

Civil Society Voluntarism in Tanzania

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Contents

1. Introduction

2. National Context

3. Voluntary Activities and Actors

4. Examples of Tanzanian Voluntary Activism

5. Voluntarism in NGO Activities

6. Discourse of Tanzanian NGOs on voluntarism

7. Conclusion

References

1. Introduction

This qualitative descriptive article seeks to understand whether civil society is an arena for organising voluntarism in Tanzania. The primary data was gathered from interviews with seven key civil society actors, which were complemented by an in-depth analysis of secondary information on civil society voluntarism in Tanzania and elsewhere. The analysis was guided by the following questions : What kind of voluntary work do people do in Tanzania and what kind of activities do they participate in voluntarily? Has the tradition of voluntarism changed overtime and if so why? How does the so-called NGO-sector and especially the project world relate to the question of voluntarism versus paid labour? Is Tanzanian voluntarism involved in South-North NGO cooperation based on development projects? What kind of discourse do Tanzanian NGOs have on voluntarism? Is it currently an issue for them at all?

1.1 Understanding civil society and voluntarism

In a vibrant civil society, people work together to solve problems and have a high degree of trust in one another and in public institutions (Salamon et al., 2003). In such a civil society, groups are of different types, communication is open, and the level of public involvement is high. Yet civil society is not homogenous, nor harmonious. As in the other arenas, there are patterns of privilege, exclusion, conflict, and ideological difference. The contrast to civil society is therefore an imposed government (Foldvary, 2005). Government is non-civil because it uses coercion to accomplish its ends. Not surprisingly, the concept “civil society” has become increasingly popular.

Free-minded people think of free markets, private enterprise, the spontaneous order, and free societies, but a more encompassing label is “civil society.” A contrast is typically made between governments and markets, but the more fundamental distinction is between voluntary action and coerced action (Foldvary, 2005). All in all, the view that civil society consists of autonomous (free from state) organisations of people within society who do not seek to take over state power, but instead seek through different forms

of strategies and activities, to influence, control and democratise the state; is widely accepted in Tanzania (Kiondo, 2002)

Accordingly, civil society refers to the arena of social interaction between the family, market, and the state where the level of community co-operation, voluntary association, and networks of public communication determine its potential (Mogella, 1999). Within civil society, people organise to advance specific agendas – social movements, trade unions, religious groups, foundations, scholars, research institutes, and others. In the Tanzanian context, therefore, CSOs encompass these entities including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs).

This article considers the idea of “civil society” as a place for voluntary organising in Tanzania. Indeed, volunteering initiatives complemented by the growth of CSOs are emerging as a response to the declining human development situation throughout sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, volunteering is closely related to the concept of a voluntary sector: a part of society seen as separate from both the business sector and the statutory sector of government and public administration (Anheier and Salamon, 2001). According to these authors, this notion of voluntarism has its roots in Lockean concepts of a self-organising society outside the confines of the state. Civil society and voluntary action also resonate in the thinking of Scottish enlightenment philosophy, yet find their most eloquent expression in the work of Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*.¹

In developing countries, however, the notion of volunteering is different and has an emphasis on communal service for the public good (de Raad, 2006). In Kenya, for instance, this author found communities rally together almost every day, following the ancient East African tradition called *Harambee*, Swahili for “pulling together”. They help each other harvest crops and build homes, rural schools and health outposts in some of the country’s remotest areas. This same phenomenon is called *Kujitolea* in Tanzania. These local perspectives are roughly equivalent to a broad definition offered by the United Nations, which refers volunteerism to ‘contributions that individuals make as non-profit, non-wage,

¹ This study by Anheier, Helmut K. and Salamon, Lester M. based on cross-national perspective.

and non-career action for the well-being of their neighbours, and society at large'.²

The definition includes mutual self-help and different forms of collective action where volunteering is a service function concerned with addressing social, economic, cultural, humanitarian and peacekeeping activities (Patel et al., 2007). Thus, volunteering work is work in the sense that it is different from leisure; and it is voluntary and therefore distinct from paid work (Anheier and Salamon, 2001). For example, a sports club can either hire a paid coach or opt for asking someone to volunteer. Yet if members choose to play some sport like tennis, they cannot pay a third party to play for them without losing the benefits of playing (pleasure). Thus, membership participation is leisure, coaching is work. Likewise, attending an environmentalist rally is participation, organising it without pay is volunteering.

From the subjective point of view, however, this distinction is not always clear (Anheier and Salamon, 2001). One source of confusion is tied to personal motivations and dispositions, especially when volunteering is mixed with advocacy functions: can I pay somebody to visit the sick or the handicapped instead of me? Another is the mix of membership and volunteering. For example, the Red Cross traditionally made little distinction between members and volunteers, as did many political parties and social movement organizations (ibid).

Indeed, the meaning of volunteerism is closely tied to the political, social and economic context in which services are provided, as well as the individual motivation of volunteers (Wilson, 2007). To minimise the effect of subjective interpretation, therefore, the use of general description of volunteer work and examples to illustrate salient aspects of volunteering is suggested (Anheier and Salamon, 2001). Thus, this article applies the concepts of volunteerism and voluntarism interchangeably.

