

## **Tracing the Local Government Reforms for Development: A Difference Made?**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

*The recognition that participation is a crucial strategy for development has been in the heart of the Tanzanian Government since independent in 1961. However, despite a strong recognition to make participation a reality, the government efforts have often ended with little or no success. The Local Government Reform which is guided by the policy of Decentralization by Devolution (DbyD) could be seen as government attempt to correct the previous mistakes in making participation a reality. Through the Local Government Reform, there has been serious government attempt to change the previous top down planning process to bottom up. This attempt has also included the introduction of a planning tool known as Opportunity and Obstacles to Development (O&OD). O&OD is a multi-sectoral participatory community planning tool that has been introduced to empower the people on the basis of bottom up planning approach and positive thinking. This paper attempts to show, how the current government efforts through local government reform is designed and institutionalised to facilitate participation for local development, and to what extent has this been a reality.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, we have witnessed various reforms in many African countries. Among other things, these reforms sought to make people the key actors for their own development. People should take their destiny in their own hands. The main strategy adapted to realise participation was decentralization.

Despite existence of various types and forms of decentralization which defines the degree of powers and responsibilities transferred from the centre to the periphery units, the African countries like Tanzania adopted Devolution. Devolution is considered the strongest form of decentralization (Mehorotra 2005; Bergh 2004; Ribot 2002; and Rundinelli 1990). According to Type-Function Framework developed by Cheema, Nellis and Rundinelli, devolution occurs when authority is transferred by central governments to local-level government units holding corporate status granted under state legislation (Cohen and Peterson (1999).

In Tanzania, the policy on Decentralization by Devolution aimed at “creating autonomous local government, strong and effective, democratically governed, deriving legitimacy from service to the people, fostering participatory development, reflecting local demands and conditions, and lastly, conducting activities with transparency and accountability” (Tanzania, 1996 as cited in Mukandala and Chris 2004:2). It is now, a decades since the reform implementation began in 2000. Several outcomes have been witnessed including changes in the institutional arrangements.

One of the outcomes is the introduction of bottom up planning process-a strategy intended to enhance participation of the people for local development. The reform envisaged that, participation will enable development of programs that are relevant to local needs and create a sense of ownership to facilitate development.

In an effort to make community participation a reality, the government through the President's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) developed an 'Opportunity and Obstacles to Development' (O&OD) methodology to facilitate the bottom-up approach in planning (PO-RALG 2005). The methodology was introduced in 2002. With the O&OD methodology, local people are expected to be empowered to identify their local problems, develop their local plans and implement. In this sense, the empowerment is crucial since it is useless if local people will develop plans which will not be implemented because of lack of resources or lack of discretions on resources to implement own preferences.

However, since independence in 1961, the government efforts to enhance participation have ended with little or no success. In the following section, a brief historic perspective on participation in Tanzania will be provided. The historic perspective on participation will help to build an argument on why is it important to asses the current reform with regard to participation. There are some indications that even the current effort is left in the same hassle of the old maladies. Some policies are not put into practice and the institutional arrangements still leaves much to be desired in terms of creating a real sense of community participation.

## **2.0 Participation in Tanzania**

Since the independent in 1961, the government of Tanzania recognised that with low economic capacity and less developed social services, the involvement of the people is a crucial strategy to facilitate development. At this time it was clear that the institution arrangement created during the colonial regime to serve their interests might no longer fit the new demands of the time. The independent government would wish to accelerate development and meet the needs of its people. In this view and as noticed in Max (1991) many African countries such as Zaire, Uganda and Senegal scrapped and restructured their local

government to meet the new challenges and needs of independence. Obviously, the main challenge of the just independent government would be how to create an institutional arrangement that can facilitate development and ensure equitable distribution of social services.

However, the course taken by countries just after independent may differ. In contrary to some other African countries, Tanzania decided to adopt the local government system left by the British colonial regime. The option which did not took so long before it proves that:

*“Infrastructure that has been created for one purpose.....can not always be transformed to serve another purpose” (Norman and Warren 1972:413)*

### ***From independent in 1961 to 1967***

The unfit of the institutional arrangements left by colonial regime to the new independent government forced the government to reform its administration system. The first remarkable institutional reforms took place in 1962. The main purpose of such reform was to strengthen the local institutions and to ensure popular participation (Picard 1980). According to Max (1991), subsequent to the reform, all Local Government Authorities (LGAs) become fully representative bodies and all local services were administered through them. It is important to notice that, parallel to the local government structure there were central government structure and the political party (TANU) structure. At this time, the party institutional arrangement was well established with a wide coverage. In fact, it was the only organization with the potential for reaching people (Picard 1980).

There was a close linkage between the central government and the party structures. For example, the regional and district commissioners who were the political appointee become

automatically the TANU secretary at the regional and district levels respectively. In the local government structure, there were regional administrative secretary and the district administrative secretary. The secretaries were the civil servants and were responsible for all of the technical matters of daily administration.

However, this tripartite linkage of the three structures appeared to undermine the local government capacity to promote mass participation. The role of the local government was not clear. According to Max (1991), the local government also lacked trained personnel as well as technical and financial resources. Yet, the central government institutions which were expected to provide technical and financial support at all the stages of development carried out more or less parallel development functions to those of the Local Government Authorities (LGAs) (Ibid). As a result, partnership between the central government institutions and the local government institutions become more important to the detriment of the participatory strategy. According to Max, “this meant that smooth implementation of project depended largely on the smooth cooperation of the government officials involved. Going a step further, Max argued that, in practice, “this dualism meant that the LGAs had the responsibility without the authoritative capacity to perform; and the central government officials had the capacity to perform without responsibility and accountability” (Ibid:80).

