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# Civil Society Pillar – Case on Women’s Rights Fund in Tanzania – Women Fund Tanzania (WFT)

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## Short summary:

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This is a Case on Women Fund Tanzania (WFT), a growing grant making mechanism aimed at accessing funds to women’s initiatives for promoting voice/capacity of marginalized women and visibility of marginalized issues including denied rights in different settings. Its vision is to see a Tanzanian society where women realize their full potential and engage in transformation for empowerment and social justice at grassroots community, district and national levels. At the operational level, WFT functions as an intermediary – which gives out funds it mobilizes as smaller grants to women’s rights initiatives at grassroots level, including those directed at raising awareness/capacities and promoting women’s leadership on water and sanitation issues. In addition to resource mobilization and provision of small-scale grants, the Fund supports capacity strengthening for start up women’s organizations and promotes movement building and strategic alliance building strategies with a special focus on linking grassroots women to national level women’s rights struggles for larger impacts. Within this setting, WFT plays a diverse and complex role in strengthening potentials for women’s capacities and organizing at local levels to demand for their basic rights, including water and sanitation rights and also work towards contributing as active actors in broader women’s movements through funding and capacity enhancement.

The Fund was started within a context where the majority of poor women in local communities in the country face discrimination and persistent gender inequalities caused by many factors, including economic disempowerment as well as limited organizing capacities for demanding water and sanitation rights. For example, significant number of women in local communities face shortage of safe water and have to walk for long distance to access it. This situation has been negatively affecting women’s sanitation conditions, especially in promoting their health and in increasing their time burdens. This is especially very disempowering scenario for majority of women as HIV/AIDS context<sup>1</sup> increases in the country. Yet women and young girls in communities are not empowered enough to organize for demanding programs from their leadership (local governments (Village and District Councils) or/and national governments/Water and

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<sup>1</sup> HIV/AIDS situation increases the demand for water use at the household levels, which often leads to time burdens to women and girls-whose role is to fetch water and take care of the sick person/s. This also means that such situation would lead to

Sanitation Ministries), which would address the disempowering situations surrounding them. Similarly, majority of women skilled or informed enough to play active roles in on going national level women's struggles aimed at promoting different women's rights including water and sanitation rights.

Within this environment, WFT plays a unique role of enabling-through funding and related interventions, local women's organizations and individuals in water and sanitation field to build/strengthen own capacities and stimulate their transformative potentials in different scenarios, developing a deeper understanding on their gender inequalities, organizing as a collective to address them, including linking up their issues to broader women's rights struggles at national levels. WFT focuses on empowerment -as it is considered essential ingredient in providing opportunities for (grassroots) women to build own capacities and demand their rights to benefit from economic, social and cultural development processes with regards to water and sanitation. Such a process, is envisaged to enhance (local) women's dignity and visibility at different levels.

## Issues addressed:

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The main issues addressed in the Case are on (gender) inequalities with a focus on women and girls within the broader context of denied basic rights, including water and sanitation rights for them in different settings. The details provided below point out that most of funded organizations are (i) grassroots based women's initiatives, mostly starters, though also some are selected and experienced national women's rights advocacy organizations funded through the on going "Women and Constitution Coalition", (ii) Most of funded organizations work on issues relating to: women's economic/rights rights; sex workers' rights; disability rights, adolescent and sexuality rights and women's/young girls' leadership rights, media advocacy on women's rights, women constitutional rights, organizing and coalition building.

### **WASH (inequalities, schools, health centres, refugee camps, women and girls)**

Women in Tanzania are yet to access their full political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights due to the discriminatory effect of the legal framework, including Constitution, adopted implementation and faced budgetary constraints. In order to achieve a greater voice and visibility in their communities and beyond, women organize themselves in groups or organizations to address some of the inequalities surrounding them. Such inequalities are, among others, limiting access to safe/ clean water and sanitation services to women and young girls. For example, while women and young girls are main actors in fetching, usage and storage of water, especially water for human use at the household level, the majority of them are not involved in decision-making/leadership in this sector. Instead, most of them are left with time, care or health burdens.

Within this context, WFT fund selected women's initiatives with the aim of promoting community dialogues regarding existing gender inequalities, including in water and sanitation areas, and also on how to address them. WFT also funds women's initiatives geared towards promoting women and young girls' leadership in their communities, and beyond including leadership (water Committees) for making decisions and demanding for effective implementation of water and sanitation rights at their localities.

