



## **Comparing Donor Approaches in Promoting Rural Livelihoods. A Case Study of Two Selected Donor-Funded Agricultural Projects in Rural Tanzania**

***Dr. Benedicto William Msangya*<sup>1\*</sup>, *Susanne Nambatya*<sup>2\*</sup>, *Emmanuel Tweh Friday*<sup>3\*</sup>, *Dr. Lester Tenny*<sup>4\*</sup>, *David B. Kwiyarhe, Jr.*<sup>5\*</sup>**

<sup>1\*</sup> Senior Lecturer and Head of Department, Department of Education, College of Science and Education, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania

<sup>2\*</sup> Senior Lecturer, Development, Peace and Conflict Studies, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), Kampala International University, Uganda

<sup>3\*</sup> Lecturer, Management Department, A. Romeo Horton College of Business and Public Administration, University of Liberia, Liberia

<sup>4\*</sup> Associate Professor & Dean, A. Romeo Horton College of Business and Public Administration, University of Liberia, Liberia

<sup>5\*</sup> Assistant Professor, Management Department, A. Romeo Horton College of Business and Public Administration, University of Liberia, Liberia

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to compare donor approaches in promoting rural livelihoods in Tanzania, with a special focus on US and China as donors, using their funded agricultural projects, in Mvomero and Kilosa Districts respectively. The study also identified some lessons that the two donors can learn from each other, in their project implementations. The study was qualitative and it involved the use of focus group discussions with the small-scale farmers, and key informant interviews with government officials, project staff, among other relevant officials. The total sample size of this study was 180 respondents. This included 160 small scale farmers who are residents of the two districts (80 from each district) and 20 key informants (10 from each district). Purposive sampling was used to obtain the small-scale farmer's sample in the study area. The study selected and interviewed only those small-scale farmers who were the direct beneficiaries of the two projects, and who actively participated in the project's implementations. The research team was guided by the project staff. A total number of four (4) FGDs with the small-scale farmers, in each district, were conducted; with each FGD consisting of 20 participants. The qualitative data obtained from the study was analyzed in the form of narratives/reports. The findings revealed that in terms of the project design, the main thematic area for the two donor-funded agricultural projects is poverty reduction, directly targeting the improvement of agricultural production with a component of capacity building. The two donors did design the projects themselves. There was no evidence showing that the project beneficiaries were consulted before the introduction of the projects. The two donor-funded agricultural projects have led to an increase in yields of small-scale farmers based on some strategies. The findings revealed that the strategies to increase the yields of small-scale farmers were the same for the two funded agricultural projects but there are some differences and similarities in how the two donors implement such strategies to increase the yields of small-scale farmers. For instance, if we are to look at practical-enabled learning as one of the strategies reported as used by the two donors to increase the yields of the small-scale farmers, the findings revealed that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa District utilizes farmers farms for demonstrations while USAID in Mvomero district has its own constructed demonstration site for practical learning. Among the similarities in implementation practices of the two funded agricultural projects include involvement of other stakeholders (partners), transparency of project implementations and cooperation, to mention but a few. The effectiveness of the two-donor-funded agricultural projects on boosting small-scale farmers entailed some practices such as introducing new agricultural practices, education of small-scale farmers in improved farming practices, improvements in rural infrastructure, enhancing farmers' productivity through the provision of farming equipment, accessibility and provision of agricultural loans to farmers. Donor-recipient relations for agricultural improvement were premised on networks and partnerships with different stakeholders, having a range of approaches to deal with the different partners, following protocol with the different partners, flexibility with local implementation partners, knowledge exchange through donor-recipient inter-country visits, ownership of the project by the aid recipients and donor commitments on communicating progress. The study identified lessons that the two donor agricultural projects can learn from each other and these were derived from the project descriptions, achievements and collaborations with the donor recipients. The study concludes by affirming that donors use different tactics when delivering aid and it is always important to understand why donors use the tactics they use. For the donors, finding partners to work with is important in making aid work better. However, you have to have a range of approaches to deal with the different partners. The aid recipients should feel that they own the process of the donor project implementations because this is the only way to make their donors accountable. USAID in the Mvomero district and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in the Kilosa district tried to make the small-scale farmers and the different partners involved and own the project implementations.

**Keywords – Donors; Approaches; Promoting Rural Livelihoods; Funding; Agriculture; Tanzania**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Tanzania is one of the largest aid recipients in Africa (Sundberg, 2019; Sebastian, 2014; UNU-WIDER, 2012; Rotarou & Ueta, 2009). The World Bank noted in 2016 that official development assistance (ODA) to Tanzania increased from \$10,360,000 in 1960 to \$2,647,980,000 in 2014. USAID is the largest donor to Tanzania (Marten, 2022; Sullivan, 2017; Tripp, 2012), and still on the African continent, Tanzania is the main beneficiary of Chinese donations (Humphrey & Michaelowa, 2019; Swedlund, 2017; Li, 2017). For purposes of this study, the focus is on these two donors, namely the United States and China, in the selected districts of Mvomero and Kilosa respectively, in the agricultural sector.

