



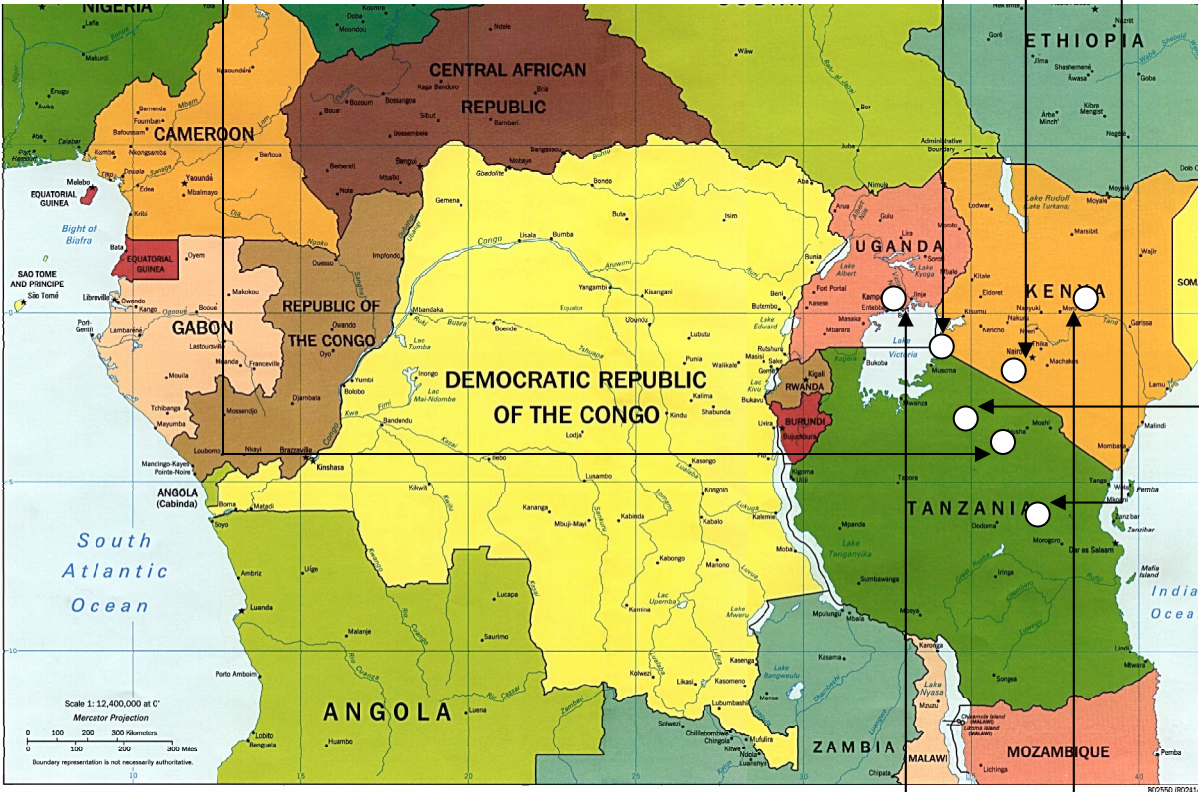
**Community-to-Community Learning Exchanges in
Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction:
Six Exchanges in Eastern Africa**

Supported by UNDP CSO Division and Equator Initiative

KENVO, IL NGWESI, and SULEDO

GROOTS Kenya, CACID

NAFRAC and ODECECO



UCOBAC, THETA, and GROOTS

Waikuka and Mama Watoto

MAA and SIMOO

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I. Background and Context

Communities play a critical role in human development and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Local government and community-level efforts are demonstrating that the MDGs can be met if the creative forces of local actors are properly harnessed. To realize this potential, new approaches to capacity development and learning must be explored and employed. Efforts to achieve the MDGs must be locally driven, cost-effective, and must foster innovation and replication.

In recent years, based on successful pilot projects in Latin America, UNDP and other partners have explored the potential of peer-to-peer local learning as a means to achieving these ends, and have been encouraged by the cost-effectiveness and impact of these approaches. In July 2003, "Learning from Community Action to Realize the MDGs: Biodiversity and HIV/AIDS", a regional workshop organized by the Equator Initiative, UNDP CSO Division, and a number of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)¹, was held in Nairobi, Kenya. More than 100 representatives of local government and community, grassroots, community-based, and indigenous peoples' organizations gathered to share experiences and practices and to forge partnerships in the areas of food security, land and water management, biodiversity conservation, and HIV/AIDS.

The highly successful workshop resulted in commitments by the Equator Initiative and the CSO Division at UNDP headquarters to manage a grant facility to implement learning exchanges to continue sharing knowledge, practices, and skills. Since, the learning exchange modality has been replicated in other regions, including in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Please see annex II).

Learning exchanges act as a catalyst for peer-to-peer learning at the local and community level. Building on successful community-level practices, they encourage low-cost and high-impact exchanges of knowledge and experience. Exchanges can be organized nationally, sub-regionally, globally or thematically depending on the needs and challenges of the communities involved. While, by definition, learning exchanges are small and focused, they can be scaled up to influence policy formation and programmes.

