

TANZANIA: WORKING TOWARDS TRANSPARENCY

An inspection of the Tanzanian government's accounts in May 2012 revealed rampant misuse of funds in seven ministries, leading to the dismissal of six high profile ministers. Corruption hits the poorest and most marginalised hardest, preventing them from accessing essential services or resources, or voicing their complaints.

GTF partner Hakikazi Catalyst (HKC) recognises the need for authorities to become accountable to those they represent, and for people to be empowered to drive this change.

Since 2008, HKC has established a dynamic network of 15 Centres for Development, Learning and Action (CEDLA) across Longido, Meru, Arusha and Monduli districts, led by local volunteer animators. HKC provides training to demystify complex policies and explain monitoring tools such as public expenditure tracking surveys. Animators then inform and organise their communities to challenge duty bearers and claim their rights.

Speaking out, being heard

Local authorities are legally obliged to hold community meetings to provide updates on their budgets and the provision of services. But animators noticed that these vital opportunities for dialogue rarely took place, or were held last minute and not publicised, resulting in poor attendance. One animator commented: 'We must consider the responsibility of political leaders to hold these meetings. But we must also remember our responsibility as citizens to participate.' The programme prioritised tackling these issues, and average attendance rose from 50 people per meeting in 2011 to 250 in 2012.



CEDLA animators from Migombani and Majengo meet to analyse why statutory village meetings are not taking place



William Francis, Majengo Village CEDLA chair

Improving local lives and livelihoods

Once trained and resourced, volunteer-led CEDLA are sustainable mechanisms of accountability, which provide a model for community activism to continue beyond the GTF.

Majengo Village CEDLA chair and farmer William Francis also leads the community's water management group. The source of Majengo's fertility in an otherwise arid district is a water drainage basin – vital to thousands of local livelihoods. Historically, the basin has been a source of conflict and land grabbing. William is working with other community leaders and authorities to write a constitution to ensure the protection of the fragile eco-system of the water basin through equitable access for all users. Funds are allocated to improve irrigation channels, increase domestic water, and create areas for livestock dams and fish farms.

In Mkonoo Village, advocacy around poor health service delivery led to the area's quarterly drugs allocation being announced in public meetings to prevent illegal resale. The maternity ward was refurbished, new staff quarters funded, and a new Health Committee was elected with an animator as chair.

Kingori Village saw animator Roselyn Kaaya work with 200 community members to plant 11,000 trees to improve local agricultural livelihoods. She has now joined the District Agriculture Development Plan Committee, influencing further local developmental policies.

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POVERTY

GTF GOVERNANCE AND TRANSPARENCY FUND

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The Governance and Transparency Fund (GTF) empowers some of the most marginalised people in the world to demand their rights and hold their leaders to account for their actions and decisions. This newsletter shows how GTF partners are making a difference to communities in Brazil, Kenya and Tanzania.

BRAZIL: SQUEEZED FROM THE MARGINS

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution recognised the rights of quilombola (descendants of escaped African slaves who formed their own quilombo settlements in Brazil) and indigenous groups to own their traditional lands. But in 25 years, just six per cent of 3,000 quilombola and 35 per cent of 1,023 indigenous communities have had their ownership legally confirmed. Even in those cases, many territories remain illegally occupied by ranchers and businesses.

Recent years have seen a growing backlash, with increasing numbers of community leaders being assassinated or detained. A mining company recently successfully claimed that entitlement only applied above ground level, and proceeded to dig under entitled land. The mainstream media, controlled by Brazil's rich elite, paints negative pictures of these groups.

GTF partner Ecumenical Service Coordination (CESE) awards grants to help mobilise indigenous and quilombola communities to advocate for their land and other rights such as access to essential services. The media is vital in creating momentum for change, and CESE has used power analysis tools such as mapping to engage with alternative audiences and media outlets.

Galvanising public support is vital

Securing land titles increasingly requires sustained, highly publicised campaigning. The indigenous Xavante group of Marãiwatsédé had their land rights ratified in 1998, but this was not enforced. Chief Damião complained: 'Brazil is toying with indigenous people. They haven't removed the squatters... it's shameful.'

Frustrated by a lack of support from authorities and ignored by the media, the group sought backing for their cause internationally through participation in the Rio+20

conference in 2012. There, they lobbied, marched, and received wide coverage. On their return, participants found ranchers had destroyed bridges and blockaded the area. But the campaign worked. The removal of illegal occupants from 165,000 hectares was approved and enforced by 2013. 'I've been walking around with annatto [paint] all over me, I'm still celebrating', said chief Damião.

Unity needed for national reform

Supporting individual campaigns is essential, but national reform is clearly also needed. The lengthy ratification process, coupled with the State's reluctant implementation of its own laws, fuels conflict. Problems are exacerbated by the lack of representation of marginalised groups within the political system.

In April 2013, CESE hosted a workshop, bringing together for the first time 30 indigenous and quilombola leaders together with GTF partner Institute of Socio-Economic Studies (INESC), which campaigns for a fairer and more representative political system. The event was innovative and well received with leaders from both sides expressing solidarity and the need to work together. The leaders had not previously engaged with national reform beyond community land rights, and for INESC it was the first time they were able to engage indigenous groups in their political campaign.



