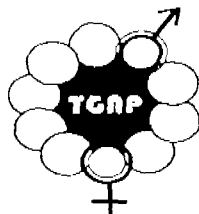
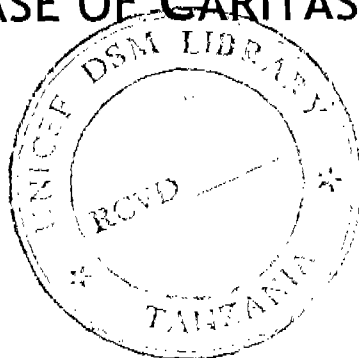


**4TH ANNUAL GENDER STUDIES CONFERENCE
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**THE PLACE OF GENDER BALANCE AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT IN NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATIONS:**

THE CASE OF CARITAS KIGOMA



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CLAIM | Christian Literature Association in Malawi |
| ESAURP | Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme |
| GAD | Gender And Development |
| NA | Not Applicable |
| NEC | National Electoral Commission |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| TACARE | Lake Tanganyika Catchment Reforestation and Education |
| TEC | Tanzania Episcopal Conference |
| TGNP | Tanzania Gender Network Programme |
| UN | United Nations |
| WID | Women In Development |
| ZEC | Zanzibar Electoral Commission |

THE PLACE OF GENDER BALANCE AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS: THE EXPERIENCE OF CARITAS KIGOMA

PART ONE: A GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

From a number of International Conventions, such as The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), African Platform of Action (APA) and The Beijing Conference for Women, there has emerged a consensus on many gender and socio-cultural issues which have to be addressed in order to achieve gender equality, equity and empowerment of women. As in any community, gender is a dimension of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). First, it can be found in the way roles, activities and power in NGOs are divided along gender lines. Second, it is expressed in the degree to which male and female principles are reflected and valued in organisational culture. The two are related, but are not the same and hence are frequently confused. A third aspect of gender is in an NGO's development approach. Gender awareness within NGOs affects their sensitivity to work relationships, and there is a link between the ways in which gender expresses itself and how NGOs ultimately perform in development activities.

Women political empowerment cannot be achieved unless women are empowered socially, economically and financially. Factors leading to low women participation in education, economy and social matters have to be

addressed first. Gender balance in our society is necessary if we have to achieve our goal of women's political empowerment. This paper, therefore, looks at the women's empowerment in general.

In this paper we shall look at why gender is a crucial issue in NGO development work section 1.3 below). Then, we shall see the historical aspect, by looking briefly at how appreciation of gender has evolved, leading to today's concern with gender in organisations as well as in development initiatives. We shall look at how Caritas Kigoma views gender issues in its relief and development work and its experiences in the implementation of its gender sensitive development plans. Finally, the paper will end by pointing out some steps to be taken to enhance women's empowerment in the "Coming Millennium".

1.2 Gender as a Development Issue for Non Governmental Organisations

Gender dimensions of development are not new but have been existing for a long time, originally framed as WID i.e. Women in Development. However, the ways of addressing issues concerning women have varied as understanding women's position in development and gender roles themselves, has grown. Although the principle of equality of men and women was recognised in both the UN Charter in 1945 and the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the majority of development planners did not fully address women's position in the development process. Several studies have shown that development process was based on the assumption that what would benefit one section of society i.e. men would trickle down to the other i.e. women.

The ways of defining women's position in development has changed over time. In the 1950s and the 1960s, women's issues in development were subsumed under the question of human rights, and women were viewed as objects to protect or make recommendations for but not necessarily to consult. In the 1970s, the position of women in the development process became more widely recognised especially in connection with population and food issues. Women were regarded as useful resources to be integrated into the development process, thus rendering the particular projects more efficient. Helvi Sipila emphasised this point by saying:

These are the women (the more than 500 million women illiterates) upon whom the success of our population policies, our food programmes and our total development process ultimately rely. The success of these policies depends, in other words, on those who are least equipped to carry them out.

In the 1980s, women were seen as agents and beneficiaries in all sectors and at all levels of development process. However, the growth of gender awareness is easily said than translated into practice. One reason for this gap is to do with an organisation itself. Our concern is, therefore, to focus on the organisational obstacles to gender sensitive development and look at the means used by NGOs to overcome these obstacles (sections 1.5 and 1.6 below).