Since the 1960s up to the present, China has supported Tanzanian agriculture through a number of projects (Brautigam and Tang, 2012). Ruvu State Farm, Upenja State Farm, Ubungo Farm Implements Factory, Mbarali Rice Farm, and four farmer training centers are only a handful of the initiatives that China has funded (Brautigam and Tang, 2012). Furthermore, according to Brautigam and Tang (2012), China gave Tanzania \$123,615 worth of agricultural equipment in 2005, including three heavy-duty tractors, seven power tillers, two mills, and two water-pumping systems. Other gifts from China to Tanzania include an agrotechnology research and demonstration center at Dakawa in the Mvomero District, several agriculture-related training programs in China for Tanzanians, and a number of agricultural extensions and farmer training stations built in Tanzania in the Morogoro, Dodoma, Mbeya, and Kagera regions among others (Brautigam and Tang, 2012). To make it easier for commodities and services to flow from the places of production (Mbeya, Iringa, and Morogoro) to the places of consumption (Dar es Salaam) and vice versa, the Chinese implemented the Tazara Railway project in Tanzania (Brautigam and Tang, 2012). Additionally, it makes it easier for people to relocate from one location to another (ibid).

USAID has been assisting Tanzania as well since the 1960s up to date. For instance, in 1964, USAID made investments in infrastructure, community development, education, and conservation initiatives to help transport goods and services from areas of production to areas of consumption. Since then, the development organization has collaborated with the Tanzanian government intending to eradicate severe poverty by fostering Tanzanians' fortitude, democracy, and prosperity (USAID Fintrac report, 2014). Through the Feed the Future Initiative, the relevant agency is currently working to increase agricultural output by tackling the underlying causes of chronic hunger and poverty and promoting economic growth in an area with abundant resources and fertile land. By lowering the cost of transporting farm inputs and finished goods, USAID improves agricultural production and increases Tanzania's competitiveness in both domestic and regional markets. Through the Feed the Future Initiative, USAID advocates for laws that foster private sector investment in agriculture, establish more dependable trade laws, help put into place laws that are more gender-equitable, and permit the implementation of significant nutritional interventions (USAID Fintrac report, 2014). More than 86,000 smallholder farmers have received agricultural training in seedling production, integrated pest management, water and soil conservation, low-cost drip irrigation and greenhouses, hybrid seeds, solar drying and juicing, and finally food safety protocols (USAID Fintrac report, 2014). These are just a few of the accomplishments made possible by the Feed the Future Initiative.

Mvomero and Kilosa districts in Tanzania continue to struggle with poverty, poor infrastructure development, limited educational opportunities, poor healthcare and a large pool of unskilled labor, posing several challenges that hamper agricultural development in these two districts. Those most at risk are small farmers who do not have the skills to develop sources of income other than agriculture. However, in recent years, the Tanzanian government has undertaken massive agricultural development to ensure food security, create jobs and stimulate the rural economy to reduce human poverty (Faki, 2015). Several donors finance agricultural activities in Tanzania. For example, in Kilosa District, China is funding a community development project entitled "Promoting Small-Scale Agriculture for Poverty Reduction," which aims to solve key problems in agricultural production and increase agricultural productivity and farmers' income to reduce poverty. The first three-year project phase was from 2012 – 2015, the second three-year phase was from 2015 – 2018, and currently on going is the third year phase, which was interrupted by COVID 19 and led to its stand still for some years, but it resumed operation. In Mvomero District, USAID, through its Tanzania Feed the Future (FTF) initiative, is funding a project called NAFKA Staples Value Chain Activity, which integrates agriculture, gender, environmental and nutrition efforts to improve the productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers since 2012.

Balla and Reinhardt (2008) noted that donor aid is largely granted based on the political and economic interests of donors in the recipient country. Donors often do not provide aid based on the desired change it brings to the recipient country, but based on cooperation it can encourage. The donor-recipient relationship is characterized by donors being the key figures, seeking ideal recipients amongst a field of possibilities and recipients as agents who cannot be monitored constantly to ensure that aid will have the effect the donor desires, that is why donors often refrain from selecting aid recipients for which aid will not encourage cooperation or development (Martens et al., 2002). Every donor, without exception, will condition aid in some way and donors' decisions are taken independently (Balla and Reinhardt, 2008). The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness includes a number of commitments from donor and recipient countries to improve the quality of official development assistance. For example, donors have recognized that recipient country ownership is essential to the effectiveness of aid and development efforts (Menocal and Mulley, 2006). As governments begin to play a more proactive role in determining how aid is allocated and managed, the essence of giving aid will prevail. However, Menocal and Mulley (2006) confirm that there are relatively few examples of host governments taking the lead in relationships with donors. The authors add that this is perhaps not surprising given that asymmetries in resources, power and capabilities characterize most relationships between donors and aid recipients (Menocal and Mulley, 2006). In Tanzania, for example, improvements in aid relations have been the product of long-term and sustained interactions between donors and the Tanzanian government since the mid-1990s (Menocal and Mulley, 2006). The purpose of this study is therefore, to compare donor approaches in promoting rural livelihoods in Tanzania, with a special focus on the US and China, using their funded agricultural projects, in Mvomero and Kilosa Districts respectively. The study also identified some lessons that the two donors can learn from each other, in their project implementations.

