

Monthly News

ActionAid Tanzania

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Farmers Research Network Members Learn from SNAP Project



Amani group Farmers in a group photo with visitors at Kibaoni Village..

By Elias Mtinda; Agriculture & Land Rights Manager

As part of their week-long meeting, participants of Farmers Research Network (FRN) embarked on a learning tour of villages implementing the Singida Nutrition and Agroecology (SNAP) project in Singida District Tanzania.

The visit brought together farmers, researchers and organizations implementing Mcknight Foundation funded projects across the globe with some of the participants coming from Bukinafaso, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Bolivia, Peru, CANADA and USA.

The site visit was intended for a co-learning experience where field technicians had the opportunity to discuss, in small groups with farmers involved in Farmers Research Network projects. The visitors toured Kibaoni, Mrama and IddSimba villages, and had the chance to meet all members of farmers' groups and village leaders.

During discussions with farmers' groups, in all the villages, evidence of strong social capital

was noted such as groups having clear structures, existence of group norms – where groups have constitutions and quarterly meetings for sharing experiences and lessons.

On the aspect of behavioral change, it was clear that the project changed both knowledge and attitude of farmers in project areas, such as farmers adopting what they learn from the group to suit their individual needs (eg when they learn to intercrop two crops from the group, they intercrop more than two crops in their fields).

Also, it was clear that farmers know the technologies for agroecology and can explain in detail; e.g knowledge of pests and predators, soil amendments, making compost and storage of produce using botanical methods.

Furthermore, strong training and dissemination component was evident, which brought with it socialized learning where discussions /sharing with neighbors beyond the village.

On potential drivers of sustainable models of the project, it was noted that in the financing part, the group has a bank account and brought an extra activity of availing savings and loans to members.

Also, on social capital-mobilization for sustainability, the groups have capacity and they know what they will do. What is needed is for them to be mobilized into strong groups and linked to financial avenues because when groups have the knowledge, it acts as a step for them to go further.

Also, the groups have put in place plans for the future on articulating success not only for knowledge, but also on how they can get money from their interventions.

The SNAP project is investigating whether a participatory approach to testing agroecological practices and improved nutrition can lead to enhanced legume production and utilization in rural communities in Singida District. It uses farmer-led research and peer education to support farmers to test agricultural practices. This is supported by engagement with farming families to facilitate improved children nutrition, gender and other social inequalities at household level.

The project is implemented by ActionAid Tanzania in collaboration with Cornell University, Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology, Ilonga Agricultural Research Institute, Agreeseed Technologies and Michigan State University.



Men in a group discussion on the gender aspect

Youth Urged To Be Innovative

Youth in the country have been urged to be innovative and shift their minds to social entrepreneurship and innovation, for them to adapt to the changing world.

The call was made during the training on Social Entrepreneurship and Innovation organised by AATZ in collaboration with Global Platform Kenya through the Youth Empowerment and Influence in Tanzania Programme in early September.

The training which drew participants from youth Activista, YPC, TYVA, AATZ staff as well as representatives of CBOs from LRPs was aimed at stimulating ideas on social entrepreneurship and innovation within youth, as strategic means to provide various options towards improving well-being.

It was also aimed at analysing and reflecting on how Tanzania Youth Development Policy (2007) is reflected in the additional value of building innovation and social entrepreneurship skills and to assess how the policy and other policies have gaps and challenges that need to be addressed.

Collins Odhiambo who facilitated the training insisted that social innovation is relevant now than ever before, because the funding opportunities are continuing to narrow down every day and even the available funding is coming with restrictions. Also, innovation is important to help address social complex challenges by providing innovative solutions which are tailored towards people's needs.

"As CSOs, we need to challenge ourselveshow do we support young people to be innovative and challenge policies? We need to be innovative and think out of the box in our work, otherwise we will remain irrelevant," insisted Collins.

As part of the training, participants did a mapping of existing policy environment in Tanzania to see if there are any policies related to social entrepreneurship and innovation and if there is an enabling environment to help youth be innovative.

