RESEARCH ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION

REPOA

Special Paper No. 07.21

Tanzanian Non-Governmental Organisations- Their Perceptions of Their Relationships with the Government of Tanzania and Donors, and Their Role in Poverty Reduction and Development

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Abbreviations

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Party) – Major political party
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GOT	Government of Tanzania
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
FEMACT	Feminists' Activist Coalition
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MKUKUTA	Kiswahili acronym for *Mkakati wa Kukuzi Uchumi na Kuondoa wa Umaskini Tanzania* (The National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty)
MS DANISH	Danish Association for International Co-operation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PINGOS	Pastoralist & Indigenous NGOs Forum
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PMS	Poverty Monitoring System
PPW	Poverty Policy Week
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
REPOA	Research on Poverty Alleviation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TANGO	Tanzania NGO Network
TACOSODE	Tanzania Council for Social Development
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
VPO	Vice President's Office

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ABSTRACT

As a result of structural adjustment programmes adopted by the Tanzanian economy in the 1980s and early 1990s, the role for civil society in development and service delivery in Tanzania expanded dramatically, encouraging explosive growth in the non-government sector. The NGO Policy of 2000 and the subsequent Tanzania Non-Governmental Organizations Act of 2002 were formulated to establish the legislative framework to allow NGOs to operate freely and effectively. However, many provisions remain unclear and in need of revision. Moreover, recent donor funding strategies are increasingly re-directing development aid to the Government of Tanzania, thereby transferring greater responsibility to the government for the future development of an autonomous civil society. As yet, it is unknown how NGOs will be affected or will respond, but this trend may usher in a new era of cooperation and collaboration between NGOs, donors, and the State.

This paper presents findings from a survey of a section of Tanzanian NGOs on their perceptions of their relationships with the government and donors, and their views on their roles and impacts on poverty reduction and development. It was found that closer planning and working relationships between the three sectors are emerging, as evidenced by collaboration during the development of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (MKUKUTA) in 2003-05. However, an atmosphere of suspicion remains. NGOs expressed doubt as to whether the government freely shares information, and they felt that if strong, vested interests were opposed then NGO submissions made little impact. Respondents recommended that civil society should continue to monitor and scrutinize the government, but equally that NGOs should act as a strategic link between the government and local communities to enhance policy outcomes. Additionally, NGOs can assist to fill gaps where the government does not, or lacks the capacity to, provide services.

Describing their relationships with donors, NGOs routinely cited pressures with respect to programme priorities and compliance. Many respondents also viewed the government/donor relationship as skewed unevenly in favour of donors. Respondents recommended that donors develop projects jointly with NGOs to reflect district/local priorities, and reduce the complexities of funding applications and reporting. Participants also strongly requested that donors expand current funding mechanisms to include NGOs' core operating costs, personnel and infrastructure to expand and sustain organisational work beyond the terms of individual projects.

Participating NGOs also recognised the need to improve their own individual and networking capacities to enhance their contributions to policy debate and service delivery. Moreover, a code of ethics applicable to organisations at all levels from national NGOs to village/community based groups was recommended, so that the credibility of civil society is strengthened and maintained. Most significantly, NGOs expressed the unambiguous desire for true partnerships with the government and donor agencies. Through commitment to greater openness, transparency and cooperation from all parties, it was felt that the common goals of alleviating poverty and furthering development in Tanzania can be realized.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), in collaboration with Dublin City University, conducted a survey of Tanzanian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) during 2005 to examine the extent to which these organisations are free to operate and to contribute effectively to policy development in Tanzania. The study aimed to better understand the roles and impacts of Tanzanian NGOs on poverty reduction and development, and to examine the relationships of NGOs with donors and with the Government of Tanzania (GOT). This paper presents quantitative and qualitative findings from the study, and uses selected quotes from participants to show local viewpoints on these critical issues and to reflect the unique social and political context of Tanzanian civil society.

Findings and Recommendations:

Profile of Participating NGOs

Of the 81 NGOs that completed the survey questionnaire, 57% were rural-based and 43% were urban based. The headquarters of organisations surveyed were located in 8 of the 26 regions of Tanzania. The median year of registration was mid-1997, for a median age of participating organisations of approximately eight years. The oldest NGO surveyed was registered in 1965. The most recent registration was in 2004. Membership of these organisations totalled approximately 30,000 Tanzanians. Of the ten organisations selected for in-depth interviews, six NGOs were chosen and four networks. Three were based in Arusha; seven were located in Dar es Salaam. The median age of these groups was eleven years.

Almost 80% of the NGOs surveyed spend all or almost all of their time on poverty reduction and development issues, primarily focusing on socio-economic development, health and HIV/AIDS, and women's, children's or youth development.

The largest number of organisations (47%) characterized their work as a mixture of service and advocacy, and over 80% of respondents felt that advocacy work is increasing in importance.

Over 90% of organisations surveyed are donor funded, and three-fifths of respondents receive funding for 60 to 100% of their activities. The remaining 10% are self-supporting through consultancies, or funded by their membership or individuals.

The Roles of NGOs and their Relationship with the Government of Tanzania

Overall, the findings from the study indicate that the relationship between NGOs and the government of Tanzania is expanding and improving, characterized by increased communication, interaction and trust. Respondents expressed the belief that the government now better understands that civil society has a clear role to play in policy formulation. Most NGOs indicated that they deal 'directly' with the GOT, either as individual organisations or through their network affiliations, and that, on the whole, their frequency and level of contact are satisfactory.

However, an atmosphere of suspicion pervades much of the sector and its relationship with the State. Some respondents expressed doubt as to whether the GOT freely shares information, and despite the growing trust, NGOs recommend that citizens and civil society organisations continue to monitor and scrutinize the government to protect their 'public investment', i.e. that civil society retains a role as a 'watchdog'.

In addition, it was argued that NGOs should analyse government policy and enhance outcomes wherever possible by providing information and offering creative solutions. NGOs can act to channel and interpret information back and forth between government and the grassroots communities where they work, as well as assist to fill gaps where the government does not, or lacks the capacity to, provide services. Respondents called for greater openness, transparency and cooperation from the government. Participants pointed to the need to revise the NGO Act and for the government to provide clear mechanisms to institutionalize the input of civil society in achieving common goals for Tanzania. NGO attitudes revealed a generous reciprocal spirit, recommending better integration and sharing with the government.

A majority of NGOs advocated collective action to bring issues before the government. Networks and coalitions were seen as crucially important to advancing pro-poor policy. They allow information and expertise to be shared and impart greater credibility to NGOs lobbying the government. Some disadvantages of networks were also noted. They may be difficult to coordinate, and can become too large or powerful, which may compromise the principles and priorities of individual member NGOs. Some respondents remarked that poor, rural and isolated communities are often cut off from collaborative efforts and forced to act alone, whereas a handful of strong 'elite' professionalised groups get noticed. There is often a strong sense of marginalization felt by NGOs outside of Dar es Salaam.

Indeed, findings show that the regional distribution of Tanzanian NGOs is highly skewed with the majority of organisations situated in and around Dar es Salaam and other major urban hubs[1]. This disproportionate representation can lead to the claim that civil society is 'Dar-centric', that everything begins and ends in Dar. However, data indicates that 94% of NGOs surveyed engage with the government directly – almost half of these at all bureaucratic levels, from village to national, but mainly at district level. This would indicate that distance from Dar es Salaam might not seriously restrict access to government. Rather, it reflects differences in the degree and level of access; most rural NGOs do not have opportunities to participate in meetings with the upper echelons of government policy makers that take place in Dar es Salaam. Nevertheless, it was strongly argued that measures be taken to increase the voice of smaller local organisations.

It was agreed that advocacy efforts need to be well informed and well organised. Viewing the government as an adversary was seen as counterproductive. Organisations must know the government's position on an issue first, and identify the entry points and key officials to effectively influence policy debate. Indeed, some respondents suggested that the lack of unity between NGOs on important issues was a weakness of Tanzanian civil society. Others felt that many NGOs lack skills and capacity, including the ability to articulate their mission and vision. Participants were split though on the topic of whether or not the GOT takes appropriate action on information supplied to it by NGOs. There was an overall sense that if the information did not agree with the GOT's position, or if strong, vested interests were opposed, then NGO efforts made no impact. The hesitancy of responses on this question indicated that more progress could be made in this area.

The Relationship of NGOs with Donors

During the study, respondents were often quick to describe their relations with donors as cordial and smooth, but with further probing, numerous frustrations were evident. Tanzanian NGOs largely receive project based funding from donors, and respondents were exasperated by the restrictions attached to this type of funding. Often very limited resources are made available for organisational running costs, salaries and equipment. Participants strongly argued that project only funding is unsustainable in the long-term; that when project based funding is withdrawn, activities often cease abruptly and

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[1] cf. Hoekstra, 2004

prematurely. They recommended that donors allocate an increased proportion of funding to cover NGOs' core operating costs, personnel and infrastructure in order to sustain activities beyond the terms of current projects. Increased funding for transport was also suggested to expand the presence and services of NGOs in more remote, rural areas.

