

Swedish support to Tanzania's Folk Development Colleges

Background

Between 1975 and 1996, Sida supported up to 54 of Tanzania's Folk Development Colleges (FDCs), modelled on the Swedish Folk High Schools (FHSs). Placed under the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), the FDCs were intended to provide a post-literacy stage for graduates from the national adult literacy programme. In 1990, the FDCs were transferred to the newly established Ministry of Community Development, Women Affairs and Children (MCDWAC).

Like the Swedish FHSs, the FDCs were to provide one or two year full-time residential programmes of general education along with skills training in technical subjects adapted to the needs of the local community. Graduates were expected to return to their respective villages to implement projects chosen by village leaders. The FDCs were also to engage in self-reliance and income-generating activities that would serve as examples for the local communities, and to provide residential and non-residential short programmes to meet local development needs.

However, the colleges were never full. Over the years, they evolved into vocational training centres for young people, who had completed primary school, and most of the outreach programmes died out. Gender bias in the curriculum was strong. From time to time, other ministries and governmental agencies used the colleges to train members of their own party or local and central officials such as village secretaries and other functionaries.

Building on a previous training programme in non-formal education for developing countries, Linköping University during 1990–96 provided – with Sida support – a staff development programme, named the TANDEM project, for the whole of the FDC sector, both the colleges and the Ministry. TANDEM set out to bring the FDCs back from the narrow vocational training centres they had become to liberal adult education institutions on a Western model. Support for the FDCs before 1990 from Sida concentrated more on facilities (buildings, vehicles, equipment, materials, etc.) than on staff development.

TANDEM consisted of a mix of inputs: a management training programme for the Principals and senior staff of the FDCs and Ministry staff; a “training of trainers” programme to develop a training group within the FDCs; a teachers’ training programme for the FDC teaching staff; a skills training programme held in the various colleges; some funding of college facilities; and a technical assistance programme to the FDC Section staff of the Ministry, including a computerized education management information system (EMIS). The project also drew upon contemporary assistance programmes, including a twinning scheme between the FDCs and the FHSs, a volunteer aid programme, and another equipment assistance programme. The project was managed by Linköping University with the close co-operation of the Sida office in Dar es Salaam. The evaluation team was unable to obtain from Sida the exact costs of the project but it appears to have exceeded SEK 43 million (approximately USD 3.5 million).

The evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned by Sida in connection with the planned phasing out in 1996 of Sida support for the FDCs, including the TANDEM project. The main objectives of this formative and summative evaluation were to evaluate (a) to what extent the project had met its objectives, (b) the impact of the project on local as well as central level, and (c) the sustainability of the project. The purpose was also to generate information of relevance to the design and execution of ongoing activities, and to decisions regarding possible future support.

TANDEM Project with the Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania 1990 to 1996

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Sida Evaluation 97/22

The evaluation was undertaken in 1995/96 by the British consultancy institute Education for Development. The team consisted of Dr Alan Chadwick, University of Surrey; Prof. K. Leni Oglesby, Universities of Lancaster and Surrey; Prof. Alan Rogers, Education for Development; and David Selby, consultant. Visits were made to Sweden and Tanzania. In order to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the training programmes, assistant local evaluators were used to collect data in Tanzania.

Of 52 active FDCs, 11 were visited twice and surveyed in depth, another 5 were visited or their staff surveyed. A large amount of literature was examined. The FDCs themselves had a major input into the evaluation; three of the training courses were attended.

Findings

The export of Swedish FHSs to Tanzania in the form of FDCs may be regarded as remarkably effective in view of the many social, political and cultural differences between Tanzanian and Swedish society, as well as the severe logistical problems faced from the start. The report attributes this success to two factors: SIDA's support over a long period, and the fact that Tanzanian society found a use for the FDCs very different from that of the Swedish FHSs, that is, as post-primary vocational training colleges for young people (what the report calls a VET model) instead of the liberal adult education/personal growth model of the FHS ideal (what is called the AE-FHS model).

However, as a comprehensive staff development programme for the whole of the FDC sector, the TANDEM project had limited success:

- The *teacher training programme*, which had covered two thirds of the teaching staff of the FDCs by 1996, had been the most effective element, affecting classroom practice of FDC teachers. In some of the FDCs, however, it was implemented in a mechanistic fashion.
- The *management training programme* had made management more transparent and democratic in several FDCs. In a few cases, it also helped them develop new and more accessible teaching/learning programmes. In other FDCs, however, the techniques were again being implemented mechanistically. The effects on Ministry staff seem to have been minimal.
- The *"training of trainers" programme* took place in isolation from other adult education training of trainers' programmes. A group of trainers in MCDWAC and in some FDCs was built up, but they had not been formed into a coherent training unit for the FDCs by the ending of the project, and their work does not appear to be sufficiently entrenched locally for the programme to continue unassisted.
- The *skills training programme* had reached most of the colleges but lacked coherence, and seems to have had limited practical impact.
- The *technical support programme to MCDWAC* had made considerable strides, but was not firmly enough embedded by the ending of the project for its sustainability to be ensured.