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## II. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Mvomero and Kilosa Districts of Tanzania. It was a qualitative study that involved the use of focus group discussions with the small-scale farmers, and key informant interviews with government officials, and project staff, among other relevant officials deemed to be knowledgeable about the two donor projects. The primary respondents for the study were small-scale farmers. These were chosen because they are the actual beneficiaries of the agricultural aid from the two donor-funded agricultural projects. The total sample size of this study was 180 respondents. This included 160 small-scale farmers who are residents of the two districts (80 from each district) and 20 key informants (10 from each district). Purposive sampling was used to obtain the small-scale farmer's sample in the study area. The study selected and interviewed only those small-scale farmers who were the direct beneficiaries of the two projects, and who actively participated in the project's implementations, using the guidance of the project staff. A total number of four (4) FGDs with the small-scale farmers, in each district, were conducted; with each FGD consisting of 20 participants. The qualitative data obtained from the study was analyzed in the form of narratives/reports. The researchers sought permission from the relevant authorities in the study districts. Informed consent was also obtained from the study respondents.

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## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *3.1 Comparing Donor Approaches in Promoting Rural Livelihoods in Tanzania*

This section presents the differences and similarities between the two donor-funded agricultural projects, by the two donors, that is, US in the Mvomero District and China in Kilosa District. The section provides an assessment of the two donor-funded agricultural projects and the lessons that both donors can learn from each other.

#### *3.1.1 Comparisons in Project Design*

The main thematic area for the two donor-funded agricultural projects is poverty reduction, directly targeting the improvement of agricultural production with a component of capacity building. The two donor-funded agricultural projects did and still do reduce some of the worst forms of poverty; although a modest achievement, for the small-scale farmers, it can be very significant. The findings revealed improvements in the economic status of those reached by the two-donor-funded agricultural projects, however, there is little evidence that beneficiaries managed to break out of self-reproducing spirals of impoverishment. This is because the duration of the project implementations is very short (that is, 3 years although renewable depending on the availability of funds), and therefore, it is very hard to realize impact at the moment. But Busiinge (2010) noted that even people helped by successful projects remain poor. The two donor-funded agricultural projects collaborated very well with the government at all levels, national, regional, district and local levels, and this generated satisfactory results on the ground. Mutebile (2002) noted that without strong collaboration with national institutions, the sustainability and replicability of many donor programs are certain. However, scholarly literature has shown that, when donor assistance ends, the activities initiated on the ground also die with little left to show for the effort (Busiinge, 2010). Chapman et al. (2006) noted that the lack of sustainable impact is widely seen as a key threat to the continued flow of international development assistance.

The two donors did design the projects themselves. There was no evidence showing that the project beneficiaries were consulted before the introduction of the projects. The findings revealed that for the two donor-funded agricultural projects; the community (small-scale farmers), village or local leaders and the different stakeholders at other levels of government were only involved at the implementation stages. Usually, project ownership is affected by how the projects are designed and introduced in the community. The two donor-funded agricultural projects were a piece of work imposed from outside and mostly pre-determined by the donors themselves. This is in agreement with Busiinge (2010) who noted that some projects are designed and inclined to donors' policy objectives and therefore unlikely to reflect the development priorities of communities where they are implemented let alone local programs of action.

#### *3.1.2 Comparisons in Implementation Practices on Attaining Project Results*

The two donor-funded agricultural projects have led to an increase in yields of small-scale farmers. The increase in yields of small-scale farmers is the indicator on which we are comparing these two projects under this subsection. There are a number of strategies focused on achieving the result of the increase in farmers' yields for the two donor-funded agricultural projects. A summary of the implementation practices in each strategy for each specific donor-funded agricultural project is contained in the illustration below and a detailed comparison analysis follows after that. This sub-section compares the differences and similarities in implementation practices based on many strategies to reach the result of the increase in farmers' yields, which is the indicator on which the study is drawing its comparison. It is interesting to note that the strategies to increase the yields of small-scale farmers were the same for the two projects but how the two projects implemented such strategies is our basis for comparison.

### 3.1.2.1 Differences in Implementation Practices

<b>Indicator: Increase in Small Scale farmer's yields</b>	<b>Implementation Practices</b>	
<b>Strategies to reach the above result</b>	<b>China in Kilosa District, under the funded project, "Promoting Small-Scale Agriculture for Poverty Reduction"</b>	<b>USAID – USA, in Mvomero District, under the funded project, "NAFAKA Staples Value Chain Activity"</b>
<b>Training of farmers in improved farming methods</b>	Use of trained experts, both local and international.	-Use of trained experts, only local. - Farmer to farmer TOT
<b>Encouraging modern farming</b>	Equipped farmers with knowledge of the use of appropriate technologies	-Provided agricultural machinery such as tractors and power tillers - Educated farmers in the use of these machinery
<b>Farmer's assessment and feedback</b>	-Through meetings -Field visits	-Through meetings -Project evaluations (Mid and End term project reviews) -Field visits
<b>Efforts to enable farmers to access loans</b>	Providing loans to farmers at no interest	Linking farmers to financial institutions
<b>Supporting infrastructural developments such as road construction</b>	Having Locals to work	Involvement of international consultants
<b>Practical-enabled learning</b>	Utilization of farmer's farms	It has its Demonstration site
<b>Strengthening of local and national institutions</b>	-Constructed a learning center on poverty reduction at Peapea village and well equipped by the project - Long- and short-term training courses in China (overseas) for local government staff and some farmers	Employee training
<b>Funding of project activities</b>	Funds are disbursed directly to project implementers on the ground preferably the Chinese nationals	Funds sent to the ASDP basket fund, disbursed by ASDP through the Ministry of Agriculture for supporting project operations on the ground

