

# Self-Reliance and Ujamaa: Tanzania's Development Strategy

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Since independence, the cornerstones of Tanzania's development philosophy have been freedom, equality and justice. These principles, however, were not effectively articulated in strategy and policy until 1967, when the Arusha Declaration was promulgated. Experience had shown that Tanzania had made the same mistakes as many other countries in supposing that growth plus regulation of a basically private sector were consistent with either greater equality or planned structural change. Thus in the Arusha Declaration it was stated explicitly that "The development of a country is brought about by people, not by money. Money, and the wealth it represents, is the result and not the basis of development. The four prerequisites of development are different; they are: People, Land, Good Policies, Good Leadership."

This statement implied that Tanzania would now rely primarily on maximum utilization of her own resources for development. Hence the country's philosophy of socialism and self-reliance.

With 14 million people, large tracts of arable land and ample resource potential, Tanzania should be able to rely on itself to a very large extent. This does not imply, however, a desire to live in isolation. On the contrary, the principles of international collaboration and solidarity are subscribed to by Tanzania, but with the proviso that co-operation must be on the basis of equality and in pursuit of balanced mutual benefits, in which each country is free to shape its own destiny.

One of the developing countries attempting a development strategy carved out of their own experience is Tanzania with its concept of Ujamaa. This article based on a paper by J. H. J. Maeda and Ibrahim M. Kaduma of the Institute of Development Studies, Dar es Salaam describes this interesting experiment.

## The Village: the basis of Tanzania's development

Since the overwhelming majority of Tanzania's population lives in the rural areas, success in achieving the country's goal of socialism and self-reliance will be determined by the extent to which the peasants understand, accept and formulate the policy's implications. Ultimately, this means the creation of the necessary institutions at the local level.

A policy paper entitled 'Socialism and Rural Development' was issued by President Nyerere in 1967 outlining the structural reorganization to be introduced in the rural areas to begin the transition towards the Arusha Declaration's goals. The paper calls upon the peasants to organize themselves into viable socio-economic and political communities. These are the 'ujamaa villages' intended to transform production that is private and scattered into communal and planned production.

Ideally, the *ujamaa* villages are to be socialist organizations created by people who decide of their own free will to live and work together for their common good governed by those who live and work in them. The peasants form these villages either in existing traditional communities or more typically by moving into unused land or regrouping scattered homesteads to establish new ones. The villagers are required to own, control and run at least some of the economic activities in their villages communally, and to organize productive activity on that basis.

As socialist and democratic living and working communities in which the members are responsible to themselves, the *ujamaa* villages are governed by members, jointly making their own decisions on all issues of exclusive concern to the village. They are expected to

own and run their communal farms and other projects such as shops, flour-mills, pre-primary and primary schools, dispensaries, and cultural and recreational activities. The size of an *ujamaa* village depends upon the land available and the number of people in each village ranges from 50 to 4,000, although 500 to 2,500 is normally viewed as the desirable village size. There exists no standard pattern of organization to be followed by all *ujamaa* villages—a deliberate attempt to ensure that each *ujamaa* village is organized in a way compatible with its environment and to encourage creative local planning.

The constitutions of various *ujamaa* villages, however, show similar features in their political orientation and organizational structures. From these, as well as from the general guidelines issued by the Prime Minister's office (partly on the basis of early experience), and under whose framework most recent village constitutions have been drawn up, the main objectives of most *ujamaa* villages are distinguishable:

To engender ideological awareness among members, organize total opposition to exploitation in any form, and create instead a sense of communal spirit in working together for the benefit of all members.

To give employment opportunities to every member of the village, thus enabling each to earn a just income.

To expand the socialist economic undertakings of the village by the establishment of communal farms, shops, industries and commercial and service activities.

To market all the products of the village, including those from private plots.

To buy or construct, buildings, offices, machines and other necessary equipment for the development of the village.

To co-operate with other *ujamaa* villages or para-statal institutions in commercial undertakings provided that such co-operation does not run contrary to the common good.

To give the villagers an opportunity to receive adult and primary education, medical treatment, pure water, improved housing and other essential services necessary for an adequate material standard of living and fuller human development.

To be an example to Tanzanians who are not members so that they can see the benefit of the *ujamaa* way of living.

#### Management of the villages

Overall responsibility for running the affairs of the village is vested in a general meeting composed of all villagers. The meeting is normally held four times a year. A two-thirds majority is required to change the constitution or to dismiss a member or members and a simple majority for other business, including annual village plans and budgets.

The day-to-day management of the village lies with the village executive committee elected by the general meeting. The committee is required to meet once every month and a village may set up specialized committees with advisory, executive or operational authority.

#### Results expected

There are several short- and long-run benefits that are expected to be derived from successful implementation of the *ujamaa* village programme. Among these are:

The creation of self-reliant and self-determining communities following the tenets of the Arusha Declaration. National self-reliance is impossible without deep-rooted self-reliant communities at the local level.

Avoidance of exploitation and excessive differentiation in wealth, income and power.

Better utilization of rural labour to raise productivity potentially obtainable through groups of peasants working together. Realization of this potential requires specialization of functions, division of labour, work discipline and strong leadership to guide the enthusiasm of group activity into productive channels.

Economies of scale in purchasing, marketing, provision of services (schools, health care etc.), and some field operations requiring mechanization.

Openness to technical innovations, through increase in scale, and readier access to farmer education.

Raising the socio-economic standards of the peasants and consequently reducing the socio-economic gap between rural and urban people.

Facilitating national planning both as to formulation of overall goals and decentralized implementation.

Mobilization of the masses for both their development and the defence of their country.

Establishing a new pattern of human settlements (including knowledge, finance, marketing and transport as well as health, water and education).