From the foregoing, the voluntary associations of civil society can certainly provide all the public goods that are now being distributed by the government. Indeed, civil society's voluntarism fosters civil behaviour, whereas the coercive prohibitions, taxes, and restrictions imposed by governments often induce corruption and violence (Foldvary, 2005). In general, civil society voluntarism embodies the principles and strengths of giving and commitment to share (ibid).

² See the 2001 UN Survey for International Year of Volunteers

2. National Context

The United Republic of Tanzania was formed out of the union of the two sovereign states of Tanganyika and Zanzibar.³ Tanganyika became a sovereign state on 9th December, 1961 and became a Republic the following year. Zanzibar became independent on 10th December, 1963 and the People's Republic of Zanzibar was established after the revolution of 12th January, 1964. The two sovereign republics formed the United Republic of Tanzania on 26th April, 1964. However, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is a unitary republic consisting of the Union Government and the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government.⁴

Since attaining political independence, Tanzania has held without fail presidential and parliamentary elections after every 5 year period. Since 1985, it has been observing a two term limit for the presidency. The country enjoys political stability. On economic stance, the government is committed to pursue sound, consistent and predictable macro-economic policies. Promotion of good governance, adherence to the rule of law and promotion of private sector development are some of the key issues of the government.

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania is an empowering instrument for the existence and operations of CSOs. It guarantees various freedoms, including those of expression and communication.⁵ Furthermore, Tanzania Development Vision 2025 realises and invites the contribution of the CSOs in the improvement of the quality of life of local communities.⁶ One of the key areas of policy focus is promotion of public-private sector partnership designed to promote wider participation in community development. Academia, research institutions, and

³ See <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/profile1f.html>

⁴ Tanzania has a total area of 945,000 sq. km. of which 883,000 constitute land (881,000 sq. km. in the mainland and 2,000 sq. km. in Zanzibar). According to 2002 Population and Households Census, the population is estimated to be 34,569,232, out of which males are 16,910,321 and females are 17,658,911. The number of households is 6,996,036 with an average of 4.9 people per household.

⁵ The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which was developed in 1977, is the mother of all laws in the country and guarantees its citizens freedoms of assembly, association and expression.

⁶ The TDV 2025 is a long term strategy that provides a framework for the formulation of all development policies in Tanzania

CSOs are also engaged in dialogue via a number of other forums.

2.1 Tradition of voluntarism overtime

Tanzanians have a heritage of voluntarism from the pre-colonial period. However, the nature and scope of this voluntarism has changed overtime. Our informants observed that voluntarism has changed from the traditional goodwill that did not hinge on returns to paid voluntarism. One of them argued that traditional voluntarism has died with the gradual disappearance of African socialism. This was supported by another informant who argued that volunteers did not demand anything during early periods of Tanzania's development history but, as of now, consideration for transport and food allowances are taking place. More seriously, some people provide unpaid labour in an NGO with a view to getting employment in the same organisation in the future.

Further, one of the key informants argued that Africans volunteered wholeheartedly until when they were spoilt by "food for work". Central to his argument was that the change has been more so due to the changing values which have been brought in across the seas. He lamented:

"We had values which were and some are still core to our souls, unlike the values of the artificial world of the foreign religions, where the subjects are told that "a publication says". The African beliefs and values were not propelled in a space of time to come into existence, as we are told in the foreign religions that "there was a divine intervention for a publication to come into being". Since that occurrence of publications, we are told to abide by artificial implantation of beliefs and values. No wonder social deviance is growing bigger and bigger each day, unlike in the closely knit Africa sub-society of the Maasai clan. We dogmatically abide by this position of shuttled beliefs and values, yet we know it is not commensurate to our unfathomable beliefs and traditions that never came to exist in space of time. Our voluntary spirit is that artificial today!"

Indeed, the development of civil society voluntarism in Tanzania can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. Historically, its experiences could be summarised into three major periods of pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence. The post-independence period can further be

subdivided into the pre-liberalisation and post-liberalisation eras. The nature of voluntarism adopted by the civil society significantly differed from one historical period to another. These differences seem to reflect, among other factors, the socioeconomic and political context into which the CSOs find themselves operating (Kiondo, 2002).

2.1.1 Pre colonial period

Voluntarism has cultural roots in the Tanzanian context and in Africa in general. Pre-colonial communities relied on mutual aid, kinship and community support to meet their basic needs. Traditional cultural beliefs and practices encouraged collective responsibility, solidarity and reciprocity (Patel et al., 2007). For example, 'village associations' of volunteers can be found in nearly every rural community. Rooted in the local culture, they provide communal services and assistance in times of need.

2.1.2 Colonial period

For much of the colonial era, there was a liberal attitude to associations (Iheme, 2007). Colonial government adapted the socio-economic and political organisation of local tribes to meet their needs and interests. Pressures were placed on kinship and community support systems and the denigration of indigenous cultural practices resulted in the erosion of the service ethos overtime. However, some practices continued to exist whilst others were refashioned to respond to present conditions (Patel et al., 2007).