As a result of the analysis, participants highlighted that even the Youth Development Policy does not clearly indicate on

how the issue of innovation and social entrepreneurship skill will be addressed.

"We have the policies, yes, but most of them are out-dated and they are not relevant to the current context of youth in the country. Implementation on the other hand is still a challenge as some policies lack laws to guide implementation," said Mohammed Ally-youth from Pemba

Also, during the training, participants were guided on how to practically turn challenges in their communities into innovative business ideas, using the canvas business model from the stage of identifying ideas to the stage of product/service.

The session saw participants, in their groups, coming out with very good and innovative ideas that can be implemented and help solve some social challenges in the communities. There will be a follow up on the implementation of the ideas.

Speaking during the training, AATZ Country Director Yaekob Metena insisted to participants that innovation means drawing lessons from the past on how we do things and explore new ways of improving it. *"Whatever you do, be it small of bigger, ask yourself, How differently could I do it?"* said Yaekob.

In Tanzania, the youth (aged 15-35) is estimated to comprise 35% of the overall population. However, they are highly



..how to identify & analyse challenges in communities



Guiding participants how to refine their ideas...

affected by extreme poverty resulting from high unemployment rates and lack of adequate participation in decision making processes that affect their lives.

Unemployment rate among youth is 12.3% for males and 14.3 for females with urban youth suffering the most at 26.7% and rural youth at 7.9%. Therefore, unleashing potentials of youth is crucial for nation building through their economic and political participation.

The Youth Empowerment and Influence in Tanzania Programme is Strategic Partnership Agreement which runs from 2018 to 2021 and funded by DANIDA. It is implemented in eight (8) countries including Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Myanmar, Nigeria, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

AATZ Capacitates Women's Rights Village Committees



Members of women's rights village committees in a plenary discussion

By Esther Simon, Tandahimba

ActionAid Tanzania(AATZ), through its Tandahimba and Newala LRP, organized capacity building workshop for Village Women Rights Committees in Tandahimba, aimed at sharing experiences and knowledge about women's rights and existing efforts in the district towards defending the same.

The workshop, which was also meant to come up with a good plan for effective working of the committees to achieve the desired goals, was attended by committee members from 15 villages, Ward Community Development Officers, Ward Executive Officers from seven wards, District Council Community Development and Social Welfare officials, Police Gender Desk representative and TAWORO executive committee members.

The committees were formed in 15 villages of Tandahimba and 10 villages of Newala through engagement with women's rights associations namely Tandahimba Women Rights Organisation (TAWORO) and Newala Women Rights Organisation (NEWORA).

The committees were formed to bridge the gap between women's rights associations and key departments in the district, including community development department, Police Gender Desk all of which are operating at district level, and in the community at grassroots.

"The committees are going to be the link, the

educators, lobbying and advocacy drivers, and informers of all practices related to violence against women in their respective villages," said Mr Dinno Celestin, the LRP Coordinator during his opening speech.

The District Community Development Officer, Mr Massau Aloyce, requested Ward Community Development Officers to submit reports to his office which show how they have been dealing with violence against women in their respective wards each month, in collaboration with the Women Rights Committees.

He also urged the Women Rights Committees and TAWORO to deal effectively with the violence against women and children at household level and report to the concerned authorities, so that they can get support because that is the way the community will recognize the importance of the women's rights associations.

Vice Chairperson of TAWORO, Ms Hawa Lada disclosed that women bare many persecutions in their homes, but they

never disclose them for fear of getting divorced. *"We are beaten, insulted, denied our rights and freedom but we keep quiet because the oppressors are our husbands, we fear divorce,"* said Hawa.

In her contribution, Regina Nyerere from Police Gender Desk blamed the community, especially women who are the victims for not being cooperative to the Police whenever violence is perpetrated against them.

"People may keep on blaming the police for not reacting to such cases, but in reality we do respond to every reported case. But, I usually fail to understand my fellow women, they face severe brutality, a case is reported, but when we start investigations the same victim because of her affection to the accused, she purposely destroys the evidence to help the accused.... this is so discouraging," complained Regina.