NGOs also routinely complained of pressure from donors with respect to program priorities and compliance with rigid funding conditions, exemplified by statements that NGOs' 'hands are tied' when it comes to projects that they wished to pursue. In general, participants said that they were doing the projects they believed in, but when further questioned, admitted that 'some' NGOs alter a project's design to align with a donor's agenda in order to mobilize resources. For example, some respondents felt that donors tend to provide more funding for advocacy and policy issues than service delivery, which may explain the high percentage of NGOs in the study that were involved in some form of advocacy work. Funding stipulations may also be impractical for local conditions, for example, gender requirements had been incorporated rather perfunctorily into certain projects. Participants recommended that donors develop projects jointly with NGOs to reflect local priorities.

Complicated bureaucratic requirements for funding applications and reporting were felt to be unnecessarily difficult and restrictive. NGOs requested that donors reduce the complexities of the application process or provide more technical assistance, including capacity training in the preparation of joint proposals to actualize the idea of 'partnerships for development'. Findings also indicated that the perceptions of international NGO donors are largely positive, while the perceptions of official donors are more problematic. Funding procedures for official donors were viewed as more elaborate, demanding and rigid and their agendas were felt to be 'hidden' more frequently.

Participants asked that donors display greater openness about funding agendas and announce priorities in advance so that qualified NGOs can apply, and those without necessary experience would not waste time and resources writing doomed proposals. Donors could also introduce a "priority list" approach to funding, whereby donors advertise topics or projects being considered for funding nationally. NGOs would then submit proposals to demonstrate relevant expertise and capacity, and receive funding for specific portions of the project. Donors could link disparate organisations through civil society networks to work jointly on these projects.

Many respondents also viewed the government/donor relationship as skewed unevenly in favour of donors. Statements that donors were more powerful, and that the GOT lacks authority and largely aligns with donors' directives, were prevalent. Other respondents argued that, since decentralization, the economy is largely run by outsiders, including the donor community and international financial institutions.

As the recent initiatives for direct, government to government development aid are implemented, including the latest grant in January 2006 of $542.5 million from Britain, it remains to be seen how NGOs will be affected or will respond. It may usher in a new era of cooperation and collaboration between NGOs and the State if, for example, qualified NGOs in the health, education and water sectors are brought into partnerships by the GOT and funded to deliver services. Whichever implementation strategies are chosen, stringent government accountability for sectoral funds will be essential to achieving economic prosperity in Tanzania. The allocation and disbursement of these funds will need to be continually and closely examined.

Perceptions of NGOs on their Impact on Poverty Reduction and Development in Tanzania

Despite all the barriers, most NGOs felt that their organisations were having a largely positive impact on policy. The area of impact most frequently cited was input to the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) review, a national consultation process initiated by the GOT as part of the development of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP or MKUKUTA to use its Swahili acronym). Participants felt that many of their recommendations were incorporated into the strategy, especially in areas of disability and gender. It was also felt that the PRS review had helped mainstream the fight against poverty into government policy and created a fresh consciousness in the country that "poverty is not normal and can be eradicated". The GOT is now more inclined to see NGOs as partners in poverty reduction, and to recognize the value of public input. A further positive note is that the PRS review promoted a closer working relationship between the government and donors, and that many donors are talking of implementing MKUKUTA priority areas.

Respondents also felt that NGOs had contributed to several other critical areas of policy and legislative change, most notably gender equity, prevention of sexual offences, and land reform. Activism around gender issues in Tanzania was seen as particularly strong, due to the efforts of several active networks and coalitions, including Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), and Feminist Activists Coalition (FEMACT).

Whereas NGOs considered that progress had been made in advancing laws and policies, they noted that implementation remains problematic. A gap existed between policy and practice.

Three-quarters of respondents gave evidence of positive impacts on poverty reduction and development resulting from their work, but the impacts cited were, for the most part, localized and cannot be viewed as sweeping improvements. Moreover, most organisations assessed their impact based upon observations and perceptions of change, such as observations of improved livelihoods, employment and standards of living in target communities. Less than one-fifth of respondents employed formal monitoring and evaluation procedures or external reviews to measure their effectiveness.

For a significant proportion of respondents a sense of discouragement was evident at the overwhelming amount of work left to do to combat ever-increasing levels of poverty. These organisations felt that few actual changes could be measured as yet. Reasons given for these negative perceptions included too little time to see positive results; a lack of financial resources; the need for more trained and compensated staff; and a political environment that was not conducive for non-state actors. Several participants also criticized the "welfare approach to service provision" adopted by some NGOs that acted as if they were the government.

Finally, it is widely believed that the entangling bureaucracies of both donors and the government cripple efforts toward development by delaying decisions and the allocation of resources.

Nevertheless, many of the successes are truly heartening news for communities. Several NGOs in Iringa, Morogoro and Kilimanjaro noted that increasing use of condoms and behavior change fostered through awareness programs had reduced the incidence of HIV/AIDS infection in these areas. Home-based caregivers were receiving more community support. Progress was being made against the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), and tougher laws against rape, domestic violence and other forms of abuse of women and children had been instituted. More children have been enabled to go to school, services for the disabled have increased, and measures to protect the environment have expanded.

To improve their impact, individual NGOs and networks recognized the need to act to build skills and capacity to overcome their own organizational weaknesses. Greater collaboration and trust must also be established between NGOs to facilitate jointly funded initiatives and to avoid 're-inventing the wheel' for each project. Uniting in collective action will strengthen outcomes. Network mechanisms were suggested to integrate information gathered by individual NGOs from grassroots communities prior to submission to the government. Follow-up with GOT could subsequently track the results of advocacy. In this way, collective voices would encourage the government to deliver on political promises of fairness, poverty reduction and economic growth for all. A code of ethics applicable to organisations at all levels from national NGOs to village/community based groups should also be developed to remove any hint of corruption or mismanagement so that the credibility of civil society is strengthened and maintained.

Throughout the study, NGOs presented with dedication and sincerity, and expressed an unambiguous desire for true partnership with the government and donor agencies. Respondents pointed out that while government and donors may have the funds, NGOs have the on-the-ground experience and expertise at local levels. So by working together as real partners – by including NGOs in the conception and planning stages, reducing bureaucracy, and considering NGO priorities rather than dictated agendas – much more could be accomplished toward the common goals of reducing poverty and furthering development in Tanzania.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Emergence of CSOs and NGOs in Tanzania

Responding to a series of economic shocks, Tanzania signed agreements with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to adopt structural adjustment programmes in the 1980s and early 1990s. Conditions of these agreements included control of money supply, devaluation of currency, and reduction of government expenditures for social services among other sweeping changes. As a result, the role for civil society in development and service delivery expanded dramatically and the number of registered NGOs in Tanzania shot up from only seventeen in 1978 to 813 organisations by 1994[2]. Subsequent transformations in donor funding strategies during the late 1990s encouraged further growth of the sector, as donors increasingly began to channel aid funds through international and locally based NGOs, which were considered to be more efficient, less corrupt and to operate closer to the poor than government bureaucracies. NGOs became more active in filling gaps as the government retreated from its front-line service role due to severe budgetary restrictions. As people realized the willingness of donors to give direct support to NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs), the number of organisations exploded[3].

Following an extensive process of stakeholders' consultations beginning in 1996, the NGO Policy of 2000 was formulated to establish a legislative framework to allow NGOs to operate effectively. The policy steering committee (made up of representatives of academia; government; local, national and international NGOS; community-based organisations and religious institutions) sought to address confusion in NGO registration and the conflicting definitions of an NGO. It also recognized that numerous conflicting laws faced any group seeking to form an NGO.

The policy estimated that 2,000 local and international NGOs were operational in Tanzania, but other studies have found that many organisations practice on a part-time basis, exist in name and proposal only, or work in a very limited capacity[4]. Despite representing a critical advance in government, donor and NGO relations, many provisions of the NGO Policy and the Tanzania Non-Governmental Organizations Act of 2002 remain unclear and vague and are currently undergoing a lengthy process of revision[5].

1.2 The Environment Today

Review of relevant literature also indicates that government/NGO relations with respect to poverty reduction and development remain a complex and contentious issue. For example, the recent NGO Statement on the Joint Health Sector Review (2005) in Tanzania pointed to "significant wariness among actors in health, including between government and NGOs" and that at both district and national levels, "suspicion hampers collective action to improve health status."