As in many other British colonial possessions in Africa, the Lands Perpetual Succession Ordinance liberally facilitated the registration of trustees to hold property on behalf of formally organised associations (Iheme, 2007). More importantly, associations were not required to register in order to operate legally. In fact, various associations were formed partly in response to the colonial rule, but also as a result of the social and economic changes which took place at that time (Kiondo, 2002). For example, following the introduction of cash crops in Tanzania, a number of producer associations/societies were established.

Peasants formed producer societies such as Kilimanjaro Coffee Growers Association in re-

sponse to the exploitation by private cash crop buyers (Towo, 1998). The associations were the foundations upon which larger Cooperative Unions were founded. However, these societies assisted to introduce the form of cooperatives which British colonialists earlier introduced in India. This implies that the idea was not introduced for the benefit of members: the cooperatives which were formed were just indigenous marketing societies, which were mainly based on cash crop marketing and the colonialists viewed them as facilitators of cash crop marketing. It seems that these cooperatives were not voluntary organisations as they were required to be (ibid).

Towns also attracted immigrants who came for different reasons, including to search for employment and living with relatives (Patel et al., 2007). Individuals originating from the same region or ethnic groups formed other social organisations in towns. These organisations dealt with a variety of issues, from cultural to economic. Their major objective was to help their members in different ways such as burial services, sickness, education, employment and weddings. Basically these forms of organisations emerged as a response to the social insecurity that people encountered in town life. The foundation of all this associational practice is the fundamental traditional values of helping each other and sharing, the practice that is inherent in African cultures and traditions (Kiondo, 2002).

By the early 1950s, the indigenous Africans in Kenya had begun violent protests – the *Mau Mau* rebellion – against colonial rule and the expropriation of the best agricultural lands by British settler-farmers. The colonial government responded in a very repressive manner, turning the colony into a police state and enacting the Societies Ordinance (Iheme, 2007). Through the Ordinance, the government imposed elaborate controls on groups and associations. This approach was intended to deny, rather than give effect to, freedom of association. Fearing that the violent anti-colonial protests in Kenya could spill across the border into the trust territory of Tanganyika (Mainland Tanzania), the British authorities in 1954 also enacted the Societies Ordinance into law in the country.

In addition, in 1956 the authorities repealed the Lands Perpetual Succession Ordinance and replaced it with the more restrictive Trustees Incorporation Ordinance. As a result, an increasing number of CSOs took different forms and structures towards the end of the colonial rule

in Tanganyika. CSOs of national character were established and most of them became nucleus for the anti-colonial movement that led Tanganyika to independence in 1961 (Aga Khan Development Foundation, 2007). In fact, some mutual organisations became agents of societal change in general and political change in particular. For example, Tanganyika African Association (TAA) was later transformed into a political party, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), which led the country to independence.

2.1.3 Post Independence

Civil society voluntarism featured strongly in nation-building and development policies and plans in the post independence era. However, most of the initiatives were government-led and compulsory (Patel et al., 2007). For instance, after independence in 1961, the Societies Ordinance remained on the statute books. In fact, the country experienced the consolidation and institutionalisation of the post-colonial state, under the socialist ideology and single party politics. As time went on, the post-colonial state increasingly became more and more authoritarian. It justified its direct control of societal organisations and life on the basis of nation-building (ibid).

2.1.3.1 Pre liberalisation era

In the early years of independence, voluntarism went hand in hand with the socialism and self reliance policies. Our informants reveal that people were required to spend their time in community works under the pretence of voluntarism. Basically this was forced voluntarism. In many places, especially rural areas, villages were required to work in communal farms, build classrooms and in case one did not appear to the voluntary activity, he or she was to lose his or her chicken, goat, or some assets like a hand hoe. To get them back, a fine was imposed.

The shift to authoritarian rule intensified after the pronouncement of the Arusha Declaration in 1967. By this time, the ruling party had monopolised the organisation of society in all spheres of life. The party's control over society demobilised the people and discouraged independent organisations or associations that could act as developmental groups or lobby agents for some specific policies (Kiondo, 2002). According-

ly, legal frameworks were set that prohibited the establishment of autonomous CSOs. These basically included the constitution (for political parties) and the society's ordinance (for associations and societies).

The reorganisation of the rural setting in the 1970s following the villagisation program further eroded any potential capacity for self-organisation in Tanzania. The spirit of voluntarism was equally affected as many organisations formed during that time were forced to follow party and government guidelines (Kiondo, 2002). More seriously, many community projects were implemented by forced voluntarism: villagers were forced to provide unpaid labour force to drill water wells, build classrooms or dispensaries. The iron is that rich villagers who did not want to waste their time working in these projects were allowed to substitute their labour force with money.

Citizens were also forced to contribute money for the implementation of the so called self-help projects. In fact, to call mandatory community service 'voluntarism' is a problem because it confuses the distinction between an activity that is freely chosen and something that is obligatory and perhaps not always rewarding. Volunteering should be something you choose to do because you want to do it, not because somebody made you do it (Bitti, 2007).

As the case of colonial period, cooperatives of independence's era were also characterised with government control (Towo, 1998). It was during this time when cooperatives were used to implement Ujamaa. When implementing this policy, the cooperatives were said to be "politically multipurpose cooperatives". Therefore, it is obvious that one cannot speak of the role of the civil society during this period since it rarely existed anyway. By the end of the 1970s, all organisations were under the auspices of the party. Those, that were allowed to operate independently of party control, were required to be apolitical in their activities.