The decline of LGAs becomes obvious since they had no adequate resources and skilled manpower to execute the functions and render services entrusted to them. Although, the central government institutions in the field took over the responsibility of the local government, they were blocked out of the budgetary process. In this regard, they had less influence over the preparation of the national budget (Picard, 1980). The final say on budgetary decisions was made by the respective ministries. The regional plan which was the compilations of all district council

plans was hardly regarded at the centre (Jones, 1971). According to Picard (1980), it was impossible to shift funds from one ministry to a second one within a region, but it was quite easy for a ministry to shift funds between regions. In fact, the district administration was primarily involved in the implementation of decisions already made at the center (Jones, 1971).

### ***The Period between 1967 and 1972***

The period between 1967 and 1972 witnessed a number of decisions made by the government in effort to strengthen the local governance. As the policy governing such decisions suggests, the government continued to show its desire to decentralize some policy making to the local level with the main intention to enhance local participation. Such decisions include: the Arusha Declaration of 1967, establishment of 'Ujamaa' (Cooperative) villages in 1967-1968, the publication of Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) party guidelines (*Mwongozo*) in 1971, and the decision to abolish district councils in 1972.

Much has been written with regard to these decisions. In relation to participation, much of the writing indicates that the disparity between decision on paper and the practice could not match, making the government rhetoric a far reaching dream. According to Finucane as cited in Picard (1980) the Arusha Declaration pulled the decision making to the centre, "the capacity of commissioners (the central government officials in the field) to effect government allocations greatly restricted by the making of almost all allocations in the centre rather than at the district or regional level (Ibid: 443). In the same vein, Picard, reports that, the few functions that had been given to district councils were being taken away from them, including the right to collect taxes and prepare their own budgets.

Similar experiences were reported in the three other decisions. For instance, while the decisions to establish cooperative villages

(*Vijiji vya Ujamaa*) was partly a response to increased centralization, according to Oyugi (1988) since the mid 1965's, the centralization of power in Tanzania gathered momentum with the decline of competitive politics undermining development of the local institutions. In view of scholars like Oyugi (1988), Picard (1980) and Samoff (1989) the government efforts in 1960s to decentralize decision making took planning further away from the rural areas that it was designed to serve and made popular participation in rural development almost impossible. By the end of 60s, most of the local council's responsibilities had been assumed by the central government (Samoff 1989).

### **The Period between 1972-1982**

In 1972, dramatic changes were made when the government decided to abolish Local Government system with the intention to create a system that gave more freedom for both decision-making and participation in matters which were primarily of the local impact (Mniwasa and Shauri, 2001). This was in line with the ideas raised in *Mwongozo*. Nyerere<sup>7</sup> in his discussion of the decentralization scheme, argued that "the purpose of *Mwongozo* was to give the people power over their own lives and their own development" (Nyerere, 1972). He further argued that, this would be done by bringing the decision making process closer to the people at the district and regional level and ensuring party control over the mechanism of decision making process.

To enforce this reform, the parliament enacted the Decentralization of Government Administration (Interim Provisions) Act of 1972 to implement the reorganization policies. This act abolished local government authorities and much larger District Councils and Regional Development Councils were formed under this law. The said law also removed representative councils and increased the ruling party's power by providing

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<sup>7</sup> Nyerere refers Julius Kambarage Nyerere the first president of Tanzania

overriding power to TANU leadership and government bureaucrats. As noticed in Picard, (1980) the purposes of this decentralization scheme were: to make bureaucracy more accountable to the political party, TANU; and to enhance popular participation at the local level.

In this time the Central Government took over the responsibility of managing and providing basic public services as well as planning and implementing development projects at local level. A de-concentrated system of administration was adopted where Central Government field officers worked at all levels of government from regions, districts to sub district levels. The intention of these reforms was that all major development schemes were to involve the regions as well as the center. The regional directorates were given the same status as central Government Ministries. The regional commissioner remained the head of his or her region and his or her status was elevated to equal that of a cabinet Minister while the Regional Development Director was the chief executive of the region with status equal to that of a permanent Secretary in a Ministry.

Some changes were also made that indicate some intention to give powers to the regional administration. Such changes include: the regional commissioner's office paid salaries for each region; decision involving staff and finance were to be decide in the regions; regional commissioners were given the power to freeze projects and apply money elsewhere without consulting the ministries; the main function of the ministries becomes advisory and providing experts to the region for implementation but under the control of the regional administration. All communication between the ministry and its specialists in the field were to go through the regional and district development directors.



However, in view of some scholars such as Kasege (2004), Oyugi (1998), Max (1991) and Samoff, (1989) the de-concentrated system, could not bring about the desired results, which included, but were not limited to, enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in decision making, increasing local participation in the development process, and accelerating both urban and rural development. This period according to Oyugi was “misleading and confusing to be called decentralization” (Oyugi 1998). It was accompanied by strong emphasis on economic planning and party domination. Power was consolidated at the grassroots level with centrally appointed regional and district heads. Actually, there was a shift from center to local levels of well trained and qualified personnel (Ibid). The system turned the district councils into rapid bureaucratic organization dominated by central government officials (Max 1991).

Despite all substantial new powers given to regional commissioners, according to Kasege (2004) still the regional administration felt shortage of being autonomous. Decisions pertaining to local development were made by government bureaucrats and not by democratically elected institutions. The flexibility which had been intended in setting up local priorities was not achieved. Government officials were influenced more by rules, regulations and bureaucratic exigencies rather than by local opinion and priorities (Kasege, 2004, Samoff, 1989). Local initiative was generally stifled.

There was much to believe that the decentralization policy on paper was far from the practice in the field. The political rationale behind the decentralization phase which made the bureaucracy, who saw its position threatened by emerging local elites, to strengthen its grip on power (Samoff 1989). From the perspective of the state apparatus, decentralization was a success (Eriksen et al, 1999), and Tanzania has become a nation of peasants and bureaucrats (Feierman, 1990), with bureaucrats firmly in charge.