Moreover, many donors are re-assessing whether funding should go to NGOs or be redirected to the government to enable the State to create the conditions for the development of an autonomous civil society. In addition, Tanzania has recently introduced independent evaluation of anti-poverty programmes for both donors and the government. Indeed, development aid from donors is now increasingly being delivered directly to national budgets.

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[2] Kiondo, 1993: 166; PMO, 1996:1
[3] Lange, et al., 2000
[4] Michael, 2004: 74; Mercer, 2003: 754
[5] Simon, 2002

In January 2006, Britain agreed a grant of US$542.5 million government-to-government support to Tanzania over the next three years for its poverty reduction program, primarily for water, health and education projects.

Debate also exists as to whether some NGOs, in order to secure resources, will follow the agendas set by international partners rather than pursue programmes developed in response to needs identified locally. Given their reliance on foreign funding, even so-called membership organisations may be more accountable to these external funding sources than to their own constituencies[6].

Acknowledging the importance of these issues, Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), in collaboration with Dublin City University, conducted a case study to explore the roles and impacts of Tanzanian NGOs on poverty reduction and development, and to examine the relationships of NGOs with donors and with the government. The study seeks to assess to what extent NGOs are free to operate and contribute effectively to policy development in Tanzania. Through a selection of respondents' quotes, the study aims to present local viewpoints on these critical issues and to reflect the unique social and political context of Tanzanian civil society.

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[6] Igoe, 2003; Reuben, 2002; Shivji, 2004; Guijit and Shah, 1998

2.   METHODOLOGY

2.1   NGO Mapping Exercise

An NGO mapping exercise was completed to develop a database of those NGOs primarily working in the areas of social service delivery, poverty reduction, development and research. Available sources of organisational information included the Directory of Tanzania NGOs (2000), together with directories, workshop lists and membership records from individual NGOs, networks and umbrella organisations, donors and funding agencies, and government departments.

The exercise yielded an initial database of over 1,500 organizations located in 23 of Tanzania's 26 regions. With the exception of current workshop lists, many of the initial sources were obsolete with listed organisations unable to be contacted. The database was cleaned and reorganized. Organisations that did not fit study criteria were removed to yield a database of about 700 local and national NGOs. International NGOs were not eligible. Other civil society entities, such as trade unions, political parties, cooperatives and media groups, were also outside the scope of the current study. The database was further refined and updated as the study advanced and new information became available.

2.2   Sampling Frame

An initial sample of 100 organisations for interview was drawn from the database. The sample was selected to include:

i)   NGOs with relatively good capacity organised at a national level or with activities focused on government ministries at a national level;
ii)   Less developed NGOs funded by external donors; and
iii) NGOs organised only at a local level that had no direct financial link with foreign organisations or governments, i.e., NGOs actively involved in fundraising, or funded by members and/or individuals.

The sample also sought representation of both rural and urban NGOs, as well as NGOs from across different regions of the country.

2.3   Data Collection

Representatives from 91 organisations were interviewed. REPOA researchers administered a survey questionnaire to 81 organisations in two rounds via structured interviews where possible. The first round of the survey was conducted during February - March 2005, with the second round held in July - August that year. In-depth interviews were then conducted by the REPOA lead researcher with a further 10 NGOs based in Dar es Salaam and Arusha. A second instrument (interview guide) was developed to examine more closely selected topics and issues raised in the larger survey.

3.   FINDINGS

3.1   Profile of the 81 NGOs that Completed the Survey Questionnaire

3.1.1   Location of Headquarters

Rural: 57%; Urban: 43%.

3.1.2   Scope of work

National: 53%; Local community level: 47%.

Of note, 70% of rural NGOs were local in scope whereas 83% of urban NGOs were national in scope

3.1.3   Membership

A total of 68 NGOs (84%) listed memberships ranging widely from six individuals to 15,000 members.

Membership for these organisations totaled approximately 30,000 Tanzanians.

The remaining 13 NGOs were not membership organisations but registered as trusteeships, companies, societies, networks or consortia.

3.1.4   Registration

The median year of registration was mid 1997, for a median age of approximately 8 years.

The oldest NGO surveyed was registered in 1965. The most recent registration was in 2004.

Only about 26% of participating NGOs were registered in the 28 years between 1965 and 1993. However, an additional 53% registered in the six subsequent years, from 1994 through 2000 inclusive.

3.1.5   Regional Distribution

The headquarters of surveyed NGOs were located in eight of the 26 regions of Tanzania. The distribution of NGOs across the country is highly skewed toward Dar es Salaam Region, the functional capital and political and economic centre of the country. Therefore, sampling was performed to ensure representation of up-country regions. The final sample included 59% of NGOs from up-country regions, 41% from Dar es Salaam Region.

Table 1: Distribution of Participating NGOs by Region

REGION	Number	%
Dar es Salaam	33	41
Arusha	13	16
Iringa	11	14
Kilimanjaro	7	9
Morogoro	6	7
Mwanza	5	6
Kagera	4	5
Coast	2	2
TOTAL	81	100

3.1.6 Funding/Donors

Donors funded 90% of the NGOs surveyed. A total of about 170 donor organisations were mentioned. Agencies mentioned most often were UNDP, SIDA, DFID (UK), Oxfam Ireland, Trocaire, Oxfam GB, FINNIDA, NORAD, Ford Foundation and CIDA.

The remaining 10% are self-supporting, through consultancies, funded by their membership or individuals.

3.1.7 Network Affiliations

Respondents mentioned over 160 different national, local and international network organisations and consortia. Those mentioned most often were Policy Forum (formerly NGO Policy Forum), Tanzania NGO Network (TANGO), Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), Feminists' Activist Coalition (FEMACT), and Tanzania Coalition for Debt and Development.

3.2 Profile of the 10 NGOs that Participated in the In-depth Interviews

Interviewees were selected based on three criteria:

- that the organizations were local or national,
- possessed relatively high capacity, and
- were organised and operated by Tanzanians.

Six NGOs and four networks were chosen for in-depth interviews. Three organisations were based in Arusha; seven were located in Dar es Salaam. The median year of registration was 1994, for a median age of eleven years.

3.3 Focus of Work of Participating NGOs by Sector

The operations of approximately 70% of organisations surveyed may be categorized into four major sectors of development:

- social/economic development (25%),
- health and HIV/AIDS (23%),

- women and children's development (15%), and
- youth development (7%).

Organisations were classified according to the principal focus of their work, as the activities of many organisations did not easily fit into a single category. For example, improvements in health and HIV/AIDS prevalence are critical factors affecting all areas of development, and vice versa.

Participants for in-depth interviews were similarly involved in a broad range of sectors including social and economic development, health and HIV/AIDS, legal reform, governance, education, human rights, youth, gender, natural resources and the environment, sustainable farming and pastoralist rights.

3.4 Nature of Work of the Participating NGOs

Surveyed NGOs were asked to describe the nature of their work with respect to the following categories: service provision, advocacy, research or any combination thereof. 'Service provision and advocacy' was the most common response (47% of NGOs). A further 16% cited 'advocacy and research', and 11% were focused solely on service provision. In total, the work of 68% of surveyed NGOs included advocacy, while 62% were involved in service provision. Lastly, 21% of the NGOs were engaged in some level of research.

Table 2: How Surveyed NGOs Characterize Their Work

Nature of Work	% of NGOs
Mixture of service provision and advocacy	47
Mixture of advocacy and research	16
Other	16
Mostly service provision	11
Mostly advocacy	5
Mixture of service provision and research	4
Mostly research	1
TOTAL	100

The types of services provided were extremely diverse, including (in no particular order):

- Legal aid and counseling services
- Water, agricultural and environmental consultancy
- Capacity building and training for NGOs and community-based organisations
- Credit and skills building for small business enterprises
- Provision of school fees and construction of educational infrastructure
- Health services, including home-based care and rehabilitation
- HIV/AIDS prevention education and information
- Support for the disabled, widows, street children and/or orphans
- Income generation projects

Thirty-five per cent of NGOs had experienced no change in their type of work since establishment. However, while retaining their original purpose/mission, 60% of those surveyed had added other roles

in response to evolving needs within their targeted communities. None mentioned that this trend was responsive to donors' aid agendas. For example, a well established NGO working on HIV/AIDS issues in a rural district remarked that commercial sex workers were the original target group, but this expanded to include orphans and out-of-school youth. Community outreach work on legal aid and human rights were also added.

3.4.1   The Evolving Nature of the Work of an NGO

"It started with 15 [disabled children] under a mango … then it increased to the veranda, to the hall, and eventually to these buildings. We've served 1,750 people since 1990 and have added a vocational training and income generating center, animal husbandry and public awareness. Now we're trying to establish an educational health center for those too ill to travel the long distance to the hospital."

