

12th EADI General Conference
**Global Governance for
Sustainable Development**

The Need for Policy Coherence
and New Partnerships



**Seeing Like Women
In The Context of North-South
Local Government Cooperation**

**Between municipalities of Hauho and Hartola
with the Iramba District in Tanzania**

Author:	Marja-Liisa Swantz, Professor emerita
Institution:	Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki
Address:	Koitinkaari 12, 19540 Koitti, Finland
E-mail:	marja.swantz@pp.inet.fi
Telephone:	+358 50 357 4442

Abstract

The Cultural Context of the North-South Local Government Cooperation in the Tanzanian Context with a special reference to women

The paper is based on six years of local government cooperation between two municipalities, Hauho and Hartola, in Finland and Iramba District in Tanzania. The paper discusses the role of local government from village to district level in rural development in general and in relation to the cultural context of the partners in particular. It looks at the development especially in relation to the emphasis on gender equality and empowerment of women. It examines the role of the mutual learning process for both partners and the cultural factors that affect it in the specific context of the North South local government cooperation. The study further identifies how the cultural factors influence the successes and failures in the common pursuit for development.

The study analyzes the potentialities of the district local government to operate as a development administrator and agent in general and in the midst of multiple foreign government development agents in particular, such as World Bank, UN and other international organizations, NGOs and CBOs. The paper will describe and assess a variety of interventions and analyze the assumptions under which the international development agencies operate. The projects targeted to support women's entrepreneurial efforts will be analyzed as concrete case studies.

The potential of North-South local government cooperation in enhancing a culturally relevant relationship, its conditions and consequences are subjected to scrutiny, and some positive consequences will be itemized.

1. Introduction

This study is part of the North-South Local Government Cooperation (NSLGC) of six years between the municipalities of Hartola and Hauho in Finland and the Iramba District in Central Tanzania, another three years beginning this year. Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Finland has supported over the years the evolvement of the Local Government (LG) in Tanzania. Related to this the Authority of Finnish Local Governments has established cooperation with sister municipalities.

The goal has been to create a mutual learning process in exchange of experiences between the LG staff members and elected councilors and thereby strengthen the local operation in both partner Governments. In the cooperation with Iramba it was seen to work best through support of some part of the development work the District is engaged in, but the cooperation between people in Hauho and Hartola with the 45 times higher number of Iramba population is out of proportion.

The research relating to the NSLGC was done in three phases in 2004 - 2007 with the Director of the Institute of Development Studies, University of Dar es Salaam, Professor Bertha Koda and four student assistants. The research task was to look to the role of the Local Government in supporting women's economic advancement and women's contribution in development, hence 'Seeing like women'. The potentialities this kind of cooperation between partners offers in comparison to usual development cooperation is referred to.

The ways of seeing are with the eyes from overburdened women to young girls, from hunters and gatherers to government workers, and to relaxed men.¹ The concept *social economy* is used to balance the *poverty* as the framework for all development work. Loading the burden of household and children on women leaves out the responsibility of the men toward domestic responsibilities. The cultural framework of the societies in question and peoples' own conceptions of the issues referred to in abstract exceeds the allowed space.

¹ The phrase 'seeing like' is borrowed from the book of James C. Scott *Seeing Like the State* (1998).

Tanzania is quoted to be one of the poorest countries on this planet.² The perspective here goes beyond the statistical figures. Agreeing that the reality of poverty cannot be denied it must also be recognized that the collection of statistics has serious flaws. The critique here is directed toward the negative image overemphasis on poverty leaves in people's minds.

I refer to the actions of the State during the *Ujamaa* period, which still affect agriculture, land rights and local level social relations. To counteract difficulties women face they sustain life working in groups carrying the burden of family welfare. The paper returns to debates on such concepts as 'moral economy', 'human economy' and 'economy of affection' in relation to the eroding social aspects under the state driven privatization and market-driven economy. The commercialization of women's lives by making their welfare dependent on private loans is ameliorated by the social relations they create and by the support they get from the groups they form for mutual assistance. Agriculture is still the largest sector of economy and leads to critique of the methods of modernization. The effect of some external assistance on women and the life of the society is analyzed.

2. Dialectics of Global versus Local

The Tanzanian administrative and political system has evolved from centralized rule toward a greater role for the Local Government (LG) bringing it closer to the people. The cooperating countries have welcomed his emphasis since bringing the Government closer to people's everyday reality creates a stronger base for democracy. The global political trends influence the policies of individual states even if it is not possible to specify the origins of the trends in national politics. 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 has affected the households in Iramba district and shift to growing sunflower. They now hopefully wait the price of the sunflower oil rise to compensate the loss, but it requires astute observation of the market opportunities, how best to press the oil and how to process it so as not remain as raw material producers.

