

**Poverty Politics in Local Government in Tanzania:
A Rural Development Perspective**

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Abstract

This article directs development to concrete practical issues in a rural society, using Iramba District in Singida Region as a case study. It deals with three issues. Firstly, it examines how the global level development ideology has affected the local level and how the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have formulated the vocabulary in which development has been phrased. The critique is directed to the dominating concept of "poverty" measured by dollars. Secondly, attention is drawn to the dominating role of women in rural development, especially in agriculture, and the dismissing of this fact in the agricultural planning in "Kilimo Kwanza" i.e. the Agricultural Sector Development Programme (ASDP). The third aspect relates to practical issues, which have been neglected particularly education.

Introduction

In recent years, the discourse of development has increasingly been contested and attributed to limited results achieved in the scale of the international development agenda since the 1960s. This article does not seek to go into historical analysis of various development initiatives related to the conventional approaches of the Western societies to assist the developing countries, but it is critical of the dominating concept of "poverty". It is the key concept, on which the Tanzanian policy framework is largely based, the widely used buzzword in most policy documents and it together with "gender" are central in the development plans and initiatives guided by the strategies spelled out in MKUKUTA, i.e. the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, (NSGPR), in 2005-2010 and is at the time of writing in its second phase 2010-2015. The international development discourse has

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similarly paid concentrated attention on the concepts of “poverty reduction” and the “gender” issue, both included in the ten Millennium Development Goals, MDGs. Together with the strong emphasis laid on the HIV/Aids they have dominated the attention given to Africa, which has been identified as the poorest continent. Most recently the environmental issues have come to the fore. The implementers at the grassroots and the local level administration are overpowered with the stated tasks imposed on them and the negative grounding from which they are to build developed structures. The local issues are here looked at as they relate to the local government operation and affect rural women living from land specifically in Iramba District in Singida Region, Central Tanzania, throwing in some comparative material from southern parts of the country. This article brings up the absence of the issue of culture in the international cooperation and takes up the effect that dependence on the external assistance has on women’s lives and the life of the society. The reality of people’s everyday life is concealed in the development rhetoric while ignoring concrete issues, such as “hands on” agricultural training and attention to practical avenues through increased technical training for household economy. The organized and coordinated time use of the local government servants, but also the monetary compensation they require as a condition for their mobility within the district, reduce the potentiality of the existing opportunities. Leaving the negative aspects aside the article gives also credit to the well-organized system of local level government, the positive attention given to the grassroots development and women’s role in it through the application of participatory village planning. When well implemented, it reaches the lowest levels in the local government setting and opens potentialities for the way ahead.

The Context

Statistically Tanzania is quoted to be one of the poorest countries on this planet. The per capita income puts it to a group 20 categories lower (178th) than the Human Development Index (159th). The GDP (PPP) lifts it 60 points higher (99th).² The gender living expectancy has put Tanzania even ahead of Kenya, which in economic terms is in the media quoted as the showpiece of Sub-Saharan Africa, from time to time causing disappointment with its internal turmoil. Tanzania’s slower but so far peaceful development has been left without mention, yet it may well serve as an example of a socially more sustainable development. I have not seen such misery in Tanzanian cities as in the worst slums of Nairobi. The seeming success of the countries, in which the per capita income grows statistically and people are visibly making better

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progress, attracts also leaders of Tanzania to building a wealthy upper class, but the countries have to build on their different histories. History of Tanzania tells of many mistakes but its strength is the foundation built at the grassroots on elected village governments, which need to be referred to in describing the politics of the country. The progress made is not rapid but recognized to be satisfactory by the World Bank and the similarly minded aid givers, Finland among them, which have continued their long time cooperation with Tanzania.³

The perspective in this study goes beyond the statistical figures, which such as they are, have serious flaws. The social base gains in significance when the women's central role in development is brought out in analysing the ways in which economy is built. While there is no escape from the reality of a degree of poverty it is an imposed concept. I argue that the way poverty concept dominates development discourse ignores the social and cultural strengths of the people and robs their own initiative from them. The critique is directed toward the negative image which dwelling on the "dollarizing" vocabulary of "living on one or two dollars a day" leaves in the minds of people so described and specifically on the self-image of rural women in their struggle for the subsistence and welfare of their families. The scorn women sense in the vocabulary undermines the energy and willingness they have in pursuing the goals, which they set for themselves and on which the country largely depends for its subsistence amidst natural and man made disasters. It undermines their daily work of growing the food of their families, which is ignored in the statistical production figures of the country.

The global emphasis on poverty reduction and on gender, in the Millenarian Development Goals, MDG, has served its purpose on the level of the state governance but the demands that both the district staff as local government implementers, and women as the food producers and citizens face are overstated. The overall goals come to the local level as orders from the Central Government, CG, which in turn is pressurized by the international financial institutions, IMF & WB, and the donor community. The country is increasingly attracted by the commercial offers coming from Asia, as they do not seem to be tied to similar conditions set from elsewhere. The global political trends influence the local policies even if it is not always possible to specify the origins of the trends in national and local politics. As the speed of the national implementation of the development goals set by *Kilimo Kwanza* Agricultural Sector Development Programme, ASDP, has been slow for commercializing agriculture it has led the government into long time renting,

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even selling, the land to China, South Africa and Arabic countries even European buyers, which has set entirely new conditions on production relations. The best land is in danger of being lost in the process, particularly when the individual sellers cannot rightly estimate the future value of their land.

The dialectics of the global and local, the space available for self-determination, the role of the Local Government in the women's economic and social advancement and the support women receive to their contribution in production and handling of family expenses are issues looked at in this article. It describes the role of the Local Government. LG, in the midst of economic and social demands, the aspects of rural women's social economy and the ways in which women sustain life individually, as family members and working in groups, while carrying the main burden of the welfare of the families. The article brings out women's practical knowledge and their versatility in managing through difficult situations. The goals of women in managing their economy cannot be set from a narrow personal ambition nor with purely economic goals. The emphasis is on the practical demands of life and the weak inputs of any level of the government in providing the means and training required for the development in the rural situation.