The following report summarizes the experiences of six learning exchanges that took place between community groups from Cameroon, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The experiences highlight some of the successes and challenges as well as the lessons learned from the process. The report reflects on the management and facilitation process and outlines recommendations for a continued programme of work.

¹ Grassroots Organizations Operating in Sisterhood (GROOTS) Kenya, GROOTS International and Huairou Commission.

II. Methodology

In a workshop setting, community participants identify good practices that have potential for replication in other community contexts. Through presentations and small group discussions, participants share experiences, practices, ideas, innovations, and successes under specific areas of work. The objective is to explore how work can be supported, strengthened, and replicated. Over the course of discussions community participants identify other initiatives that offer potential for success.

Following the sharing of experiences and practices, in small working groups participants engage in a 'mapping' activity. The session provides an opportunity for group reflection, the articulation of goals, and the refinement of objectives. For each thematic area discussed, participants identify potential groups with whom they might benefit from partnering and the potential content of the learning exchange agreements (i.e. what each group wants to learn from the other). Communities then group themselves as either teachers or learners based on the preceding needs-assessment and best practice exercise.

By way of example, in the July 2003 regional HIV/AIDS workshop participants identified strategies for potential learning, including: the value of testimonials in breaking the silence around HIV/AIDS, home-based and orphan care, community mobilization for awareness-raising and planning, and the use of traditional herbal medicines to treat symptoms. In biodiversity conservation, participants identified community skills in forest management, income-generation strategies (ecotourism, food storage, and processing), and community mobilization for effective management of natural resources. After identifying learning goals, groups identified concrete actions to be taken as well as the external support needed to achieve knowledge transfer and learning objectives. Table 1 functions as a simple matrix to map: 1) the strategy to be applied 2) the teacher and 3) the learner.

Table 1 - Learning Goals: Teachers and Learners

HIV/AIDS		
Strategy	Teachers	Learners
Testimonial approach to breaking the silence	Name of CBO(s)	Name of CBO(s)
Community Awareness and Planning	Name of CBO(s)	Name of CBO(s)

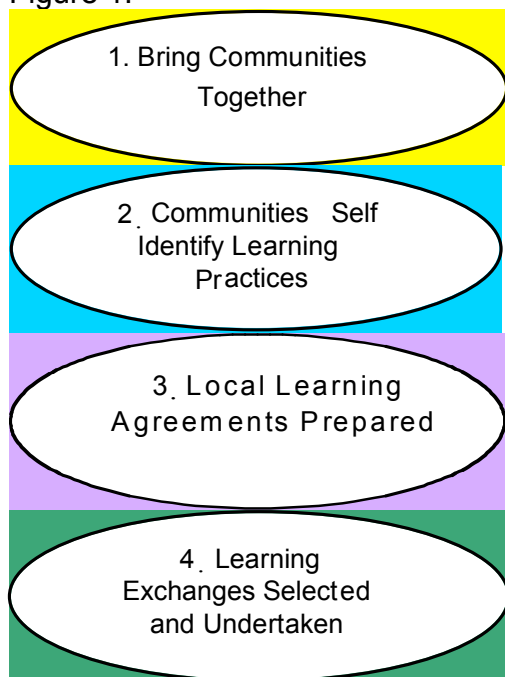
BIODIVERSITY		
Strategy	Teachers	Learners
Agroforestry	Name of CBO(s)	Name of CBO(s)
Forest Management and Reforestation	Name of CBO(s)	Name of CBO(s)
Food Security (storage and processing)	Name of CBO(s)	Name of CBO(s)

Based on this information, participants prepare local learning agreements (please see Annex I for the Learning Exchange Model Agreement) outlining their proposal, budget, and timeframe and submit it to a steering committee made up of UNDP staff, CSOs, and other partners. The committee takes decisions based on pre-established criteria and on the basis of consensus.

Selected communities work with the steering committee to refine their objectives, activities and establish a schedule for the exchanges. The facility provides a small grant (\$2,000-\$10,000) for participating communities to implement agreements following the workshop.

III. Local Learning Phases

Figure 1.



Past experience suggests it is strategic to partner with a national CSO to support the design of the exchange, logistics, and the codification of learning. This support proves beneficial as it empowers the CSO and ensures that lessons learned are fed back to the wider CSO sector.

By introducing the exchange mechanism in a workshop setting, an environment is fostered to match communities who share interests but pursue different approaches. The goal is to strengthen local community-based development work by applying the strategies and approaches learned and shared. The UNDP CSO Division, Equator Initiative, and donors (such as SwedBio) have to date allocated small grants to implement exchanges between communities in Africa and the SIDS.