The abolition of Local Government Authorities and Urban Authorities in the early 1970s and Cooperative Unions in the mid-1970s further eroded people's capacity to organise. Statist policies adopted by the government including the introduction of Regional Development Directorates (RDDs) and District Development Directorates (DDD) significantly affected people's initiatives and participation in voluntary works

(Kiondo, 2002).⁷ In fact, it reduced Tanzanians to mere recipients of government services. The government worked to provide "everything" to the people including those things that people could work for themselves (ibid).

2.1.3.2 Post liberalisation era

Our key informants reveal that with the coming of multiparty politics and the changes in the Tanzanian socialism, the spirit of community volunteerism seems to have gone away with. Forced voluntarism made people hate doing community voluntary works and now nobody is out there forcing them. In urban areas, for instance, many people have relaxed. It means voluntarism needs to be conceptualised anew in Tanzania.

In fact, the new era started in the late 1980s when the implementation of economic liberalisation policies speeded up the move away from monolithic politics. Indeed, structural adjustment policies gave room for the emergence of new civil organisations. The proliferation of CSOs was nevertheless not only a response to the changes that were taking place by then. They were also a result of struggles by those who wanted to participate independently in the country's development but were otherwise being marginalised by single party politics from organising (Kiondo, 2002). Little wonder that the emerging civil society organisations included different socio-economic development groups and lobby associations.

Other factors accounting for the emergence of CSOs in the 1980s and 1990s included the need to fill the gap left by state withdrawal from service delivery and the coming to the fore of environmental issues. Also included was the need for certain social groups such as women to organise and articulate their interests, the move by international aid agencies to bypass the state and privatisation and retrenchment programmes that increased the number of unemployed people who found voluntary organisations as an alternative. Thus, most of CSOs seemed to be responding to problems of the day as they confronted people.

⁷ *In statist model, the state retains the upper hand in a wide range of social policies, but not as the instrument of an organised working class as in the social democratic regimes. Rather it exercises power on its own behalf, or on behalf of business and economic elites, but with a fair degree of autonomy sustained by long traditions of deference and a much more pliant religious order (Anheier and Salamon, 2001).*

3. Voluntary Activities and Actors

Development is brought about by the people themselves through voluntary action. Where they can do no more on their own, these people are supported by a host of other actors including the government and donors. Our key informants revealed that any person can afford to volunteer at her or his level, from farmers living in rural Tanzania to the ministers in Dar es Salaam. Within CSOs, for instance, it was pointed out that services are provided to the needy on the basis of voluntarism. At the level of CSOs' Board, members are also volunteering.

In fact, voluntarism is the bedrock of CSOs. This has often helped these organisations in defending their legitimacy against the attacks from the three arms of the state: government, the parliament and the judiciary. This shows that engaging volunteers is a powerful way for development organisations to further their cause and build their organisational capacity as they

benefit from person-power, skills and expertise that they may otherwise not have access to. Table I shows people who can afford to volunteer in Tanzania.

One observation that can be made from the table above is that CSOs can recruit and motivate highly qualified and motivated volunteers on the basis of shared values and a belief in the social mission of the organisation. However, the evidence so far shows that the level of voluntarism in Tanzania is very low. Factors that may explain this low level of involvement included the fact that members of the public do not know where to go to volunteer or what they can do; they cannot commit their time regularly or for the long-term to a cause because of other life commitments; CSOs do not provide practical opportunities for volunteers.

3.1 Voluntary activities in Tanzania

Voluntary work in Tanzania takes place at the community level and at the individual level. The majority of our informants revealed that in community development arena, people volunteer to

Table I: People who can afford to volunteer in Tanzania

No.	Volunteer	Description
1	Professionals	Skilled people can participate in promoting a shared cause. Most of these volunteers contribute to the well-being of their communities by providing services according to their expertise. These professionals include doctors, teachers, lawyers, economists, and accountants who offer their services to communities either free of charge or with small payments to cover administrative costs.
2	Retired officials	Retired officials are very useful in inspiring and mobilising the people, kindling their aspirations to develop and helping in the preparations of plans and mobilisation of resources of the communities, the government and those of the donor agencies in the pursuit of community development.
3	Politicians	Political leaders including ministers, Members of Parliament at the national level and councillors at the local level can be very useful in uniting the people's efforts to bring about community development.
4	Affluent citizens	Well to do people can volunteer because they want to show their moral side as well as to show their commitment to community development. Because they are self-financed, then, they work for shorter duration.
5	Private sector employees	Private sector staff can be sponsored by their companies for short-term punctual volunteering activities, similar to short-term consultants, at no financial cost to the hosting organisation or disadvantaged communities.
6	Self-help group members	These groups are formed primarily for members to respond to specific community problem. They can undertake community projects such as digging wells, construction of classrooms, teacher houses, dispensaries, and roads.
7	CSO members and staff	Members of the governing bodies and programme staff of civil society organisations including NGOs, CBOs and FBOs can work in tandem with their constituencies.

