



Mwaloni Fish Market Association - Case Study

(In collaboration with Mwanza Policy Initiative)

Presented by Gertrude Mugizi¹ at Public Health Watch Skills Building Conference
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CSAⁱ has been training CSOs from the SADC region on a certificate course in the Fundamentals of Social Accountability since 2007. The course is accredited by Rhodes University. While CSA, via PSAM monitors government using the social accountability tools at provincial level it does not monitor local government, the level likely to have the most direct contact with communities. Nevertheless most of the past participants on the Fundamentals course operate primarily at the community level. This case study aims to show how a civil society network in Tanzaniaⁱⁱ has incorporated this methodology into its work and adapted it to enhance the capacity of its members who monitor government performance at the local government level.

Policy Forum is a network of NGOs in Tanzania that aims to make policies in Tanzania and their implementation bring a real improvement to the lives of Tanzanians. This network was one of the first organisations to send participants onto the first Fundamentals course in 2007. Having been introduced to the tools, the network decided to use them to assist its members working at community level to use these tools to more systematically track their advocacy objectives through the complex and often inaccessible systems within the public sector. This would be done initially by entering into 2-year agreements with networks of civic actors operating at sub-national level and introducing the network members to the tools. The in order to demonstrate the tools in action, the partner network would identify a current advocacy problem or set of problems to be addressed through social accountability monitoring.

In July 2008, Policy Forum signed an agreement with Mwanza Policy Initiative (MPI), a CSO/CBO network operating in Mwanza region, to work with them to develop their social accountability monitoring programme. A monitoring team was formed, comprising of staff and volunteers from NGOs and CBOs who were members of MPI.

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Pic.1: Mwaloni Fish Market: Despite her contribution to MCC Budget, little is done to improve sanitation around the market.

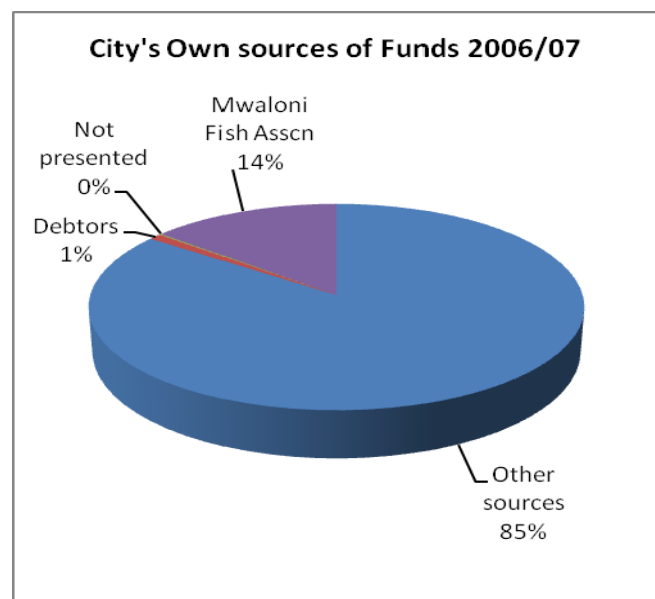
The first advocacy issue was identified by Mwaloni Fish Market Association, a member of MPI. This association comprises fishermen and those who sell fish at the Mwaloni Fish Market. In September 2008, Mwanza City Council announced that the fish market levy would be increased by 100% with effect from September 2008. The Fish Market association did not feel that this was fair because they felt they were already taxed very heavily and yet the plumbing in the fish market had been dilapidated for several years and the local government was not doing anything to rectify this situation despite the sanitation and health issues they faced as a result. Poor sanitation within the fish market was contributing to the cholera and typhoid outbreaks that were a regular occurrence in Mwanza.

The team began by collecting the relevant documentation or outputs for Process 1: Resource Allocation and Strategic Planning. This endeavour was not easy and took considerable time for a number of reasons. There was some information that was not available, either because it was not produced or there were delays in its production. Some information was available yet not accessible to the civic actors requesting it. This was partly because of bureaucratic red tape, partly because of the absence of relevant government officials from their posts, partly because of fear of how the information was going to be used and a number of other reasons. Despite all this, after three months of following up, the Social Accountability team was able to obtain the following documents:

- Mwanza City Council Strategic Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08
- Mwanza City Council Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2005/06 – 2007/08
- Annual Plan and Budget 2005/06
- Annual Plan and Budget 2006/07
- Annual Report of the Controller and Auditor General Mwanza City Council 2006/07

