



Daraja Tanzania

**The village, district and national context
for interventions to improve the
responsiveness of local government in
rural Tanzania: A situation analysis**

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Executive Summary

Background

Daraja is a newly established NGO with the aim of making local institutions more responsive to the needs of the wider community in rural Tanzania. Daraja's mission is to empower communities and local institutions, and build their capacity to work effectively together to reduce poverty in Tanzania.

This paper aims to increase Daraja's understanding of the context in which it will operate and the situation that it will aim to change. As such, it is an important step in the process of developing programme intervention strategies. The specific objectives of the paper are as follows:

1. To document and analyse the policy and practice of local governance, including the statutory roles of key institutions, the roles played by those same institutions and other actors in practice, and the local-level discourse surrounding local governance.
2. To document and analyse the wider working environment in which Daraja will operate, including policies and the direction of policy debates relating to decentralisation and village government, the roles of state and non-state actors in rural service provision, and the roles accorded to civil society in governance.
3. To identify gaps further gaps in Daraja's understanding of these two areas, and to recommend further field and/or desk studies as necessary.
4. To make recommendations for Daraja's programme intervention strategies and overarching long-term strategies according to the analysis included here.

The paper draws heavily on earlier research by the author into the practice and local-level discourse of village governance in general and village-level HIV/AIDS governance in particular.

Summary of key findings

Village governance

Village governance in practice differs greatly in rural Tanzania from village governance in theory. In theory, the village council and associated institutions provide an arena for determining local needs and priorities and for legislating and allocating resources accordingly. In practice, village governance is dominated by a strong executive function that primarily implements the decisions of higher levels of government, and does so forcefully. Access to information, public consultation and debate and public challenge are not perceived by government officials either as legitimate rights or as valuable means of improving government performance. This is the case both for overall village government and for sectoral governance. Sexual and financial corruption by village officials is reportedly widespread. The community is largely resigned to this situation: all this is not merely expected, but even accepted by the community. These cultures of governance are a major obstacle to responsive and accountable village governance.

Capacity weaknesses at village level are genuine, but their importance is often overplayed in defence of re-centralising measures that take power further away from the community.

Nevertheless, the institutions of village governance have the potential to provide a responsive form of government. The institutions are broadly well designed, but overpowered in practice by the cultures of governance described above. In addition, there is some limited evidence of responsiveness stemming from rooted-ness that demonstrates the potential of village-level governance.

District governance

A similar situation is found at district level. As with village governance, strong upwards accountability pressures overpower any downward pressures, corruption is widespread, and local perceptions on the legitimate roles of different actors differ greatly from the theory behind the institutional design. Similarly, there are capacity weaknesses, although perhaps not to the extent portrayed by central government officials and some development partners.

The search for demand-side accountability

Development partners and a small group of influential national and international NGOs are very aware of the need for demand-side accountability pressures to replace the less-legitimate, less-democratic challenge function that they currently provide. This need is seen as particularly important at district level, where it is perceived as the missing link in the decentralisation process. As such, financial and other forms of support are likely to be made available for the type of interventions Daraja is proposing.

How to bring about this demand-side accountability is not well understood. This presents a second gap for Daraja to fill: to innovate, document and share lessons in order to influence the direction of decentralisation and democratisation processes.

Risk of resistance

The main challenge in the national policy environment identified here relates to confronting the interests and attitudes of different levels of government. A significant part of the unresponsive cultures of governance is the negative attitude of government officials at all levels towards transparency, public consultation and scrutiny. This could lead to considerable resistance for Daraja to overcome at district and sub-district levels. At national level, this could lead to Daraja being seen as a troublesome actor.

Lessons can be learnt from other civil society interventions in order to minimise these risks. First, campaign-style advocacy and high profile criticism of government is likely to provoke reactions that would undermine Daraja's work. Second, Daraja must ensure that any contributions to policy debates at national level are constructive and useful rather than confrontational.

Re-centralising tendencies

A related challenge is that re-centralising tendencies, particularly from district to national but also village to district, could undermine Daraja's efforts to increase local responsiveness. Some engagement at national level may be necessary to lobby against taking powers away from local tiers of government.

Recommendations

The paper makes recommendations in three areas: for Daraja programme intervention strategies, for longer-term overarching strategies, and for further research. These are summarised here (see section 7 for more details).

Recommendations for programme intervention strategies

- Work at district as well as village level
- Build on existing institutions and accountability mechanisms
- Strengthen inter-electoral accountability pressures
- Aim for changes the cultures of governance
- Demonstrate the benefits of responsiveness
- Build community capacity to engage
- Build on local rooted-ness
- Build the capacity of elected representatives
- Use capacity building as a means to change local official's attitudes
- See local government as partners
- Make it impossible for elected representatives to ignore public debate
- Promote transparency and access to information
- Avoid creating dependence

Recommendations for long-term overarching strategy

- Capitalise on demand-side accountability debates
- Frame interventions as action research initiatives
- Build strong relationships with national stakeholders

Recommendations for further research

Three further research activities are recommended to fill gaps in Daraja's current understanding.

1. Understanding institutions – A desk study to systematically review the statutory responsibilities, powers and accountabilities of key institutions at district and sub-district levels.
2. Governance attitudes survey – A quantitative survey of local government officials, elected representatives and community members covering attitudes to government performance, understanding of the roles of different institutions, democratic rights, etc.
3. Review of experiences in demand-side accountability – A desk study into efforts to promote demand side accountability at local government levels, primarily in Tanzania but also elsewhere in east and southern Africa.

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|----------|--|
| AIDS | Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome |
| ALAT | Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania |
| CARF | Community AIDS Response Fund |
| CCM | Chama Cha Mapinduzi (<i>Party of the Revolution</i>) |
| DCI | Development Cooperation Ireland |
| DED | District Executive Director |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| FBO | Faith Based Organisation |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| FHI | Family Health International |
| HIV | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| LGA | Local Government Authority |
| LGRP | Local Government Reform Programme |
| MAP | Multi-Sectoral AIDS Programme |
| MORALG | Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PEDP | Primary Education Development Plan |
| PEFAR | Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability Review |
| PMO-RALG | Prime Minister's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government |
| PORALG | President's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government |
| PSF | Public Sector Fund |
| REPOA | Research on Poverty Alleviation |
| RFA | Regional Facilitating Agency |
| SEDP | Secondary Education Development Plan |
| SPW | Students Partnership Worldwide |
| SWAP | Sector Wide Approach to Planning |
| TACAIDS | Tanzania Commission for HIV/AIDS |
| TANGO | Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organisations |
| TANU | Tanzania African National Union |
| TGNP | Tanzania Gender Networking Programme |
| T-MAP | Tanzania Multi-Sectoral AIDS Programme |
| UNAIDS | United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS |
| VEO | Village Executive Officer |

1. Introduction

1.1 Daraja

Daraja is a newly established NGO with the aim of making local institutions more responsive to the needs of the wider community in rural Tanzania. Daraja's mission is to empower communities and local institutions, and build their capacity to work effectively together to reduce poverty in Tanzania. The organisation is founded on principles of justice and respect.

Daraja believes that institutions that provides services or sets policies that affect the lives of the poor should be accountable to them. This includes local services such as schools and clinics run by the state, NGOs or religious organisations, as well as local policy-making bodies. Only when these institutions are accountable to the poor will they truly meet the needs of the poor. This belief is reflected in all Daraja's activities and programmes, which will aim to achieve this accountability and responsiveness.

In addition to this programmatic goal, Daraja has an overarching, longer term strategy to contribute to understanding of issues relating to decentralised governance, particularly the accountability and responsiveness of local government and other service providers.

1.2 This paper

At the time of writing, Daraja has not developed intervention strategies, preferring instead to concentrate initially on increasing its understanding of the context in which it will operate and the situation it will aim to change. This paper is an important step in that process.

The objectives of this situation analysis are therefore as follows:

1. To document and analyse the policy and practice of local governance, including the statutory roles of key institutions, the roles played by those same institutions and other actors in practice, and the local-level discourse surrounding local governance.
2. To document and analyse the wider working environment in which Daraja will operate, including policies and the direction of policy debates relating to decentralisation and village government, the roles of state and non-state actors in rural service provision, and the roles accorded to civil society in governance.
3. To identify gaps further gaps in Daraja's understanding of these two areas, and to recommend further field and/or desk studies as necessary.
4. To make recommendations for Daraja's programme intervention strategies and overarching long-term strategies according to the analysis included here.

