



## **FOLLOWING THE MONEY A QUEST FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN TANZANIA**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

Over the years there have been some initiatives to promote good governance at both the national and grass roots level. From the local government reform programme to independent initiatives by civil society organizations, the call for citizen engagement and participation in good governance and demands for accountability for the leaders has been on the increase, indicating that citizens wish to see the long waited changes in their lives through improved social services delivery.

In this context the Christian Council of Tanzania (CCT) in collaboration with partners in different areas of Tanzania has been implementing PETS (Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys) to enhance citizens' participation to ensure that public resources are efficiently utilized. To deepen the understanding of the benefits and challenges of PETS, CCT in collaboration with Tearfund, has undertaken the current study to investigate the impact of PETS policy and practice, as well as successes and challenges associated with conducting public expenditure tracking surveys.

#### **Context of PETS in Tanzania**

Expenditure Tracking refers to the process of following money or public financial resources from their source through the various levels of government down to the points of expenditure or service delivery<sup>1</sup>. Advocates for expenditure tracking claim that it can help to enhance the participation of citizens, decision makers and development partners so that they know whether public resources are utilised as planned and whether they bring the expected results<sup>2</sup>. There are further claims that it can help stakeholders to ask questions around the leakages of funds; problems in service delivery; or the funding of services compared to what was published in the plans and budgets. The results of this process should lead to decisions to improve the situation

Expenditure tracking has become popularly known in Tanzania as Public Expenditure Tracking Systems (PETS). The Prime Minister's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) officially introduced PETS guidance in 2007 for local government authorities and regional secretariats with an intent to inform and educate them on the way

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<sup>1</sup> HakiKazi Catalyst, REPOA and TGNP (2009) *Follow the Money: A resource book for trainers on public Expenditure Tracking in Tanzania*, published by The Local Government Working Group of the Policy Forum, Tanzania

<sup>2</sup> Advocates include PETS committees, councillors and some citizens .

to operate with civil society organisations and other interested parties in conducting PETS at local levels. Although the Prime Minister's Office is responsible for PETS policy, implementation has been left to village authorities and other stakeholders who have an interest in PETS.

### **Research methodology**

This research was carried out in three regions of Tanzania, namely, Morogoro, Geita and Dodoma, specifically in the districts of Kilosa, Bahi and Geita rural and Geita urban, between 6<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Interviews were conducted<sup>3</sup> with a total of 89 respondents, involving face-to-face semi-structured interviews with key informants in the program, resource partners, Ward and Village Executive Officers, District Executive Directors; local councillors, PETS committee members and religious leaders.

Questions asked were:

- How is Public Expenditure Tracking being carried out currently in Tanzania?
- What have been the positive impacts of PETS?
- What are the factors that have contributed to successes?
- What are the limitations or challenges of PETS as a social accountability approach?
- What needs to change in a) civil society ways of working, b) laws and policies, c) government accountability mechanisms?

### **Key findings**

#### **1. How is PETS currently being carried out?**

The aim of this question was to find out whether the PETS committees and LGA (Local Government Authority) leaders knew their roles and responsibilities for PETS, whether they knew any existing policies or guidelines for PETS, and whether PETS committees received any support from the government or local authority (LGAs). The following were the responses by the interviewees.

- a) Only a few PETS committee members were aware of their roles and responsibilities, moreover, very few local councillors or government officials knew what PETS does or is supposed to do.
- b) On policy guidelines, none of those interviewed, neither local leaders or government officials, were aware of the guidelines or had seen the guidelines for PETS before, despite the fact that PETS guidelines have been around since 2007:

*“ Well, I have never heard about that document... this is the first time I heard about it..” Pius Magoti, Planning Officer, Geita District Council*

- c) In terms of support from local government, very few PETS committee members claimed to have received any support from local government. The majority of PETS committees

