

GHANA LEARNING AND SHARING TRIP JOINT SUMMARY REPORT:

Introduction:

ArdhiYetu is a program that seeks to support and strengthen the capacity of Tanzanian CSOs to promote land rights of small holder farmers and pastoralists as a means of ensuring food security. As other programs, ArdhiYetu keep striving to be the best through learning and sharing information and knowledge on partnership, land rights and pastoralists issues in Tanzania.

Therefore, ArdhiYetu from CARE Tanzania together with colleagues from Mozambique and Ghana planned an exchange visit to Ghana with the purpose of learning what and how our colleagues are implementing their programs. Amongst people or groups they met in Ghana, were three groups; KASA (meaning Speak Out), Forest Watch Ghana and CICOL.

Main objectives of the trip were:

- To learn from Ghana how to build strong and sustainable coalition best on your Forest Watch Ghana Coalition experience
- To learn and share on the ground advocacy experience through partners
- Focus group discussion on partnership, how to keep and maintain strong and sustainable partnership.

Through meetings and discussion with Forest Watch Ghana, KASA, and CICOL, we realized that these coalitions are structured differently.

KASA explained three different coalition structures, namely; (1) the loose coalition convened by an individual/organization, without governance structure and the convener assuming all costs; (2) the loose (not registered) coalition hosted by an organization; and (3) the formalized organization with a secretariat, own funding, governance structure in place, etc. For instance, KASA is an example of a multisector national coalition that is registered but mainly facilitates joint interventions.

Operations:

KASA works with government on thematic basis involving government officials in their activities which make it easy during the advocacy activities. For example, CICOL is a committee member in a government land registration committee which gives it an avenue to advocate for issues of their interest. Civil societies are using all the avenues available from the government side to get involved to push and advocate for issues of interest to their impact groups. However, sometimes, it is the other way around, where government is involved in civil society activities for example, parallel review where civil societies invite the government and present the issues to the government so that it is aware of the issues the civil

societies will be presenting. This has helped on the part of the government to improve of the shortcoming addressed by the civil society organizations.

Lessons:

- There is an amicable relationship between government and civil societies on matters of common interests such that, the two sides involve each other in their activities in a mutually reinforcing relationship. This could be a lesson for us as partners to involve government officials in our program implementation. However, being able to balance and establish limits to avoid compromising stances and roles of civil societies in advocating for the poor.

We also learned that civil society organizations are highly recognized by government officials/institutions such that they are being involved in some of the government projects and decision making. FWG explained how the coalition was involved in the preparations of the forests related policies and guidelines to the extent which the government adopted all their recommendations. Similarly, CICOL is participating in the land administration project that is jointly implemented by the government.

Challenges:

- ✚ Gender issues were not being addressed by the coalitions. There was no clear strategy or indication showing coalitions are giving gender issues and gender gaps the priority it deserves. For example, issues of women participation in decision making, and representation on land rights, forest rights, and other issues could not be seen.
- ✚ No strategy to address inequality and violation of human rights especially through the traditional leaders, such as chiefs. There was no strategy to overcome or how best to address this as well as addressing challenges of difficult to convene meetings with chiefs.
- ✚ Lack of protection mechanism to human right defenders who protects and guards the interests of CSOs especially when in confrontation with the government. For example, some of their posters displayed victims of human rights violations who had been severely injured and tormented by allegedly government security forces without any protection from human rights activists. One of the activist said they are protecting themselves and sometimes depend on communities and whistleblower to give them hints when their lives are in danger. This is unlike the situation in Tanzania where, Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) strives to protect human rights activists through training, advocacy and capacity building to human rights civil society organizations.
- ✚ They have not been part of the UPR process, but they are working towards it. This will be an opportunity for them to address human rights violation issues in Ghana.
- ✚ Lack of media engagement strategy, and their communication was not clearly showing media engagement apart from having one of the prominent members of FWG who is a journalist (Environmental journalist)

- ✚ There was no clear approach on advocacy strategies and linkages used in their interventions in FWG
- ✚ CICOL has been providing more information in LAP instead of playing an influencing role for policy and legal change when engaging with government as part of the land Administration projects (LAP I & II)

Lessons learned

- ✚ Power of numbers: when CSOs collaborate together to address a certain issue, the impact is great compared to one CSO dealing or addressing the same issue. FWG shared the best cases in advocacy when they managed to mobilize their members to jointly influence the passing of the forest policy and guidelines very successfully due to the pressure of members.
- ✚ Utilizing the individual capacity within the coalition who has connections/link or relation with government officials, or being involved or consulted on government programs/projects.
- ✚ Preparations and sharing of strategic plan jointly
- ✚ Capacity building to each and every meetings of members

Sustainability: Members sharing information between the old and new members to ensure sustainability of the coalition in absence of the founding members or change of things. After a week of learning and sharing sessions, Tanzania team decided on areas of engagement as follows;

- ✚ Initiate or explore the possibilities to establish/join a collective bargaining forum where we can use the platform to address issues of land and land reforms. One of the existing forums is Tanzania Land Alliance TALA. This coalition is already operational and could be one of the best platforms for AYP members to join but there is a need to explore more on its current status and possibility to join and members. The partners were privileged to know that TALA is meeting to decide on its fate for the next programming phase on October 8th). When AYP partners join the TALA network they will use the opportunity to address issues of land and land right reform.