Concluding the meeting, the following resolutions were made; such a meeting will be held quarterly, for reflection, and will be organized by the Community Development Department. Another resolution was that there will be joint field visits to villages to assess the work of the committees and government officials in addressing the problem of violence against women.

The visiting team will involve District Council Officials, Police Gender Desk, TAWORO, and likeminded CBOs.

On top of that, the district council has promised to extend the efforts to other villages which are not yet reached.



participants in group discussion..

Mafia Discuss Unpaid Care Work for Women

By Amri Lutera-Mafia

Unpaid care work is essential to human development and sustaining households and communities. However, women's disproportionate responsibility for this work makes it a burden and has severe consequences on their ability to enjoy their other rights and freedom.

Unpaid care work can simply be defined as the activities done around the home and in the community to contribute at meeting the basic physical and emotional needs of individuals, families and communities.

In Mafia District, common unpaid care work includes taking care of children, elderly people and people who are ill, household work such as cooking, raising children, agricultural work, preparing food for the family, collecting firewood and fetching water.

Most of the women do engage in these activities but feel that their work and contributions are not contemplated in monetary form because the communities are not appreciating, hence there is no recognition of their contributions to their families' income.

The situation leads to most women's rights being violated because of power imbalances between men and women within the families. These include divorce due to non-fortified relationships among married couples and lack of control of family resources and forced marriages.

As part of Mafia Local Rights programme women's initiative, the LRP organized dialogue meetings aimed at increasing awareness among community members on the concept of Unpaid care work and the analysis around **Reduction, Recognition and Redistribution**, provide linkages between communities and government officials on the fight against gender roles and responsibility and strengthen women's ability to build up assets, skills and voice and, thus, women's empowerment.

The dialogue brought together 186 people from two wards of Kiringwe and Kiegeani and it included commu-

Mwanaimani from Marimbani village contributing during the dialogue..



nity member representatives, community development facilitators (CDFs), Women Rights groups, local government officials and Police Gender Desk.

During the meeting, awareness on the concept of unpaid care work was given focusing on analysis around **Reduction, Recognition and Redistribution**. Participants were also required to specify self help jobs and the division of gender roles. The two lists were designed to show works performed by women and those performed by men for 24 hours along with social and biological activities.

Contributing during the dialogue Mwanaimani Abdallah (community member) said unpaid care work was not contemplated in monetary form because the communities do not appreciate hence there is no recognition of their contributions to the families' income.

"We appreciate AATZ for supporting community members and other stakeholder to come together and analyze unpaid care works to bring change in the community," concluded Mwanaimani

From the analysis, it shows that within 24 hours women had a lot of unpaid care work to do and it is associated with so many challenges which continue to affect them.

In addition, participants also identified advocacy issues for the district and national level including improving provision of public services eg water, electricity, health that ultimately will reduce the burden of unpaid care work for women.

For family level, participants agreed that husbands and wives should sit together, do analysis and discuss how to address the existing challenges.

Recognition of women's unpaid care work is essential to the social and economic wellbeing of individuals, families and larger society.

Through its Country Strategy paper IV, AATZ focuses on women's economic empowerment intervention as a means to enhance their ownership of resources and enhance their decision-making roles at family and community level.

The organization is committed to work with women and their organizations for the recognition, value and redistribution of women's unpaid care work.

Children Empowerment Helps Mtinko Pupils Demand Their Rights



Editha and her fellow students in the class

Disability is not inability, is a common saying that rightly applies to Editha, an 11-year old pupil at Mtinko Primary School of Singida District. The energetic girl who is living with disability (hearing impairment) is defying all the odds to nurse her dream of becoming a teacher, so that she can enlighten other children.

Having suffered a setback earlier in her life ,that almost prematurely killed her dream, now she is happy as she finally joined her age mates at school. Even though the school is 3km away from her home, the distance does not bother her at all compared to the value of education she is getting.

