

Intervention:	Networking for Sustainable Agriculture
Country:	Tanzania
Date:	Since 1996
Objectives:	Capacity-building in sustainable agricultural knowledge, fund-raising strategies and communication skills for empowering farmer groups
Approach of the Intervention:	<p>Capacity Building: Since 1996, PELUM-Tanzania has conducted more than 65 national and regional training workshops on technical, social, management and policy subjects: sustainable agriculture, seed security, genetically modified crops, organic standards and certification, farmer groups and networking, facilitation, planning, monitoring and evaluation, fundraising and communication. More than 350 farmers and staff from 33 member organizations have attended these courses.</p> <p>Documentation and Communication: PELUM-Tanzania's documentation and resource centre disseminates information on sustainable agriculture initiatives, advocacy and lobbying activities in Tanzania through visits, discussion forums, emails, leaflets, newsletters, and the PELUM Association's bulletin and its magazine, <i>Ground Up</i>. The resource centre has a large number of publications, reports, and CD-ROMs in English and Swahili.</p> <p>Promoting Farmer's Networks: PELUM-Tanzania facilitates the networking of farmer organizations. It does this by working with its member organizations to promote self-help farmer groups and local farmer networks. It then encourages these networks to join a national network of farmers' groups, known as MVIWATA. This is the only independent national farmer network in Tanzania, and is controlled by small-scale farmers themselves.</p> <p>Advocacy: PELUM-Tanzania organizes zonal workshops on policy analysis, negotiation skills, decision-making processes and strategic advocacy issues. It has held workshops for 64 farmers on policy formulation and policy analysis. It lobbies and advocates together with farmer and development organizations on food and seed security, markets and trade, sustainable land use management and agriculture, biosafety and genetically modified organisms.</p> <p>Marketing and Trade: Together with farmer organizations, PELUM-Tanzania has studied factors affecting smallholder farmers' market conditions in Tanzania and proposed actions to improve them. It has started a program to tackle imperfections in the market for smallholder farmers' produce. It has also organized exchange visits for farmers and member organizations to learn about cereal banks, savings and credit organizations, and produce marketing.</p> <p>Developing the PELUM Tanzania network: PELUM-Tanzania holds annual general meetings to discuss the previous year's activities, review progress, plan activities, and develop strategies. In September 1999, the members met to develop a vision and mission statement and to refine the organization's strategies and the roles of its staff.</p>
Benefits and Impacts:	<p>Capacity Building: Member organizations and smallholder farmers have increased their knowledge on sustainable agriculture and farmers' empowerment. More farmers use and multiply seeds of local varieties of crops and trees; they make greater use of manure; and the use of locally prepared organic pesticides has gone up. The training has motivated other organizations to join the PELUM-Tanzania network. It has generated new partnerships and collaborative relationships, further promoting sustainable agriculture, and increasing the scope and reach of PELUM-Tanzania itself.</p>

	<p>Promoting Farmer’s Networks: Farmers groups’ networks are becoming common all over the country. They have gained confidence by exchanging experience and mutual learning. Networks have achieved a great deal of recognition inside and outside Tanzania. Networks affiliated with PELUM-Tanzania are attractive partners for government agencies and NGOs.</p> <p>Unlike most projects and donor-driven farmers’ organizations, local MVIWATA groups and networks have a high degree of financial autonomy and independence.</p> <p>Advocacy: Many members and partner organizations have developed advocacy strategies, including forming alliances with farmers’ organizations to identify issues, lobby and campaign together. Farmers’ delegates raised the visibility of smallholder farmers at the 2002 Johannesburg Summit. Farmers were recognized as a “major group” during the summit.</p> <p>Important groups of stakeholders, especially smallholder farmers, were not involved in drafting a biosafety bill. A campaign against genetically modified organisms succeeded in preventing the government from submitting this draft to Parliament in 2005.</p> <p>Developing the PELUM Tanzania network: PELUM-Tanzania’s membership has grown from 5 in 1995 to 33 in 2005. The organization has built up a strong constituency and has gained a reputation for high-quality, innovative work with and on behalf of smallholder farmers, who are the majority of Tanzania’s population. PELUM-Tanzania’s member and partner organizations have formed strong local partnerships.</p>
Lessons learned:	<p>Strengths. PELUM-Tanzania is composed of many strong member organizations, has a focused and experienced management team, established administrative procedures and a committed board. It has the facilities it needs to deliver services to its members. It has strong ties with other organizations at the national and international levels, including the regional PELUM Association and several funding agencies willing to sustain current operations.</p> <p>Weaknesses. Some members do not pay their membership fees on time, and communication can be difficult. There are only four full-time staff, so inevitably there are gaps in skills, such as financial management, impact assessment, proposal writing and presentation. Although it is a membership organization, PELUM-Tanzania is dependent on donor support, and finding funds for new activities is a challenge. And in some ways, the organization is fighting an uphill battle in support of smallholder farmers’ interests in the face of globalization and increased dominance of larger players.</p> <p>Opportunities. Because it is seen as a credible organization, PELUM-Tanzania has high potential to increase its membership and garner more support from donors. It has been recognized by the government and other stakeholders at the national and international level.</p> <p>Threats. As with many development organizations, PELUM-Tanzania is at risk if donors withdraw their funds. Another threat is the danger of conflict among member organizations as their number and variety increases.</p>
Implementing agency & partners	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) Association (www.pelumtanzania.org) MISEREOR (www.misereor.org)
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