The data tells us that for the training of farmers in improved farming methods, the China-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district uses trained experts in both local, international and USAID-funded agricultural projects in Mvomero district used trained experts locally well as farmer-to-farmer TOT. By using experts who have skills and knowledge on agriculture production, the project is more likely to have a trained expert who: stays within the true training needs of farmers, conducts thorough agricultural training; understands how to operate in an environment where learning is a constant issue; writes clear reports; uses a methodology that suits the local situation; understands key agriculture concepts and terms; tells you what you need to hear as opposed to what they think you want to hear; excels at implementation and yields positive farmer results. Using well-trained agricultural experts should help donor-funded agricultural projects achieve their objectives. For China in Kilosa district, bringing in international experts (overseas) to offer training is a good implementation practice, because it helps to better determine training's impact on project operations and ensures that training efforts support larger project goals. The farmer-to-farmer TOT model by the US in Mvomero is also helpful in enhancing farmers' participation in the project activities and therefore making them own the project. In many cases, the farmer-to-farmer TOT model can save a great deal of money.

The two projects used different approaches to encouraging modern farming. The Chinese agricultural project in Kilosa district equipped farmers with knowledge on the use of appropriate technologies, while USAID in Mvomero provided agricultural machinery such as tractors and power tillers and trained farmers in the use of these machinery. The Chinese implementation practice in this regard is cost-effective and possessing important agricultural information is in itself empowering for farmers. However, with the provision of agricultural machinery such as tractors and power tillers, as adopted by USAID in the Mvomero district, the agricultural mechanization process is expedited.

The assessment of farmers and providing feedback is important for project implementations. For the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district, meetings and field visits serve as a platform for farmers' assessments and providing feedback on their progress. USAID in Mvomero district adopted three practices, that is; meetings, project evaluations (Mid and End term project reviews) and field visits. Farmer assessments provide a look at how and what a farmer is doing compared with the earlier reviews of his or her farming skills and knowledge. This record reflects whether the farmer is improving in his/her agricultural production or whether the farmer has not witnessed any change which helps the project to tailor its implementations to the specific farmer's needs. Carrying out project evaluations as done by USAID in the Mvomero district is very important because they help the project get neutral views from an outside source.

The data tells us that for efforts to enable farmers to access loans, the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district provides loans to farmers at no interest and USAID Mvomero district links farmers to financial institutions. Credit has a crucial role in the elimination of farmer's financial constraints to invest in farm activities, increasing productivity and improving technologies. Generally, credit accessibility is important for the improvement of the quality and quantity of farm products so that it can increase farmer's income. Because small-scale farmers are assumed to have no collateral, many of them struggle to get loans from financial institutions. The Chinese policy in Kilosa district of providing loans to farmers at no interest is believed to support farmers against some of these ideologies that threaten farmers' welfare.

The projects supported infrastructural developments such as road construction in the areas of implementation. Important to note is how the exercise was executed. The Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa District involved locals in the construction of the village road(s) while USAID in Mvomero District involved international consultants in the road project in Mvomero district. Having locals work as practised by the Chinese in Kilosa district promotes the building of local capacities. This finding disagrees with most of the kinds of literature which has indicated that for most Chinese aid throughout Africa, where Chinese aid projects are being implemented, Chinese contractors hire mainly imported Chinese workforce, even where Africans desire opportunities to work. However, international expertise as prioritized by the USAID in Mvomero district for the road project also comes with its rich experiences and technical know-how of doing things.

In contemporary society, there is an ongoing saying that evidence-based teaching is the way to go. Locals in Tanzania hold on to the saying that seeing is believing. The Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district utilizes farmer's farms for practical-enabled learning while USAID in the Mvomero district had its demonstration site where it conducted practical lessons for farmers. Practical learning is good for skills development. It is convenient to have its demonstration site like USAID in the Mvomero district. You can dictate whatever you want to do at your demonstration site and being a neutral ground, all farmers will feel comfortable on it as opposed to practising on another farmer's field like the Chinese strategy in Kilosa district. For example, when farmers have conflicts, they might refrain from participating in a demonstration/practical lesson. After all, it is being carried out on the enemy's farm thus slowing the project's achievements because it will mean that some farmers are missing out on some practical knowledge.

Strengthening local and national institutions is an investment that helps to ensure the sustainability of the project. For example, long- and short-term training courses in China and the construction of a learning center on poverty reduction by the China-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district can help better determine the impacts of the project operations. Outsourced experience can help aid recipients in developing new knowledge paths and ensure a higher level of learning. Beneficiaries under the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa District benefit from overseas exposure (in China) to proven agricultural techniques, and ideally this quickens their learning of new skills. The quicker new skills are learned, the quicker they can be applied to the recipient country, which can translate into a competitive advantage. The learning center on poverty reduction by the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa District is a permanent structure that can be used by generations and generations. Employee training by USAID in Mvomero district is equally important. Employee training is normally initiated as part of overall professional development and also to help an employee be eligible for a planned intervention. The general benefits of employee training include increased job satisfaction and morale among employees; increased employee motivation; increased efficiencies in project implementation processes, resulting in financial gain; increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods; increased innovation in strategies and products and reduced employee turnover.