Women's inequalities are apparent in their accessing of basic/public water and sanitation services in various settings including: for poor women sellers in local markets; sex workers; women living with HIV/AIDS; women living with disabilities; elderly women; school girls and in Higher Learning Institutions, others. This situation has been leading to women's further marginalization and exploitation, increasing corruption, including sexual corruption. In response, WFT has been funding women's organizations/

initiatives organized around addressing such issues for ensuring that women in these settings are able to enhance their capacities and skills for holding responsible officials/ actors accountable for safe, quality and adequate water and sanitation services with no marginalization or losing their dignity through sexual corruption, and others.

Limited or denial of women's access to basic water and sanitation rights are related to other gender issues/gender inequalities such as gender based violence, economic deprivation, limited decision making/leadership, ownership/usage of resources/assets, lack of relevant knowledge/skills and information, lack of engagement as equal citizen, funding and others. In order to provide a holistic approach to gender inequalities surrounding women and young girls, WFT fund women to develop a conceptual understanding on how issues of gender inequalities in water and sanitation link to other inequalities around them, and how to address these issues in a holistic way, including linking them to broader women's rights struggles. National women's movement struggles include promotion of women's constitutional rights, which include rights to water and sanitation.

### **Risks (mortality, economic losses caused by natural and human-induced disasters)**

Promotion of women's rights issues in water and sanitation is increasingly becoming an important agenda as climate changes issues become a reality in the country. This situation has major potential of affecting (poor) women more and creating heavy (economic and time/labour) burdens at individual, community and national level. The envisaged risk in this environment relates to how to continue generating interest of different players (governments, multilateral organizations, foundations, private sectors, communities and individuals on resource mobilization for enabling women, especially at local levels to address gender inequalities at different levels.

## **Tools for implementation:**

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### **Capacity development:**

- Funding the creation of spaces/sessions for outreaching, community dialogues promotion and partnership building between women with other likeminded initiatives:

WFT funded 35 local women entrepreneurs (food/vegetable, fruits vendors, others) promoting on economic rights, including rights to basic water and sanitation services in local markets, in two wards in Shinyanga.

The project was aimed at capacitating/training women in small businesses/entrepreneurs become aware on their economic/basic services rights as well as build a strong and united voice as they engage in advocating for positive changes in their localities.

Currently local women in these wards have formed a functional network that connects them to District level leadership, which has enabled them to share their concerns on faced inequalities through organising Dialogues/working sessions with Trade officers, Water and Sanitation Officers and others. This, for grassroots women, is an important achievement for boosting their confidence as well as voicing their issues of concern.

- To enhance knowledge/capacity of women groups organizing around water and empowerment rights at grassroots level-through funding MAMA SAMAKI/FISHERWOMEN PROJECT in Mtwara, Southern Tanzania.

This Project was aimed at awareness raising amongs 50 women fish vendors on surrounding gender barriers (GBV and in accessebility to water) in their businesses, and in empowering them to raise their voice on these issues with District level officials. As part of this, WFT funded fseveral trainings through a Mentor, who supported them to develop effective strategies on coalition building,

advocacy and movement building skills. Trained women organised and formed a network for engaging with leadership in the market, and in the District. Such efforts, has been leading to key changes in the way the local Market is organised and functioning. This approach has been providing instrumental lessons for other local women in communities.

- Funded promotion of leadership rights for young girls and women in Village/Districts' governing structures for raising and advocating for budget increase towards basic services for women and poor men (such as water, sanitation, centres for supporting GBV victims etc). Convenings/Learning sessions for reflections and revitalization!

WFT has been providing targeted funding to selected grassroots women's rights organizations working on rights issues on: water and sanitation, sexual and reproductive rights; sex workers and housemaids rights; women and disability rights; victims of sexual violence/GBV; sextortion/sexual corruption; and others.

Through the provided funding the above groups were strategically selected in different Districts and their knowledge and skills on leadership enhanced as well as on promotion of strategic alliance/coalition building strategies for strengthened women movement/s within their own communities and beyond.

Resulting from these efforts, Young women in Shinyanga and other districts under funding focus are actively engaging in Water and Sanitation Committees as well as providing leadership at District levels. This is a significant achievement as often women and young women in communities are not in a position to become active leaders for role modelling as well as for voicing their issues out. As part of promoting leadership for women through the funded organizations, WFT provided technical support through mentors, sponsoring them to selected trainings and link them up to some funders (especially groups working on sex workers rights). For example, we linked up Waremba Forum (sex workers group) to UN Women funding, and Faraja Trust to Search for Common Ground. WFT has also been sharing information on funding to some of our local level grantees and national women rights organization in general.

