

NETWORK OF PARTICIPATORY METHODOLOGIES PRACTITIONERS/PAMOJA GAMBIA



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

SUBMITTED TO NPMP/PAMOJA GAMBIA

SUBMITTED TO: PAMOJA WEST AFRICA

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INTRODCUTION

Preamble

It is stated in the constitution that the Local Government Administration in The Gambia shall be based on a system of democratically elected councils with a high degree of local autonomy. The statement went further to mention that the state shall be guided by the principles of decentralisation and devolution of government functions and powers to the people at appropriate levels of control to facilitate democratic governance. It was on the basis of that NPMP conducted this programme to fulfil this basic tenet of the Constitution of The Gambia by making its citizenry especially women be aware of their constitutional mandate.

Introduction

The Network of Participatory Methodologies Practitioners – Gambia has received funding from the Democracy and Human Rights Fund of the American Embassy Banjul The Gambia to conduct community sensitization on Local Government Act 2002. The objective of the sensitization was to inform and educate farmers on the content of the Act with the view to increasing and enhancing their level of participation in local government reform activities.

Objective of the Act

To establish and regulate a decentralised local government system for the Gambia, make provision for the functions, powers and duties of local authorities.

Participation: Four of the 13 registered on NPMP/PG have conducted the sensitization training in their target intervention communities. Agency for Development of Women and Children (ADWAC), Wulli and Sandu Development Agency (WASDA), Future in Our Hands The Gambia (FIOH), Agency for Village Support (AVISU) collectively implemented programme.

Target: A total of 3200 women farmers have benefitted from the sensitization training sessions conducted by the four organisations

Objectives of the Community Sensitizations

- To sensitize the communities on the key areas of the Local Government Act 2002
- To create awareness of beneficiaries on roles and responsibilities of Ward Councilors, Finances and Audit
- To understand decentralization policies and procedures, and



Facilitators introducing sensitisation plan to participants

Key Areas Covered

A. Village Development Committee (VDC)

Composition of VDC
Registration
Removal from the VDC membership
Dissolution of VDC
Meetings of the VDC
Functions of the VDC

B. Ward Development Committee (WDC)

Composition of WDC
Removal from membership of WDC
Dissolution of WDC
Meetings of WDC
Functions of WDC

C. The District Authority

Composition of District Authority
Appointment of *Seyfo* (District Chief)
Qualification and disqualification of a *Seyfo*
Cessation and removal of *Seyfo*
Duties of *Seyfo*
Powers and functions of *Seyfo*
The *Alkalo* (Village Head)
Appointment of an *Alkalo*
Qualification and Disqualification of *Alkalo*
Cessation and removal of *Alkalo*
Duties of *Alkalo*

Testimonies from participants

Mr. Mballow said, and quoted " *what the local government authorities in our localities owe to the citizens is like the people pay taxes and district rates to the Council which shall be used in the community development initiatives such as provision of safe drinking water, education affordable, etc*". Another participant said " *we are never told that we should have a youth representative or women representative in the Council and also not aware that sixty percent of the collected revenue should come back to the tax payers, but all we know is that taxes and rates payment is an obligation and we must do it*".

RECOMMENDATION

NPMP should intensify its sensitisation campaigns to cover more communities as a lot of them are not aware of the content of ACT.

Response: NPMP will continue the sensitisation through member organisations' work while meeting with their target constituents. Sensitisation takes many forms and strategies.

Monitoring of the project Activity

After the completion of the sensitization trainings, NPMP/PG hired an evaluator to assess the performance of the project and its immediate impacts on the farmers.

Objectives:

The objectives of the monitoring and evaluation exercise are as follows:

- To check the implementation status of the project
- To monitor and evaluate the activities implemented through the project
- To jointly review the implementation processes of the project
- To identify implementation gaps of the project if any
- To identify the effects of the project and the most significant changes on the lives and livelihoods of project beneficiaries

The monitoring and evaluation exercise was carried out by a consultant in collaboration with staff as well as facilitators of the organizations implementing the project, namely ADWAC, FIOH-TG, AVISU, WASDA and WAD.

The consultant employed focus group discussions, beneficiary reviews and stakeholder review meetings to deduce evidence from farmers.