Funds for project activities under the China-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district are disbursed directly to the project implementers on the ground preferably the Chinese nationals. This reduces embezzlement and corruption by not transferring cash to the recipient government since this is a small project. However, for country-wide projects, it is necessary to disburse funds through the government. For traditional big donors like USAID who are part of the ASDP basket fund, their funds have to be channelled to the ASDP basket fund first (which regulates the donor funds) and the ASDP disburses it through the Ministry of Agriculture for supporting project operations on ground.

### **3.1.2.2 Similarities in Implementation Practices**

#### **Involvement of other stakeholders (partners)**

The findings have shown that both the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district and USAID in Mvomero district involved personnel from the government at national, regional, district and local levels in the project implementations. These were involved in the execution of various project activities for farmers. The purpose of engaging other stakeholders in the project implementations was to solve the prominent issues in agriculture by conducting field demonstrations, mobilization and capacity building for farmers. This is one of the strategies in place for both donors funded agricultural projects to sustain their project achievements. Stakeholders are believed to continue promoting or building on the project's achievements.

#### **Transfer of knowledge and skills to farmers**

The findings have shown that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district and USAID in Mvomero district transferred knowledge and skills to the small-scale farmers, for example, through different training, which are successfully continued in the community even when the donors decide to leave, for instance, for the case of USAID – it has trained farmer trainers of trainees who still offer training to farmers. Agriculture in contemporary society is becoming more knowledge-intensive, changing rapidly, and making agricultural management more complex. Skills and knowledge are becoming more critical for success. Acquiring new skills and knowledge to be able to harness new agricultural practices that are critical to agricultural performance involves a commitment to learning. There is significant potential to improve small-scale farmers' learning through constant training and capacity building as offered by the two donor-funded agricultural projects.

#### **No strings attached to offering support to farmers**

There are no conditionalities for giving agricultural aid for both the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa and USAID in Mvomero. The donors have a preference for untied aid because the real sufferer of tied aid is the aid recipients. For untied aid, the motivation of a donor is the benefit of the aid recipient, to bring about a desired change. The economic cost of untied aid is reduced for aid-recipient countries. The extent of this reduction, of course, depends upon the clear terms and conditions. Untied aid allows the choice of its use by the aid recipients. The choice lies mainly by the aid recipient. By implication, the interests of the aid recipient receive a preference over those of the donors. Some donors have a preference for tied aid for obvious reasons. It reduces the risk of default by the aid recipients, and it gives the donor better control over the design, technology, location and management of the aided projects.

#### **Transparency of project implementations and cooperation**

Both the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa and USAID in Mvomero have made commitments to providing information about the project. The details and practices of the two donor agricultural projects remain clear. Essentially, transparency has a positive impact on a project because of the benefits associated such as improved understanding of the project, enhanced project team productivity, increased accountability, and smooth communications. When the project's implementations are transparent, it is easier for team members to communicate and share project data. A more transparent project is open to discussion and understanding. Meanwhile, such a project might suffer from information leakage, so it is a matter of project safety to keep project data secure and available only to those having appropriate authority and rights for reviewing and communicating the data.

### **3.1.3 Effectiveness Assessment Comparisons on Boosting Small-Scale Farmer's Livelihoods**

#### **3.1.3.1 Introducing new agricultural practices**

The projects introduced new agricultural practices that were helpful for farmers. The study findings revealed that both USAID in Mvomero and Chinese Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa introduced crop-growing demonstrations. USAID in Mvomero built an agricultural demonstration center where all the rice-growing experiments were performed. The Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district uses an initiative to demonstrate proper maize growing on farmer's farms. The crop-growing demonstrations were non-existent in the two districts before the two donor-funded agricultural projects. This is a new agronomic practice in the two districts. In addition, the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district introduced intercropping where farmers could grow maize as well pigeon peas or sunflowers for purposes of profit increase in yields. These new agricultural practices have boosted the small-scale farmers with planting skills which has led to a significant increase in rice and maize yields. The interpretation of the agricultural information is unlikely to be clear and straightforward without practical demonstrations. Field demonstrations represent the most direct and reliable method of obtaining agricultural information. As Hails (2002) noted, we should promote an experimental approach to answer questions like how to produce the food we need. Lawton (2000) added that such agricultural experiments need to be designed and resourced at the appropriate scale so that we can adequately address the major agricultural practical questions.