"Before joining school, I used to stay at home and do house chores including taking care of cattle, farming, taking care of my siblings and other home activities. This was because my parents did not know the importance of enrolling me to school. But now, I no longer stay at home.I love coming to school and meet with teachers and learn than staying at home," said Editha.

The predicament is not a preserve of Editha alone at Mtinko Primary School as there are other pupils living with disabilities, who are also pushing for their dreams to become reality. The other pupils are none other than Saumu and Zainab. Saumu dreams of becoming

a successful business woman while Zainab wants to be a teacher.

And, despite challenges they are encountering in and out of their learning environment, but their thirst of acquiring education and becoming successful people is vivid on their faces.

Mtinko Primary School is among schools in Singida District that participated in the first phase of the Promoting Quality Education Through Domestic Resource mobilisation project implemented by ActionAid Tanzania (AATZ) in collaboration with MEDO.

The school, which was established in 1981, is inclusive with an enrolment of 1,070 pupils of which 511 are girls while the remaining 559 are boys. Currently, the school has nine pupils with hearing impairment (5 girls and 4 boys). But, due to shortage of classrooms all of them are mixed to form one class, despite them being in different educational levels (Standards I,III and IV).

Interventions implemented by the project at the school include establishment of a school club known as Nyota Njema. Members explained that through the club, they were able to learn on their rights including the right to free quality education, right to safe environment, right to non-discrimination, right to enough and skilled teachers and tax.

They also added that during different events such as parents and community meetings, they perform songs with messages of children's rights as a way of raising awareness to the community on its role to protect their rights.

Saumu and Zainabu are also active members of the club and they used the knowledge of their rights from the club to pass on their message to Hon Stella Manyanya, the former Deputy Minister for Education when she paid an official visit to the school, last year. They confidently presented their demands, requesting enough classrooms so that they can have a comfortable learning environment and a dormitory to help other children with disability, who are still out of school.Their message was not in vain because the government has already supported the school to construct 2 classrooms and 2 dormitories for disabled children. The construction is in its final stages.

Mr Benard Muna, a special education teacher at the school admitted that had these girls failed to demand this from the government, the school wouldn't have those buildings to cater for their needs.

For Editha, Saumu and Zainab knowing how to read and write has also become a catalyst for other parents in the community to start bringing their children with disability to the school.

"Some community members believed that deaf children cannot learn. They perceived it as wastage of resources. So they prefer leaving them at home to do house work. But now, they are wondering that these pupils can read and write. It has become news even to other villages and now I am receiving calls from parents who want to bring their disabled children to school," narrated Mr Muna.

He added that there are still challenges they are facing in teaching and dealing with pupils with disability, including inadequate knowledge on special education for teachers (sign language), teaching aids and low understanding of parents on their role in taking care of disabled children.

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Children Empowerment.....

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“With such challenges, we are still trying our level best to continue raising awareness to parents and community in general on the importance of giving the disabled children the opportunity to go to school and at school, we are also regularly orienting other pupils on how to deal with their colleagues and not discriminating against them,” added Muna.

Stories of deaf pupils at Mtinko is an indication that there are still so many children living with disability, who have dreams and the desire to go to school, but unfortunately due to different challenges they are not able to get the opportunity, as their right.

According to Citizen Education Report (2016), participation in school by children with disabilities and those from nomadic communities is very low.

It is estimated that less than 5% of disabled children in Tanzania are currently

attending school. This is despite the commitment in the National Policy on Disability 2004 to provide basic education to all children with disabilities.

In its new Country Strategic Paper AATZ is committed to work to see public education system are more responsive and rights of children and girls in particular and guarantee free, quality and inclusive education. This will be achieved through school/community based participatory research using PRS on the rights and access to quality and inclusive education, engaging with networks, coalitions

and teachers unions for enactment/enforcement of progressive education policies, increased support to education in general and its inclusiveness, engage with relevant institutions to roll out pre and in service training curricular for improving teachers pedagogical skills especially with regards to the inclusion of girls and children with disability.