Recognising gender as an organisational issue within NGOs is not confined to the North but also exists in the South. The appreciation of gender issues by NGOs in the South has been influenced by pressures from mainly local women groups and, to some extent, by demands from the northern influence which sometimes has led to negative reactions from the South. Put another way, whatever their merits, Northern initiatives towards better gender relations in the South have provoked the feeling that this type of sensitivity

is a northern cultural imposition. Whatever the justification for this response, putting gender-sensitive rhetoric into practice is tough because it requires getting into the 'deep structure' of organisational psychology and stereotype, which are culturally determined.

1.3 Why are Non Governmental Organisations Interested in Gender?

When we talk of human rights, we cannot leave aside women's rights because, as has been rightly said by the North American women's liberation movement that "the oppression of women is the oldest oppression in the world". Friedrich Engels wrote "The first oppression of classes was that of feminine sex by the masculine". And his disciple August Bebel added "woman was a slave before slavery existed".

Gender has been at the forefront of NGO concerns due to several factors. First, social justice, as a moral obligation, calls for direct attention to who wins and who loses in society. Generally, women systematically lose out to men in terms of access to society's resources and power over decisions although the degree of variance differs from culture to culture, with place and with the economic, social and political context. It also varies within culture and over time. It is not a secret that most of women in Africa do not own the means of production such as land and lack access to financial resources. Furthermore, as producers, women are usually responsible for providing the subsistence foodstuffs and informally 'off-farm' incomes which determine the survival of their respective families. Studies of women's role in agriculture in Senegal, Gambia, Uganda and Kenya have shown that women contribute between 60% to 80% of the total agricultural work done. Women are also found doing household chores when they are not engaged in other external economic activities. Consequently, their efforts, abilities and

incentives are vital factors in determining the profile and the level of poverty of their respective households. Poverty, therefore, cannot be alleviated unless people, regardless of sex, have control over and access to commodities i.e. ability to influence decisions on how commodities are generated and distributed. Second, investments in women have greater tendency to translate into increased household well-being than into consumption. Socially, women are central in maintaining cohesion, stability and local organisational capacity. All are important conditions for ensuring the sustainability of benefits which result from development interventions. Women's fertility determines long-term population growth rates. Their control over reproduction translates into the threshold above which economic growth can mean per capita improvements. Women have often been adversely affected by development process. There is a wide gap between women's high, yet unrecognised, economic participation and their low political and social power. In short, *for an NGO to turn a blind eye to the position and concerns of women is to choose ineffectiveness*. Some people would say it is an inexcusable sign deep-lying organisational prejudice. It is important for any NGO, therefore, to ensure that organisational culture reflects development values of the society, including those of women.

1.4 The Shift from Women in Development to Gender and Development

In the 1970s and 1980s, the appreciation of gender was looked at in terms of the position and development needs of women. In keeping with its standard mode of operation, the aid system and NGOs defined projects specifically for women and established women's units to promote their interests. Several NGOs such as Caritas Tanzania, Caritas Kigoma and ESAURP, offices of Embassies and High Commissions and many others established sections (WID) to promote women related interests. Some

African countries, including Tanzania, Zanzibar, Kenya, Uganda and others went to the extent of creating special ministries to handle women issues. Generally speaking, women in development (WID) became an add-on, something parallel to what was already being done out there, or set up as an entity with responsibility for women, the rest of the organisation maintaining the *status quo*.

Recently, there has been an emphasis on gender and development (GAD). Several authorities have tried to distinguish sex from gender. Anne Oakley says that sex is concerned with biology whereas the gender identity of men and women in any given society is socially and psychologically (also historically and culturally) determined. Biological and physical conditions lead to the determination of male or female sex. To determine gender, social and cultural perceptions of masculine and feminine traits and roles must be taken into account. The term GAD is, therefore, regarded to be **sexual specific in culturally determined perspectives on the roles and relationships between men and women in society rather than the position of women *per se***. GAD acknowledges gender differences and disaggregates development work and impacts in terms of men and women as complementary actors. GAD, for example, recognises the fact that there are activities which can be performed by women only and those by men only due to biological differences between the male and female sex. While the GAD approach aims to improve the quality of life for all, gender analysis concentrates on how existing patterns and structures in gender relations can be modified in favour of greater balance and equity.