Following this introduction, the paper is structured in five main sections. The first consists of a review of the legal-institutional framework of village governance (section

2). This is followed by analysis of the practice of village governance: first at the village council (section 3); then in sector-specific governance, including a case study of village-level HIV/AIDS governance (section 4). Section 5 considers the policy and practice of the next level of elected government above village level – the district. Section 6 then looks at the national policy environment in which Daraja will operate, and section 7 makes recommendations for Daraja’s work in Tanzania: for long-term overarching strategy, for programme intervention strategies, and for further research.

A substantial amount of this report is based on an empirical study into the policy and practice of village governance, with a particular focus on Tanzania’s decentralised approach to responding to HIV/AIDS.¹ This study included field-based qualitative research in two villages in Ludewa district, and forms the basis of sections 2 and 3 as well as the case study in section 4 of this situation analysis. These sections are only minimally edited from the two formats of reports of this study that have already been produced – the full dissertation / study report and a condensed version for wider distribution. Some additional desk-based research has been conducted to complement the study, particularly sections 5, 6 and parts of 4.

¹ This research was conducted by the author of this report and submitted as a dissertation as part fulfilment of the requirements for a MA in International Development: Development Management, from the Institute of Development Policy and Management (IDPM) at the University of Manchester. Further details of the research, including the submitted dissertation, are available on request from the author.

2. The legal-institutional framework of village governance in Tanzania

2.1 Levels of administrative and legislative governance in Tanzania

The three main levels of government in Tanzania are national, district and village. These are the three levels with elected representation of the population (parliament, the district council and the village council), and the three with legislative powers.

Since 1998, Tanzania has been undergoing a process of decentralisation to district level, known as decentralisation by devolution or the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP). In theory at least, the reforms allocate responsibility for service delivery to district councils and empower them to plan and budget according to local priorities. National ministries are left with responsibility for policy and guideline setting (including minimum standards), regulation and monitoring and evaluation, with few remaining service delivery responsibilities. The process has not been smooth, and is not yet complete, resulting in a somewhat uneven patchwork of implementation responsibilities and accountability mechanisms. This is discussed more in chapter 6.

There are currently 120 districts on mainland Tanzania. Each district has an elected council (with councillors elected at ward level) and an executive branch consisting of sectoral officials and headed by the district executive director (DED). District officers report to the DED, who in turn reports to the district council. Some functions at district level, including the judiciary and school inspectorate, are not accountable to the council, but to higher levels of government, in order to retain their independence.

Between district and national levels, there is an administrative level of government – the regions. There are 24 regions on mainland Tanzania, each of which covers 3-8 districts.

Between district and village levels, there are two administrative tiers of government – divisions and wards. Typically, a rural district would have 6-12 divisions, each of which would contain 2-6 wards, with 3-10 villages in each ward.

2.2 Village governance institutions in Tanzania

Tanzania has a long history of village level government. Since the Arusha declaration in 1967, the village has been seen as the site of development and the basic unit of organisation (Shivji and Peter, 2000; Gaventa, 2002; Brockington, 2005a). This included the *villagisation* programme of the late 1960s-early '70s, which saw the compulsory relocation of nine million peasants and pastoralists into villages (Coulson, 1982). This saw the establishment of village assemblies, consisting of all adult members of the village, and village councils elected by the assembly from within the ruling party, TANU. These bodies though, had little discretionary power, and were seen both by national leaders and the general population as a mechanism for the “implementation of policies and decisions made at higher levels rather than of political governance,” (Shivji and Peter, 2000, p.42; James et al, 2002; Mukandala, 1998).

Following the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1992, village council members and their chairpersons are now elected (Brockington, 2005a; Shivji and Peter, 2000). Only members of registered political parties may stand for office, and the vast majority are elected from within the ruling party, CCM² (Shivji and Peter, 2000; Lawson and Rakner, 2005; Gaventa, 2002).

Although the decentralisation reforms (LGRP), introduced in 1998 (see above), were stated to be founded on the principle of subsidiarity (that decision making powers should be devolved to the lowest level unless good reason can be given otherwise), the LGRP has thus far not significantly altered village level government (Shivji and Peter, 2000; James et al, 2002; Gaventa, 2002; Mukandala and Peter, 2004).

In law, village councils have legislative, executive, and judicial functions, including the following:

- Legislative function: Village councils have some power to enact local bylaws and raise taxes, although these must be approved by both the village assembly and district council (Gaventa, 2002).
- Executive function: Village councils and a range of committees that report to the councils (see below) have a number of executive functions. This includes implementing local bylaws as well as implementing laws, policies and directives from higher levels of government. The Village Executive Officer (VEO) is the only paid non-sectoral government employee at village level. He/she has responsibility to implement council decisions and is accountable both to the village council and the District Executive Director (DED).
- Judicial function: Carried out through the village and sub-village chairpersons, the village council operates as a first level judiciary for settling local disputes. More serious cases and appeals are referred to the formal legal system (Shivji and Peter, 2000).

2.3 Village-level sectoral institutions

Within the village council, a number of committees are entrusted with responsibility for particular sectors, with committee members representing different local interests, often elected by the village assembly. School committees are a clear example of this, with every Primary School governed by a committee that reports to the village council and represents interests including teachers, parents and even (in theory) pupils. The committee controls school budgets and development plans (Rajani and Omondi, 2003). Other committees include health committees (Mubyazi et al, 2004) and forest or natural resource management committees (Wily, 1999; Brockington, 2005b; Shivji, 2002).

The precise nature of the statutory roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of these sectoral institutions varies widely. It will be important for Daraja to have a strong understanding of how the various institutions are structured and how they are intended to operate. A single example is given below – HIV/AIDS committees. This is the sector which is currently best understood by Daraja.

² *Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM)*, together with its earlier incarnations, has been Tanzania's ruling party at national level since independence in the early 1960's, and retains a highly dominant position on most of the Tanzanian mainland.

2.4 Case Study: Village-level HIV/AIDS governance institutions

In 2003, discussions between the Tanzanian Commission for HIV/AIDS (TACAIDS), the then Presidents Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG)³ and the Association of Local Administration of Tanzania (ALAT), recognised the need for local governments to play a leading role in the national response to HIV/AIDS (PORALG, 2003). World Bank pressure also played a role here (Delion et al, 2004). The result was a communication from PORALG to all village councils instructing that they establish an HIV/AIDS committee (PORALG, 2003). Committee members are specified as follows, although there are no guidelines as to how they should be appointed or elected:

- a) *The Village Government Chairperson who shall be the “Chairperson”;*
- b) *The Secretary of the Village Government who shall be the “Secretary”;*
- c) *One member from each sub-village;*
- d) *Two members from the Village Council Committee;*
- e) *One representative from all the schools in the village area;*
- f) *Two prominent citizens from the village council, one woman and one man;*
- g) *Two representatives from the youth, one female and one male;*
- h) *Two religious representatives, one Muslim and one Christian;*
- i) *Experts working within the village council;*
- j) *Two representatives from people living with HIV/AIDS, one woman and one man;*
- k) *A representative from the network of Non-Governmental Organisations that are involved in the fight against HIV/AIDS.*

(PORALG, 2003, p.3)

Committees were also established at district and ward level. These committees have responsibility for coordinating and approving proposals and the flow of funds.

The World Bank launched the Multi-Country AIDS Programme (MAP) in 2000 to provide substantial support to national responses to HIV/AIDS (World Bank, 2000; 2003b). On mainland Tanzania, the programme, which also has the support of other donor agencies and is known as the Tanzania Multi-Sectoral AIDS Programme (T-MAP), includes three components: institutional support for TACAIDS, the Public Sector Fund (PSF), and the Community AIDS Response Fund (CARF), focusing on “social mobilisation and community-level responses” (World Bank, 2003a, p.13). Both the PSF and CARF include funds set aside for rural village communities (World Bank, 2003a; TACAIDS, 2005).