#### **3.1.3.2 Education of Small-Scale Farmers on Improved Farming Practices**

Both USAID in Mvomero and Chinese-funded agricultural projects in Kilosa provide information for small-scale farmers on improved farming practices such as the use of improved seeds, application of fertilizers, use of appropriate technologies, weed control and so on. Education of small-scale farmers on improved farming practices will increase crop yields and thus food availability, increase small-scale farmers' incomes and increase the sustainability of agricultural practices. An increase in food availability directly addresses hunger problems that arise when food is not available for people to buy. Improved crop yields can meet the international market demand and therefore enable small-scale farmers to establish themselves on the international market. An increase in food availability can also lower the price of food therefore enabling the poor of the poorest to also be able to have something on their plate. Lower food prices mean that more people can afford to buy food and fewer people go hungry thus leading to food security in the country. Increasing the sustainability of agricultural practices will ensure food security in years to come by preserving and rehabilitating the resources used to produce food, including soil and water. As Rosegrant and Cline (2003) noted, many small-scale farmers in rural areas do not have the latest information on how to grow food efficiently and economically. Therefore, education of small-scale farmers on improved farming practices can dramatically increase the small-scale farmers' level of productivity.

#### **3.1.3.3 Improvements in Rural Infrastructure**

The projects introduced new infrastructure developments in the implementation areas. The study findings revealed that both USAID in Mvomero and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa constructed roads to ease farmers' movements to the markets where they could sell their agricultural products. The small-scale farmers need access to markets for their produce. Without easy access to markets, a large share of small-scale farmers produce ends up being locked on the farms leading to post-harvest losses. Oraboune (2008) noted that the absence of road infrastructure in rural areas is a significant cause of poverty. Constructing connecting roads to villages eases market access. For the two donor agricultural projects, USAID in Mvomero and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa, the connecting road seemed more important for rural people as their main farming produce was for both home consumption and selling the surplus to the markets. The findings also revealed that USAID in Mvomero constructed a warehouse for farmers where they could store their produce while waiting for the prices of the goods to rise. Warehouses are very good at stabilizing the prices of agricultural commodities by checking the tendency to make post-harvest sales among farmers. Warehouses also lead to market intelligence where small-scale farmers keeping their produce in them can acquire market information.

### ***3.1.3.4 Enhancing Farmers' Productivity through the Provision of Farming Equipment***

The study findings showed that USAID in Mvomero provided tractors and power tillers to the farmers. The Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa only provided knowledge on the use of modern technologies such as tractors. Modern farming equipment allows farmers to cultivate in half the time that it would take with human labour alone. Most small-scale farmers will require some equipment to complete their rice or maize cultivation. The fact that many small-scale farmers are poor and cannot rent most of the agricultural equipment, the idea of providing free farming equipment by USAID in the Mvomero district was relevant to the project's implementation. However, small-scale farmers need to be trained in the proper maintenance of agricultural equipment such that these farming equipment cannot wear down easily which can result in costly repairs and delays in cultivation because nothing can be done until the equipment is fixed.

### ***3.1.3.5 Accessibility and provision of agricultural Loans to farmers***

The study findings showed that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district provides loans to farmers at zero interest. The findings showed that USAID in the Mvomero district links farmers to different financial institutions to get loans to boost their agricultural production. Agricultural loans are very important in agricultural production and sometimes they may be a limiting factor in smallholder agriculture. When farmers have money to buy agricultural inputs such as fertilizers and apply them on their farms, this can lead to high yields and therefore more incomes. The reverse is true, when farmers do not have capital, they will not adopt the improved farming methods like the use of fertilizers and therefore, the absence of such crop boosters will mean less production. Providing loans by the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district is very important for small-scale farmers in that area because normally, many financial institutions do not want to give loans to small-scale farmers and charge high interest rates. This was revealed by the small-scale farmers in the USAID implementation villages where they reported negative experiences with the financial institutions that the project linked them to. Andino (2017) noted that financial institutions especially banks often have very little knowledge of the risks and opportunities involved in food production and shy away from providing loans to farmers. Agricultural loans are important to small-scale farmers because they help small-scale farmers to scale their operations. Anigbogu (2014) noted that credit for the rural poor plays a role in alleviating rural poverty.

## ***3.1.4 Effectiveness Assessment Comparisons on donor – Recipient Relations for Agricultural Improvement***

### ***3.1.4.1 Networks and Partnerships with different stakeholders***

The findings showed that USAID in Mvomero district interacts with different stakeholders in its project implementations. These include; the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional and District officials, the village leaders and the academia (Like Sokoine University of Agriculture). Likewise, the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district also interacts with different stakeholders including the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional and District officials, village leaders and academia (Like Sokoine University of Agriculture). For the two donors, the networks are very helpful in carrying out some of the project activities such as training. This helps to build a more effective awareness of the project activities and helps the donors to execute the project implementations better. Engaging with different local partners brings about local relevance to the project implementations. Having networks enables the donor project objectives to be framed around the real-world operational issues of the networks and for the project to be designed so it is sensitive to the operational constraints of the networks. Haines (2012) noted having networks is an important strategy for increasing evidence-based practice. It is however important for donors to compare the different networks, especially in terms of impact on the quality of the project implementations. Sometimes, it is important to choose helpful networks and drop those that do not add anything to the project.