- Funding more than 25 women's groups (7 working on water and sanitation issues) to participate in trainings/Learning sessions/Convening on women's constitutional rights for their active engagement/ participation in on going Constitutional review processes in the country.

WFT provided a significant amount of funds to support local women's organizations/groups to become active participants in the national level constitution review processes taking place in the country since 2013. Through enabling local level women working on addressing different gender inequalities, including those in water and sanitation field, the Fund contributed in movement building strengthening initiatives - including enhancing strong partnerships processes between grassroots and national level women for collective voice and community dialogues creation on critical women's constitutional rights, where water and sanitation rights were made central;

Currently, several grassroots women are active members of a WFT funded national Coalition known as Wanawake na Katiba/Women and Constitutional Rights Coalition in Tanzania. This Coalition which has more than 50 women's rights organization has been playing a key role of making visible women's constitutional rights, including demanding for these rights to be included in the new Constitution (under formation).

As a major result of this engagement, the Proposed Constitution (awaiting for Referendum in April 2015) has included key and progressive women's rights principles (including water as a basic right) in its content. More rewarding though was the strengthened involvement and participation of women from local levels in decision making on national issues for inclusion in the new Constitution. Engagement of grassroots women for increased awareness raising/consciousness and VISIBILITY of women rights issues in the NEW CONSTITUTION is an important part of addressing gender inequalities in different sectors, including water and sanitation.

## Who is involved?

- Several actors are involved in the process of resource mobilization/grant making. Internally, WFT Secretariat/staff under the leadership of its Board, resource mobilize and develop tools (Grant Making Manuals and others) and mechanisms of supporting its resource mobilization and grant - making programme. One such mechanism is the establishment of a Selection Committee, involving key individuals/Resource Persons with skills and experiences on grant making, gender and various knowledge based experiences on issues under Fund's focus, e.g. water and sanitation, GBV etc. The Selection Committee is mandated by WFT Board to facilitate the selection processes of Grantees to be funded and report back.
- WFT Grantees at grassroots (and national) levels including those promoting leadership, community dialogues on water and sanitation issues and others, are also involved at different stages of funding processes: These include their participation during proposal development where Mentors work with those whose Concept Notes have been approved; during implementation of interventions under funding; during evaluation/feedback sessions on results/impacts of project interventions. Grantees are also involved in other initiatives planned by WFT such as National Forums/Convenings on funding/resource mobilization or Learning Sessions on key topics such as women's rights and constitutionalism, etc, and in selected networking/media sessions.

## What were the objectives of the intervention?

- The objectives of the funded interventions are : to enable grassroots women organizations and national level Coalitions such as Women and Constitution Rights Coalition to enhance their capacities/empowerment for ensuring that gender inequalities are addressed within different settings including water and sanitation.
- The objectives are also to enable the organizations under focus (through their participation in the Coalition) for ensuring that gender equality gains in the proposed Constitution are protected and implemented while capitalizing on momentum gained in the ongoing constitutional review processes to raise greater awareness of women and the public on women's constitutional rights, including water and sanitation rights.

**Implementation challenges:** Limited awareness/effective knowledge to rights based approaches to grassroots women 's empowerment initiatives, coupled with increasing challenging context (poverty) which limits deployment of rights based approaches by many women's initiatives, especially at local levels. This, at times hinders progressive and deliberate approach to funding such strategic initiatives. Other challenges include: limited funding vs the growing demands, especially from local levels, limited recognition of potentials of Funding mechanisms (such as Women Funds) in channeling funding to women for promotion of empowerment rights at local levels.

## Main task/activities undertaken / Tools used:

- Conducting preparatory activities within WFT (planning, identification and approval of funding themes and ending out Call of Proposal for review and approval, development of tools).
- Grants provision/grant management, monitoring implementation and results/impacts tracking.
- Funding Grantees Feedback sessions for enabling documenting, reflections and learning.
- On going resource mobilization processes.
- Linking local and national women for collective learning, reflections and planning for collective action through the Wanawake na Katiba Coalition; organised forums/Convening and other shared spaces with Coalition members.

- Linking local level women's initiatives with selected/potential funders for their increased institutionalization and visibility.
- Funding movement /Coalition building strategies through the Wanawake na KATIBA with a focus on promoting women's constitution rights, which include basic rights such as water and sanitation.

