

## GENDER ISSUES IN THE TANDEM PROJECT WITH THE FOLK DEVELOPMENT COLLEGES (FDCs) IN TANZANIA 1991 TO 1996: AN EVALUATION<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

*The Tandem project was a Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) which funded a comprehensive development programme for the FDC sector of the Ministry of Community Development Women Affairs and Children (MCDWAC) which had four components. A teacher training programme, a training of trainers programme, a management programme and a skills training programme. These components cannot exclude gender. The paper starts by presenting gender context in Tanzania in terms of employment, decision making and education. The gender strategies of the FDCs are juxtaposed against the country's gender context and it is observed that SIDA and MCD WAC ought to have learnt from the country's context in order to incorporate gender issues adequately into the Tandem project.*

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Folk Development colleges birth goes back to 1970 when Tanzania's first President requested Sweden to establish, in Tanzania, the residential adult teaching institutions modelled on the Swedish Folk High Schools (FHSs). A similar institution had been established at Kibaha near Dar es Salaam by the Scandinavian countries in the 1960s. It was known as the Nordic college and had the following: a farmer's training centre, a secondary school, an extension services centre, a hospital, and an adult education library. Nyerere had requested Sweden to build such a centre in every district of Tanzania. What led Nyerere to request Sweden to establish such institutions was two fold: First, Nyerere had been attracted much by the Swedish FHSs and thought that their blending of adult education, democracy and skills development would be relevant to the young socialist country of Tanzania.

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Finally, MCDWAC being a new ministry wanted to develop its structures approaches and systems on the communit development model. The MCDWAC requested from SIDA a new FDC programme, a new FDC management system, a new Ministry structure, and new sources of funds. The result of this request was the Tandem project.

### **1.2.1 The Tandem Project**

Resulting from changes in SIDA's aid policy and issues in MCDWAC as has been mentioned above, an agreement was reached in February 1991 between MCDWAC, SIDA and Linköping University of Sweden to "save" the FDCs. Linköping university were the consultants who would implement the project on behalf of SIDA. This agreement gave birth to the Tandem Project an acronym for "Tanzania Democracy". The Tandem project had four components.

The first component consisted of elements of a training of trainers (TOT) programmes and a Teacher Training Programme for FDC staff. The second was a management component for FDCs and the Ministry named (Tan Mari). The second component had to do with provision of technical assistance to the Ministry while the third had to do with skills development for the non-academic members of FDCs; and the fourth was the provision of funds for physical facilities, equipment and materials.

### **1.2.2 Tandem Project Objectives**

The original project document which was only a letter of intent had objectives related to the four components. Some of the objectives related to Gender were:

- FDCs to design their activities according to local needs (local needs include gender needs).
- FDCs to design their course programmes in accordance with local needs. (designing programmes in accordance with local needs means that programmes should cater for what the local people need).
- FDCs to increase the number of village/outreach courses. (Out reach courses may also include courses for specific gender).

## 2.0 THE COUNTRY GENDER CONTEXT

According to the 1988 population census figures, which were the latest available, women comprise 51% of the population of Tanzania (Bureau of Statistics 1992).

### 2.1 Employment

The employment sector in Tanzania can be categorized roughly into 3 groups

- waged/salaried employment.
- informal/domestic service employment and agriculture (Bureau of Statistics 1992)

Women's employment in the categories mentioned above is governed by several factors the key one being the limited exposure to education that women have. The 1988 population census revealed that only a mere 3% of women were engaged in the wage/salary sector. About 97% of the women were involved in the agricultural and informal sectors. Although the number of women engaged in waged/salaried employment has been increasing at a slow pace, they are mainly engaged in stereotypical female occupations such as nursing, primary school teaching, typing, machine operating and generally low skilled jobs which are non motivating and carry minimum pay levels. There are very few women who occupy high positions of responsibility in the public service.