Project Beneficiaries Review: A forum to hear from the primary beneficiaries to speak their minds on the impact by using focus group discussions.

(b) **Stakeholder Review Meeting:** These meetings provided an opportunity for implementing organizations to reflect on the project implementation with a view to critically analyze the processes involved as well as put forth their recommendations for similar future projects. This was successfully carried out in all the regions, with the active involvement and participation of all the stakeholders.

Key Findings:

Impact of Project: The following responses from the interview showed how the project impacted on the people and the communities at large

- There is greater awareness on the Local Government Act
- Project has changed our view on people's rights, roles as well as responsibilities in the national development process
- It has made us know things we never knew before about how Local Governments work and mandate
- We now know the percentage of tax that should be ploughed back to the communities
- We now know who should nominate a Councillor and also whether an ordinary person can attend council meetings
- It has cleared a lot of misconceptions around the elections of council members
- The project has impacted in re-shaping people's thinking about the local authorities.
- Communities are empowered after knowing that they owe the council certain duties so that their dues are also given; they pay taxes to council and expect in return facilities like schools, clinics, roads etc.
- The local government elections is now seen as an important exercise, before the sensitization, we see it as a useless activity and a waste of resources
- Politically, communities are now aware that the Area Councils otherwise the Local government authority is the representation of the central government
- We are looking forward to the next election in order to practice what we learnt from the exercise
- It is the responsibility of the village development committee to carry out all the development planning of the village.
- That there should be a term limit for the chairperson and his/her committee that should not exceed four years (two years term)

- Although with a target of 3200 people the project has reached over 4000 people. This was achieved due to the sensitization approach which gives the opportunity to those interested community members to participate positively in the discussions
- Three (3) facilitators have begun translating the LG Act into Pulaar with the support from Network of Participatory Methodologies Practitioners/Pamoja Gambia management team. The inspiration to take up this task is a manifest of the interest generated towards the theme of the project.

Constraints: Despite the achievements registered, the implementation of the project had witnessed the following constraints which had somewhat interrupted timely implementation in some regions;

- The busy schedule of the farmers particularly the women folk who are very much occupied with domestic chores
- Vehicle constraints in some organizations made timely follow-up and monitoring difficult
- Coordination and submission of organization reports to Pamoja Gambia Secretariat for compilation and onward submission to the donor.

Conclusions: The community sensitization sessions were highly applauded and acknowledged by the participants. In their own words, the project is very timely because it has enhanced their knowledge on a theme which has the potential to lay a strong foundation for grassroots participation in the democratization process of the country.

Recommendations:

- Provide participants with translated copies and versions of the Local Gov. Act
- Provide communities, especially the Village Development Committees (VDCs) with copies of the constitution, local government act and other legal instruments to be used as reference material



Evaluation Sessions: Beneficiary Review meetings

CLUSTER TRAINER WORKSHOP

Future in Our Hands the Gambia (FIOHTG) is one of the active members of the Network and as part of its efforts to contribute in literacy development of youths and women it has implemented Cluster training for its stakeholders.

As a measure to enhance the quality of the SEGRA modules used by the cluster trainers in its various intervention areas, a three day workshop was held at the FIOHTG office in Kotu. The workshop designed to discuss the modules, identify areas for improvement and agreed o way forward. The

workshop provided an opportunity for the cluster trainers to meet, share learning, highlight challenges and come with suggestions for ways forward.

As part of the workshop program, the cluster trainers additionally participated in an interactive session on health education focusing on Ebola. Discussions and exercises highlighted themes such as personal beliefs about Ebola, facts about the virus and key areas for prevention.

Village Literacy Facilitators' Training Workshop

The Agency for the Development of Women and Children has conducted literacy training for twelve (12) Village-based Facilitators from its intervention communities. The training lasted for ten (10) consecutive days and was facilitated by the staff of the Agency. The Agency received funding from a Belgian NGO to implement a three-year literacy project for its target women farmers. The objective of supporting women is premised on the believe that women have a lower literacy rate and their involvement in development is crucial.

The training has equipped facilitators with relevant methodologies, concepts and approaches to be used in the implementation of the literacy project.

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