The article returns to the old debates on the concepts of moral economy, social economy and human economy and their persistence in relation to the eroding social relations and health care under the state policies of privatization and market-driven economy. The commercialization of women's lives by making not only their economic progress but also their welfare dependent on private loans is part of the picture. Agriculture is still the largest sector of economy, which raises the question how the increased resources are used in facilitating women as the main agricultural producers and what are the factors influencing the decline of agriculture while the need for agricultural production has greatly increased with the growing population. I question what the role of modernization of agriculture is and what the reasons for its failures especially when the emphasis is programmed to be on *Agriculture First*, through the programme *Kilimo Kwanza* until 2015 and even further. In its programme document women, who are the main stay of the self-sustaining agricultural production, are mentioned only in one part of the eighth section out of eleven.

How people themselves conceive poverty and wealth and the vocabulary they use have been studied in a REPOA⁴ study by Lwaitama, Yahya-Othman

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and Rubagumya who made a linguistic analysis of who the poor consider to be poor. Their study was based on a variety of methods on selected samples of urban and rural individuals in different zones and districts known to be poor on the basis of standard statistics. The linguistic analysis was made by recording conversations, administering a questionnaire, and making ethnographic observations in three different zones of Tanzania. The study showed that people do not identify themselves as being poor, *maskini*, and if they use the word at all it is of some outcasts or when there is outside support on offer "for the poor".

The results support some of my own findings that identity of being poor is acceptable when it is a group-identification, not a personal one. One can call oneself poor when one compares oneself to some group of people whose wealth is well known. In such cases the connotation of superiority based on power or hierarchical relations is implied. The team's study also supports the point that people can manipulate their reputation of being poor to their benefit materially. But what is obvious is that it is an insult to assume that someone is poor or to call another person poor, because of the negative connotations that the words have.

The translations of the concept poor included 'stupid', 'lazy', 'slovenly', 'slow', 'sluggish', 'unambitious', 'handicapped' even 'insane'. They appear also in my data. With these connotations, the concept poor is indeed an insult; it is taken to imply a condescending and despising attitude of the one who uses it (Lwaitama et al. 1996). The Lwaitama team's findings supported also the realization in this study that women, especially women who are heads of their households, manage better the state of poverty than men do. Women headed households are 'statistically poorer,' using Lwaitama's terms, than male headed households, yet women are more optimistic about their possibility to get along. Women respondents who were not household heads in both rural and urban areas singled as a major cause of poverty the fact that men spent a disproportionate amount of family income in alcohol at bars. Most women's image of a poor person was a dirty looking drunken man, in one woman's words, 'Beer has turned that man into a contemptible person,' (*Amalwa gakamujangula ogwo*). The opinions of rural women were more optimistic than men's and the opinions of rural women and men were more optimistic than those of urban men who were more fatalistic (Lwaitama, 1996).

One could interpret these results as indications that a person classified to be

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poor can manage better in rural areas than in urban areas. That women are more optimistic than men is no surprise since they do most of the food production and are thus more familiar with their potential resources. The productive potential and the community spirit, which enables a wealthier neighbour to recognize the need of the poor, contribute to the relative optimism.

Development needs inspiration, which comes from the identification of the rich nature, and resources that the country can offer and the riches the nation has in her people and communities. How many times the officers or politicians demanding development look for the specific resources that the people have, what their environment and history have to offer and how to develop them further? Participatory Action Research, and PRA as Participatory Rural Appraisal tools have been used to give people ways to identify and analyse their own resources and the space, *nafasi*, which is available for them. People can be guided to make effort to look for the potentialities their *habitat* and areas of living offer and how to make use of the available resources and social strengths instead of directing people toward commoditization of the land as a sign of poverty eradication or for looking for external supports.

Dialectics of Global versus Local

Since Independence in 1961 the Tanzanian administrative and political system has evolved through stages, from the centralized rule toward a greater role for the Local Government (LG). In the 1998 - 2002 the authority of local development was transferred from the regions to districts in three phases, regions retaining the responsibility and overseeing the security and political responsibilities. The cooperating countries have welcomed this emphasis since bringing the Government closer to people's everyday reality creates potentially a stronger base for democracy.

The Local Government Reform (LGR) was acted on in 1998 to give the districts the decision-making power. The partner countries assisted the process by 90 per cent. The Reform was carried out in three phases. Iramba District was part of the third phase starting in 2002. The Iramba District office and the District Council, with elected and appointed representatives from each ward, were responsible over a land expanse of 7,900 sq. km, population of 420 000 people, over ten thousand women more than men, and over 350,000 heads of cattle. The area was divided into seven divisions, 26 wards, 126 villages and 715 sub-villages as administrative units. For the work of all

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the departments and levels the district had 2039 workers in 2007, including teachers for all the schools and health personnel for one large hospital, four health centres and 49 dispensaries and a great variety of health services from maternal health to children's vaccination etc. These figures in themselves give perspective to what could be expected from the district staff in terms of keeping people informed, served, educated, healthy, fit, innovative, productive, profit making and staying away from corruption. Assumedly because the Central Government, CG, did not trust the district authorities it held on to parts of the authority and money, which was due to come to the districts, as was the case especially in education. The external contributing agents add to the responsibilities of the government workers. For instance the World Food Programme, WFP, which has provided food for primary school meals wanted a report every month.

In 2011 the district was divided into two, Makambala and Iramba districts, but at the time of writing this the offices have not yet been moved from Kiomboi as the building of new structures takes its time. The District Government, DG, consists of the District Council with elected and nominated councillors representing the wards and being members in three permanent committees. The vice chair position has been recently held by a woman for many years, the position being open for re-election from time to time. The heads of the District departments attend the council meetings. The council has ten nominated women members and three women members the villages and wards have elected as their representatives. The council fulfils its duties under pressure from many directions. As a political post there is also a District Commissioner, DC, who represents the ruling party CCM with the administrative secretary, and keeps an eye over the development in the district but officially is mainly in charge of security. DC of Iramba was twice for many years a woman.