The period shows a clear divergent of interests between state apparatus and that of the state. The influence of the state apparatus become stiffer and turned out decentralization to serve the interests of the state apparatus, and not those of the community as a whole (Eriksen et al, 1999). This situation undermined both political and the economic foundations of the state. As a result, the de-concentrated system of administration was the deterioration of public services in both rural and urban areas.

### ***The Period Between 1982 to date***

Just before 1982 it becomes clear that the abolishment of LGAs was a mistake and the only option to rescue the deteriorating social services was to re-establish the LGAs. This resulted to re-establishment of LGAs in 1982. The main objective was to enhance participation of the people in local development. This includes participation in both decision making and implementation.

Obviously, the de-concentrated system required some institutions transformation in order to facilitate a new decentralization system and in particular participation. According to Semboja and Therkildsen (1991) the institutionalized local government system after 1982 can be described as a mixture of political and administrative decentralization. As indicated on paper, the substantial formal autonomy was granted to districts (Ibid).

At this time, the institutional arrangements was divided into three hierarchies: (1) the central government hierarchy running from the minister at the national level down to ward at the local level; (2) a local government hierarchy running from the respective ministry through to the District Council and with village councils at the sub-district level; (3) a party hierarchy running from the national

CCM secretariat down to the neighborhood level where the “ten-cell” leader would be the smallest unit. These hierarchies were interconnected in a number of ways: In line with the doctrine of the “supremacy of the party” the party “interfered” with the government in various ways, and at practically all levels (Eriksen et al,1999:62). The District Commissioner and the Regional Commissioner were key party figures. District Secretaries held key administrative positions in the administration; and at the village level, the administration and council were in practice serving as party organs.

Until 1990s, the LGAs could not meet the expectation of enhancing participation and improve social services. The study conducted with regard to the same revealed that such failure was caused by the inherited problems associated with institutional and legal framework; unclear roles, functions and structures; poor governance; inadequate finance; poor human resource capacity and management; and low capacity of central government institutions and agencies to support the local government institutions (United Republic of Tanzania, 1996, the local government reform agenda). As a result of this study, the government in the local government reform agenda published in 1996, promised to “creates the Local Government Institutions that are largely autonomous, strong and effective, democratically governed, deriving legitimacy from services to the people, fostering participatory development, reflecting local demands and conditions, and being transparent and accountable”. This government wish was later reflected in the Policy Paper on Local Government Reform of 1998. In this policy paper, the government explicitly state that, the local government reform is guided by the principle of Decentralization by Devolution.

The main objective of decentralizing the powers to the LGAs is to improve service delivery. The main assumption is that by

transferring responsibilities of managing funds and personnel from the central government to the district councils, delivery of social services will improve. This is expected to make the district councils directly responsible for self financed service provision and more active in mobilizing local resources in order to finance their programmes.

In the same vein, participation of the people in local governance is seen a crucial elements for local development. In this regard, the reform envisages that participation of the people in the local governance will: facilitate development of development programs that are relevant to local needs; engender a sense of ownership in implementation and; improve local financial and political accountability.

However, in view of scholars like Mehorotra (2006), Bergh (2004) and Healler (2001), the success of decentralization to achieve its objective depends among other things the institutional arrangements created to facilitate the process. In this regard, the local government reform in Tanzania is expected to have created an institutional arrangement that facilitate participation of the local people in both decision making and implementation. Both political and bureaucratic commitments are also important in the wishes indicated in the policy into practice. The major indication of the working practice of participation is the improvement of social services. In the following section, the indication of the government commitment to enhance participation for development is explained.

### **3.0 The Reform's Theory of Participation in Tanzania**

One outcome of the Local Government Reform is the implementation of planning process from the grassroots to the centre levels (bottom up planning). According to Mukandala and Peter (2004:12) before the reform, planning and development

projects/programs originated from the council. In this regard, much of what were included in the plans were the wishes of the central government and council's officials. The grassroots people who at the end of the day benefits or affected by such plans were only involved at the implementation stage.

The reforms that followed a series of studies to identify factors contributing to ineffective and inefficiency of LGAs, put much emphasis on participation of community members to the planning process. Since, its implementation in 2000, the local government policies coupled with the government rhetoric indicates that the planning process is bottom up. There has also been an introduction of O&OD methodology. According to the Prime Minister's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PMORALG) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (2006:1) O&OD is a participatory community planning process to empower the people on the basis of the bottom-up approach and positive thinking. According to the United Republic of Tanzania (The URT) (2004:4),

*“the O&OD methodology has been developed in line with the government aspirations to devolve powers to the communities as declared in the 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, and implemented in the ongoing Local Government Reforms. In so doing the government intend to restore the spirit of self reliance, local resources mobilization, transparency and accountability, whereby communities participate in planning, decision making, implementation and ownership of their development initiatives”*

### **What does the theory of O&OD say?**

The process of the O&OD methodology starts at the grassroots level. In Tanzania, the lowest government structure is the village level in Rural LGAs and 'Mtaa' in Urban LGAs. However, at the start of implementation of O&OD methodology the 'Mtaa'

structure was not fully formalized. It had only political leadership but not executive officials to carry on the O&OD methodology. As a result, in Urban LGA, the O&OD methodology was organized at the ward level. Though, the process follows exactly the same steps as applied in the rural set up.

According to the United Republic of Tanzania (2004) the preparation of the village development plan starts at the village level in rural LGA. At this level, the process involves: giving prior notice to the leadership in various levels about the start of the process (community entry protocol); informing community members about the purpose of the exercise; identifying preferences, opportunities and obstacles (data collection) and; setting the priorities. Thereafter, the village council compiles the identified priorities into the draft village plans. The draft village plan is then discussed and given technical advice at the Ward Development Committee before approval at the village assembly. In Urban LGA, the community priorities are compiled at the ward level with representative selected from each 'mtaa'. Thereafter, the Ward Development Committee (WDC) discusses and provides technical advices on the content of the plans before it is approved by community members of all Mtaa in the ward. The approved Village Development Plan or the Ward Development Plan is then forwarded to the council level for development of the Comprehensive Council Development Plan and Budgeting (CCDPB). In theory, the villages' plans/ward plans are suppose to be incorporated into council plan.

