



VIHIGA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION (VCDO)

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Vihiga Community Development Organisation (VCDO)

Profile

Reg No.4572/2003

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Vision

A community that is healthy, economically secure and respectful of the environment and human rights.

Mission

Improved living standards of the rural communities through promotion of appropriate skills and information on sustainable development approaches and strengthening human capacity for self reliance.

Background

Vihiga Community Development Organisation (VCDO) is a community based organisation (CBO), registered in 2003 under the Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services.

The organisation is located at Sabatia Divisional Headquarters in Vihiga District, along Chavakali – Eldoret highway. VCDO was started with the aim of participating in the fight against **HIV/AIDS**, **poverty alleviation** through promotion of **micro-enterprises**, **environmental conservation**, **sustainable agriculture** and **assistance to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC)**.

Objectives

- The capacity of subsistence farmers is strengthened through training so that they are able to adopt sustainable food production techniques ;
- 150 Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC) are supported through provision of food, clothes, blankets, shoes, school fees (*secondary school*) and vocational training for a period of three years;
- Communities are sensitised through community media to conserve the environment especially Rivers and wetlands within the Lake Victoria catchment area in Western Province;
- Women's groups, self help groups and youth groups are trained and assisted with a small amount of capital to start various micro-enterprises;
- Local communities are assisted to become more aware of their human rights and how to stand up for them.

Ongoing Activities

I. Human Resource Exchange Programme

At the beginning of 2005, VCDO was privileged to join a south-south human resource exchange network. The programme involves the exchange of young environmental journalists between Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya for a period of one year. The network is supported by Fredskorpset (FK) of Norway. The programme has enabled VCDO to monitor and report on the impact of human activities on the environment especially on the rivers that flow into Lake Victoria through Western Province. Stories produced by the journalists are published in a VCDO quarterly newsletter called ***The Western Watch***.

II. HIV/AIDS Programme

(a) Support to Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs)

VCDO has supported more than 150 Orphans and other Vulnerable Children with uniforms and food over the last three years. A lot more needs to be done in order to reach the thousands of destitute OVCs in Vihiga district who are dire need for fees, toys, clothes, shoes, medication and other basic necessities to enable them lead normal life. VCDO is looking for support from concerned organizations and individuals in order to respond to this growing demand for OVC assistance.

(b) Support Groups

VCDO is encouraging people to visit Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centers to know their HIV status. Those found to be HIV positive, are encouraged to join support groups and ARV programmes nearest to them. VCDO links such support groups to other sources of assistance such as Information, Education and Medicare. At the moment, VCDO has assisted widows who are HIV positive to form a Community Based Support (CBO) support group called **Tumaini Support Group**.

III. Economic Empowerment Activities

VCDO promotes income generating activities especially among Women's groups and the Youth. Emphasis is placed on bee keeping and production of Grain Amaranth. The two enterprises have low management requirements and high returns per unit area of land as compared to the traditional land use systems that involve the growing of maize and beans all year round.

a) Bee keeping

VCDO is training local farmers in modern techniques of bee keeping as a more profitable alternative land use system. The organization has established a carpentry workshop and installed a multipurpose woodworking machine for making modern commercial beehives known as **Langstroth**. The hives are sold to farmers and women's groups, on soft loan basis. Emphasis is placed on training Extension Agents for provision of regular technical services to the beekeepers. Beekeeping holds vast potential as a sustainable source of income and improved nutrition for VCDO and farmers in Vihiga district in general.

Comparative Analysis of Maize and Beekeeping in Vihiga district

Maize	Beekeeping
Unit of land ----- 1 acre	Unit of land ----- 0.5 acres
Average yield in one year ----- 20 bags (90 kg each)	Number of Langstroth hives100 (minimum)
Average cost of one bag of maize ----- KSh 1300	Cost of one hive ----- KSh 3500
Gross income in one year ----- KSh 26000	Average yield per hive per year.....30 kg

	Yield from 100 hives3000 kg
	Average cost of of 1 kg of honeyKsh 100
	Grossl income in one yearKSh. 300,0000

b) ***Amaranth Production***

Grain Amaranth is gaining popularity in Kenya as a *wonder crop* due to its unequalled nutritional value. Its rapid growth-rate (55—65 days) and profuse production of highly nutritious leaves and grain, makes G. Amaranth not only a superior vegetable for improvement of local diet as well as for income generation, but also, a crop of choice for the thousands of peasant farmers in Vihiga district, most of whom own an average of one acre of land. G. Amaranth has high levels of carotene, vitamins A, B, C and E, iron, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium. It is also rich in lysine, an essential amino acid that is commonly lacking in many other cereals and tubers. G.Amaranth has been shown to lower blood cholesterol levels.

VCDO is promoting the growing and consumption of Grain Amaranth through women groups and schools in Vihiga district.

IV. Eco-Schools Programme

VCDO promotes environmental conservation activities through Environmental clubs in schools and colleges in Vihiga district. The project entails identification of key environmental problems within and around each of the participating institutions and devising practical solutions for addressing them.

This activity is aimed at conserving the natural forests, rivers, streams and soils in Vihiga and surrounding districts. Most of the rivers that drain into Lake Victoria traverse through or have their sources in Vihiga district. Hence the need to manage these resources sustainably.

The Western Watch

VCDO produces the *Western Watch*, a quarterly newsletter that serves as a platform for stimulating debate among the public and the policy makers regarding the need to conserve Lake Victoria and its environs for sustainable development of the three East African countries.

Human Rights

VCDO promotes good governance and rights approach to sustainable development. Special attention is directed at enabling widows particularly those who are HIV positive, to regain and preserve their self esteem in the face of rampant stigmatization from family members and the community at large.

Community Resource Centre

VCDO plans to establish a Community Resource Centre to serve the Youth and the community at large. The organisation is appealing for book donations and audio-visual materials on reproductive

health, environment, business management, HIV/AIDs, organic farming and beekeeping. In addition, the organisation is appealing for donations of ten old laptop (*operational*) computers to be used for training and internet connectivity. Training in the use of internet will be offered as soon as resources become available.

Collaboration

VCDO works very closely with the following organisations:

- **Government** – especially the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Livestock Development, Ministry of Culture and Social Services, Ministry of Youth Affairs, District Development Office, Ministry of Health (*Constituency Aids Control Committee*)
- **Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)** – pursuing similar objectives locally, nationally or internationally
- **Community Based Organisations (CBOs)** – pursuing similar objectives locally
- Research institutions
- Donor organisations

Sustainability

VCDO aims to generate sufficient income from the beekeeping project to finance all its activities by the year 2012. Apart from selling beehives, the organisation will diversify its income generating activities to include buying honey from farmers and packaging it for local as well as for international market. In addition, the organisation will raise queen bees and sell them to farmers, marketing of by-products such as candles, propolis etc. In addition, the organisation will package Amaranth flour for marketing.

Staff

	Position	Current Number	2008 Requirements
	Extension Agent	3	8
	Apiarist ¹	1	1
	Training Officer	1	2
	Office Assistant	1	1
	Accounts Clerk	1	1
	Workshop Staff	4	6

¹ *Part-time*

	Information Officer	1	1
	Accountant²	1	1
	Director	1	1

Management Committee

VCDO has a Management Committee comprising of 7 members. The Committee is responsible for providing policy guidelines to the organisation. The committee meets once every four months.

Banking Details

Cooperative Bank

Vihiga Comm Dev Organisation

Kisumu Branch

Account #: 0110014312100

Swift Code: KCOOKENA 11003

Contact details:

Director

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² *Part-time*