mechanisms such as the CDF as their competencies and commitment to development for all have been increased.

There has also been good progress with the CSO networking programmes PEN has been supporting. Development of plans for the launch and staffing of VIWANGO, Kenya's first independent CSO standard setting institution, is now complete, just awaiting receipt of the registration certificate from the Registrar of Companies. The CSO Reference Group has now completed the production of a framework document to guide CSO inputs into the revised NGO Act and a CSO advocacy campaign has been developed.

PEN has received a great deal of helpful and constructive feedback about its new interactive website and in this respect more changes are planned in the near future to enhance interactive components and further simplify content.

One highlight of the PEN management services programme during the last quarter was a training programme for governors, managers and staff of more than 25 CSOs from all parts of Kenya supported by the Embassy of Finland. The five-day training covered governance, leadership, change management, fundraising, and financial sustainability. Once again systemic weaknesses in CSO governance became apparent and greater awareness was developed on how good governance practice can assure organisational sustainability.

We wish all our readers a productive quarter and trust Kenyans will make an informed choice during the forth coming referendum and mark a new start for Kenya to rebuild a growing, developing, just and equitable society in which every Kenya stands to benefit from their God given talents.

John Batten CEO PEN Kenya

PEN Management Services

PEN's Management Services is a specialist service for the Civil Society Organisations in Africa. We can help you with

- Governance
- Leadership and Change
- Resource Mobilisation
- Strategy and Planning
- Evaluating capacity and results

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Contact us today to

discuss how we can

help with the most

important issues

affecting your

organisations

effectiveness. As a

member of the

PENetwork you are

entitled to discount

rates. Quote

'newsletter discount'.

PEN Management Services

- Organisational Assessments
- Teambuilding
- Financial management
- Proposal development

We believe that CSOs and their leaders deserve professional, cost effective and effective support. Our development professionals bring an impressive depth of experience from working with a broad range of organisations and leaders. They are committed to providing a cost efficient service to help you achieve the impact and sustainability you need to make social change a reality.

Don't take our word for it, hear from our customers.

"As the CEO of the Dhow Countries Music Academy (DCMA) as well as a board member of Busara Promotions, I have had the pleasure several times to work together with PEN for the sake of organizational development. The workshops were excellent, well prepared and very professionally managed and delivered. The consultancy had a great impact on the development of the organizations and helped staff and board members to grow in their roles. The level of expertise provided by PEN is very high. Furthermore all of the consultants are genuinely interested in the development of the organization and offered guidance and support well above and beyond their call of duty. I very highly recommend their services to anyone interested in receiving professional guidance and support for organizational development."

Hilda Kiel, CEO
Dhow Countries Music Academy
Zanzibar

COMMUNITY BASED FIELD WORK EXPERIENCE

*Read about our experience from our work with the
Community as shared by one of our field staff*

For the last five years I have worked for PEN as Project Officer in the lower Eastern region. Within this period, I have observed the practical transformation of communities

From depending on external plans and aid to initiating their own projects by utilizing the locally based resources.


From traditional methods of farming to modern methods suitable for the areas environmental pattern which have improved the income levels within the region.


The key to success is the strengthening of community institutions by improving governance structures and capacities.

Our approach

My team and I have been strengthening the capacity of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to take up the development agenda for sustainable livelihoods for their community. The peoples through their CBOs have realized that they can be change agents in various fields.

PEN's approach is to encourage communities to contribute towards any development activity happening within their area for this helps the communities to own and sustain the development projects.

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Working with PEN-the real impact

PEN has played a significant role in working with the development partners on areas of good governance, managing change, strategic planning and management and resource mobilization.

Success Stories

Wisuvie CBO

Wisuvie CBO has been involved in supporting HIV/AIDS programs in Kangundo District and since PEN established a working relationship with the organization in the year 2007, the CBO has been funded by three different partners to support the program.

The constituency Aids Control Council has funded them once with a total of Kshs 450,000, AMREF Maanisha project has funded them twice with a total grant of Kshs 880,000 and in 2010 the St Johns Community has funded the CBO with a total grant of Kshs 1,500,000. This reflects sustained fundraising capacity of the organisation.