### **Main outcomes / impacts (what has changed?)**

- Increased level of funding for WFT grant-making processes to support women's rights initiatives, with outcomes of strengthened awareness and organizing capacity for women and adolescent girls in addressing situations of their marginalization, especially at the local levels.
- Strengthened coalition of women's rights organizations committed and capable of engaging with on going constitutional reforms for advocating women's rights in the new Constitution in Tanzania.
- Increasing promotion of progressive debates and community dialogues on women's rights issues, including water and sanitation rights at different levels.

## **Lessons Learned:**

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### **Triggers:**

- As the first Women's Fund in the country, funders such as UN Women, OISEA, Irish Aid, OXFAM, Mama Cash, Global Fund for Women and others had been supporting us, and some have taken us as an opportunity for them to reach more local women organizations through funding...!
- The country's context provide positive environment for WFT to respond to emerging issues from women' rights organizations through funding and in strengthening strategic alliances building objectives resulting into strong movement building processes in the country<sup>2</sup>.

### **Drivers:**

- Funding women's empowerment initiatives with a rights based approach has been raising awareness/consciousness and leading to women's VISIBILITY (e.g. on water and sanitation issues).
- On going debates within women's movement (public) on critical issues of concern have been raising their awareness/consciousness in demanding for constitutional rights beyond the review.
- The adopted innovative approaches in implementation, including partnership building and strengthened movement building (between national and grassroots organizations) enhances collective voice and promote action that is transformative and empowering
- Up coming Constitutional Referendum and Elections (2015)- is a space for promotion of women's leadership rights on women and sanitation issues.

### **Barriers:**

- Limited awareness/implementation approaches to rights based approach to funding/ implementing women's empowerment initiatives in water and sanitation sector, i.e becoming a hindrance to progressive and deliberate approach to funding such initiatives.
- Limited recognition of potentials of Women Funds as mechanisms (such as WFT) in channeling funding to grassroots women for promotion of women's empowerment rights at local levels.

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<sup>2</sup> The country is in the height of re-writing its Constitution, and this has opened up a number of strategic opportunities for the people and women's rights organizations in particular to organize for engaging to influence.

## **What has worked well?**

- Learning and consensus building interventions through organised Convenings, and For a enabled the participation of women from local level to strengthen their knowledge base etc.
- Outreaching and promotion of community dialogues has been enhancing conceptual clarity of women on gender equality issues under advocacy as well as support national and grassroots organizations to engage and influence the grassroots
- Media advocacy (training, press conferences/releases, radio and television shows, community radios) has been providing women, including grassroots women engaging in addressing water and sanitation issues raise their voice in public
- Supporting the formation and functioning of the Wanawake na Katiba Coalition has been fruitful and providing great role modelling especially on how women in their collective can achieve their agenda (advocating for inclusion of progressive constitutional rights/principles in the new Constitution, where out of 12 advocated women's rights issues 11 have actually been anchored in the Proposed Constitution.
- Supporting women's organizations to promote broader gender equality rights such as: promotion rights for sex workers, housemaids, disabled women, the elderly, women in entrepreneurship has offered key opportunities for contributing on creation of justice and equitable processes in water and sanitation communities.
- Potentially, funding focus on marginalised rights issues such as gender based violence, sexual violence, economic disempowerment, and related others provide opportunity for WFT to grow and link more substantively with women's movements' needs, especially at local levels.
- WFT is a (Learning) organization, where we have been able to achieve significant efforts in place strengthening institutional as well as individual staff's capacities for learning, sharing and contributing in WFT's processes. This is strategy that has been leading to shared learning, planning and participation of staff in major processes of our implementation.
- Thus far, WFT has gained positive profile and image on its role as an emerging Fund providing windows and related support (capacity building and mentoring through profiling organization's work, especially on the outcomes of the funding.

## **What could be improved?**

As a funding organization, we need to learn more and improve on documenting our HERSTORY-WHO WE ARE, OUR WORK/PROCESSES, RESULTS, OUTCOMES while profiling our grantees voices and issues. We have some plans to do this coming period.

## **The way forward:**

As a Fully-fledged Fund, we plan to further strengthen our strategies for resource mobilization, and our mentorship programme so as to be able to cope up with the increasing funding expectations in the country. We also plan to deepen our on going monitoring and impact tracking at different levels for improved documenting and sharing of lessons.

**Links:** [www.wft.or.tz](http://www.wft.or.tz)