Chief Damião Paridzané, leader of the Xavante indigenous people of Marãiwatsédé, recognised in 2012



KENYA: IMPROVING GOVERNANCE IN A CONTEXT OF CHANGE

The GTF has spanned five formative years in Kenya's politics, beginning in the wake of the 2007 elections which were marred by vote-rigging, corruption and ethnic conflict which led to the loss of more than 1,200 lives, and the displacement of more than 300,000 people. Under Kenya's seemingly peaceful surface, violence had been brewing for years, as successive regimes stifled moves towards human rights, transparency, accountability, public participation and the devolution of power.

The constitution of 2010 marked a turning point in the struggle by the ordinary Kenyan for voice and inclusion. It was widely hailed as one of the most progressive constitutions in Africa.

The world was watching as Kenya returned to the polls in March 2013. The vote resulted in the election of President Uhuru Kenyatta, despite his indictment for his alleged role in the 2007/2008 Post-election violence. Many had opposed his eligibility to stand, claiming he did not meet the leadership and integrity threshold of the new constitution. But the aftermath – which had been forecast to whip up historic ethnic rivalry – reaffirmed the strength of new and reformed institutions. Instead of calling for mass protests

and triggering violent clashes, candidates appealed to the newly established Supreme Court as the mandated arbiter in the presidential elections. This was the first triumph of constitutionalism in Kenya's presidential elections. The coming months and years will continue to test the pace of reforms, and confirm whether the changes put in place will succeed in creating a fairer, more accountable governance system.

GTF partners Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), and Northern Aid (NAID) have been advocating in this context of conflict and change to ensure that the needs of the most marginalised groups are heard and reflected in new laws, and to encourage their informed participation in political processes.

KHRC supports community-led activism

Through the GTF, KHRC has established, trained and led grass roots Human Rights Networks (HURINETS) of community-based groups in two marginalised counties in Northern Kenya, Wajir and Isiolo. HURINETS monitor human rights abuses and advocate for change to address communities' needs. At their request, KHRC's GTF programme has concentrated on two key areas of local and national advocacy: citizenship and water access.



Members of the public waiting to vote in the 2013 Kenya elections



The chair of the Vetting Board addressing participants during a community meeting ahead of the general election

Advocating for access to citizenship for marginalised groups

The struggle for citizenship in northern Kenya has been particularly long and bitter due to underdevelopment, and entrenched discrimination against its pastoralist communities. Registration procedures have historically been lengthy and demanding, exceeding requirements in place for the rest of the country. Those rejected are left stateless, unable to vote, work legally or access services such as education or healthcare.

KHRC together with other civil society organisations established the **Chapter 3 Coalition**, which called for the reform of citizenship procedures in the new constitution and complimentary legislations. Eighty per cent of their advice was incorporated. New policies included simplified processes for obtaining documents, and extra vetting requirements and committees that had previously been used to deny the citizenship rights of Kenyans in the north were outlawed. Since the reforms became law, waiting times for access to vital documents has reduced from an average of six months to three to four weeks, and relationships between officials and citizens have improved. KHRC continues to work closely with the Constitution Implementation Commission and citizenship and immigration officials.

In June 2013, KHRC will host a Pan-African conference on citizenship and freedom of movement in collaboration with Ugandan GTF partner Refugee Law Project to discuss ways of addressing discrimination against ethnic minorities in granting citizenship.

Ensuring equitable access to water in arid areas

For pastoralist communities in arid northern Kenya, access to water is of constant concern. Last year saw the worst drought in 60 years, and they are becoming more frequent due to the impact of climate change. The scarcity of water fuels regional conflict as ethnic

groups compete for access, while corrupt authorities receive bribes from the affluent to ensure priority access.

A water policy, which ensures fair access including in times of drought, is essential. KHRC and the HURINETS monitor water provision to ensure equitable distribution. They provide training to communities, deciphering the complicated 2002 Water Act. In Isiolo, a HURINET chair has recently won a place on the local water board, and is able to voice local needs. Improved governance concerning water service delivery has reduced the average distance to access water from 30km to around 5km, dramatically improving local livelihoods. This success has led KHRC and HURINETS to seek further partnership with local water boards.

NAID: Encouraging participation and preventing corruption

NAID is an indigenous grass roots organisation working on human rights issues in Mandera, northern Kenya.

When the new constitution was promulgated, NAID campaigned for the establishment of a Vetting Board designed to encourage community participation in politics and to prevent corrupt politicians from buying votes, which has been common in Mandera.

In the recent elections, NAID supported the new Vetting Board in interviewing all candidates for various positions in Mandera – 54 candidates for ward representatives, 12 MPs, three governors, three senators and three women's representatives. This board consisted of clan elders, religious leaders and youth. All candidates presented their development agendas and were graded according to their commitment to the region's development. The Vetting Board also blocked the candidacy of those known locally to be corrupt, meaning that for the first time in decades, northern community voices are beginning to be heard by those who understand their needs and will promote their development in an accountable way.