Government-Community Partnerships in Kalama Division, Machakos

In Kalama Division, Machakos district, partnership has been developed by the local communities and the government. Communities have understood/learned to source for services from both the public and the private institutions. For example, in the year 2004 only PEN and KENDAT were involved in supporting community projects in Kalama Division compared to 2010 when seven development organizations are working with the Kalama community namely: The HCDA, FINTRAC, PROLINNOVA, KENDAT, PEN, Land Care and Partners for Progress. Most of these organizations have initiated their support after realizing that the community embraces participatory development with a strong sense of ownership.

Environmental Conservation

In Kalama division after three community tree planting campaigns and trainings on environmental management, the tree planting patterns by the community have improved and sand harvesting has been stopped. Discussions are underway on how the resource can be responsibly utilized as reported by the District Officer Mr Maina Wanjiku during a District stakeholders forum in Machakos town

**The year 2004
only PEN and KENDAT
were involved in
supporting community
projects in Kalama
Division compared
to 2010**

Challenges

We have overcome many challenges while working with the community. High expectations by some government officers and community members made our process slow. A lot of time was spent educating them on the importance of contributing towards any community project or program undertaken by an external person, many took a long time to embrace the idea.

Past experience of other organizations working in the area meant community members expected financial reward for taking part. PEN does not pay allowances so some people failed to attend our training and fora

The lower eastern region on the other hand experiences mostly long dry spells accompanied by famine and outbreak of water borne diseases such as cholera and dysentery. During the dry seasons, the environmental projects are highly affected due to water shortage and infestation of termites.

Finally-----

PEN as an organisation believes in supporting staff development.. I love working for PEN and really feel we have brought change within different communities!.

Mary Kanini, Project Officer- Machakos

PEN CBP Case Study



Kyevaluki Bee keeping Self Help Group

Background

Kyevaluki Bee keeping group started in 2005 with an aim of improving the livelihoods of the community through production of honey, a product that has been proven to be beneficial to our body system and also of income. The group started with 8 traditional hives and in 2006 introduced the modern hives which produce more honey within a short period. In 2007 the group purchased 18 modern hives (langstroth) with money from honey sales and group contributions. PEN supported the group with 18 more hives and at the moment they have a total of 52 hives.

‘Bee keeping is set to become a sustainable an income generation project for the group members which basically uses the locally available resources’.

Challenge

The traditional bee hives produces only once or atmost twice a year when the weather is right with more flowers. The quantity and quality of honey is low compared to the modern hives.

Our intervention

By training the group to produce high quality honey in large volumes, marketing has become easier. The group was supported to purchase a honey processor and a harvesting kit which solved the problem of producing low quality honey with impurities.

“Our honey has been added value through harvesting with a processor. The machine ensures safety, quality and a good price for our product. Our honey is now known from a far and we get orders even before harvesting. In a period of three months we harvest between 350-450 kilograms of honey each kilogram costing Ksh 600. It is my call to groups and individuals to invest in bee farming which requires no fertilizer, weeding or spraying-” Stephen Muswii Kavoi”



Results

A number of lessons for the future have been identified from the bee keeping group activities by the CBO and non CBO members who are now embracing bee farming. Bee keeping is set to become a sustainable an income generation project for the group members which basically uses the locally available resources. Increased income from bee farming will help them to transform their lives by educating their children, access to medical care, improved nutrition and reduce social ills such as theft.

EAST AFRICA ASSOCIATION OF GRANT MAKERS (EAAG)

And the 1st East Africa Grantmakers Conference
June 29th and 30th 2010 in Nairobi

EAAG brings together grant makers in the region with a view to identify and strengthen mechanisms of local giving, resource mobilization and the promotion of effective grant making for sustainable development.

EAAG is an initiative of a group of Trusts and Foundations working in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania who came together to form a membership organization for grant making bodies and philanthropic organizations across the region. EAAG members share a fundamental belief in the importance of nurturing a strong culture of local giving and resource mobilization in East Africa and promoting effective grant making for sustainable development. EAAG believes that we have resources in East Africa held by individuals, families, businesses and communities that can be tapped to support its development and social justice programs in a sustainable way.

EAAG is an initiative of a group of Trusts and Foundations working in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

EAAG has grown tremendously since it was founded in 2003. The Members of EAAG are spread across the East Africa region and the membership constitutes; Family Foundations and Trusts, Community Foundations, Corporate Foundations and other Grant making organizations in the region

1st East Africa Grantmakers Conference June 29th and 30th 2010 in Nairobi

Two members of staff of PEN (pictured), Mrs Judith Gondi, Finance and Administration Manager, and Mr. Thomas Kirongo, CSO Capacity Building Manager were among the many delegates to the 1st East African Grantmakers Conference organized by East African Association of Grantmakers (EAAG) held at Red Court Hotel, Nairobi on 29th and 30th June.