The Iramba District Five-Year Strategic Plan made for the years 2006/2007 – 2010/2011 followed closely the Millennium Development Goals, MDGs, with the emphasis on poverty reduction, on gender, and with an increased attention on environment. HIV/AIDS programmes have been carried out with separate funding within the district administration. All the MDG points are listed and they are taken up point by point in the district strategy document. The successes and failures in reaching the goals are reported annually amazingly honestly. The global ideas penetrate remarkably to the village level in the Tanzanian system in which the villages are potentially well organized having elected Village Councils and Village Assemblies with

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legal powers. Through them villagers can voice their views depending how well they are aware of their rights.

The increased participation of the grassroots people in the decision-making is contradicted by the dominating trends of globalization through liberal market economy. To illustrate, the influence of the market in lowering the cotton prices several years ago affected the households in Iramba district, where apart from three wards, in which cotton growing has continued, people shifted from cotton to growing sunflower. They are now hopeful as the price of the sunflower oil has steadily risen to compensate the loss, but it requires astute observation of the market opportunities, how best to press the oil and how to process and market it so as not to remain as raw material producers. There are still Asian and African business men or women in the commercial centres who quickly develop their own channels and reduce the possibility of slower women, even men, to keep up with the potential of further developing the product packing it ready for the sale in cities and abroad. The same applies to growing beekeeping. Production of clean commercially packaged honey requires training, which has not been adequately available for the bee keeping women. The North-South local government cooperation with Hartola municipality in Finland has assisted by stages in training in Iramba villages, which has not before been practical enough. Sheer lecturing requires astute skill of listening, which can leave the listeners puzzled not knowing how to state their questions and practical needs.

An example of the global trend of privatization is the revenue collection given out experimentally to a private person who had bought the right to collect the tax from fishermen's catches sold to buyers who transport the fish from the Kitangiri lake side in Iramba to Dar es Salaam and to other bigger centres. According to the chairman of the Doromoni village, where the fish is caught and smoked or sold fresh, the village did not receive their share of tax returns as from the collected tax fifteen or eighteen per cent should come to the village via the district administration.⁵ On the other hand, according to the district report for the year 2009 an increased number of unlicensed fishermen had been caught in Kitangiri, assumingly because it was in the interest of the tax collector to identify them. Also the revenue collection of the Kiomboi market had been privatized.

The privatization is a far cry from the program of *Ujamaa* socialism of familyhood, largely formulated by the first President Julius Nyerere,

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Chairman of the ruling Party TANU at the time, later in 1977 named CCM, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi, Revolutionary Party*, when it joined with the Zanzibar Revolutionary Party. Nyerere's politics were based on the principle of people's power and dominance in decision-making, it aimed at retaining and even resuscitating and building the economy on the social ties,⁶

We would be stupid indeed if we allowed the development of our economies to destroy the human and social values, which African societies had built up over centuries. Yet if we are to save these, we cannot afford the arrogance, which our technical superiority tempts us to assume. (Nyerere 1973: 279)

Paradoxically, the politics and the administrative structure turned out to be top-down with the villagization programme. The scholars debate whether the centralization of the government system in independent Tanzania continued from the centralized colonial system or, as other scholars maintain, did it take that direction after independence, when the political leadership wanted to keep control over the precarious developments in the country (Schneider, 2006:49). The hope of quick modernization of agriculture ended up in the forced moving of people to centralized villages. It weakened people's potential of utilizing the inside knowledge learned in relation to specific conditions of land, environment and social relations. Yet the political structure of the ten house cells with cell leaders served as an administrative organ and created a potential sense of community, at least in villages in which people while moving had some choice as to who will be their neighbours. The elected village chairperson was part of the Party structure in the one party state and the Party had some say whether the villagers' choice was acceptable to the Headquarters. With moving into the multiparty system in 1985 sub-villages or hamlets replaced the cells, but as the Party cells they still give the ruling Party the advantage over other parties in the elections. In Iramba District all the Councillors were members of CCM until 2012, after which two electorates have another choice.

The Central Government with its many programmes and funding agencies cooperating with local governments for such as HIV/Aids and WB Tanzania Social Action Fund, TASAF, and numerous NGOs load the LG personnel with a great variety of duties, which they have difficulty in executing and which they prioritize according to the flow of funds yet the orders from the CG seem to overrun any other duties.

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The orders are considered as commands (*maagizo, masharti*), which the district officers seem to pass on to the lower levels through commands and instruction sessions. The Education department runs with the policy orders from the Central Government. In principle the teachers can apply to their posts but the need for teachers in certain places overruns the personal quests. The teachers can refuse to go to places they are called to serve, as has been the case in Mtwara and Lindi where the reputation of the areas has kept teachers from other parts of the country from responding to their government appointments. The command culture contradicts the intended policy of distribution of power and strengthening the powers of the District and local government in villages through intended participatory planning. Whether this is only an impression of an outside observer, is a valid question.⁷

National policies enacted by the Parliament obligate the districts to implement them. International community with its agents, and some leading NGOs as argued by Gould and Ojanen, (2003) influence greatly the national development politics, which in turn follow the global trends. The LG funding does not always follow the demands the national policies set. The JK presidential loan money, from the name of the Honorary President Jakaya Kikwete, made development fund available through the banks for a few years in 2005 to be distributed for each district, yet the greater part was left for the use of the CG. It ended up as loans via the local commercial banks to those with enough income to have the needed guarantees for their bank loans. The District was left with the task of training the conditions for the loan, and the CDO went around to as many wards as he could to give the needed information. It was not possible to anyone to interfere even to know how many loans and what sizes were distributed, because the local bank declared the results bank secrecy. None of the women interviewed who had applied had received any response. An inquiry was made of the distribution of the loan in the Parliament. The response gave evidence that the distribution had been poorly managed, but the results in the District in question was no longer bank secret as information was given that in the location in question the money had gone to very few individuals.