The shift from WID to GAD stemmed, amongst others, from the way in which governments had taken women's concerns on board. Establishing specialist women's units, which is what governments and NGOs did, may

have provided a focal point but also marginalised their impact in response to this experience. Greater attention is now being paid not just to GAD, as opposed to WID thinking, but also to mainstreaming gender awareness throughout organisations. In other words, there is now a realisation that a **major impediment to applying gender principles in development work is within organisations themselves - the problem is not just out there with projects.** To be effective, strategies need to be underpinned by an analysis of obstacles which stand in the way of gender awareness. What does this mean for NGOs?

1.5 Gender Issues in Practice

As organisations, NGOs are not gender neutral. By and large, non-governmental organisations reflect rather than contradict wider society with its stereotypical views of women acting as servers of men; seldom function as decision or policy-makers. During their fieldwork, Caritas researchers, who were conducting a survey on gender issues in Kigoma region (1997), were told that the majority of women had to seek permission from their husbands to start economic activities and they had little say on the use of the money earned by them through these means. The recent diagnostic survey on food security in Kibondo (sponsored by Caritas Kigoma in May 1999) has confirmed that, although women spend more time on farms when compared with their male counterparts, husbands control household resources and incomes. Men have an upper hand on the welfare of women. It is a known fact that as producers and contributors to the well-being of their respective households, women rarely own the products they are involved in producing, such as farm produce. This means that women seldom enjoy the fruits of their labour. Judgement on performance differs, with women having to prove themselves by being twice as good as men. This could be one of the factors

which scared women from entering the Presidential race during the 1995 General Elections in Tanzania. As a result, Presidential candidates and their running mates (a total of 8) were all men. Norms of behaviour, rules, physical structures, organisational divisions of power and tasks, and functional categories naturally tend to favour men rather than women. And importantly, informal communication, decision-making and negotiation take place in male preserves, such as clubs.

Table I: Leadership Situation for Selected Positions in Tanzania (1997/99)

| S/No. | Position | Total Population | Number of Women in These Positions | |
|-------|--|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| | | | October 1997 | August 1999 |
| 1. | Chairpersons of Political Parties | 13 | 1 | 0 |
| 2. | National Secretaries of Political Parties | 13 | 1 | 1 |
| 3. | NEC Commissioners | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| 4. | ZEC Members | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| 5. | Ministers | 23 | 3 | 3 |
| 6. | Deputy Ministers | 14 | 3 | 3 |
| 7. | Principal Secretaries | 23 | 4 | 4 |
| 8. | Regional Commissioners - Mainland | 25 | 1 | 1 |
| 9. | Regional Administrative Secretaries (Mainland) | 20 | N/A | 4 |
| 9. | Regional Police Commanders | 25 | 1 | 1 |
| 10. | Constituency Members of Parliament (Mainland) | 182 | 7 | 7 |

Source: Mutakyahwa (1997) and Survey

For a long time, women have not been involved in decision making in family as well as in government matters, although they make up 52% of the total

Tanzanian population (1988 Census). The representation of women at the top echelon of government leadership is poor. At the time of writing this paper, for example, out of 25 Regional Commissioners in Tanzania (Mainland and Zanzibar) only one was a woman. The situation is worse at the local level. Table II showing leadership situation in Kigoma Rural and Kibondo districts reveals that there are no women who are Division Secretaries or Village Chairpersons. None of the 40 elected councillors is a woman. More examples of low women participation in decision making positions are shown in Table I. This picture confirms what Mbilinyi (1996) had once argued that the present system has little room for women and youth in power sharing at all levels.