The Conference brought together participants from Grantmaking Community, Family Philanthropists, Corporate Foundations, Civil Society, the Academia, Government officials and individuals interested in promoting Philanthropy.

The theme of the conference was “Expanding Frontiers for Philanthropy in East Africa: Strengthening Partnership”,

The conference brought out deep and insightful reflections on the subject of African Philanthropy, and on how to strengthen partnerships between civil society, government, corporate sector and the media for the promotion of philanthropy. New development paradigms such as ‘impact Investing’ and how we could exploit opportunities for growth of social enterprises in Africa was a key discussion. Read more about the conference at www.eaag.org

EAAG is a member of PENetwork committed to building effective collaboration within civil society and improving CSO effectiveness. The outcomes from the conference are an important contribution to these critical debates in East Africa

PEN has worked closely with EAAG supporting the development of strategy, fundraising and providing training on Governance, Financial Sustainability and Fundraising and team building for Members.



“VIWANGO” Is here!

Development of plans for the launch and staffing of **VIWANGO**, Kenya’s first independent CSO standard setting institution, is now complete.

Key developments include recruiting a new CEO, branding the organisation and funding the initial work.

We await receipt of the registration certificate from the Registrar of Companies.

PEN acting as the Viwango Secretariat advertised for 1st **VIWANGO** CEO. The advert appeared in both ‘Daily Nation’ and ‘Standard’ newspapers. Applications are being currently reviewed.

A funding appeal for ‘**VIWANGO**’ has been launched among members of the interim board.

ActionAid, Allavida, KCDF, PACT Kenya and Plan International have given pledges to date to ensure this groundbreaking initiative gets off the ground.

PEN JOINS OTHERS IN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP FOR CSOs TO POSITIVELY ENGAGE IN THE NGO COORDINATION ACT REVIEW PROCESS

A new NGO Act

Since independence, NGOs and other types of CSOs have complemented and cooperated with government in the delivery of services. Hence, in 1990, the NGO Coordination Act No. 19 of 1990 was passed "to make provision for the registration and coordination of NGOs in Kenya and for connected purposes".

The context in which the Act was promulgated was, however, highly charged with mistrust and suspicions between the government and NGOs. After the government proposed and passed the NGO Coordination Act, NGOs reacted strongly to the law. The latter claimed that the law's provisions were not enabling but aimed at stifling and controlling the sector. A frenzied series of consultations in the sector resulted in amendments, which were later effected as part of the law by the government. However, many in the government and NGO sector later questioned the efficacy of having a law on NGOs in the absence of a national policy on NGOs.

It was not until July 2006, that Parliament adopted Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2006 on NGOs, which was aimed to enhance regulation of the sector amongst other things. The Sessional Paper calls for a new NGO law. It also recognizes NGOs' contribution to the economy; emphasizes the government's commitment to engage the NGO sector in development and policy making; expresses the Government's expectation that NGOs will operate more transparently; gives a new, wider, definition of NGOs. However, while the sessional paper recognizes the role of NGO Council and NGO Coordination Board it proposes new mechanisms for better regulation and coordination of NGOs in Kenya.

In 2008, the Government of Kenya requested the NGOs Coordination Board to lead a process of reviewing the current NGO Coordination Act, in line with Sessional Paper No. 1, 2006. The Sessional Paper anticipates and proposes a comprehensive review of legislation governing the operations of the NGOs sector.

Civil Society Voice

In 2009, out of the realization that the review of the NGO Act was being pursued by the NGO Board with no clear nor organized engagement with the civil society organizations across the country, PEN decided to approach a number of like minded organizations who were interested in seeing that CSOs are involved in all stages in any initiative that will lead to a new legislation that will affect them.

The promoters of this initiative hence put together a group of civil society leaders and experts to provide the leadership for this process. The group is referred to as the "CSO Reference Group".

This group meets once every month. The role of the CSO Reference group is to provide the face of the review process, lead the CSO consultation process on the review of the NGO Act, develop and implement the strategy for this review including advocacy, media and communications strategy and to undertake oversight of the Secretariat which is currently housed by one of its member organizations, Poverty Eradication Network (PEN). The CSO Reference group has reached out to many stakeholders since the start of this process.