The project will take advantage of this structure [local government authorities] to strengthen the implementation of HIV/AIDS activities at all levels of Government through the Public Sector Fund. Furthermore, the Community AIDS Response Fund will channel resources to communities, religious

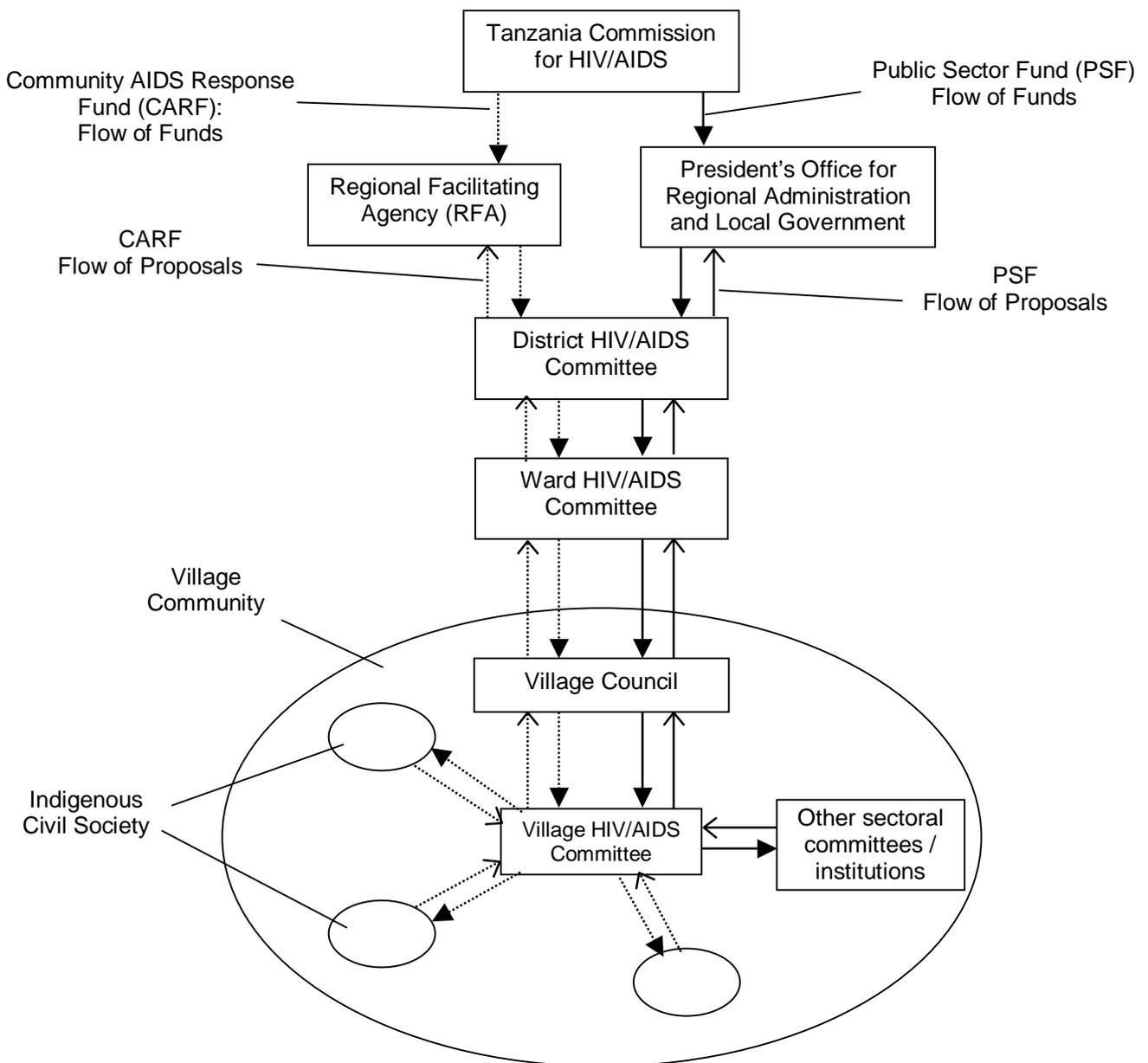
³ This institutional location of this office has changed twice since the mid-1990s, together with concurrent name changes. Prior to 2000, it was known as the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government (MORALG). Between 2000 and 2005, it was the President’s Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG). Since late 2005, it has become the Prime Minister’s Office for Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG). In this paper, the office will be referred to by the name in use at the time being referred to. However, readers should be aware that MORALG, PORALG and PMO-RALG are essentially the same institution.

organizations and NGOs to help extend the reach of the National Program down to the most decentralised levels.

(World Bank, 2003a, p.8)

The mechanisms by which projects supported under the PSF and CARF are planned and coordinated are shown in figure 1. An NGO or private sector institution will be selected at regional level (the Regional Facilitating Agency, RFA) to coordinate the development of proposals and flow of funds for the CARF. Proposals for activities originating from civil society organisations (in the case of CARF) or public sector institutions (in the case of the PSF) at the village level must be approved by the HIV/AIDS committees at each level.

Figure 2.1 – Flow of Proposals and Funds under the Community AIDS Response Fund (CARF) and Public Sector Fund (PSF)



Source: Compiled from World Bank (2003a) and TACAIDS (2005)

3. Village council in practice⁴

3.1 Village council functions

The practice of village governance was found to differ substantially from the theory. First and foremost, villagers did not perceive local government as an arena for negotiating differing interests and priorities and then setting policies, legislating and allocating resources accordingly. This contrasts with the intended role of the village assembly and village council, which are designed to make decision making more responsive to local needs by taking it down to the level of the community⁵. Instead, the executive function of village government is strong, with the council seen primarily as an implementing agency: implementing directives from higher levels of government, and even acting as the local implementing agents for NGO projects. This demonstrates how upward accountability pressures in practice tend to outweigh downward accountability to the community. Two such examples from the study sites are given in Box 3.1.

As also demonstrated in these examples, the practice is for this executive function to be carried out forcefully. This is ingrained to the extent that it has become expected and even accepted by both local government and the wider community. As a consequence, the primary experience that local citizens have of village government is that of being on the receiving end of decisions that are implemented forcefully, and over which they have no input and no real opportunity to challenge⁶. Neither villagers nor local leaders see consultation, challenge or respectful implementation as legitimate rights of the community.

Box 3.1 – The strong upwardly-accountable executive function, implemented forcefully

Example 1 – Agriculture and water sources

The research was conducted a few months after a directive from national government banning agricultural production within a fixed distance of water sources reached the villages in question. This was understandably unpopular with villagers, given the local dependence on small scale stream-fed irrigation for dry season production.

The village leaders were given the responsibility of passing the directive on to villagers and for its enforcement. Several cases were mentioned by both leaders and community members of crops in the newly illegal areas being destroyed by the village leaders, numerous fines being levied and one case of imprisonment, reportedly the result of pressure from above:

“[I]f they [district leaders] come here and see that people are still farming in the valleys, they will give us problems.”

(Village Executive Officer, Village A)

⁴ This chapter is very closely based on the submitted dissertation

⁵ See Gaventa (2002), Shivji and Peter (2000), and Lawson and Rakner (2005)

⁶ This concurs with Brockington (2005a), who argued that “from the point of view of Tanzanian peasants the local state was most prominent in their day to day experience for the varieties of violence [aggression, insults, appropriation of resources] it perpetrated” (p.8).

Example 2 – Contributions for local development activities

Development initiatives stemming from the national or district level commonly require local contributions. At the time of the research, “compulsory” contributions in the form of money and bricks were being collected in both villages for the construction of new classrooms at the secondary school. The initiative was reportedly part of the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP). The contributions had been requested by the Ministry, and the precise amount required per household (evenly spread) was determined by the council and passed by the village assembly of all adults. Despite the assembly’s approval, the contributions were unpopular, as few young people from the villages in question attended the school and because this regressive form of local taxation represented a major proportion of poorer household’s income. The collection of the contributions was forced:

“They really disturb us. We have no work and no income, and they [the village leaders] know this, but still they force us to contribute. If we fail, they follow us until we pay. Many times people can’t, and they are given a fine. If you haven’t been able to give a contribution, will you be able to pay the fine? You will be locked up.”

(FGD, Young People, Village A)

The second major function of village government in practice is judicial. Village and sub-village chairpersons are regularly called upon to adjudicate in local disputes, which are usually resolved with a fine paid by one party to the other. While this was praised by some as a cheap and effective means of maintaining harmony, other community members complained that the system was highly corrupt, making justice accessible only to those with money or influence.

“If you need the help of the sub-village chairperson, he/she won’t come until you have paid a little. And if you don’t pay again, he/she can’t support your claim. [...] Even the fine ends up as his/hers.”

(FGD, Women, Village A)

It also serves to reinforce the high power distance between citizens and village government, and severely undermines the principle of an independent judiciary.

The legislative function of the council is used only minimally and usually in response to directives from higher levels. In addition, any local bylaws must be approved by the district council (Gaventa, 2002).