**Table II: Leadership Situation for Selected Positions
in Kigoma Rural and Kibondo, August 1999**

| S/NO. | DISTRICT POSITION | KIGOMA RURAL | | KIBONDO | |
|-------|-------------------------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|
| | | TOTAL | WOMEN | TOTAL | WOMEN |
| 1. | Division Secretaries | 6 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| 2. | Ward Executive Officers | 22 | 2 | 20 | 0 |
| 3. | Village Chairpersons | 75 | 0 | 67 | 0 |
| 4. | Elected Councillors | 22 | 0 | 18 | 0 |

Source: Survey

Low level of education among women in Kigoma is one of the main factors that discourage women from taking leadership positions. Recent statistics released by the District Adult Education Office show that, in September 1999, the number of adults who could neither read nor write were 27,974 women and 19,343 men. Table III shows that the situation has become worse when compared to the previous year. The illiteracy rate of women has increased by 107% compared to 34% of their male counterpart. The enrolment of women for literacy classes has fallen by 12% while that of men has gone down by 7%. One would have liked to look at the factors leading to this trend but this requires a different study. It is our expectation that suggestion to rectify the situation will come out of this workshop.

Table III: Illiteracy Situation in Kigoma Rural, September, 1999

| | ILLITARATES | | ENROLLMENT | |
|-------|-------------|--------|------------|--------|
| | 1999 | 1998 | 1999 | 1998 |
| Men | 19,343 | 14,450 | 7,641 | 8,204 |
| Women | 27,974 | 13,530 | 11,510 | 13,049 |
| Total | 47,317 | 27,980 | 19,151 | 21,253 |

Source: District Education Office, Kigoma Rural

Patriarchal bias in organisational culture does not mean that NGOs are not taking feminine issues in their development work, far from it. NGOs are essentially caring institutions, concerned enough about any aspect of society. This difference implies either a discontinuity or tension between a feminine development approach and masculine organisational culture - an inconsistency which contributes to frustration, reduced effectiveness and, on occasions, wholesome questioning of the sincerity of leaders and managers of NGOs. Reaching effective gender-fair development work would, therefore, be aided by gender fair NGO culture and practice. *A gender fair organisational culture is the one which recognises and draws on the complementary potential of men's and women's life experiences and competencies in all aspects of organisational life.* Unfortunately these wishes are not easily realised. We may ask then: What are the obstacles to a gender-fair NGO culture? Nicky May has suggested a number of obstacles and grouped them in two types i.e. covert and overt obstacles and a summary, *with some modifications*, is reproduced below.

(a) Covert obstacles

Covert obstacles arise from deep-lying but dimly understood attitudes of organisation's power holders, usually imported from patriarchal cultural surroundings. Typical attitudes are:

- i. assuming that women are best suited to support roles (*second class citizens*);
- ii. applying male norms to everyone's behaviour;
- iii. repressed anxiety about female rejection, which translated into keeping women in their place (*the kitchen*), including overt disrespect, control, domestic violence and sexual harassment;
- iv. treating female authority as something to be countered, contained or marginalised (*I can never be ruled by a woman!*);
- v. disrespect for femininity and hence feminine principles in organisational behaviour, often signalled by sexist humour;
- vi. inability to accommodate different communication styles: non-assertive women are ignored, while forcefulness is criticised as unfeminine. (*You are a woman, how can you behave like that in front of men*).

(b) Overt obstacles

Overt obstacles result from covert feelings and prevent women from making their full contribution to organisational functioning. This has led to:

- i. too few women in positions of authority; *In Tanzania Mainland, for example, of the 20 Regional Administrative Secretaries, only four are women. During the last general elections in Tanzania, not more than 4% of 1,336 parliamentary candidates were women.*
- ii. tokenism, which allocates professional women to stereotyped functions, such as secretaries and personnel officers, rather than line managers (see Table IV);
- iii. assessments which are used to subvert change;
- iv. defensive action which argues that biases against women are inviolable part of existing culture rather than a failure to be remedied;
- v. an over-proportion of women in non-professional positions (*e.g. clerical work*), creating low expectations for and about women's values;
- vi. working hours (*including anti-social hours*) and lack of facilities which act as barriers to women who are mothers;
- vii. down playing the importance of gender as a legitimate organisation-wide issue *as people tend to think that this is a women issue.*

1.6 Making NGO Culture More Gender-Balance and Gender Fair

Let us look at what one can do if the organisation believes that gender must feature more strongly in its culture. Alan Fowler, who has worked with NGOs for several years, has suggested the following points for NGOs interested in becoming more gender-sensitive and gender-fair.

