**Gazi follow-up executive member**

Some information missed due to tape recorder failure.

I: how and you are telling me that you the ones who have employed the coordinator?

R: we employ coordinators, but under some circumstances that there are some things that we can tell her or do to her and there are others that we cannot. Because I don’t know whether it is because of her level of education which is above us or what, I don’t know.

I: what do you have authority to tell her as her bosses and what can’t you tell her?

R: we can consult her about the mp projects on why we can’t do this activity now and the other one may be later.

I: how did it happen that when she came to start working you no longer have any authority over her?

R: I think she is guided by the job contract.

I: where did her contract come from?

R: we gave it to her.

I: who wrote that contract?

R: I think those people who did the interview. Not sure.

I:so the way the coordinator does her work; you don’t have any control over her?

R; no. we have no control over her. Especially the time she came, she really used to wrong us. If you say anything she used to be aloof and there was nothing we could do. Until now we have been assisted by social services and KMFRI that is when she came down abit and that is only when we can now tell her something and she listens.

I: she was not listening to you people?

R: no.

I: why do you think she was behaving like that?

R; I don’t know why she was behaving that way. She could tell us “I am the coordinator and you will have to follow what I have said”. When somebody tells you that it shows that person does not value you. So she behaves like she is the one who has employed us.

I: what would you propose so that fairness is obtained.

R: my proposal is that if it is possible, Mark to provide some training to our community for anybody who would like to be a conductor, so that in future we can get our own person as a coordinator. Because, a person a person from far doesn’t value you. The waswahili people normally say, whoever doesn’t know you does not value you. But if it is somebody from our community, who gets trained on how to become a good coordinator, then in future we would be able to get one from our community.

Also, we need to learn the duties and responsibilities of the coordinator. Even though we are the ones who participated in her hiring, through interview, if I am told to give the responsibilities of the coordinator, I can’t state them. And sometimes, it could be somethings it is us who are supposed to do them and then we are leaving them to the coordinator to do. Or some things it is the coordinator who is expected to and since we don’t know it, she doesn’t bother doing.

I: what other things require to be done so that there is justice?

R: another thing that need to be done is in the committee. In the coming years, there should be arrangement such that committee members, are able to get something small per month. The thirteen people in the committee be getting even if it is ksh.2000.00, so that they get the morale of volunteering in this work. This is because, being a committee member, doesn’t mean that one doesn’t have other jobs to do at home and elsewhere, these duties are there. But we leave them so that we can serve in this project.

I: isn’t there a percentage of money that goes to the committee members?

R: the only percentage is when there is a meeting so we get a sitting allowance, when there is an activity of planting that’s only time we get an allowance. Any other time there is nothing. Neither the chairman nor the treasurer gets anything. Imagine somebody handling like Ksh. 400,000.00 for the community, you go to the bank, withdraw the money, for the projects that have been organized, sometimes you find the constructors are not yet ready and you have to stay with the money in your home for even two days. As you wait for them to organize themselves to start the work, you still hold the money in the house and there is nothing you’re in that money.

Like the time I was a treasurer, people used to follow me. Some committee members used to follow me to lend them some of this mp money because they knew I had the money with me. Like “let me ksh.20000.00, once I get the money I will refund” and I could ask myself “now this committee member, he want me to led him the money he will refund, where will he get that money for refunding?” and this is the money for the community project. If I give it out what will I use to pay the constructors with? Other than those ones, even myself I have my own problems because I am also human.

Ther is a time I handled Ksh. 200000.00 for makongeni and gazi. We went to a meeting and decided the work would start the day after tomorrow. We went with the secretary and the coordinator to withdraw the money. The following morning, we were told that the work was to start next week. And that time I was expectant at nine months. The following day I had stomach pains. I was taken to msambweni hospital and admitted. The money was left in the house. I spent 8 days in the hospital. But while I was in the hospital I was worried about the community money that was in the house. Everybody in the village knew that I am the treasurer and they knew I had money in the house and I was not in the house.

I: how can that be dealt with?

R: I was telling the committee members, if we plan to carry out an activity, the plan should be executed as planned. Otherwise, that money will put people into temptation. But my request is that we be given even if it is that Ksh. 20000.00.

I: is there anything else that you propose to be done so that we bring justice.

R: scouts to be increased even if its by 2 more.

I: what’s wrong with those already there?

R: the forest is big. There is the side of Gazi and this makongeni. If for example the one for Gazi falls sick, then one for makongeni will be required to do the makongeni rounds and also those for Gazi. At least if they are two per village, it will be better.

I: are there issues of mangrove illegal cutting?

R: these days it has reduced. There is a time we were informed that there were people who were coming to harvest the mangrove by boats. We think they were people from msambweni, because we investigated this area but didn’t get the culprits.

I: and do you have a boat to monitor?

R: no. we don’t have. And that is why our group was proposing we get a boat so that we can be able to guard our mangroves.

I: are there processes that need to be changed so that there is justice?

R: like during the time of doing projects, like example in those projects we were talking about, if we pursue one project at a time, I think that is what would be the best. This time here in makongeni we had proposed 3 projects; one was stalls/shops, second proposal was a tower in the mosque, because water was not flowing well in the mosque, we propose a small tower for a water tank, and the third one, we proposed latrines for community in the periphery of the mangrove forests, so that people do not go to the mangroves instead. What happened was that those stalls, the person who had promised to give us the place to construct them, declined to give us the plot. Now the other two remaining, we started doing them concurrently. The projects were completed but they are not perfect as we had expected. So my opinion, is that we take one project at a time. It is the committee to organize ourselves.