***Why the O&OD methodology is regarded as tools that can enhance participation for local development?***

As shown in the previous sections, there have been several attempts by the government to enhance participation for local development. However, these attempts have often caught by the urge of the central government oversight and control which

resulted in most decisions implemented at the local level being done at the centre. The introduction of O&OD is therefore the government attempt to bring in a participatory planning tool that can facilitate participation of the people in addressing the local issues. In other ward, the O&OD methodology is intended to empower the local people to take their destiny in their own hands.

The urge for introducing a participatory tool is contributed by the promising results accrued from the similar tools used especially in donor funded programs. Some of the participatory tools that have been used for local development include: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA); Self esteem, Associative strengths, Resourcefulness, Action planning, and Responsibility (SARAR); Zielorientierte Projektplanung- or GOPP- Goal Oriented Project Planning (ZOOP); Learner Centered Problem Posing Analysis (LEPSA) and Community Voice (CV) (The United Republic of Tanzania 2004; Ifakara Health Research and Development Centre (IHRDC), 2005). Despite some criticism attached to these tools such as raising community expectation and dependency, there is some evidence that these tools have enabled communities to make decisions in the process of planning and angered a sense of ownership which facilitated implementation (The URT, 2004; Fjeldstad et all 2010). For example, the community voice has enable: realization of water projects in Kilimani Village in Rufiji District; construction of two classrooms and crop storage structure in Fulwe village, Morogoro Rural District Council (IHRDC, 2005). These projects were accomplished using community contribution and donor support.

Some evidence also shows that even after the donor support project phased out, community members were able to continue using the participatory tool to address other local problems. “In Fulwe village for example, after the completion of the community voice project, the villagers identified the first three primary

problems to be solved. These included: extension of their primary school, construction of a dispensary and establishment of reliable water sources” (IHRDC, 2005:39). According to Ifakara Health Research and Development Centre (2005), such initiatives were successively implemented.

These make it clear at what time the O&OD gained impetus rope as a participatory methodology for planning. The major expectation with the local government reform was that, it will strengthen the institutional arrangement to facilitate implementation of O&OD methodology in enhancing participation and local empowerment.

#### **4.0 Properties of Participation**

Some examples in Tanzania indicate the value of participation for development. It is therefore no wonder why scholars like Dola and Dolbani (2006), Cornwall (2002) and the international organizations, such as the World Bank and the World Health Organization emphasizes the needs for participation in local development. However, according to Cornwall (2002) there has been different interpretation of the concept of participation. Such interpretation also signals the existence of properties that define participation to occur.

Although, it is not the interest of this paper to discuss definition of participation, it is worth to shade some light on what participation means in theory. One of the broader definitions with the international perspective is that by World Bank’s Learning Group on Participation (WBLGP). As cited in Cornwall (2002:35), participation is described as a:

*...process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives, decisions and resources which affect them.*



One of the key stakeholders' referred to in the above definition is the people, who would benefit from the initiative or the project. Actually, from Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger point of view, the original statement read as: 'a process by which people, especially disadvantaged people, influences decisions that affect them' (Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger 1996:11).

Going a step further, Rudqvist and Woodford-Berger (1996:12) elaborate the concept of participatory development as "a partnership which is built upon the basis of a dialogue among the various actors (stakeholders), during which the "agenda" is set jointly, and local views and indigenous knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. This implies negotiation rather than the dominance of an externally set project agenda". In this view, one of the properties of participation is that people are expected to be actor and not simply beneficiaries.

In this regard, participatory development envisages that: people have a strong influence on decision to be implemented and the course of action to be taken. Also, people are expected to play a key role in the implementation phase. These involve contributing resources in terms of finance or in kind and holding accountable local leaders or project leaders. However, the success of the participatory development depends on the availability of resources to implemented people preferences. It is useless, if people will identify development preferences to be address in a situation where there is no resources to implement. It goes without saying that people's contribution may not be enough to address their local problem. After all, people pay taxes to the government to get good services in return.

***What properties in the institutional arrangements are considered to facilitate participation?***

There have been various explanations about properties of a system that is likely to facilitate participation for development. Some of

these explanations are research based while others are theoretical based. However, despite extensive literature in this area, there are no universally accepted properties that assure the success. Though, some of the properties appear to be mostly repeated in various literatures.

In Devas (2005) for example some properties are highlighted. Such properties are based on the some empirical evidences drowned especially from some municipality in Brazil. According to Devas, for effective participation to happen requires: “the attitude and commitment of the politician and officials involved in the process; effective steps to ensure that the results reflect the views of all citizens (or all those affected), particularly the poor/marginalised, and not just the articulate and powerful; the ability of the poor to organise, mobilise and use their voices; availability of resources to implement the agreement-since there is little point in going through the process if there are no resources to implement what is agreed on” (Devas 2005:7).