The informal/domestic sector which together with agriculture engages 97% of women includes enterprise activities and individual businesses. This sector is faced with problems that hinder the involvement of women, (Main report) such problems are:

- obtaining finances.
- work premises and permits
- trading licences
- reliable markets
- appropriate training and appropriate technology

Tanzania's economy relies heavily on agriculture, engaging about 90% of the population of whom about 75% are women. In Tanzania, about 97% of the women are involved in subsistence and cash crop production producing about 60% of the Country's Gross Domestic.

*The rising costs of living in the informal economy has increased the workload for women... Since the mid 1980s many more children have dropped out of school than before to help with household work (girls especial) (Kaihula 1995).*

## **2.2 Women In decision-making in Tanzania**

Very few women participate in decision-making in the communities and country's affairs (Policy on Women). An analysis of the participation of women 4850 community members 498 were women while 4352 were men. Of these, there were only 5 women chairpersons and 40 secretaries, the rest of the women were ordinary members. Women, in effect comprised about 10% of the decision making bodies in those regions. (Bureau of Statistics 1992).

The number of women involved decision making decreases as you climb up the ladder up to the apex of the leadership. An analysis of senior government employees in regions and districts by position undertaken by the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government in 1991 showed that at Regional Commissioner (RC) level women who made up 10% were not present at all at the level of Regional Development Director (RDD) now Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS). At the District Commissioner (DC) level, they made up 10% at the District Executive Director (DED) level they made up 5%. However, there has been growth in the number of women members of parliament between 1961 and 1990. (Bureau of Statistics 1992). By 1998 women Members of Parliament were about 16% of the total members of Parliament in the Tanzania National Assembly (Gender Statistics 1998).

## **2.3 Education**

The access of women to education and employment has not been equal to that of men despite all the efforts by the government to redress the imbalance. Efforts have not been as fruitful: as they involve significant change of existing cultural, social, statutory values and policies.

### 2.3.3 Higher Education

Women enrollment in higher education is lower than that of men. The gender composition for students at 3 National Universities for selected years is provided below

*Total Enrollment and Percentage of Women Enrollment in three National Universities 1992/93 - 1995/96.*

Institution	1992/93		1993/94		1994/95		1995/96	
	Total	% Women	Total	% Women	Total	% Women	Total	% Women
University of DSM	2676	17	2834	14	2951	17	3544	15
Sokoine University	743	19	836	21	909	23	932	25
Muhimbili University College	211	32	331	34	336	26	357	26

Source: "Gender Statistics and Related issues News Letter": 1997  
Bureau of Statistics

### 2.3.4 Adult Literacy

Although the National literacy campaign managed to reduce National literacy rates from about 67% in 1967 to 95% in 1986, the 1988 figures show the illiteracy rate of about 12 % for women as compared with 7.1 % for men. (Bureau of Statistics 1992). The trend of increased illiteracy for women is also evident in more recent statistics. In 1997 for example, the Ministry of Education estimates that illiteracy for adult men had risen up to about 47% while that of women had risen to about 55%. (Basic Statistics in Education 1998). This may be attributed to the limited time that women have to spare for such commitments as adult education due to the increase of household workload. Low rates of literacy and limited opportunities for schooling at all levels have also been an obstacle to the recruitment of women in agriculture and technical biased professions. In addition training opportunities have rarely taken into consideration women's workload and the extent to which this hinders them from taking advantage of the opportunities. Basic education for adults is literacy and postliteracy classes as part of non-formal adult

- to help represent our local women group - (20%). Only 5% of the respondents advanced other reasons as to why they joined the FDCs.

The preceding section on Education has generally pointed out that women are poorly educated. The educational poverty of women may be attributed among other factors to

- the structure of the education system inherited from the colonial governments offering fewer opportunities to female students
- the cultural bias among parents against educating their female children
- the expectation that girls can be diverted from their studies for domestic and economic activities which militates against satisfactory performance academically
- concentration on domestic science for girls as opposed to science subjects. and
- the paucity of career guidance programmes in secondary schools which reduces the probability of girls considering career in agriculture or technical professions.  
(UNICEF - The Sarah Initiative Project)

### **3.0 GENDER STRATEGIES AND THE FDCS**

#### **3.1 Womens major concerns**

The poorer women are concerned with falling living standards, low wages declining returns from farming, rise in unemployment and under-employment, and the growing inability to provide food and other basic needs for their families. These concerns influence women's attitudes to and priorities for education and training (Mbilinyi. 1992).