3.5   NGOs' Perceptions of the Meaning of Advocacy

The work of 68% of NGOs included advocacy, and 82% of those surveyed cited that their work on advocacy had increased in importance. For half of the respondents engaged in advocacy, their primary targets were the Tanzanian government (various levels), donors, communities, or the general public. About 25% of NGOs targeted only the government. Just over one percent cited international donors as the only focus of their advocacy efforts, and 12 % did not engage in advocacy. When urban based and rural based NGOs are compared, urban locales showed slightly higher participation in advocacy and research, whereas rural organisations indicated higher involvement in service provision.

How 'advocacy' is defined from one organisation to another may vary widely depending on their activities. For example, advocacy, if directed toward donors, might mean promoting ideas for a project to secure resources. While, advocacy directed toward a local community, might entail disseminating information, raising awareness, or building capacity.

Data from the surveys indicate that advocacy was understood differently by individual NGOs. One primary theme emphasized advocacy as 'creating awareness' or 'sensitizing' around a given issue. Other meanings included 'pressurizing' government policymakers or 'organising for action' to bring about change to solve a problem. During the in-depth interviews, the themes most often cited were 'speaking for' or 'on behalf of others' (the disadvantaged, marginalized or voiceless), or 'informing and influencing for change'.

Threaded through all responses, the idea of bringing voices from the grassroots or general public to participate in policy formulation and to demand change prevailed. However, it was also clear that a number of respondents were not certain of the meaning of advocacy. For example, certain respondents described their advocacy work as 'providing credit', 'training in business entrepreneurship', or, simply, as 'advocating'.

3.5.1   The Varying Perceptions of Advocacy

"Advocacy is promoting a certain idea that brings development or meets the rights of the community or individual."

"Generating shared understanding of key issues among stakeholders and advocating for change in the interests of the poor."

"Change from an unwanted situation to the ideal one."

"Efforts toward making changes, creating an enabling environment for change, and

empowering the community to take action."

"Voice up and pressurize; inform people on issues and call them to action."

"Advocacy is policy engagement, from the grassroots up, and being at the table, part of the process. It is also activism, mobilizing grassroots and public to demand change, and have the capacity to debate."

A complicating factor was the perception that donors tend to provide more funding for advocacy and policy issues, which, in turn, may influence NGOs to increase advocacy activities and decrease service delivery. This view was clearly stated by one respondent:

"We do very little work on poverty alleviation and development because of funding. Donors are not very interested in poverty alleviation – they're more interested in advocacy and lobbying for policy changes and law reforms."

However, most NGOs maintained that the growth in advocacy was planned. Indeed, the increasing importance of 'advocacy' in the work of Tanzania's NGOs may be a response to enhanced levels of activism and networking by some of the stronger coalitions, as well as a perception of increased openness by the Government for contributions from civil society during the review of the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) in 2004-05. Nevertheless, in pursuit of financial support for their projects, and with the increasing interconnection of civil society work as a whole through networks, it appears that many NGOs have adopted the terms and 'shifting priorities' of donors. Therefore, the data indicating certain levels of advocacy work must be viewed with caution.

Advocacy efforts cited by participating NGOs included lobbying and activism in the following areas:

- Promotion of local government involvement in HIV/AIDS issues
- Child labour, sexual abuse, gender equity, land rights, and natural resources
- Education and health, including maternal health and rights of the poor
- Youth behavior change training and education
- Environmental conservation
- Anti-FGM and HIV/AIDS awareness and education
- Civic education to help citizens to take action and hold government accountable
- Policy and legal reforms to recognize and support disabled people
- Allocation of space for small traders
- Poverty reduction through economic and social justice
- Governance, democracy, peace and security (local and regional conflict issues)

3.6   NGOs Work in Poverty Reduction and Development

Over 80% of surveyed NGOs considered that all or almost all of their work was closely aligned to poverty reduction efforts or socioeconomic development. About 18% spent half of their time or less on these areas and a small fraction do not work in these fields.

Issues of access to health services, land, water, education and employment were generally agreed to be poverty issues, since the poor are often disenfranchised from these basic resources. Similarly, development is pursued by respondent NGOs through a multitude of avenues including provision of primary health care, protection of environmental resources, credit/loans and income generation projects, and education and training on a broad spectrum of topics. One NGO's remarks illustrated the

immediate connection of their work on HIV/AIDs with poverty reduction and development efforts:

> *"We spend all of our time devoted to poverty alleviation and development, because HIV/AIDS is surrounded by poverty."*

3.7   The Relationship of NGOs with Donors

3.7.1   Level of Support from Donors

Over 90% of organisations surveyed were donor funded, and three-fifths of respondents received funding for 60 to 100% of their activities.

Funding from donors covered a smaller overall percentage of rural NGOs' activities. A total of 55% of rural organisations had received financial assistance for between 60 and 100% of their work; whereas 68% of urban NGOs received that level of funding.

The majority of donor-funded NGOs received a combination of financial and technical support.

Only a little less than seven % of the NGOs surveyed received <u>no</u> outside funding from donors. Most of these operate on contributions from members and individuals, or on income from consultancies.

3.7.2   Communication with Donors

Most NGOs (65%) communicated with development partners frequently via phone and/or email, while another 15% met with donors regularly. About 4% cited no direct contact.

3.7.3   Differences in NGOs' Relationships with International NGOs and with Official Donors

Over 60% of NGOs did not have any relationship with official donors. For the remaining 40% of NGOs that did interact with both international NGOs and official donors, 56% cited differences in their relationships with these two donor groups, while 44% found no difference in their interactions. Findings indicate that the perceptions of international NGO donors are largely positive, while the perceptions with respect to official donors are more problematic. Selected comments from NGOs on this topic are listed below.

International NGOs

> *"More accessible."*

> *"More concerned, help to build our capacity and show us where to improve when necessary."*

> *"Careful on accountability."*

> *"Often do not respond. Waited for 9 months for response to one proposal."*

> *"Relationship is more informal."*

> *"We are closer to NGOs than to government – they do follow-up and build capacity."*

> *"We prefer to be funded by NGOs with a culture of really reaching out to poor communities."*

> *"Even if not providing funds, they focus more on collaboration in common interests."*

Official Donors

> "Not open to local NGOs."

> "Official donors build our capacity to manage our programme more than northern NGOs, who do not follow up on the money they give us."

> "Careless with finances and follow-up."

> "More strategic engagement – where we feel our objectives could be advanced."

> "Too many strings attached – "Maybe the spirit of NGOs is being killed by funding from the non-NGO world."

> "Focused, they respond, we always get feedback."

> "Not interested in partnership; just give the money."

> "Elaborate procedures and rules, rigid, rigorous, cumbersome & demanding, difficult to qualify for proposals."

However, it was noted that perceptions of the same donor by two organizations can be starkly different as illustrated by the following responses

> "One donor (USAID) is very inflexible and demanding on implementation and reporting, especially on finances."

> "USAID is not that difficult – agree on a budget and get down to activities – also flexible, generous, but pressure to show results. They give money, you do it, but USAID comes to the kitchen to check on the cooking."

3.7.4 Funding Strategies and Project Priorities

The ten in depth interviews were used to further explore the perceptions of NGOs of their relationship with donors. Asked whether NGOs in general are doing projects they want to do and/or that they believe in, responses were mixed and tended to be cautious or negative. One respondent remarked positively that their donor (an international NGO) provided funding from the early phases of research through implementation of projects and supported their organisation to improve. However, half of the explanations indicated that donors' priorities were paramount, exemplified by the statement that civil society organizations' (CSOs') "hands are tied" when it comes to projects they would like to pursue. The following quotes attest to perceptions that donors' agendas are dominant.

> "The mechanism in which CSOs and donors operate does not give CSOs voice to decide, but gives donors the power to prescribe."

> "In most cases, donors invite CSOs to present their interests in certain [donor] priority areas."

> "CSOs respond to what donors are saying, not their own agendas."

Asked whether donors' priorities had a direct impact on the priorities of their own organisations responses were equally split. Respondents acknowledged differences in agendas, that most donors have their own country policies. One respondent said that his organisation attempts to resist as much as possible and looks for donors with the same broad priorities. Another NGO that provides HIV/AIDS prevention education for youth had received money from the US Government PEPFAR program. Since this initiative emphasizes abstinence and faithfulness, the organisation was required to cease promoting condoms as they had done before. However, the interviewee remarked that *"we*

can always implement areas when we have the resources," indicating that this was only a temporary setback.

Moreover, when asked if their organisations had ever changed the focus of a proposal for funding after discovering that a donor's priority differed from their own, or had sought other funding sources when a potential donor was not interested in the focus of a project, responses to these two questions appeared inconsistent. Four fifths of respondents answered 'yes' to the first question; all ten participants answered 'yes' to the second.

