

HOW NGOs CAN IMPLEMENT MKUKUTA COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

**A PRESENTATION AT A CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON MKUKUTA
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY DAR ES SALAAM**

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Introduction

- The strategy is meant to ensure effective participation of all stakeholders in addressing causes of poverty through sharing of information on poverty reduction initiatives, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring.
- The strategy requires NGOs to be senders of messages on the above aspects of poverty to different stakeholders
- The messages are to be sent through different channels such as media, government officials, policy-makers, IEC materials, meetings, e-mails, websites and so forth.

Intro -cont'd....

- Key questions:
 - How best NGOs can make MKUKUTA communication strategy a success?
 - What strategies can NGOs deploy to ensure the information sent out empowers different stakeholders to take action against poverty?
 - What needs to be done by other key stakeholders to enable NGOs to play its role effectively?

What NGOs can do to impact positively on MKUKUTA Communication Strategy

MKUKUTA Communication Strategy is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Increase public awareness of the MKUKUTA, Poverty Monitoring Strategy (PMS) and Budget/Public Expenditure Review (PER) among the intended target audience
- Place the issue of poverty on the agenda of mass media
- Facilitate and encourage feedback from the stakeholders
- Build consensus among the key stakeholders

What NGOs can do ... CONT'D

- It is well-known that the main cause of poverty is lack of effective communication strategies and methods.
- Studies over the past three decades have revealed that in many parts of Africa, most development programmes get little success because ineffective communication strategies are deployed.
- If the aim of MKUKUTA is to alleviate poverty, the information must be communicated in a way that will not prevent or deter target groups/audience from actively participating in poverty reduction activities.

How can NGOs communicate positively?

For MKUKUTA communication to have a meaningful impact:

- NGOs need to find out which means and methods communications work best and in what circumstances
- Eg: Not all the people in the country are literate, they have to make sure that those who cannot read can easily access MKUKUTA information.
- NGOs have the responsibility of looking for alternative methods of reaching them e.g public meetings, songs, traditional dances and theatre art instead of depending only on mainstream media which have limited capacities.

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- Involvement of NGOs in MKUKUTA communication strategy will have value if NGOs will provide information that will define wealth according to different levels of their target audience
- The information should not only raise awareness, but also empower different communities to take control of their lives and look for alternative means to their problems

Eg it is not effective to tell someone who owns 200 cows that he is poor when his child could not join secondary school because he failed to pay school fees. But this person might be empowered to overcome poverty positively if he receives message which will show him the benefits he will get by educating his kid if he agrees to sell only one of the cows to get money for school fees.

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- In a similar way, NGOs need to provide information that will empower communities to abandon cultures and traditions that reinforces poverty.
- Such traditions include those which deny women the right to own resources, wife inheritance, forced girl-child marriages and women's right to have a say over their bodies and their families in general.
- Such traditions in one way or another fuel the spread of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS which again goes back to causing poverty.

NB: Networking and Coalition

- NGOs need to monitor MKUKUTA information sent out by other stakeholders especially the government to see if it is sufficient and consistent.
- They need to monitor how the information goes out, how is disseminated-- does it use the multi-channel to disseminate information?
- Monitoring is important because the public need to be bombarded with information on MKUKUTA since poverty reduction is about change of people's mind set.

What NGOs should do to send effective messages?

1. NGOS must know the contents of MKUKUTA and their role in MKUKUTA communication strategy.
2. To organise themselves and plan ways and means of sharing information aimed at promoting MKUKUTA.
3. To learn how to engage with media effectively. For example how to write newsworthy press releases, organise press conferences and conduct interviews.
4. To monitor good initiatives and use multi-media dissemination of information to the public so that other people will emulate.
5. Collaborate with the government especially the overall coordinator of MKUKUTA to make sure that information sent out to the public do not contradict and undermine efforts to reduce poverty in the country.

Challenges

- NGOs need to keep records, data, testimonies and scenarios on MKUKUTA information if they are to be resourceful to the media.
- NGOS needs to budget for information dissemination activities.
- They need to have at hand contacts of most media houses for easy and quick distributions of their materials. Key questions to be asked are:
 - How many reporters and news editors know anything about my organisation? Do I have any contacts from any media house?
 - How often do I prepare and send press releases to the media and which media do I normally use and why?
 - What mechanism has my organisation put in place to collect data, information, testimonies which can make people change practices, cultures and traditions that reinforce poverty?
 - What budget is set aside every year for information dissemination on MKUKUTA?

Thank You
for your attention!

Good Day!!!!!!!!!!!!

