

**TANZANIA PROGRAM**

**ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT - PORTFOLIO REVIEW**

**PERIOD UNDER REVIEW: 2014 - 2015**

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**INTRODUCTION TO THE PORTFOLIO**

This is a review of OSIEA Tanzania program’s electoral work undertaken in 2014/2015. The program engaged in the country’s general elections for the very first time last year, 2015. This work was guided by the second goal of our 2014/15 annual work plan, and overall OSIEA strategy which aimed at increasing citizen’s demand for, and participation in, credible elections. A total budget of USD. 1.3 Million was expended, with about 80% coming from the Tanzania program budget, 15% from other OSIEA programs, and 4% from the Africa Regional Office (AfRO). One grant was co-funded with the Embassy of Denmark and the Canadian High Commission to a tune of about USD. 1 Million.

**CONTEXT**

As is true of many countries in Eastern Africa, elections in Tanzania tend to be seasonal undertakings with most actors only engaging haphazardly as the voting day draws closer. Yet, elections are a cycle with components that warrant a continuous process.

The 2015 election was heralded as the first true multiparty election for Tanzania mainland. It pitted the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) against an opposition alliance UKAWA (*Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi*, meaning ‘Unity for a People’s Constitution’) leading to a shift in the political landscape of the country, as the two main presidential flag bearers were both strong and had a CCM history.

Regarding the legality that surrounds the electoral process, the legal framework for both Union and Zanzibar does not provide the necessary foundation for the conduct of democratic elections that meet international and regional standards.[[1]](#footnote-1) There are three main reasons for this:

1. The National Electoral Commission and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission are not independent or transparent according to international standards. The Commissioners are appointed by the President(s); moreover, the Union Commission does not have its own qualified staff at regional, district or local levels leading to divided loyalty among temporary staff hired from the local government to manage the elections; and National Electoral Commission/Zanzibar Electoral Commission (NEC/ZEC) lacks financial independence. Historically, the counting and tallying of election results has been problematic.
2. The Constitution prevents the jurisdiction of the Court from inquiring into anything done by the Commission in discharging its functions pursuant to the Constitution[[2]](#footnote-2). Furthermore, the court is denied jurisdiction from hearing presidential results disputes.
3. Despite the decision by the African Court, there is still no provision for independent candidates to contest elections in Tanzania.

According to NEC, the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) exercise registered about 96% of eligible voters though it faced a number of hiccups. NEC is also mandated by law to provide as well as coordinate voter education. It had invited institutions that wished to conduct voter education to seek permission. Voter education nevertheless started late and did not seem to address lessons learnt from the previous election.

Funding of election activities is stipulated in the National Elections Act and states that all expenses in the preparation of the register, the issuing of voters cards and such other matters as may be required to conduct the election shall be paid out of Consolidated Fund. There was late disbursement of funds, which also fell short of budget. Donor support to CSOs could have been more coordinated to fill the gaps. Police were more restrained in their handling of crowds during such a contested election. The media was also relatively fair in its coverage though work on media freedom needs to be undertaken. CSOs on their part engaged though limited capacities and lack of sufficient funds still remain a significant limitation to their effective engagement.

**OUR AMBITIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

Goal 2 of the OSIEA Tanzania 2014-2017 strategy is focused on increasing citizens’ demand for, and participation in, credible elections. This is anchored on OSIEA’s overall category of work on political participation and human rights. Key objectives include: a) civil society organizations demand timely amendments and implementation of electoral laws to provide for an independent electoral commission and credible elections; and b)increase youth voter registration and participation through the use of popular culture. Our overall aim was therefore to ensure that electorates exercised their democratic rights.

