



ROLE OF CBOs IN ENSURING SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT: CASE OF CBOs IN EMBU AND BUNGOMA COUNTIES, KENYA

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Abstract: *The objective of this study was to determine the roles of CBOs in ensuring that there is sustainable land management. The research was based on case study research design. The target population was the project officers of the pilot projects, key informants from the CBOs and farmers in Embu and Bungoma counties. The study employed purposive sampling in selecting the CBOs and farmers who were the members of the organizations. Purposive sampling involved focus on a particular characteristic of a population that are of interest to the researcher and for this case the CBOs involved in sustainable land management were the focus. Data collection was done through data triangulation whereby data was gathered through methods like, document analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions to ensure the validity of the information. These successes were seen in the way CBOs participated in pursuit to SLM activities, networking, leadership of the groups, gender participation in organization activities, youth involvement, project monitoring and evaluation and conflict resolution. The study recommended that, depending on the CBOs, different trainings should be provided on project management, identification, planning and monitoring and evaluation.*

Keywords: *Roles of CBOs, sustainable land management*

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INTRODUCTION

Background Information

According to the IFAD strategy, CBOs were formed to ensure that the agricultural activities are of help to members. The activities involved; marketing of products, supporting local finances through funding of their activities, reducing poverty and improving sustainable land management. This prompts participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities done by the organizations (GOK, 2003). To strengthen the capacity of these CBOs and increase their access to markets, empowerment of the rural people and the promotion of effective and equitable linkages between poor producers and market opportunities should be encouraged (IFAD, 2001). This can be done by assessing the CBOs and recommending scaling up such that if they are successful, they can be adopted in other counties.

In Africa, like other regions of the world, local CBOs have been formed. In Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Tanzania, communities have organized themselves to implement cost effective interventions to increase their ability to design and enhance sustainable service programmes (USAID, 2009). They have formed community based natural resource management (CBNRM) organizations which have enacted policy and legislative frameworks to facilitate sustainable land management. Local communities are usually involved in management of natural resources and in the process of decision making (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999) to facilitate sustainable utilization of the resources. At the grassroots level and in parts of Kenya, the community has established a collaborative partnership with CBOs and NGOs in undertaking the responsibility for developing a local vision and strategy, designing and planning, allocating resources, implementing and monitoring and evaluating of development activities that would better cater to the local needs. They have jointly become the driving force towards development, develop a sense of shared ownership and become managers of their development initiatives (GoK, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

In Embu and Bungoma Counties, CBOs were organized as partners and means of delivering services to dairy farmers', horticultural farmers and river users associations so that they can improve sustainable land management (IFAD, 2003). These CBOs are localized within



specific areas of the counties thereby limiting their performance and achievement of the targeted objectives to their members (IFAD, 2001).

Objective of the Study

To determine the roles of CBOs in ensuring that there is sustainable land management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community based Organizations (CBOs)

In the last twenty years, community based organizations have expanded to the point of being referred to as a movement. According to Boyte, the process of community organizing themselves has expanded into many community based organizations (Boyte, 1989). One struggle that has emerged in this period is the awareness of power shifting from local communities to regions, nations and international corporations (Fisher, 2002; Orfield, 1997). The process of globalization has raised new questions about the efficacy of local organizations in addressing problems which cause large-scale economic forces. Many of the organizations have been progressive in philosophy, even by today's standards, and provide services to or activities for children and teens (Levine & Levine, 1970). They have influenced the process of development at the community level through participation and involving the community in the activities that pertain to their livelihoods.

The promotion of CBOs as instruments of community empowerment is concept that is focus now days. Community development initiatives have been promoted through self-help groups such as women and youth groups (Mulwa, 2010). These groups involve stakeholders and the community in all initiatives hence the community recognizes that they are part of the development process.

Groups of people with a common interest form CBOs that can play a big role at the community level of ensuring that they get the services they might require. CBOs act as the vehicles which help in tackling poverty and responding to disasters. They plan for local development through mobilizing resources and serve as an entry point to the community. CBOs operate within a given locality. They source their funding from government grants, sale of raffle tickets, and sponsorship from individuals, income generating activities and membership subscriptions. For their formations, the fundamental issues lie on their roles, goals, mission and vision, clarity and community interest. An issue of focus is necessary since they can be driving forces to community development. CBOs can act as organizers,