3.2 Interaction with disadvantaged groups

In both villages, there was a marked difference between the feelings of different sections of the community towards village government. Men, particularly those aged 40-50 years or over, were generally positive about the responsiveness of local government, whereas women and younger men felt that local government did not take any interest in their needs and priorities, a finding backed up by SPW Tanzania

⁷ *“Kama unahitaji msaada wa mwenyekiti wa kitongoji, haitikii mpaka utoe kidogo. Na usipotoa tena, hawezi kukubali na unachodai. [...] Na hata faini yenyewe huishia kwake tu.”*

(2004) and Lugome (2006). This was most particularly evident in the village council's judicial function, which, as described above, was found to be most accessible to those with some financial resources. However, it was also expressed in both villages that village assembly meetings tended to be dominated by older men, and that when women and younger men spoke, their ideas were rarely taken on board.

*"We contribute a lot [to public meetings], but they don't follow up our complaints. It's only the contributions of men that are heard."*⁸

(Older woman, FGD, Older People, Village A)

3.3 Corruption

Villagers in both research site and neighbouring villages repeatedly claimed that corruption was rife in village government. The most common example was in fulfilment of the council's judicial function, as mentioned above, but significant examples were also mentioned relating to the implementation of directives from higher levels of government and to NGO programmes. It was claimed that funds from NGOs and central government programmes intended for orphans and widows had been diverted to the families of high-ranking village officials. According to one source, in an example from a neighbouring village,

*"[t]here was a project to give iron roofing sheets to widows, but the [sub-village] chairman would refuse to give you the iron sheets unless you submit to him⁹. It is truly distressing."*¹⁰

(Community Member, personal communication)

*"If a woman wants help from a leader, she must agree with him [accept his sexual advances]"*¹¹

(FGD, Women, Village A)

*"Some teachers are playing with [having sex with] their students. A student can't refuse: she knows the teacher can get her expelled, or make her fail her exams."*¹²

(FGD, Young People, Village A)

Although it was impossible to verify these allegations, there is no particular reason to doubt their veracity. Furthermore, FHI (2005), Lugome (2006), and SPW Tanzania (2004) also found evidence of similar forms of corruption. The claims also echo the arguments of Fugelsang (1997) and UNAIDS (1997) that sex can be the currency by which women and girls are expected to pay for life's opportunities

⁸ *"Tunachangia vizuri sana [katika mikutano wa hadhara], lakini hawatekelezi malalamiko yetu. Ni mawazo ya wanaume tu yanayosikilizwa."*

⁹ The Swahili phrase *kumkubali*, literally *to agree with him*, is a euphemism for agreeing to sexual advances.

¹⁰ *"kulikuwa na mradi wa kutoa bati za kuelekea nyumba za wajane, lakini mwenyekiti [wa kitongoji] alikuwa akigoma kutoa bati hadi umkubalie. Kwa kweli inatisha."*

¹¹ *"Kama mwanamke anataka msaada kutoka kwa viongozi, itabidi amkubalie tu."*

¹² *"Waalimu wengine wanacheza na wanafunzi wao. Mwanafunzi hawezi kukataa: anajua mwalimu angemfanya afukuzwe shule, au kumfelisha mitihani."*

3.4 Accountability and democracy

As described above, village council officials respond more to district and central government than to local needs and priorities. However, there was also evidence that villagers can achieve some local responsiveness. The democratic selection process for village councillors, combined with the strong local rooted-ness of village governance institutions both serve to provide citizens with opportunities to influence, as described in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2 – Responsiveness through rooted-ness: CCM selection committees

The local dominance of CCM and the ineligibility of independent candidates combine to limit the electoral choices open to villagers in electing members of the village council. However, the local rooted-ness of the village CCM committee appears to ensure that unpopular candidates are not put forward for election, with CCM keen to retain their dominance. In one example, a village council member who was widely regarded as corrupt was not put forward by the party committee for re-election. In another, a CCM candidate was asked by the party to withdraw when committee members became aware that he was unpopular with the local community. In both cases it is the rooted-ness of CCM – the personal ties that exist between the CCM committee and the wider community – that achieves this form of local responsiveness, although this would not be possible without the theoretical possibility of unpopular CCM candidates being defeated at the ballot box.

This form of local responsiveness is echoed in the initiative of the village B HIV/AIDS committee to support widows and orphans of the village HIV/AIDS committee in Village B (see Box 4.2 below). This committee is shown to be sufficiently rooted in the community – understanding the pressures facing these vulnerable groups – to respond to local needs without formal processes to enforce accountability.

There was no evidence of any functioning inter-electoral accountability mechanisms by which incumbent council members could be ejected.

4. Sectoral governance at village level

Since Daraja's understanding of sectoral governance at village level is currently greater in the field of HIV/AIDS than other sectors, the bulk of this chapter will analyse HIV/AIDS governance as a case study of sectoral governance at village level. However, since other researchers and practitioners have documented their findings on Tanzanian village governance in other sectors, this section will also review this literature following the HIV/AIDS case study.

4.1 Case study – HIV/AIDS governance at village level¹³

The research focussed on two main aspects of village level HIV/AIDS governance – capacity and early operations of village HIV/AIDS committees. (See section 2.4 for an introduction to the theory and policy behind these committees as well an outline of the institutional framework that surrounds them). Capacity is a commonly voiced concern about decentralised governance, although some authors have suggested that this is a chicken-and-egg problem: that capacity will only rise when real power is devolved¹⁴. Here we will consider both managerial-administrative capacity and basic knowledge of HIV/AIDS transmission and prevention. Who are the committees' members and what knowledge, skills and experience do they have? On committee operations, early initiatives are clearly an important indicator of likely future activities. How do the committees operate, and what activities have they initiated since their formation?

The membership of village-level HIV/AIDS committees in the two villages included in the field research did not accord with PORALG guidelines¹⁵. No village chairperson or executive officer, teacher, health or community development expert was on any of the committees, and there were no representatives of religious institutions, locally active NGOs, young people or people living with HIV/AIDS. All of the above should be members according to the guidelines. In one village, the committee had met only once, two years earlier, at the time of its formation. In the other village, meetings were more frequent but still irregular. This situation was blamed on a lack of support from the district authorities that had instructed the village government to form a committee and promised training that had not yet taken place.

"In truth we have not done many things. We're waiting for a seminar from the district authorities."

(HIV/AIDS Committee Member, Village B)

The committees' capacity was found to be a major weakness, a fact the members themselves acknowledged openly. They scored very low on basic knowledge tests (see Box 4.1), had very low levels of education (several having not completed even Primary School), and had very little experience in similar positions of responsibility. Members of the committees in both villages identified their own low capacity as the main obstacle to their work, again citing the lack of training as a defence.

¹³ Section 4.1 is largely taken from the as yet unpublished summary report of the field research into the culture and practice of HIV/AIDS governance at village level.

¹⁴ see Ribot (2002)

¹⁵ PORALG (2003)

Box 4.1 – Highlights of HIV/AIDS knowledge and attitudes questionnaires

In quizzes testing very basic HIV/AIDS knowledge, the average score of HIV/AIDS committee members was worryingly low, scoring 2.17 out of a possible 5 (43%). As a comparison, the average score of village chairpersons and executive officers was 4.25 (85%) on the same questions.

All six of the questioned HIV/AIDS committee members claimed that it was possible to identify someone who is HIV positive by sight alone.

Five out of six committee members questioned agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that people living with HIV/AIDS were being punished for something bad that they had done

Please note that these results are based on a very small, non-random sample, and are therefore not statistically rigorous or generalisable. However, they do strongly suggest likely capacity weaknesses.

Although this low capacity presents a challenge that must be overcome if the committees are to work effectively and efficiently, two factors suggest that this particular challenge is one that could be overcome. First, it is likely that the knowledge and attitudinal issues identified here would at least in part be addressed by training from the district authorities or the Regional Facilitating Agency (RFA), none of which had been conducted by the time of the research fieldwork. Second, once the funding mechanisms of the CARF are more fully operational, including training and making funds available, it is likely that more experienced and better qualified individuals, including those listed above, will become part of the committees, either in response to pressure from above or attracted by the funds becoming available.

The level of activity of the committees varied greatly between the two villages. In Village A, the committee has not engaged in any prevention or impact mitigation activities, or begun to promote or coordinate activities by other actors. In contrast, in Village B the committees have engaged in a range of educational activities, despite their own concerns regarding their capacity, facilitated some support to widows and child-headed households, and initiated activities to target risk taking behaviour. These are described in more detail in Box 4.2.

Box 4.2 – Early initiatives of HIV/AIDS committee in Village B

The committee had made educational talks on preventing HIV transmission at village and sub-village public meetings, described by one committee member as “telling people to stop having irresponsible sex”. Committee members claimed that this included working with a local performing arts group to raise awareness through drama, but the community members interviewed had no recollection of any such methods.

