

Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)

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TAMWA is an activist's media advocacy organisation well known to many Tanzanians and beyond. It is a non-partisan, non-profit sharing professional media membership Association registered in 1987 under the Societies Ordinance Cap 337 of 1954 with registration number SO 6763. The association also in 2004 complied with the new Non Governmental Organisations' (NGO) law of 2002. TAMWA has two offices; Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam. The Zanzibar office is rented in Mombasa area near SOS, but the office in Dar es Salaam, situated at Sinza-Mori, along Shekilango Road, Kijitonyama, Kinondoni District, is the Association's own property.

Founding and membership status: TAMWA was started by 12 media women, but the membership has grown to more than 100 women journalists with minimum Diploma in the profession and three years of experience. Members reside from Tanzania Mainland and others from Zanzibar and majority of them work with various electronic and print media. Through experiences and trainings some of have become specialists in gender, human rights, media ethics, election reporting etc Others are engaged as public relation officers or communication consultants in public institutions and private institutions.

Vision: Peaceful Tanzanian society which respects human rights from a gender perspective.

Mission: To advocate for women and children's rights by conducting awareness raising activities for cultural, policy and legal changes/transformations in the society through the use of media.

Structure: To observe good governance, TAMWA has three main organs each with its powers and mandate. The Annual General Meeting (**AGM**) of all members, which meets in March every year, is the supreme decision making body of the organization. Among other things it determines admits and expel members, it hires and fire office bears and it determines the Association's long term plans (Strategic Plans), Annual Narrative reports and Financial Statements and external auditors.

To ensure smooth running of the organization, AGM mandates its powers to the Governing Board (**GB**) which constitutes seven members. GB among scrutinize performance of the organization on regular bases; that is implementation of Annual plans and unplanned issues that requires TAMWA activism.

TAMWA day to day activities are executive by **two teams of Secretariat**; one in the Tanzania Mainland headed by the Executive Director and in Zanzibar is facilitated by a Coordinator. Currently TAMWA has 15 employees and five volunteers. The staffs have various skills including gender training, project management, writing newsworthy press releases, developing communication for development messages, accounts, report writing, community mobilization, training facilitation etc.

TAMWA Strategies

In pursuing its vision and mission TAMWA uses variety of media oriented strategies including:

- a) **Planning:** Planning is given high priority at TAMWA. Plans are developed in participatory manner to ensure conceptual clarity for all key stakeholders particularly Secretariat teams and members. The plans include Long term plans (Strategic Plans), Annual Plans, quarterly plans and even activity plan. TAMWA believes that without proper planning- that is knowing exactly what objectives/results required, it is not possible to effect positive social transformation to improve the lives of marginalized groups especially women and children. For us even a story is planned to set focus, what is the objective of the story and what kind of information it should contain and where to source the information
- b) **Journalistic Survey:** TAMWA media advocacy work has become effective because our advocacy is evidence based. We collect facts and information through journalistic field surveys to establish problems on the ground, its causes, magnitude, impact and solutions from marginalized people's perspective. We also collect data and information through policy analysis eg what laws/policies say.
- c) **Bang style Journalism:** This is TAMWA home grown strategy developed after the country in 1992 opened up media widows. The strategy entails dissemination of same type of information to several media channels for the purpose of reaching maximum audience.
- d) **Strategic IEC:** TAMWA produces strategic Information Education and Communication materials to address its issues. Strategic messages are publicized through TV and Radio spots as well as posters and calendars. We also produce leaflets and special magazine - *Sauti ya Siti* to target rural communities.
- e) **Training:** TAMWA train journalist's men and women (including our members) on how best to cover issues affecting the lives of women and children based on our campaigns. Usually we organize training workshops for journalists and editors sessions at the beginning of TAMWA projects/campaigns. The aim is to ensure that as key actors they understand why the project and what role as journalists/editors and media in general need to play to make the projects/campaigns a success. We also train women politician on how best to deal with media. In 2004-2005 we trained 150 potential candidates for that year election. We also have strategically designed programmes meant to improve skills and academic excellence of TAMWA members. The programmes include Exchange programme eg Media Women Associations (MWAs) of Eastern and Southern Africa running effective 2003 which by 2010 had benefited **18** and Scholarship fund initiated in September 2005 and by 2010 had benefited **14** members to pursues Bachelor and Master degrees from various local universities. We also train women politician on how best to deal with media. In 2004-2005 we trained 150 potential candidates for that year election. We also invest in training TAMWA members and secretariat team to improve their skills and professional excellence. This is done through TAMWA Scholarships and Exchange Programmes.

- f) **Engagement with editors:** Editors are key decision makers in the newsrooms. Before we engage in any project/campaign we organize a two hour session with editors to introduce them the campaign/project with the aim making them understand why the project and the role of their respective media in making the project/campaign a success.
- g) **Coalition with like minded organizations:** TAMWA values synergy, learning and the power of movement in making a difference through advocacy. TAMWA is an active and respected member of a strong gender, governance and human rights movement in the country-Feminism Activists Coalition-FEMACT which recently launched Voters Manifesto-to put women agenda in perspective to political parties, individual contestants and government of the day and one which will be put into power after October election.
- h) **Choosing genuine development partners:** TAMWA does not raise funds from every donor. We choose partners strategically to make sure that only those who believe in women human rights from a gender perspective. They include Norwegian Embassy, Swedish Embassy, Finland Embassy and Danish Embassy.