Progressive Taxation For Gender Responsive Public Service Delivery

By Andrew Chikwore, Public Accountability & Tax Justice Advisor

ActionAid Tax working group recently held a meeting in Arusha that brought together 27 participants including representatives from NORAD project, while ActionAid Tanzania (AATZ) was represented by Public Accountability and Tax Justice Advisor and Education and Domestic Resource Mobilization Manager.

The major objective of the meeting was to discuss progressive taxation in an effort to ensure that developing countries adopt progressive taxation systems that will result in those who earn more (corporates and individuals) paying more, while those who earn less paying less.

During the meeting, different forms of taxes were discussed including Value Added Tax, Excise Tax, International Trade Tax, Informal Sector Tax, Wealth Tax and Property Tax. The aim was to learn on how to make the taxes more progressive, to ensure that governments can collect as much resources as possible to fund gender responsive public service delivery.

Given the strategic changes that have taken place (shifting to progressive taxation), it was important to review the programme framework which was adopted during the previous meetings. Sad to note is the continued growing power of corporations and wealthy individuals who are influencing government policy making processes, making it more regressive and increasing the burden on the poor.

Also, connections between tax justice and gender-responsive public services (GRPS) were made since the provision of such services is the motivation for ActionAid to work on revenue-raising. It is also why we focus on progressive taxation, since we want to be sure that revenue is raised in a way that does not make undue demands on women and other marginalized groups, who need quality public services most.

The planning that was done as part of the last session made it possible to focus our work more intensely on progressive taxation, tax treaties, tax research as well as creating opportunities for future engagements.

At the end, it was agreed that ActionAid needed to continue putting pressure on governments and international institutions to stop illicit financial flows and aggressive tax planning by corporations.

Improving Gender Relations Through SNAP Project

Jumanne Khamis and his wife Mariam live in Ntondo village of Singida District which is in the central part of Tanzania. They are among members of groups formed under Singida Nutrition & Agro-ecology project implemented by AATZ and other partners. Jumanne joined the group in 2016 after mobilisation and awareness conducted by mentor farmers in their village.

Having savoured the benefits of the project, Jumanne shares his testimony on how his participation changed his perception as a man towards gender roles at family level.

“In the beginning, we had a perception that this project is for women and children. But after understanding that it was meant for both of us, we started to participate fully in the group activities,” said the seemingly jovial Jumanne

He added that apart from learning agro-ecological farming practices, which are the major aspect of the project, they also learnt about gender equality especially issues of violence, importance of participatory decision making in the family and division of responsibilities between men and women at all levels.

“Before joining the SNAP group it was difficult for me to help my wife with domestic



chores. I used to think all family and house responsibilities are for women, hence I had no time for it. But trainings have changed my perception and nowadays I help my wife to fetch water, attend the children and even cooking,” narrated Khamis.

On her part, Mariam (Jumanne’s wife) also testifies on how the project has helped to change the attitude of men in her village, including her husband.

“Through this project, we are cur-

rently seeing men in our village changing... For example, nowadays my husband is helping me in all family responsibilities; we make all decisions together something which was not there before,” narrated Mariam.

Pili Shaban who is a mentor farmer in Ntondo village also explains that participation of men in farmers’ groups has brought a great deal of change to men... *“Our group had 56 members (28 female and 28 men). Men are very active in the groups and now we are witnessing their engagement in family responsibilities increasing and cases of women abuse and violence are also reduced to a greater extent,* said Pili

She further added that generally through the project, agro-ecological farming practices led to improved food security at household level and nutrition for children. *“We applied all the knowledge that we were taught by agriculture experts and as a result farmers have harvested more than previous years. We have really benefitted from this project and now other community members want to join the groups”.* Pili concluded.

ActionAid Tanzania has been implementing the project to promote food security and enhance women’s role at household and community level. The project focuses on promoting agro-ecology and gender involving women farmers. The project has been using peer learning approach to create a friendly learning environment among farmers under the leadership of mentor farmers.