Creating communities which can relate effectively to government officials and councils following the 1972 decentralization of most governmental functions directly affecting individuals.

Between 1968 and 1973 *ujamaa* village formation exceeded party and government expectations. The record also showed that provision of supporting services and especially adult education (1974-75 enrolment was about 3.5 million) could be expanded rapidly in villages but

remained virtually impossible for more dispersed populations. Therefore in 1973 the TANU Congress set a 1976 target date for enabling everyone in rural areas to live in a permanent and planned village.

Thus, since 1973, there has been a national drive to move the scattered rural population either into *ujamaa* villages (for those who so wished) or to ordinary planned villages (for those who are not ready to start *ujamaa* living). Movement to villages, therefore, is now compulsory, while the transformation of a village into an *ujamaa* village is still, and likely to continue to be, voluntary. It is hoped that many of the benefits expected to be accrued from living in an *ujamaa* village will also prevail in an ordinary planned village.

By June 1974 at least 2.6 million peasants (of a total of about 10 million) were members of over 5,000 *ujamaa* villages. After the 1974 village system campaign, it was established that upto 80 per cent of the peasant population were resident in planned villages, about 1.5 million in old non-*ujamaa* villages, 3.0 to 3.5 million in *ujamaa* villages and 2.5 to 3.5 million in new non-*ujamaa* development villages.

Public-sector assistance, while seen as supportive, has been large. In 1974/75 education, health, housing, agricultural extension and inputs, transport and other expenditure directly related to the village exceed 500 million shillings (4 per cent of total GDP.)

#### Implications of the village system policy on international cooperation

From the foregoing, three things may have become evident from the point of view of international cooperation.

The village is intended to be the economic base for rural planning and implementation. Self-governing villages must be involved in deciding what outside resource transfers they should receive and on what terms.

Projects at the village level will be basically small-scale ones directly responsive to local initiatives and resources, and implementation capacities.

Although village communities require technical and material assistance at least during the initial phases, their most important role is one of self liberation, psychological as well as material. Therefore, 'assistance' which is ideologically antagonistic to participation and socialism is inefficient in terms of village goals and thus unacceptable.

With regard to international cooperation and *ujamaa* village development the international community will have to accept the decentralized, participatory and socialist nature of the village and not seek to use 'assistance' to reverse it.

#### An interim assessment

What can be said of the results of the *ujamaa* programme to date? The human settlement pattern has been transformed from one dominated by scattered homesteads and hamlets to one of more compact communities.

Access to basic health, adult education, primary education and communication facilities has greatly improved. Access to skills within the village community (not simply to outside skilled agents) is increasing.

Access to directly productive knowledge and inputs has improved somewhat but is hampered by inadequate central and village resources and inadequate communication and control patterns between villages and 'experts'.

Food production effects to date are marginal—though probably positive - because weather and relocation difficulties have imposed costs, and reorganisation has taken time. Access to food has improved; the change in settlement pattern, for example, was useful in identifying and meeting deficits during the 1973-75 drought.

Mistakes have been made at village, regional and national levels, both in poor technical

planning and the partial substitution of exhortation and coercion for education and participation, but more notably these have usually been identified and rapid corrective measures have been taken, e.g. by TANU's central committee in October 1974 following peasant criticism of aspects of some regions' village - system programmes.

Communal action has risen rapidly with regard to infrastructure, new economic activities (e.g. shops, dairy herds, small workshops) and new crops, but less in respect of staple foods and traditional cash crops, which are largely grown on individual plots.

Egalitarianism has progressed within villages - private plots are unequal in size but not radically so, especially when compared to those in some non-*ujamaa* rural enclaves.

Participation within villages has broadened and the degree of rural elite control fallen. The villages have often been able to exert far more influence on the post-1972 decentralized government structure than peasants could apply to the elite-dominated cooperative unions or the agents of central government bodies during the pre-*ujamaa* period.

Village self-reliance has been unequal both in terms of goals and of achievements but has risen in many cases. This is linked to a parallel decline in clientage exemplified by a much more assertive and self-assured pattern of relationships, with government and party officials.

Peasant ideological development has begun, especially in the realization that basic needs can be met and that they must mobilize pressures and support for party and government agents and institutions to safeguard and build on results to date. Adult education and improved communication have led to broader and deeper individual and community cons-

sciousness in a significant number of villages, even if it may be fair to question the present degree of clarity and elaboration.

Each of these assessments is a qualified one—individual cases of total failure or regression, authoritarianism of clientage can be found. Each represents a state of transition, not arrival. Tanzania, like China, sees the full achievement of socialist rural communities and of a socialist rural society as a goal requiring time, evolution and sequences of priorities.

To attempt more than an interim assessment would be to distort. Tanzanians do not claim to have achieved participatory, self-reliant, socialist development but to have begun the long transition to it. They do not claim that the *ujamaa* village core of another rural development is complete but that it has begun to emerge. The participatory nature of the transition forbids laying down detailed patterns for the year 2000 as opposed to evolving sequences and programmes within the strategic framework. The 1967-75 record is one of significant change towards another form of development. Basic needs—food, habitat, water, mass education, health, the utilisation of surpluses to increase provision of essentials are central to economic strategy. The quest for self-reliance does inform major village, regional, national and international policies. Inequality of income and of access to basic services has been reduced rapidly both by redistribution and increased production. Participation and decentralization have moved very far from the colonial, authoritarian, bureaucratic starting-point, with an increasingly socialist and participatory mass party in control of strategic and basic policy decisions. To claim more does a disservice to Tanzania. Claims of total success and absolute certainty as to the future are part of the old, authoritarian, technological, growth mystique. 'Mistakes are mistakes' (to quote Mwalimu Nyerere) and the ability to recognize, correct and learn from them is an integral part of the Third World's development perspective.