### ***3.1.4.2 Having a range of approaches to deal with the different partners***

The findings revealed that both USAID in Mvomero and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district use different engagement approaches with different partners. For example, for both donor projects, training and field visits dominate their engagements with the villagers (small-scale farmers). But with the Ministry of Agriculture and other top government officials, the findings revealed a range of interaction approaches such as; emails, consultations, letters of invitation, trainings, direct dialogues (round table talks) and meetings. This is because the different partners have different roles and responsibilities they play regarding the delivery of activities of the partnership. For farmer training, for example, we see both donor agricultural projects utilizing the agricultural officials from the regional office and districts and the academia as well because of the capacity to deliver agricultural training. The initial engagements before the execution of the training would entail the donor writing officially or having round table talks. Different partners have different capacities and therefore, attending to different partners with different approaches enables donors to understand the capacities of the different partners better.

### ***3.1.4.3 Following protocol with the different partners***

The findings revealed that both donor agricultural projects met with the concerned officials in the Ministry of Agriculture or the Planning Office of the President in the first place before implementation on the ground, then to the regional office, district office and lastly to the village level organization (village leaders and small-scale farmers). Following proper protocol, especially in terms of the positions of the different partners is a sign of respect to the partners involved. You cannot choose to go directly to the villages after receiving permission from the Ministry because you will need the help of the district officials to help you introduce you to the respective local leaders and district leaders will require a letter from the regional office to introduce

you. Violating protocol can result in significant unwelcome consequences. When you knowingly go around someone, you are indirectly saying that you are more important than the process. At the very least, it makes you appear selfish. Even worse, ignoring some relevant partners may cause them to believe that you are unfriendly therefore making it hard for donors to build relationships in the recipient countries. Olson (2006) noted that ignoring protocol creates an atmosphere of suspicion that fuels an "us versus them" climate. Therefore, the two donor agricultural projects need to respect protocol because its absence fosters resentment and discontent on the part of the partners.

#### **3.1.4.4 Flexibility with Local Implementation Partners**

The finding revealed that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district allowed the villagers to construct the village road themselves while USAID in the Mvomero district accomplished the road construction task itself with its foreign team and equipment. This shows us that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district recognized and accepted that villagers have skills and abilities, which ensures that the project's partnership with the villagers can sustain a level of trust. Flexibility with local implementation partners enables donors to better meet local needs therefore bringing about the local relevance of the project implementations.

#### **3.1.4.5 Knowledge Exchange through donor - recipient inter-country visits**

The finding revealed that the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district brought some ministerial officials, regional officials, district officials and some farmers from Tanzania to China to learn from the experiences of China. The project also brought international experts from China to Tanzania to get the local experiences of the Tanzanians in their agricultural production. These donor-recipient inter-country visits are very rare for most donors since some donors do not even want to reveal their full information. The exchange of information in an open network like China does under the Chinese-funded agricultural project often helps to build shared understanding and values and therefore strengthens partnerships.

#### **3.1.4.6 Ownership of the project by the aid recipients**

It is always important to ensure a level of local ownership of the project's implementations. This is reflected in the achievements of both donor agricultural projects, for example, utilizing local agricultural experts to train small-scale farmers, using farmer trainers of trainees (TOT), especially by USAID to encourage farmer-to-farmer training, using villagers to construct the village road by the Chinese funded agricultural project in Kilosa, and so on. As Hostettler, Gadgil and Hazboun (2015) noted, project recipients must have significant involvement in the project implementations to have full ownership.

#### **3.1.4.7 Donor Commitments to Communicating Progress**

It is always important to give feedback for any undertaking or intervention. This is because effective feedback has benefits for the giver, the receiver and the wider society. The findings revealed that both USAID in Mvomero district and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district have meetings where they communicate the progress of their project implementations and also carry out project evaluations to assess whether they were achieving their intended objectives, to find out what works and what does not work. Providing feedback of rural development interventions is an opportunity to motivate the rural populace to actively participate in those interventions. Too few donors find time to express appreciation because many donors think feedback is something similar to criticism. We therefore have to applaud USAID in Mvomero and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa for their commitment to providing feedback on the project implementations. Feedback is essential to develop performance and it is a way to keep learning.

### **3.2 Lessons that the two donor projects can learn from each other**

Although from the findings, analysis and effective assessment of the two-donor-funded agricultural projects we can paint a picture of the two projects' success, the impacts of the two-donor-funded agricultural projects, especially those aimed at improving the livelihoods of the small-scale farmers cannot be ascertained. It was difficult in this research to establish actual statistics that show the long-term changes that have taken place. Literature suggests that, quite often, donors also find difficulty in measuring project impact (Ishkanian, 2008). However, there were important lessons to capture and learn in the two donor-funded agricultural project implementations.

#### **3.2.1 Lessons for the Chinese Funded Agricultural Project from USAID - USA**

These are derived from the project descriptions, achievements and collaborations with the donor recipients

- ✚ Having an independent field demonstration farm rather than using farmer's farms. There are conflicts inherent in the communities that sometimes donors are unaware of. One farmer might refuse to go for a field demonstration just because the field being demonstrated belongs to his or her enemy.
- ✚ Considering further infrastructural developments such as a warehouse for farmers where they can store their produce in case of bumper harvests. This will guard them against market price shocks and therefore increase their incomes further.



- ✚ Providing farming equipment such as tractors and power tillers to farmers because most of them are poor and cannot afford to hire these farming equipment. This will bring about relevance of information received especially on using improved farming methods like the use of tractors.
- ✚ Adopting a farmer-to-farmer model of knowledge exchange. For example, the case of USAID in Mvomero district has farmer trainees of trainees (TOT).