- i. Have a holistic view (*i.e. a systems approach*) of what needs to be changed organisationally. This would include:

Identity:

- a. establish policies about gender in the organisation and development;
- b. ensure the governance system is gender fair;

Structure and systems:

- a. set targets for women at different staffing levels;
- b. create job structures which recognise gender features and their relative contributions, such as female communications officers for issues affecting women's rights;
- c. arrange provision for child care;
- d. have gender specialists with systems which clarify their contribution and degree of influence;
- e. build alliances to learn about and promote gender sensitive approaches;
- f. collect gender disaggregated data for all planning activities and assessment of organisational performance.

People:

- a. provide gender training for managers;
- b. include gender awareness in recruitment and selection process;
- c. include gender as an item in staff development;
- d. have gender training scheduled for all employees, including women;
- e. create mixed gender teams whenever appropriate.

How can the above mentioned approaches be implemented? Again, Nicky May has provided a list of strategies, as a guideline, for creating a gender-balanced NGO culture and these are reproduced below (Fowler 1997) *with some modifications*.

Altering organisational culture is the most difficult and time-consuming type of organisational change. It is a long process which requires commitment and perseverance. People are loath to address, let alone give up, ingrained, subconscious beliefs and attitudes in which they are secure. This must be respected. To change culture, go carefully, but with conviction.

Preconditions:

A number of pre-conditions must be in place if change strategies are going to be meaningful. The following are important:

- i. The leadership, even if not convinced, should not be actively opposed to gender fairness (forcing it on partners is counter-productive).
- ii. Resources for change, including time, should be overtly allocated; activities must not be treated as an add-on to business as usual.

- iii. Change management should be a recognised responsibility with agreed progress indicators.

Strategies and steps

Strategies:

- i. Change should be incremental, comprehensive and iterative - that is continually going back to check on response, problems and achievements (feedback mechanisms).
- ii. Getting and keeping people on board is vital.
- iii. Deal with people's reservations; do not disregard the value of resistance.

Steps:

- i. Start a process of dialogue analysis.
- ii. Introduce frameworks and tools for gender analysis, linking external cultural dimensions to what is happening internally.
- iii. Identify the myths and prejudices existing within and between men and women in the organisation.
- iv. Place organisational culture in the context of life cycle; identify where forces for and against change are likely to lie.
- v. Build consensus on what sort of change is needed over what time scale. Do not give up. Cultural change is an iterative and incremental process, especially when management is not ready.
- vi. Diagnose the personal reorientation needs in terms of individual knowledge, attitude and working relations with others.
- vii. Introduce training, counselling and team-building.
- viii. Identify outside allies, such as women's organisations, who can support the direction of change by providing information, experience and advice.
- ix. Periodically monitor progress and provide organisation-wide feedback on what is being achieved.
- x. Gradually reduce the intensity of change activities, but do not stop, because organisational change is a constant process.

PART TWO: THE EXPERIENCE OF CARITAS KIGOMA

2.1 Introduction

While looking at what Caritas Kigoma has been experiencing as far as gender-fairness and women empowerment are concerned, we shall try to examine a few questions: Has gender ever been an issue to Caritas Kigoma? If yes, why and what has Caritas Kigoma done in order to have a gender-balanced organisational activities, in particular and to women empowerment in general? What have been the obstacles towards gender-fairness? Later on, we shall have a look at the activities that have been carried out in order to promote the status of women in Kigoma Region.

2.2 Origin and Mission of Caritas Kigoma

Caritas Kigoma is a non governmental "relief and development" organisation of the Catholic Diocese of Kigoma which helps the needy and assists people in bringing about their development. The activities carried out are of two main areas, i.e. assistance to refugees and development work mainly in the refugee affected areas. The target groups of Caritas Kigoma are people of all denominations. In its refugee work Caritas Kigoma provides (a) humanitarian assistance to incoming refugees (at the entry points), (b) assistance to refugees in camps in the field of social-pastoral work, community mobilisation and health care, and (c) humanitarian assistance to refugees returning to their home countries. In its development work, Caritas Kigoma assists people in bringing about their development by educating and training,

by facilitation and animation and by giving financial and physical assistance to communities living in Kigoma Region.

