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PEOPLE, RULES, AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEM RESOURCES (PROSPER)

DELIVERABLE 5A: AN ASSESSMENT REPORT OF DELIVERABLE
5 FOCUSED ON PUBLIC OUTREACH AND AWARENESS
BUILDING APPROACHES

MARCH 2017

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DISCLAIMER

THE AUTHOR'S VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

ACRONYMS

CA	Community Assembly
CAT	Community Awareness Team
CI	Conservation International
CF	Community Forestry
CFMA	Community Forest Management Agreement
CFMB	Community Forestry Management Body
CFOC	Community Forest Organizing Committees
CFWG	Community Forestry Working Group
CRL	Community Rights Law
EC	Executive Committee
EPA	Environment Protection Agency
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
FFI	Fauna and Flora International
FIFES	Forest Incomes for Ecosystem Sustainability
FTI	Forestry Training Institute
KAB	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior
LFSP	Liberia Forest Support Program
LRCFP	Land Rights and Community Forestry Program
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MoL	Ministry of Labor
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
PROSPER	People, Rules, and Organizations Supporting the Protection of Ecosystem Resources
PC	Peace Committee
PUP	Private Use Permit
SADs	Skills and Agricultural Development Services
SAMFU	Save My Future Foundation
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication

SCNL	Society for the Conservation of Nature
UL	University of Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VPA-SU	Voluntary Partnership Agreement, Support Unit

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INTRODUCTION

The PROSPER program scope of work notes that “The successful management of Liberia’s natural resources depends not only on government agencies and communities directly responsible for their management, but also on an educated citizenry that can make informed decisions about the use and management of these resources by government agencies, the private sector, and communities.” To contribute to building an educated citizenry, PROSPER is charged by USAID with working with key institutions to build their capacity to develop effective outreach campaigns to communicate information that will lead to changes in the way citizens think about and make decision about their natural resources.

This report of the “Public outreach and awareness building approaches field tested with relevant GOL agencies (FDA), target communities, and other identified stakeholders along the themes of sustainable natural resource management, land tenure and property rights, environmental compliance, and community-based forest management”, is submitted in fulfillment of Contract Deliverable no. 5a.

The report provides a synopsis of the approaches and best practices used to plan, prepare, and implement the annual campaigns on community forestry issues in keeping with the Community Rights Law (CRL) and the CRL Regulations. It highlights some of the launch events of the fourth annual outreach campaign as well as activities covered during the campaign rollout. Finally, the report describes the evolution of the different channels of communication over the course of the PROSPER project.

BACKGROUND

The absence of effective public education and awareness efforts in Liberia concerning environmental and natural resource issues hampers efforts to implement policies aimed at the sustainable management of Liberia's forest resources. The highly-publicized private use permit (PUP) scandal, alleged fraudulent community forest applications, and other instances of non-compliance with major forest policies and laws have provided clear evidence of the Forestry Development Authority's (FDA) limited capacity to impact and change behaviors through sensitization in the forestry sector. Liberia's failure to harness effective public education to avert the pillage of its forest resources has contributed to the rapid, ongoing decline of the Upper Guinea Forest of which Liberia is home to nearly 40%.

Several years following the passage of the Community Rights Law (CRL) in 2009 and the subsequent promulgation of the CRL Regulations in 2011, the Government of Liberia and the FDA did not disseminate those important laws that recognize and legitimize the role of local communities in the management and governance of the country's forest resources. Hence, the integrity of valuable forests resources and biodiversity and the rights of forest communities were still being undermined by threats such as illegal logging and poaching, and by concession agriculture and mining schemes approved without informed, prior consent of communities.

In response to these issues, PROSPER in collaboration with the FDA re-activated the CFWG in 2012. In October of that year, the CFWG met in Monrovia where it reconsolidated, and with PROSPER's facilitation began developing messages and designing strategies it would apply during the pilot testing of the first outreach campaign. This work represented an application of formative communications research, a best practice that involves conducting focus groups or interviews with key stakeholders on the issues that affect them and using that information to guide the design of communications campaigns and materials.