IV. Learning Exchanges

The following report is based on reports submitted by participating communities in Africa and information collected through formal interviews with members of the various groups. The featured learning exchanges took place between late 2004 and 2005 and cover a wide range of activities ranging from forestry, ecotourism, and beekeeping to local governance to orphan and home-based care. The exchanges were selected in late 2003 by a steering committee made up of representatives from UNDP and a number of CSOs. By request of UNDP GROOTS Kenya based in Nairobi managed the implementation phase and provided oversight and support during the entire process.

GROOTS- Kenya headed the facilitation process under the leadership of its coordinator. A facilitation team was appointed to handle logistics, budgets, and planning. The primary task of the three-member team was to ensure the exchanges provided in-depth learning between visiting peer groups beyond the breadth of conventional “exposure visits”.

V. Six Exchanges in Eastern Africa

1. NAFRAC Tanzania and ODECECO Kenya Exchange

27 July – 1 August 2005, Tanzania

Participating Groups

The two participating groups included the Ogiek Development Culture, Environment, and Cultural Conservation (ODECECO), operating on behalf of the Ogiek community in Nakuru District (Rift Valley Province), and the Natural Resource Management and Agro-Forestry Centre (NAFRAC), a government department in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (Tanzania), operating on behalf of the Hadzabe Hunters and Gatherers in Meatu District (Shinyanga Region). NAFRAC previously operated on a smaller scale as HASHI (Hifradhi Ardhi Shinyanga). Because of its strong performance and record of success, HASHI was nationalized and integrated into Tanzania’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism. NAFRAC focuses on natural forest conservation and agro-forestry development through locally-based initiatives.

Background

Shinyanga is a vast region covered by woodlot, and is suffering from massive environmental degradation. The region has lost more than 50% of its vegetation cover due to environmental degradation from short-sighted government policies of the 1930s. The colonial government encouraged “bush clearing” to reduce (unsuccessfully in the end) Tse Tse fly populations, which reduced forest cover. Rotational farming and livestock are among the more prominent economic activities in the region. Sungu is home to more than 20,000 farmers and pastoralists who form the majority of the population. Deeper in the forest (a

National Reserve), live the minority Hadzabe and Tindige hunter-gatherers who number close to 5,000.

HASHI took a participatory approach to the multiple problems resulting from environmental degradation using traditional, locally-based institutions. One of the more successful examples of a traditional system was the “Ngitile” system. Ngitile is a land management system where communal land is utilised for farming for an agreed amount of time, left fallow for a fixed number of years to allow for regeneration, and then used in the future for grazing and forestation for commercial purposes. HASHI successfully combined this technique with more modern conservation approaches, implementing farmer-to-farmer exchange visits to encourage replication of model farms.

Objectives and Expectations

The ODECECO team, which included senior government officials, travelled to Sungu (bordering the Serengeti National Reserve) and visited the Hadzabe. The Hadzabe live a traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyle, in isolation, with limited infrastructure, social services, schools, or means of communication. Illiteracy and poverty are rampant.

Lessons Learned by NAFRAC from ODECECO

Following consultation in the village it was decided that a village committee be constituted and consult among themselves to achieve a number of objectives. It was deemed necessary to organize with the local authority to register a community based organization (CBO) to form the basis of communication between the Hadzabe and the outside world. It was also decided that a five-person team be sponsored to visit the Ogiek people in the Mau forest complex in Kenya.

The Ogiek team learned about the use, practice, and application of traditional medicines and knowledge in Tanzania and were impressed by the local herbalists and their leadership. The delegation encouraged a focused effort on research to improve the quality of their products, to advance their marketing, and to achieve better representation in local and national government bodies. The Kenyan delegation suggested that their Tanzanian counterparts should undertake a larger programme of work to identify stakeholders (NAFRAC, Hadzabe, neighbouring communities, local government, NGOs), conduct a stakeholder analysis (definition of the roles and interests of each stakeholder), and identify the priority problems facing the Hadzabe (with an eye to possible solutions). The team also suggested that the Hadzabe identify an indigenous community facing similar challenges and conduct an exchange.

2. GROOTS Kenya and CACID Cameroon Exchange

21-25 February 2005, Kenya

Participating Groups

Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) Kenya builds the capacity of women and communities to participate in decision-

making and development processes both at the local and international level. Located in the extreme northern province of Cameroon, CACID was initially created to rehabilitate the hydrological cycle of the Logone river's floodplain, establish a natural resource management plan, and stimulate the economy through sustainable micro-enterprises. The Logone plain is an 800,000 hectare region comprised of the floodplain and the Kalamaloué and Waza National Parks.

Background

Local-to-local dialogues fall under GROOTS Kenya's governance programme, which offers women and community representatives a platform to speak with local leaders (councillors and council officials), technical officers (ministers), and donors. The dialogue session aims to create solutions that advance community interests in decision-making processes. GROOTS Kenya uses this strategy of promoting good governance to backstop grassroots solutions to local problems. Moreover, the dialogue session acts as a mechanism for keeping communities informed about existing programmes and initiatives by relevant bodies of authority. Prior to the dialogue session, communities hold internal meetings where they discuss and outline priority issues. Following the dialogue and consolidation of objectives and relevant partnerships, a committee from the community is formed to anchor follow-up. Common issues discussed include poor sanitation, lack of water and housing, general insecurity, bursaries for youth, the burden of HIV/AIDS, and the mismanagement of local resources.