For the secondary school building program, which was carried out under duress in the beginning years of the millennium, the donor countries committed the bulk of the funds, but the wards were ordered to provide the funds or work for the buildings. The CG ordered every family member 18 years and over, women as well as men, to pay 10 - 15 000 shillings for

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building the secondary school in their Ward.⁸ A situation like this ate the confidence toward the CG. People in Msingi village had run to the hills when the money collectors came around paying no attention to the voluntary work input. People should have been entitled to contribute work in place of the money. Even then Iramba District was in the top category of 20 districts (the 16th) in countrywide assessments of the performance for three years running. As recognition the District was rewarded with increased funding contribution. For building at least for two women students' dormitories the district has had external assistance, but in the implementation there have been difficulties. In one of them male students instead of the intended women students were housed as the school was to be raised to A-level and there would not have been enough girls to house. The private housing for girls had already caused the problem of girls dropping out of school for the sake of pregnancies.

Village Councils have an elected chairperson and 24 elected members with a number of nominated women members. Nowadays the numbers of women in leadership have been growing as three wards had for the ongoing electoral period elected a woman as their Councillor and a woman councillor had been elected as the Vice Chair of the Council since 2011 continuingly. The council divides into three obligatory committees and may form other needed committees. The water committee has become more or less obligatory and Iramba District reported that water committees in 87 out of 126 villages had been started in 2009 and the district had given them training about their duties.⁹ The Village Assembly, in which all villagers potentially can attend, should meet four times a year. The records had shown that in some villages not even one meeting had been held. Because of the weak performance the villages were ordered to hold all four meetings and list the dates on the village office wall in the beginning of the year. Visits to some village offices bore evidence that the order had been followed and the dates were listed on the wall. The wards and villages have salaried Executive Officers (WEO, VEO), some VEO are women. The weak link in the well-structured system is that only one Councillor represents all the villages of each Ward in the District Council yet one ward such as Ndago might have up to 17 villages. The Council's potential to pay equal attention to the priorities from 126 villages in Iramba District was another challenge hard to respond to. This was the case even more so because not all the councillors with poorer lines of contact were informed ahead of time about the items to be dealt with in the Council meeting, which meant that they could not prepare for the meeting discussing the issues with the ward council members. Furthermore, their

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documents were returned to safe keeping in the District office after the Council meeting.

Tanzania had adopted a policy of participatory planning for the village development plans for three years. The villages were helped to make their plans using PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal), later replaced by a simpler O & OD (Opportunities and Obstacles to Development) as tools.¹⁰ An example of the ways in bringing an important global and local issue to the village level was the 2006-2010 National Action Plan, which following the world wide UN General Assembly Declaration of Commitment included HIV/AIDS in 2006, and was activated on the village level in Tanzania. In the villages in Iramba in which the PRA was applied the most vulnerable children, MVC, were identified and their names were listed on the village office wall, as the researchers were able to witness. The villages formed committees for MVC and selected a person to be in charge of seeing that the children's needs were looked after.

The Iramba District expense sheets for 2009 showed that thousands of children identified as MVC had got school uniforms, shoes, socks, pencils, etc. which children ordinarily have to buy themselves. (Numbers of children were given) The World Food Programme also provided school meals when parents could not do it, which increased the administrative work for monthly reports. The district staff members make a great effort to follow the orders as far as possible. Yet according to the annual report the year 2008 had been a year of neglect, which then activated the district under the new directorship in 2009.

How operational is the local government?

The picture given above might sound too rosy for many districts and even in Iramba the programmes have not been implemented as well everywhere. But the action witnessed in person gives evidence that the system is operational. The committee meetings are not always held, as they should, there is fluctuation in implementation depending on the changes in the staff composition and on the interest of the people. For instance Msingi village, where people were discouraged with the secondary school project and with the change of leadership and staff, had become less active judging from the condition of the village office. On the other hand, changes in the leadership and the commitment of teachers and students in the Msingi Folk Development College as well as external assistance directed specifically to women gives hope for more action, but the colleges are dependent on

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additional funding for running efficiently. The actual benefit the development programmes bring to individual women and to the needs of the area is another issue, as is common when citizens are caught in a bureaucratic system with a varying quality of staff and the feasibility of the intent. But the democratic base offers the villagers space, opportunity, *nafasi*, having potentially a democratic voice, if they are aware or are made aware of it and hold on to the rights that the system offers and if the officers and politicians in charge do not misuse their power. In the local development in Tanzania significant is the citizens' space for action, which this article attempts to bring out.

It is significant that the local interacted with global when people's participation gained strength even in the relations with the World Bank. In the 1980s WB and IMF had forced the poorer countries into economic reform through the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). It was strongly criticized for its negative consequences for the economy when first implemented, not only the effect it had on economics but also reducing the Government staff from 50 000 to 20 000 with sad consequences to district based work and families, adding greatly to women's workload.

The changed leadership of WB and introduction of the global Poverty Reduction Program in 1996 was an outcome of communication between the local experts and the WB specialists and resulted in a more interactive policy and changed direction to a grassroots approach. It promoted participation of beneficiaries in project design and implementation in selecting village projects for support and in bringing forth the village contributions, which in Iramba has continued as TASAF program, Tanzania Social Action Fund projects.

The critical studies such as Gould and Ojanen (2003), which see the participatory village level programmes as camouflaging the ultimate global market goals are looking at the issues in the larger framework of liberal market economy, in which the North is also caught, and the writers also remind of the huge debt accrued to WB. My local level analysis sees benefits in the local implementation also in the efforts of TASAF, Tanzanian Social Action Fund of the WB in village improvements as seen in the 2009 Iramba District report, regardless of the usual inefficiencies observed, even when special attention is not paid in the reporting of its effects on women's participation or workload. The sums spent in building village schools and

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dispensaries with the work contribution of the villagers is a positive contribution regardless the other implications.