The size and level under which participation is exercised are seen as important properties for participation as well. Dahl and Edward (1974) provides the significance of size in exercising participatory activities. In their work they explore important views of prominent scholars like Plato and Aristotle. According to Dahl and Edward, Plato stressed the desirability of a citizen body small enough so that citizens would all know each other and would be as friendly as possible toward one another. In the same vein, Aristotle argued that optimum level of democracy must lie between a population so small that the polis could not be self-sufficient and so large that the citizens could no longer know one another’s character. He also maintained that, ‘all the citizens should be able to assemble at one place and still hear a speaker’ (Dahl and Edward 1974:5) Stressing on the Plato and Aristotle views Dahl and Edward argued that:

*“A democracy polity must be completely autonomous, because otherwise its citizens could not be limited by the power or authority of individuals or groups outside the citizen body. A democratic polity must have so few citizens that all of them could meet frequently in the popular assembly to listen, to vote, perhaps even to speak. Smallness .....enhanced opportunities for participation in and control of the government in many ways” (Ibid)*

It is the views of Dahl and Edward supported by ideas of the prominent philosophers like Plato and Aristotle that smaller democracies provide more opportunity for citizens to participate effectively in decision making. They also stress on the issue of autonomy. In simple term, autonomy can be defined as ability to make decision and implement.

Here, the issue of size could be ambiguous if not somehow elaborated. In the classic view, a democracy requires a small population within a small surveyable area (Ibid: 17). According to Dahl and Edward (1974), in Plato point of view the optimal number of citizens in a polity should be 5,040 people (the head of family). Sometime, the population size was generally defined as a number of citizens eligible to attend meetings of the assembly. The eligibility of the population could be subject to how it is defined in a particular context. For instance in Tanzania, such could be considered as someone with 18 years of age.

More concern especially at recent time seems to point in the direction that Plato, Aristotle and Dahl and Edward seem to stress on. For example, Mehrotra (2005) inter-sectoral action in service delivery (such as health, education, water and sanitation, reproductive health and nutrition) is best triggered through ‘voice’ at the local level, with the village level planning. In this view, the village can be considered as a level in which community members can be mobilised and coordinated for participatory action. In the

same vein, Bergh (2004) assert that, the opportunities for participation can be enhanced by placing power and resources at a level of government that is closer to the people.

In both Mehrotra and Begh, the issue of resources that community members have more control to implement own decision is important. In addition, they both consider the importance of the three actors in realising participation for development. These include: citizens enabled through institution to determine the preferences to be implemented at the local level; the lower local government in which powers and resources have been devolved and therefore capable to respond to people preferences and; capable government that can support technically and financially the lower level government. The role of the state at both the central and lower level in enabling citizen to participate for local development is considered by many scholars as important if participation has to happen. For example, according to Mehrotra (2005), “without the state enabling collective voices and action, which emerges as a counterweight to the intermediaries, the delivery of services, can not be realised”.

In this section, we see some properties defined to be important if participation for local development is to be realised. These properties define the institutional arrangements in which participatory process is to be exercised. It goes beyond to define, what is expected from the people and institutions involved. The following section describes the participatory process in Tanzania. The main essence is to show the extent to which Tanzania has been carrying on the participatory [O&OD methodology] process, weather it has been successful or unsuccessful. It also intends to show the extent to which the identified properties in this section contribute to the failure or success.

## **5.0 Participation in Tanzania: How is it Practiced?**

This section presents two cases on bottom up planning process in Tanzania. The case is selected from one Local Government Authority (LGA). It is part of the PhD thesis of the author. The thesis comprised of six cases. For the purpose of this paper it is perhaps important to assert that the other five cases [one from the same LGAs and four from other LGAs] points more or less in the same direction.

As indicated earlier, the local government reform in Tanzania had put much emphasis on bottom up planning process. This envisages that, the reform has created an institutional arrangement that facilitate participation for local development through the bottom up planning process. One indication of this is the introduction of O&OD methodology. In this regard, the two cases demonstrate the way in which the O&OD methodology is exercised in practice.

### **A case of Kingorwila Dispensary**

Kingorwila Dispensary is located in ‘mtaa wa Zahanati’ in Kingorwila Ward. The dispensary was established in 1979 by the Morogoro Municipal Council. It is about 13 kilometres away from the municipal headquarters in the town of Morogoro. The dispensary started in a building that had been used as the primary court. This building had only two rooms and one small hall. According to the administrative head of the facility, in the early days of the dispensary more than one operation was carried out in one room.

According to the documents and the interview with the in-charge, there are some improvements made at the dispensary between 2000 and 2008. However, despite the improvements, the dispensary suffers shortages in almost every aspect of infrastructure {i.e. buildings, staff and equipment) if compared to

the national minimum standards. The improvement between 2000 and 2008 include an increase in operation rooms from three to eleven, increase of staff from four to ten and increase in some equipment, such as a stethoscope, a blood pressure monitor, a delivery bed and a microscope. Table 1 shows the status of the infrastructure in Kingorwila dispensary between 2000 and 2008.

*Table 1:Infrastructure at Kingorwila Dispensary between 2000 and 2008*

Service Areas	Years									N.S.*
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Staff	4	4	4	3	3	4	3	6	10	15
Buildings										
Operating rooms	3	6	6	6	6	6	11	11	11	15
Wards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
Staff Quarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
Equipment										
Autoclave	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Delivery Kit	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
Delivery Bed	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Microscope	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Weigh Scale	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4
BP Monitor	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	4
Stethoscope	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4
Diagnostic Set	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Ambulance bag	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

\* N.S. = National Standards

In view of the policy paper on local government reform, primary services such as the dispensary are decentralised to the local government. In this regard, the role to improve the dispensary to ensure that it has adequate infrastructure to deliver quality services is a responsibility of the respective LGAs. The LGAs is

expected to address the local issues through the so called bottom up planning process. The following section presents the reconstruction of bottom up planning in relation to the improvement of Kingorwila dispensary. The intention is to see how the bottom up planning process enable participation for local development.

#### Planning at Grassroots level

A brief account of the planning process was provided in the ward plan of 2005 which comprises of all the plans of all ‘mtaa’ in the ward. The ward plan and the interviews with the facilitator of the planning process, the mtaa executive officers, two members of the ward executive committee and the ward executive officer, made it possible to reconstruct the actual planning process. It is important to note that, although the account of reconstruction for this case was obtained from the facilitator, in this planning process there were two types of facilitators involved: one from the council and the other from the community. The role of the council facilitator is to train and guide community facilitators who lead the planning process at mtaa level. The reconstruction of the planning process in relation to Kingorwila dispensary was obtained from the community facilitator who facilitated the process at ‘mtaa wa Zahanati’.