Objectives and Expectations

The overall objective of the GROOTS Kenya learning exchange was to share the experience of the local governance dialogue project. The tool, developed by Huairou Commission members, aims at positioning women in decision-making roles in local governance and local resource allocation. GROOTS Kenya hosted CACID Cameroon and the exchange offered experiential learning in local governance capacity building.

Following an orientation, CACID Cameroon participated in a Kisumu Municipal Council Local-to-Local Dialogue. The communities were presented with information on Local Authority Transfer Funds and the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan. The community representatives were provided with background on how community projects had been funded in 2003-2004. The Kisumu community was briefed on the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan, their responsibilities, and what demands they could make to their elected representatives.

Lessons Learned by CACID from GROOTS Kenya

The learning exchange was a positive experience for CACID. The group emerged from the experience with the realization that communities throughout Africa are not always informed of the availability of local development funds. Dialogue sessions were recognized as an effective strategy in bringing communities and their leaders together to communicate, work cooperatively, and solve community problems. In addition, local-to-local dialogues were

recognized as a strong source of information exchange and empowerment to communities, policy-makers, and funding agencies. These meetings give groups self-confidence, raise awareness of their rights (as well as their obligations), and bridge community interests with the work of public authorities.

CACID, aware that community groups often work in isolation from each other, learned that mechanisms like the local-to-local meetings pave the way for building relationships between groups with compatible objectives and increase the conviction of their voices in issues and processes of local governance. Networking was seen as adding value to community development work. CACID members learned the value of mapping potential partners inside and outside their communities and identifying overlapping objectives. CACID was inspired by the diversity of local community plans and the possibilities for local communities to work directly with the municipal council and local administration.

Overall, CACID viewed the local-to-local dialogues session as an effective technique of actively involving communities in their own development. The CACID team emerged from the experience feeling equipped to organize a similar dialogue session in their communities. In addition, CACID has replicated two projects in home-based care and child daycare programmes. The group also benefited from the opportunity to forge new partnerships and strengthen its relationship with GROOTS Kenya.

3. KENVO, IL NGWE'SI Kenya and SULEDO Tanzania Exchange

24-30 January 2005, Tanzania

Participating Groups

KENVO (Kijabe Environment Volunteer) focuses on using forest resources without compromising parallel conservation efforts. Its activities include data collection, income-generation activities for its members (such as, beekeeping), the promotion of activities that encourage community vigilance within the Aberdare region, and the preparation of recommendations for potential areas of improvement. ILNG'WESI, a Maasai community group based in Laikipia, manage a communally owned ranch while conserving the neighbouring Mukogodo forest. Profits from ecotourism ventures (such as the eco-lodge) facilitate the development of infrastructure and the balance of income-generation and conservation sets a good example for neighbouring Maasai communities. SULEDO based in Kiteto District in Tanzania, focuses on the conservation and protection of forest resources through the formulation of by-laws, youth patrols and income-generation activities.

Background

Suledo is an indigenous forest found in Manyara Province. The name derives from the names of the wards involved in the management of the forests (i.e. Sunya, Lengatei and Dongo). Nine villages manage a section of forest previously managed by the central government which they zone according to their needs and in the spirit of conservation. The SULEDO project began after the

district council demarcated the forest without community consultation. The community opposed the move and requested greater involvement in the process. Consequently, demarcation followed traditional and administrative boundaries. Villages were able to zone their portions of the forest according to their needs; a system that has been instrumental in avoiding territorial disputes.

The SULEDO project has been successful on a number of fronts: developing and implementing effective by-laws governing the forest; punishing violations through a magistrate court; taking care of pastoralists during the dry season and mitigating conflicts with crop farmers; regulating use of the forest through blending customary and national law; establishing a disciplinary committee (that meets on a case-by-case basis); and implementing a campaign to discourage the use of timber and promote the use of clay as a building material.

Objectives and Expectations

Prior to the visit KENVO and IL NG'WESI established some objectives and expectations of the visit to SULEDO. The main objectives outlined included: the exchange and sharing of ideas on how available natural resources can be used sustainably for economic benefit of community members; learning how the Suledo community is successfully managing the forest; familiarizing themselves with the by-laws that govern use of the forest; and learning about SULEDO's committee management mechanisms. The visiting organizations expected to develop management plans, zone the forest for greater management capacity, develop similarly effective local by-laws, mobilize community participation in resource management; and understand the relationships between community and central government by-laws. In the company of the host group from the Suledo community the Kenyan teams visited eight community projects.