developers, planners or resource mobilisers depending on the reasons for their formation (World Bank, 2006). This prompts a need to build the capacity of local groups to better provide the immediate support (Eade, 2002). They act as the link between community needs and at the same time a solution to their problems. CBOs if well managed will create an opportunity for the powerless people in the society to air their views to the concerned authority. This is achieved through lobbying and advocacy for change in policy in their favour.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was based on case study research design. Case study design is an approach to studying social phenomena through analysis of an individual case. The data collected from the selected CBOs were organized in terms of cases, where horticultural farmers CBOs, dairy farmers CBOs and river users association CBOs were intensively studied on the way they organize their leadership, manage their finances, how they design their projects, the nature of networking and their role in ensuring that there is sustainable land management. Data obtained was analysed to give information to be used in scaling up the CBOs. This was to provide an insight for expansion to other CBOs of the same nature for scaling up purposes. Descriptive analysis was provided to show the performance of the CBOs based on successes, challenges and interventions required. The descriptive provided generalizations which could be used for scaling up other CBOs based on the in depth information obtained.

Target Population: The target population was 1000 civil servants in Eldoret town drawn from all public institutions.

Target population

The target population was the project officers of the pilot projects, key informants from the CBOs and farmers in Embu and Bungoma counties. These counties were selected because IFAD and Government of Kenya (GOK) has funded some CBOs which the researcher wanted to investigate good capacity that could be replicated to other areas and also to explore on the constraints which they face so that solutions can be sought for desired impacts to farmers.

Sampling Size and Techniques

The study employed purposive sampling in selecting the CBOs and farmers who were the



members of the organizations. Purposive sampling involved focus on a particular characteristic of a population that are of interest to the researcher and for this case the CBOs involved in sustainable land management were the focus. CBOs were selected from the pilot projects which have been funded GoK and IFAD to evaluate their success and challenges they face so that they can be replicated to others. Twenty nine (29) CBOs were selected based on the activities they do, like water resource users associations, dairy farmers and horticulture. Seven (7) key informants from each CBO were selected for the interview. Two (2) Focus Group Discussions were conducted in Embu and Bungoma comprising of farmers from the CBOs. Each FGD had 20 farmers who were members of the CBOs. Three (3) key informants from the three pilot projects were interviewed. Eight (8) GoK officials were also interviewed. This made the total number of people for the interview, two hundred and Twenty (220). Since this was a case study design, the chosen cases gave a representative number from the total population from the CBOs for scaling up of the activities rather than studying all CBOs in Embu and Bungoma which are involved in sustainable land management.

Data Collection tools and procedures

Data collection was done through data triangulation. According to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003), triangulation is a "method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data. In this study, it involved using more than one method to gather data like, the use of document analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions to ensure the validity of the information. This involved asking the key informant and FGD participants on how the organization operates its success and constraints it faces in the management of their operations. The researcher was also concerned with views, attitudes, feelings and perceptions of informants hence such information was best collected through FGDs. (Bell, 1993; Touliatos & Compton, 1988).

a) Key Informant Interviews

According to Carter (1992), key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, professionals, or residents who have first-hand knowledge about the community. These community experts, with their particular knowledge and understanding, can provide



insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. The researcher prepared an interview schedule which was administered to the contact persons of the CBOs who was either the chairman, secretary or any other official who was in charge of the CBOs at the time of data collection. The questions asked guided the respondents and the researcher on activities undertaken by the CBOs, organizational management, and finances, ownership of the project and project development and design.

b) Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The focus group discussion (FGD) is a rapid assessment, semi-structured data gathering method in which a purposively selected set of participants gather to discuss issues and concerns based on a list of key themes drawn up by the researcher/facilitator (Kumar 1987). This involved exploring the perceptions, experiences and understanding of the CBOs members on the capacity, finance, monitoring and evaluation and technical assistance pertaining to the organization. Two (2) FGDs from the selected CBOs, one from Bungoma and one in Embu were conducted.

The researcher developed broad discussion points and discussed them on the selected members of the CBOs. The FGD members expressed their opinions on the issues discussed and responses recorded by the enumerators.

c) Document analysis

Document analysis is a social research method and is an important research tool in its own right and is an invaluable part of most schemes of triangulation. Documentary work involves reading lots of written material (it helps to scan the documents onto a computer and use a qualitative analysis package). A document is something that we can read and which relates to some aspect of the social world. Official documents are intended to be read as objective statements of fact but they are themselves socially produced (Heffernan, 2001). This study collected data from documents like brochures, pamphlets and magazines obtained from the organization based on activities they have initiated. The CBO officials gave the researcher the relevant documents like the constitution and bylaws which provided information regarding the structure and functions of the organization. Close analysis of these documents gave an in depth information that members could not relay during the interviews.