Being cognizant of our limited expertise on the subject, OSIEA sought the input of the Africa Regional Office (AfRO) Election Cluster in designing its engagement strategy. This resulted in several consultations, in and outside Tanzania with relevant electoral stakeholders in order to have a clear understanding of the level of their engagement, gaps, and possibilities for collaboration. These consultations were followed by a high level multi-stakeholder convening in 2014, and a desktop research which further helped shape the OSIEA Tanzania strategy for engagement. Three issues came out of these consultations:

1. Donor support to civil society organisations on elections was not adequate especially for those focused on civic and voter education.
2. A limited number of civil society groups had the right capacities to engage with the process effectively.
3. There was great mistrust amongst actors including CSOs, political parties and electoral management bodies, especially towards the electoral commissions, hence unwillingness to collaborate.

In an effort to address the issues above, while remaining true to our overall goal and bearing in mind our limited budget, OSIEA opted to invest in:

1. Supporting civic and voter education initiatives focused especially on youth who form a large part of the population; and
2. Supporting a collaborative framework which would ensure a joint CSOs initiative that cooperates with key EMBs and donor partners to monitor and engage with the electoral process.

**OUR PLACE**

This having been the country’s fifth general election, a multitude of actors was already at play with significant investments in the process by 2014. OSIEA‘s contribution was focused on merely filling the gaps.

The Democratic Empowerment Project under UNDP managed a joint donor basket fund, and received about USD.14 Million for the process with a large percentage of the money focused on supporting EMBs capacities (NEC, ZEC, IGP, RPP), and a smaller percentage supporting community participation through dialogues and access to information through community radios. Some of the Development Partners (DPs) who supported the basket included the European Union (EU), Canada (CIDA), UK (DFID), Switzerland, and Norway, Sweden, Finland and Ireland through One Fund.

The US through USAID also continued to support local election observation through its grant to TEMCO, and a joint grant with DFID to Oxfam in support of CSOs civic education and local observation under TACCEO. There were other smaller contributors like the National Democratic Institutions who mostly focused on technical expertise, and other international organisations who focused on peace.

The Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), a local grant making organisation, made significant contribution to CSOs participation in the process through small grants to organisations at grassroots level, thus empowering community voices and participation in the process. UN Women also supported women candidature and participation in the electoral process.

**OUR WORK**

We worked closely with grantees and disbursed over USD.1.3 Million between 2014 and the end of 2015, in grants focused on 2015 elections, internal trainings by OSIEA/AfRO, and convenings by OSIEA Tanzania. Other activities included commissioning a research with AfRO on key issues towards the 2015 elections that was meant to inform the engagement of different stakeholders in the area. We also had two advocacy visits to Tanzania and USA arranged in partnership with OSF’s policy centre in Washington D.C, OSF European Institute, OSIWA Nigeria, and funded by the AfRO.

OSIEA’s massive investment in the constitution review process in Tanzania right from inception made a significant contribution in empowering the masses to take interest and participate in the country’s democratic processes. This engagement with the constitution contributed indirectly to the engagement with the electoral process. A practical example is when we were making a documentary on OSIEA’s constitution work in Maasailand, the citizens there were heard attributing their eagerness to register as voters with the sensitization received from OSIEA’s grantee Pastoralists Indigenous NGOs’ Forum (PINGOs) during the constitution process.

The Election Convening hosted by OSIEA in September 2014 set the pace of our involvement in the process. Aimed at offering a reflection platform for key stakeholders, the high level convening was well attended by the EMBs including the NEC Chairman officiating, DPs, a representative of the Malawi Electoral Commission, Tanzanian CSOs and an expert from Kenya. It was at this convening that the idea of hosting a collaborating framework (Election Situation Room) was introduced with experiences of similar initiatives in West and Southern Africa shared.

The ability of OSIEA to bring together the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO) and Tanzania CSOs Consortium for Election Observation (TACCEO) under the Coalition on Election Monitoring and Observation in Tanzania (CEMOT) is considered a great success amongst actors in Tanzania especially within the CSOs fraternity. Working in coalitions proved to be more effective, especially in increasing capacities, avoiding duplications and accessing funds. TACCEO and TEMCO were among the leading coalitions that played a significant role in providing a public oversight role in the process.

