

# **HAKIKAZI CATALYST**

## **DEMOCRATIC POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION: Encouraging Participation Through Policy Dialogue/Discussion**

*Emmanuel A. Kallonga*  
*Hakikazi Catalyst*  
*P.O. Box 781*  
*Phone: 255 27 2509860*  
*Email: [hakikazi@cybernet.co.tz](mailto:hakikazi@cybernet.co.tz)*  
*Website: [www.hakikazi.org](http://www.hakikazi.org)*  
*Arusha.*

## BRIDGING THE POLICY FORMULATION GAP

### INTRODUCTION:

A traditional leader living in a remote area was asked the following question:-

“If you had the possibility of choosing between a telephone line, a school or a clinic for your village, what would you choose?”

The leader replied “The telephone line, so that I can dialogue and lobby Ministers in the Capital about the school and the clinic”.

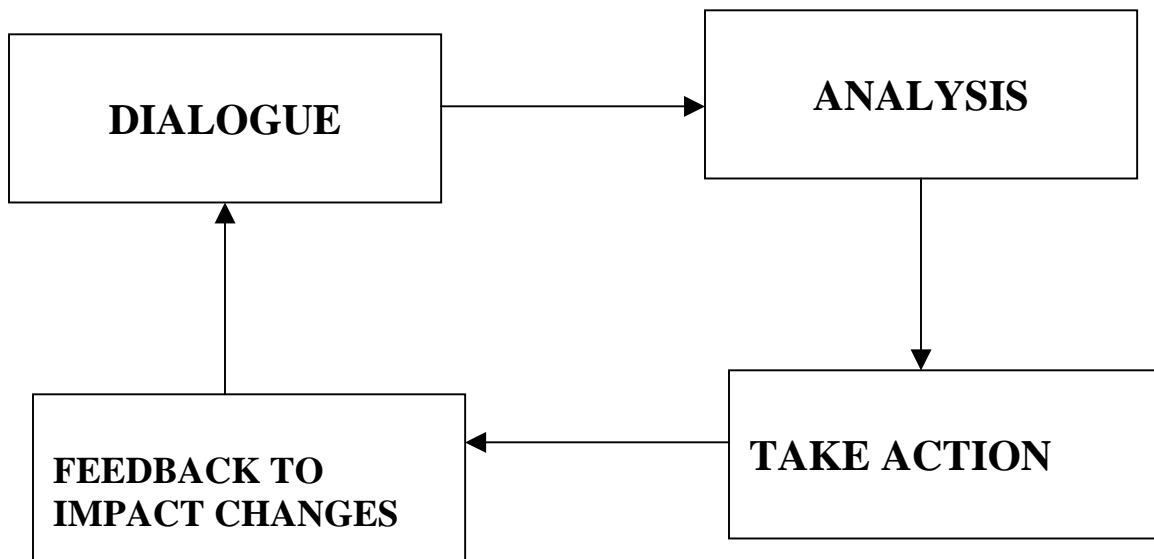
This story captures the central message of this paper: If promoted properly, policy dialogue can become an enabling means that ensures CHOICE and VOICE particularly for poor people to be included in policy making processes.

Why should we bother about discussing policies of our country? All policies claim to guide Tanzanians towards poverty eradication. Poverty is not an abstract concept or a macro economic notion. It hurts our fellow Tanzanians throughout the country, to the extent of affecting them physically and their dignity. The fight against poverty only makes sense when it is translated into actions. **It is the translation process that necessitates policy dialogue**

No real development can take place when you experience exclusion and marginalization during policy formulation. Poor people need among other things access to policy information that is vital to their livelihoods. Policy dialogue therefore underpins the evolution of democracy in the policy formulation process.

# ARRANGING DISCUSSION AND CHANNELING FEEDBACK

**Policy Discussion is a participatory process of 4 things**



## Arranging Discussion

Among other things this include

- Organising discussion sessions to create further understanding of popular materials e.g. PRSP booklets and to answer questions as they arise.
- Designing a questionnaire to stimulate feedback from particular target audience.
- Responding to telephone enquiries. This is a constant phenomenon.
- Establishing linkages with policy discussion points/centres e.g. village Government etc.

# STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IS CENTRAL

**Stakeholder involvement is central to policy discussions. The box shows the many categories of stakeholder that could be involved in both discussions to promote understanding and developing action plans and in feeding information into, or being channels for feedback of ideas and information to the relevant authorities.**

	Govern- ment	Private Sector	Civil Society
<p><b>United Republic</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regions</li> <li>• Districts</li> <li>• Divisions</li> <li>• Wards</li> <li>• Villages</li> <li>• Families and individuals</li> </ul> <p><b>The Isles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regions</li> <li>• Districts</li> <li>• Shehias</li> <li>• Villages</li> <li>• Families and Individuals</li> </ul>			

## STAKEHOLDER CAPACITY BUILDING WHEN DISCUSSING POLICY

Sometimes it is important to build capacity of stakeholders in order to create an interactive environment that encourages **Open Mind, Sharing Attitude, Creating Interest and Commitment** to an agreed course of action.

Practical examples have covered the following:-

- Introducing stakeholders to a policy document and in particular the popular version.
- Analysing vulnerability and marginalization and how they apply in policy plans.
- The role of the media in strengthening policy discussion.
- Reflecting on how best to organise policy discussion events.
- Designing an action plan for distributing policy materials and gathering feedback.

## WHAT CSO'S CAN DO TO BUILD CAPACITY OF STAKEHOLDERS

- Creating policy awareness (e.g. using 4-D model) among communities we work with and provide feedback on choice and voice of particular policies to decision makers.
- Building human and institutional capacity in policy analysis, demystification techniques, dissemination and participatory discussions. This task needs closer collaboration between macro level Government institutions, the private sector and the grassroots level.
- Building a culture of Information sharing, that helps to multiply information and feedback access points. However the efforts should not be about technology but about giving poor Tanzanians the means of engaging in policy formulation to improve the quality of their lives.

Strategies to promote policy dialogue differ according to target audience.

## BENEFITS

The benefits of discussing policy are multiplied when policy information is available to all. Policy understanding and reflection can be stronger when it reaches everyone and not just part of the population. Certain key benefits have been witnessed:-

- (a) Establishing a favourable policy dialogue environment builds strong alliances that involve all potential grassroots, national and international actors.
- (b) Discussing policy within the strategic points of making analysis, taking action and impacting changes can make the delivery of policy intentions much easier.
- (c) Discussing policy at all levels creates opportunities to expand the **reach** and **participation** if information and knowledge about policy is accessible. Hakikazi Catalyst has witnessed that consensus is emerging on the fact that when widely promoted, policy discussion offers enormous opportunities to narrow social and economic inequalities. Exclusion from economic growth is intensified where only a small proportion of people have created knowledge and understanding of existing policies.
- (d) Policy dialogue can also be a powerful tool for improving accountability and efficiency of the Government. Through dialogue people can learn participatory techniques that monitor policy implementation.

## OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

- We need to encourage more dialogue at district level (strategic level for local government reforms) in the manner that encourages better interaction between district authorities and grassroots communities.
- We have to find out who knows what about key policies.
- We need to help communities resolve conflicts, and negotiate on particular policy issues that contradict with others or with other legal instruments.
- We need to develop our capacity to respond in a timely way to Government policy formulation processes.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Among the issues that need to be considered in discussing policy are:-

- **Developing capacity:**

Continuous efforts must be made to ensure that our capacities (particularly for civil society organisations) to acquire, understand and communicate policy knowledge is the foundation of democratic policy formulation.

- **Feedback:**

Policy dialogue should offer the opportunity for marginalized groups to participate in providing feedback to decision making processes and governance. Effective feedback is one that combines grassroot experience, relevant context, interpretation and reflection.

- **Integration Advocacy:**

Responsiveness to feedback from policy discussions will only make sense if expressed and justified needs are integrated into the next round of policy formulation or its practices. Advocacy for integration is key to embedding justified feedback into the government system.