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 leaders wanted to keep control over the precarious developments in the country (Schneider, 2006:93 –123). The program of *Ujamaa* socialism, largely formulated by the first President Julius Nyerere, Chairman of the ruling Party TANU, aimed at retaining and even resuscitating the traditional social ties,³ Nyerere's politics were based on the principle of people's power and dominance in decision-making:

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, and 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 people's inside knowledge learned in relation to specific conditions of land, environment and social relations. Yet the new political structure of the ten house cells created a potential sense of community and served also as an administrative organ. The elected village chairperson was part of the Party structure in the one party state. With moving into the multiparty system in 1985 sub-villages replaced the cells, but as Party cells they still give the ruling

² Per capita given is \$1,100. In the HDI index quoted in 2007 is in the 4th category from the bottom. Source Human Development report 2007.

³ TANU = Tanganyika National Union; Tanzania after Zanzibar was united with Tanganyika. In 1977 the name changed to Chama Cha Mapinduzi, CCM, Revolutionary Party, joining with the Afro Shirazi party of Zanzibar.

Party the advantage over other parties in the elections. In Iramba District all the Councilors are members of CCM.

Since Independence in 1961 the Local Government has evolved through stages. 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.

LGR was carried out in three phases. Iramba District was part of the third phase in 2002. The District office and Council have a responsibility over a land expanse of 7,900 sq. km, population of 370,000 people, ten thousand women more than men, and 750,000 domestic animal units. The area is divided into seven Divisions, 26 Wards, 126 Villages and 715 Sub-villages as administrative units. For the work of all the departments and levels the District has 2039 workers. These figures in themselves give perspective to what can be expected from the District staff in terms of keeping people informed, served, educated, healthy, fit, innovative, engaged in productive, profit making activities and staying away from mischief. The external actors contribute, but they also add to the responsibilities of the Government workers. Also in NSLGC this is an aspect to be aware of. Assumedly because CG does not trust the district authorities it holds on to parts of work and to money that should belong to the District.

National policies enacted by the Parliament are imposed on the districts for implementation but the funding does not follow the demands. The recent JK presidential loan money made available through the banks was divided in the proportion 280 to 90 million shillings between the centre and the districts and it ended up as loans to the rich. I assume that this affected the recent Secondary school building program, to which donor countries committed the bulk of funds. The CG ordered every family member 18 years and over, women as well as men, to pay 10 – 15 000 shillings for building the Secondary school in their Ward.⁴ A situation like this eats the confidence toward the CG. Iramba District has been in the top category of 20 (the 16th) districts in DG assessments for four years running. It has been rewarded with three times increased funding contribution for the current year.

Villages have Governments with three committees with 24 members and an elected chairperson. The Village Assembly, in which all villagers potentially attend, has legal powers and meets minimum four times a year. The villages are represented in the Ward Development Council and they elect one Councilor to represent them in the District Council. The Council has ten nominated women Councilors and two Wards have elected a woman Councilor. The Wards and Villages have salaried Executive Officers, (WEO, VEO) some VEO are women.

Tanzania has adopted a policy of participatory planning for the village development. The villages make plans using PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) and O &OD (Opportunities and Obstacles in Development) as tools. It is significant that the local interacted with global when people's participation gained strength in WB, which had earlier promoted economic reform through the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) with its negative consequences, among others reducing the Government staff from 50 000 to 20 000, with sad consequences to families and adding to women's load of work. The new WB Poverty Reduction Program promoted participation of beneficiaries in project design and implementation. With the changed policy after experimenting village level Primary school program in southeastern Tanzania WB created village level TASAF, Tanzania Social Action Program.⁵ In Iramba District TASAF projects have been initiated in 40 villages assessing their financial contribution according to their poverty level

3. North-South LG Cooperation

⁴ In an interview with the now resigned Prime Minister Edward Lowassa he assured that the compelling order was not the intention of the Government.

⁵ 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.

The North-South cooperation is one of the many efforts to create a better understanding between partner countries in development. It brings LG colleagues, women and men, staff members and elected Councilors from Tanzania and Finland into contact with one another through exchange visits, acquainting them on both sides with LG in practice. For both the experience is new. MFA directs moderate sums of money to the program. The cooperation between Hauho, Hartola small rural communities and huge Iramba in comparison has continued over six years and a new three years period is beginning. The delegates exchange ideas about their expertise and they see the partner country with new eyes and the visitors are received openly.