The report suggests that there are signs of some improvement in gender practice, most noticeably an in-

crease in the number of women appointed to positions of responsibility. However, it attributes this as much to MCDWAC as to TANDEM. There appears to have been no significant improvement in the FDCs' general understanding of the structural issues relating to gender inequality in Tanzania.

The evaluation attributes the limited achievements of the TANDEM Project to several factors, some of a general or contextual kind, others more specific or project-related. On the level of large-scale change in Tanzania at the time, the transition to multi-party democracy, the partial liberalization of the economy, the decentralization of local government, and the more market-oriented approach to adult education adopted by central authorities are all mentioned as developments unfavourable to TANDEM and liberal adult education.

A more specific obstacle to the TANDEM Project was the transfer of the FDCs from MEC to MCDWAC that occurred just as the project was getting started in 1990. It took more than three years for MCDWAC to finalize its own structures and to develop its policies. The project suffered from this unforeseen coincidence, which was exacerbated by uncertainties, ambiguities and inefficiencies in administrative procedures and internal rivalries that existed within the Ministry.

Another problem was that different agendas were built into the project from the start. Senior staff at MCDWAC expected TANDEM to help the new Ministry to re-orient the FDCs towards an alternative "community development centre"-model and, thus, away from both the VET model and the AE-FHS model. Some members of the TANDEM team were unhappy with this. The tensions between TANDEM and MCDWAC over the purpose of the project hindered an effective completion of the programme.

As a further complication, the Government of Tanzania found itself unable to continue to fund FDC courses, and in 1994 required the colleges to immediately become self-funding. This placed a impossible burden on the FDCs, demoralizing many college staff and, to some extent, undermining the training programmes.

Still, the limited success of TANDEM can apparently not be fully explained by these factors. Failures within the programme are part of the explanation. According to the evaluation, the internal shortcomings consisted, in the main, of an over-ambitious and unrealistic target given the limited time frame; a tendency to see the training as a single-injection approach to staff development rather than as part of a longer-term staff development programme; a failure to use the experience of the participants as the basis of the training programme together with some imported inappropriate teaching/learning materials; and a failure to identify and use local training expertise and experience outside of the FDC sector as a resource for continuing the programme of staff development.

The TANDEM Project came to be owned by only a small group of FDC staff (mainly in the colleges but a few within the Ministry) which TANDEM sought to build up and strengthen. Most of the college staff saw TANDEM as an outside intervention rather as a process meeting their own identified need. TANDEM stressed the distinctiveness of the FDCs and therefore

kept them ring-fenced from any other Tanzanian network (adult education, community development or vocational training). Similarly, TANDEM encouraged the FDC Section of MCDWAC to remain separate from the rest of the Ministry, causing further hostility within MCDWAC. The key issue here is that of partnership.

Despite the limitations of TANDEM, however, the study revealed that the FDCs continue to function as a national network of adult education and training centres which few other countries possess. The infrastructure of the FDCs is relatively sound, and the standard of staff development higher than in many other educational sectors in Tanzania. Most of the colleges have some long-term residential students, and several have started to develop new outreach, short-course, programmes. Understandably, however, there is widespread demoralization among the FDC staff caused by the almost simultaneous withdrawal of MCDWAC funds and of Sida support from the colleges.

Recommendations

With regard to any continued Swedish support to the FDCs, the report recognizes the commitment of many Swedish adult educators to the FDCs and the value of the historical links between these two countries. However, it suggests that it would be inappropriate for Sweden to continue to try to influence the FDC structure substantially. Such continued support as may be given must not prevent the FDCs from finding, within Tanzanian society, their own niche – which is likely to be very different from that of the FHSs in Sweden.

With regard to new roles for the FDCs, the report notes the revised community development agenda set by MCDWAC for the FDCs, and recommends that the FDCs and MCDWAC draw on the wide experience of community adult education which exists in many parts of the world, particularly Africa (for example, through the International Community Education Association).

Such education tends to concentrate more on short-term education and training programmes for village groups than on longer-term residential courses for younger-aged individual students. This will mean that the staff of both the colleges and the Ministry will need to develop new approaches to their work. TANDEM has begun to help them to do this, but its “participatory pedagogy” – with its emphasis on individual personal growth and on classroom practices – is less suited to this broader remit than contemporary community education outside of the classroom. On the other hand, MCDWAC will need to learn the specific contribution which adult education agencies like the FDCs can contribute to development.