The CFWG agreed that the goal of the first outreach campaign was to address the overarching problem of high community forest degradation and depletion in Liberia due to:

1. Lack of knowledge about community forestry rights, which:
 - a. Prevents communities from being able to effectively negotiate with third-party investors who are able to lease and exploit large areas of community forest land, displacing communities and destroying community forest land
 - b. Prevents communities from seeing the value of putting in place community forest management systems, without which there are no safeguards for preventing degradation
 - c. Keeps communities in poverty and increases conflict between neighbors and within families
2. Lack of knowledge about sustainable forest use practices among communities, and particularly among women, who are primary users of the forest resources; this lack of knowledge has harmful environmental effects
3. Attitudes that lead community members to focus on personal gain and benefits from forest use, rather than the broader interest of the community and country

4. Behavior of local authorities, who may pressure communities to engage in unfair transactions or may execute transactions without community input for personal gain
5. Behavior of community members, who engage in unsustainable shifting cultivation and slash-and-burn farming. Farmers typically move agricultural activities to a new part of the forest every three years because soil fertility becomes depleted.

The first annual campaign was followed up with a second campaign, which focused on the process of managing community forests and strengthening public understanding of the CRL. Ten key messages on the CRL and community forestry management were developed in collaboration with the CFWG. The audience focus expanded to include policy makers and government ministries as well as broader stakeholders across Liberia.

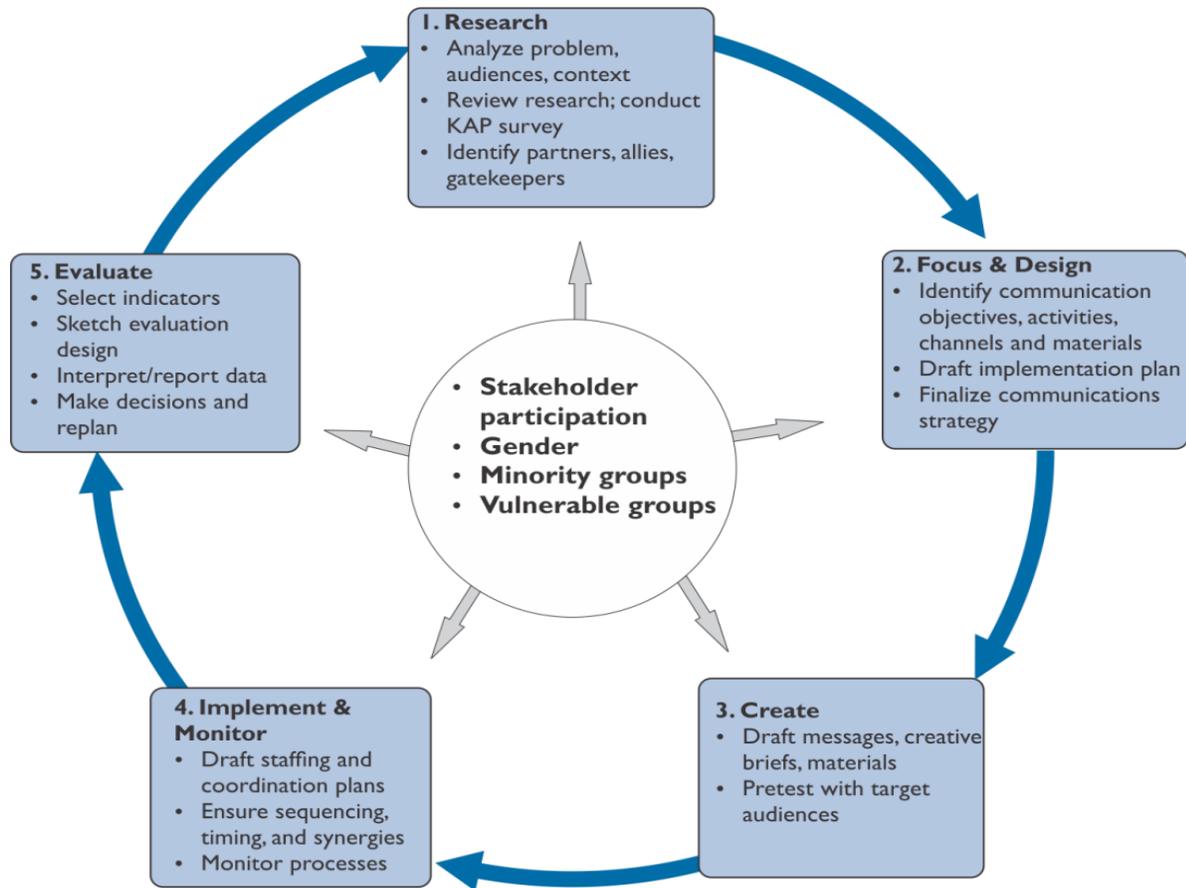
Carrying forward lessons learned from the first annual outreach campaign, the second campaign supported communities in taking control of the campaign from design to implementation. This included PROSPER supporting community forestry leaders in planning their rollout activities and in developing budgets that were used for community outreach focused on the CRL and other community forestry management issues. The outcomes and lessons learned from the first two outreach campaigns informed the planning and subsequent implementation of the communication approaches for the Fourth Annual CF Outreach campaign in Q2 of FY16.