According to the facilitator, all community members were invited to participate in the planning process. Although the facilitator was not able to remember the exact number of community members who participated in the process, she pointed out that very few community members turned up. According to the facilitator, members of the community are often less willing to participate in collective action like the planning process because these events have often ended with little or no impact. However, despite poor turn up of community members, the planning process was still carried out as outlined in the O&OD methodology guideline. The

identified development preferences at 'mtaa' level were then forwarded to the ward for compilation into one ward plan.

According to the mtaa facilitator and two members of the ward development committee, the officer responsible for compilation of the ward plan was the ward executive officer. At the time of this study this officer had already been transferred to another ward and the new officer was yet to see the plan. The ward plan was not among the important documents handled over to the current ward executive officer. However, during the interview the ward executive officer, who took office just one month before the interview, was able to locate a copy and saw it for the first time.

The two members of the ward executive committee said that they participated in the planning process at mtaa level. In fact, their names appeared in the list of participants included in the ward plan. However, according to these two members they never saw the result of their contribution, in the form of the ward plan document. Besides, neither of them were able to tell which wishes for the Kingorwila dispensary were formulated or which preferences were included in the plan. According to the two members, they did not know what went on after their participation at the discussion at mtaa level. And none of them followed up to find out whether the identified development preferences had been addressed or not.

The mtaa executive officer did not participate in the planning process because she was employed after the ward plan was already developed in 2005. According to her, she never saw a copy of the ward plan nor knew what was contained in the plan. Indeed, during my visit, she tried to search for a copy of the plan in her office but couldn't find one. It appeared the mtaa office is little or not at all concerned with the ward plan. It is hardly surprising that the mtaa executive officer was unaware of the identified development preferences during the planning process



and did not know what happened after the plan was filed to the council.

### The dispensary in the planning process

Both the in-charge and the committee members were considered to be the active members in the management of the facility, and therefore are expected to be informed about the development of the dispensary.

The in-charge said that he participated in the planning process at 'mtaa' level. According to him, his main role in the process was to inform members of the community about the status and needs of the facility. However, during our interviews, the in-charge was not able to recall the development preferences about the dispensary identified during the planning process. Instead the in-charge admitted that he did not have or even see a copy of the ward plan. In addition, the in-charge did not know anything about the follow up of the ward plan. He was not able to tell whether the identified preferences were addressed or not.

According to the in-charge, the plans for facility development are contained in the facility plan, which is funded through the Joint Health Infrastructure Rehabilitation Fund (JHIRF). The facility plan is prepared by members of dispensary committee. Thereafter, the plan is presented to the mtaa committee and forwarded to the Ward Development Committee (WDC) before it is submitted to the Council Health Management Team (CHMT). According to the in-charge, this plan is supposed to be incorporated into the Comprehensive Council Health Plan (CCHP). This sectoral planning procedure differs from the general O&OD procedure, which prescribes an integral approach.

Another way in which the in-charge reports to the council is through the quarterly reports. The quarterly reports are developed

by the in-charge in collaboration with the facility committee members. According to the in-charge, these quarterly reports contain an overview of the current status and the facility needs. Sometimes special requests about the facility needs can be made by letter.

It is important to note that, the in-charge and other dispensary staff are employees of the council and therefore accountable to the Municipal Director. According to the in-charge, no decision can be made at the dispensary level without the consent of the respective staff at the council level.

The group discussion conducted with committee members of Kingorwila dispensary showed that most of the members did not participate in the planning process. None of them has even seen a copy of the ward plan or knew its content in relation to the dispensary development. In this regard, one member of the group argued that:

‘there are still problems in community participation. Sometimes, community members are involved when decisions are already made’

It’s therefore clear that the committee members were not aware of the relevance of the ward plan with regard to the dispensary development. As such, the ward plan appeared to be useless to them.

### **The content of the ward plan**

In the reconstruction of the planning process, the ward plan was reviewed to establish development preferences identified for Kingorwila Dispensary. As noted earlier, all the identified development preferences at mtaa level were compiled into one ward plan. Thus, the focus here was the development preferences of ‘mtaa wa Zahanati’, where the dispensary was located.

According to the ward plan, the planning process was not undertaken at each 'mtaa'. Instead the ward was divided into four zones namely: Kingorwila, Tungi, Nanenane and Legeza Mwendu. According to the facilitator, some of the 'mtaa' are close to each other and share the same problems. It was therefore thought a good idea to combine some mtaa in order to minimise time and cost. In this regard, the focus in review of the plan was the development preferences of Kingorwila zone where 'mtaa wa Zahanati' is located.

The review of the plan showed that various issues across different sectors were incorporated in the plan. Every issue was presented in terms of the objective. Since the focus of this research was on Kingorwila dispensary, the attention was given to development preference related to Kingorwila dispensary. Table 2 shows the development preferences of Kingorwila dispensary included in the ward plan.

Table 2: *Development preferences of Kingorwila dispensary in the Ward Plan*

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1.	the need for health staff, clinical officer and student trainee from the municipality
2.	the need for one laboratory technician from the municipality
3.	the need for laboratory equipment, drugs and microscope from the municipality

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As shown in table 2 most of the issues are clearly stated in term of name and numbers. The only ambiguity can be seen in preference number one where 'the need for health staff' does not show the intended cadre or amount required. The same goes to the last part of the sentence where it does not show the number of student trainees required or their specialisation.

