Development is miserable, but people are making things happen

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Across Tanzania Governments, NGOs, donors spend huge energy trying to improve lives of poor people.

Is it making a difference?
Based on 9 village stays in Tanzania (2009)
and weeks of walkabouts/conversations (2008)
What did we learn?

1. What doesn’t work
Not functional in most schools and clinics
And in many places women and girls still walk
and walk
and walk
In urban areas too...
... such as in Namanga
5 minutes from the US Embassy
Our village was close to Lake Victoria, but water had to be purchased at Tshs 200 per bucket or fetched from the Lake 1.2 km away. Most collected water from the Lake, but we never saw it being boiled. When nearby, contaminated but not treated, water borne illnesses common.
20 liter bucket of water can cost up to Tshs 300/- (US $.23) about 20-fold more than what I pay
Matters the most to rural citizens but gets the least attention
(compare water and HIV/AIDS)

% of rural citizens identifying selected issues among top 3 priorities for government to address

- Water supply: 44%
- Health: 39%
- Infrastructure/roads: 33%
- Agriculture/food: 31%
- Economy/employment: 25%
- Education: 15%
- Electricity: 14%
- Corruption: 7%
- AIDS: 4%

% of rural citizens expressing satisfaction with government efforts to provide key social services

- HIV/AIDS: 84%
- Education: 80%
- Basic health services: 64%
- Roads and bridges: 53%
- Water and sanitation: 39%

Source: 2008 Afrobarometer survey
Investments going to waste

Only 54% of rural waterpoints functioning in 33 surveyed districts

- > 4 WPs per 1,000 people
- 2-4 WPs per 1,000 people
- 1-2 WPs per 1,000 people
- < 1 WP per 1,000 people
- No data available
And money not equitably spent

- Water points distribution highly unequal
- New funds exacerbate the differences?

Less than half (40%) of new funding going to wards with below average coverage
health
Nice new/renovated buildings but...

Staff virtually never around

No drugs
No lab tests
No sanitation

= no care
“At this government health centre there was no doctor, only a ward attendant. The patient in this photo came in with a very high fever. She put him on the bed like this and left. A little later she came back and gave him malaria tablets, but she did not do any examination or any tests. His friend said he would bring him food later from the school where they were boarding.”
Cold chains not working, expired drugs
Nurses often run private pharmacies.
“In the neighboring village there is a good clinic, built by an NGO, but it’s only for HIV/AIDS testing. People cannot take their children with diarrhea and malaria there.”
education
Many new schools and many more enrolled
Budget tripled in the last decade
The one MDG Tanzania will comfortably meet
New schools look better than local homes
But upon closer observation, poor quality
Floors of classrooms often first to go...
Newer buildings worse than older ones

Many unfinished buildings and insufficient desks despite parental contributions

Pit latrines inadequate, no water
“The last development grant we received was in 2005.”

In response parents compelled to contribute. Unregulated, certainly no more ‘free education’
“Every Monday I send 2 bricks to school to build a toilet. I have been doing this for two years, like many other parents... Three years later the walls of the toilets don’t even reach the height of this one year old child!”
“Last year we received capitation grant of Tshs 3,700. It is not enough, but we are grateful it as at least something.”

(Q: Do you know how much it is supposed to be?)

“No, is it supposed to be a certain amount?”

(Q: The policy says it should be $10/yr, or about 13,000)

“Oh! I did not know!”

(Q: What will you do to ensure you get the full amount?)

“Nothing,” [laughs] “When your father gives you something, you say thank you, you don’t ask questions, you don’t ask whether it should be more.”
“An old Mzee got fed up of paying school ‘contributions’ of 10,000/- [about $8] each time, not seeing the fruits of that money. So he refused to pay again until he got a proper income and expenditure report read out in public. The authorities tried to quieten him, but the old Mzee was adamant. The meeting ended in some disarray. Two days later the local militia (sungu sungu) visited his farm, demanded to search it, and ‘found’ a marijuana plant. He was told that he could be jailed for many years, unless... The old Mzee parted with two cows and Tshs 200,000/- [about $160] to stop matters going further.

After that, do you think he or anybody else will speak up again?”
In some schools, 400 students, 2 teachers

‘Vodafasta’ Teachers trained for 2 weeks

Often half the teachers not in school; those there rarely teach, push private tuition

Student attendance low, but not captured in district records
Few books, often locked up for safety

No functional libraries

Only $4 of the $10 gets to schools

Examinations dumbed down; still less than a quarter ‘pass’ Math, Science, English

Overall, **lots of schooling, little learning**
What can we conclude?

We have hollow shells, hardware over software, dysfunctional governance, veneers & pretences of progress, high costs and serious inequities,

Little care, little health, little learning
What can we conclude?

Little faith in ‘officialdom’
in school committees to solve problems
in Village Councils to air views
in Councilors or MPs to help
or elections to make a difference...
(“whoever wins will eat”)
The ‘official development’ side of life (whether government, public services, or NGOs) is largely dysfunctional, delivers little, supports few, inspires no one.

Few exceptions are used to over the main story.

Development has become about extracting what one can from it (salaries, allowances, study trips, procurement deals, bribes).
“Development is ... a workshop”
What did we learn?

2. What works
Hamisi’s story (Kahama, Tanzania)
Official work: farming cotton
Official income: about Tshs 300,000/- last year

After costs of inputs, hired labor, unfulfilled pay net profit: about Tshs 180,000/-

But something didn’t compute:
- good, plenty food; good health
- using 35,000/month on mobile phone
- decent assets (bicycle, radio, kitchen ware)
- relaxed, stress free, easy-going
After the first night over three days, turns out Hamisi is also engaged in:

- vegetables and rice fields
- tobacco (far from the main road)
- cattle keeper
- transporter
- cupboard shop in the living room

... and
Pikipiki rental business @ 10,000/- day
The herb gardener supplying Paul Tudor Jones’ luxury hotel at Grumeti
Lots of thriving markets ...
... for food
or clothes..
Buy mine!
If you want the latest watches ...
... or your previous ones repaired
Despite restrictions people move things
... in rural areas
... in cities
And bring the services right to you
.. esp. convenient when stuck in traffic
You can get sturdy shoes specially made for local conditions.
... unless you prefer new, imported ones.
... or second hand but looking good
Reliable services too, from cooking your food the old way.
... or the new

CHIPS MAYAI KU
No electricity, no problem, you can still be handsome ...
Shine your shoes ...
Make you beautiful ...
... or well groomed
Pots for your water and cooking ...
Fixing your stoves ...
solving every ailment (and fulfilling fantasies)
Or, if you prefer, your rat problem ...
Hustling, making things out of scrap, whether
Cheap packaging recycled materials
... or jewelry made from bottle tops
... or sun charged batteries for power
Where indeed is the power?
Officialdom of policies, services, governance, projects does not work

But people are not waiting for us to get our act together.

They are getting on with things; hustling, scrounging, scheming, innovating, making do, making new, crossing lines, ...
Imagination will make Tanzania fly