



Between 2004 and 2007 Tanzania made significant strides in increasing school enrollment, particularly in primary school. However, there were questions about the quality of education the country's schools were providing children. Civil society organization, HakiElimu, uses budget analysis and advocacy to improve education for all of Tanzania's children.

Photo courtesy of HakiElimu.

The following presents a case study of the impact that civil society budget analysis and advocacy can have on government budget policies, processes, and outcomes, particularly as these relate to efforts to eliminate poverty and improve governance. This is a summary of a more in-depth study prepared by Ayub Roba and Debbie Budlender as part of the Learning Program of the IBP's Partnership Initiative. The PI Learning Program seeks to assess and document the impact of civil society engagement in public budgeting.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION REFORMS: THE CASE OF HAKIELIMU'S CAMPAIGN OF 2005-2007

HakiElimu is a civil society organization (CSO) in Tanzania that works to ensure that all the country's children receive high-quality basic education. When developing its Programme Strategy for 2004-2007, HakiElimu noted improvements in enrollment levels, but identified a lack of attention to education quality. Based on these concerns, it crafted and implemented a campaign that led to significant improvements in Tanzania's schools.

## THE ISSUES: EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

Between 1996 and 2004 low enrollment levels led the Government of Tanzania to implement various programs to increase primary and secondary school enrollment. These programs resulted in impressive increases in access to education. For example, primary education enrollment increased from 90.5 percent of the relevant age group in 2004 to 97.3 percent in 2007. While only 147,490 primary

school leavers went on to secondary school in 2004, by 2007 the number had increased to 448,448.

However, enrollment was not the only problem in the education sector. HakiElimu's concerns about education quality drove it to partner with the Tanzania Teachers' Union to survey teachers on their living and working conditions. The resulting report, *The Living and Working Conditions of Teachers in Tanzania* (2004), highlighted three major issues: low morale due to low pay, poor quality of teachers, and poor working environments.

The report noted that half of the 1,383 teachers surveyed said that they would quit teaching if they found alternative jobs, and more than three-quarters said the salary was inadequate. About 41 percent of teachers in urban areas and nearly 80 percent in rural areas reported receiving their salaries after the 5th of the following month (teachers are supposed to receive their salaries at the end of the month), and more than half reported living in rented accommodation for which they paid up to 15 percent of their salaries.

## HAKIELIMU'S PLAN

Based on its commitment to high-quality education for all and the findings from its research, HakiElimu's 2004-2007 program strategy focused on engagement at three strategic levels:

1. At the **community level**, HakiElimu aimed to enable parents, teachers, students, and community members to influence decision making by facilitating their participation in local governance.
2. At the **level of the general public**, HakiElimu aimed to develop and sustain a national movement for social change by stimulating broad public engagement, information sharing, dialogue, and networking.
3. At the **policy level**, HakiElimu sought to broaden public participation in critical national policy-making processes.

## WHAT HAPPENED IN THE CAMPAIGN

### *Media and Public Education*

A key component of HakiElimu's strategy was to use popular media to educate the public and foster debate on Tanzania's school system. Its dramatic radio spots on the delays in payment of salaries and the other inconveniences that teachers had to endure to get their salaries significantly raised public awareness. HakiElimu also produced 44 popular publications and distributed them widely, ultimately sending out 1.8 million copies of these publications to approximately 24,000 Friends of Education, CSOs, and individual Tanzanians.

### *HakiElimu Banned from Schools*

The government reacted strongly to HakiElimu's campaign by issuing an interdict against it in September 2005 and notifying all regional and local government authorities that the organization was banned from all its activities in schools. Ironically, the

national debate that ensued further enhanced public awareness of the organization's campaign. More publicity followed when the then President of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, reproached HakiElimu for "misinforming the public about the state of education in the country." Mr. Mkapa also expressed support for the education ministry's ban on HakiElimu.