Committee members had taken steps to exempt widows and orphans from compulsory contributions to village development efforts, and to request contributions from the community towards widows’ medical costs. However, these were both rare and dependent on the discretion of the committee members and the sub-village chairpersons rather than deliberate policies.

Committee members made regular visits to local bars during busy drinking periods to “see who is causing infections and to tell them to stop these habits.” Those who were

identified were initially warned and educated about the risks of HIV/AIDS, with some called before the committee and/or the village council to explain their behaviour. These activities earned the committee the nickname “committee to prevent irresponsible sex”. In one such case, this quasi-judicial behaviour resulted in a “promiscuous woman” being chased out of the village. Although accounts varied as to whether she was expelled or left by her own decision, it is clear that the pressure exerted by the committee played a key role in her departure.

These activities demonstrate some potential that village HIV/AIDS committees could play a positive role in responding to HIV/AIDS. The awareness raising activities show enthusiasm that could be capitalised on more effectively following training. The support for those most affected by HIV/AIDS demonstrates a degree of responsiveness to local needs that bodes well.

However, the activities also suggest possible weaknesses of village HIV/AIDS committees. First, the approach used to educate the community was simply to tell people what to do: to avoid irresponsible sex. This prescriptive form of education is unlikely to achieve behaviour change. Second, the targeting of risky behaviour with quasi-judicial measures suggests that the committees have already taken on aspects of the pre-existing cultures of village level governance, in particular the authoritarian behaviour that is largely the normal and expected practice of village government (see section 3).

4.2 Village-level governance in other sectors – a review of the literature

The literature on village-level sectoral governance in other sectors in Tanzania echoes many of the challenges identified above in the case of HIV/AIDS. Research literature on village-level education, health and natural resource governance is considered here.

These similarities can be demonstrated first in the education sector, where the composition of Primary School committees regularly does not conform with national guidelines, which specifically state that democratically elected pupils should be represented (Makongo, 2003). Makongo (2003) also found that even representation of the community in the committees was minimal.

There is a strong tendency for education sector decision making in practice to be top-down, in contrast to stated policy of substantial powers being devolved to school committee level (Makongo, 2003; Therkildsen, 2000). One clear example given is that of allocating resources from the capitation grant, which is accompanied by detailed instructions from central government as to what proportions should be used on what (Makongo, 2003). A second is that district education offices see public meetings as an opportunity to give instructions rather than facilitate public debate (Makongo, 2003).

Public information at village level on school budgets, performance and decision-making processes is minimal. In part, this is due to limited availability of data and policy information and to technological challenges, but there are also arguments that an institutional culture that resists transparency is a major obstacle, both at school level (Makongo, 2003) and higher levels in the sector (Makongo and Rajani, 2003). Access to information is tightly controlled, both out of a “fear of being exposed”

(Makongo and Rajani, 2003, p.6) and a culture that does not perceive public access to information as a legitimate right, and does not value public debate.

The combined effect of these challenges is that opportunities for pupils and community members to contribute to school governance are inadequate, and that consequently schools are not responsive to local needs and priorities.

In natural resource management, there is less agreement in the literature, and additional lessons to be learnt. Wily (1999) is broadly positive that participatory natural resource management institutions at village level have provided a level of responsiveness that was not provided by the earlier centre-dominated policy making. On the other hand, Brockington (2006a; b) is highly sceptical of these claims, arguing that Wily's analysis is weak on analysis of political processes at work in practice. Brockington cites his own research in Rukwa region, where he found evidence that pre-existing local elites had effectively taken control of natural resource management institutions at village level and were using these institutions for their own ends.

In the health sector there is less literature, reflecting the more limited devolution of powers to village level. However, Mubyazi et al (2004) did look at village health committees in four districts. They found that committees were largely inactive, widely seen as ineffective: lacking both capacity and powers, and unclear on their responsibilities. They also found that where the committees were active, their primary function in practice was to transmit instructions downwards.

Mubyazi et al (2004) also considered how well democratic forms of accountability at district level and below provide responsiveness in the health sector. Their main conclusion was that elected representatives acted primarily in their own personal interest and that democratic processes were not sufficiently competitive to ensure that these interests were aligned with those of the wider community.

In conclusion, the evidence from other sectors broadly concurs with the findings from the HIV/AIDS case study. Top-down decision making, institutional cultures that do not accept the legitimacy of access to information or value community participation, and strong upwards accountability pressures undermine local responsiveness. Besides these cultural and accountability-related challenges, there are problems with the institutions themselves: they may not be formed as originally intended in policy, capacity is often weak, and roles are often unclear or misunderstood. In addition, some different challenges are found in these sectors: elite capture and limited availability of information.

5. District governance in policy and practice

5.1 Decentralisation and local government reforms

Tanzania is currently undergoing a process of reforming local government, known officially as the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) and popularly as decentralisation by devolution, or D by D. This fundamental restructuring of how government operates aims to shrink the responsibilities of central ministries and agencies and to devolve significant responsibilities and powers to district level (MORALG, 1998).

[T]he overall objective of the reform is to improve service delivery by making local authorities more democratic and autonomous ...

(MORALG, 1998, p. 5)

At district level, local government authorities (LGAs) consist of an elected council with legislative powers and authority to pass or refuse plans and budgets, and an executive, led by a District Executive Director (DED) and including sectoral officers, which is theoretically accountable to the council.

Under the LGRP, local governments have responsibility for:

social development and public service provision within their jurisdiction, facilitation and maintenance of law and order and issues of national importance such as education, health, water, roads and agriculture.

(MORALG, 1998, p.4)

In turn, the roles of central government are confined to

- *facilitation and enabling of local governments in their service provision*
- *development and management of a policy and regulatory framework*
- *monitoring accountability by the local government authorities*
- *financial and performance audit*
- *provision of adequate grants.*

(MORALG, 1998, p3)

5.2 District governance in practice

These reforms were intensely fought over at the time (Mbilinyi, 2003), and how they are put into practice remains highly contested. In particular, central government ministries and the development partners have been reluctant to cede real decision making power to LGAs. A number of re-centralising tendencies can be identified, which may or may not be deliberately circumventing the aims of the LGRP, including the following:

- Local sources of taxation were removed in 2003 and 2004, resulting in only 4-5% of LGA revenue being locally sourced (PEFAR, 2006a; 2006b). Although this can be seen as a pro-poor measure reducing tax pressure on the rural majority, it also reduces the funds available for discretionary expenditure by LGAs.

- Policies and guidelines have been introduced by ministries that restrict the policy choices open to district councils.
- Lines of accountability from sectoral officers at district level to national ministries have been maintained and even strengthened, with appointments and salaries controlled centrally in many sectors (Therkildsen, 2000).
- New mechanisms to provide funds to district government have been introduced that ring-fence the majority of council budgets and limit discretionary expenditure. Notably, this includes large amounts of funds made available through Sector Wide Approaches to Planning (SWAPs) for primary and secondary education, roads and the water sector that restrict LGAs' discretionary power to deciding priorities within rather than between sectors. In financial year 2004/05, for example, 88.7% of LGAs' total revenue was restricted in this way, with only 11.3% fully discretionary (PEFAR, 2006b).
- Within sectors, investments channelled through SWAPs are often also tightly controlled. Consultants with stronger accountability pressures to central government than to LGAs are accorded major responsibilities in determining local priorities and allocating resources.

The overall result is that the real autonomy of local government is currently significantly lower than originally intended.

Local government capacity is commonly cited as a weakness that justifies retention of central control, and it is certainly true that some audit reports of LGA accounts have been highly critical (HakiElimu, 2006; PEFAR, 2006a; 2006b). However, the accounting problems are in no small part down to the complexity of the planning, budgeting and reporting systems that have been forced on LGAs (PEFAR, 2006b).

As at village-level, corruption by elected representatives and government officials is reportedly widespread at district level.

From the perspective of those at the core of the reform process (in the LGRP), three outstanding challenges remain that must be overcome for the reforms to be successful¹⁶. First, central government ministries and agencies (and development partners) must relinquish control over key decisions and accord real autonomy to LGAs. Second, the capacity of LGAs to plan, budget, deliver services, and report must be increased. Third, demand-side accountability on LGAs must be increased.