OVERVIEW OF PROSPER'S SBCC PROCESS

During Year 1 of the project, the PROSPER communications team engaged key stakeholders, including the CFWG and communities, at each phase of the design process to build capacity of project partners, CSOs, and government institutions to implement similar campaigns, and to ensure that messages, materials, and activities being created will resonate with target audiences. The project followed a phased approach that represents best practices in the design and implementation of behavior change communication campaigns. The five phases of this approach (as detailed in Figure 1) include:

1. **Understanding the Situation:** During this phase PROSPER worked closely with the CFWG to develop a 'situation analysis' that served as the starting point for the design of outreach and awareness activities. Project stakeholders met to discuss the development problem, conduct a people analysis, examine the environmental, social, and cultural context, review existing and plan for additional research, and identify partners, allies and gatekeepers who can assist with campaign implementation.
2. **Focusing and Designing:** PROSPER collaborated with stakeholders to identify, segment, and prioritize audiences, create a 'matrix for change' in which needed changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors were identified, draft communications objectives targeting these needed changes, and discussed appropriate methods and channels for disseminating information, messages, and materials. The communications strategy was solidified during this stage.
3. **Creating:** Drawing upon previous design phases, PROSPER worked with the CFWG to brainstorm, design, and create messages and materials aimed at changing knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of target audiences. Project stakeholders played an integral role in the development of campaign materials, suggesting tone, content, graphics, and messages to be used in various materials.
4. **Implementing and Monitoring:** Messages, materials, and activities were rolled out in PROSPER target areas, with the PROSPER communications team tracking activities and monitoring processes. Project stakeholders actively participated in the roll out of communication activities.
5. **Evaluating and Re-planning:** During this final phase, PROSPER conducted "Lessons Learned Consultations" with project stakeholders, including communities, the CFWG, CSOs, and communications subcontractors to gain feedback and evaluated impact of outreach and awareness activities. The project actively used this feedback loop to re-plan campaign objectives for subsequent years.

Figure 1. PROSPER's SBCC Process



Using this participatory process allowed the stakeholder working group to reach consensus around development challenges, communications objectives, and the project communications strategy. The remainder of this report describes how PROSPER used this process to constantly refine and improve the effective implementation of a variety of communication channels used during the outreach campaign.

EVOLUTION OF METHODS AND CHANNELS

Since 2013, members of the CFWG, including individuals from government and civil society organizations and PROSPER staff, participated in annual SBCC workshops. The goal of these workshops was to discuss feedback received from stakeholders through communication consultations on just-concluded campaigns, provide a forum for CFWG members to voice their thoughts and opinions on the next phase of the campaign, re-assess target audiences, and discuss effective BCC methodologies that can be used and applied during future campaigns. The group is then asked to draft new messages as well as several potential print products that can be used in the up-coming campaign.

Over the course of the two-day training, participants analyzed the situation, discussed the core issues and target audiences, identified key messages and materials needed, and reviewed the key components necessary to design effective print media. These objectives and channels of communication continued to guide the implementation of the fourth campaign.