Inputs from KENVO and IL NG'WESI

Following an orientation by SULEDO demonstrating their income-generation activities, community representatives from KENVO and IL NG'WESI identified a number of unexplored opportunities. The forest was identified as the ideal environment for ecotourism and beekeeping. They also noted that the area is home to a wide variety of birds for bird-watching, snakes, and other wild animals that could generate income through ecotourism. In addition, the Kenyan teams recommended that SULEDO document their rich traditional knowledge to complement the conservation of local and national resources. It was suggested that SULEDO adopt certain agricultural methods (drought-resistant crops) to avoid famine during the dry season. Finally, the visiting communities observed a need for gender balance in Suledo's existing programmes.

KENVO and IL NG'WESI visited the Olkitikiti Village of Maasai livestock farmers. SULEDO has helped this pastoralist community to demarcate areas of forest for dry and rainy season grazing, respectively, and establish a zone specifically for calves to graze. KENVO and IL NG'WESI suggested that the community start an environmentally friendly income-generation activity (such as ecotourism and beekeeping), diversify its economic activities to reduce reliance on livestock,

train community members in public relations and apiculture, and integrate exotic breeds of livestock into traditional breeds.

The visiting communities were also exposed to a project entitled Village Community Bank (VICOBA). The project, aimed at helping members achieve economic independence, gives community members training in financial and business management. Members contribute a set amount (usually TSh 500) which is equivalent to the cost of one share and are permitted to purchase three shares per meeting (usually held twice a month). Following consolidation of the money and a 16-week waiting period, members can take loans to establish a viable business - a loan which is paid back with interest and shared as dividends at the end of each year. The project is a major advance as there are no banks in the Kiteto district and transportation to those in Arusha or Dodoma is extremely difficult. Accountability and transparency are secured through clear lines of communication between treasurer and members. All members are trained in the selection, planning, and management of business activities so as to make informed decisions in selecting projects. The establishment of community banks was a key learning experience for the Kenyan groups. As a result of this experience KENVO, together with Kereita Forests and Wildlife Association - KFWCA (a forest user groups), have started small loaning schemes for their members. Internally, KENVO has started a micro-credit scheme which is being supported by the British Petroleum conservation programme.

Lessons learned by KENVO from SULEDO and IL NG'WESI

A number of lessons were extracted from the peer learning exchange. KENVO came to appreciate the role of community members in management systems, from incorporation in forest management to input into the formulation of by-laws. Full representation in terms of gender and age were seen as an effective way to avoid conflicts. Income-generation activities (with locally available materials) were recognized as central in raising the living standard of community members. Zoning of the forest was seen as pivotal in providing grazing space for both the dry and rainy seasons.

Like IL NG'WESI, KENVO has constructed a camp site and seven members of the group have been trained and recruited to act as tour guides. However, due to limited resources, KENVO has not been able to integrate all the activities they have learned into their work plan.

Lessons learned by SULEDO from KENVO and IL NG' WESI

The SULEDO project learned from KENVO that wild seed from indigenous trees can be collected and planted in nurseries to ensure that certain species are protected from extinction. SULEDO has been able to create indigenous tree nurseries from wild seed collection. Another lesson learned has been the importance of reinforcing laws and policies that provide for the protection of forest resources. SULEDO recognized the potential for groups to employ their members while generating income through activities such as tour guiding and apiculture. Using modern beehives the group has improved its honey production. Nevertheless, SULEDO has faced barriers by way of government

bureaucracy in the management of forests and in accessing funds and other resources.

Lessons Learned by IL NG'WESI from KENVO and SULEDO

Based on the experience, IL NG'WESI has established an indigenous tree nursery to supplement the exotic trees they have been planting. The group also emerged with an appreciation of the need for integrating women in community development activities, in management, and in decision-making. IL NG'WESI like the others operate with limited resources and has inadequate funds to implement all practices learned.

4. UCOBAC, THETA, Uganda and GROOTS Kenya Exchange

16-21 January 2005, Uganda

Participating Groups

The Uganda Community-Based Association for Child Welfare (UCOBAC), THETA, and GROOTS Kenya participated in the exchange. UCOBAC runs a child welfare programme that aims to improve the welfare of vulnerable children through building the capacity of relevant actors. THETA uses traditional healers and herbal medicine to provide home-based care to people infected with HIV/AIDS in an effort to boost their immune systems. GROOTS Kenya's mission is to build the capacity of grassroots women and their communities to effectively participate in development. UCOBAC hosted the exchange in Uganda.

Background

UCOBAC conducts a number of programmes. A Community Resource Mobilization Project, implemented in western Uganda, provides agricultural and business loans to vulnerable grass roots households afflicted by HIV/AIDS and civil war. Loans are repaid with a small level of interest for sustainability. Through these micro-credit loans, women have gained self-esteem, reached positions of leadership, and raised the living standards of their families. The Butumula Women's Dairy Cattle Project distributes cows among HIV afflicted households, provides training in dairy keeping, childcare and savings. UCOBAC also works with other groups like FOCA operating in child welfare. The FOCA street child rehabilitation programme offers a home, education, vocational training, medical care and training, and recreational opportunities to street children in urban areas of Uganda. UCOBAC faces a number of challenges in its work, including: a lack of administrative resources to facilitate continuous monitoring and support of its regional offices; a lack of transportation facilities for social workers to supervise projects; and continuous reports of child assault and sexual abuse (such as rape).