The preceding was also echoed by women of Morogoro Urban constituency talking to their MP Hon. Shamim Khan during a Structural Adjustment and Gender Empowerment Symposium in 1994, held at Sokoine University of Agriculture. SUA). What this shows is that the Tandem project

#### **4.1 Gender related training curriculum**

Gender issues appeared in the Tandem training courses such as TOTs and Tan Mans very rarely. Gender provision in Tandem as with the network was concentrated mainly on the increase of women among the college students. In examining the curriculum, there were one or two sessions on how to deal with the specific problems of female students and discussions on changing course descriptions to try to overcome gender stereotyping. These are not the ways to develop gender awareness. Access and participation seem to have been equated with empowerment. Apart from a visiting lecturer (an American female) who came into some of the courses for half a day to enlighten the participants on women's burdens there was little or no exploration of the participants own experience of gender issues. This is surprising, since there are many Tanzania women well equipped to undertake such studies and many of these are known to and have been used by SIDA in Tanzania. Every participant trainer and trainee experiences and contributes to the gender construct of societ and this experience needs to be analysed and reflected on. We saw no signs of any discussion on how the participants were aware of these constructs and what steps could be taken to modify such constructs with a view to changing attitudes and behaviour in gender inequalities. The courses, in so far as they dealt with such questions concentrated on the immediate and practical issues of gender rather than the longer term structural aspects such as oppression and liberation (Moser 1993). As a result, the staff of the FDCs are still ill equipped to teach gender issues within their college courses.

Many of the participants in Tandem programmes staff and trainees alike felt that more needed to be done in this area. This was a major weakness of the training programme which would have been monitored in joint consultation with SIDA, MCDWAC and the Tandem project staff.

#### **4.2 Gender Impact on FDCs**

In examining the FDC curriculum, we found no college that is teaching their students about gender issues.

##### **4.2.1 FDC Boards**

Most management boards have women members, but there is no pressure from the board to increase the gender aspects of the work of the FDCs. We found no signs of any college policies on gender and equal opportunities.

A National workshop funded by SIDA in 1991 discussed the possible use of FDCs and their role in relation to women and the discussions still appear to be pertinent today. Certainly this is why MCDWAC wanted to change the FDCs philosophy from the Adult - Folk High School model to the community development model. The workshop held the view that the FDCs were under utilized and had a potential value as life long education centres embryonic community and economic development colleges and women's institutes. Possible actions suggested were:

- incorporate in the FDCs a content relevant to the needs of different kinds of women by introducing life skills such as book keeping, project proposal writing, potential sources of funding government regulations and laws;
- take affirmative action to ensure equal participation of women and men in adult education programmes;
- allow flexibility in programme organisation and content to accommodate the learning needs of individuals and communities along the lines of Ruaha Folk Development College in Iringa) for example, most programmes for women were held after the harvest season when women's workload on the farms had decreased. Students had the option of paying school fees either in cash or through maize, millet or sorghum;
- make FDCs and other similar institutions genuine people's colleges by democratizing organisation and management; and increasing the participation of local communities and learners in decision making.

## **6.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Tandem project with good financial and human resources from SIDA ought to have seen this predicament of the Tanzanian woman and helped her out of the web of such problems. While we appreciate that TANDEM was attempting to move forward in accordance with the principles of the national Policy on women, it did not realise that Tandem was still too rapid a movement for women in rural Tanzania. The constructors of Tandem ought to have understood that it is difficult to impose a strategic transformation perspective as was envisaged in Tandem objectives without