AUDIENCE	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES	CHANNEL
Community Assemblies (CAs)	By 2016, 10 CAs will be exposed to repetitive information that increases their understanding of how to exercise rights under the CRL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop • Town halls • Person-to-person handouts • Local radio talk show • Radio drama • Community theatre
Lawmakers	By 2016, the knowledge of 103 lawmakers will be increased, motivating them to take action to enforce compliance of the CRL in communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52 newspaper columns by 2015 (weekly column) • 103 lawmakers are part of radio talk panel (each lawmaker takes a turn) • Video targeting policymakers • Brochures targeting policymakers specifically • Presentations for policymakers by select community members (in which community member presents issue)
Third Party Contractors	By 2017, level of knowledge and attitude towards community changed so that 60% of third-party agreements will have followed the legal CRL process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Short 2-3 minute videos advertising/marketing the problem • Newsletter

Table 1. Description of audiences, objectives and communication channels developed initially by the CFWG

This initial planning led to the implementation of a number of communications channels used throughout PROSPERs campaigns.

Launches/Media

For the first outreach campaign, the launch ceremonies were held in cities around the community forest sites, i.e. Tappita, Sanniquellie and Buchanan, respectively. However, after the first campaign, local stakeholders expressed a desire to hold the launch ceremonies in Monrovia so local community forest members could meet their political representatives and communicate with them directly concerning forest management issues. Due to this feedback, the FDA and CFWG began hosting the launches of the campaign in Monrovia. Representatives from the Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs), Executive Committees (EC), Community Forest Organizing Committees (CFOCs) and Community Awareness Teams (CATs) were invited to participate in the annual launch events in Monrovia. Unlike the traditional setting of such gatherings, the communities were deliberately invited and positioned as distinguished guests.

To ensure that communities are prepared to occupy this status, guidance is sent to each community about what they should expect at the launch and the roles that they are expected to play. They are provided with participants' selection criteria, guidance on their written speech development and delivery. PROSPER facilitates several community-level meetings to enable wider consultations and prioritization of issues to present to policy makers. After all site level preparations, community representatives are invited to participate in a rehearsal on the eve of the launch. This gives communities a final opportunity to fine-tune their speeches and presentation skills. It is clear that the communities are now confident when engaging with this wide range of county, national and international policy makers. That confidence is then communicated back to their respective communities.

The 4th Annual Community Forestry Outreach Campaign typified how PROSPER has evolved in how it uses this communication channel to build awareness about the coming campaign. It was launched at the Monrovia Christian Fellowship Center in Sinkor, Monrovia – “Making Community Forest Rights Real”. As suggested by the title of the event, the main objective of the campaign is to make communities aware of their rights and obligations under the CRL and CRL Regulations; but it is also to build the capacity of local and national institutions to design and conduct outreach campaigns to promote sustainable forest management.

A variety of stakeholders are invited to the outreach campaigns such as representatives from forest dependent communities around the country, especially from the project target areas, including Nimba, Grand Bassa, Maryland, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, Sinoe, Grand Cape Mount, Bomi and Gbarpolu counties; as well as representatives from USAID; local and international NGOs working in the forest sector, such as SCNL, SAMFU, SADs, FFI, CI; projects funded by USAID and other donors, such as FIFES and VPA-SU; development partners such as the World Bank; diplomatic missions such as the Chinese, German and Nigerian Embassies; Education Institutions such as the FTI, UL, Stella Maris Polytechnic; relevant GoL Ministries and agencies such as the EPA, MIA, MoE, MoL; and the Liberian legislature. Prominent and well-respected personalities in society are engaged as keynote speakers. In the launch of the fourth annual outreach campaign, Mr. Neto Z. Lighe, the Minister of Labor, and one of the FDA's Board of Directors delivered the keynote speech. Key features of launch ceremonies include speeches by community representatives and dignitaries, the performance of the campaign theme song and biodiversity song, and dramatizations of the 9-Steps to Authorized Forest Community status.

The overwhelmingly high turnout at the campaigns can be attributed to the success of the prelaunch awareness programs, which include the placement of panelists from the FDA and CFWG on two popular breakfast radio broadcasts – the Super Morning Show (Liberia Broadcasting System (LBS)) and the Truth

Breakfast Show (Truth FM) prior to the launches. Also, with the support of the CFWG, the PROSPER communication team develops and places articles in local newspapers that promote the campaign and explain its objectives.