In December 2005 President Jakaya Kikwete came to power at a time when many articles, letters to the editor, and TV and radio discussions by journalists, citizens, and opinion makers had condemned the government's hostility towards HakiElimu. President Kikwete's administration appeared to be influenced by this public opinion when, after a meeting with teachers, President Kikwete formed a task force to look into teachers' demands, including late payment of salaries.

In an apparent step backward, the Prime Minister's Office issued a letter on 5 December 2006 prohibiting HakiElimu's publications and advertisements on the grounds that they were contrary to public interest. The interdict and this subsequent prohibition letter also sparked a debate in Parliament when a member of parliament (MP) demanded that HakiElimu be punished because its radio and TV spots disparaged the government. Other MPs, however, questioned the merit of the interdict. The media coverage generated during the debate also reveals that many opposed the government's encroachment on the freedom of citizens and civil society represented by its actions against HakiElimu.

### *Resolution*

Still seeking to lift the restrictions on its activities, HakiElimu published a booklet



## HAKIELIMU'S CAMPAIGN TACTICS

### Awareness Raising

- TV, radio spots, and short films on specific education-related issues
- Production and widespread distribution of popular publications for various audiences and on various themes, including what makes a good school, disability and education, and key principles for school committees (Many of these used cartoons to make them more accessible)

### Engagement

- Mobilizing the country-wide Friends of Education network to ask questions, write, organize, and advocate for quality education and responsible management of education funds
- Advocating on various education and budget policies
- Direct engagement with government officials, either face-to-face or in stakeholders' consultative meetings

### Research and Analysis

- Research on the state of schools, teachers' working conditions, and learning processes
- Policy analysis on a range of education and budget policies
- Monitoring and analysis of media articles

in 2006 titled: *HakiElimu Inapotosha Elimu? (Is HakiElimu Misleading the Public on Education?)*. It contained 32 feature articles, 10 editorials from national newspapers, 22 letters to the editor, 16 statements from CSOs, and 23 news stories about the interdict.

On 6 February 2007 representatives of HakiElimu went to the capital city Dodoma to meet with the Prime Minister, Edward Lowassa and several other ministers, including Education Minister Joseph Mungai. After detailed discussions, Mr. Lowassa committed to lifting the ban on HakiElimu, and on 6 August 2007 HakiElimu received a letter from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training informing it that the ban had been lifted.

The letter, according to HakiElimu's current Executive Director Elizabeth Missokia stated that the ban was being lifted because "the organization had shown positive and constructive activities" since the ban had been issued. In an interview for this study, Mr. Lowassa, now no longer prime minister, said the ban had been lifted because the government had "overreacted."

In 2007 HakiElimu contacted the finance minister with a proposal on how to solve the delays in teachers' salaries, which the ministers of finance and education ultimately acted on.

## WERE THE CHANGES DUE TO THE CAMPAIGN?

Following the interdiction, HakiElimu continued its public campaign to improve education quality, while simultaneously indicating its willingness to engage with government. After President Kikwete had been elected, this willingness was rewarded when the government started consulting HakiElimu on how to address problems in education. Subsequently government instituted several reforms that



## OUTCOMES RELATED TO THE CAMPAIGN

- In January 2007 the government increased the minimum wage for teachers from 80,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$ 60) to 100,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$ 75).  
*Source: Tanzania Teachers Government Salary Scale (2007)*
- Since 2007 teachers have been getting their salaries before the end of month and with fewer hassles.
- The number of teachers employed in primary schools increased from 135,013 in 2005 to 154,895 in 2008, while the number of government primary schools increased from 14,257 to 15,673 and secondary schools from 1,202 to 3,039.  
*Source: Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (2009)*
- The teacher-pupil ratio in primary schools decreased from 1:56 in 2005 to 1:52 in 2006.  
*Source: Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (2005, 2006)*
- Increased awareness of teachers' welfare and training and a more open debate over these issues.
- Journalists wrote more than 1,000 articles about the state of education in the country, HakiElimu contacted more than 2,000 sources, mostly ordinary people, for their views on different aspects of education.  
*Source: HakiElimu Media Unit*

addressed some of the key issues highlighted by HakiElimu's campaign, particularly those related to teachers' welfare. Reforms addressing these issues are a strong indication of the impact of HakiElimu's campaign, as they had been highlighted in the first steps of the campaign, through the survey of teachers.