Nevertheless, some organisations may have applied both tactics. One donor said that when a donor wanted to fund a project in a different area of the country than that selected by the NGO, they refused the grant but ultimately received money from a different donor. To avoid having to follow donors' agendas, one organisation was trying to develop 'internal' funding sources from individuals who support their work.

3.7.5   NGOs' Perceptions on the Donor/Government Relationship

A majority of the ten respondents in the in-depth interviews viewed the donor/government relationship as 'uneven' and favoring donors. One respondent said *"Sometimes donors listen to the GOT".* Only two respondents viewed the relationship as a 'complementary partnership'. However, the selected quotes below better illustrate NGOs perceptions on this complex and dynamic issue.

> *"A relationship of diplomacy, give and take. Donors say they feel that the GOT is too strong, stubborn, but GOT is too tied to donors."*

> *"Donors need to answer to their taxpayers, so it's a dilemma."*

> *"A complex issue – right now, good communication, but still Tanzania is highly dependent on donors, not good."*

> *"They are unequal; conditions come with the money."*

> *"Extremely good relationship relative to other countries. Some say they're in bed together. They work very closely, but it's a tenuous marriage because they're also very wary of each other."*

3.7.6 Recommendations on How Donors Can Facilitate the Work of NGOs

A majority of NGOs said that more financial assistance was needed from donors to better facilitate their work, especially 'adequate', 'flexible' and 'long-term' funds. Many of these respondents frankly pleaded for greater financial resources. One respondent remarked: *"Bottom line – more money."*

However, other NGOs specified the need for increased funding of core expenses (personnel, infrastructure and operating costs) to enhance institutional sustainability. These expenses were often not covered by donors that sponsored specific projects. One-third of respondents also cited the need for greater technical support (computer technology, training information exchange, capacity building) to facilitate their work. The need for broader funding mechanisms is highlighted in the following quotes.

> *"We get money for a project, but most donors do not support personnel and running costs. That's why some organizations 'cheat'- find a way to divert funds to staff. Secretaries even sell reams of paper."*

> *"Village/grassroots organizations have nothing – no chairs, desks, paper. They lack basics.*

So it's hard to find partners to make it effective to go outside of Dar and fund in the rural areas."

"We're only funded for activities, which have very finite terms. We also need equipment."

"Financial resources are not adequate – they want to support a program but do not provide enough to do it right. Time, communication and duration of implementation are important."

Respondents also recommended that donors focus more on local/district level issues, and that policies and projects should be formulated in partnership. After critical priorities for Tanzania are identified, individual NGO agendas and priorities within that list should be funded by donors. It was felt that NGOs possess grassroots knowledge and wish to share that expertise. NGOs also sought for donors to reduce the bureaucratic complexities of the application process, to offer capacity training in the preparation of proposals, and to display greater openness about their agendas.

One interesting recommendation was that donors should engage consulting firms to manage projects, as Deloitte Touche currently administers the Rapid Funding Envelope. Funds should be advertised when available. Concern was also voiced of the trend toward single-channel funding to the GOT as this increasingly directs control to the government and away from civil society. Finally, one youth representative argued for donors to support local ideas and advised donors to *"leave aside as much as possible 'best practices', which are only blueprints to cut and paste, and become an imposition."*

3.8 The Roles of NGOs and their Relationship with the Government of Tanzania (GOT)

3.8.1 Level of Contact with the Government

Almost all NGOs surveyed (94%) engaged directly with the GOT.

Almost half of the organizations interact at all levels (national, regional, district, ward, village), while almost one-third of the NGOs do so only at the district level.

Over 10% interact primarily at the national level, while about 3% engage only at ward level and below.

A majority of NGOs (57%) interact with government officials directly; only 11% engage via a network alone. The remainder utilizes both approaches.

More than 40% of NGOs were in touch with officials either monthly or quarterly, almost 15% had weekly contact, and a similar proportion (~ 15%) had daily contact. However, almost 30% said that their contact with the government was only in response to special events. Overall, more than 60% of NGOs described their level of contact as satisfactory. Findings indicate that rural groups had less frequent contact with the government and more often cited multiple barriers to access than urban-based NGOs.

3.8.2 Perceptions on the Roles of NGOs and the Government

During the in-depth interviews, respondents were asked to specify differences between the roles of the government and NGOs in poverty alleviation and development. Wide-ranging lists of responsibilities were attributed to both sectors, but several common themes emerged.

Policy and leadership were the principal roles attributed to the government together with the

responsibility to create an environment conducive to citizens to participate in the making of policies and laws. One respondent added that the government is responsible for managing public assets and providing public goods (such as health, education) to ensure social protection, peace and security.

The key functions for NGOs were interpreting, monitoring/scrutinizing and implementing government policies. NGOs should translate policies to inform local communities, and provide a conduit for input and information from those communities to reach the government. NGOs also perceived a strong role for civil society to formulate creative policy and implementation solutions.

With respect to service delivery, i.e., implementing policies, the majority of respondents indicated that NGOs should assist to fill gaps where the government does not, or lacks capacity, to provide services. However, one NGO argued that since decentralization, the economy is largely in the hands of outsiders:

> *"CSOs are doing a good job trying to lobby for social sectors. [But] the large social sector is not sustainable – it will be donor dependent for a long time. Very few NGOs are helping people to cope with the economy. Though people think the GOT is running it, outsiders are. International financial institutions, donors and the GOT have created a role for the private sector, which employs only 16% of the population. Only 6% have bank accounts. NGOs should connect the people to the economy. During thirty years of centralized government, people were assured of employment after graduating from university; there was free education, a marketing monopoly – all gone now. The IMF should have helped the government to prepare people in advance of privatization of utilities."*

All ten respondents said that CSOs should scrutinize the work of the State. Specific entry points for civil society centred on tracking budgets and participating in the public expenditure review (PER) process. One respondent remarked *"NGOs should lobby to sit on committees [in partnership with GOT], and should get budgets and documents to review in advance, before they go to Parliament."* There was a general sense that government should be transparent, but that people must monitor and protect their public investment. Another commented that: *"NGOs should be in the front line of analyzing policies and agreements of the government,"* and should help by providing information and alternative solutions to the GOT. A third respondent echoed this, arguing against NGOs being 'only' watchdogs, stating that organisations should approach the government not only with criticism but also with proposed solutions, and they first need to know the 'rules of engagement' at various governmental levels.

3.8.3 How Tanzanian NGOs Can Help Shape Government Policy

When asked for ways that Tanzanian NGOs can help shape policy, NGOs described various forms of collective action as the best ways to influence government policy makers. Networking, forming strategic alliances or coalitions, working through umbrella organisations, and mobilizing collaboratively around critical issues were cited repeatedly as the most effective approaches. Networking allows NGOs to share information, skills and expertise and to efficiently mobilize resources, while enhancing the credibility of the organizations' agenda through a strong collective voice.

Certain disadvantages of networks were also cited. Effective networks take time to develop and may be difficult to coordinate if very large numbers of NGOs are involved. In fact, despite their significant advantages, seven out of ten respondents in the in-depth interviews agreed that a network could be too big or too powerful. An individual NGO can risk becoming overshadowed and compromising its core convictions, or be *"forced into a mold"* as one respondent remarked.

Respondents also emphasised 'policy literacy', i.e., for NGOs to be thoroughly familiar with the issues

as well as the policy context, and to engage in policy formulation from the outset and in a timely fashion. NGOs needed to do their 'homework' in advance and identify entry points for civil society participation. Organisations must first learn the government's position on an issue, and then make sure that key officials at the proper levels know their priorities through a clearly presented, persuasive position paper. In short, NGOs need to be organised and be informed. In turn, NGOs wanted the GOT to see them as partners, and to support important work at the local level.

Respondents also mentioned using the media and seeking opportunities for face-to-face advocacy. One respondent recommended employing a *"mix of methods – make noise in the streets to raise public debate." "Speaking truth to power"* as another remarked.

On the negative side, a few respondents felt that NGOs were not united, lacked expertise, and did not have well thought out strategies. If NGOs did not combine their voices in a common cause, they would just be *"shouting in the wind"*. A further and more serious warning was the belief that NGOs acting alone might risk government retribution.

3.8.4 Perceptions of NGOs on their Relationship with the Government

Participants in the in-depth interviews were almost unanimous: NGO relations with the Government of Tanzania have improved since their organisations were established. Evidence cited for this assessment included increased requests by GOT for information, greater involvement of NGOs in policy processes, and closer communication and improved credibility with the government. Respondents felt that the GOT now has a better understanding that civil society has a clear role to play in policy formulation.