Even WB is not one solid power, which cannot be influenced. Its social section experimented village level primary school programme in Kibaha and was ready to try on invitation the same in some schools in Mtwara region. Simultaneous primary school development applied in the Regional Integrated Project Support, RIPS, at the same time in Mtwara and Lindi regions brought the two into cooperation in monitoring the results. The story is too long to reiterate here but of interest is that WB agreed no longer to require the village contribution in 20-50 per cent cash money but agreed to have it done by people's work. This was the case also in the TASAF (2000)¹¹ initiated projects in the 20 Iramba villages (of the 40 were initially surveyed for it), where the villagers chose the project by making a participatory inquiry as to their first priorities and they established locally responsible committees to be in charge. The value of village work is estimated below the market rate, in order not to disturb the labour market. The funds are directed straight to the villages, but a District Officer selected as a coordinator, later three of them were needed when the work expanded, who meet monthly with the District Council Management Team to follow up the developments. The quarterly village reports seemed to be an excessive obligation, but TASAF serves as an example of the global reaching to the local level. The officer in charge of the TASAF cooperation in Iramba thought in 2011 that the programme worked better than other projects he had been involved in. Again, no special mention was made of the participation of women, as the custom is that in building projects women carry the sand and water and do other menial jobs. The President of the Bank of Tanzania professor Benno Ndulu was in charge at the time of starting the TASAF programs as he was working with WB at the time of the Director Wolfenson.

An example of a failing WB project was the irrigation scheme, for which the involved villages formed a local management committee for taking care of the operation. Visit to the location evidenced that the programme had been out of operation for at least a half a year. The locals did not have the technical competence to fix what went wrong and no one knew who was responsible for the repair. Some technical fault is the most common cause for a failing project. Such details as who has the responsibility to act and where is the technology available need to be defined at the planning stage since there seldom is local competence for required technology without training for the purpose. Special mention was made that a group of Hadzabe women had

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been involved in the project on behalf of their families, but had left when the program came to stand still.

The North-South cooperation with Hartola municipality in Finland, in which the writer has been involved from since 2001, contributed its share supporting the training for the participative planning until all the villages had one exposure to it, but the payment for the initial training of the staff members and allocation of money for the purpose had come from the Regional Commissioner of Singida, before our cooperation started. He had become convinced of the usefulness of the approach while serving as RC in Lindi, where he got acquainted with the use of PRA in RIPS, the Regional Integrated Project Support. The planning done in Msingi village in preparation of the N/S cooperation in 2001 was a fine exercise by the villagers in a participatory analysis of the state and future needs in their village. All the age groups including primary school students met in their own groupings. No sets of PRA tools¹² were used, elders met to give the history of the village, youth presented their need of land, women took active part also in writing down on cardboards their proposals and complaints and presented them to the total group in the end, when all gathered to listen to each others' stories and agree on the report. The sessions encouraged women's further participation in participatory planning sessions, in which they could meet as a group and come forth forcefully presenting their views. The success of such sessions depends on individual district facilitators who dare take the lead in an encouraging manner. Too often the plans that the villagers propose are pushed aside and forgotten at the higher level but there are plans people can implement on their own. The officers complain that women do not participate in planning meetings. Women occupied with sustenance of their families, quickly retort, "Men have the time to sit and talk", "Women have no time for empty talk". PRA has given opportunities toward planning concrete actions. Women come if they have a role in a well carried out planning.

There is a darker side to the implementation of the projects. The District gives an annual report to the ruling Party. Looking at the auditor's report for the year 2008 in Iramba one finds that it had not been as positive as the district report of the year 2009. The money allocated to the MVC program had not been put forward, at least not in the intended categories. The training of the teachers and health workers was not implemented and the orphans had not been provided with the learning equipment. This failure might have caused the improvement in the year 2009. The auditor's report of

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2008 brought out the major weakness, which has been evident also in the cooperation with Iramba district. The funds used for per diems and various allowances exceeded the planned or allocated sums in great excess even recorded as being hugely overspent. The per diem quota is in general excessive in comparison with the funds available and the needs of the country, and also in comparison with the per diem allocations allotted in Finland. It is obvious that the country tries to raise the living standard of the middle class so that the consumption would go up and the tax returns accrue inputs into government coffers, but the funds used for per diems exceed grossly the sums allocated for the purpose. It is a viscous circle.

The structure of planned development as the best servants of the system implement it, is too tightly tied to the state strategies guided and 60 per cent supported by the external agents. Is there evidence that people's creativity could come forth more forcefully and have more space if there was less on offer and less direction from above, not only from the district, but from the central government which in turn is directed from the universal policies of the IMF, WB, and the so called donor community and indirectly WTO, World Trade Organization? Aili Mari Tripp showed how in Tanzania people took over when the politics of the state went into extreme and the country economy failed in mid-1980s. The situation brought out surprising initiatives, especially by the women in Dar es Salaam. (Tripp, 1989; 1990) The periodical acceleration of people's activity demonstrates that the citizens are activated when things go badly. They do not then use the administrative channels of the local government, but the system has left sufficient leeway to circumvent.

Many writers analyzed the situation during the 1990s and in the new millennium, when the World Bank had to revise its earlier programme based on structural adjustment and they find that the underlying policy remains the same. I refer to writings of Kjell Havnevik, who has continued research in Rufiji river basin since the villagization till recent years, and gives an illuminating analysis in *Tanzania, The Limits to Development from Above* (Havnevik, 1993; 2000). I refer also to my previous writings (See Bibliography). People have not channelled their dissatisfaction to political channels, which Ferguson's analysis of Lesotho would anticipate (Ferguson, 1990., 1994). They take direct action, which they have not so far been prevented from doing. In line with Ferguson's line of thought if the government economics is dominated by global powers with the top-down channels it does not give much room for political influence. The recent legislations, which make land alienation possible, are bound to bring ground

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level disagreements. People assumed to be inactive in Mtwara Region showed signs of it recently to the degree of violence.

The pressure from above is obvious when the policies and the implementers define the operational goals and outline them from above. I have indicated that the increasing pressure leaves space for operation by the people if that space is made use of and if the pressure does not extinguish the local initiative. It requires a greater consciousness of the people's rights, which exist in the legal system. Women have made use of that space in a positive way by forming active informally cooperative groups the names of which indicate that the main purpose of them is mutual support. If the members call their group *Neema*, *Upendo*, *Tupendane*, *Vumilia*, *Mwamko* (Grace, Love, Let us Love one another, Have patience, Wake up) as the women named their groups in Gumanga in Iramba, they indicate that the core of coming together and working in groups is for social as well as for economic goals and service.