### 3.2.2 Lessons for USAID - USA from the Chinese Funded Agricultural Project

These are derived from the project descriptions, achievements and collaborations with the donor recipients

- ✚ Encourage small-scale farmers to practice intercropping. When farmers produce two or more varieties of crops, they are assured of income. In case one crop fails on the market, at least the other crop can bail them out of poverty.
- ✚ Providing agricultural loans to farmers such that they can be able to invest in agriculture which is their main livelihood.
- ✚ Flexibility with local implementation partners by allowing them to have direct involvement in some project operations, for example, the case of the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district allowing the villagers to construct the village road themselves.
- ✚ Having donor-recipient inter-country visits to open a network with the aid recipients.
- ✚ Long funding durations of project implementations, a minimum of 10 years to realize impact.
- ✚ Having partnerships based on Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) rather than individual understanding. This will enable good cooperation among partners.

## IV. STUDY IMPLICATIONS AND RELEVANCY FOR TANZANIA

The skills and exposure that come with donor-aided projects significantly contribute to the development of human resources within communities. This study found that agricultural skills were spread over different categories of beneficiaries, namely; small-scale farmers, village local leaders, and other different stakeholders. This is facilitative for improving the quality of the population, as people will be able to do certain things that would not have been possible without skills. In a country short of skilled labor and with a limited supply of jobs, we can say that donor-aided projects can contribute to the creation of human resources at the grassroots level and in addition provide employment opportunities, especially for community-level facilitators. Therefore, skills development could be considered one of the most indelible marks on beneficiary communities as a result of donor-aided projects. This study found out that even though social networks existed before the two donor-funded agricultural projects were introduced; the project activities increased their cohesion by attracting members to come together. The findings revealed the active participation of agricultural government officials (from the ministry, regional and district levels), academia, village-level organizations and small-scale farmers in the two-donor-funded agricultural project implementations. This has the potential to accelerate their connectivity and increase the opportunity for them to address other community problems beyond their networks.

Usually, project ownership is affected by how the projects are designed and introduced in the community. This study found that the two donor-funded agricultural projects were only introduced to the community at the time of implementation, with no involvement of the community members and the country's leadership in project formulation. This means that the leaders will have little control over the projects and where they are implemented. For this reason, the leadership has to make sure that it follows up on the projects, although one would think that it is the role of the donors to regularly be there to follow up 'on their' projects. This study raises relevant questions about projects implemented in communities and whether these projects address real community needs. The fact that previous literature has confirmed that some projects accustom communities to participation incentives like money, it is likely that communities will participate for money and not the results the projects are designed to achieve. It is therefore paramount for governments to encourage donors to consider and recognize the social, political and cultural circumstances of the local people, that is; the local knowledge of what they know and what can work for them. Both donors and the government need to carefully plan the involvement of project beneficiaries as well as the government in the design and implementation of community development projects. This will go a long way to achieve project ownership by both the beneficiaries and local governments. If donors and government community development co-financing is achieved, the continuity of projects might be achieved.

There are ongoing debates in the contemporary world about the effectiveness of aid in developing countries. The findings from the study add to the aid literature important information on aid effectiveness. These data may contribute useful information for donors, aid recipients, practitioners in development and a vast array of academicians who may be interested in foreign aid studies. In this way, the study aims to contribute to the current debates on aid effectiveness, especially in assessing whether aid for agriculture is good or not.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

Donors use different tactics when delivering aid. The current study has proved some different forms. It is always important to understand why donors use the tactics they use. Nowadays, donors are sharing their information to make aid more effective. Aid donors, USAID in the Mvomero district and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district tried hard to make their aid more transparent. They developed a way of sharing information through feedback meetings, project evaluations and so on so that it would be easier for recipients to understand the donor's intentions, and compare and use the information received. When everyone can access this information, people can make informed choices about where money is needed most and where it will have the biggest impact.

Finding partners to work with is important in making aid work better. However, you have to have a range of approaches to deal with the different partners. USAID in Mvomero district and Chinese funded agricultural project in Kilosa district partnered with different stakeholders such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Regional and District officials, Local Leaders, Academia and Villagers (including small-scale farmers) in their operations and had a range of approaches to deal with the different partners. Without good partners in the recipient countries, aid cannot work. To make aid work better, recipients need to show ownership and leadership. The aid recipients should feel that they own the process of the donor project implementations because this is the only way to make their donors accountable. USAID in the Mvomero district and the Chinese-funded agricultural project in Kilosa district tried to make the small-scale farmers and the different partners involved and own the project implementations.

### Recommendations

- I. Since the project target beneficiaries for the two donors were the villagers (small-scale farmers), these should be involved in monitoring and evaluation of the projects to build their capacity in directing their development projects. More training needed to be given to the village's local authorities to enlighten them on the goals the projects are meant to achieve. This knowledge will help them know whether the projects achieved their goals or not.
- II. In terms of accountability, small-scale farmers should be involved by identifying their needs and coming up with a project in which they will be able to give feedback and the donors and small-scale farmers will learn in the process. Bainbridge (2008) noted that organizations that are accountable to the people they serve are committed to improving the quality of their work and this demonstrates that they listen to the community members and take action.

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