

BRIEF REPORT OF THE 7:30 BREAKFAST DEBATE – APRIL 27TH

2012

INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO ACTION: WHAT CAN POLICY MAKERS DO?

The total population of Tanzania is 34 million. More than 60 % of the total population is Youth, and 68 percent of the active labour force is young people. A youth in Tanzania is defined as a person between the ages of 15-35 years. With concern the situation of youth, many of whom are marginalized from mainstream society through inequalities in income, wealth and power, unemployment and underemployment, infected and affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, living in situations of poverty and hunger, experiencing illiteracy and poor quality educational systems, restricted access to health services and to information, exposure to violence including gender violence, engaging in armed conflicts and experiencing various forms of discrimination.

They are also the group with fewest formal opportunities to change this. Young people can do change the world. They are creative, open to change, energetic and resourceful. In their numbers and with their energy, they have the potential to push forward development.

That is why Policy Forum dedicated its April 2012 debate on the issue of the Youth in Tanzania, the debate is titled: **Inspiring young people into action: What can policy makers do?**

The debate included two presentations, one from **Mr. Linus Kibenge**, Policy and Advocacy Coordinator of Restless Development who gave an overview of the state of Youth in Tanzania; the reality on the ground and **Mr. Humphrey Polepole**, the Executive Director of Tanzania Youth Coalition (TYC), who discussed the Youth Development framework in Tanzania: Legal, Policy and strategies for youth development.

Followed by the critics from the discussant, Ms Esther Riwa, Senior Officer of Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports.

The debate was facilitated by Alex Ruchyahinduru from Policy Forum

Mr Linus Kibenge was the first presenter, he started his presentation by giving an over view of the state of youth in Tanzania. His presentation was based on the findings from a research on Status of the youth in Tanzania conducted by Restless Development

He said that, their research involved Youth led research, desk research and focus group discussion looking at livelihood and employment, sexual reproductive health and rights and decision making.

He reported that, the status of youth in livelihood and employment is very poor. Employments with salary in the rural areas is very limited. Young people have few opportunities to learn business skills. The report shows that, only 4% of youth access micro credit.

He continued to say that, youth want to be self reliant and develop skills to be self employed, to have resource for further education and become professionals and also to create opportunities for other young people and the community. But they are faced by many challenges. He mentioned some of the challenges as, it has been very hard for them to get jobs, they are affected by social problems, they are working under poor condition and they also can't access a startup capital. They call upon others to train them on how to start and grow businesses, educating them on income management and life skills, support from local government and leaders to access land, support from families and elders to support their plans and for the government to implement training and credit schemes

He then talked about Sexual Reproductive health and rights, he said most young people become sexual active between 15-24 and many transition to parenthood and they are at great risk of contracting HIV and other STIs, unwanted pregnancies, sexual exploitation and violence. 5% of the girls have started child bearing by the age of 15 with education not doing enough for that. Gender hierarchies prevent women from controlling their bodies.

He reported that, youth are very ambitious to stay healthy, help other young people avoid risky sex and their communities address the problems by they are affected by many challenges. He pointed out some of the challenges as access to health services, they cannot talk to their regarding sexual reproductive health issues and also they are not educated enough on issues they need to know.

He went on saying that, youth are calling upon support from doctors and nurses to understand youth issues, they also need education on Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and not just HIV/AIDS. Youth also need training to have the confidence to implement what they know as well as the support to talk openly with families and communities.

Commenting on the status of youth in decision, he said that the government has initiated key national strategies and policies to achieve young people's participation formally in decision making. Although with those government's

efforts, still young people's knowledge and participation in decision making is very low. There are few initiatives to monitor progress towards measuring achievement of policy aims affecting young people, and hence limited data.

He later clarified that, young people have limited understanding of laws and policies that affect them, also they are not aware of the structures and how to be involved on decision making.

He concluded his presentation by calling upon various stakeholders into action; civil society, policy makers and other development partners. He added that, from the findings of their research, they call on civil society to respond to the issues facing youth and people as they identify they exist. This include, working in partnership to advocate for youth participation in decision making processes, forming coordinated platforms and coalitions at national and local levels and ensuring participation of youth led and youth focused organizations. Also a call to recognize youth as a cross cutting issue and insuring youth organizations are presented in sector plans and strategies. Policy makers to bridge the gap between policies as detailed on the paper and implemented on the ground, as well to consult with young people in policy developed. There were also a call to development partners to foster an enabling environment for young people and organizations by recognizing youth as cross cutting issue in their work and developing policies supporting this group, establishing a mechanism to formally consult young people in the development of the country policies, strategies and programmes and ensuring youth targets are built into development plans and strategies and appropriately resourced.

Mr Polepole, was the second presenter of the breakfast talk, he started his presentation by giving out the challenges that face youths he said that, the issue of youth development has not been handled seriously as it lacks coordination at the national level, local level and the stakeholder level.

He added that, the ministry responsible for youths is there but is not working hard enough in forinstance it cannot summon other ministries like the ministry responsible for agriculture and demand explanations and justifications to the budget that is allocated for youths in agriculture. .