It has been a true mutual learning process. A Hartola woman Councilor, a farmer and expert in beekeeping and candle making, visiting Ndago women's group specialized in beekeeping, has given the group members new ideas and an environmentalist from Hauho has cooperated in creating structures for refuse collection and environmental education in schools and communities. The custom of the Tanzanian colleagues to attend Church services has shaken the Finns out of their indifference toward their Church and the Hartola villages have learned about the village planning. The central role that culture has played in the national development of Finland gives a good comparative perspective for today's development in Tanzania. The Chairman of the Executive Committee of Hartola is also the Curator of the local Museum. He has inspired the collection of oral histories in Iramba and the Iramba Council Chairman, after visiting museums and historical places in Finland, inspired the Wards to dig into their histories and start collections. Seeing that citizens' reading is the backbone of learning for all ages in Finland the DED of Iramba was inspired to build, using District funds, the first public Library - Information Center with Internet connections and a room for historical collections near the District Headquarters in Kiomboi. Two teachers were trained as librarians and books have been purchased and collected from both countries. Also schools have had exchange of letters and materials and exchange visits are in the plan. A Finnish sports NGO is initiating sports program in primary schools in Iramba.

NSLGC has supported the training in use of the participative tools in planning, all the villages have had an exposure to it. It has encouraged women's participation in PRA sessions, in which they can meet as a group and come forth forcefully presenting with charts their views. The officers' usual complaints that women do not participate in meetings accords with the WB report from the TASAF program preparation. Women are occupied with sustenance of their families and when invited to meetings quickly retort 'Men have the time to sit and talk'. 'Women have no time for "empty talk"'. PAR gives a different opportunity toward planning concrete action. Women come if they have a role in a well carried out planning. For example in a village of an active Councilor in Ilunda Ward more women than men attend the Village Assembly, which has made important decisions for villagers' welfare.

The research reported here was also intended to be participative (PAR), so that it could go deeper into the problems together with village women and men as well as with the District staff from different levels. This process will continue but space does not allow here to go into it.⁶

4. Seeing like women -- Women's ways of sustaining life

4.1. Reflections on social economy

The study penetrated to women's ways of making living and asked what keeps women going, what sustains the lives of their families in village communities, which in all the 'objective' measures fall below tolerable boundaries and belong to the category of the poorest. Further, what is women's role in society and in their communities in Iramba District.

⁶ Swantz, Marja-Liisa, 'Participatory Action Research as Practice', in Reason, Peter & Hilary Bradbury eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research. Participative Inquiry and Practice*. Second Edition, 2008: 31-48. For the works of Polanyi, Scott and Hyden see Bibliography.

In an alarming manner women have been left to carry the burden of daily sustenance of their families. An assisting student made an interesting point in reference to women's work in villages. She described the women as being "*wanawake wa nyumbani tu*", 'women staying only at home', because 'they do not have enough education to get them work in offices'! This is repeated twice in her report. Women in charge of the economy of their homes could hardly be referred to be 'women staying at home only'. It reflects the alienation of the educated young woman from her home environment, and it also reflects the distance of the education from the rural environment. This attitude reflects clearly an urban view to women's lives but it refers also to something else. It demonstrates the prevailing statistical view, which does not count the village women's productive work as part of GDP. This attitude to rural people's work is also a reflection of the dominating global social theory, which considers urbanization to be the inevitable progressive trend.

Joining the critique of the assumption that free market penetration is the main solution to the lives of women and families in rural communities we looked to which extent women's economy could be described as social economy. Does it have similarities with economies, which were called 'human economy' by Karl Polanyi, 'moral economy' in pre-capitalist village societies by James C. Scott and 'economy of affection' of uncaptured peasants in Tanzania by Goran Hyden (Swantz & Tripp, 1996:12-13) In such economies people retained social values upholding the social motivation of mutual care. Investing in relations of affection and engaging in market are not mutually exclusive, rather reinforcing, as Hyden suggests. Critics of the main line economics sought alternatives and found them in small group or village social economies designed to cope with the threat of contingencies, and with the overt market penetration. Polanyi's SRM, Self Regulating Markets, were resisted as a threat to co-operative ties. Platteau's review of the studies on traditional systems of social security and their critics provides a good comparative base for testing the assumption of 'service economy' on a wider scale, not only in pre-capitalist societies. (Platteau, 1991:112-170)

In reading the writings of the quoted scholars one is amazed about their male orientation, men writers have looked on the households as units dominated by men. The women economists, who have joined the critique of the main line economics, have defended women's social departure in their economic pursuits centered on family welfare and have described their limited possibilities and unequal rights in specific societies and cultures.⁷

Women are the main agricultural producers for the family maintenance. The main occupation of people in villages has been agriculture. 80 per cent of the economy is still related to agriculture. Women have been the main producers of food but their work has been minimized and not included in the production figures giving an entirely false picture of the GDP. Professor Germano Mwabu while in WIDER estimated that 90 per cent of the maize production in Kenya was for domestic use and thus not calculated in the GDP figures. The same pertains to the situation in Tanzania. This gives a different picture of the situation and conception of poverty. The plots have been family or individual plots on which women have worked, but with the hardening conditions of life women have started joining in groups, often also cultivating fields together. In Iramba ox plowing is widely used by women and in it sharing takes place. Many have only one ox but they borrow the second from one another and share in plowing. One sees also a woman holding the plow handles and man holding the reins as earlier the plowing was men's work. In smaller plots women do the hand hoeing.