In the mid 1990s a study was conducted in Mtwara and Lindi regions of the then existing women's groups. It was found that for women there to join together some previous contacts between them existed, such as the attendance previously in the same maturity rituals, being members in a church women's group or confirmation or having attended the same activities before. Women were of the middle-income level, while the wealthiest did not need such groups and the poorest did not come out of their homes out of fear of not matching up with the requirements. The same was the case also in Iramba within the groups, which required initial input for joining.

In Iramba the groups are further formalized in *Vikoba* and SACCOS saving and cooperation groups, which are multiplying on the countryside also elsewhere in Tanzania. In *Vikoba* groups up to 25 women gather for saving and getting small loans for starting entrepreneurial activities. The LG has so far given the metal boxes with three sets of keys, which three elected members keep in safe places and the box can be opened only when all the three are present, in practice when the whole group is gathered together. This has made it possible to keep the money in safety when the use of the regular banks has been too demanding for the small scale saving and loaning purposes. SACCOS saving and loaning groups require bigger initial sums and gather together women and some men who are prepared to add to the fund regularly agreed sums and take bigger loans. Women more than men

demonstrate that if they did not practise social economy they would not manage making family living in the existing economic and social situation. It is notable that men have joined the SACCOS groups started by women, perhaps eventually wanting to take over the leadership. Men do not start groups with the same social cohesion as women.

So far the formation of savings and *vikoba* groups have worked better than the ones formed on the loan money by the district government. The mutual sharing in the fellowship draws women together rather than coming together only for getting loans. This also means that women's groups work better than men's corresponding ones. One reason is the greater ease with which men gain the trust of the banks for receiving loans. Even enterprising women with considerable evidence of their trustworthiness have found it difficult to upper the amount they receive and thus fail to broaden their business enterprises.

Technical Problems as Cultural Problems

There is a major weakness in local level development affecting both men and women in the way agriculture and other projects requiring technical skills are being developed. One needs only to read the report of Iramba for the year 2007, when the obvious problems become evident, yet surprisingly little attention has been drawn to it until now. We read in the Iramba District report that 26 337 oxen driven ploughs and 13 tractors were in operation but only seven tractors worked. In 2009 a power tiller and a weeding machine were supposed to have been sent to each ward on the Prime Minister's initiative to be purchased as a model for a low price by some farmer. It was too early to make any estimate whether the tillers' fate was the same as that of the donkeys, which were sent to the coastal villages in the 1970s. Unused to donkeys the villagers had a hard time getting rid of them. A donkey training station was built in Lugoba in Bagamoyo District, but no farmers wanted to try to plough with donkeys and farmers were not used to have donkeys carry their loads. The station was eventually closed down. This happens when the initiative does not come from the people themselves. If the tillers satisfy the need, men will be more engaged in agricultural work, hopefully for the benefit of the families and not only for their personal gain as the push is for commercial products.

There is a great need for "hands on" technical training for women as well as men, since women do much of the agricultural work. Of the potential agricultural land a little over one half is so far in use, which means that there

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is much room for expansion, if the machines can be kept working. The same technical skills are needed to keep the tools of all kinds in operation. The women are as capable as men to use machinery and will be happy to do so instead of preparing the large fields by hand hoes as they do now. The immediate need is to get practical skill training for men, women and youth for the jobs, which require the use of any kind of technical tools or machines. The immediate need is to introduce the practical skills into all the primary school programmes with concrete contents for ready application. The fact is that children grow up with no tools to use in their homes as they are not needed in the *tembe* houses and there are no clothes racks, shelves, hooks or cupboards provided in the new houses. The *panga* knife no longer suffices as the tool for all the jobs.

It is obvious that a totally new way of training the common villagers in repair work is needed, alerting people to keep instruments and tools in repair before they break, to learn to do the ordinary repairs and to make use of the local self-educated skilled workers for training. The Folk Development Colleges for teaching the needed skills in the rural communities are largely undervalued. The existing vocational expertise needs to be utilized by facilitating for villagers courses, for which the colleges were initially established, following the educative and cultural role such institutions played in the rural areas in Nordic countries. Women need to learn the maintaining jobs of all kinds not separating men's jobs from women's jobs. Keeping sewing machines in operation is also a skill, which needs to be taught similarly to men and women. Storage space and repair skills are needed and for the use of repairs spare-parts need to be made available as soon as any machines are introduced or bought. Otherwise the reports will continue to record a greater number of machines out of operation than in operation. The simple brick homes built to day all over the country have no consideration of storing articles and clothes, not even for food items, nor facilitating any use of instruments, or providing simple shutters for window openings, not to speak about windows of any kind. The better level houses in villages are kept for funerals of the city folk and stand empty much of the time, which is a waste of a learning process for acquainting the local villagers in the use of them.

When the shallow well programme was carried out by the different donor countries in different regions in the 1980s the well handles to pull up and down was one solution, as they did not break in joints. The even better way was to teach a selected group of women the maintenance and commonly

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needed repairs. A woman headed water committee, which had also the guardian responsibility for the spare-parts, was the solution for maintaining the wells in the water project supported by Finnida in Kenya, already tried toward the end of the programme in RIPS in southern regions. (Sitari, 1988; Swantz, 1989)¹³ The frequent sight of broken well handles and other facilities for general use, reveals that it has not been left to any group or individual as a special responsibility and the knowledge of the availability of the place for spare parts is also missing.

When the reports continue to show the tractors under repair but not repaired, or the oil pressing machines constantly out of operation there must be a fundamental failure in the technical capacity to deal with machines. It is a cultural problem, which the anthropologists and technology experts should deal with. (Troil, 1986) Until recently the unit for development studies in DSM University had a room for storing broken chairs. In a FDC vocational school broken school desks filled a quarter of the workshop space and in a village primary school needing badly classrooms and desks a large classroom was used as a store for unrepaired desks. The examples are from the new millennium.

In 2008 conference chairs with black shiny plastic surface had been ordered from Malaysia for Iramba district meeting hall and chairs of the same material were bought for a dispensary. It took only a few months when the back of the first chair was pushed in. When broken nothing could be done to repair the surface. Tanzania is not the only country to run after modernity and to make the choice for the cheapest with no regard to quality. It is good to remember that some of the wooden chairs from the colonial time are still in use in District officers' houses.