Mafia Forms Advocacy Taskforce To Demand Accountability



Members of the taskforce listening to Mafia Coordinator (Samwel Mesiak) in one of the meetings

By Samwel Mesiak, Mafia

Mafia District, located on an island in the Coastal region, is one of the poorest areas in Tanzania, with its inhabitants largely depending on agriculture and fishing for survival. Though farming is mainly subsistence with cash crops such as coconut and cashew nut, fishing has, in recent years, become more significant and commercialized.

According to a research conducted by AATZ(2016) on revenue collection, allocation and spending in hotels and fish industry, one of the findings was that if the revenue base and potential in Mafia are well developed, more funds will be collected and can be used to improve equitable provision of social services in the district.

Also, in different engagements and forums, community members raised that there is lack of transparency and accountability from government and companies which are doing business in the district, that's why it is very difficult to get a fair allocation of the resources to help improve social services in their areas.

Under its public accountability and tax justice work, Mafia LRP continued to support communities through awareness raising, on findings from the report and their role in making follow ups on accountability and transparency of leaders on their resources. Series of activities including engagement meetings with local and district leaders were conducted to openly discuss issues around revenue collection, allocation and

spending. But for the sustainability of these advocacy activities, a need for establishing a District advocacy taskforce that will be responsible for all engagements with decision makers and companies to advocate for tax justice and be able to get their rights as citizens was necessary.

To put the idea into action, community members formed a district task force which consists of 25 members (15 males and 10 females) and they will be working under an interim leadership. AATZ is planning to support the taskforce in capacity building, for them to widely understand their roles and responsibilities and being able to develop detailed advocacy strategy that will help them to tackle the issues.

Waziri Suleyman, a member of the taskforce says that the aim of the platform is to make follow ups to ensure that there is fair distribution of resources between community members and government... "What we want is transparency and accountability. We want the government to get its share of tax and citizens get their allocation as stipulated in the laws and bylaws," added Waziri

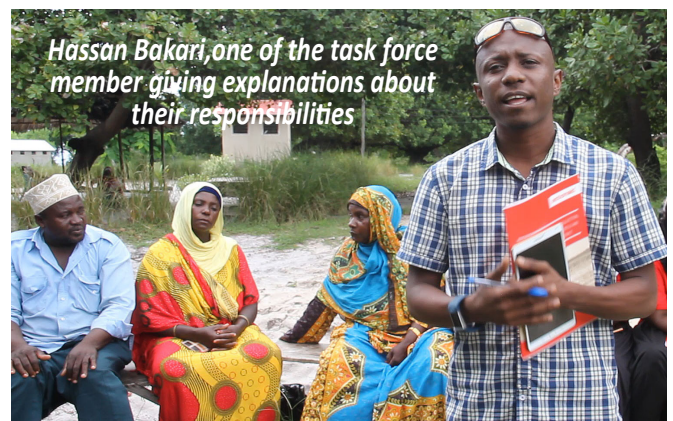
Explaining further on the roles of the taskforce Hassan Bakari had the following to say, "Through the taskforce, we will reach out to all stakeholders both government and private and find ways of collaborating with them to make sure that taxes collected from resources available in our district will benefit every citizen."

So far, among issues that the team dealt with include making strategic engagement with councillors, political leaders and government officials on how the collected revenue can be utilized to improve social services in Mafia (specifically – education, health and transport)

The team also had engagements with owners of fishing and hotel industries ward councillors, local government (LGA) officials on how to improve tax margins and revenue collection that can generate funds and resources towards equitable provision of social services in the district.

The taskforce members emphasized that even if AATZ leaves Mafia today, they are confident that they will continue implementing the advocacy work using the knowledge provided by AATZ.

In its new CSP, AATZ is committed to enhance civic participation and state accountability for democratic governance and redistribution of public resources for the delivery of quality gender responsive public services.



Hassan Bakari, one of the task force member giving explanations about their responsibilities