Objectives and Expectations

The overall objectives of the exchange were to share their respective work and lessons learned in orphan care and support. UCOBAC and GROOTS also sought

to initiate small-scale industries for women's groups, and to develop projects on women's economic empowerment through training in access to credit.

Lessons Learned by GROOTS Kenya from UCOBAC

GROOTS Kenya emerged from its exchange with a number of lessons learned and plans for integrating the lessons into its own work. GROOTS Kenya learned: 1) involving orphans in community activities is beneficial; 2) mobilizing political will at both the local and national level is essential to securing funding through government channels; 3) rural areas provide a homogeneity with less challenges than the slums where the social fabric may not be as cohesive; and 4) the importance of UCOBAC's linkages and networks with organizations both inside and outside Uganda. As a result of the exchange, GROOTS Kenya has ensured that orphans are part and parcel of project planning and implementation. The visiting delegation learned from UCOBAC's income generating activities, the organization's political networking skills at the local and national level,

The exchange concluded with a commitment to continue to share information between the two organizations and to share these practices with other African and non-African groups working in similar fields, when and if possible.

Lesson Learned by UCOBAC from GROOTS Kenya

UCOBAC members were able to experience firsthand the challenges of community-led home-based care and the importance of integrating youth in home-based care activities. The organization has integrated youth in the provision of home-based care and despite the challenges posed by working from a volunteer work base, continues to improve its programmes.

5. WAIKUKA Kenya and MAMA WATOTO Kenya Exchange

1-5 December 2004, Kenya

Participating Groups

MAMA WATOTO and WAIKUKA participated in the exchange. MAMA WATOTO is a registered self-help group situated in western Kenya whose objectives are to reduce poverty through food security strategies, the promotion of herbal medicine, support of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, and wood fuel alternatives from "women-made forests." WAIKUKA, an acronym for three groups from villages in the Tetu division and Nyeri district, is a group from the central province in Kenya who engage in forest management, re-forestation, and eco-agriculture to improve the livelihoods of its members and conserve the natural environment.

Members of MAMA WATOTO began their work on a small-scale, planting soy beans in individual farms and, later, in group plots. After some time, the group surpassed the needs of household consumption, producing a surplus capable of being processed for profit. Local women also collected firewood (the main source of household energy) and herbs from the forest, a practice hindered by

the establishment of a reserve and social proscription against women cutting down trees. In response, the women established "women-made forests" in sections within their own farms. The three WAIKUKA groups came together in 1999 under the banner of the Green Belt Movement with the common goal of (re)planting tree seedlings (both imported and indigenous varieties) and fruit-bearing plants. In addition to cooperative tree nurseries, members maintain individual nurseries in their compounds. Eco-agriculture activities are complemented by income-generation projects, including: handicrafts, homemade soaps, and the processing of traditional medicine from medicinal plants and herbs.

Background

The participating groups face similar environmental challenges and work from a similar resource base as they live in close proximity to two important Kenyan forests. Both groups invest in the conservation of flora and fauna, but apply different strategies. WAIKUKA focuses on the development of seedling beds for sale to Kenya's forest department as a means of income-generation. WAIKUKA complements this primary income-generation activity with basket weaving. MAMA WATOTO also plants trees and cultivates tree seedlings, but do so to sustain sources of fuel. MAMA WATOTO's complementary income-generation activities range from the cultivation and processing of soy beans to apiculture and honey processing.

Objectives and Expectations

The learning exchange involved representatives from MAMA WATOTO travelling to Nyeri to learn from the WAIKUKA group. The objective of the exchange was to demonstrate the range of complementary income-generation activities (tree planting, dairy farming, and soap making) from accessible, locally available resources. Additional objectives and expectations included the sharing (and ideally the replication) of the herbal control and cure of malaria, household-based tree nurseries, the integration of goats more prominently into dairy farming, knowledge-sharing of pruning and grafting (particularly avocados), and opening group membership.

Lessons learned by MAMA WATOTO from WAIKUKA

MAMA WATOTO learned a number of practices and skills, such as the capacity of herbal medicines to manage and boost the immunity of HIV/AIDS infected people. The group also acquired in-depth knowledge of soap production and the multi-scale planning of tree nurseries. MAMA WATATO returned to its community to plant a variety of herbal plants to be used in treating people suffering from disease. In addition, the group has since undertaken the production of solvent detergent. The lessons have also come with their share of challenges. The group lacks the capacity to train a workforce capable of implementing many of the lessons extracted from the exchange. They similarly lack access to the packaging materials necessary for quality control.

Lessons learned by Waikuka from Mama Watoto

The WAIKUKA group was able to gain in-depth knowledge on soya production, sugarcane farming, and apiculture (from processing to manufacture). Additionally, the group learned: 1) how to construct a fuel saving *jiko*, and a "bore hole" for water harvesting; and 2) the value of kitchen tree plantations for firewood and nectar for bees. Once home, WAIKUKA was able to implement a system for soya farming and replicated fuel-saving and water harvesting techniques. The group faces some challenges in effectively marketing its soya products and in funding the technical capacity to implement the learned practices on a wide-scale.