A fundamental reason why no more progress has been made in activities related to agriculture in Central Tanzania is in the environmental fluctuations, which cause uncertainty and excessive work. The planting of larger areas has to be replaced with small plots mainly for food crops. Two out of the six years of the N/S cooperation were of drought. The year 2007 was a year of excessive rains, which continued from November till March. Fields were covered with water and the pollination failed, reducing the crops radically and leaving the oil presses without sunflower seeds. The unfavorable conditions made the repayment of loans a burden and discouraged women who had optimistically joined in groups and applied for loans to increase the area of plowing. Because of the uncertainty in

⁷ Hazel Hendersson, 1992; Anne Mayhew 2000; Lourdes Beneria 2003; Marilyn Power, 2004; Hilka Pietilä 2006.

agriculture loans have seldom been given for agricultural projects. Groups that were formed only for loans do not have the same social glue as the groups with social and economic purposes.

After witnessing the disasters it was irritating to read in *International Herald Tribune* “Food Fantasies. Africa’s Organic Farms” by Prof. Robert Paarlberg (1-2.03.2008):

As late as 1980 the U.S. Agency for International Development was still devoting 25 percent of its official development assistance to the modernization of farming, but today it is just 1 percent. Nearly 30 percent of World Bank lending once went to agricultural modernization, but now it is 8 percent.

The news about reduced assistance are disturbing indeed but the reason is rather in the discouraging attempts of modernization rather than non-modernizing “post-materialist fantasy” of organic farming or ‘European donors refusing genetically engineered crops’, as suggested by the writer. In the fluctuating weather conditions genetically engineered seeds hardly would be the solution, if anything the price of expensive seeds limits the farmer’s possibility to reseed if one round of sowing is destroyed. Small machinery is now made available, but fuel has its cost and the harvest uncertain. With oxen much of the hand hoeing is replaced.

Modernizers have also criticized moral and social economy-concepts in their different modifications. James Scott’s *Moral Economy of the Peasant* and a later work *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* were criticized for being too idealistic, not recognizing human weakness and rationality in all circumstances. In S. L. Popkin’s *Rational Peasant* as a critique of Scott, the peasant in a pre-capitalist society was as rational as other economic performers and “are egoistic and hard calculating agents intent to deriving maximum personal advantage” (Popkin, 1979:22). In Scott’s view of the pre-capitalist rural communities, the social rights of minimum subsistence were secured to all members if no exceptional calamities occurred. Scott denies being uncritical toward everything traditional and in his later book, *Seeing Like the State*, he shifts the emphasis to “the indispensable role of practical knowledge, informal processes and improvisation in the face of unpredictability” (1998:6), the same concept Stephen Marglin had elaborated with the terms *techné* and *epistémè* (1990:217-278).⁸

Scott brings his case against “certain kinds of states”, which have been “indeed a mortal threat to human well-being”. As one such case, even if a milder kind and not a threat to human lives, he refers to the Tanzanian ‘Operation villagization’, when “rural communities were severely affected by the forceful moving of people into concentrated villages” (1998:223 -261). The operation did not have its model in Chinese or Russian collectivization but in the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority, modifying the capital-intensive agriculture in the United States. Concentrating population would provide the labor and the combined fields the expanses of land for tractor plowing. The operation in 1973-76 affected most former socially operating rural communities and subjected people to the power of the State ruled by the TANU Party, later CCM.

The lands in the Rift Valley below the escarpment in Iramba, where new villages were created, had been rain forests with elephants roaming around, according to the present villagers. Indian merchants had run business of selling wood, but moved away when wood was cut. Today these villages in the vast expanses of land with no trees face problems. Mtoa Ward is surrounded by square kilometers of open land where rivers run altering their course with mass of water flowing over the riverbeds. During the operation families got five acres each but now people were quoted having access to 50 hectares for a household, but because of floods in 2007 they could utilize only small areas. Common farmers had no tractors but referred to the wealthy, who earlier had them. Farmers use oxen for plowing, had grown rice in place of cash crops and had conserved a supply of millet from previous year. Cattle herding Sukuma had moved to the area from the neighboring district in 1976-78 and were given plots but grazed large herds in the open areas. Men were quoted to be in big majority in Mtoa. With drastic movements and mixture of population the inherited social links were disturbed.