I: any other thing?

R: other things are moving on well. The only problem is when the coordinator might have sent a message at a time like now, she sends a message like “tomorrow, there is a meeting in such a such a place”. A time like now, 3.00pm, and you have already planned the activities of tomorrow. If somebody is given a notice of 2 days, then that is better. We have already told her but that one she has not rectified that. If it some emergency, that one is understandable. But if it is something that can wait, she should give us at least a notice of 2 days.

I: when you want to conduct meetings together with community, how do you select the members to attend your meetings?

R: at a meeting which we discuss to invite some community members to a future meeting, we ask ourselves who would be right person to get in touch with community members – whether it is the village chairman, or the chief or the mp chairman. So whoever has a chance to get in touch with community volunteers to do so.

I: how does that person identify who to select?

R; like this village has parts. Like this town area is called Kambini, then from town upto there it is called Bandari, and then there is another village much ahead where I personally come from, even that one is another section. If we need 6 people, the chairman can decide to pick 2 people here, 2 people in the middle and 2 from the far end. And if it is 3 girls he gets 3 boys. We also check the age and gender.

I: you were a treasure at some point. are there times when you organized to do one activity, but then later you change and do a different thing.

R: if it happened that the money was to be allocated to an alternative, as committee, we must meet and discuss it. You see like that one of the stalls, it was not possible. So we meet as a committee and discussed and agreed we complete the 2 other projects, and once complete, we see the amount money that was remaining so that we decide what else to be done.

I: did you decide?

R: we have not yet decided. Once we decide as committee, we will call the community and explain to them that the project we had proposed is no longer possible because the owner of the plot declined to give us the plot to us. So, you as community, what do you suggest we do.

I: There are those groups that were using the forest, and when MP took over a section of the forest, some casuarina trees were planted so that those people can have alternative source of wood and firewood. Were those trees enough for them?

R: it was not possible for them to get as they were getting from the forest. Once trees are cut, it requires that people plant others. But our people do not want to do that.

I: what happened to those trees that were planted?

R; the trees matured and were harvested. They were planted in the school compound. And were sold. The money obtained benefitted the school.

I: was there an agreement that once the trees are sold the school would retain the money?

R: yes.

I: so no part of that many went back to mp project to progress its activities? You had bought the ssedlings, then you planted,

R: then we followed to see the plants were growing well.

I: then was it mp that sold or it was the school that sold?

R: it was the school. Once they get a buyer, other times if it’s a bulk buyer, they consulted the committee chairman and then then the head teacher is told to sell the trees and keep the money. And then when we held a meeting, between the community and the school we were told “money from casuarina we got this, this and this”. We said that money should be kept and the money was kept. And then there was a period, when there was a shortage of books, and the parents decided that that money from sale of casuarina trees some of it to be used for buying books.

I; is it just that the proceeds from sale of trees non went back to the mp?

R: this has not been fair in the way these projects are carried out.

I: what about water? does the water committee send back some money to the mother committee, the mp?

R: No they don’t send anything.

I: what do you propose?

R: these committees of water and also those people where tree planting is done, they should be regularly reporting to the mother committee, the mp, so that we get to know how the trees are growing, and if it is the water committee, we get to know how much money is the account, and what bills have not been paid. The problem is that once they are given that freedom to lead, that is when they forget themselves completely. There is even a time we call that water committee for a meeting and it was very difficult.

I: what do you propose to be done.

R: that is something that have given us a lot of headache. Like that one for casuarina we had an MOU with the school.

I: did the MOU say how the proceeds should be shared? Or that the money should be returned to the mp?

R: no it didn’t specify that.

I: also when those trees were being planted, it was to provide firewood to those who were denied access to mangrove areas.

R; the casuarina failed to provide the firewood to those people. There was no fairness.

Those who were buying the trees, once the tree is bought it belongs to the buyer. If the person bought a tree at ksh. 500.00 he had no obligation to leave firewood for anybody. He had to ensure all parts of the tree gets into the vehicle, including the leaves.

I: so do you think mp disadvantaged those firewood collectors?

R: yes. They didn’t benefit from the woodlot.

I: how can that be resolved so that there is fairness to all?

R: I think by now most of the people are now used to that ban. they have looked for alternatives. many now have charcoal jikos, other have gas cookers, others have stoves. So they have started getting used. So the ban should continue, while we continue to educate the community on using of improved jikos so that they forget about the mangrove as a source of firewood or wood. They have also been trained on how to plant and weed for trees in those CFA meetings. People were also trained trained to on how to prune their coconut trees, mango and Neem (mkilifi) trees to get firewood.

I: what about those who were cutting mangroves?

R: those could not benefit from the casuarina woodlots. Those ones now are still in a lot of problems. But some of them have looked for alternative jobs.

I: what jobs are they doing?

R; they are digging quarries, for building stones. And this has reduced the desire to go into the forest. Many people who were constructing nowadays they are doing so by using those stones and the sand.

I: which groups have benefitted from mp?

R: there is a group that wanted to start a farming project, about 2 years ago, we bought a tank, we connected our water for them although they failed because our people do not like to work, but we used ksh. 30,000.00 to support that youth group project. Then this year there is a footballer youth group, we bought balls and uniforms for sports.

Those that have not benefited are those women groups. Ad they are money they cannot all benefit. But we say they benefit from water that has been supplied near their homes.

I; do you have anything else you would like to add?

R: I have nothing else to add

I: thank you very much for your time.