6. MAA, MWEDO Tanzania and SIMOO Kenya Exchange

December 2004, Tanzania

Participating Groups

SIMOO (Simba Maasai Outreach Organization), MWEDO, and MAA (Enyuat E Maa) participated in the exchange. SIMOO is a group based in Kajiado District, Kenya and focuses on improving the living standards of its poorest community members through a number of development projects. MWEDO is a non-governmental organization working to improve the well-being of Maasai women and girls in Arusha, Tanzania. They engage in activities ranging from income-generation to HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. MAA is a group also based in Arusha, Tanzania focusing on the revitalization of Maasai values and culture and the creation of income-generation activities (e.g. bead craftwork).

Background

SIMOO, MWEDO, and MAA are homogenous groups. They are all pastoralists living and working in the semi-arid regions of Kenya and Tanzania. The groups also share a cultural heritage in being of Nilotic origin.

SIMOO and MWEDO hosted one another in exchanges. The MAA, however, were not able to visit the SIMOO group in Kenya due to logistical problems.

Fourteen SIMOO representatives divided into two sub-groups visited the MAA and MWEDO development projects. The group that joined the MAA visited the Mbuyuni, Makuyuni, Naitolia, Mswakini, Juu, Oltukai, and Esilalei villages in Monduli district. SIMOO visited tree planting projects and rainwater harvesting activities in MAA target communities. MAA showcased a cultural *boma* project, a community-based income-generation initiative focusing on the promotion of Maasai culture through handicrafts and ecotourism.

Objectives and Expectations

The primary objective of the exchange was to share experiences between the MAA and SIMOO organizations, their members, and their communities. The exchange focused on the different approaches and techniques used by each group in implementing their respective development projects. The exchange was to show different economic, social, and cultural experiences aimed at benefitting the participating groups. Discussions were oriented around four themes: (1) community-based natural resource management; (2) food security

and income-generation; (3) health care, HIV/AIDS, water and hygiene; and (4) education.

In the area of community-based resource management, MAA showed tree-planting projects in primary schools, and the construction of rainwater harvesting tanks – all of which were acknowledged as contributing to conservation efforts. Rainwater harvesting projects have demonstrated increased study time (as less time is spent looking for clean water), increased teaching hours from availability of water for domestic use, increased green space from well-watered trees and plants, and reduced eye diseases in schools. MAA also described their land rights and environmental seminars and study tours. In healthcare and HIV/AIDS, MAA explained how awareness campaigns have been effective in changing sexual behaviour and societal attitudes to those affected by the disease. School classrooms hosted discussions around education and awareness campaigns. Food security and income-generation activities were discussed as poverty reduction strategies. Ecotourism (cultural tourism) and the sale and crossbreeding of livestock were used as examples of such activities.

Lessons learned by SIMOO from MWEDO and MAA

SIMOO learned a number of practices. A large amount of locally available materials – sticks, stones, and bones – were given new value in the production of ornaments and handicrafts. The group also learned about the importance of constructing easily accessible schools in raising education levels and how the use of revenues from ecotourism can be reinvested into education. SIMOO returned home to implement bursaries to supplement the educational needs of women and girls in their communities and created a space for the manufacture of ornaments to supplement the incomes of community members. SIMOO has, however, been plagued by drought which has driven many of its members to look elsewhere for pastureland for their livestock. The group has also faced difficulty in finding sufficient funds to establish an eco-tourism resource centre. Simoo also requires increased knowledge to facilitate the implementation of the practices learned.

Lessons learned by MAA from SIMOO and MWEDO

MAA learned 1) how to construct water dams to store water for animal consumption; 2) how to crossbreed livestock to improve productivity; and 3) the use of information and awareness campaigns on the fear and stigma of health-related services and diseases like HIV/AIDS.

VI. Overall observations on the implementation of the learning exchanges in Eastern Africa

Community-to-community learning exchanges have demonstrated to be a successful mechanism to enhance skills, practices, and knowledge base at the local level. The enhancement of community knowledge should be need driven

and coupled with exchanges of lessons learned. For these activities, additional support is required and due consideration is needed to effectively develop techniques and programmes that benefit communities.