Radio

There is a plethora of examples of how PROSPER used radio as a channel of communication throughout the course of the project. However, the evolution in the use of radio as a tool is marked by increased community participation in the development of radio content, the translation of the messages into different languages and the increased use of community radio stations to transmit the messages. For example, in 2016, PROSPER worked with community radio stations in Grand Bassa, Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe, Bomi and Gbarpolu Counties and produced several radio programs. These community radio stations include: Radio Nimba, located in Sanniquellie, which reaches approximately 90% of the Gba community; Kahn Voice of Peace in Kahnplay, which covers all of the Zor Community; the Voice of Tappita, which covers Tappita and surrounding villages; Radio Gbehzohn, which reaches all of the Barconnie community; and Radio Wee, which covers a significant portion of District #4 in Grand Bassa County. In the extended counties, PROSPER worked with Smile FM (Grand Gedeh), Liberty Broadcasting Service (Sinoe), Radio Bomi (Bomi) and the Voice of Kpo (Gbarpolu).

Also, PROSPER produced three core messages using extracts from provisions in the CRL and the CRL Regulations. The messages were designed to support radio outreach in the extended areas and to boost public understanding of the CRL and CRL regulations in PROSPER zones. To further build awareness on the nine-step process, a monologue was also produced. Each message was studio mixed with the “Make Rights Real” theme song, in one-minute slots for radio broadcast. The messages were recorded in simple Liberian English and local Liberian languages (Krahn, Kru, Grebo, Bassa, Kpelle, Gola, and Vai), and were distributed to community radio stations in the areas where extended outreach was being conducted, as well as in existing PROSPER zones.

Through community radio stations in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties, radio talk-shows were designed and aired. Subjects covered included community livelihood from forest and agricultural products and its implications for biodiversity, the 9-Steps process, and forest governance and management. Live talk-shows attracted listeners calling in to programs. There were also pre-recorded programs, including interviews or panel discussions with various forest users and farmers from the field.

To ensure effectiveness of these radio programs, radio stations were consistently monitored, including solicitation of feedback from the listening audience. In the extended sites, i.e. Sinoe, Grand Gedeh and Gbarpolu Counties, the initial launching of the community radio program was not effective until outreach coordinators were deployed in those areas. This resulted in a decision to terminate the contract with the Voice of Kpo in Gbarpolu, and establishing a new contract with Radio Bomi (Bomi) to serve the population in Western Liberia. Outreach Coordinators were deployed in each of the extended counties that ensured significant improvement in effectiveness of the broadcasts. PROSPER designed monitoring tools to document and process feedback.

Dramas and Speeches

Live drama and cultural performances was used as a key component of the campaigns from their inception. Since the first campaign, PROSPER employed the use of theater troupes to educate local communities. However, over the course of the four campaigns the project faded their support for the local troupes to enhance the sustainability of this effective communication channel. Even though direct support was not offered for drama troupes in most PROSPER sites, the communities still featured them in the rollout of the campaign at site levels. The communities continue to emphasize the effectiveness of this

tool to disseminate campaign messages. During the fourth campaign, PROSPER provided minimal support to these troupes, including costumes and basic traditional instruments to aid their performances.

For instance, in 2013, the Liberia Crusaders for Peace, a professional entertainment group was contracted to provide this service during the launching ceremonies. However, since 2014, they were contracted to also provide training, equip and mobilize local theater troupes to improve their effectiveness in designing and performing drama and cultural displays. Since then local theater troupes from communities in Tappita, Sanniquellie and Buchanan have been a key element of PROSPER's communication strategy. In 2016, in addition to their usual role in the annual outreach campaign, PROSPER provided additional training to the theater troupes from the Gba and Zor communities, and provided them with materials to support special performances. This was in response to requests submitted by the Gba, Zor and Blei CFMBs for support in the promotion of new forest rules and permitting systems, which PROSPER helped to develop. The training included how to develop and effectively convey messages through dramas, skits, traditional songs, and dance. The rollout of the rules and permits outreach coincided with its later stages and complemented the 4th Annual Outreach Campaign in these two communities.