Demand-side accountability has been identified as the key challenge, as it can be seen to underpin the first two. The core of the argument for decentralisation by devolution is that it will be easier for people to make their priorities known to local government and enforce accountability on them. This will in turn undermine the legitimacy of central government's re-centralising tendencies and put upward pressure on LGA capacity. Similarly, development partners justify their close scrutiny of policy making and resource allocation at LGA level with arguments that there is currently no other group of actors exerting significant accountability pressures on the government: that they would prefer to reduce the extent to which they offer this challenge function but are unable to do so while demand-side accountability pressures remain so weak.

¹⁶ The identification of these challenges is based on personal communications with the author from those involved in the LGRP from a number of agencies, including DFID, DCI, the World Bank, and PMO-RALG.

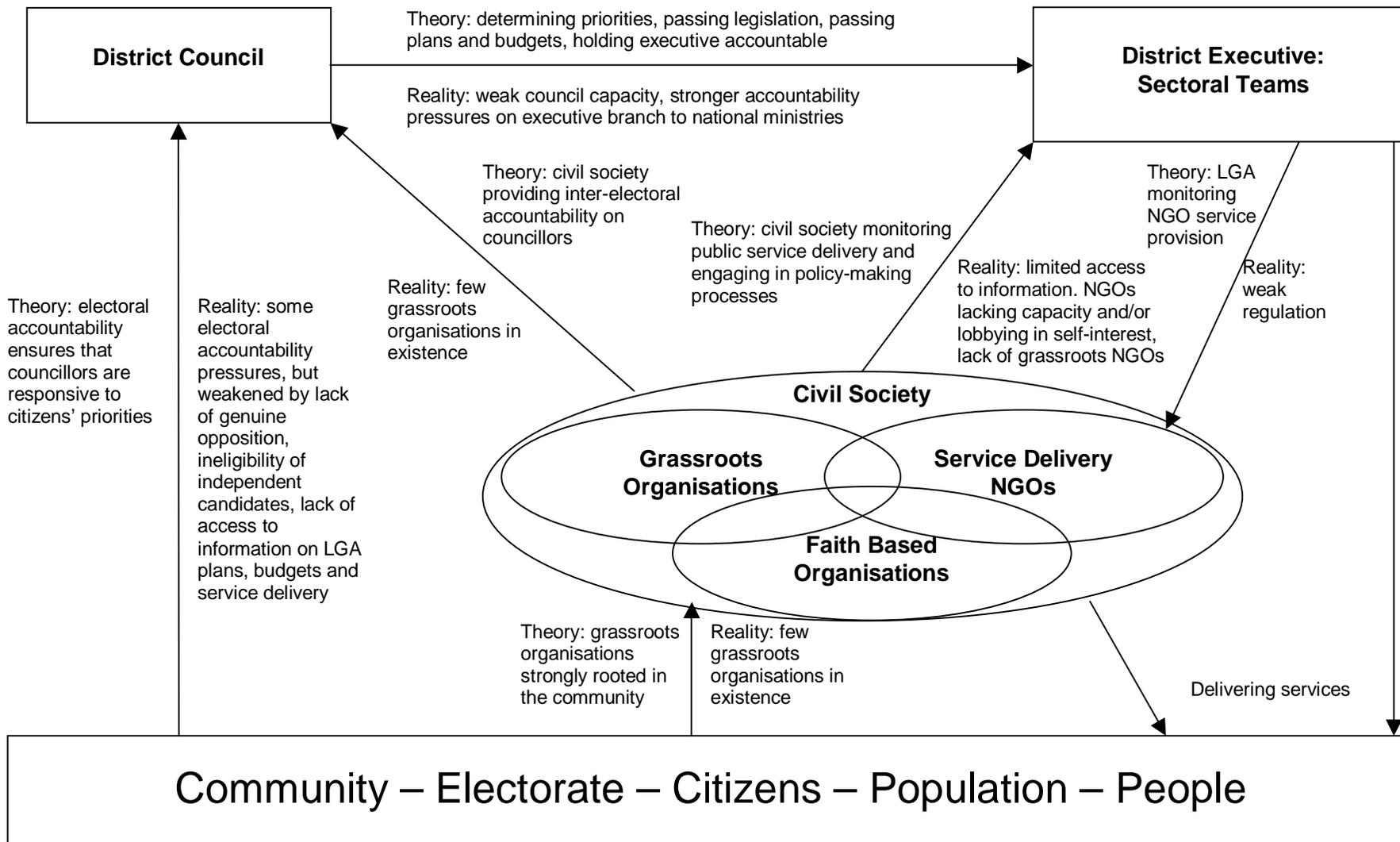
Two main forms of demand-side accountability are envisaged to fill this gap, neither of which is currently acting effectively: the public interest represented first through the elected council and second through civil society. The media is also cited as a potentially valuable force for local government accountability to the community.

Demand side accountability through elected representatives depends upon two forms of accountability working in tandem: citizens holding elected representatives accountable and those representatives holding the executive teams accountable. At present, limited electoral choice and few functioning inter-electoral forms of accountability on councillors mean that the first link in this accountability chain is weak (Gaventa, 2002). Between councillors and the executive teams there are three factors that weaken accountability pressures. First, councillors have limited capacity to scrutinise plans and budgets (Steffensen et al, 2004). Second, there are strong upward accountability pressures on executive teams from national ministries, as described above. Third, the general understanding of and discourse around the roles of councillors does not include a strong challenge function.

District level civil society lacks both capacity and willingness to engage with LGAs on policy matters, and there are serious questions as to whether local civil society truly represents the interests of the community anyway – the majority of district level civil society organisations are service delivery organisations responsive to the market for NGO funding rather than grassroots organisations representing the community and responsive to their needs and priorities.

This theory and reality of accountability mechanisms is shown in figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 – Theory and reality in LGA accountability mechanisms



6. National policy environment

Three areas of national-level policy debates are of direct relevance to Daraja's proposed work in Tanzania. These are the decentralisation and local government reforms described above (section 5), the roles of state and non-state actors in delivering services, and governance debates, including the roles played by civil society in governance. This chapter will consider the two remaining areas in turn, looking at the current state of policy and practice as well as current debates on the future direction of policy.

6.1 The roles of state and non-state actors in service delivery

A dominant view regarding the roles of state and non-state actors in service delivery in Tanzania has emerged, although with some disagreement and some different emphases between actors. Where economically viable, private sector participation is broadly, although not universally, accepted as the most efficient means of delivering services. In such cases, the state has an important role to play in regulation: setting standards and monitoring to ensure a pro-poor focus. Where low market potential limits private sector interest, the state (generally LGAs) takes the lead in providing services directly, with NGOs and faith based organisations (FBOs) are encouraged to play a role in service provision. In this situation, the state has a role in coordinating different actors, setting and maintaining standards and monitoring. The prominent proponents of this model include the national and local government and the World Bank.

The few voices that are heard against this dominant view come primarily from the international NGO community, some other development partners (notably DFID), and a small number of national NGOs. In the case of private sector service delivery, there has been some concern voiced about whether the state has the capacity and weight to effectively regulate for pro-poor services. In the case of NGOs, concern is voiced that NGOs do not wish to become simply contractors to the state, thereby jeopardising their independence. Their ability to monitor and comment on government activity, to innovate and develop new approaches to service delivery, and to plan and implement programmes according to their own values would all be threatened.

There are undoubtedly problems with how the dominant view is implemented in practice. Of particular interest to Daraja is that the state at all levels regularly fails to fulfil its regulation and coordination roles, commonly taking the view that any service delivered by another actor justifies the state taking its investments elsewhere, whether or not the service meets official standards. As an example, the presence of a mission hospital in a community will be used to argue that the area is served, despite the mission implementing services according to its own priorities and principles (such as not providing family planning services) rather than according to government policy.

6.2 Governance and the role of civil society

Governance has been a major subject of debate in Tanzania in recent years. Led by the development partners, international NGOs, a small elite group of Dar-based

national NGOs, and some individual academics, a principle focus of the debate has been on how to promote demand-side accountability to substitute the challenge function that is currently played primarily by the development partners with something indigenous, and therefore more legitimate and sustainable. Within this, debates have focussed on democratisation, access to information, the role of the media and the role of civil society. While the last of these is of most interest to Daraja, and will be covered here in most detail, the other debates are also pertinent, and will be covered first.

Development partners and NGOs have been understandably reluctant to openly intervene in electoral and political party processes. However, there has been some commentary from academics and other public figures on the need for a stronger opposition to provide a meaningful challenge function, and calling for independent candidates to be made eligible for election for president, parliament, district council and village council (Shivji and Peter, 2000; Shivji, 2004; Gaventa, 2002).

