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The Tanzania Second Social Action Fund (TASAF II)

*Knowledge Sharing and Learning
for Better Delivery of Results*

Context and Development Objective of TASAF II

Tanzania is currently implementing the second phase of the Tanzania Social Action Fund, known as TASAF II. The first phase, TASAF I, commenced its operations in the year 2000 to respond to the challenge facing the Government on how to put in place the right mechanism to deliver tangible benefits to communities while the government was engaged in a program to reform the economy to bring about long-term benefits. The implementation of TASAF I registered demonstrable achievements in line with the country's drive towards reducing poverty amongst its people. The achievements were mainly in the form of asset creation, employment creation, income generation, and skills development. There were also intangible benefits such as enhanced downward accountability, with Community

Management Committees (CMC) in charge of managing the funds and being accountable to the community; and social cohesion.

The main objective of TASAF II is to empower communities to access opportunities so that they can request, implement, and monitor sub-projects that contribute to improved livelihoods that are linked to indicator targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as stipulated in the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty, popularly known by its Kiswahili acronym "MKUKUTA".

Expanded mandate and full mainstreaming of TASAF II into LGAs

One major challenge of delivering TASAF II is its expanded mandate and full mainstreaming into local



Findings

government authorities (LGA) operations. Unlike TASAF I which covered only one third of the country, TASAF II operates nationally, covering all LGAs in Mainland Tanzania, as well as the Islands of Unguja and Pemba in Zanzibar. Again while TASAF I provided support to mainly five sectors, including support for HIV/AIDS victims, TASAF II provides support to fourteen sectors on Tanzania Mainland and sixteen sectors in Zanzibar. Through the National Village Fund (NVF), a funding window for implementation of sub-projects, TASAF II supports efforts towards improved access to social services, provides employment opportunities to food insecure households, offers income generating opportunities to vulnerable groups, and raises awareness and builds community capacity to save and invest.

The expanded mandate of TASAF II is seen therefore through enlarged geographical coverage, number of sectors supported, and inclusion of software type and income generating interventions.

TASAF II is also fully mainstreamed into LGA activities. Thus local government personnel are accountable to the beneficiary communities through their role in facilitation, technical supervision, and appraisal of community programs. Public monitoring is carried out by Local Government elected representatives. Through TASAF II operations, linkages

between communities, LGAs and central government are thus effectively enhanced.

Knowledge sharing and learning: the rationale

To ensure smooth transition and effective delivery of TASAF II, stocktaking of the best practices and challenges experienced during TASAF I was crucial. Joining TASAF II LGAs had to be provided with the opportunity to internalize an objective assessment of achievements and challenges observed during the implementation of TASAF I, through the sub-project cycle. This would provide opportunity for the joining LGAs to learn from the experiences of TASAF I, thus create space and environment for efficient and cost-effective delivery of TASAF II.

There were thus three specific objectives to be attained. First, to give participants from the joining LGAs a chance to obtain knowledge and experience gained from their TASAF I counterparts, hence making it an in-depth learning event of best practices. Second, was to offer a unique opportunity for the identification of real issues that needed redress, and help implementers to minimize repetitive experimentation. Third, to build on the problem-solving potentials available at LGA, village and community levels so as to enable implementers at these levels to identify: (a) where to find examples of both positive and negative

experiences, and (b) key knowledge facilitators whom they can contact and make use of.

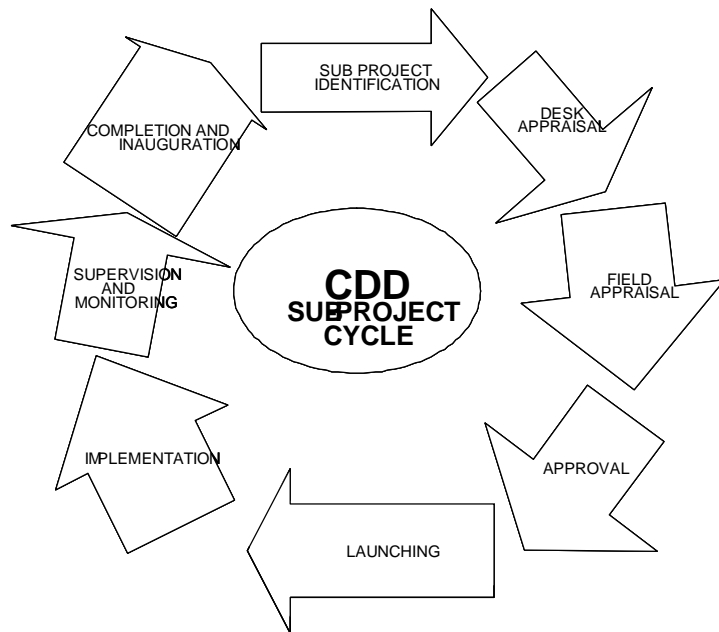
Methodology: How were LGAs linked up?

