

United Republic of Tanzania

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# **ENHANCING ACCESS TO REDD+ INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE IN TANZANIA POLICY BRIEF**

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Climate change is one of the biggest global problems posing challenges to sustainable livelihoods and economic development, particularly in the developing countries Tanzania being one of them. Tanzania has embarked on a policy to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) as a climate change mitigation measure that would also improve livelihoods of communities and enhance forest conservation. REDD+ widens the scope of the mechanism to include conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks, as well as sustainable management of forests. REDD+ as a new and evolving concept, needs a systematic and consistent information flow among various actors to promote learning, knowledge and information sharing to bridge existing knowledge gaps and participate effectively in REDD+, among others.



As part of the REDD+ readiness process, two in-depth studies were conducted in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar in 2010 with the aim of identifying REDD+ information needs and effective communication channels to disseminate information to various actors. Specific objectives of the studies were:

- to identify information needs and knowledge gaps among various stakeholders involved in REDD+ implementation,
- to help develop effective communication strategies that will address information needs and promote knowledge and information sharing among various stakeholders.

This policy brief presents the findings of the studies and current communication developments in the REDD+ process.

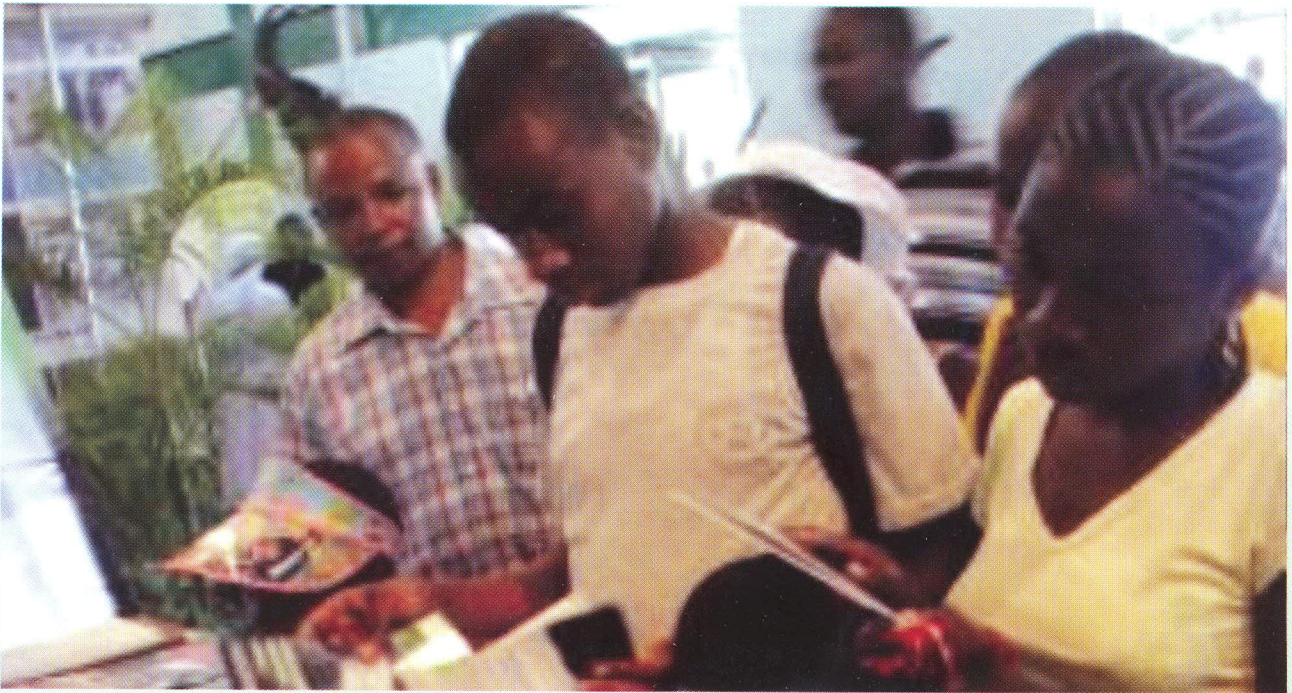
## KEY FINDINGS

### Information needs and Knowledge gaps

Knowledge about REDD+ among different stakeholders in Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar was found to be low at all levels at the time of the studies. Critical information and knowledge gaps identified among various stakeholders include:

- Concepts of REDD+
- Benefits of REDD+
- Coordination of REDD+ activities
- REDD+ infrastructures,
- Safeguard systems,
- Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV),
- Mechanisms for REDD+ payments and benefit sharing
- Carbon markets and contractual agreements,
- Carbon tenure and understanding of UNFCCC Key deliberations on REDD+

To date, awareness among stakeholders has improved considerably as result of various REDD+ awareness creation and capacity building activities by different actors such as the Government departments, National REDD+ Task Force (NRTF), Development Partners, Research and Academic institutions, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Private sector, REDD+ pilot projects, and UN-REDD Tanzania Programme.