One NGO's credibility with the GOT increased when they criticized a World Bank HIPC report that had used out-dated financial ratios, resulting in less debt relief for Tanzania. Recalculation of the figures by the organisation resulted in higher debt relief. This NGO is now a fixture in the PER process and participates in negotiations with the World Bank and IMF.

Only one respondent deviated from the overall good perceptions of the relationship with the Government, remarking that it was really difficult to say whether it is better or worse, acknowledging that it is changing, but more cautiously asserting that there are ambivalences:

> *"GOT is beginning to understand us better, taking more interest in our work, seeing where we can be beneficial to them, what our strengths and weaknesses are. [But] some parts of GOT seek us out, and others fear us more. Some value our input; some exclude us."*

3.8.5 Perceptions of NGOs on Information Sharing by the Government

Interestingly, in light of the good perceptions on the NGO/GOT relationship noted above, only five out of the ten interviewees believed that the government freely shares information with NGOs. One participant felt that the GOT was more forthcoming, and that the amount and frequency of government interaction and engagement with civil society had improved. This progress indicated the growing strength of the relationship and the increased recognition of the role of CSOs and the private sector as partners. However, nearly half of the respondents expressed doubt on the extent to which the GOT truly shares important information as illustrated by the quotes below:

> *"Maybe not 100%, we need to press [for more], it all depends on the person you interact with."*

> *"Though they share more [information] than before, there are still closed areas and topics, especially donor negotiations."*

"Yes, but we do not know to what extent other crucial information is being hidden. Do we only receive two per cent of it?"

3.8.6   Recommendations on How Government Can Facilitate the Work of NGOs

Respondents recommended several ways that the government could better facilitate the work of NGOs. Suggestions can be grouped under four main themes. In order of importance, the government should aim to:

i)   Foster a collaborative spirit with NGOs by creating an enabling environment and institutionalising mechanisms for civil society participation in Tanzania;

ii)   Provide funding and/or resources to NGOs, including training, technical assistance and capacity building;

iii)   Increase access to information through a commitment to greater transparency and openness and the establishment of clear channels of communication; and,

iv)   Revise the NGO Act to improve its operation.

Commenting on the need for more liberal funding, one participant highlighted the common goal of NGOs and the government, that both sectors *"serve the same people – the citizens of Tanzania, not NGOs".* Similarly, another respondent suggested that funding assistance to NGOs *"will just go back to the people who are the taxpayers".* However, one respondent shared an opposing view that the facilitation of NGO work was <u>not</u> the role of the government. Lastly, a simple request for recognition of their work was made by a few NGOs. One participant remarked eloquently on a challenge frequently encountered by staff and volunteers of an organization, that *"sometimes an NGO is almost bankrupt, but surrounded by people in need".*

3.9   The Impact of NGOs on Poverty Reduction and Development

About three-quarters of NGOs surveyed believed that they have an 'important/considerable' or 'medium' impact on poverty reduction and development in Tanzania, and many respondents referred to the successful work of other high-profile NGOs in attaining important outcomes. This response may indicate a significant increase in NGO networking, but may also be indicative of the rising impact of the NGO sector as a whole in Tanzania. However, most organisations assessed their impact based upon observations and perceptions of change; only a little less than one fifth of respondents employed formal monitoring and evaluation procedures or external reviews to measure their effectiveness. For example, nearly one quarter of NGOs assessed a positive impact based on their perceptions of improved livelihoods, employment and standard of living in target communities.

Table 3: How NGOs Measure/Perceive their Positive Impact on Poverty Reduction and
Development

Types of Measurements and Perceptions	% of NGOs
Perceptions of higher employment, incomes and standards of living	24.1
Monitoring and Evaluation, such as external evaluations, baseline surveys, work plans with indicators, information gathering and follow-up visits	19.4
Perceptions of increased awareness, confidence and behaviour change, and greater participation, networking, activism and exercise of rights (especially for youth and women)	13.9
Perceptions of improvements in health awareness and outcomes	10.2
Perceptions of greater interaction with government, and changes in laws and policies	9.3
Perceptions of positive environmental impacts and better natural resources management	8.3
Perceptions of improvements in attendance and quality of education	8.3
Other perceptions: media attention for programs, clampdown on corruption, increased demand for services and expanded client base for NGOs	6.5
TOTAL	100

Notably, several NGOs in Iringa, Morogoro and Kilimanjaro regions felt the incidence of HIV/AIDS infection was declining in those areas as a result of increased condom use and behavior change fostered through awareness training. Home based caregivers were also receiving more community support. Other important examples cited were improved food security; advances in gender equity, including a reduction in the incidence of female genital mutilation, and tougher laws against violence, rape and abuse of women and children services; forest recovery through the use of alternative fuels rather than firewood; and increased education and services for disabled people. The selected quotes below illustrate a few of the positive impacts in health and education cited by participating NGOs.

> *"If we look at the indicators, youth are now peer councilors who were once drug addicts; sex workers have built houses, are sending their children to school and taking other jobs, even volunteering."*

> *"There has been a change of policy as a result of our constructive engagement, e.g. removal of user fees in primary education in 2001, following our research… Also, networks have been founded that have enabled a collective voice in education."*

> *"Some children are enabled to go to school now through lobbying activities – especially poor and orphaned kids."*

> *"The Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) has been revised to incorporate special needs education [for the disabled] and there is budgetary provision for that."*

For the remaining quarter of respondents who assessed their impact as '*fair, poor or none*', a sense of frustration was evident. They expressed discouragement with the overwhelming amount of work left to do to combat ever-increasing levels of poverty, and felt that few actual changes can be measured as yet. Reasons given for their negative assessments included: too little time to see positive results; lack of financial resources; need for more trained and compensated staff; and a *"lack of a conducive or encouraging political environment for non-state actors"*. Two quotes typified these perceptions.

> *"There is so much need and so few resources. Poverty is intensifying, and the frequency of displacement and migration and food insecurity are forces working against our initiatives.*

Incidences of real poverty are increasing."

"Time has been short, not enough to evaluate impact, and our resources are not sufficient to make significant changes."

Although the positive impacts cited are valuable and encouraging, the initiatives are, for the most part, localized and cannot be considered as sweeping national improvements. However, NGO perceptions of expanded interaction with the government, which has encouraged changes in policies and laws, can be considered broader in scope.

3.10   The Impact of NGOs on Government Policy

All respondents surveyed, except one, felt that NGOs were making an impact in shaping government policy; two-thirds perceived definite impact, while about 36% felt that NGOs have 'some or a little' impact.

3.10.1 Impact on the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP)

The most frequently cited area of policy impact by NGOs was input to the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) review, a national consultation process initiated by the GOT as part of the development of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP). The NSGRP was released in June 2005 and is expected to last 5 years, i.e. through fiscal years 2005/06 to 2009/10.

It is commonly referred to by its Swahili acronym, MKUKUTA. The strategy focuses on three major clusters of poverty reduction outcomes:

i)   growth and reduction of income poverty;
ii)   improvement of quality of life and social well-being, and
iii) good governance and accountability.

The PRS review started during Poverty Policy Week (PPW) of October 2003 and concluded with the PPW of November 2004. The review aimed to actively engage stakeholders from all sectors of Tanzanian society – the government, the citizenry (both poor and non-poor), civil society, communities, and development partners – to enhance ownership and confidence in MKUKUTA and ensure its success and sustainability.

Participants among the 81 NGOs surveyed felt that many of their recommendations were incorporated into MKUKUTA, especially in areas such as disability and gender. Many NGOs contributed papers on various sectoral and grassroots issues to the Vice President's Office, the office responsible for developing MKUKUTA. NGOs were also keenly involved in a series of consultative workshops during the PRS review – a most encouraging sign for civil society as a whole. A more specific victory on the use of alternative energy sources was cited by one respondent, who remarked that nearly all of their organisation's recommendations were adopted.

The in-depth interviews further examined the perceptions of NGOs on their involvement with Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) in general and MKUKUTA specifically. Nine out of ten respondents felt that PRS processes had brought change to the relationship between the government and civil society. Some respondents felt that the GOT now views CSOs as partners in poverty reduction and recognizes the value of input from citizens. The increased participation of CSOs in GOT processes is proof of this positive change. Equally, the work of civil society was perceived as affording greater legitimacy to the government's programs. Other respondents were less enthusiastic:

"Yes, the relationship between civil society and the GOT has changed but not substantially,

though there is talk of inclusion and tolerance. The GOT listens a little. PRS is a reference document for the future."

"PRS has forced the government to work with CSOs to get their input. Last year there was lots of interaction during the review, but it was not meaningful – just an exercise."