In the mean time young carpenters tried to saw boards by hand, some even out in the open by the main street through the town, unable to fill any part of the need for furniture. Kiomboi district could not provide electricity for the workshop of the first skilled group, not even any shade for the second, but around the corner all the district houses and offices had no problem with electricity. Wooden chairs are not considered as fine looking as the black foreign chairs, which soon look ragged.

The more general problem is cultural, which has not been taken as such. The traditional utility articles in homes were replaced when the old items wore out. New material is fetched to fill in or to replace annually the old roofs of

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the *matembe* houses. A broken pot was not repaired as women made new ones. The three-legged stools lasted long but when worn out they were replaced. It is hard for people grown up with tools to picture that young people might come from homes in which some such tools as a needle, thread, and scissors for sewing, axe, spade, saw, hammer or nails have never been used and even needed. Students come to university who have not even in school learned any practical skill apart from what they knew from home. That background does not create the inclination to repair things. Even people who come from modern homes do not think of such demands. The modern young people, women and men, do not fix broken things but rather throw them out and buy new ones. They have entered to such a wasteful culture in a period when consumption is encouraged and repairing things less and less common. The country cannot afford the waste. The need for repairs cannot be passed without tackling the issue. The journals are filled with articles blaming the neo-liberal economy, but the writers have succumbed to it in practice. Having taught teachers during the ending years of the colonial rule it is not surprising that the elderly people starting their education at that time agree with the writer that such skills were taught in the school system at that time.

Anthropologists who work closely with people do not enter into such practical matters, yet this is clearly a cultural matter, which needs cultural analysis. Here I come back to James Scott, who as an American in his book *Seeing Like the State* shows how the state organized things were bound to fail in one way or another, as in any case people take over and find their ways of doing things. He calls it "*metis*, which descends from the classical Greek and denotes the knowledge that can come only from practical experience". He conceptualizes the nature of practical knowledge and contrasts it with more formal, deductive, epistemic knowledge. (Scott, 1998) In this he comes close to Harvard economist Stephen Marglin whose terms *techne* and *episteme* I have elaborated in an article still in print on "Premises of knowledge creation". Marglin has later replaced epistemic with "algorithmic knowledge" in his later book *The Dismal Science, How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community*. The name already indicates the theme of the book, in which the author critically examines the negative sides of communality, but puts forth the fundamental necessity of community-based economics for human society. (Marglin, 1996; 2008)

Fraterline Kashaga has in his recent articles developed further the social economy based on Karl Polanyi's new edition of *The Great Transformation: The*

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Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (2001), paying attention to the new edition of the book introduced by Stiglitz, (2003) who went through conversion from his original neo-liberal orientation after visiting East-Africa. (Kashaga, 2013)

Jean-Philippe Platteau points to other changes of life style, which need to be taken in consideration. The knowledge and the conditions of the forms, organization and management of the people's life forms are essential because of what Plateau calls "deeply engraved misconceptions about the nature or process of technical change on the part of African governments and international donor agencies". Here as elsewhere listening to the people concerned, taking their points seriously and learning from them is a precondition for a constructive dialogue (Platteau, 1990:279-379). Platteau brings out the fact that people have skills and knowledge, which have to be worked into the new methods, but must first be utilized and earned credit by the innovators.

In using the PRA tools in a village in Newala district in Mtwara Region the learners of the use of the tools were surprised to find the wealth of knowledge the school youth had on the plants and trees. I quote a sample of people's knowledge gathered in using participative approach in a village gathering. It is taken from an article of mine "Practical knowledge for development" in the process of being published:

"Farmers were found to practice soil fertility management with a great variety of ways. I quote from a report listing them:¹⁴

1. Ridge-making. Grasses and leaves are put in mounded lines with soil.
2. Fallow system. Each of the 3-4 years cultivated has a different name.
3. Cleared grasses/bushes are spread on the ground to decompose.
4. Goat or cow manure is spread on cultivated soil.
5. Spot burning. Cleared grasses and shrubs are piled in heaps and burnt.
6. Deep hoeing to mix top and sub soil. 'Bringing up the fertility sunk.'
7. Thinning of cashew trees to reduce the canopy to give air to

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- trees.
8. Artificial fertilizers used by younger wealthier men.
 9. Mulching: Leaving weeds from fallow for a year incorporated into soil.
 10. Retaining soil-enriching trees.

25 trees, four local grasses and two climbers were identified which were said to improve soil fertility. Six grasses, shrubs and a tree were identified which deteriorate soil. Different soils required different management practices. Land types have their own local names and they are used with insight to their suitability for different purposes. Extension officers with simple conventional messages do not have much to teach to such farmers who depend on differences in microenvironments."

It has intrigued me that one specimen of the long ago rejected Finnish Valmet tractors is in operation as the main operational vehicle hauling whatever needs to be hauled in Kiomboi town. The engineers must have learned its operational tricks since it was brought to Kiomboi a quarter of century ago. People have a lot of ingenuity, when they are given the freedom to play around with a machine. I refer here to my book *Transfer of Technology as an Intercultural Process*, chapter "Anthropology of technology", which gives examples how people have learned "From hand-tool to machine", pp. 78-83 and 121-126.

In the technical problems the ignorance of whose responsibility the action or tool is and who takes the initiative seem to be a basic problem, especially if the money comes from a donor. Work stands still and may even be dropped for such reasons. In the case of an oil pressing machine of a women's group in an Iramba village the district technical officer had come to verify a technical problem but did not touch it neither sent anyone else to do the work. After half a year of no operation a local handy man advised the women where such repairs could be made and the group took the broken part to Haidom in the neighbouring region, where the Norwegian presence had taken care of technical expertise. Also in other oil presses, the electric company's failure to connect the machine from the nearby pole was excessively costly or was not done when requested or a missing nut was not fastened and the village did nothing to put the machine into operation. There had been no problem with the ox ploughs. It was a tool, which people had used since the missionaries introduced it and worked it with the people

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starting in the 1920s. There are plenty of engineers in Tanzania who have failed to learn the practical repair skills.

