

Knowledge transfer on the successful management of KBAs

Birhan Ali, Sustainable Natural Resource Management Association (SUNARMA)



Under an initiative by CEPF to build capacity among its grantees, I attended a site visit and learning exchange in Mbeya, Tanzania in October 2016. The exchange was organized by the Tropical Biology Association and was hosted by Wildlife Conservation Society, Tanzania. The site visit also involved stakeholders from other organizations including Birdlife Zimbabwe, Lem- The Environment and Development Society of Ethiopia and Population Health and Environment Ethiopia Consortium. The objective of the exchange was to harness best practices and expertise on designing and implementing environmental management plans for improved conservation of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs)

I had the opportunity of participating in several activities during the visit including discussing with WCS officers about their conservation practices in the southern highlands of Tanzania. Such practices included their partnership with the Tanzania Forest service in developing an environmental management plan for Mount Rungwe Forest nature reserve. We also held discussions regarding the best procedures and principles of developing a forest management plan.

In addition, we visited Mount Rungwe forest nature reserve where we held discussions with the scouts about the forest biodiversity and the overall status of the reserve. We later visited Poroto Ridge Forest Reserve, which currently has no environmental management plan, where we discussed the threats facing it and provided recommendations on how to deal with the present issues. We further visited community environmental management groups and assessed their initiatives in the production of tree seedlings and honey.

From the exchange, I learned the procedures and principles required in preparing a forest management plan, monitoring its implementation and measuring the results. The exchange further enlightened me on various topics including advocacy, effective communication, fundraising and resource mobilization, project delivery, project development, project monitoring and evaluation, stakeholder engagement and strategic planning. The exchange also provided concrete examples of good practices while also making it possible for me to expand my networks.

Through the exchange, I was able to fill the knowledge and skill gap of designing and implementing a forest management plan for my project in Wofwasha key biodiversity area, Ethiopia. I will also share the skills, lessons and experiences acquired from the exchange with the rest of the staff in my institution.