When asked what major impacts PRSs have had on Tanzania, responses were once more split between hopefulness and cynicism. On the positive side, respondents cited the creation of more participatory partnerships between stakeholders, and the opening of information flow and consultation between CSOs and the State. One respondent remarked that these efforts have created a fresh consciousness in the country that *"poverty is not normal and can be eradicated".* The PRS process had helped to mainstream the fight against poverty into government policy and to direct GOT and civil society work towards priority sector issues. Another commented:

"Yes, the GOT has focused around MKUKUTA, which is a major impact. That the government has reinvented itself to such an extent is unique to Tanzania, which may be why donors have such a good opinion of Tanzania. And for the future, the CCM manifesto has also organised itself around MKUKUTA."

However, one respondent remarked that despite these improvements, there has been no increase in resources flowing to social services. Indeed, almost half of the respondents felt they had not seen any clear results. One participant expressed the view that attempts had been made to reduce the number of parastatal organisations, but not all privatisation efforts had been successful because *"they were sold to people who are not doing anything for Tanzania – they take the money and go".* Another described the PRS process as only *"a paper, politics and financial arrangements on who gets what, but not a tool for development".*

3.10.2   Ability of NGOs to Influence MKUKUTA in Pro-Poor Directions

Eight out of ten respondents in the in-depth interviews believed that NGOs could influence MKUKUTA in pro-poor directions. Several participants observed that NGOs have long experience in working closely with communities to reduce poverty, and many organisations had also conducted participatory research to inform their projects. Incorporating this knowledge and experience into MKUKUTA should be a straightforward process for the GOT. Moreover, NGOs are now part of the Public Expenditure Review working group and the Poverty Monitoring System (PMS) for MKUKUTA. NGOs in Tanzania had lobbied to participate in these key functions, unlike the situation in Uganda where NGOs are not included as active stakeholders.

However, one interviewee considered that the influence of NGOs was limited because the GOT had its own priorities and would not take the advice of NGOs. Another respondent felt that the influence of NGOs was limited to sectoral/micro strategies but did not impact macro policies.

3.10.3   Perceptions of the Impact of PRS Processes on the Relationship between the GOT and Donors

The majority of participants in the in-depth interviews believed that the introduction of PRS processes had improved the relationship between donors and the government. Respondents felt that the government now plans and partners with donors, and that many donors are committing to MKUKUTA priority areas. There is also greater collaboration on technical committees as well as joint funding of programs by government and donors. However, another respondent remarked that there is *"more dependence on donors through basket funding, more fundamental decision-making [by donors] now,*

and less autonomy for the GOT". Lastly, one NGO held that:

> *"The GOT has more money now and donors can claim that the GOT is implementing their policies. The relationship has very much undermined the credibility of the GOT, especially when a big share of the total budget comes from donors".*

3.10.4   Other Areas of NGO Impact on Government Policy

Respondents felt that NGOs had contributed to several other critical areas of policy and legislative change, most notably gender equity, prevention of sexual offences, and land reform. Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), one of the most influential CSOs in Tanzania, was a leading advocate for the Sexual Offenses Special Provisions Act 1998 (SOSPA). Indeed, the law is also referred to as the "TAMWA Act". The Act provides for strong penalties for rape, domestic violence, and child abuse. Under the new law, female genital mutilation of girls under the age of 18 is a crime. In addition, participants cited Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) as a key organisation mainstreaming gender issues, such as the Gender Budget Initiative. Lastly, the Land Act 1999 and Village Land Act 1999 provide a comprehensive framework for managing and administering land in Tanzania, and include provisions to secure women's rights to acquire title and registration of land.

NGOs have also been keenly involved in educational policy, pastoralists' rights, and environmental protection. In addition, participants cited contributions by NGOs to the establishment of a national Youth Council, and to progress towards a debt strategy for Tanzania. NGOs have also successfully lobbied the GOT to take up the issue of amending the NGO Act.

3.11   Barriers faced by NGOs in influencing Government Policy

"Lack of interest by the government in the views of NGOs" was the barrier most frequently faced by surveyed NGOs (21%) in influencing government policy. A further 16% complained of political and legislative barriers, including lack of access to key officials. These 'legislative' barriers were felt to exclude non-state actors from the dialogue. The lack of political pluralism, transparency, and a 'level playing field' were also considered to act as constraints to effective engagement in the policy process. However, one respondent remarked that since some NGOs are providing civic education programs to sensitize communities that *"the public is now looking at the government with a keen eye".*

On the other hand, one NGO pointed out that the GOT will listen to sharp, cogent arguments. Since this NGO provides "usable" information to the government, it felt "free to contact the GOT any time." The same respondent, however, admitted that advocacy takes a long time, and that it was hard to get the GOT to listen:

> *"The level of contact we have [i.e. weekly] is not satisfactory because a fundamental shift in how policy is made in Tanzania is needed, so that it is not an exclusive group of donors and key policy makers who are determining everything. The environment needs to be opened, to be honest, transparent. It is now secretive, the rules of the game are cloaked, and even the cloaked rules are broken – a very inefficient process. Despite that, government and donors continue to say the process is open and that there is extensive national ownership. This is a fallacy".*

> *"There is some progress, but donors are so desperate to hold up Tanzania as a model of virtue they are unwilling to see the things that do not work. We have failed to sufficiently make sure the process has truly national ownership. My criticisms do not mean that we have not had any impact at all. Poverty Monitoring System is trying, but highly flawed. There is so much*

pressure by donors on government to be [seen as] 'perfect,' there is no room for self-criticism and improvement. In the last five years, the role of NGOs has been successful – though not unilaterally – in opening up the political environment. But we need to do more to get more response."

Some respondents felt that NGOs lacked the knowledge or resources to articulate their vision and influence policy. Others felt that NGOs did not understand how to avoid confronting the government as an adversary, which is counterproductive. A further set of criticisms indicated that some NGOs focused on service delivery as if they were providing the services instead of the government. Another respondent remarked that NGOs were, for the most part, concentrated in towns and maintained little or very weak presence in the villages/districts. Transport and infrastructure were lacking, but so was collaboration and trust <u>among</u> civil society organisations.

During in-depth interviews, responses were split on whether the government took appropriate action on information provided by NGOs and many participants avoided answering directly. A majority agreed that if the information was sufficient and well researched, and if the input was submitted early enough, then it would be used. The emphasis was on providing the correct person in the GOT with the information well before the process was completed on a given issue. However, one respondent remarked that *"if strong vested interests were backing the government position, that the GOT ignores what CSOs say".*

Another reiterated this point of view: *"If [the government] supports your position, they'll use it readily to show the world 'we are doing the right thing, even the CSOs agree. But if it disagrees with their plans, it will not be welcomed, and you also will not be welcomed."* From the hesitancy of responses to this question progress in this area appears to be not quite as advanced as participants would have hoped.

4.0   CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1   Summary

The tripartite relationship between NGOs, the government, and the donor community in Tanzania is an extremely complex one. An optimistic note was expressed by many in the study that closer planning and working relationships between the three sectors are emerging, demonstrated by inter-sector collaboration during the PRS review of 2003-04. However, considerable wariness remains. NGOs view donors as more powerful than the Government, and the Government often sees civil society as a competitor for resources.

Throughout the study, NGOs presented with dedication and sincerity, and expressed an unambiguous desire for true partnership with the GOT and donor agencies. Respondents pointed out that while Government and donors may have the funds, NGOs have the on-the-ground experience and expertise at local levels. So by working together as real partners – by including NGOs in the conception and planning stages, reducing bureaucracy, and considering NGO priorities rather than dictated agendas – much more could be accomplished toward the common goals of reducing poverty and furthering development in Tanzania.

4.2   The Roles of NGOs and their Relationship with the Government of Tanzania

Overall, the findings from the study indicate that the relationship between NGOs and the Government of Tanzania is expanding and improving. The Government now better understands that civil society has a clear role to play in policy formulation. Most NGOs indicated that they deal 'directly' with the GOT and that, in general, they were satisfied with the frequency and level of contact with the Government.

However, an atmosphere of suspicion also pervades much of the sector. There was an overall sense that if submissions to the government did not agree with the GOT's position, or if strong, vested interests were opposed, then NGO efforts made no impact. Some respondents also expressed doubt whether the GOT freely shares information, and felt that citizens and Civil Society Organisations should continue to monitor and scrutinize the government to protect their 'public investment'. Moreover, NGOs should channel and interpret information back and forth between government and grassroots communities to enhance policy outcomes.

A continuing need also exists for NGOs to fill gaps in service provision. Respondents called for greater openness, transparency and cooperation from the Government and pointed to the need to revise the NGO Act. Attitudes of those surveyed revealed a generous reciprocal spirit, with participants seeking better integration and sharing with the government to realize common goals for Tanzania.