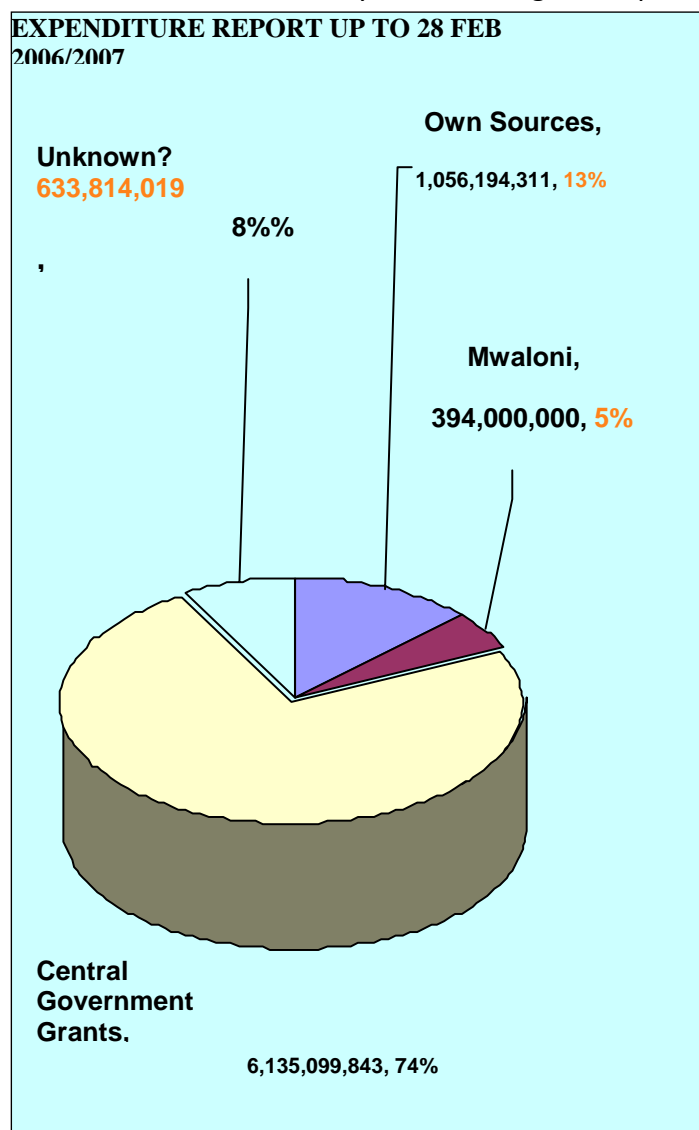
The team then began its analysis of the information that was obtained.

The analysis was conducted by asking a set of questions of the information contained in the official outputs from this process. These questions were developed by Policy Forum, adapted



from the analysis tools used by CSA to suit the local context (see Policy Forum analysis tool). The answers to these questions enabled the MPI Team, assisted by Policy Forum to draw out a set of conclusions that were shared with the wider MPI network as well as the relevant government officials and local councillors in a public hearing, and which formed the basis for a joint advocacy initiative between MPI and Policy Forum from the national to the local level.

By participating in this analysis, the Mwaloni Fish Market Association made a number of discoveries that were able to help them in addressing their tax hike problem. The first discovery they made was the extent of the fish market's contribution to the city council's revenue. The analysis revealed that of the council's revenue collected locally from Mwanza city (own source revenue), taxes, duties and levies collected from the fish market contributed 14%. This did not include grants from external sources, such as grants from central government, donors etc. When all of the Mwanza City Council's revenue sources were examined, it was discovered that even when all revenue sources were taken into consideration the contribution of the Fish market still amounted to 3% of the city council budget. Despite the significant contribution of the



fish market to the city council's budget, they were excluded from the city council's participatory planning and budgeting process (O&OD), which was accessible to civic actors by invitation only from the Council. Other civic organisations contributing significantly less to the Council's coffers, were invited to participate in this process. When asked why this was the case, Council officials responded that people who worked at the fish market tended to have low education levels and therefore were unlikely to have much that is of substance to contribute to the process.

The second discovery was that there was no budget allocation in the Council's capital budget during 2007/08 to rehabilitate the

water and sanitation infrastructure at the fish market. This was excluded despite its proportional contribution to the budget and the significant implications poor sanitation could have on the Council's potential income should a major health problem arise, such as a cholera outbreak (a common occurrence in Mwanza city). Issues prioritised for capital spending included renovation of the Council Treasurer's office - 25% and renovation of the Mayor's office - 7% of the capital budget.

Thirdly the Mwaloni Fish Market Association discovered a discrepancy of approximately 10 million Tanzanian shillings between the amount they had recorded as having paid to the company contracted to perform the job of tax collection, and the amount the Council reported to have received from the tax collector. Furthermore, the association claimed that if given the role of collecting taxes themselves, they would be able to exceed the amount collected by the tax collector, implying and would be prepared to agree a collection quota with the Council that was higher than the current quota agreed with the tax collector provided that their service delivery problems were addressed in the plan and budget.



Pic. 2: Poor sanitation at Mwaloni attracting Birds and other members of the ecosystem.

As a result of the above findings, the Fish Market Association decided that it had enough evidence to compel the City Council to the negotiation table and after failing to get the Council to hold discussions with them regarding the tax hike, they staged an organised civil disobedience action where they refused to pay any tax until the Council agreed to meet with them. There was also

public support for the Association's case from MPI and Policy Forum in their respective public fora. In December 2008, the Mwanza City Council finally agreed to meet with the Mwaloni Fish Market Association and negotiated a way forward. The fish market levy was not increased at all and remained at its original rate. The Fish market association was included on the list of civic actors invited to participate in the participatory planning and budgeting processes. A budget was allocated in the 2009/10 financial year to rehabilitate infrastructure at the Mwaloni fish market as per instruction from the Ministry of Livestock Development and Fisheries.