Commercialisation of agriculture is the main theme in the new *Kilimo kwanza*, national ASDP programme of the country. Whether private sector or state run it will not work unless the technical “hands on” repair training is taken seriously. The women’s central role in food production and their knowledge of local land qualities for growth thus in development of agriculture has not been given any role at all. It would be tragic if the agricultural programme had to be given to experts from other countries because the country does not take its technical “hands on” learning seriously. Large parts of best agricultural land is in the hands of South-Koreans and South Africans and the Chinese are in the process of taking over land for cultivation in many areas as part of the process of neo-colonialism. This way of commercializing agriculture will necessarily displace the development of local agriculture.

Conclusion

The article has brought out the role of the Local Government in the rural development keeping the perspective of women in mind. Women are still doing the main part of the domestic food production. This is a fact, which continues to be ignored, as indicated. It is ignored in the production figures, as the domestic production is not measured in them. That the everyday toil is not counted means also that the key role of women in the economy of the country is kept hidden in the international parlance on poverty and also in the agricultural planning. The theme on gender misses some of the key points, because the discussants no longer live in the reality of the majority of women residents in rural homes.

The first part of the article gives credit to the way the local government has managed to combine the global perspective in implementing the MDGs and WB initiated local level programmes. While the LG can be given credit in many respects, its freedom to determine the local projects is limited, because of the leading and commanding role of the Central Government and the non recognition of the rural reality of the majority population till today. The women’s central role in agriculture is almost totally ignored in the *Kilimo Kwanza* agricultural programme but even more the women’s central role in local food production is given no place in defining the factors of local development and furthering agriculture.

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The significant point in the women's way of managing life is their way of retaining social sharing in work and leisure. The role of the women's groups, which serve both economic and social functions, is crucial in the rural communal environment. This aspect has not been given the value in development planning, as it deserves. The ending part of the article focuses on the neglect of all kinds of practical training, especially in the technical skills needed in everyday life. The almost total neglect of practical subjects in school programmes and lack of facilitating and equipping the male and female youth in starting any work that demands skills is shown to be the basic weakness in rural development and development in general. The plans in process need to be taken over by the central and local governments instead of anticipating the donor money to cover it.

Meaningful rural development in Tanzanian rural communities now defined by the MDGs, *Kilimo Kwanza* and MKUKUTA inclusive of the gender component need to be contextualized in each location. For localizing development the local government leaders need to recognize the local experts and learn the vocabulary used by people, being mindful of the linguistic differences relating to the different means for living, including the names of plants, animals and insects in each area, using concepts people understand in the area. All this demands from the leaders more careful identification specifically with the women's ways and needs. People know the meaningful economic opportunities their communities have, but far too often especially the women's requests and proposals are pushed aside. This is where participatory planning and implementation plays a significant role, but the local level planning and proposals need to be heard.

The article has also brought out the neglect of recognizing the cultural strengths and problems, which relate to different interpretations of customs or even borrowing customs in interethnic marriages, such as girls mutilation or men's choices in between matrilineal and patrilineal duties in marriage. Another issue requiring legal and social advice is who takes the responsibility for children, especially young girls, when the problem occurs between partners with different ethnic customs.

Localizing development agenda and building the needed capacity at district, ward and village level in a functional manner would replace the top-down approach, also of the Central Government, which at present controls the development agenda. Every job to be done, every tool, every machine, every operation has to have a responsible individual, preferably two or three or a

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group, to whom other partners turn, when a problem occurs in an activity or when a tool or machine brakes. When the rhetoric for meaningful participation of local actors at village level becomes a recognized practice it becomes the foundation for further development and is not used only to impress development partners and donor community, the ownership of development will belong to the rural communities themselves.

Notes

1. Professor Bertha Koda and BA and MA students Sarah Mlangi and Samwel Muhajida in UDSM did research in the Iramba District in 2004-2007 for N/S Local Government Cooperation between Hartola municipality and Iramba District supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, administered by the Authority of Local Governments in Finland, Their reports are used for some of the information, especially on Iramba and Nyaturu customs. The writer took part in this research and has been in close contact with Iramba District 2001-2013, and done research in Tanzania since 1965.
2. The statistical figures are based on categorization made in 1996, most compiled in 2005, some in 2006.
3. Per capita given is \$1,100. In the HDI index quoted in 2007 Tanzania was in the 4th category from the bottom. Source: Human Development report 2007.
4. REPOA = Research on Poverty Alleviation research programme of the Tanzanian government in 1990s.
5. Collected catch and tax fluctuate and collectors count the catch periodically. Privatization of tax collection was credited to the Dutch.
6. TANU = Tanganyika National Union; Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to form Tanzania. In 1977 the Party was named Chama Cha Mapinduzi, CCM, Revolutionary Party, after joining with the Afro Shirazi Party of Zanzibar.

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7. One finds similar command culture in the European Union, where imposed directives in following the rules in agricultural support assume a degree of deceit, which makes honest Finns furious.
8. In an interview with the former Prime Minister Edward Lowasa he assured that the order was not compelling, only a recommendation.
9. UNICEF has a countrywide WASH programme for hygiene and water, which might have induced these developments.
10. DPLO and DCO of Iramba were trained in PRA tools in Mtwara and continued to use them but the Ministry of Local Government ordered the use of O&OD instead. Scholars have directed critique toward the methods for various reasons. (Swantz, M.L., in process).
11. TASAF Institutional Development Implementation Handbook 2000, The World Bank and the Poorest Countries. Support for Development in the 1990s. Washington, D.C. 1994. TASAF, Aide Memoir, 2003.
12. PRA, Participatory Rural Appraisal set of tools.
13. Taimi Sitari had the experience from the evaluation of the Mtwara water project and brought the wisdom to Kenya.
14. "Indigenous soil fertility improvement study, Newala and Masasi Districts, mimeo, March 1995. Technical report by Likanda, S.N.M., Kerven, C., Magembe, M. S., Majule, A., Mapua, M.S., Tenge. A., District Forestry officers with RIPS, Soils Section and Farming System research, MOA, Naliendele, Mtwara. The 27 pages report gives detailed aspects of farmers' knowledge. The items listed are given as an indication of the type of information the farmers work with.

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