Lessons learned

Within the lifetime of any project, aid agencies should be willing to adjust their agenda to changes in the local agenda: they need to ask throughout any project “whose reality counts?”. There are serious implications for any project when faced with different factions inside the country, and a choice of priorities needs to be made; in this case, between the interests of FDC staff – as perceived within TANDEM – and the views of the senior Ministry staff.

The report presented here suggests that to ground such an on-going training programme within its local context and to make it sustainable, it should draw upon already existing local expertise and experience, thus strengthening both the local competencies and building more effective networks within the country concerned.

The evaluation suggests the need for outside projects to be sensitive to local realities. The ownership of the FDCs in Tanzania belongs and will always belong to the Government of Tanzania; they are not and can never be autonomous adult education agencies as in Sweden. It is important to cut through the rhetoric in adult education projects. ■

Assessing poverty reduction and gender equality: Sida country reports and evaluations 1995–96

Background

Poverty reduction is the overriding goal of Swedish development cooperation policy and strategy. To “raise the living standards of poor people” has been the underlying, fundamental objective since 1962.

Yet, the explicit attention paid to poverty reduction has varied over time. Firm directives and guidelines focusing on poverty reduction have been lacking. The same holds true for gender equality, which until recently has been treated as a cross-cutting issue, more than a goal in itself. The sixth official objective for Sweden’s development cooperation, equality between women and men, was adopted by the Swedish Parliament in May 1996. (The other five are economic growth, social and economic equality, democratic development,

economic and political independence, and environmental quality).

In recent years, issues related to poverty reduction and gender equality have received increased attention. A Task Force on Poverty Reduction was established in early 1994. Its mandate is review Sida’s experience in combating poverty; to examine the needs and achievements of partner countries; and to develop methods and approaches through which the poverty reduction objective could be mainstreamed in *all* Sida operations. An important outcome of the Task Force is a Programme of Action for Poverty Reduction which officially came into force in February 1997.

Concomitantly, Sida's Gender Advisor and Gender Focal Point Network have coordinated the formulation of a comprehensive Action Programme for Promoting Gender Equality, launched in April 1997.

The evaluation

As part of Sida's efforts to improve and mainstream the poverty reduction and gender equality objectives, the Department for Policy and Legal Services commissioned a study to review the attention paid to the two objectives in evaluations and in Country Reports compiled during the first year and a half of operation of the new Sida. The study, *Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality: An Assessment of Sida's Country Reports and Evaluations in 1995–96* (Sida Studies in Evaluation 97/2), is meant to serve as a baseline for subsequent inquiry into the treatment of the poverty reduction and gender equality objectives at later stages, when the two Action Programmes have been implemented.

The study reviews 11 Country Reports – comprising Results Analyses, Country Analyses and Country Strategies – and 38 evaluation reports, all written by external consultants and produced between 1995 and 1997, i.e. before the two Action Plans had been adopted. It addresses two basic questions:

- How much attention is paid to poverty reduction and gender equality in Sida's country reports and programme evaluations?
- What can be said about the depth and quality of analysis?

Findings

The evaluators find that, by and large, scant attention is paid to poverty and gender issues in the reports and evaluations analysed. Somewhat surprisingly, given the long tradition of overall priority on poverty reduction in Swedish development cooperation, the analysis of poverty is not better than the much more recent objective of gender equality.

With few exceptions, they find attention paid to the issues superficial, especially in the evaluation reports. Here, the treatment of poverty is usually limited to a few comments on poverty based on simple income criteria, while the treatment of gender equality is either

absent or limited to some remarks about the situation of women. Somewhat more attention to the two issues is given in the Country Reports, in particular Analysis and Strategy Reports.

The evaluators note that the Terms of Reference (ToR) for evaluations hardly ever mention poverty or gender equality as major objectives of the project/programme being evaluated, and very rarely are the consultants asked to pay specific attention to these issues. In fact, in comparing the degree of emphasis given to the issues in the ToR and the respective evaluations, the evaluators find that the latter score marginally higher. They conclude that Sida has provided little guidance to the consultants as regards poverty and gender analysis, and suggest that there are serious systemic errors in the way the ToR are designed and the evaluations commissioned.

Recommendations

If poverty issues are considered to be significant in evaluations, the evaluators argue, it is essential to design appropriate ToR, to make sure the required competence is available in evaluation teams and that team leaders are able and willing to adopt an approach in which poverty reduction and gender equality are given adequate priority and attention.

Another issue is whether the relative neglect of these issues in evaluations is a reflection of the weak emphasis given to them in the projects/programmes under evaluation. While the findings are provisional, the analysis of the 38 evaluations sampled indicates that this is, in fact, the case. In other words, while poverty and gender issues may be highlighted in Country Analyses and Country Strategies they are often not at the centre of projects and programmes. The Action Programmes for poverty reduction and gender equality represent a potential for bridging some of the gaps between policies and practices.

Poverty Reduction and Gender Equality: An Assessment of Sida's Country Reports and Evaluations in 1995–96

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