He went on by saying that, youth development should be given priority as youths constitute 14 million out of 32 million of the total population of our country. It should be given to the youth ministry and look at things that affect youths. He also said that, youth issues lacks a calling power, it needs a calling power as youth issues are cross cutting. It needs a ministry that has a calling power to engage with other ministries in youth issues. He added that,

in Tanzania currently there are many stakeholders attending youth issues but not coordinated. They need to work together to attain their goal.

He also said that, the definition of youth itself is a challenge to youth development as other people define youth in different ways which affect even in giving priorities.

He informed participants of various youth development guiding instrument in place and others in the pipeline; such as the National Youth Development Policy, NYDP 2007 Implementation Strategy (First Draft 2008), National Youth Council (In the pipeline, layman's bill 2006-2007), National Youth Employment Action Plan (Published 2007), National Youth Participation Strategy (Published 2008*), he envisaged participants as responsible citizens to get these guiding instruments.

He said that, although with all these instruments, still the youth issues are not been handled to the satisfaction.

He summed up his presentation by suggesting on how to inspire and engage young people into productive and development centered actions. He mentioned some of the ways as; empowering youth through provision of right information to enable them become effective and informed players in social and political affairs of the country, Provision of demand driven skills to enable them to become effective and informed providers and consumers in the labor market, Supporting the capacity building of youth led NGOs so that they (youth NGOs) can partake effectively and having an influence in development related processes and discussions, Supporting enterprise development initiatives by youth, for youth and to youth, and as well as Instituting systematic and sustainable means and ways of engaging youth in social, economic and political lives of our communities.

In a nut shell, he ended by making upon policy makers to be serious and make laws laws, Policies, programmes, strategies and conducive environment for youth development, Prioritize youth development (considering the demographics) and to allocate budget and resources for youth development.

Ms Ester Riwa ,Senior Officer of Ministry of Information, Youth, Culture and Sports. was the discussant of the event who started by appreciating the work done by Restless Development and said that is it will give them the light on where to start. She also appreciated the work done by TYC on youth development issues and agenda

She further said, the government is still struggling to improve the sector but there always arises challenges towards the implementation of various issues.

She went on commenting on the study by restless development highlighting on each key issue.

Decision making and civic participation, the government expects youths to be members of the family and to get involved in decision making process.

She said that, the issues of youths should start to be resolved at the society level, this will make things much easier for the government.

She also commented on the youth livelihood and employment saying that, the government understands the need for youth skills development and it has prepared a manual for life skills training as there are many people training youths but in different perspectives. The government has also established vocational schools to the district levels. Also youths should now change their mind set from acquiring white color jobs to self-employment as the sectors cannot accommodate the massive number of graduates. There is a lot of potentials for young people which has not been extracted; like in agriculture with the Kilimo kwanza. Youth should think of entrepreneurship, and she stressed that the government is now in the plan to establish youth bank for them to get loans for startup capital.

She went further by commenting on the sexual reproductive health rights, saying that the government is now collaborating with various stakeholders like TACAIDS, UMATI in improving and empowering youth health issues, although the globalization with the use of internet and TV possess as a big challenge as youth copy things from there. Also parents don't talk to their children regarding the sexual and health issues which again could simplify the issue.

With all the challenges and the highlights issues, she also suggested on the way forward.

She said that, youth participation and networking is very important. Young people should understand their potentiality and the government will understand on how to reach and support them. She also said that, we really need an institution to coordinate youths.

She further said that the government needs to collaborate with stakeholders to implement their policies.

She then stressed on leadership management and governance saying that, the participation of youth in these areas should be given priority.

Comments and Questions from plenary discussion:

- Is there any initiative that the government is doing in accommodating youth issues in the East Africa community?
- Many people and especially youth do not have a culture of reading especially policy documents. It is good if the government could use social media in popularizing policy issues and educating the youths.
- There are a lot of challenges because youths are not given opportunities in decision making.
- Access to information is very minimal as people are restricted from accessing government documents and even policy books. The government should support in disseminating policy books
- The government hasn't prepared a business environment for youth, and especially areas for conducting their business.
- Education system needs to be reviewed. Youth lacks confidence as the education and teaching curriculum is not prepared to do so.
- The question of youth employment, the government should emphasize on youth engagement in agriculture. Agriculture contribute less than 10% of GDP but it consume a big percent of the budget
- They have been a challenge on agriculture, although youth are being encouraged to engage in agriculture but the government should develop a means for them to acquire market of their agriculture produced goods.

Respond to the comments and Questions:

- Youth are now entering in the parliament. But the issue isn't only getting a parliament seat, we should look on if they are representing enough while there
- Young people sees themselves as vulnerable, of which is a challenge to the government side. They should consider themselves being potential
- On the integrating youth issues within east Africa community, there is now a council representing youth issues in the integration
- People should build a culture of recommending on solutions, instead of asking many questions. It is important to propose solutions on which can be taken forward

Alex Ruchyahinduru closed the discussion and he welcomed again participants for the next 7:30 Breakfast Debate.



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