Development partners and NGOs have been far more forthcoming about the need for transparency in planning, budgeting and reporting processes. Development partners have argued for joint sector reviews that involve civil society. Civil society has also been involved in public expenditure review processes (e.g. PEFAR, 2006b). As a result, while public access to national government plans, budgets, accounts and performance reports remains difficult the situation is undoubtedly improving. Some less substantial improvements have been also made at district level, although access to information at district and especially sub-district levels remains very difficult (PEFAR, 2006b).

The media's role in scrutinising government is widely espoused in theory (e.g. see Bgoya, 2005), but rarely operates effectively. It is unclear whether the media's failure to present a serious challenge function to government is down to limited capacity, deference to authority or a fear of reprisal – it is most likely a combination of these factors. While media confidence to scrutinise, challenge and present an independent voice is growing, this has yet to be tested by any high profile media-government battles. In addition, what media scrutiny is there is entirely at national level – there is almost no media coverage of district level government and below.

There is a substantial variance of views on the role of NGOs in advocacy. The most prominent view within government is that NGOs should primarily support government in delivering services in line with government policy, and that any advocacy work should be in partnership with government, constructively contributing to improving policy based on practical experience and additional policy expertise – experience and usefulness as the qualifications that legitimise advocacy work. More confrontational advocacy based on scrutiny of policy, budgets and performance or representation of contrary perspectives and priorities lacks legitimacy in the eyes of many government officials.

Development partners, on the other hand, see a major role for civil society in providing scrutiny and demand-side accountability. As such, they have made substantial efforts to encourage the role of civil society in providing scrutiny of government. This includes providing substantial funds to the few national and international NGOs with the capacity and inclination to challenge government. Of more direct relevance to Daraja is the establishment of a foundation, the *Foundation for Civil Society*, to provide funds to smaller NGOs, grassroots organisations and even the media to raise public awareness of policies and laws, promote monitoring and policy engagement, and strengthen demand-side accountability. To date, these

approaches have had only minimal effect, and several limitations of the approach can be identified:

- A significant part of what challenge has been provided by civil society has come from international NGOs with dubious legitimacy for such activities and which do not command the attention of elected representatives.
- The Tanzanian NGOs that have taken steps to scrutinise government are few in number and generally specialist advocacy NGOs, therefore again fail to command the attention of elected politicians.
- There is limited capacity in Tanzania for scrutinising policy, legislation, budgets and performance data.
- The majority of indigenous NGOs in Tanzania are primarily service delivery NGOs responding to the market for funds, which requires official support, and are therefore reluctant to criticise the same government that provides them with their income.
- There is very little by way of the mass membership or grassroots civil society organisations that would offer greater legitimacy and would force elected representatives to take note.
- The culture of deference to government remains strong, resulting in a reluctance to engage critically on the part of civil society, and highly sensitive and reactionary responses to the criticism that is presented on the part of government. This is linked to the differing views of the role of civil society (see 6.1 above), whereby the government's perspective is that NGOs should be delivering services and supporting government policy rather than presenting a challenge function (see HakiElimu case study).
- There is almost no civil society scrutiny of government activity at or below district level (although see case studies below).
- Current efforts to achieve demand-side accountability through NGOs tend to run parallel to democratic and electoral systems rather aiming to strengthen these systems. This further undermines the legitimacy of NGO advocacy and misses an opportunity to contribute both to demand-side accountability and to democratisation.

In response to these failures and obstacles, development partners, national and international NGOs are actively looking for new ways to promote demand-side accountability both at national and lower levels of government. This is obviously of significant importance to Daraja, since it represents both funding opportunities and an eager audience for any lessons that Daraja might learn.

Box 6.1 – Examples of NGO policy advocacy

1 – Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP): land law campaign

TGNP, a national NGO with strong international connections, scored one of the few substantive advocacy successes in Tanzania to date – a change in land ownership and inheritance law so that women and men have equal rights. This was achieved through mobilising a coalition of gender-focussed NGOs, clearly explaining how land law discriminated against women and how this was inconsistent with the Tanzanian constitution. The key success factors were this constitutional inconsistency, the mobilisation of sections of the media behind the campaign and a strong capacity for careful legislative scrutiny.

2 – HakiElimu: State of Education report and Friends of Education programme

HakiElimu is a Tanzanian NGO working to promote accountability and responsiveness primarily in the education sector but also across government as a whole. They provoked considerable antagonism from the Ministry of Education when it published a report into the state of education in Tanzania (HakiElimu, 2005) in the run up to the 2005 general election. The report drew upon and analysed official statistics from the Ministry of Education and other government agencies to assess progress in the sector, identifying both successes and failures. The result was a high profile spat between HakiElimu and the Ministry, particularly the then Minister, Mr Mungai, with HakiElimu threatened with closure for breaching the restriction on NGO involvement in politics, and responding by reasserting their right to free speech. HakiElimu's exclusive advocacy focus, without any service delivery or capacity building activities, made it easy for the Ministry to question their legitimacy in the eyes of a general public that largely shares the government's view of civil society as a means of delivering services. Following the election, the dispute cooled substantially, and HakiElimu has continued to operate as before.

This episode demonstrates the government's sensitivity to criticism from NGOs, particularly in the context of a forthcoming election. It also demonstrates how advocacy activity by NGOs needs to be constructive, useful to the government and rooted in practical experience rather than simply providing scrutiny.

This raises the question of whether broad-based mass membership civil society organisations would command more attention from elected politicians. HakiElimu recognises this, and has put considerable effort into building up a network of supporters known as the *Friends of Education*, which currently includes over 5,000 members (www.hakielimu.org). It remains to be seen whether this will make any difference to the government's willingness to listen to the organisation.

The *Friends of Education* network also aims to take HakiElimu's advocacy work beyond Dar es Salaam. By encouraging a widespread network of activists to engage with decision making processes at district, ward, village and school levels, HakiElimu aims to challenge the culture of deference and build a culture of challenge from the bottom up – to shift the perspective of the public from mere recipients of services to citizens with entitlements.

3 – ActionAid, Tanzania Association of NGOs (TANGO) and TGNP: the public campaigning approach

In response to a number of controversial government decisions, these two Tanzanian NGOs and one international have attempted to promote public campaigning as a means of protest. This has included protests against bringing in the private sector to manage the water supply in Dar es Salaam, and protests accompanying visits from high level World Bank and IMF officials. The most notable aspect of these campaigns has been the low level of public participation – while the issues may have had widespread public support, the idea of expressing that support through public campaigns did not. The result was public rallies attended by few beyond the staff of the organisations arranging the protests.

4 – WaterAid: Advocacy at district level

WaterAid has been responsible for one of very few examples of trying to promote demand-side accountability at district level. Through conducting detailed quantitative

mapping surveys of water supply and presenting disaggregated data to elected district councillors, the councillors are empowered with the information they need in order to put pressure on planning and budgeting processes. Currently still in its early stages, it will be interesting to follow whether this approach proves effective: how the councillors use the data and whether this results in greater responsiveness to community needs.

From this, a number of conclusions can be drawn for Daraja. First, there is significant demand in some quarters for Daraja-style efforts to promote demand-side accountability and responsiveness at local levels. Second, there is likely to be resistance from government to Daraja's objectives. Third, there is little to be gained from campaigns conducted through public rallies and protests unless the demand for the approach stems from the community. Putting these together, Daraja should aim to be seen as useful rather than confrontational by government, to complement and support rather than undermine democratic and electoral forms of accountability, to influence national government policy relating to local government and accountability, and to influence development partner and NGO efforts to promote demand side accountability.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations for Daraja

This paper has covered village- and district-level governance in Tanzania in theory and in practice, using village HIV/AIDS governance as a particular case study. It has also analysed the national policy environment in which Daraja will operate. This final section draws together the main findings and makes recommendations for Daraja's future research, intervention and long term overarching strategies accordingly.

7.1 Summary of key findings

Village governance in practice differs greatly from village governance in theory. In theory, the village council and associated institutions provide an arena for determining local needs and priorities and for legislating and allocating resources accordingly. In practice, village governance is dominated by a strong executive function that primarily implements the decisions of higher levels of government, and does so forcefully. Access to information, public consultation and debate and public challenge are not perceived by government officials either as legitimate rights or as valuable means of improving government performance. This is the case both for overall village government and for sectoral governance. Sexual and financial corruption by village officials is reportedly widespread. The community is largely resigned to this situation: all this is not merely expected, but even accepted by the community. These cultures of governance are a major obstacle to responsive and accountable village governance.