## **Planning at Council Level**

The reconstruction of the planning process at council level was based on the account of the head of health departments, head of economic department and members of the Council Health Management Team (CHMT). The information from the head of departments was gathered through interviews while for the CHMT members it was gathered through the group discussion.

According to the head of the health department, the planning process starts with a pre-planning session. The pre-planning is a preparatory stage where the information for development of the Comprehensive Council Health Plan (CCHP) is collected at the local level. This information is collected by the members of the council health management team, in collaboration with the in-charges of the health facilities in the district. Thereafter, the actual planning process begins. According to the head of departments, the actual planning process is guided by the Comprehensive Council Health Planning Guidelines. With this in mind, every decision for planning is made based on the guidelines.

In addition to the information collected directly by the members of the management team at the council level, three sources of information are used in the planning process. First of all the 'health management information system' provides useful information. In this system every in-charge has to report quarterly on the status of his facility, using forms developed centrally by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. The second source of information is the stakeholder workshop, which is conducted with all the in-charges of the primary facilities in the municipality aiming to identify and discuss the problems and needs facing their respective facilities. According to the officials at the council level, the report of the workshop is a useful source of information in the planning process. Finally the facilities are required to prepare a facility plan each. This plan has to be submitted to the health

department at council level. These health facility plans are also a good source of information.

The main assumption of staff at the council level is that these sources represent the wishes of the local people since their representative in the facility committee provides them. The collected information is, however, sorted and decided upon by the council officials. They decide what will be included in the Comprehensive Council Health Plan (CCHP). According to these officials the decision on what to be included in the CCHP is based on national priorities and directives. The national priorities are obtained through guidelines while directives are obtained through official correspondence between the central government officials in the field and the local government officials. For example, there is a letter directing the local government to implement the political directive of building a dispensary in every village.

The guidelines that determine the decisions on the level of the council, are Council Health Planning Guidelines (CCHPG) (2007), the guidelines for Joint Infrastructure Rehabilitation Fund (JIRF), Essential Health Package (EHP), which focuses on the most important health problems in Tanzania, the Burden of Disease (BoD) profile, which identifies seven interventions that have to be taken into account in councils' plan, National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP), Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Government Vision 2025 and the overall national Health Policy and National Health Strategic plan. As a matter of fact, according to CCHPG (2007), the plan is said to be comprehensive if it has taken wishes stipulated in such documents into account. Also, prior to every annual planning session the council receives the sectoral priorities and budget ceiling for the respective year from the central government. According to public servants working at the council level, their focus in the development of CCHP, is directed towards meeting

these guidelines and central directives. The wishes of the local people as stated in the ward plan, was not seriously considered.

According to the head of the economic department, most funds from the central government are specified for certain sectoral areas. Bearing this in mind, the sectoral plan must be developed based on criteria set out in the guideline, the budget ceiling and the national priorities. They also have to take into account, any directive from the central government. ‘The council has to abide to the guidelines otherwise the budget may not be approved’, argued the head of the economic department.

### **The contents of the council plan**

The council plan was reviewed to establish the extent to which they reflect the development preferences expressed in the ward plans. For this reason three plans were reviewed, covering the period where the ward plan was suppose to be executed and accomplished. These were the plans for the financial years 2005/2006, 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

The three council plans showed that the development preferences contained in the ward plan regarding Kingorwila dispensary, were not reflected at all. Although the plans indicate some interventions related to improvement of primary health facilities infrastructure in the municipality, none of the interventions was related to the identified preferences for Kingorwila dispensary as reflected in the ward plan. The specific intervention for Kingorwila dispensary regarding infrastructure was the ‘rehabilitation of Kingorwila dispensary’s infrastructure’. Such intervention was not reflected in the ward plan.

In fact, the officials at the council level had no idea of the content of the ward plan. There was not a clear connection between the ward plan and the CCHP, since the plan at the council level is mainly developed on other information gathered by the council

officials. The general answer given by the council officials, was that ‘most of development preferences identified by the local people are often not reflected in the council plans because of limited funds.’ Going a step further, they also pointed out that:

‘it might be that some of such development preferences do not match with the national priorities.’

The result is that decisions about most health development projects at the local level are made centrally.

### **Development activities implemented at Kingorwila Dispensary**

The last step in the research was to compare the implemented development activities with the identified development preferences in the ward plan. For the research question it is relevant to assess whether or not the planning procedure contributed to this development. Therefore the extent to which the council has contributed to the development as perceived by the local people is assessed as well. The information to reconstruct this part was collected through observation, archives, interviews and group discussion. The group discussion consisted of seven members.

The interviews conducted with the dispensary in-charge showed that most of the development preferences explained in the ward plan were not implemented. For example, at the time of this study, the dispensary had no health officer, no laboratory technician, no laboratory equipment and no microscope. All of these requests were made in the ward plan.

On the other hand, the dispensary showed some development when comparing the situation in 2000 and 2008. Some of these developments were not identified in the ward plans. Table 3 shows the implemented activities at Kingorwila Dispensary.

Table 3: *Development activities implemented at Kingorwila Dispensary between 2005 and 2008*

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1. the increase of seven health staff
  2. construction of one building with 5 working rooms
  3. construction of the maternity ward which contain the labor room (it was still on going)
  4. increase in some equipment ( one delivery kit, one Bp monitor and one stethoscope)
- 

According to the in-charge and the dispensary committee members the large amount of funds for the construction of buildings was obtained through the Granssont Assistance Programme (GAP) and community contributions.

The grant from the Granssont Assistance Programme was obtained through an individual person who became interested in the development of the dispensary. According to the in-charge that person was touched by the death of a Japanese citizen who died in a road accident at Kingorwila area along the highway between Morogoro town and Dar es Salaam city. She thought that it would be a good idea to improve the capacity of Kingorwila dispensary in order to be able to take care of the people involved in accidents like these. Although this person was a resident of Dar es Salaam city, she had some sort of work relationship with the deceased. In order to find means to develop the dispensary this person was able to secure funds from the Granssont Assistance Programme (GAP). In the end this support contributed heavily to the development of the Kingorwila dispensary.