2.3 Caritas Kigoma and Gender Sensitivity

Being a religious organisation of the Catholic Church, Caritas Kigoma has a moral obligation to treat all human beings on equal terms regardless of sex, race, class or religion provided the concerned person/group is in great need of assistance. In its plans and activities, Caritas Kigoma is lead by the spirit and philosophy of equality and love for everyone. The Catholic Church, as a grassroots part of community life, is always in touch with the people. Day to day experiences in the parishes and outstations gave church leaders an understanding of the real facts of life in society and ability to see things from the standpoint of the disadvantaged people, including women. Caritas Kigoma is aware of the factors which have led to the disadvantaged and marginalised position of women. The factors include low levels of education, experience, lack of resources and self confidence. Since the Vatican II (December 1965), the Catholic faith demands solidarity with the disadvantaged. This has, in turn, promoted a growing awareness amongst the Christian faith that human rights are part of the Gospel. In this spirit, Caritas Kigoma wants the perceived inequalities between men and women and the practices that discriminate against women be stopped. The Church, therefore, would like to see that women are assisted because of the belief that by helping a woman, is helping the whole community. As a contribution to this noble task, Caritas Kigoma would like to see to it that gender features strongly in its relief and development work plans. Caritas has been trying to address the causes in an attempt to bring down the disparities between women and men. This is due to the belief that women's political

empowerment can be achieved by addressing the root causes of these problems.

Caritas Kigoma has taken the women's empowerment issue seriously to the extent of establishing a separate unit (i. e. WID) to deal with gender related issues. The main tasks of the unit are to:

- i. help with consciousness raising of men and women about gender equality;
- ii. uplift the status of women in society;
- iii. empower women (economically, socially and politically) to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their institutions; and
- iv. give visibility to women's perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice and peace and integrity creation.

It is now being considered to rename the unit as GAD instead of WID. The shift to GAD from WID has been prompted by the findings of the gender survey (financed by Caritas) which was conducted in all the three districts of Kigoma Region between November and December 1997. The survey was intended to assess the situation on gender issues, identify gender balance gaps/needs and priorities of women so that the survey results could be used in the formulation of a three year development and relief support plans of Caritas. The study, which utilised expertise from TGNP and the Office of the Regional Community Development Department in Kigoma, revealed the unfavourable position of women in decision making, access to and control over resources, education, expertise in project formulation and management, to mention just a few.

The research findings were presented and discussed during the Caritas planning workshop held in Kasulu (December 1997) a few days after the completion of the study. People who participated in the study and those at the workshop were concerned with the low position of women in Kigoma Region. Norms of behaviour, rules, organisational divisions of power, economic status and tasks (all due to culture and low level of education, especially of women) favour men rather than women. At the end of the workshop, the participants proposed that Caritas Kigoma embark on gender education campaign throughout the region. It was emphasised that this was one way to make gender awareness spread to a wider community which would eventually lead to women's empowerment. This campaign, which has women as well as men as target groups, has made Caritas Kigoma to put emphasis on gender in development (GAD) rather than WID. The shift to GAD from WID, therefore, has come because of the needs of the society and not due to the pressure of donor agencies or from the NGOs which Caritas co-operates with.

2.4 Caritas Kigoma and Gender Balance in Practice

It has been observed earlier that the church is a community itself with particular expectations from her members; involving a sense of accountability and caring, leadership and structure. The Catholic Church is aware that male dominance in our society is traditional, but has no place in the Kingdom of God. In addition, the church believes that this situation is not part of God's plan, but of human making. We have also seen that beliefs guide behaviour and form the basis for policy making. Because of these beliefs, the Catholic Diocese of Kigoma through Caritas Kigoma, has taken steps to ensure that gender features strongly in its organisational culture by:

- i. creating a separate unit, headed by a female staff, to deal with gender and women empowerment issues;
- ii. women, as a group, are represented in the Caritas Board;
- iii. establishing policies about gender in development approach i.e. **gender sensitive planning**;
- iv. including women in panels created to interview people seeking employment with Caritas Kigoma.
- v. establishing alliances and contacts with other institutions, such as Caritas Tanzania, TGNP and regional departments, dealing with women matters, to learn more about promoting gender sensitive approaches;
- vi. providing gender training to several members of staff;
- vii. including gender sensitive and gender awareness in recruitment and selection process, for example, the positions of the Executive Secretary and the Deputy require persons who are **gender sensitive and have experience in gender specific planning and monitoring**; and **who have respect and open attitude towards the underprivileged.**

In its development work Caritas Kigoma undertook several tasks in order to show its commitment towards the promotion of gender fairness and the empowerment of women. This is in line with the call to the Church to solidarity with the dispossessed, the exploited and the marginalised. Some of the activities carried out (to promote the empowerment of women) for the last three years (1997-1999) are listed below.

- i. Visited villages, through its network, to mobilise women to form income generating groups and assisted them in their formation and the election of office bearers;
- ii. Enabled the election of women animators/mobilisers to carry on the sensitisation of other women in the region.

- iii. Conducted a gender survey to find out the gender awareness among the population and the problems faced by women in general and women economic groups in particular. Data collected was used in the planning activity for a three year plan i.e. 1998-2000.
- iv. Involved women, as a target group, in the planning workshop which aimed at preparing a three year plan of activities and operations. This was an opportunity for women to participate in making decisions on matters affecting their welfare.
- v. Conducted training for women as well as men on gender issues in the region. The main aim of such training programmes was to build self confidence among women and reduce gender inequalities.
- vi. Conducted training workshops for women group leaders on project management and bookkeeping.
- vii. Provided professional and managerial advice to women groups engaged in small scale enterprises, including poultry, cattle keeping, tailoring, vegetable growing, tree planting and petty business. Caritas records show that so far 60 groups have been assisted.
- viii. Provision of loans, in form of cash and/or material goods such as agricultural inputs, at affordable interest rates.
- ix. In terms of mobilisation of savings, Caritas has assisted women in establishing savings and credit schemes and bank accounts have been opened. At the moment a total of 120 women have benefited from this scheme.
- x. Solicited and secured funds for women economic groups.

Other activities regarding the empowerment of women have been in the fields of formal education, health and agriculture. These are as follows:

- i. *Education sector*: It is believed that knowledge and skills acquired through education and training will gradually transform women into an active society, hence women's empowerment.
- ◆ a fund to assist girls to pursue secondary education has been set up. The beneficiaries are girls from poor families not able to pay school fees. It is planned that 8 girls each year benefit from this fund.
 - ◆ participation in the rehabilitation of classrooms will provide a good learning environment and improve school performance of students including girls.
 - ◆ informal education (seminars, workshops, PRAs and study tours) is provided to women in various fields to enhance knowledge and skills of women and girls to enable them improve efficiency..
- ii. *Agriculture and Fisheries*: Support women (in form of groups) involved in agriculture and fishing related activities so as to increase their production by providing:
- ◆ training in cash and food crops farming methods as well as animal husbandry;
 - ◆ loans in terms of agricultural inputs like seeds and seedlings, pesticides, fertilisers;
 - ◆ assisting women in search of markets;
 - ◆ advisory and extension services.
- iii. *Health sector*: In order to increase production and productivity one has to be in good health. Caritas Kigoma has not ignored this factor and has been doing the following:
- ◆ Provide health education (especially Primary Health Care) with emphasis on water and environmental sanitation;

- ◆ provide support in the provision of clean, safe and adequate water by protection and rehabilitation of spring water sources and facilitate in the formation of water committees to maintain water schemes, this lessens the burden women as water collectors. Saved time is used for other economic and social activities. Kagunga, Zashe, Bukirilo, Kinonko and Gwanumpu are some of the villages that have been included in this project.
- ◆ take curative measures by providing medicines to local health units.

