

## **Madagascar & Tanzania: an exchange visit to learn more about model developed on biodiversity participatory management**

A team from Malagasy NGO Fanamby ([www.fanamby.org.mg](http://www.fanamby.org.mg)) have visited the TFCG (Tanzania Forest Conservation Group) site in Iringa region, District of Mufindi within the exchange visit program supported by CEPF.

The exchange visit had the following objectives:

- To improve mutual understanding between African organization working in biodiversity conservation
- To exchange knowledge and experiences in different areas : local participation in natural resources conservation, rural organization, production, marketing and training



*The team*

The project is located in the eastern arc mountain. The region is characterised by the mountains, the raining climate and the tea plantation.

The goal of the intervention is that population in forest adjacent communities had the capacity to participate in the forest management through:

- sharing information and experiences

- having a common voice on their participation
- facilitating the dissemination of ideas, knowledge and recommendations to the responsible authorities for consideration
- supporting and fostering community initiatives to alleviate poverty

The objective of the project is that the biodiversity of the forests is protected through sustainable forest management and communities have improved livelihood security.

The forest extends over 600 ha on land belonging to the villages. The forest was being heavily logged when the project first intervened. Project succeeded in bringing together the key stakeholders and provided technical assistance in establishing a process of participatory forest management and writing a management plan. The Participatory Forest Management committee is now managing the forest according to the management plan. Illegal timber harvesting has now stopped.

The forest has a number of plants and animals that are endemic to the Eastern Arc.

Project is working with communities to establish a management system for the forests. This has included strengthening the Village Environmental Committees and writing and implementing management plans.

More than 15 villages are involved in the process. Criteria to choose the village are based on the biodiversity richness, community motivation and the threats.

The main facts that the team has observed about the participatory management process during the visit are as follows:

### **Forestry legislation**

Tanzania's legal and policy framework with regard to the management and ownership of forests by rural communities is one of the most advanced in Africa. Reforms introduced in the late 1990s and early 2000s provide the legal basis for communities to own and manage forest resources on village lands or jointly manage forest resources within government forest reserves:

- The policy to devolve the management of unreserved forests to village governments as a means to improve management.
- The rights and responsibilities of local level forest managers are clear and unambiguous

### **Women participation**

Each village has a natural resources committee including the chairpersons (composed by traditional and government representative) and an elected members. Women participation is very significant within the committee that we have met and they adopt a common approach, with the men, to local problems relating to forest management. Women have the same level of responsibilities for implementing forest management activities on behalf of the village.

The village committee is technically and financially supported by the project.

### **Collection mechanism (forest)**

The mechanism adopted by the community under the lead of the project is well established and allowed to manage the forest in a sustainable manner. It can be described as follows (according the management plan):

The collection mechanism is explained as follows

First line: land owner (field adjacent the forest)

Second line: community use

From the third line: which couldn't be cut or exploited – belonging to the government/ community

This mechanism is observed in all communities and has been respected by all members.



*The project officer explaining the mechanism*

### **Reforestation**

The project has assisted villagers to plant trees as an alternative source of firewood for villagers and as a source of cash income.

Reforestation is implemented within household or a group of households. Tree nursery is established within private field. This approach allows facilitating the technical assistance provided to the community and secures the investment made in terms of land status and the nursery up keeping.

The result is, as described above, a thousand of trees have been planted and the problem of firewood has been resolved. In add, the reforestation has generated revenue to local community.



*Visiting the tree nursery*

### **Village community bank (VICOBA)**

We have observed that the presence of village community bank facilitate the approach developed by the project. The capacity building mechanism – implemented by the VICOBA promoter - to empower the participant to adequately meet the economic challenges of the business sector has a great impact on the forest beneficiaries' behavior. The project can entrust to local community all financial aspects (especially in terms of financial management) of the forest and the village.

This model supports the effort deployed by the project in reducing poverty to vulnerable and economically active poor especially for women. The joint effort has produced a significant result particularly in local empowerment process.

### **Livelihood improvement**

The project is helping people to develop more sustainable livelihoods:

- Community members have the training, tools and advice they need to turn traditional activities such as beekeeping, pig breeding and fish breeding into profit making

enterprises. This means that they are no longer dependent on selling timber resources such as firewood and charcoal to survive.

- Communities are involved with protecting their habitat now that they have alternative ways to earn a living that don't exploit forest resources.

The strategy can be explained as follows: the project provides start up in a household and subsequently, the household is required to replicate the mechanism in other households.

### **Community network**

A network has been established by TFCG to enable forest adjacent communities to engage more actively in the development of participatory forest management.

The network activities are mainly focused on facilitating mutual learning on participatory forest management between forest adjacent communities through exchange visits and regular meetings and organizing annual community forest conservation network workshops in which forest adjacent communities meet to share ideas and experiences on participatory forest management.

The network structure can be described as follows:

- At the national level the network's activities are coordinated by the TFCG Network Unit. The network is supported by a committee, elected at the annual general meeting
- A Local Area Conservation Networks: village environmental committees from communities in the vicinity of a specific forest area come together to form a Local Area Conservation Network
- A Village Environmental Committees : these committees comprise elected representatives from forest adjacent villages



*With the community in Lulanda*

## **Conclusions**

- There are a huge link between living conditions and community participation in forest management:
  - o The region is served by a road in good condition: the degree of isolation is low
  - o The land on which is installed the community is fertile: their livelihood is more or less assured
- ⇒ Facilitate the project implementation in many areas : basic infrastructures exist
- Communities are involved from project design to monitoring the implementation: high level of participation especially for women and a satisfying result in community organization
- Volunteering mechanism is easily implemented when the project has organized a huge and regular awareness campaign

- Effective local community participation should be accompanied by a legislative framework adapted to local context and allowing the livelihood improvement within rural households.