

BRIEF REPORT OF THE 7:30 BREAKFAST DEBATE – OCTOBER 28th 2011

Contested Development: social and other services through the eyes of young people

This topic centered on a research which had been conducted by Tamasha. Tamasha is an organization which works and develops young people in Tanzania.

Since youths are the coming generations they should be taken into consideration by the state in terms of their health, infrastructure, employment etc. Most of the youths in Tanzania are not given this kind of privileges especially those youths found in the rural areas. Do policies really benefit these youths?

This is why Policy Forum dedicated its October 2011 debate on the issue of young people interms of accesing social services, the debate is titled: Contested Development: Social and other services through the eyes of young people.

The breakfast talk had one presentation and two discussants.

The Debate was facilitated by Alex Ruchyahinduru from Policy Forum.

The presentation was done by Richard Mabala, the Executive Director of Tamasha who focused on the youth for change: Perspective on education, participation and social services.

He started by saying that, from the research they had conducted it shows that development of young people seems to be going backwards. No attention is given to the mental wellbeing of the people.

He posed questions to the participants to reflect on how is their health affected when they sit in a class with no teachers, books? How does it affect the health of young girls in mines who are constantly harassed?

He said that, young people do not participate in decision making they only implement what they are told. They mostly also do unpaid labour (or volunteer). The other issue that he pointed out was education which is a demand for children and young people, he asked the participants when is a school a school? he said the situation of teachers in secondary school is very worse.

He added that, schools should be registered according to infrastructure not politics because according to politics anything can be a school (no proper criteria's are involved).

He said, in Tanzania English is taught as the medium of instruction but according to the research conducted by Tamasha shows that Kiswahili should be the medium of instruction when teaching because it was seen that students who used Kiswahili as a medium of instruction passed their exams better than the ones who used English, this indicates that our young people are being programmed for failure therefore policy makers should take this into account.

He said, livelihood opportunities for young people are very limited, electricity in this research was found to be a key in the activities that most young people get involved in. Infrastructure should also be developed so that people could easily access health services, this can be a better alternative than building so many hospitals which don't have nurses, doctors and medicines.

Lastly, he suggested that, health should be looked at in context not only as a sector, there should be a policy on how to protect community health for girls, the ministry of education should work out educational issues for young people and the whole community this will help young people to contribute to development, he also said volunteering is good but young people should be paid for their work.

There were two discussants of this breakfast talk, one was Helima Mengele, Executive Director of TENMET and Professor Galabawa, Lecturer of University of Dar es Salaam.

Helima started by saying that, all that had been presented is exactly what is happening currently. We need to know the root causes of all these problems.

She said, it is true that the most affected group of all these problems are the youths. She mentioned some of the policies governing development as, Decentralization policy, Education Training Policies and asked participants to reflect on how come all of these policies are not working?

She said, some of the issues of budgets need to be revised for instance Tanzania is 60% GBS dependant, how do we expect to develop if we are so much dependant to other developed countries.

Professor Galabawa said that health and education are the major resource of human capital. If the educational resources are not addressing the needs of the societies then there is a big problem in the sector.

He recommended that, the governance structure should be improved and should start at the local level, usually if things are not working it means the system is dysfunctional, we should learn from other developed countries not necessarily by following all that they did or do.

He said that some of the problems of the educational system are not there because of our country being poor but are due to under spending for example 74 billion was reported in the budget speech to be spent out of 74 billion.

He said, the management system in schools should be made better which lets teachers teach and students learn and not otherwise. All these are policy matters and should be addressed by policy makers.

Plenary Discussion

- People in Tanzania need to understand English so as to communicate well with people from abroad.
- We have to take into account that English plays a major role.
- There is a need for the mentality sheet for the youths.
- The learned-centered approach should be fostered.
- What is the importance of the government spending a lot of money while the social services are lagging behind?

Responds to the comments and questions

- Both languages are important but the problem here is using English as the medium of instruction instead of it being taught as a subject.

- Communities should realize that all these youth centers belong to them
- Without community development we cannot take off in development.
- We need to understand that the village government is as strong as the solid government which needs to be strengthened together with the whole government system.
- Public Private Partnership is now a culture in Tanzania which needs to be developed so as to bring community development.
- Young people should organize themselves through these youth centers so as to contribute to national development and avoid what she termed as *vijiwe* (idleness).

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