The constant unnecessary warnings, which some saw as mere threats, by NEC to the CEMOT EOC contributed to a large extent to the centre’s inability to realise its full potential, especially on the rapid response system aspect. The Cybercrime Act was also used by the government to limit the use of social media by the centre hence limiting citizen journalism. Electoral laws were also used to limit collection and sharing of results. The raiding of the TACCEO Centre and the CHADEMA ICT Centre and arrest of personnel by the police created a lot of unrest among actors in the CEMOT Centre.

Recognizing the funding gaps especially to youth led initiatives, OSIEA focused about half of its budget on empowering youth organization’s involvement in the process and ensuring maximum youth participation. OSIEA takes pride in its grantee iDEV (Innovative Development), a small start-up that turned into a fully-fledged organisation through OSIEA’s support, for creating vibrant social media engagement by Tanzanian youth on the country’s political dialogue. The program plans to continue supporting this grantee to enable young people to hold leaders accountable to their electoral promises in 2016/17.

OSIEA’s advocacy mission to the US in collaboration with other OSF entities, made a significant contribution towards raising interest in the Tanzania elections, putting pressure on the Tanzania government to adhere to the democratic principles that ensure integrity and credibility of the process, and emphasizing the need for investing in a comprehensive post-electoral engagement strategy. A team of two key influential CSOs from Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar, together with the Tanzania Program Officer, spoke to key officials in the US government including in the National Security Council at the White House, the State Department, the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, as well as a CSOs roundtable and a public event with key stakeholders including international media organised at the OSF-DC Office.

The Tanzania office received requests for interviews by national and international media including Aljazeera, BBC Swahili and DC based radios. In order to raise the visibility of our grantees, OSIEA recommended various grantees for most of these interviews requested.

OSIEA has made efforts in growing its grantees. The Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) for example publicly recognize our contribution to their growth as we were their first donor in 2011 and have continued to walk with them to become strong members of the Tanzania CSOs family. THRDC’s role in empowering Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) with security knowledge and their efforts to secure the electoral process didn’t go unnoticed. Their coordinating role through the establishment of the CSOs directors’ group provided leadership at times of need, such as when TACCEO Observation Centre was raided by the police. The group continues to bring together CSO leaders and motivate them in many spheres of their work.

Despite limited human resources at the Tanzania office, we managed to implement our strategy successfully thanks to the endless hands that kept reaching out from within OSIEA/OSF. It is our opinion that co-funding outside OSF needs to be made more flexible.

**ASSESSMENT OF OUR GRANTEES**

Summary of grants towards elections between 2014/2016 are as follows:

**1. Tanzania Human Rights Defenders (THRD)**

Founded in 2012, Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) is a member-based organization with over a hundred members, both individual human rights defenders (HRDs) and human rights organizations. We gave them a two year grant amounting to $180,000 for Security Management and Protection for HRDs in Tanzania. In its first year (2015) of the project timeline, THRDC focused on security of HRDs and journalists for the 2015 general election, groups that are often at the forefront becoming victims of violence and intimidation by politicians and sometimes even government officials. This grant enabled THRDC to conduct several trainings across Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar on securing the electoral process with some key actors like law enforcers, the judiciary, and media. Most importantly, it enabled them to impart HRDs with skills and techniques to protect themselves during the process. The Chief Justice of Tanzania was impressed with one of their trainings for judges and committed to fund a continuation of the training. There is opportunity for continued cooperation with this grantee.

**2. Coalition for Election Monitoring and Observation Tanzania (CEMOT)**

CEMOT was formed by member organizations from the Tanzania Civil Society Consortium for Election Observation (TACCEO) and Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (TEMCO). We supported a one year project to set up the Election Observation Centre (EOC) that aimed to monitor and observe the 2015 Tanzania General Elections. We supported USD.709,178 with each of OSIEA’s country programs contributing USD.50,000 to this cause and later the Canadian and Danish embassies also contributing USD.1 Million to the project. The Centre (EOC) co-chaired by TACCEO and TEMCO, engaged at least ten thousand citizens in election observation and monitoring including monitoring the functioning of election management bodies throughout the electoral period and principals of democracy and human rights observation. The platform also offered an avenue for citizen journalism through short code and social media platforms. One of the key objectives of the platform was to ensure rapid response systems for EMBs, which was largely achieved with the police, who had their representative at the centre. However, success with the NEC was limited.