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<sup>3</sup> Research was undertaken by Lawrence Chuma, in coordination with CCT staff

expressed their dissatisfaction towards government officials for being not supportive of them. This was due largely to inadequate knowledge of the leaders on what PETS was all about or what it does, as voiced by one of the local councillors:

*“Well, to be honest, I have never heard about PETS committees at all, but I know these guys [PETS committee members] and I always see them roaming around in the street and we would sometimes have a talk but I really never knew what they were up to” Hon. Buchuma H. Christopher, Local Councillor – Mtakuja Ward*

## **2. What were the positive impacts of PETS?**

There were various successes recorded in different districts where PETS was undertaken, including:

- **Increasing accountability and correct use of resources.** In Mayukuni Village, Kilosa the PETS committee ensured that the village council reported the correct amount that had been received from villagers’ contributions, so that the money allocated to a village dispensary was used to build it – as opposed to it being used for other purposes.
- **Reclaiming embezzled money:** In Ibihwa Village, the PETS committee discovered that the village council had received Tsh 4,200,000 for a telecommunications tower instead of the reported 600,000. They succeeded in suspending the village council and reclaimed the money to build a dispensary and modern toilets.
- **Increasing transparency and responsibility of local officials.** In many villages, the PETS committees reported that the village committees now regularly report on their income and expenditure, whereas they did not beforehand. In Bahi Village, since the establishment of the PETS committee in 2008, the frequency of village assemblies held has tremendously increased.

*“Things have really changed in our village, village leaders are more cautious than before when they could choose to do anything and yet noone could do anything to them. Nowadays, they prepare quarterly reports on time and read them in all village meetings: citizens are now aware of the importance of these meetings than ever before” Augustino Ndovu, Ward PETS Coordinator, Bahi.*

*“Nowadays things have really changed. In the past, leaders would do anything they wanted... they would decide when to hold village meetings... they wouldn’t display (funds) that were received for village development, they were considered as gods, but now they have no choice, they are now compelled to do what citizens want. I think they live in a great fear because they know if they acted irresponsibly, it would be their fate” Stella Makwawa, PETS committee coordinator – Mtitaa Village, Dodoma.*

- **Increased citizen participation in setting the development agenda.** In Nyakumbu Village in the Geita region, the PETS committee managed to influence and mobilize citizens to demand the district authority to construct a toilet for a health centre that did not have

one. The absence of a toilet had previously made it difficult and caused embarrassment to patients, especially women who were admitted in the maternity ward. After considerable pressure by the PETS committee and citizens, the district authority eventually conceded to build it.

- **Increased citizen confidence to demand their rights.** In Nyakabale Village (Geita region) the Gold Mining Company had decided to close the road that connected Nyakabale village with other villages as it was passing through the mining area. The result was that villagers were required to walk long distances around the mining company (about 10kms or so) to access the main road to town or to the nearest villages. When citizens reported the matter to the village authority, no action was taken. As a result, PETS committees from the nearest villages managed to influence villagers to demand for their rights and the mining company resolved to negotiate with the villagers. The company bought two buses to transport villagers to and from town, with as low cost of Tsh 100 per person, and the money goes into a village account.

*“This has been indeed a great achievement to Nyakabale village, nowadays we don’t have the transport problems that we used to have before, we have standby buses that transport villagers at any time and at very low cost, also the village collects money from those buses which helps us with other social activities” William Paul, VEO - Nyakabale Village*

### **3. What factors contributed to their success?**

As noted during the research process, among the factors that led to their success include the following:

- a) **Cooperation from the local village and government leaders with the PETS committees.** Leaders could include district executive directors, district commissioners, and other departmental officers. It also helped where government or village leaders were informed, and knowledgeable about PETS committees and their work.
- b) **Access to information for PETS committees** from local government officials (VEO, WEO, ward division).
- c) **Active, courageous and informed citizens.** In the areas where citizens knew about their rights and actively participated in the village assembly, they became the main support and provided strong back-up to PETS committees to carry out PETS, even if the village officials were reluctant.
- d) **Availability of facilities to undertake PETS.** Access to tools such as a camera, writing pad and money to support PETS committees in their transport costs was vital.
- e) **Skills and knowledge possessed by PETS committee members.** Some of the PETS committee members had background in media and journalism, law, economics, accountancy and so forth, some were retired and others were still in practice, so they used their knowledge and skills to analyse the information received and read between the lines to disclose what may otherwise have been concealed.
- f) **Readiness, active and committed PETS committees.** In some districts there were very active PETS committees whose vigour was not easily influenced or discouraged. Those committees would be self-driven, striving to look for information anywhere. Even when

they were denied access to information in their respective village, these people would be restless until something was done.

#### **4. What are the limitations or challenges facing PETS as a social accountability approach?**

Despite the significant achievements that PETS has so far displayed, there is still huge work ahead to be accomplished before the benefits of the PETS tool are fully realised. There are still a number of challenges that limit PETS. These include:

- **Threats from local government officials**, for instance those who want the PETS committees to keep quiet or refrain from undertaking PETS in their respective jurisdictions. Threats were reported in Bahi (Dodoma) and in Geita, where some of the PETS committee leaders were even put behind bars for doing PETS.
- **Local government officials persistently refusing to release information** to PETS committees, often under the pretext of “confidentiality”.
- **Inadequate or lack of support from the Local Government Authority to PETS committees.** Many PETS committees expressed their disappointment in this.
- **Lack of recognition by local leaders of the mandate of PETS committees.** In several villages, the PETS committees complained of having been mistreated, being accused of not having any legitimacy or mandate to do PETS and ordered to quit, or been publicly maligned and discredited.
- **Lack of training and difficulties of PETS committees in understanding budget documents.** The majority of PETS committees lacked ongoing training to keep them up to date, while others had not been trained at all. Some PETS committee members found it difficult to understand budget.
- **Lack of continuity of PETS committees in the absence of continued outside support.** This was observed to be a critical challenge that required a long lasting solution as most of the PETS committees could not run on their own without the support from outside. Some have ceased to operate while others are either very weak or inactive.

#### **Recommendations**

From the above findings the following are recommendations for civil society organisations, central and local government and donors or development partners:

##### **For civil society organisations (CSOs)**

- There is the need for closer cooperation between CSOs and Local Government Authorities to resolve negative attitudes or perceptions and build trust.
- To avoid inconsistency, it is recommended to come up with a uniform training manual for PETS committees that can be widely used and disseminated.
- CSOs should ensure that there is adequate follow up and ongoing mentoring of PETS committees to ensure their effectiveness. This is particularly important for those CSOs that have the mandate to mentor PETS committees in different regions
- CSOs should find a way of working with the media so they can get their message through to the public.

##### **For national and local government**

- Central Government should create mechanisms to facilitate regular information sharing between Ministries and with Local Government Authorities, especially those up-country, so that they are kept in loop with the introduction of new policies or guidelines.
- There is also a need for the Local Government Authorities to train their staff (VEO/MEO/WDE) on PETS policies and guidelines to help in reducing unnecessary conflicts and misunderstanding with PETS committees that seek information from their respective offices.
- Local Government Authorities should set aside adequate funds in their budgets to hold meetings, as many local leaders claimed that they spend a lot of money from their own pockets to organize such meetings, or simply fail to do so.
- Government should seek partnerships with business and civil society groups to enable them to strengthen governance and accountability mechanisms at national and local levels. This should include seeking ways of translating the PETS guidelines and other policies from English into Kiswahili language and disseminating them widely so that citizens may have an access to and an understanding of the documents, and be able to demand their rights.

**For donors**

- Donors should establish funds to support grass-roots initiatives, especially those that address the issues of transparency, accountability and citizens' participation.
- Donors should in their support to the Government (Central or Local) emphasise the need for strengthened PETS to be among the deliverables or priorities at the local Government Authorities

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