



TOWARDS UHURU: CELEBRATING COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY IN TANZANIA

Uhuru, the Swahili word meaning freedom, has its roots in anti-colonial movements in East Africa. The word uhuru is often used in the context of African liberation movements and the fight against colonialism. The word uhuru is a powerful symbol of freedom and liberation for many Africans. It is a reminder of the struggles that have been fought for freedom, and the importance of continuing to fight for justice and equality. In a broader sense, uhuru can also refer to the freedom to be oneself, to live one's own life, and to make one's own choices. This is the kind of freedom that is often fought for by individuals and groups who are oppressed or marginalized.

In our contemporary climate, the term can hold various meanings including freedom from poverty, inequality, and the whims of paternalistic development practice. Community philanthropy can help to realise these long-held desires for freedom.

Local living in Africa is such a way of life, we often forget to take a deliberate moment to celebrate it. In regards to recognizing the gains we've made to institutionalise both vertical and horizontal philanthropy on the continent, we've certainly celebrated that. In June, the SGS team joined many others at the East African Philanthropy Network (EAPN)'s 8th Conference in Zanzibar. This was to celebrate EAPN's 20th year in existence and reflect on the road traveled as well as the one ahead.

The conference theme - Systems Transformation: Catalysing Collective Action - offered robust discussions and key actions that prompted participants to engage, enrich, and empower. The programme was insightful, from engaging on feminist and social justice philanthropy to enriching dialogues on youth giving, to discussions on the 2018 African Continental Free Trade Agreement. It was also a platform that provided critical, active reflections on the notions of #ShiftThePower.



Image source: EAPN LinkedIn page

Shaun Samuels chaired the opening panel of the conference that focused on 'Driving collective action for Philanthropy: A system-wide approach to transformation'. The panelists included Jessica Horn - Regional Director, Ford Foundation (East Africa), Dr. Tendai Murisa - Executive Director of the Sivio Institute, and Rosemary Amondi, East Africa Regional Director for the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs. The areas that were unpacked and set the tone for the conference included innovative approaches towards driving systems transformation, sharing models for catalysing collective action for impact, and addressing the stubborn gap between intentions, and outcomes towards transformation. More practically, how grantmakers, grantees, communities, and other stakeholders, can leverage systems transformation and collective action for impactful change.



Shaun Samuels chairing the opening panel

TCFN & SGS technical cooperation

The team then drove down to Morogoro, Tanzania to support the Tanzanian Community Foundation Network (TCFN) in the launch of its five-year Strategic Plan (2023 - 2027). The event was also an opportunity to disseminate the outcomes of a recent study on SDGs. TCFN, along with five community foundations in Southern Africa, demonstrated through the compilation of case studies, how their work aligns with goals and targets relating to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report highlighted some of the projects implemented by the community foundations including the construction of energy efficient stoves at schools, the construction of a water reservoir, educational support programmes, a garbage collection project, tree nursery and gardening projects, and land ownership arrangements. See link to the TCFN SDG case study report.

The Morogoro Municipal Community Foundation (MMCF), one of the foundations within TCFN, hosted the launch that was attended by six community-based organisations (CBOs). The CBOs were unanimous in their aspiration for the growth of the MMCF, viewing this as a precursor to greater support for additional CBOs in the district.



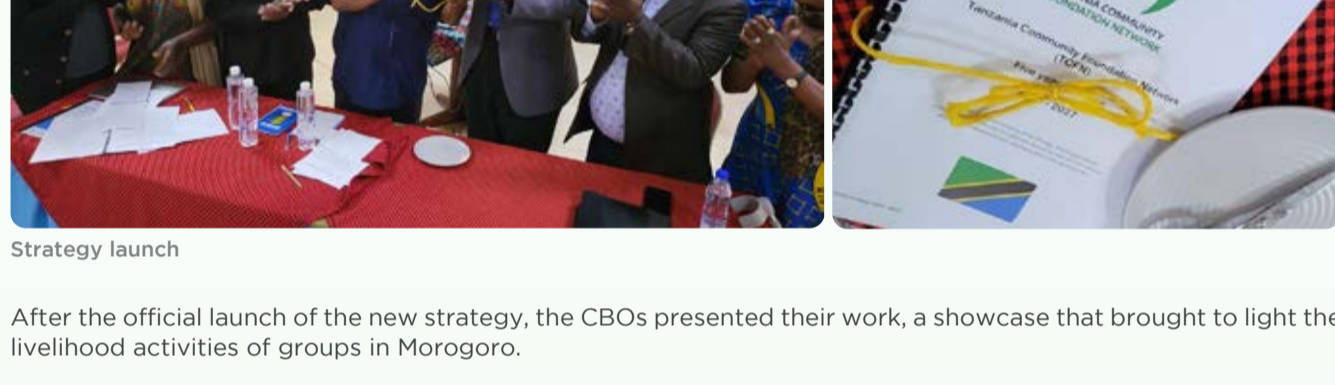
See link to the TCFN SDG case study report.
<https://sgsconsulting.co.za/tanzania-community-foundation-network-december-2022/>

Also in attendance at the launch were municipal community development practitioners, district representatives of the Tanzania Social Action Fund, the former executive mayor, board members and community members.