Also, to promote community ownership of the community forestry processes supported by USAID-PROSPER, there was a need to acknowledge and incorporate community leaders in the outreach process. This marked another evolution in the use of community speakers to deliver campaign messages. The heads of community institutions including town chiefs, youth leaders, women's leaders, traditional elders, school teachers, chairmen of Community Forest Management Bodies (CFMBs) and heads of other forest governance groups were allotted time to give speeches during the programs. In addition to these speeches, town criers who are able to articulate messages in the local dialect are used to spread information concerning the campaigns and the various events.

Print Materials

A number of different print materials have been designed throughout the course of the campaigns. Both during the pre-testing phase and the evaluation phase of the materials creation process PROSPER gathers critical information from community members in regards to the print materials and how they are used. Community members informed the design team that a hunter in one poster did not accurately portray how a hunter would carry himself or dress while searching for game. Also, after the first campaign, PROSPER realized that posters were being used on the inside of houses for decoration as opposed to on the outside of buildings where they can best communicate their message. This prompted future campaigns to emphasize the proper placement of communication tools for maximum effectiveness. As a result of this evolutionary process, the following print materials were created for the 4th Campaign:

Posters: A set of eleven posters was designed to support continued awareness-raising on community forestry in forest dependent communities following the campaign. These posters were used to decorate the campaign venues both at the launch events and the rollout activities. Following the launches, posters were mounted at various public spaces around the communities to promote easy access to information they convey. There was a high demand for the use of the CF posters by FDA, technical staff in the field and other institutions working toward supporting other communities to establish community forests.

T-Shirts: Assorted colored T-shirts (green, yellow, black and white) were designed with various campaign messages. They were distributed to community participants, local leaders, dignitaries and representatives of various groups during the launch events. They were further distributed during the rollout and handed out as prizes.

CRL Booklets: To increase access to the Community Rights Law and the CRL Regulations, they were formatted and printed as booklets and distributed during the launching ceremonies. The booklets were

also used as giveaway items to community participants during the rollout, for correctly-answered questions posed during the quizzing exercises.

Flyers: To disseminate key messages, flyers have been used in a variety of ways. For example, a number of flyers were created to share information pertaining to the rules and procedures for permitting systems. These were limited to the more mature sites that were prepared to take this step within their community forests.

Face Cap: A variety of face caps designed to increase visibility of FDA and USAID-Liberia and to support public awareness about Community Forestry were distributed during the 4th outreach campaign.

Audio Visual

During the course of the annual campaigns, two theme songs were produced by PROSPER, The Make Community Forestry Rights Real, and The Biodiversity Songs. They were usually performed at the launching ceremonies by live bands and played-back during the rollout of the campaigns and aired on the radio.

The campaign songs were always well received at the evening programs for each of the rollouts. They were played at the beginning of every program. At the start of the evening programs, the outreach team played a selection of old familiar songs and popular traditional music unique to the respective clans and ethnic groups hosting the programs. This contributed immensely to mobilizing communities for the evening activities. The lyrics for the campaign songs were written by the PROSPER/CFWG team and produced by the Liberia Crusaders for Peace (LCP) and Flomo Theater, respectively. The campaign songs CDs were distributed to FDA, Radio Gbehzohn, Voice of Tappita, Radio Nimba and PROSPER vehicles. The campaign songs were the signature tunes used for PROSPER radio programs. It was also used as overlay/theme music for the special radio features which were produced by Voice of Tappita, Radio Gbehzon and Radio Nimba. Aside from performing the song live, it resonated across the streets of Buchanan, Tappita and Sanniquellie during float parades. The songs were also the signature tunes for the evening events during the rollout.

Although video did not feature prominently during the 4th outreach, the video documentary produced by the CFWG was one of the key features of other campaigns' launch and rollout activities. The video was introduced as a training product of the CFWG, which captured real-life situations in northern Nimba communities where USAID community forestry projects had been implemented. It portrayed how local communities can stand up for their rights according to law and influence positive change. The participants were also informed that highlights of the video were to be featured in the quiz sessions. Response to quiz questions and general comments on the video demonstrated how passionate campaign participants were about the issues addressed.

