

Approaches to and Challenges of Establishing Community Foundations in Africa: the Case of Tanzania

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization in Tanzania has created an urgent need for new mechanisms to extend community-driven development (CDD) into cities. In this paper, John Ulanga investigates the practices that philanthropic groups in Africa can adopt in order to engage with community needs while also ensuring organizational sustainability. Community foundations present a good opportunity for community-led interventions to address community challenges in a sustainable way. They also present a unique opportunity for communities to take the lead in tackling current problems and to prepare an institutional mechanism for addressing future challenges.

In order to identify best practices to recommend to Tanzanian organizations, the author examines the strengths of foundations, like the Brooklyn Community Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. These case studies iterate the importance of staff professionalization and a clear strategic plan to ensure good governance. He also concludes that a diversified donor base of both local and international contributors and transparent accounting records would help further the economic sustainability of Tanzanian foundations. Mr. Ulanga ends his paper by urging Tanzania's four existing community foundations to conduct a large cross-organizational assessment, in order to both map existing resources and identify potential avenues of growth.

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