Source: Constructed by author

dig drainage channels and in the construction of classrooms. This happens in both rural and urban settings. At an individual level, our key informants observed that somebody can volunteer to undertake care of orphaned children or participate in organising public events. Thus, voluntarism may be formal or informal in Tanzanian context. Table II shows the differences between informal and formal voluntarism in Tanzania.

Table II: Formal and informal voluntarism in Tanzania

No.	Formal	Informal
1	Organised in a hierarchical management	Organised by a leader who may also be a headman
2	Recognised membership	Involve family, friends and close neighbours
3	Officially registered	Activities include weddings, burials, or farming
4	Often run by civil society organisations	Operated at micro level
5	Roles of volunteers are defined	The roles are defined by the community members
6	Length of service is determined	Rules are informally determined
7	Service projects often extend beyond a single community	Operate at local levels
8	Guided by public or NGO policy	Involves minimal external facilitation

Source: Constructed by author

Further, our key informants hinted that the voluntary nature of Tanzania is a disguised one since those who are mainly in it are seeking an earning or a favour. One pointed out that people can volunteer for anything, especially desperate job seekers. But few would ever volunteer to assist, for instance, the sick in hospital.⁸ Thus, Tanzanians volunteer where there is value return for their efforts.

⁸ One informant retorted: "Forget about the religious fanatics who patronise the wards in hospitals; they do it not as good thing to do but as imitation of what their prophets did and a ticket to the next world."

4. Examples of Tanzanian Voluntary Activism

From the available evidence, it appears that the service functions of the civil society sector clearly absorb the lion's share of voluntary work (Salomon et al., 2003). For instance, one of our key informants observed that activities for which Tanzanians are likely to volunteer are professional (technical) and community serving. Most of these activities can be found in the provision of health, education and legal aid services.

4.1 Professional activities

NGOs utilise the positive policy environment that government is striving to establish for these organisations to become its development partners. Already civil society actors use their expertise to complement government efforts in delivery of basic services and promotion of good governance. These professional activities include preventive interventions outreach services and legal aid to the marginalised citizens as attested by the following cases:

4.1.1 Preventive interventions outreach services

The striking case for voluntarism in preventive interventions outreach services was recently provided by Medical Women Association of Tanzania (MEWATA). This is an association of medical women doctors and dental practitioners founded in 1987 in an effort to address some of the issues of women's health, to promote interests of women in the medical profession, to assist the development of promising young women professionals and to advance the health care of women and children.

Over the past three years, MEWATA has been hitting the headlines following their voluntary nationwide awareness raising and breast cancer screening campaigns. With cancer given a low priority in Tanzania due to the health system's heavy burden of infectious diseases, MEWATA

decided to focus its efforts on this disease: Currently, Tanzania has some 35,000 new cancer cases each year.

An official of MEWATA explains that their members concentrated on breast cancer workshops, training and informing women of the importance of self-examination and early detection. Soon the group discovered the magnitude of the cervical cancer and decided to be engaged in a public screening campaign. However, they did not have resources.

It was at this point when they started to approach private individuals, companies and organisations for donations. A private broadcasting company, ITV/Radio One, started to support MEWATA's fundraising efforts and launched a mass media campaign sponsoring the NGO. In this campaign, MEWATA had succeeded in persuading many people to voluntarily donate money, for the clinical investigation of women likely to develop breast cancer.

MEWATA's voice was also heard by Tanzania's First Lady, Mama Salma Kikwete, who became a dedicated patron, helping to spread the word and attract more donors. On one occasion, the First Lady officiated at a charity walk to motivate the society to take part in the fight against breast cancer. The charity walk focused on informing the public about breast cancer and raising funds for the purchase of an x-ray machine known as mammogram, which is capable of detecting early stages of breast cancer.

By 2005, MEWATA's membership had grown from 32 to more than 200 female doctors. To capitalise on their large numbers they held a major screening event, with radio and television spots urging women to attend. The weekend exercise, held in Dar es Salaam and timed to coincide with International Women's Day in March 2005, attracted more than 7,000 women.

A second weekend initiative, in the northern city of Mwanza in September of that year, involved 80 MEWATA doctors and brought in 11,000 women. The most recent breast cancer initiative, held in the south of Tanzania in November 2006, underlined the successes of MEWATA's voluntarism. It attracted a massive 23,150 women, all of whom were checked by doctors and shown how to carry out self-examination of the breasts.

Today, MEWATA is going from strength to strength. More recently, it has lobbied regional governments and communities to help stage local breast cancer awareness workshops, with very encouraging results. The initiatives the female doctors have taken are a clear demonstra-

tion of their commitment to helping thousands of women, who might be suffering from the life-threatening condition.

4.1.2 Paralegal services

The dominant form of voluntarism in the realm of human rights in Tanzania is in the provision of paralegal services. By definition, a paralegal is a legal assistant who assist lawyers in the delivery of legal services. Through formal education, training and experience, legal assistants acquire knowledge and expertise regarding the legal system and substantive and procedural law which qualify them to do work of a legal nature.

Bertha Mdundu of Morogoro municipality provides a practical example of a paralegal. Bertha, who is teaching at the public owned Morogoro Secondary School, where she earns a living as home economist teacher, spends her free time working as volunteer at Morogoro Paralegal Centre, which provides counselling and reconciliation for women and children.⁹

"I like the change of activity after teaching at school, because it keeps me busy and active", Bertha says. "I started as a volunteer at the paralegal centre in 2004, after participating in a couple of seminars about legal education on women's rights, organized by Women's Legal Aid Centre and Morogoro Paralegal Centre."