Town Cluster Rollouts

Initially, rollout events were aimed at reaching a select number of towns and villages through centrally-located communities within the districts of northern and southern Nimba Counties, and Grand Bassa County. The events were all structured around promoting awareness of the CRL and of community forestry as a viable forest management option for Liberia. To achieve these goals, major towns and villages within PROSPER communities were grouped into two clusters per region. For each of these clusters, a centrally-located community was selected to conduct the evening events of the rollout. In the evening, participants flowed in from surrounding communities to participate. Members of the CFWG,

PROSPER staff (including field coordinators and community mobilizers), and FDA field staff led various aspects of the events. However, in the lessons learned, the communities informed PROPSER that it needed to increase the number of clusters further to expand their audience. The cluster system gradually phased into community to community outreach as PROPSER had more community people facilitating outreach programs with fading support from PROSPER in terms of training and communication equipment.

Also, a key feature in the evolution of the rollout process over time was the inclusion of community members in all aspects of planning and implementation of the communication channels. This was a result of strong recommendations by communities regarding their participation at all levels of the campaign, from design to implementation. This requires quick and effective enhancement of communities' capacities to realize this. PROSPER works with community forestry leaders to develop activity plans and budgets, through which they reach out to their communities with the law and the key campaign messages. To ensure consistency of messages in all communities, PROSPER works with each site and translates the 10 key campaign messages into the predominant language in their respective localities. These are recorded, studio-mixed with their respective popular traditional music, and aired on community radios and played on high performance megaphones bought for each site.

Prior to the launching of outreach campaigns, community mobilizers, field coordinators and FDA cadre staff provide guidance to CF leaders in Nimba and Grand Bassa Counties in planning their village-to-village outreach campaign. This exercise helps community members to be better prepared for the national launch of the annual outreach campaigns, and represents a significant part of PROPSER's capacity development support to CF leaders. Key areas of support to CF leaders and outreach taskforces cover preparation of programs, issuing of invitations, scheduling of activities, logistical planning, and mobilization of local leaders and communities for outreach activities.

The community level rollouts typically occur immediately after the launching ceremony and continued actively through the end of the campaign. Villages are organized into clusters and the schedule is driven by CF leaders. The village-to-village outreach campaign targets local leaders, authorities at the county level, and youth, women and forest user groups. Theater troupes trained and equipped by PROPSER perform skits on the CRL and CRL Regulations, while members of the outreach taskforce distribute illustrative materials and booklets of the CRL and CRL Regulations to community residents. At the beginning of each rollout activity, CF leaders in PROPSER zones organize formal programs in central locations, and invite local chiefs and representatives from adjacent towns to participate. These mini-events served as platforms through which CF leaders communicate outreach messages to target audiences.

Peer Outreach and Learning

In addition to their work with theater troupes, PROPSER evolved in its increased use of Peer Outreach and Learning at the community level. Training of Trainers (ToT) workshops in "Understanding and Discussing the Contents of the CRL and CRL Regulations" were designed and conducted in all PROPSER project sites. CF leaders in each of the 11 (eleven) sites were trained. The community forest leaders demonstrated high levels of comprehension of these instruments as a result of the training provided. Also, trainings were conducted at the three PROPSER sites for all community mobilizers and community forest leaders to enhance skills of CFWG members to effectively deliver the communications strategy developed for the outreach campaigns. The trainings also focused on approaches that could be employed to intensify awareness on behavior change towards campaign topics. Finally, the trainings provided support to CF leaders to effectively communicate messages and themes during the community-led rollouts. CF leaders led outreach sessions in their villages and market places, where they explained the law and regulation in the local languages.

During the 4th campaign, community mobilizers, in collaboration with Community Awareness Teams (CATs) conducted village-to-village outreach and awareness activities in multiple communities across the

sites. CATs are semi-structured CF groups that regularly receive capacity building support to lead outreach activities in their constituencies. As an example, in northern Nimba, PROSPER supported the Gba and Zor CFMBs to promote awareness about their rules and permitting systems. The rules and permitting system awareness exercise was carried out at the same time as the rollout of the 4th annual outreach campaign. The campaign was supported by the FDA, the CFWG, and PROSPER's community mobilizers and field coordinators.

Also, the PROSPER communications team provided orientation for community mobilizers (CMs) and field coordinators on the effective use of a simple guide on how to form community forest governance structures. Following the orientation, the CMs and field coordinators also trained CF leaders across the sites, using a learning-by-doing approach to enable the CF leaders to effectively use the materials during outreaches in their constituencies. The simple guide on how to form community forest governance structures is a user-friendly illustrative booklet adapted for use by CF leaders. The guide was conceptualized and designed based on provisions of the CRL Regulations. This typifies how PROSPER used Peer-to-Peer learning as a central communication channel.