Capacity weaknesses at village level are genuine, but their importance is often overplayed in defence of re-centralising measures that take power further away from the community.

Nevertheless, the institutions of village governance have the potential to provide a responsive form of government. The institutions are broadly well designed, but overpowered in practice by the cultures of governance described above. In addition, there is some limited evidence of responsiveness stemming from rooted-ness that demonstrates the potential of village-level governance.

A similar situation is found at district level. As with village governance, strong upwards accountability pressures overpower any downward pressures, corruption is widespread, and local perceptions on the legitimate roles of different actors differ greatly from the theory behind the institutional design. Similarly, there are capacity weaknesses, although perhaps not to the extent portrayed by central government officials and some development partners.

The national policy environment presents both opportunities and challenges to Daraja. Development partners and a small group of influential national and international NGOs are very aware of the need for demand-side accountability pressures to replace the less-legitimate, less-democratic challenge function that they currently provide. This need is seen as particularly important at district level, where it is perceived as the missing link in the decentralisation process. As such, financial and other forms of support are likely to be made available for the type of interventions Daraja is proposing.

How to bring about this demand-side accountability is not well understood. This presents a second gap for Daraja to fill: to innovate, document and share lessons in order to influence the direction of decentralisation and democratisation processes.

The main challenge identified here relates to confronting the interests and attitudes of different levels of government. A significant part of the unresponsive cultures of governance is the negative attitude of government officials at all levels towards transparency, public consultation and scrutiny. This could lead to considerable resistance for Daraja to overcome at district and sub-district levels. At national level, this could lead to Daraja being seen as a troublesome actor.

Lessons can be learnt from other civil society interventions in order to minimise these risks. First, campaign-style advocacy and high profile criticism of government is likely to provoke reactions that would undermine Daraja's work. Second, Daraja must ensure that any contributions to policy debates at national level are constructive and useful rather than confrontational.

A related challenge is that re-centralising tendencies, particularly from district to national but also village to district, could undermine Daraja's efforts to increase local responsiveness. Some engagement at national level may be necessary to lobby against taking powers away from local tiers of government.

7.2 Recommendations for Daraja programme intervention strategies

This paper has argued that district and village-level governance institutions are broadly well designed, and that the lack of responsiveness they demonstrate is in large part due to norms and expectations of local governance that obstruct intended accountability mechanisms. This leads to some important recommendations for Daraja's programme intervention strategies:

General recommendations

- *Work at district as well as village level* – The importance of district level government in service delivery and resource allocation means that there would be considerable benefit to be gained from working to improve responsiveness at district level. The interest of development partners, national government and NGOs in demand-side accountability at district level suggests that working at that level would be likely to have a greater impact on national policy debates and could attract significant financial support.
- *Build on existing institutions and accountability mechanisms* – Daraja's interventions should be designed to make existing institutions and accountability mechanisms work more effectively, rather than to circumvent these institutions by creating parallel forms of participatory governance. This will also ensure that demand-side accountability pressures created by Daraja's interventions will possess legitimacy and contribute to democratisation.
- *Strengthen inter-electoral accountability pressures* – Promote mechanisms by which the community can scrutinise local government and make its priorities clear to between election periods. This could include promoting local media, transparency, and public debate.

- *Aim to change the cultures of governance* – Increasing responsiveness will, in large part, depend on changing the cultures of local governance. This means changing the perceptions of government officials, elected representatives and the general population towards the legitimate roles of different actors in local governance.
- *Demonstrate the benefits of responsiveness* – Perceptions are unlikely to change through civic education and awareness raising activities alone. Efforts will need to be made to support community members and leaders in putting new ideas on roles into practice and demonstrating that this can increase responsiveness.

Working with the community

- *Build community capacity to engage* – On the side of the community, interventions should encourage and build the capacity of community members to make their priorities known and put pressure on their elected representatives. This could include encouraging the formation of community groups, promoting tools to identify priorities and present them to decision makers. Pressure could be exerted through grassroots organisations, religious institutions, local media, local information sharing, public meetings, or any other means suggested by the community.
- *Build on local rooted-ness* – The responsiveness that appears to stem from rooted-ness suggests means by which community members can exert pressure, particularly at village level. In particular, personal connections could be harnessed to influence local decision makers such as CCM committee members.

Working with local government

- *Build the capacity of elected representatives* – Interventions should encourage and build the capacity of elected representatives to respond to community needs and priorities. This should include increasing their understanding of their powers to legislate and scrutinise plans and budgets and building their capacity to do the same, as well as building their capacity to engage with the community and listen to their demands. It should encourage elected representatives to see responding to community needs and priorities as the best means of ensuring re-election.
- *Use capacity building as a means to change local officials' attitudes* – capacity building will be seen as less threatening to local officials than efforts to change attitudes. It can therefore be used as a way of drawing officials in.
- *See local government as partners* – To minimise the risk of provoking government obstruction, interventions should see district and sub-district government as partners with a shared goals of increased responsiveness. As such, programmes should avoid using confrontational methods and try to demonstrate the benefits of increased responsiveness.

Promoting engagement and debate

- *Make it impossible for elected representatives to ignore public debate* – Promote public debate amongst community groups, the media, religious

institutions and others on key issues of interest to the community, and actively link these debates to electoral politics by engaging elected representatives and candidates.

- *Promote transparency and access to information* – Daraja should both promote transparency directly, by accessing and sharing information, etc, and encourage community members to demand access to information.
- *Avoid creating dependence* – There is a danger that Daraja’s role in promoting engagement and access to information could become an indispensable component of the process, thereby undermining sustainability. First, Daraja should not be exerting accountability pressures at local level but encouraging others to do so. Second, Daraja should work closely with local partners to ensure that the capacity and willingness to engage is transferred.

7.3 Recommendations for Daraja long-term overarching strategy

- *Capitalise on demand-side accountability debates* – The identification by development partners and some NGOs of demand-side accountability as a missing link in local governance presents an ideal opportunity for Daraja to make a valuable contribution to ongoing policy debates at national level. This also has the benefit that interventions presented along these lines are likely to attract significant support from donors and other stakeholders.
- *Frame interventions as action research initiatives* – Using interventions as action research to increase understanding of how demand-side accountability can be most effectively promoted will make Daraja useful and greatly increase Daraja’s potential to impact positively on the lives of the poor (by influencing actors with wider reach and influence). Monitoring, documentation and dissemination must be core components of the work, integrated into all interventions from the outset.
- *Build strong relationships with national stakeholders* – To maximise potential for influence, Daraja should aim to build strong relationships from the outset with PMO-RALG and the LGRP team, NGOs working in related fields, and development partners interested in local governance and demand-side accountability. Daraja should aim to be seen by these actors as performing a vital role in governance and development efforts in Tanzania. This will require high quality policy analysis and programme interventions.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

It has not been possible to cover everything of relevance to Daraja in this paper. Three areas can be identified where further research would increase Daraja’s understanding of the issues involved and provide a strong evidential basis for Daraja’s interventions:

1. Understanding institutions

A desk study to systematically review the statutory responsibilities, powers and accountabilities of key institutions at district and sub-district levels, including district councils and standing committees, district executive departments, division offices,

ward development committees and officials, village assemblies, councils, officers, sectoral committees, and sub-village chairpersons. This should draw primarily on research conducted by others, with only minimal additional research needed into policy documents and legislation. It should be conducted during the first half of 2007.

2. Governance attitudes survey

A quantitative survey of local government officials, elected representatives and community members covering attitudes to government performance, understanding of the roles of different institutions, democratic rights, etc. This would back up the highly qualitative findings of the earlier research with more rigorous quantitative data. For comparability, this would ideally build upon the Afrobarometer surveys on democracy in Africa (see afrobarometer.org). This should be conducted during 2007, drawing on a team of Tanzanian university students for data collection. It may well be possible to attract funding for this study, either from REPOA¹⁷ or the Foundation for Civil Society¹⁸.

3. Review of experiences in demand-side accountability

A desk study into efforts to promote demand side accountability at local government levels in sub-Saharan Africa. This should include tracking down documentation on interventions, including reports, evaluations, training manuals and toolkits, and produce a catalogued electronic library. A second stage would involve producing a paper analysing these efforts, drawing out common themes and lessons. This could be done by a UK-based masters student on an international development-related course, as their masters dissertation.

¹⁷ Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) is a Tanzanian research institution that provides opportunities for local NGOs to access funding for small research projects.

¹⁸ An organisation that provides funding for Tanzanian civil society organisations, including for research into governance issues.

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