The lessons learnt from this case study are as follows:

- *There is strength in numbers.* While the Mwaloni Fish Market would have had limited means of addressing their concerns on their own, their alliance with MPI and Policy Forum enabled them to conduct advocacy on their issue from local to national level and sent the message to the City Council that just because they were uneducated did not mean that they could not find a way to conduct advocacy that was evidence based.
- *Don't expect a positive result to come easily or immediately. Change is often subtle and civic actors must build in a strategy to monitor for evidence of this*

change. The team found that accessing information was a difficult and lengthy process that required considerable perseverance and patience from the social accountability team. The results relating to the infrastructure problems of the fish market only manifested in the 2009/10 budget. This meant that monitoring had to be a continuous process and not a one-off event.

- *Make use of the different types of expertise.* Mwaloni Fish Market Association, MPI and Policy Forum all brought different types of skills expertise and value-added to the table in this process. The Association being directly affected by the problem were best able to deconstruct the problem and get to the main issues that were causing the problem to happen. They also had to have the guts to take on the City Council which was best done by them and managed to do so in a way that yielded the intended results. MPI was the local organisation that had direct contact and legitimacy with the city council which facilitated the process of collecting documentation for analysis. They are a well known network in Mwanza and were able to augment the advocacy efforts of the fish market association. Policy Forum provided technical assistance with the analysis of the documents and taught MPI members how to use the analysis tools so that they could continue monitoring after the collaboration had ended. MPI has since incorporated a social accountability monitoring programme in its strategic plan and have expanded their scope to other districts of Ukerewe, Magu, Sengerema, Nyamagana and Ilemela, within the Mwanza region.
- *It is rare that a service delivery problem is solved through one process or solely by addressing one level of government.* The collaboration between the 3 networks operating at different levels is a testament to how civic actors can conduct advocacy at several levels to achieve an advocacy objective.
- *Real change comes from consistent and progressively knowledgeable monitoring and advocacy that is evidence-based.* Addressing a specific event-related problem usually only addresses the symptom. To ensure that the necessary corrective action is taken that will prevent a problem from reoccurring or happening to others requires that one takes a systemic evidence-based approach that addresses the source of the problem rather than just the symptom. To ensure against future exclusion and unfair treatment of other civic actors, continuous advocacy will be required to change the instructions made to by central government to local governments to ensure that public servants become progressively more accountable to those they are meant to serve. This will require continuous and scaled up social accountability monitoring and evidence-based advocacy from different types of civic actors.
- *Incentive for communities to invest the time and effort necessary to conduct evidence based advocacy by collecting evidence that is useful and used at the point at which the information is collected.* When community members are involved in generating information that concretely solves problems that are directly relevant to them, there is greater incentive to put in the necessary effort required to access this information and to learn how to conduct the analysis rigorously within the means that they have. If local-level civic actors

are equipped with simple tools they are able to adapt the tools and the data collected to suit their context and objectives.

Conclusion

This early success encouraged MPI to continue monitoring using the social accountability tools. The programme has expanded to other districts where social accountability monitoring is conducted mainly in the education sectors. Already, inconsistencies in the way the social accountability cycle operates in reality have begun to emerge. Policy Forum has also entered into similar collaborative arrangements with two other regional networks in Pwani and Manyara regions. For Policy Forum, the emerging local-level evidence has been used to inform its national level advocacy. For example, in all districts where social accountability monitoring was conducted there were unspent funds identified in one year that were neither re-budgeted for the following year nor returned to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs when the accounts were closed at the end of the year. The result of this was that despite the fact that services were not being delivered to the required standard (many local dispensaries ran out of essential drugs before the end of the month and five to eight pupils had to share one book in many primary schools; with the most common reason being sited as a shortage of funds due to disbursement delays and shortfalls) there would be money in the district coffers that did not appear in the official accounts. As a result, this money was not being monitored by any of the official oversight bodies. What was surprising was that this was not being picked up in the district council audit reports. Policy Forum made a number of presentations where this issue was reported as one of the findings of its social accountability work during 2008 and 2009. It was interesting that the new Council Financial Instructions issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs to all district councils in September 2009 emphasised that all councils must either re-budget or return to Treasury all unspent funds at the end of the year and that disciplinary action would be taken if this was not done. In this case, the extent of attribution to CSO advocacy efforts cannot be conclusive. However, it would be logical to assume that CSO advocacy initiatives did play some part in this decision.

ⁱ CSA – The Center for Social Accountability of the Rhodes University of South Africa: Where leaders learn.

ⁱⁱ With special contribution and editing by Marcossy Albanie, Manager (Accountability Monitoring) Policy Forum.