Validity and Reliability

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), the reliability of an instrument is the measure



of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To test the reliability of interview schedule for key informants and FGD schedule to be used in the study, a pilot study was conducted in Embu on a CBO which was not sampled for the study to test the reliability of the instruments to be used. After the pilot study, the instruments to be used were tested and adjusted so that they could be used for the actual research. Pilot study helped in adjusting the structure of the schedules and arranging questions for the preparation of the actual study.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires was keyed into the computer in the excel format. It was then exported to SPSS for quantitative analysis. Qualitative data was obtained from the notes recorded from the field. The field notes were recorded in verbatim. The analysis was done in form of frequencies, percentages which presented in terms of graphs, pie charts and tables. Descriptive analysis was given to explain the activities, challenges and successes of the CBOs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Activities of CBOs

The objective of this study was to determine the activities of CBOs in relation to Sustainable Land Management (SLM) in Embu and Bungoma counties. With the assistance of the Pilot Projects, WRUAs and FDAC have been formed to facilitate the improvement of water catchment areas and spring protection. As illustrated by Lakew Desta et al. (2000), inadequate investments in soil conservation, deforestation and overgrazing have reduced the fertility of soil. This can be achieved through participating in tree planting activities, soil conservation and other ways of ensuring that there is sustainable land management. According to the study, 196 respondents from CBOs indicated that their organizations have been involved in SLM activities. Table 1 presents the different types of SLM activities implemented by the CBOs. FDAC and WRUA participated in establishing tree nurseries whereby they planted trees. This showed that tree planting was a dominant activity among CBOs. Most of the groups had tree nurseries established. Women groups CBOs practiced river bank protection, planting cover crops and spring basin management. The group members sold trees so that they can earn some income.



Table 1: Activities of CBOs in Sustainable Land Management

SLM activities	Number of CBOs practicing SLM activities
River bank protection, soil conservation	2
Terracing and planting cover crops	6
Terracing	1
Tree planting	12
Tree planting, terracing, planting cover crops	5
Tree planting, spring basin management	3
Total	29

Sustainable land management activities improved the livelihoods of the members and the community at large. As shown in table 2, 189 respondents revealed that the livelihood of the members had improved positively through increases of income, food security and availability of employment. Members said that, the livelihood has improved as compared to the rest of the years when they had no place to rely on and were subjected to poverty. The other 14 respondents indicated that they have not seen any change to the livelihoods of members.

Table 2: Role of SLM activities to the Livelihood of Members

How has activities improved livelihood	Number of respondents from CBOs	Percentage
Positive improvement	189	93
No change	14	7
Total	203	100

CBOs have played a role in adding value to the lives of members through bringing food to their tables by increasing productions. FGD participants said that their lives have improved because their children can now attend school without complications of lack of school fees. The youth who did not have employment can now get menial jobs from the farms instead of idling around. They indicated that the food security had improved because they can access food commodities within a short distance. The income of farmers has also increased due to sale of products.



The 7% of groups which said that they did not see any change in livelihood attributed it to the limited time of initiating the group activities and lack of market for the goods. The results are summarized in table 3.

Table 3: Nature of improvement of Livelihoods

Positive Impacts			
Respondents that reported positive impacts of SLM activities	Indicators (% of CBOs)		
189	Created employment	Increased food security	Increased income
	3.8%	11.5%	79.6%
Negative Impacts			
Number of CBOs that reported no change/impacts from SLM activities	Indicators (% of CBOs)		
14	Limited time to initiate activities	Lack of market for goods, pests and diseases	
	50%	50%	

Members of the youth groups, women groups and self-help CBOs indicated that, though they intended to gain from being members of the organizations, they face some challenges. The CBOs are new and members said they have not enjoyed the fruits of their hard work. Lack of market for their products is also another problem. The negative impact is attributed to lack of markets for the products, pest and diseases affecting the farm produce. The information from the FGD revealed that the members were experiencing myriad of problems which were associated to lack of market research and development of the required market strategy.

“We lack markets for our products. When these bananas are not sold, we do value addition instead of wasting them. This is a big loss to us as farmers” FGD participant in Bungoma County.

CONCLUSION

The study identified successes in the CBOs. These successes were seen in the way CBOs participated in pursuit to SLM activities, networking, leadership of the groups, gender participation in organization activities, youth involvement, project monitoring and evaluation and conflict resolution. FDA, WRUA and DCAC performed better in coordination



of group activities whereas youth and women groups were better in improving livelihood of members through employment, increase of income and improving food security.

RECOMMENDATION

Depending on the CBOs, different trainings should be provided on project management, identification, planning and monitoring and evaluation. This will help in the way projects are being managed. Members should be trained on new technologies, value addition and maintenance of the quality of products.

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