In the nearest town Shelui along the trunk road an Arab has his own tree nursery. In villages on the other side also the Government has forest planting projects led by a woman forest officer and women teachers teaching the school children to take the seedlings to their homes for planting. Hartola being a forest municipality gets a chance through the NSLGC to join the efforts.

In the northeastern Iramba Mwangeza village, the modernization has been tried by IFAD, the agricultural arm of WB, in building an irrigation system for cultivation of sunflower, cowpeas and *dengu*, linseed. In the irrigation scheme one quarter of households were women-headed. The irrigation channels had been broken already for one year, the Council was to provide an engineer for repair. According to TASAF, which was involved in the scheme, the irrigation should belong to an organization of villagers. In TASAF labor intensive projects people could not be paid commercial salaries not to disturb the market. The members contribute 40 per cent of the costs, or adjusted to poverty level.

Another broken irrigation channel, “built by an expert”, along the river in Msingi was reported by the Ward Agricultural Officer. The failures of irrigation projects and the fluctuations of rains and periodic droughts demand expertise which does not seem to be available or is not congruent with the environmental, economic and social conditions in the areas where they have been operating. The WB irrigation program has moved away. The WB is now supporting a large domestic water project employing a private company.

Today no groups can stay out of the reach of the State represented by the LG. There are small groups of hunters and gatherers, which have so far refused to condone to the demands of the State. No LG efforts to settle them in villages by building houses for them and recruiting their children to schools have so far succeeded. Such are the Hadzabe, also referred to as Tindiga, in Mwangeza Ward Murungusi Village in the northeastern part of the District. We visited Kipamba hamlet of scattered 49 huts four hours walk from the nearest village Munguli, taking a drive through bush along an indistinguishable road. The area available for hunting and collecting roots, nuts, seeds and fruits is diminishing, not least because the migrating Sukuma cattle herders occupy gradually parts of the land. The Hadzabe chairman in Kipamba had demanded from the visiting Regional Commissioner (RC) that the land they utilize be clearly marked. They feared because in the neighboring District a Member of Parliament, a Government Minister, had released a large part of the Hadzabe occupied land to an Emirate Arab as a hunting ground. In an earlier similar case a large Maasai area was released to a Saudi Arabian Prince. The Ministers act in the name of the State under the excuse that the renters would provide facilities for the area. There was no hearing of the people concerned.

The Hadzabe families survived on nuts, as it was a dry season. They crushed the nuts with a stone, ground them against a larger stone plate and cooked for food. The women hoped that the two young men who left for a night hunt would come back with a monkey, baboon or a wild hen, but the men were not very optimistic. One woman had dug small holes in the ground and sowed seeds and the group asked WEO, an agriculturist accompanying us, to bring them hoes, machet, axes and seeds. The chairman Edward had been baptized in Munguli village, where he also hoped the Government would build a dormitory so the children could go to school. A nursery school they themselves were going to build with poles and grass in their hamlet. Edward’s son and daughter, now married with children, had been for two years to a Catholic Secondary school in Mbulu District, where they learned also basics of agriculture, but they could not finish as the funding organization stopped paying. The brother had started teaching the villagers of all ages students sitting on the ground each with an exercise book, “They pay me with honey, I help my tribe”. TCRS⁹ had built a well for the hamlet but the Sukuma, who used it, had broken it. Houses were small cone-shaped grass huts, in which a grown up would not be able to stand. A woman had placed a small branch on the path close to her hut to show that she was not there. Edward’s family was living in a long hut built of poles and some Christian group had built a rectangular shed with poles as seats as a simple worship place near the hut.

⁹ TCRS, Tanzania Christian Refugee Service, started under the Lutheran World Service but now independent.

The WEO reported that using PRA they found that 50 Hadzabe children had been to school from the different sections of their area. The Church had also built a nursery school for them in Munguli. A group of Hadzabe women had lived in four houses attached to the irrigation program but as it failed they had returned to their home area. The Hadzabe women had made use of the dispensary in the village but there was a shortage of midwives. The families had been assisted with rice and maize flour when the harvest failed funding coming from the HIV/Aids grants.

It is difficult to think of these little groups scattered here and there as “rational peasants” conforming to the economist’s conception of rationality, yet their rationality serves them in their way of life. They have better knowledge of their environment than anyone else, they gave immediately a long list in their language of names of the plants they utilized, some as medicines. Without mutual care they could not survive. Learning to read, going to school, assistance in learning are the steps for change. Here as often elsewhere the churches offer the first steps.