Success in Increasing Visibility of women in political leadership

TAMWA has made several milestones . They include

- 1) The number of women in various decision making levels has increased. For example Members of parliament increased from 22 percent 2000 to 30 percent in 2005. Indeed, some women MPs have proved to be active in voicing in Parliament issues which affect poor and marginalized groups majority being women
- 2) The number of women vied and elected for Chairperson's post at the grassroots lection increased compared to 2004. By 2009 only 200 women were holding the post of village Chairperson, but the number increase to close to 600 after 2009 local government elections.
- 3) We are seen increased women presidential appointments in various sectors such as judges, Districts Commissions etc. By June 2010, three TAMWA members were part of DC team in the country. Two TAMWA members had become members of Parliament by 2009.
- 4) Reduced case of Female Genital Mutilation. According to 2005 Demographic Health Survey, FGM reduced from 18% 1995 to 15% in 2005.
- 5) Advocacy for the amendment of the Law of Marriage Act (LMA) of 1971 which allows marriage of the girl child below 18 years, a move which has led the governing promising to prepare white paper on the law.
- 6) From 2001 and 2008 TAMWA conducted media advocacy work on HIV and AIDS from gender perspective that build up pressure which saw the government enacting a law on HIV and AIDS in 2008. The law is crucial in addressing human rights issues in relation to HIV infection such as the need to provide PEP to the survivors of rape.
- 7) From 2002 to 2005 pioneered media advocacy initiative that in 2005 saw the Repeal of Zanzibar Spinsters, Widow and Female Divorcees Protection Act No 4 of 1985 which would sentence to prison young women becoming pregnant out of wed lock.
- 8) In 2009, TAMWA initiated a 6 year campaign on school pregnancy which so far has made an impact especially in provoking public debate on role of various stakeholders deg the children themselves, the government and the communities in reducing school pregnancy.

Challenges

- Lack of sustainable source of funding of TAMWA advocacy activities. Development partners usually provide financial support during the year of election which in TAMWA's views such support can make minimal or no impact at all because the end of one election is the beginning of preparation of another election.
- Media by and large is a commercial entity. Airing a strategic message for say one month can cost millions of shillings. Yet, TV and Radio spot messages are very effective in provoking public debate and action on campaign issues.

Lessons Learned

- Journalism, if strategically used, it is a very effective profession in facilitating social transformation. What TAMWA has registered as success in various aspects would not have happened had it not been that the association uses journalism profession in a creative manner.
- Journalism organisations as social pressure groups can play a key in social transformation to promote human rights and equality from a gender perspective.
- Quality media work produced by TAMWA attracts media attention and ensures maximum coverage. We have witness that even at times we would not expect media to publicise our press releases eg during General Assembly sessions, but quality story get published.
- Effective TV and Radio spot messages can attract local sponsorship. Eg ITV and Radio one in 2009 offered airtime worth close to 300 million shillings for a TAMWA spot meant to empower girl child to say no to pregnancy risk temptations. The spot is commonly known as SIDANGANYIKI.
- Engaging editors, journalists and producers as key actors of activist organisations' work, strengthens mutual relationship between non-governmental organisations and the media, and this has positive impact the later.

Strategic Issues to be addressed in the coming six years

The association has articulated major strategic issues to be addressed from 2009-2014. The strategic issues to be addressed will focus on women poverty, girl child education, women in leadership, maternal health and HIV/AIDS which also impact on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 1,2,3,5 and 6 respectively. Under the girl child education, the focus will be on factors which contribute to child school dropout and specifically the girl child school dropout including school pregnancy, child marriages, rape, abandonment of women and children, denial of widow right to inheritance, and other harmful cultural practices such as FGM). As regards governance, the Association's efforts shall focus on corruption. Today, corruption in more or less a culture in the country and its effects the strategic issues cannot be over emphasized. The specific strategic issues to be addressed include;

1) *Girl child education* Aspects focused on under this issue include

- School pregnancy
- Child marriage
- Rape
- Abandonment of women and children
- Denial of widow inheritance rights
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- HIV and AIDS

2) Governance

- Corruption in all forms

3) Gender equality

- Visibility of women in decision-making

4) Poverty

- Reducing Poverty in women especially in Pemba North and Unguja South where TAMWA is running a project –Women Empowerment (WEZA) in collaboration with Care Tanzania

5) Health

- Maternal health and HIV and AIDS

Planned results

- 1) The increase number of women in all decision making organs to 50% including ministerial cabinet, parliament, and village councils by year 2014.
- 2) 6,000 poor women in Zanzibar (3000 from Pemba North and 3000 from Unguja South) sensitized and access credit facilities to engage in economic activities.
- 3) Significant reduction in school pregnancy occurrences.
- 4) Reduce maternal deaths by 50 percent by 2014. (Current maternal death is 579 per 100,000).
- 5) Reduced cases of HIV infection
- 6) Significant reduction in grand and petty corruption cases.
- 7) Significant reduction in violence against women and children eg.in FGM, child marriages, rape, abandonment of women and children, denial of women inheritance rights etc. in targeted regions.