Bertha is happy to assist her fellow women with legal disputes. It makes her glad to see women achieving their rights. She sees the problems Tanzanian women are facing every day at school, at the paralegal centre and in her neighbourhood. "I have gained knowledge about women's rights and now I use it wherever I can, being at home, in the neighbourhood, at school or at the Paralegal Centre", Bertha explains.

4.2 Community serving activities

Several initiatives for socio-economic development at the community level are implemented on voluntary basis. These programmes share goals such as recognising the importance of community involvement in local coordination and implementation. They include community based

⁹ This is according to interview that Bertha Mdundu had granted to Christoph Lodemann of MS, a Danish Development Organization.

home care for people living with HIV/Aids (PLHAs), caretaking of Aids orphans and vulnerable children and community participation in development projects:

4.2.1 Community-Based Care

Home-Based Care (HBC) services are provided in the home through outreach from a static medical facility. Community home-based care is similar, but the service provider is a community member trained in health care, rather than a professional based in a clinic (Pathfinder, 2006). The concept is an innovative approach to comprehensively meeting the needs of PLHAs in resource-limited settings. It bridges the gap between health facilities and home care by enabling PLHAs to receive quality and dignified services in their homes.

In fact, HBC relates well to the traditional African way of responding to both acute and chronic illnesses whereby a family member or neighbour would tend to the ill, sometimes for a long time. Such a person would then be responsible for seeing to the patient's feeding, personal hygiene, nursing care, and even spiritual care if needed (Pathfinder, 2006). Aspects of community HIV/Aids interventions performed by community volunteers include door-to-door sensitisation, counselling and referral to HIV testing sites, basic nursing care.

KIWAKKUKI (Kilimanjaro Women Group in the Fight against Aids in Tanzania) is a case in point. This is a community-based civil society organisation, founded in 1990 by a group of women in northern Tanzania who felt compelled to join the fight against HIV/Aids because the negative effects of the epidemic were rapidly increasing in their community.

The first step in the formation of KIWAKKUKI was taken in December 1990, when a group of women got together informally to organise an Aids Week in the town of Moshi. The theme was "Women and Aids," which was also the theme of World AIDS Day that year. Following the success of the week's activities, a number of these local women decided to form a women's organisation in response to the HIV/Aids pandemic.

KIWAKKUKI's founders felt that as women were the most vulnerable and affected group, they had to join together to protect themselves, their children, and the whole community from being infected with HIV and to care for those already infected/affected. Although KIWAKKUKI

is a women's organisation, its target group is the entire population in the area: all age groups, sexes, and religions.

The organisation believes that it can bring about social change through the mobilisation of women to carry out community-based activities for HIV/Aids prevention and care. At the village level, many women have been empowered, especially those who are members of KIWAKKUKI, to talk about Aids prevention with their husbands and children. Workers of this organization believe that their voluntary support to People Living with HIV/Aids contributes to reducing the stigma and discrimination surrounding the epidemic.

The most outstanding lesson to be learned from KIWAKKUKI's experience is how quickly and effectively a group of local women were able to mobilize and rally support within their own community. The voluntary spirit of its members, who carry out Aids prevention and care activities during their free time, is the life force of the project.

4.2.2 Caretaking of Aids orphans and vulnerable children

Children affected by HIV/Aids often live in households undergoing dramatic changes including intensified poverty; increased responsibilities placed on young members of the family; poor parental health that may increase emotional or physical neglect; stigma and discrimination from friends, community members, or extended family; and parental death. Not surprisingly, emerging information on the impact of the epidemic on children has increased attention on orphans and other children affected by HIV/Aids. At the local level, communities are currently mobilised to address the needs of vulnerable children and their families. One of these voluntary initiatives in Tanzania is known as *Mama Mkubwa* (MM).

Mama Mkubwa is a community-based initiative for the care and support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). The popular *Mama Mkubwa* initiative has been supported by TAHEA (Tanzania Home Economics Association) in Makete district, Iringa region since 1999. The objective was to complement the care and support to orphans by providing psychosocial needs to these orphans, who were increasingly becoming a significant aspect in the social life of communities in Makete (Mwaipopo, 2005)

A recent evaluation by UNICEF found that *Mama Mkubwa* – the person – has indeed been a welcome complement for the care and support of orphans in the communities where the initiative has been introduced. Not only has the process been able to fill a felt gap in terms of psychosocial support for OVC, *Mama Mkubwa* has also been able, to some extent, to stimulate sentiments about community responsibility to a local problem otherwise eroded. The fact that caring for orphans was handled by immediate kin or relatives, introducing a *Mama Mkubwa* in replacement of these kin has indeed cultural validity (Mwaipopo, 2005).

However, the burden of providing care and support to an increasingly large number of children, the poor economic status on the part of *Mama Mkubwa* themselves, inadequate skills to handle and provide some support such as psychosocial support to the most vulnerable children, just to mention a few, have limited the capacity of *Mama Mkubwa* to respond adequately to the needs of these children. Yet, despite its limitations, the system has managed to provide support to child-headed households and vulnerable children who needed close supervision and follow-up (Mwaipopo, 2005).