4.2. Women work in groups

I use the term ‘social economy’ or ‘economy of care’ here simply referring to women’s mutual care when they meet in groups and assist the weaker women in village communities. The exchange of services in place of payments or substantial contributions to a common pool to be shared, are signs of mutual social care. Mutuality means a degree of mutual economic and social security albeit conditionally. I also interviewed women who stayed away from groups and had started their own small enterprises, but there is no space here to tell their story.

The customary state of women’s limited freedom and subjection to injustice has necessitated women’s greater dependence on each other and the formation of informal and formal groups. There is no clear separation between the means in which a group of women sustain their livelihood and the services the group members need from and offer to one another. The economic activity is seldom totally separate from the service activity. Based on such experiences in Iramba villages, women’s economy could be described a ‘service economy’, but observations of various group activities evidence also limits to women’s solidarity.

Anthropologist Mary Douglas defines “a group essentially as a temporal dimension. --- A group must essentially have some corporate identity, some recognizable signs of inclusion and exclusion” (Douglas, 1970:57). A sizable group, in which members exchange services on a fairly regular basis, forms at times a small community. Only in exceptional cases any group with communal features comprises a whole village or even a sub-village in the Tanzanian village structure. In fact, the failure of the Tanzanian *ujamaa* socialist system was in the assumption that a village provided a sufficient communal basis for a rationally shared production system. Where villages were based on kinship relations the social economy had a different base than in new villages where people had to create new communities. While doing research in Rufiji in 1973, where moving to villages was imposed in 1968 because of floods, I found sharing operational only in one village. People had cultivated a field where villagers could go and dig cassava for their meals. I found that the relationships were based on kinship between two clans. The plan for villagers to work three days a week on common fields did not prosper. The forced social sharing did not succeed.

Working in groups helps the women in situations of personal needs; group mates take over from a friend in need. Mutuality in relations guarantees continuity, which in individual projects is difficult to maintain, as many individual life stories indicate. The mutuality also means that the selection of the members into a group often presupposes previous contacts and initial trust in one another. Groups formed quickly in anticipation of assistance get soon reduced in numbers, if the assistance fails to come.

The wealthy villagers also need to share and be part of the village exchange system. The service functions and social relations differ accordingly. An example of this was a case in Kinampanda village. A well-established man paid his dues to a mutual welfare society for sharing the expenses at

weddings and funerals, but he did not participate in the social gatherings. When his relative died the group members did not come to serve at the funeral, sheer money was not what the shared sociality was about.

For income earning purposes the downside of group work is the small individual benefit that women often gain for daily subsistence when the social support is greater than the material benefit. In hard times women do not have the time to fulfill the obligations for group work and the poorer women cannot afford the monetary inputs today's group activity requires. For budding entrepreneurs the groups work best in which each member takes financial responsibility of her own project, yet returning the loan payments together.

The women in Gumanga Ward interviewed in 2004 had started groups with no external funding. A group *Twende na wakati*, 'Let us go with the times' was started for growing sun flower and having the seeds then pressed into oil at a press 30 kilometers away, including a climb up an escarpment. The women groups had meaningful names, *Vumilia*, 'Endure', *Mwamko*, 'Waking up', *Upendo*, 'Love', *Tupendane*, 'Let us love one another' and *Azimio*, Declaration, referring to the Arusha Declaration of the year 1967, which defined the *ujamaa* socialist politics for 25 years. This group kept chickens, bred grade goats, grew and had pressed sunflowers and sold the oil. They knew about the loans but had not applied for them. The names indicate the spirit in which the groups were started. It inspired the CDO to choose the Gumanga women as the recipients of the first oil press bought with the support from NSLGC.

The Gumanga women had showed their good spirit also saving a truckload of grain from totally falling to a ditch by helping to unload it. The women groups kept wisely the volume of production moderate not to overburden the members, yet enough to sustain their families. Several groups presented the view that the women groups should not discriminate men from participation, they should be at least informed about women's activities so that their enterprising spirit would not raise suspicion and jealousy of the men. Yet there were many cases in which the men used the opportunity to relax, since the women brought enough income to maintain the family.

A women's group in the neighboring Msingi Lutheran Parish got an initial input for buying a pump to water their field from the riverbed during drought. Their vegetable field flourished and they provided the Msingi Folk Development College with greens and roots and earned good income. Part of the money they saved to give an initial capital to another group of women in the parish. When the research team visited them they had in hand half a million shillings to pass on to the other group for production. During the following rainy year they grew maize for food on their plot.

Groups of women in Iramba practiced also a traditional savings system, *upatu*, known among women in many parts of Tanzania. A group agrees to put a certain sum into a cash pot on a certain day weekly or fortnightly, depending on their financial capacity. Some groups could afford a minimal sum, for others it climbed to thousands. Everyone in turn can get a sum from it for a special need. From this traditional system there was only one step to SACCOS, Savings and Credit Cooperative Society, which follows the same principle.