Gender and Community Calendars

Both Gender and community calendars have had a significant impact on all aspects of PROSPER's communication channels. Throughout its work in developing clear channels for communication, PROSPER has progressively increased the inclusion of women and gender issues in its activities. There are a number of examples of how women were actively incorporated into communication approaches:

- All community theater troupes comprised both boys and girls. In some communities, there are more girls than boys due to advance community awareness about the inclusion of girls in the theater troupe.
- Because the campaign teams are aware that women in rural communities are often overwhelmed with early evening chores, the campaign team appropriately adjusts the rollout evening events to start late enough to allow the participation of women.
- To further encourage the involvement of women in the evening programs, a set of questions is set aside for women during the quizzing competitions.
- PROSPER's Gender Integration Officer or her field counterpart is provided space during all of the evening events to speak about gender specific issues

This focus allows women to share their experiences in community forestry with a range of female audiences in target communities where awareness campaigns are being implemented. Also, it motivates other women across Liberia to work alongside their male counterparts to promote community forestry. In addition to this, this initiative highlighted women who have gained economic benefits from community forestry through livelihoods and enterprise activities in their communities, thus encouraging women in other communities to support community forestry.

During interviews throughout Nimba, many community members described how prior to the first outreach campaigns women would sit at the back of local meetings and rarely share their ideas and opinions. Now women and men sit side-by-side at meetings and women freely express themselves.

Also, during the implementation of different communication channels it is critical to maintain an awareness of community activities. For example, from January to March, most of the men in rural areas are "brushing" their farm sites while from May to June women are "scratching" to plant the rice crop. One of the strategies PROSPER proposed to use to address this concern was to have community members themselves determine and allocate time for each meeting. This strategy proved very effective especially in the Barconnie fishing community. Community dwellers were always in full attendance during all

meetings and make meaningful contributions. All communities have expressed appreciation to PROSPER for this modification to the implementation of communication approaches and urged them to continue to work with the community for successful implementation of CF activities.

CONCLUSION

As described above, the local communities participated in the research design of communications approaches. The communications team conducted lessons-learned workshops at all PROSPER project sites, along with the CSOs, CFWG and FDA. This step in the process provided key community forestry stakeholders the opportunity to analyze, which best practice works and how it works within the Liberian context. The valuable inputs from communities informed the design of each outreach campaign. The team was careful to feature community recommendation prominently in every step of the process and in decision-making during each of the planning phases.

For instance, during one such lessons learned workshop project stakeholders and audiences across PROSPER sites stated that they preferred media and information dissemination channels such as community dramas and cultural performances, community produced videos, and music and jingles. Community members explained that they preferred these channels for the following reasons:

- They entertain and educate in a way that is natural for the community
- Demonstrate community realities and experiences while modeling desired behavior. In essence, they tell “the real life story.”
- Allow for follow-up question and answer sessions
- Are live, practical, accessible, and attractive to all ages
- Provide a powerful visual aid, and “seeing is believing.”
- Teach the community about the issue more quickly with relatable characters discussing relatable experiences.

This constant incorporation of community feedback led to an evolution and improvement in the processes surrounding the implementation of different channels of communication.

When communities realized how seriously their inputs transformed the outreach approaches, they have publicly expressed their satisfaction. Since the genesis of the outreach campaigns, community input has shaped and modified the various communication channels producing an evolution which enhanced the effectiveness of each successive campaign. For instance, communities have asked to work directly on message development. They have participated in trainings to enhance their understanding of SBCC techniques. As mentioned above, they requested more control over the planning and arrangements of the yearly campaigns and they have flourished through the participation of various forest users with a focus on women.

Due to PROSPERs strong collaboration with the FDA, community members believe that the government has actually taken their concerns seriously and put them into action. Their sense of ownership of the process was so strong that they have pledged their full cooperation with the community forestry program, including the use of their talents to ensure that things work out successfully. Any future projects

focused on community forestry need to continue to build on the lessons learned in enhancing the communication approaches used during the last four outreach campaigns.

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