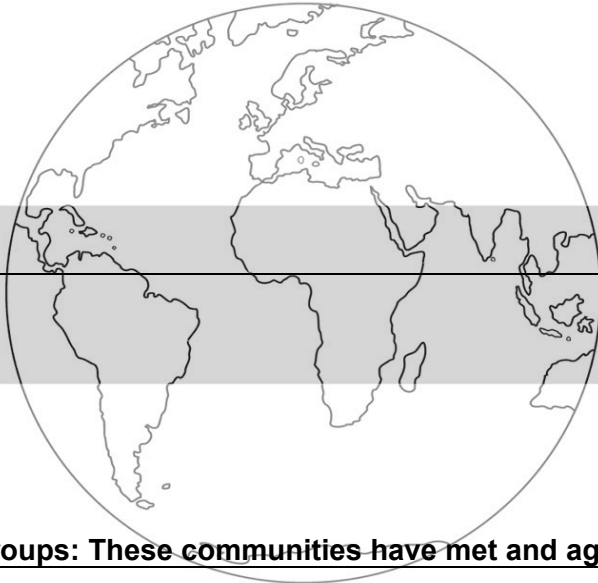
Additional exchanges for those groups that have integrated and shared the learned practices should be considered. As the experiences demonstrate additional capacity is required in product development and in identifying markets for community products.

The participating communities made recommendations to improve the logistics of the learning exchanges. Programming and coordination of exchange programmes should be done at an early stage, exchanges should be longer to allow for more learning and the completion of intended objectives, and budgets be sufficient to allow for safe and timely transportation.

The facilitation team stressed the importance of securing funds in a timely manner to maintain the enthusiasm and commitment of community groups. Other recommendations include the drafting of an in-depth report on both the potential and challenges for future learning exchanges and the development of a peer learning exchange fund to invest in the sustainable, ongoing success of community-to-community dialogue.

Conclusion

The groups participating in the exchanges benefited from learning from each other. They were able to identify each other's strengths and weaknesses and, by doing so, to identify future programmes of work and areas for improvement. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is a global priority that requires engagement with local capacity. Communities must be supported to scale-up their innovations in balancing biodiversity conservation with improved and sustained community livelihoods. The community-to-community learning exchange methodology supports communities by allowing them to identify their own solutions by partnering with those working in to solve similar problems nearby.



Learning Exchange Model

1. Groups: These communities have met and agree to participate in a learning exchange:

(1)

(2)

Others:

2. KNOWLEDGE SHARING: We wish to share and learn the following skills, approaches and strategies:

3. ACTIVITIES: We propose the following activities for each participating group:

4. CONTRIBUTION FROM COMMUNITIES: Participants agree to make the following concrete contributions to the learning exchange process (for example: establishing meeting places, providing accommodations, etc.):

Community Group 1:

Community Group 2:

5. FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES: After the exchange we plan to: (for example, visit with other communities to share lessons; liaise with government and donor partners):

6. SHORT PROPOSAL: A timeline for the learning exchange, a preliminary budget, and a list of expected outcomes is attached to this form on a supplementary page

In our capacity to represent the groups and communities named herein, we agree to act as partners in this learning exchange. We agree to undertake the tasks and responsibilities specified and commit to evaluating and reporting on the process and results within three weeks of our last activity.

Community 1 Representative	Community 2 Representative
Signature	Signature
Name	Name
Position	Position
Community	Community
Address	Address
Country	Country
Phone	Phone
Email	Email

Signature _____

ANNEX II.

Community-to-Community Learning Exchanges 2005-2006

Four learning exchange agreements were selected among the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as an output of the *Community Vilaj*, a community dialogue space, hosted at the Barbados Programme of Action +10 Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Port Louis, Mauritius in January 2005. The *Community Vilaj* showcased stories of grassroots sustainable development, victories won, and challenges overcome by community led action. The *Community Vilaj* facilitated dialogue among community members and policy makers in an enabling environment focusing on the importance of community participation and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.

Four exchanges

1. Project Title: *SIDS Community Vilaj Learning Exchange Agreement*
Partnering Organizations: Mokosai GROOTS (Papua New Guinea), and Zazao (Soloman Islands)
Objectives: The overall objective of the exchange is to empower women and youth and ensure their well being through the learning of various skills: savings and credit programmes for income-generation, shelter upgrading, weaving, knitting and tailoring, fish smoking, coconut oil making, jam and spice making, silk screen printing and jewellery making.
2. Project Title: *Learning Exchange on Traditional Medicine*
Partnering Organizations: Indigenous People (Bethechilokono) Saint Lucia Governing Council (BGC) (Saint Lucia) and Traditional Healers/Domestic Violence (Samoa)
Objectives: The exchange will work cooperatively to: 1) document traditional medicine usage through the establishment of a data base; 2) map and select an area for the establishment of an herbarium in Samoa; 3) mobilize and establish a National Association of Traditional Healers; and 4) establish a network of traditional healers of Saint Lucia and Samoa.
3. Project Title: *Learning Exchange on Pig Waste Management*
Partnering Organizations: The Seychelles Farmers Association (Seychelles Islands) and Appropriate Technology (Cook Islands)

Objectives: The exchange will coordinate field visits and training on simple, cost-effective technology on pig waste management from the Cook Islands.

4. Project Title: *Learning Exchange on Environmental Impact (Beach)*
Partnering Organizations: Construction Resource and Development Centre (Jamaica) and Sandwatch (Trinidad)
Objectives: The exchange will involve training in the scientific observation and measurement of beaches, data collection and dissemination, and awareness-raising through posters and brochures.