In Kinampanda women had started a mutual service group in 1998, which they called *Faraja*, Comfort, with the membership of 40. They registered the group and had gained twenty more members. The women came together for bringing comfort to the bereaving members at funerals but also for rejoicing together at weddings. The leader of the group was the local nominated female Councilor. Each member paid 200 shillings (about 12 cents) every month and from the collected money a sum of 5000-10 000 shillings was customarily given to a member, whose family member had died. The members shared in the celebrations and wore *sare* dress, the custom of women in Tanzania to wear clothing of the same material for affiliated members for special occasions to emphasize their social togetherness. The husbands were said to pay for the cloth.

Upendo, Love, group in Ndago was also started for providing services at funerals and weddings from the fund the members contribute. They met on the first Sunday of every month 3 p.m. to share

fellowship and to bring in the contribution they had agreed on. If a member failed to pay the membership fee three times or to come and pay the money, she no longer belonged to the group. If the member had experienced some calamity she was excused from the payment. So far they had put out one member.

Another form of economy of care was the growing number of women's groups for the support of the many widows, whose husbands had died. An elected Councilor in Ilunda Ward was active in mobilizing women in many different ways. In her village Kinafundu in *Tumaini*, Hope, there were 50 women who supported widows over 70 years of age. They were of the opinion that SACCOS rather than bank was the best way for getting the money for those in need. The entrance fee for the group membership was 5000 shillings. The members were carefully selected as the membership required willingness to give mutual support to those who faced death in their families. The widows were able to rent sewing machines from women, who did not have time to sew but had money to buy the machines. Women in *Ukombozi*, *Redemption*, *Amani*, *Peace*, and *Usharika*, Cooperation groups could also rent sewing machines from teachers and nurses for a moderate fee. Women pointed out that in spite of applying for assistance they had not received any. Some of the groups did not want to apply for a loan for fear of the strict rules in repayment.

4.3. Cases of external assistance to women's groups

Women groups have been assisted in their efforts to take care of their families, to fulfill their social tasks and to pursue different entrepreneurial activities to increase their earnings. The funds or possessions owned by a group cannot be interfered by men. The tradition defined that the man has the right to determine the use of the family funds. Ideally such decisions should be made together in mutual agreement, regardless which of the partners has earned it. Interviews with women and discussions in women groups evidence that often this does not happen. Far too often women are left to take care of the children, even to pay for their education, while the man takes the lion's share even of the money the woman earns. For this reason women gather in groups and the money the groups earn is not personal possession, which the men could control.

Most of the Iramba inhabitants are Christian or Muslim by religion at least nominally. Both the Christian and Muslim teachers emphasized that the assistance to women should not cause division in the family. Both recognize men as the heads of the family, but it should not mean that men dominate, even less that they would oppress the women.¹⁰ The traditional Nyiramba system was matrilineal, which made the mother's brother responsible for his sister's children. At times the sister could take her earnings to her brother so that they would benefit her children rather than the father's sister's children. The other large group the Nyaturu is not matrilineal but in their tradition man's dominance is strong. The matrilineal system was officially abolished in 1964, which means that men can excuse themselves from the traditional responsibility but often they have not fully assumed the new responsibility in the changed system.

The spreading HIV/Aids have become a strain on the grandmothers and the extended families to care for the orphaned children and widowed parents. With the external funding villages have been helped to list the orphans and children living in poor conditions using the PRA approach. The Vice Chairman of the Council was in charge of the HIV/Aids Fund and a CDO was the responsible Officer. The village offices have the names listed on the office walls. The foreign funds for the Aids programs go also for educating people and in September 2007 general testing of the whole population was to be carried out in Iramba District though no one could be forced to have it done.

In Kifundu village, population of 5204, the PRA was done to locate the needy children, many having lost both parents because of Aids. Over hundred children were identified. With the help of a woman DPLO Village Assembly was held and it was decided to give the children tools and seeds for cultivation and food assistance to those in greater need. Many of the children were living with their

¹⁰ In Christian teaching based on the Bible the passage saying that man is the head of the family adds that he should sacrifice himself for the family as Christ sacrificed himself for people. The sacrifice is conveniently forgotten.

grandparents, in two families children lived by themselves when one child was old enough to care for the rest. A village fund was started for the needy. The Education Department pays the Secondary school fees for ten poor students in each Secondary school and the District had built a girls' dormitory in Gumanga where the female students from the village can go. Dormitories are needed as it is not safe for the girl students to make long walks daily.