4.2.3 Community participation

Community participation as a form of civil society voluntarism can be seen in provision of basic services especially education. In primary education, for instance, Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) provides a framework under which the local communities contribute money and unpaid labour in construction of classrooms, teacher houses and other school infrastructure. In fact, PEDP which was formulated in 2002, replaced Community Education Fund (CEF), a five years programme established in 1997 to increase the allocation of public funding for non-salary expenditures at school level through the matching of community contributions with funding allocated from the CEF.

Of late, the government has been engaged in secondary education expansion initiative known as Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP). Community participation is central to the implementation of this programme with the expectation that it will replicate volunteering spirit demonstrated in PEDP. However, community participation in nationwide second-

ary education classrooms construction campaign is largely mandatory. In rural settings, where citizens are ignorant of their rights, reports indicate that they have been either punished for failure to contribute and their properties confiscated by local authorities for financing the classrooms construction. This is very undesirable indeed. Of course, CSOs also benefit from an unpaid labour force. However, theirs is a voluntary one. After all, CSOs lack the authority to coerce anybody.

5. Voluntarism in NGO Activities

Our key informants argue that it is very hard to distinguish the voluntary and paid labour in Tanzanian context of civil society. One of them charged that the concept of voluntarism is frequently used by NGOs as a means to evade statutory obligations of paid labour such as P.A.Y.E. deductions. For instance, he contended that a director of a leading NGO could work for a decade as a “volunteer” and over the space of that decade donors gave his organisation core funding support. However, he agreed that some NGOs are gradually becoming honest to the paid labour statutory requirements, segregating the two by paying higher wages to the paid labour and low “allowances” to the volunteers.

Another key informant revealed that volunteers are taken or considered as option of formal employees in project based NGOs. According to him, such organisations serve a large amount of money which could otherwise be used to pay remuneration of full time staff. Not surprisingly, some of these NGOs formulated internal policies to govern volunteers and interns. Overall, the key informants admitted that people work voluntarily in NGOs only when the project idea came from them and after adequate awareness about the project had been created. Otherwise, people will certainly demand to be paid.

There was also an agreement among our informants that the majority of Tanzanians are too poor to volunteer effectively and therefore a need for remuneration for them to contribute their expertise to civil society movements. This is consistent with our documentary analysis which shows that the kind of divide between voluntary and paid job in civil society projects is hard to discern. Most of the NGOs that implement projects provide incentives to all their staff, including volunteers. Hence, the kind of voluntarism in these projects can be termed as a “paid voluntary work”.

Tanzanian NGOs use volunteers as a cost-saving mechanism and yet they are compelled to provide them with remunerations including salaries. However, there are few NGOs which could not provide monetary incentives. The argument advanced in favour of remuneration is

the fact that most NGO activists are unemployed with no other sources of income. Of course, there is recognition that non-monetary incentives in attracting and retaining motivated volunteer staff are important but given the growing costs of living, monetary incentives are decisive (Patel et al., 2007).

5.1 Voluntarism in South-North NGO cooperation

Voluntarism is one of the salient features of a North–South civil society partnership in Tanzania. Our key informants assert that most northern NGOs demand from their southern counterparts a contribution to project costs. In Tanzania, one key informant revealed that the local contribution can be in a form of unpaid labour from the beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the communities can only agree to volunteer without pay after being well informed about the issue or involved in problem identification.

Conversely, another key informant revealed that some few Tanzanians have also worked in the north as part of South-North NGO cooperation. He cited an example of Danish Development Cooperation (MS), which once initiated a programme to send Tanzanians to work in Denmark as volunteers. According to this informant, some Tanzanians have also been hired by Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), an international development charity that works through volunteers, to work in other countries.

As already indicated, volunteerism is an aspect of NGO work which offers a cheap alternative to expensive labour. Not surprisingly, NGOs working in partnership with their northern counterparts largely depend on volunteers in accomplishing their goals. A good example is provided by AHEAD (Adventures in Health, Education, and Agricultural Development), a small grassroots NGO working in Meatu district, Shinyanga region, 80 miles south of Lake Victoria. AHEAD is supported by an organization with the similar name based in the United States of America.

One of the initiatives implemented by AHEAD is the Health Outreach Project. The initiative involves Tanzanian nurses who provide health education, child weighing, nutritional counselling, family planning, and antenatal services. In fact, a team of nurses from AHEAD travelled daily to remote villages to provide essential health care, otherwise nonexistent for the villagers. Mothers

walk for miles to bring their children for Village Health Outreach Day, often a baby on the back and one or two toddlers in tow.

The project provides immunisations for infants, children and women, conducts growth monitoring; implements nutrition intervention for malnourished children, provides antenatal care for women, provides family planning services, and conducts health education sessions for mothers and fathers. AHEAD also conducts training workshops for Village Health Workers (VHW), Primary Health Committees (PHC), and other health providers.