Consultation Process

The CSO Reference group has continued to pursue CSO involvement in this review through face-to-face consultation national and regional consultation meetings workshops. Two national CSO leaders' consultation fora have been held. The 1st was held on 30th September 2009 at PanAfric Hotel, the second was held on 16th February 2010. The objectives of the national consultation fora were to engage and seek support of CSO leaders in the review process and to endorse the leadership of the process.

The eight regional CSO leader's consultation meetings were held in Kisumu (for North Nyanza region), Kakamega (for Western region), Narok (for South Rift region), Eldoret (for North Rift region), Karatina (for Central Kenya Region) and Garissa (for North Eastern), Homa Bay (for South Nyanza) and Mombasa (For South Coast). In total, the eight consultation meetings were attended by a total of 373 CSO leaders. CSOs are also engaging in this process through an on-line dialogue on this web site. We encourage all CSOs to participate in this review process either through this process, through their own networks.

The East African Association of Grant Makers (EAAG) is also leading another consultation with their members and other Trusts and Foundations, while Oxfam GB is leading consultations with the INGOs. Other networks are beginning to show some interest in this issue but we are not aware of other initiatives at this time.

CSOs across Kenya should understand that the development of new law should be of interest to each and everyone in the sector. It is not an exclusive activity to any group of individuals or organizations. In the past, it has been the trend that some CSOs leaders, who are either are misinformed or are uninformed, have been known to criticise any new initiative. We are challenging such people to now start engaging in this process by starting their own parallel processes.

CSOs should also be interested in ensuring that we get a new legislation that will really lead to a better and enabling environment for civil society in Kenya are encouraged to start their own parallel processes but ensure their voices are heard by the government and other stakeholders.

Next Steps

Based on the history of development of legislation in Kenya, the promoters of this initiative, CSO Reference Group, have decided to develop general principles for the drafting of CSO Bill. These principles have been developed based on the outputs from both the Regional CSO consultation meetings and from the two national fora. These general principles will be shared with the NGO Coordination Board for them to consider in the drafting of a new CSO Bill.

CSO Effectiveness

Good Governance

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 CSO governance, in particular ‘good governance.’ For most CSOs this is the single most important internal factor to influence CSO effectiveness.**

CSO Governance is often given short shrift by CSOs. The governance function in CSOs is frequently not understood, its potential to add value is often unappreciated and its organizational requirements seen as an unhelpful imposition by regulatory authorities. In our experience a majority of CSOs suffer from ‘poor governance’ and base their negative attitudes to governance on the resulting impact of bad practice.

Within the western democratic governance context, **‘good governance’ is underpinned by three fundamentals: roles and function, principles and ethics, and a strong profile of governance group members.**

Boards need to be clear what the governance role is and what it is not? Boards that interfere in operational management, micro-manage the CEO, or simply agree to everything requested of them are not making a valuable contribution to CSO governance. There are two main types of poor governance: the one that involves itself very little in the affairs of the CEO and the one that over-involves itself in CSO management. Boards: establish and own policy and strategic direction, provide stewardship and oversight of resources, protect the good name of the CSO and support local resource mobilization. Above all they stay informed about CSO activities and engaged in regular meetings and communication with other Board members.

Good Governance depends upon a CSO Board internalizing their roles and sticking to them,

Boards must also agree on fundamental operational principles and follow them to ensure that they do not misuse and abuse their powers, that they preserve the integrity of the CSO and that they optimize their contribution to the achievement of CSO objectives.

Good governance is underpinned by three fundamentals: roles and function, principles and ethics, and a strong profile of governance group members.

Finally, Board members must both individually and collectively display characteristics and profiles that reflect the nature, culture and ethos of the CSO. Individual Board members must have integrity, demonstrate sound leadership, commit themselves to the mission and objectives of the CSO, be good ambassadors for their organization and reflect the organization’s values in their own values. Collectively the Board should reflect a balance of its various stakeholder groups: donors, beneficiaries, professional from all relevant walks of life.

Good Governance depends upon a CSO Board internalizing their roles and sticking to them, articulating operational principles and adhering to them, and developing a team of people with integrity who provide excellent stewardship of resources, while ensuring a results-based culture.

Investing in good governance pays dividends: greater impact, easier resource mobilization, enhanced organizational reputation, and - in the longer term - organizational sustainability.

by John R. Batten, Executive Director, PEN