The World Vision has a well-planned assistance program and gives women's groups good training. JUWAKI, 'Organization of Entrepreneurs of Kinyangiri,' combined seven groups and had formed a SACCOS. It had both group and individual membership, the latter increased between 2004 - 2008 from 55 to 412 because of good leadership and loans faithfully returned. JUWAKI received 3 million shillings loan also from the District, it gave hundred poorer members 30, 000 shillings loans with ten percent interest which they repaid in eight months. The groups come together fortnightly and return the agreed sum. This provides discipline and gives an opportunity to share experiences, even advice.

In this model of the Grameen Bank individuals receive the loans for their own projects via the group fund, but the group is responsible for returning the loan. The loans grow with the earning capacity of the borrower. In the Iramba case there is no bank behind the loans, the members provide the money through the SACCOS. The weakness is in the institutional insecurity and no guarantee of continuity, yet the self-reliant groups do the best.

A Sukuma women's tailoring group Amani, Peace, is a small enterprise, which flourished after getting an initial contribution of three sewing machines from the N/S cooperation. The two leading women had initial capabilities to make rapid use of the offered assistance. The initiators were mothers with several small children with a moderate economic family background. They had received training in tailoring after finishing Primary school. With the gift of the sewing machines, they built a mud house for their tailoring business and started teaching three other members to sew.¹¹ With the changing times women's taste calls for new patterns. It gives the women tailors work with more costly materials and styles than before. The local school had also given an order for school uniforms. It can become an annual order but in future they might be competing with other tailoring groups.

Iramba District does not have the same kind of rotating market system in operation as in the wealthier Kilimanjaro Region. With the growing contact with the bigger world through TV, radio and traveling the mode of living is visibly changing also in Iramba. Increased opportunities for marketing and the freedom of women to travel to do the marketing themselves increase their entrepreneurial efforts. The basket makers travel by bicycle and busses to take their goods to fairs in Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, the JUWAKI women sell in Arusha and the women from *Jipemoyo* group in Shelui go by bus to buy *dagaa* fish for sale in their home market.

Concluding thoughts

The present study has not entered into detailed information about the volume of production or figures of income. The official statistics ignore women's work. I have brought out some difficulties women go through in the development process. The efforts of quick progress without the structures that modern development requires turn out to be harmful. I have tried to show that social values built into continuing care of one another build society even when the slow pace might try people's patience. The LG tries to accommodate in the midst of pressures from many directions.

The groups women form, the assistance they receive, the difficulties they face have increased their strength in midst of hardships. Without mutual care the women could not manage their lives and support their families. The concept of social economy applies to them in a limited sense. Women's economy more than men's has a component of mutual care. Men have formed SACCOS in order to get loans of significant size for business purposes. In joining the savings organizations in which women are in majority they face a different social culture. For women the social gathering gives social security but fills also financial needs, the sociality is part of their economic progress. By highlighting

¹¹ The leader of the women's Amani group was chosen to come to Finland as part of the delegation in November 2007.

the social aspects of women's economic pursuits does not suggest ideal people's ideal communities, quarrels occur, groups break up, new ones are formed when women seek ways to manage their demanding life situations.

The conclusion can be drawn that women's situation in rural Tanzania obligates them to take care of their families and children, directs the choices they make and the social sharing they exercise. They make use of the opportunities for individual progress when such opportunities occur, but they build social foundation for branching out to uncertain future. Women cannot easily escape the responsibility for every day life of their families. There is another side of the coin. Young girls having had some education see no future ahead of them for the lack of resources. They escape to cities and face the fate of prostitution even human trafficking, if no more is done than what is available today in training them for meaningful skills and work tasks and preparing them for motherhood and family life.

The Local Government has followed the gender policy of the country, but the shortage of female staff, the great variety of tasks the staff face, the spectrum of assisting organizations with different tactics and demands overwhelm the scarcely funded and staffed administration. The strategies are in place, the people centered policies and the new emphasis on agriculture are well placed, but the excess emphasis on poverty leads to wrong direction instead of lifting up the strength of the people with which the country is making progress. Wealth is conceived solely in monetary terms ignoring the real strengths of the common people. The language of the 'masses', 'peasants', 'stakeholders', 'donors', 'strategies' and 'logical frameworks' needs to be replaced with human beings, social groups and citizens.

Acronyms

CDO	Community Development Officer
CCM	<i>Chama Cha Mapinduzi</i> , Revolutionary Party
CG	Central Government
DED	District Executive Officer
DPLO	District Planning Officer
HDI	Human Development Index
IFAD	International Food and Agricultural Department
JK	Jakaya Kikwete, President of Tanzania
LG	Local Government
LGR	Local Government Reform
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
N/S	North South
NSLGC	North-South Local Government Cooperation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Reflection and Action
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
TANU	Tanganyika National Union
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
WB	World Bank
WIDER	World Institute of Development Economics Research