According to the in-charge, the dispensary committee managed the funds from the program. The committee members were very motivated by this support. ‘This made the committee members efficient in utilising the funds and mobilise more support through community contribution said one of the committee members. The grant required a contribution from the community members as well. This contribution was both in kind, such as labour power,



and in money. ‘To ensure that their contribution and other funds for the project were used efficiently, the community members continuously demanded transparency on the amount of funds secured and a report on the progress of the implementation of this project’, said one of the committee members. According to the in-charge, the activity of community members made the local government leaders, including the members of the dispensary committee, more responsible and accountable to the local community members.

The dispensary committee members could also provide information on the general support of the council in relation to the dispensary’s development. In view of the committee members, support from the council in relation to the dispensary’s development was generally low. According to them, the dispensary’s development would not have occurred had there been no external financial support.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The institutional arrangement through which the bottom up planning process is exercised is yet an effective instrument to facilitate participation for development. As indicated in the case description, the bottom up planning process follow a long structural arrangement before the final decisions on what to be implemented at the local level is reached. This process seems to dilute the meaning of the bottom up process. The community voices which according to the main objective of the local government reform and the O&OD methodology, suppose to determine the development issues to be implemented at the local level are disregarded as they move from the community level, village level/ward level to the council level.

There are some reasons that can be associated to disregard of community preferences at council level. First, most of the resources to implement local issues are received from the central

government. According to the Local Government Expenditure Review of 2007 most of LGAs depend on the central government transfers for about 90%. Most of these transfers are associated with guidelines that direct where and how to be used. In this regard, there is little discretion left to council officials to allocate resources in response to local preferences. In this view, the LGAs are seen as just implementers of national and sectoral development plans.

Second, the council official has their own perception of the local situation. This perception is supported by information collected through various methods parallel to the bottom up planning process. Since, the council plan is prepared by official at the council level it is likely that, the little discretion left to central government transfers are used to fulfil the interest of council official. After all, there are indication that council official perceive lower local government structure and communities to have n capacity to development sound plans. In other wards, council official pretend that they know better about local needs and wants than the local people themselves.

Third, in the process of O&OD methodology, there is little to suggest that the final village plan is shared to community members. As indicated in the case study, most of the respondents have little or no idea of the village plan. Some admitted that, they have never seen a copy of the village plan. In this regard, there is much to believe that, community involvement is more ceremonial. Once they have identified their preferences, community members are less concern about what has taken place next. In this situation, official in the village council and the ward development committee who are the employee of the LGAs are likely to ignore community preferences in response to council's wishes during the preparation of the village plan.

What do we see from the theories is that participation is better organised and coordinated at the lowest level of government. In the Tanzania context, the village level is in the sense of Plato, Aristotle, and Dahl and Edward administrative level in which community members can easily be coordinated for collective responsibility. At the village level, community members share most of primary services such as primary schools, dispensaries, roads and sometime water sources. It is therefore easy in this situation to mobilise community members to respond to a social problem. In this regard, the local government autonomy should be extended down to the grassroots level i.e the village level. Community plan should be developed and funded at the village level. This is the government administrative level that is closer to community members and therefore community members can easily hold accountable village government officials. Besides, more often some of the village government officials are from among community members. In this regard, they are likely to be well informed of the local situation and the behaviour of the community members. By knowing the behaviour of community members it could be easier to transform them into a sense of collective responsibility.

The current bottom up planning process, do not create a sense of ownership to facilitate implementation. This is cause by the fact that, the bottom up planning process is long and full of uncertainty. Sometime the local preferences are not responded to and if responded it sometime takes too long. As a result, community members loose the connection between the identified preferences in the village plan and the development activities implemented at the local level. As such, community members do not see the value of the village plan.

However, even if village government are left to coordinate and implement participatory activities, much would still be needed from the government to make it work. It is important to note, the

activities referred to here are those with local impact or with no or less spill over effect to other villages within the same LGAs. The experience of participation in Tanzania as indicated in the earlier section, there are often disparities between policy on paper and practice. In this view, to make participation at the village work requires both political and official commitment. The commitment that allows real autonomy to villages to decide about their own problems and implement without interferences from the top. However, this does not mean that, LGA should withdraw completely from what the village government are doing. The role of LGAs remains important to ensure that village government are accountable both at bottom up and top down. There are also responsible to provide technical advices and support. As noted earlier, without government [at both the local and central level] enabling participation for development, it can not be realised.

More importantly, it is useless if community members will invest their time to identify their local needs and wants, while there are no resources to implement. The empowerment of the local people requires resources to enable them implement their wishes. Once there are good accountability mechanisms, the government transfers which cater for larger percent of the local government financing should provide adequate discretion. Community members in support of official at the village government should be able to allocate resources according to preferences identified in their village plan. Such resources should also be provided on time and people should be well informed about the logistics and the amount they can get. In other ward, there should be transparency to enable the local people have a sense of ownership.

As it has been indicated in this paper, the government recognition of participation for development is undisputable. This is an important land mark to capitalise on. It may take sometime to realise this dream, but once there is an intention there will always be a way. In view of this paper, it is a high time now to extent

devolution to the village level. As argued by Othman and Liviga (2002:11)

*“it is at the grassroots that real development has to take place if the face of Tanzania is really to change. Over 80% of Tanzanians still live in villagers, most of them in the over 10,000 registered villages that are all over the country. The village therefore has to be not only the site of governance and administration but the focus of development too”.*

It is therefore, the intention of this paper that some of the issues raised will contribute to the improvement of the institutional arrangements to promote participation for development. As indicated in the case description, the current institutional arrangement does not work to facilitate participatory development.

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