Students reviewing REDD+ publications in one of national exhibitions

## How are the **REDD+** information and knowledge gaps being addressed?

Several on-going initiatives are being implemented to create awareness and to educate the communities and other stakeholders on REDD+ mechanism.

- **Government-led efforts:** The National REDD+ Task Force is involved in awareness creation activities both at national and sub-national levels through stakeholder consultations, radio and TV programmes, website ([www.reddtz.org](http://www.reddtz.org)), production and dissemination of awareness raising materials and participation of government delegates in international meetings as part of capacity building and experience sharing on REDD+ activities and also through implementation of REDD+ Information and Communication Strategy (RICS).
- **REDD+ Pilot projects of NGOs:** The pilot projects are sensitizing, creating awareness, training and building capacities on REDD+ among the communities in various parts of the country through radio and TV programs, e-news, video shows, drama, newspaper articles, policy briefs, brochures and leaflets which address information needs of various actors on REDD+.
- **Climate Change Impacts Adaptation and Mitigation (CCIAM) programme:** The CCIAM programme is generating various kinds of data and information on REDD+ and related interventions which is disseminated among practitioners by using various communication channels such as, publications, workshops, annual scientific conferences, exhibitions and website ([www.suanet.ac.tz/cciam/](http://www.suanet.ac.tz/cciam/)).
- **UN-REDD Tanzania programme:** The UN-REDD programme in Tanzania aims at building capacity of various actors at different levels; it generates and shares information through stakeholders' meetings, workshops, publications, TV and Radio programs and website([www.un-redd.org](http://www.un-redd.org)).

## What channels are more effective for REDD+ communication?

Several channels of communication were identified as being used to communicate information on REDD+ to various actors. Generally, channels that bring people together irrespective of social position, education, religion and gender and which can leave a vivid impression on the minds of people are believed to be the most effective.

The radio was identified as the most popular channel of communication both on mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. The radio has the ability to reach both literates and illiterates and can be used in combination with other popular channels such as village meetings, traditional dance and film shows (mainland Tanzania), mosques and the "Maskani" (Zanzibar - Unguja and Pemba). In addition to this, interactive videos, traditional dances (ngomas), use of school children and face to face dialogues between government officials and villagers have been identified as the most effective communication channels. Among government officials however, workshops, round table discussions, seminars, newspapers, newsletters were identified as important channels for communication.

## What barriers limit REDD+ information communication?

The studies and information from on going REDD+ activities have identified several barriers to information communication which need to be addressed to ensure easy access to REDD+ information among various actors. These include:

- Poor infrastructure (such as impassable roads, poor reception of radio signals and phone coverage problems), especially when communicating with rural communities
- Low literacy levels of the majority of citizens,
- Power and gender relations that exist at community levels,
- Language barriers
- Complexity of REDD+ concept

<sup>1</sup> These are very special areas where people with common interests do meet daily after work hours to discuss various recent issues including political, economic and social.

## Lessons learnt in communicating REDD+ issues

Lessons learnt from implementation of REDD+ awareness and communication activities by various actors indicate that:

- Adequate awareness on REDD+ and its processes improves peoples' knowledge, helping to change attitude and practice toward forest conservation and management. Increased awareness on forest conservation and management issues has improved a sense of ownership and value on forest resources.
- Communication at community level is more effective when different kinds of channels are used in combination; channels which bring people together without class or power barriers are the most effective. Village meetings are good channels for communicating awareness but deliberate efforts should be made to ensure active participation of women and marginalized groups in the society.
- Seminars, workshops and study tours are effective for communicating technical information to beneficiaries;
- Use of participatory and simple learning approaches and local language has been influential in creating awareness and communicating REDD+ information.
- Comprehensive consultation processes employed during development of the National REDD+ Strategy and Action Plan created a learning platform on REDD+ issues among stakeholders.
- Effectiveness of a communication strategy depends not only on using the appropriate channels, but on the quality of interactions between the communicator and the target beneficiary.



Awareness raising on REDD+ to villagers at Mughunga village, in Singida region



# CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the REDD+ concept is new and is still evolving. Current communication efforts have been focusing on enhancing access to information in order to address existing knowledge gaps. A REDD+ Information Communication Strategy has been prepared to address the challenges identified.

## KEY POLICY MESSAGES

1. Awareness, knowledge and adequate capacity are critical requirements for REDD+ implementation among the communities. Considerable efforts should be put into raising awareness and building capacities of communities on REDD+.
2. Communication and information sharing is an essential tool in achieving broader development and natural resources management goals. Therefore, there is a need for government, civil society, development partners, private sectors and other interested parties to support implementation of REDD+ awareness raising activities.
3. Use of Kiswahili and other local languages especially on radio and print media to communicate vital REDD+ information to communities should be encouraged. Community radio programmes on REDD+ should be supported.

### **For More information contact:**

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