To investigate the question of the campaign's overall contribution to these education reforms, interviews and discussions were held with 42 individuals, including five HakiElimu staff members, five government officials and politicians, five members of the campaign's broader coalition, seven members of the community with an interest in developments in the education sector, and 20 teachers and pupils.

All respondents were familiar with HakiElimu and its objectives and

activities. The majority felt that HakiElimu had created greater awareness and had helped generate public debate on issues related to quality education. Most linked the changes that took place in the education sector, and particularly the improvement of teachers' welfare, to HakiElimu's campaign.

Several of those interviewed pointed to specific cases in which the government's actions were a direct response to HakiElimu's campaign. These included an instance when HakiElimu had alerted the government to the fact that certain local authorities had not utilized Primary Education Development Programme funds allocated to them to construct classrooms. Two government interviewees confirmed that the government had not been aware of these facts. It was also evident from interviews that the government's

decision to train more teachers had resulted from the widespread public debate about the quality of hastily constructed ward secondary schools that lacked teachers.

Some respondents referred to achievements beyond those related to teachers. For example, pupils said that HakiElimu's campaign on children's rights had worked well and that pupils were no longer being caned. Further, they felt that HakiElimu's campaign for the rights of children with disabilities had been successful because these children were now catered for in terms of access and facilities, although there were still some shortcomings.

While acknowledging HakiElimu's impact, government respondents expressed strong reservations about



As part of its efforts to raise public awareness about the need to improve the quality of education in Tanzania's schools, HakiElimu posted billboards in high traffic spots. This one, in the Mwanjelwa Market, asks "Can you learn by yourself?"

Photo courtesy of HakiElimu.

HakiElimu's general approach. Some government officials and politicians felt that HakiElimu was a "donor-driven" organization that sought to disparage government in its campaign. They complained that HakiElimu was always "negative," deliberately focusing on failures and ignoring achievements. They felt that the organization failed to take steps to appreciate what the government had done to improve education and did not appreciate that achieving high-quality education would take time.

## OTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

While there is general consensus that HakiElimu's campaign contributed to increased awareness of education quality issues and brought about changes, there are several other factors that could help explain improvements in education.

In 2005, when the Mkapa government banned HakiElimu activities, the country was approaching general elections and the ruling party was already planning to use enrollment gains as a campaign issue. HakiElimu's activities helped to widen the debate to include issues related to the quality of education.

Another factor was the clear support for HakiElimu by the Friends of Education and mass media who drove the national debate and initiated various activities aimed at improving the quality of education. During confrontations between the government and HakiElimu, other stakeholders in the country, such as political parties, media, and civil society organizations, also

showed strong support for the organization's campaigns. A network of umbrella civil society organizations such as Tanzania Education Network, Policy Forum, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations, and Tanzania Teachers Union also stood by HakiElimu throughout the campaign.

The Teachers Union also met with President Kikwete in October 2006 and presented him with their demands, including late payment of teachers' salaries. Finally, the donor community was also concerned about the way funds for education reforms were being utilized and indicated their intention of holding the government to account on the same.

## CONCLUSION

Although it is not possible to attribute all these changes to HakiElimu's campaign, there does seem to be strong agreement among interviewees about the catalytic role the organization played. Although it was challenged for criticizing the government's education policies, government would probably not have been prepared to engage with HakiElimu if the campaign had not created the pressure to act.

HakiElimu's campaign demonstrates the value of a multipronged strategy that incorporates sound research to support advocacy, broad efforts to educate and mobilize the public, and a willingness to work with the government on solutions. HakiElimu continues to use this approach in its ongoing efforts to improve education for all of Tanzania's children.

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