As for community participation in development projects within the context of South-North cooperation, there are two contradictory meanings (Marsland, 2006). One, concerning “empowerment” and the facilitation of local decision-making, is associated with international development discourse; the other, concerning the obligation of Tanzanian citizens to contribute to the development of the nation, can be traced back to the Ujamaa’s era. This author explored these meanings through an ethnographic study of a community malaria control project in the south-west of Tanzania and found out that the practices of local and expatriate development workers are distanced enough for these disparate versions of participation to run together without difficulty.

According to Marsland (2006), when the two versions were brought together, tensions between community and local politics resulted, as there was competition to gain control and take the credit for the commodities associated with development. Nevertheless, this fissure did not prevent the project volunteers from taking on the locally prevailing discourse of development experts, which disparages local knowledge.

6. Discourse of Tanzanian NGOs on voluntarism

The current discourse on NGO voluntarism in Tanzania focuses on an ideological perception of voluntarism. On the one hand, voluntarism is embraced by civil society actors as inherent in their independence from the state. On the other hand, the concept of civil society voluntarism is opposed by the left leaning intellectuals who see it as yet another imperialists’ tool for unleashing global capitalism.

In fact, supporters of civil society voluntarism embrace liberal ideals (Patel et al., 2007). . . Indeed, while many libertarians envision a minimal role for the state and its imposed government, another vision is to seek to make governance voluntary, whatever its size. In the latter case, the direction of reform is not just to shrink government, but to transform it into voluntary association (ibid). For example, in education, the reform would be to give students and parents an equal financial choice between governmental and civil-society schooling.

Further, proponents argue that voluntarism fosters capacity-building, inclusion and ownership of CSOs. This in turn would create an enabling environment for realisation of poverty reduction targets set forth in national plans such as National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) and global initiatives especially Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).¹⁰ For them, voluntarism is a self-perpetuating resource that can replenish itself indefinitely if properly nurtured. This line of argument was vehemently rejected by the opponents of civil society voluntarism. They argue that Tanzanian and African NGOs in general play a bigger role in expanding and consolidating neo-liberal hegemony in the global context.

Probably, no other than Issa Shivji, a retired Law Professor of the University of Dar es Salaam, who has been the most vocal in the leftists’ camp. In his new book: “Silences in NGO Discourse: The Role and Future of NGOs in Africa”, Professor Shivji argues that NGO discourse, is predicated

¹⁰ *National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty is popularly known by its Kiswahili acronym of MKUKUTA*

on the philosophical and political premises of the neo-liberal or globalisation paradigm. In short, he contends that the role of NGOs in Africa cannot be understood without placing them in their political and historical context. He argues that it may not have been as direct or as underhand as some of the activities willingly undertaken by colonial missionary societies and voluntary organisations.

Central to Shivji's argument is that the market and voluntarism have a long association: the first and most celebrated period of 'free trade,' from the 1840s to the 1930s, was also a high point of charitable activity throughout the British Empire. He cites the case of Britain's Industrial Revolution to hammer his ideas home:

"The industrial revolution opened up a great gulf between the bourgeoisie and the swelling ranks of the urban proletariat. In the 1890s, when industrialists were amassing fortunes to rival those of the aristocracy, as much as a third of the population of London was living below the level of bare subsistence. Death from starvation was not uncommon. At this time, private philanthropy was the preferred solution to social need, and private expenditure far outweighed public provision."

Professor Shivji therefore claimed that it is hardly surprising that in the current era of neo-liberalism, to see, once again, a burgeoning of NGOs. While such institutions had some presence in Africa in the post second world war period, it was really only in the 1980s and 1990s, as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) were imposed across Africa by the international financial institutions and development agencies, that NGOs really flourished, gradually taking over the work of the retrenching state that had been persuaded to disengage from the provision of social services.

In fact, what the leftists suggest can be categorised as the social justice approach to service provision, which is concerned with redress of class inequality and social divisions associated with social and economic exclusion. Service programmes tend to be concerned with advocacy for social and economic justice, democratisation and the transformation of social relations in the society. Advocacy against imperialism and the negative consequences of economic globalisation may characterise civic service activities (Patel et al., 2007).

This discourse is however not a big issue in Tanzania. Many of the civil society organisations

follow their funders' programme objectives. The trend is towards enabling communities demand for their rights to participate in development processes rather than service delivery. Most of NGO projects focus on training workshops, seminars, consultations on various policy and legal processes and not social welfare kind of projects like drilling boreholes, building classrooms which typically demand voluntary labour.

7. Conclusion

This analysis suggests that increased number of CSOs has resulted in increasing voluntarism in Tanzania. However, the kind of voluntarism that is practiced can be termed as a “paid voluntary work”. CSOs have been particularly effective in exercising voluntarism especially in the realm of service provision. Until the early 1980s, for example, it was considered out of order to organise voluntary work within the civil society sphere in Tanzania. Thus, civil society as a place of voluntarism organising in Tanzania is a new concept although the populace in general has been volunteering for ages.

Over half of civil society voluntarism found in Tanzania seems to be community-based. This is due to the fact that most of voluntary work is done in rural areas where CBOs are dominant. FBOs are also among dependable service providers but most of community initiatives to address social problems are taken through CBOs. The community-based organisations, however, have links with large national, international and governmental programmes. The linkage is built on mutual relationship on which the CBOs receive additional resources to scale up the impact of their initiatives.

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