Participants who attended the launch of the new TCFN strategy

Shaun Samuels handed over the new strategy document of TCFN (2023 - 2027) to the chairperson of the board, Stephen Mashishanga, at the ribbon cutting event.



Strategy launch

After the official launch of the new strategy, the CBOs presented their work, a showcase that brought to light the livelihood activities of groups in Morogoro.



Representatives of the CBOs showcasing their products and services

On our second day in Morogoro we had the opportunity to visit five project sites belonging to three of the community groups. We learned, first-hand, how the groups utilise local resources to fuel income-generation and help communities become more sustainable. By focusing on using local assets, these groups help communities lead their own development.

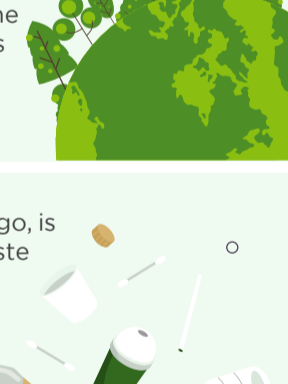
A brief insight into these CBOs demonstrates the wealth of work underway at the community level, and affirms the argument that community foundations are truly able to facilitate change and impact at the most grassroots levels:



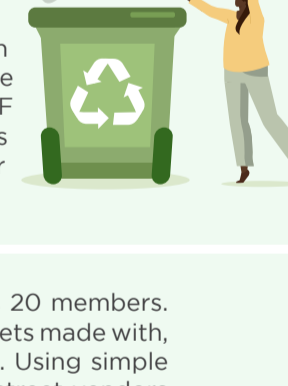
The **Ukwere** group, established since 2005 with more than 15 members, is focused on agriculture, producing vegetables, and making herbicides and organic boosters for use on their farm, as well as for sale to other farmers. With support from the MMCF in the form of small grants and the provision of farming tools, Ukwere has trained many women and widows with skills and knowledge to manage their income-generation activities.



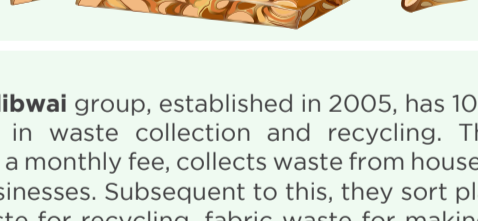
The **Maua** group highlighted its particular expertise in environmental conservation. Established in 2005, Maua group has 10 members that grow flowers and indigenous plants. To supplement income, they sell these flowers and provide garden services for individuals and institutions. It is encouraging to see collaboration in action as the Maua group works with the Ukwere group to use the latter's herbicides to treat flowers. MMCF has been supporting the Maua group with tools and training.



The **Makoroboi** group, established 30 years ago, is a local handicraft group that recycles tin waste and uses it to make frying pans, measuring caps, and kerosene lanterns. This group has more than 20 members in different areas of Morogoro, translating to more than twenty families receiving support through this initiative. By passing on the knowledge and skills to create these tools, community members, particularly those on low-income, are able to afford locally-made utensils and in turn, light their villages. MMCF supported the Makoroboi group with grants to collect hard waste and buy tools for production.



The **Kashata** group, established in 2010, has 20 members. One of their activities is the production of sweets made with, among others, groundnuts, sugar and water. Using simple firewood, the group supplies more than 25 street vendors and shops. MMCF supports these groups with small grants for the capital, and to buy materials for production.



The **Kindibwai** group, established in 2005, has 10 members involved in waste collection and recycling. The group, charging a monthly fee, collects waste from households and small businesses. Subsequent to this, they sort plastics and hard waste for recycling, fabric waste for making carpets, and organic waste for making fertilizer. These activities are important for generating income since monthly fees are insufficient and often irregularly paid. MMCF supports Kindibwai with working tools including boots, gloves, working clothes and wheelbarrows.



The **Tushikamane** group, established in 2005, has 12 members and consists of young women involved in various activities. These include soap-making using local materials, henna art, and making compost fertilizer from food waste. MMCF supports the group with training and small grants to implement their activities.

A new community foundation joins the TCFN in 2022

The Mafuru Youth Action Community Foundation (MYACF) was established in 2022, and joined the family of community foundations in the TCFN. Omary Ally, the leader of the foundation, spoke to Yolisa Lawrence of SGS, and articulated that "our foundation is dedicated to empowering youth and driving positive change within local communities. We firmly believe in the potential of young people, and we strive to create opportunities that enable them to thrive and make an impact in the community". The MYACF is based in Morogoro, Tanzania with the vision to "create a society where every young person is equipped with the necessary skills, and knowledge, to enable them to realise their full potential, and champion changes in their communities." The mission is about empowering young people and working to transform communities through youth-led initiatives and collaboration with local stakeholders. Some of the projects relate to capacity development, unlocking municipal loan capital for women and youth-led CBOs, and leveraging philanthropy resources to help address sexual reproductive health and rights, water and energy projects at the local community level.



Yolisa from SGS engaging Omary Ally, leader of the MYACF foundation

It is not evident that community philanthropy in East Africa is not only alive but thriving. Community groups are clearly making use of their knowledge and local resources, and organising themselves to generate income, work towards self-sufficiency, and grow the spirit of hope and giving in their communities.

This sounds a lot like freedom!

Behind and beneath all this are the community foundations that recognise the value and potential of these group initiatives, and support where possible.

Long live community philanthropy, towards uhuru!