**3. Masoko**

We also partnered with Masoko, a marketing agency that implemented a project that promoted youth voter registration and participation through pop culture in Tanzania. With a USD.300,000 grant, Masoko hosted seven concerts around the country attracting massive participation of youth in order to provide civic education towards election day. This was a one-year grant. The campaign message “*Kura Dili*” literally meaning “Your Vote Matters” became popular through the use of social media and popular artists in the country. NEC partnered with Masoko and sent their officers for voter education in some of the concerts and group meetings.

**4. Innovative Development (iDev) Tanzania Ltd**

OSIEA supported a youth-led company, Innovative Development (iDev) Tanzania Ltd with a USD.170,000 grant to create animated political satire for civic and voter education towards the 2015 national general elections between April 2015 and March 2016. Founded in 2013, iDev is a start-up that produces multimedia and web based products that stir public debate towards issues of public importance. The satire series (39 episodes) was intended to provoke public interest and debate towards key governance issues towards the national general elections in Tanzania. Innovatively and very creatively, iDEV managed to create social media interactions between their followers and the characters of their show in brainstorming governance issues and the role of young people in the elections. They currently have over 80,000 followers on social media and an estimated viewership of about 5 million people. They are now looking at going commercial with some of their work to ensure their sustainability as the organization is growing and employing more creative youth. We are looking at supporting them this year in a project that aims at holding leaders accountable to their electoral promises, including the president and members of parliament.

**5. Tanzania Youth Vision Association (TYVA)**

Another youth-led NGO we supported in 2015 was the Tanzania Youth Vision Association (TYVA). We supported TYVA to conduct a youth dialogue in Zanzibar before the election, and a post-electoral youth conference in Dodoma with a parallel social media campaign to advocate for peaceful youth engagement in the process. TYVA held two meetings reaching about 20 youth-led organizations and ran a social media campaign reaching about 25,000 youths across Tanzania with a grant USD.10,000, demonstrating the impact that micro grants can cause and the need to strategize for more of such. Representatives from NEC, the police force, municipal council, young MPs and other youth focused organisations like Restless Development made presentations during the meetings. An agreement was reached to enact a youth manifesto that would address most youth issues, and also create an agreement with law enforcers to ensure continued collaboration.

**WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED**

* 1. Our engagement in electoral processes, regardless of undesirable outcomes/disappointments, is inevitable. This is probably the biggest lesson for the program. The role that our support played in influencing the process, albeit minimal, was very significant. As funding to CSOs for electoral processes by traditional donors continues to dwindle, it is donors like OSIEA who think out of the box and are largely focused on CSOs that continue to enable them to engage the public.
  2. Long term investment in electoral processes as a cycle rather than a short term activity is critical in influencing true reform that will ensure free and credible elections in future. Many laws, including electoral laws need major reform and this can only be achieved through long term and properly strategized advocacy.
  3. The collaborative framework of OSIEA and AfRO work should be encouraged in future so as to ensure that all actors are working to guarantee the integrity of the process. It is critical though that the initiative starts latest a year or two ahead of election day, and the secretariat is recruited at an early stage.

**KEY QUESTIONS/ FUTURE**

Q1. Reflecting on the situation surrounding elections in East Africa where a culture of impunity has been perpetuated by incumbents, does it make any sense to continue engaging in electoral processes in future? We are at a moment where it seems we ought to think outside the box. What are other ways? How else can we engage?

Q2. Would it be beneficial to start thinking with a regional outlook in strategizing for our involvement in the electoral process, and thus program for engagement regionally within OSIEA?

1. Tanzania is a signatory to series of international and regional instruments regulating the conduct of democratic elections which include: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights; SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections; Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women; International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; and Commonwealth Harare Declaration. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Article 74 (12) of the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1997, which is also reproduced in Article 119 (13) of the Constitution of Zanzibar of 1984. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)