Four (4) TASAF II joining LGAs were linked up with two (2) TASAF I LGAs through Knowledge and Learning Workshops, hence the term *2+4 exchange* workshops. To kick off the process, a National 2+4 workshop was organized to set the stage and pace for the subsequent LGA cluster workshops held in eighteen (18) different centers, hence covering eventually the entire country involving all 123 operational areas, i.e., 121 LGAs in Tanzania Mainland and 2 Islands of Unguja and Pemba in Zanzibar. The *project-cycle approach*, as demonstrated in the figure below on Community Driven Development Cycle, was used to gather LGA experiences, guide exchange of views, and identify challenges and lessons, and measures to address them. Personnel who were involved in the implementation of TASAF I made presentations, followed by interactive sessions and group work; with feedback given during plenary, and consensus built around identified challenge areas, charting at the end the way forward.

Key results and lessons

No doubt the *2+4 exercise* has been an enormously useful exercise, an eye opener and

Community Driven Development Cycle



a huge opportunity for ensuring efficiency and cost-effectiveness in implementation of TASAF II. It became clear through the process that each step in the sub-project cycle was unique in its characteristics and contribution to the process, and required proper handling to assure successful implementation of the Project. Most critical though were the pre-subproject and identification stages. These were identified to be critical to doing right in all the ensuing stages. Key lessons drawn for which strategic interventions are required include the following:

1. *Setting the stage right through proper facilitation*

Facilitation is indispensable and requires the use of properly trained facilitators and this ensured that correct messages about TASAF were disseminated, distortions rectified, and principles and

procedures were clearly explained thus avoiding wasteful utilization of resources. Knowledge of the local culture and traditions as well as the involvement of influential people (opinion makers) facilitates the process of identification of and building consensus around community needs. Continuous sensitization and prior consultations with village/*mtaa* leaders avoids poor attendance at community meetings, as meetings are set to take place on days and at times convenient to community members.

2. *Provision of guidelines key for cost-effectiveness*

Provision of clear and simplified guidelines used for desk appraisal, together with making frequent technical backstopping visits to LGAs and communities saves on costs. Proper planning by coordinators, getting

information out well in advance creates space for effective participation of and enhances commitment by sector experts in carrying out desk appraisals. Improperly conducted field appraisals cause problems during subproject implementation, in terms of increased subproject costs, resettlement problems and environmental degradation. It may as well lead to sub-projects being unsustainable, negatively affects community participation and diminishes ownership.

3. *Ownership and accountability garnered through effective engagement*

Mobilization and sensitization of communities during the pre subproject cycle stage creates ground for smooth implementation, encourages community participation and lays a strong foundation for accountability. Effective engagement is done through holding community meetings, attendance of community members on the launching day, posting in public places information about the sub project including the amount of funds involved, the work schedule and labour contributions. Indeed identified subprojects that do not respond to community priority needs do not get full support from the community and leads to (i) poor community participation during implementation and (ii) conflicts regarding roles and responsibilities of different parties, thus causing unnecessary delays.

Involvement of the community in implementation makes skills transfer possible.

4. Norms and standards adhered to through supervision and report writing

Continuous and objective-oriented supervision is a prerequisite for successful implementation of subprojects. Regular preparation of reports, including those on justification, facilitate timely decision making, release of subsequent disbursements, and finalization of arrangements for completion of sub-projects.

5. Sustainability critical and must be nurtured

Post completion follow up is important to check on the functioning, usage and quality of services being provided by the created assets; including sustainability of such facilities. Communities need to be sensitized on this.

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