A majority of NGOs advocated collective action and collaboration to bring issues before the Government. Networks and coalitions were seen as crucially important for enhancing the credibility and impact of civil society in advancing pro-poor policy. It was agreed that advocacy efforts need to be well informed and well organised. Viewing the Government as an adversary was seen as counterproductive. The lack of unity between NGOs on important issues was considered a weakness in Tanzanian civil society, and participants felt that many NGOs lack skills and capacity, including the ability to articulate their mission and vision. Other respondents remarked that poor, rural and isolated communities are often cut off from collaborative efforts and forced to act alone, whereas a handful of strong 'elite' professionalised groups get noticed. Indeed, findings show that the regional distribution of Tanzanian NGOs is highly skewed with the majority of organisations situated in and

around Dar es Salaam and other major urban hubs. It was be strongly argued that measures be taken to increase the voice of smaller local organisations.

4.3　NGOs' Recommendations to Government

Participating NGOs gave the following recommendations to the Government of Tanzania:

i)　Institutionalize a mechanism for civil society participation in Tanzania through the establishment of clear channels of communication.

ii)　Increase access to information through a commitment to greater openness, transparency and accountability.

iii)　Help build partnerships with civil society to overcome any 'us and them' antagonism and to enable work towards common goals.

iv)　Introduce mechanisms to link and fund NGOs with similar focus and expertise to work on joint donor- or government-initiated projects.

v)　Explore the idea of funding joint projects pooled around MKUKUTA as many donors now talk of implementing MKUKUTA priority areas – a more coherent approach than the 'scattershot' effect of many small NGOs working in isolation.

vi)　Revise the NGO Act to allow NGOs to operate more freely and effectively, thereby establishing a more enabling political environment for civil society.

4.4　The Relationship of NGOs with Donors

Over 90% of organisations surveyed are donor funded, and three-fifths of respondents receive funding for 60 to 100% of their activities. Relations with donors were often initially described as cordial and smooth, but with further probing, numerous frustrations were evident. Tanzanian NGOs largely receive project based funding, and respondents were critical that only limited resources are made available for NGOs' core operating costs, personnel and infrastructure. Participants strongly argued that project only funding is unsustainable in the long-term; that when this funding is withdrawn, activities often cease abruptly and prematurely.

NGOs also routinely complained of pressure from donors concerning program priorities and compliance with rigid funding conditions, exemplified by statements that NGOs"hands are tied" when it comes to projects that they wished to pursue. Many respondents also viewed the government/donor relationship as skewed unevenly in favour of donors. Statements that donors were more powerful, and that the GOT lacks authority and largely aligns with donors' directives, were prevalent. In general, participants said that they were doing the projects they believed in, but when questioned further, admitted that 'some' NGOs alter a project's design to align with a donor's focus in order to mobilize resources.

Respondents further suggested that the over-emphasis by donors on advocacy work to the exclusion of service delivery could also prove short-sighted. However, participants recognised that poverty reduction is impossible without political involvement by civil society to advocate for positive policy and legislative change.

Respondents recommended that donors develop proposals and projects jointly with NGOs to reflect district/local priorities, and reduce the complexities of the application process. NGOs also requested that donors display greater openness about funding agendas and announce priorities in advance so that qualified NGOs can apply. Disparate organisations with similar objectives could be linked through civil society networks to work jointly on donor programmes.

As the recent initiatives for direct, government-to-government development aid are implemented, including the latest grant in January 2006 of $542.5 million from Britain, it remains to be seen how NGOs will be affected or will respond. It may usher in a new era of cooperation and collaboration between NGOs, donors and the State if, for example, qualified NGOs in the health, education and water sectors are brought into partnerships by the GOT and funded to deliver services. A critical implication is that donors should seek to play a role that ensures mutually beneficial relations between the State and civil society. Whichever implementation strategies are chosen, stringent government accountability for sectoral funds will be essential to achieving economic prosperity in Tanzania. The allocation and disbursement of these funds will need to be continually and closely examined.

4.5 NGOs' Recommendations to Donors

Participating NGOs made the following recommendations to donors:

i) Allocate an increased proportion of funding to cover NGOs' core operating costs, infrastructure, personnel and equipment to sustain activities and achieve desired outcomes beyond the terms of current projects.

ii) Develop projects jointly to reflect local priorities. NGOs possess grassroots knowledge and expertise.

iii) Display greater openness about funding agendas. Announce priorities in advance (for example, once a year) so that qualified NGOs can apply, and those that do not have necessary experience will not waste time and resources writing doomed proposals.

iv) Reduce the complexities of the application process. NGO personnel are talented and dedicated though sometimes not highly educated. Complicated bureaucratic requirements for funding applications and reporting are often unnecessarily difficult and restrictive.

v) Provide more technical assistance, including capacity training in the preparation of joint proposals to actualize the idea of 'partnerships for development'. Civil Society Organisations need help. Donor agencies need to either simplify logistics, or provide clear instructions and/or training in application procedures.

vi) Introduce a 'priority list' approach to funding, whereby donors advertise topics or projects being considered for funding nationally. NGOs then submit proposals to demonstrate relevant expertise and capacity, and receive funding for specific portions of the project. Donors could then link disparate organisations through civil society networks to work jointly on these projects.

vii) Increase funding for transport and infrastructure to expand the presence and services of NGOs in more remote, rural areas.

4.6 NGOs Impact on Poverty Reduction and Development in Tanzania

Almost 80% of the NGOs surveyed spend all or almost all of their time on poverty reduction and development issues. Despite all the barriers, most NGOs felt that their organisations were having a largely positive impact on policy. The area of impact most frequently cited was input to the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) review in 2003-04. Participants felt that many of their recommendations were incorporated into the strategy, especially in the areas of disability and gender. It was also felt that the PRS review had helped mainstream the fight against poverty into government policy and created a fresh consciousness in the country that "poverty is not normal and can be eradicated". The GOT is now more inclined to see NGOs as partners in poverty reduction, and to recognise the value of public input. A further positive note is that the PRS review promoted a closer working relationship between the government and donors, and that many donors are talking of implementing MKUKUTA priority areas.

Whereas progress had been made in advancing laws and policies, respondents felt that a gap existed between policy and practice. Three-quarters of participants cited evidence of positive impacts on poverty reduction and development resulting from their work but the impacts noted were for mostly localized. Moreover, less than one-fifth of respondents employed formal monitoring and evaluation procedures or external reviews to measure their effectiveness. A significant proportion of respondents also expressed a sense of discouragement at the overwhelming amount of work left to do to combat ever-increasing levels of poverty. These organisations felt that few actual changes can be measured as yet. It was widely believed that the entangling bureaucracies of both donors and the government cripple efforts toward development by delaying decisions and the allocation of resources. Nevertheless, many of the successes identified provide truly heartening news for communities, including reduced incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, progress against the practice of FGM, tougher laws for violence against women and children, higher school attendance, and increased services for the disabled.

To improve their impact, individual NGOs and networks recognised the need to act to build skills and capacity to overcome their own organisational weaknesses. Greater collaboration and trust must also be established between NGOs. A code of ethics applicable to organisations at all levels from national NGOs to village/community based groups was also suggested to remove any possibility of corruption or mismanagement so that the credibility of civil society is strengthened and maintained.

4.7 Recommendations for Improvements in NGOs and Networks

i)   Act to overcome internal organisational weaknesses. Some NGOs lack capacity, financial and human resources, and often the ability to articulate their mission and vision is weak.

ii) Ensure that advocacy efforts are well informed and well organised. Improve knowledge of government mechanisms and key entry points for civil society participation. When acting as change agents, avoid confronting the government as an adversary, as this is counterproductive. Through training and technical assistance, networks and other coalitions can assist NGOs to improve in these areas.

iii) Recognise that the work of NGOs supplements but does not replace the work of the government in delivering social services.

iv) Establish greater collaboration and trust between NGOs and work together to avoid 're-inventing the wheel' for each project. Unite in collective action to strengthen activities. Through networks, promote linkages between NGOs with similar objectives to work on jointly funded initiatives.

v)   Introduce network mechanisms to integrate information gathered by NGOs from grassroots communities and provided to the government. Follow-up with GOT to track results of advocacy. Collective voices can help to encourage GOT to deliver on political promises of fairness, poverty reduction and economic growth for all.

vi) Develop a code of ethics applicable to organisations at all levels from national to village/community based groups to remove any hint of corruption or mismanagement so as to maintain the credibility of civil society.

vii) Facilitate greater participation and networking opportunities for small, especially rural-based, organisations. Most small NGOs lack resources to interact with the upper echelons of policy makers in Dar es Salaam. Funding by networks, donors or the government should be provided to address this imbalance. Communication channels to effectively disseminate information in both directions should be established.

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