All these activities have been aiming at addressing financial and socialisation constraints facing women. It is only when one has attained, to some extent, social and economic empowerment can be able to go for political empowerment. It has been possible for Caritas to carry out these tasks aimed at attaining gender-fairness because of the following reasons:

- i. The leadership, including the Bishop of the Diocese, who is also the Chairman of Caritas Kigoma, is not opposed to gender-fairness.
- ii. A fair amount of resources including time, manpower, materials and money were allocated for gender equality activities. It is a policy of Caritas Kigoma, for example, to see to it that women form 40% of the Caritas target groups and also at least 40% of the total project funds goes to women as beneficiaries.
- iii. Organisations such as TGNP, government departments and other individuals have been involved in providing information, experience and advice on gender issues.

2.5 Problems Encountered

Like any organisation, Caritas Kigoma is facing problems in the implementation of gender-fairness plans. Caritas Kigoma has been operating in an environment which does not easily appreciate gender balance and women empowerment. As mentioned before (page 15), cultural practices and norms in Kigoma discriminate against women and girls. Some of the problems, which are of both internal and external nature, are listed below:

- i. The attitude of both men and women, that the place or position of a woman is the kitchen. This has been a persisting obstacle that blur the perception and understanding of the real roles of women in a society in evolution.
- ii. Practices which requires women to seek permission from their husbands before attending meetings, let alone joining women economic groups. Unfortunately this practice does not apply to men.
- iii. Beliefs (sometimes are of religious nature) that women cannot be leaders of men but have to be led by men. For a long time, women have been conditioned to look up to men only for leadership. This is partly due to women's own resentful jealousy they feel when they encounter examples of successful and highly achieving women. In some cases, women have opposed the inclusion of women in leadership positions. This kind of resistance comes from women who have internalised their oppression in the domestic sphere.
- iv. Lack of self-confidence among women that they can perform some activities on their own without assistance from men. This may be attributed the low level of education among women which is a hindrance to innovative ideas (see Table III).

- v. Ignorance of people (especially among women) to know their rights and obligations.
- vi. A patriarchal tradition, re-enforced by a one party structure and culture, has entrenched a certain dependency attitude which prevents some people from understanding the power they have. People have to understand that the role of NGOs is not 'to provide', but instead give people their own power and support empowerment with service structures (advice, infrastructure, finance, etc.).
- vii. Mobilisation of savings is another problem area. Banks have moved out of the rural areas. The safety of the saved money, usually kept by leaders, cannot be guaranteed. How can rural savings be mobilised if there are no banking services in villages? Co-operatives, NGOs and religious centres could render such services provided they are backed up by regional structures which guarantee safety and good service.
- viii. Beliefs that women may disrespect their husbands if they acquire more money and other assets, this kind of attitude could be a result of the actions of very few women. Swai (1998) has emphasised this point when she said that women are ambivalent about women in high offices and accuse their fellow women of being arrogant or masculine.
- ix. General tendency of thinking that gender issue is a women's concern and has nothing to do with men. This could be due to the fact of confusing the word gender with sex and the use of WID (i.e. the position and needs of women) often drives away the participation of men. This was also revealed during the gender study conducted by Caritas whereby "men found it a bit odd to be involved in discussions which they felt were women issues". An

officer with TACARE in Kigoma has revealed that his organisation has also experienced this problem in Mwamgongo village during the establishment of Savings and Credit schemes. Of the fifty participants in this scheme only four are men. This is only 8% compared to the target of 40% of all scheme members.

- x. *Staff position at Caritas Kigoma:* At the moment, it has not been easy to have gender-balanced senior positions (at Caritas Kigoma) mainly because of the historical and social reasons which discriminated against women. Although women were encouraged to apply for senior positions advertised in 1997, there was poor

Table IV: Applications and Staff Positions at Caritas 1998 & 1999

| S/NO. | POST | NUMBER OF APPLICANTS 1998 & 1999 | | | NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES 1998/99 | | |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | | Total | Women | | Total | Women | |
| | | | No. | % | | No. | % |
| 1. | Health | 23 (14) | 13 (7) | 57 (50) | 28 | 11 | 39 |
| 2. | Secretarial | 13 (42) | 13 (32) | 100 (76) | 4 | 4 | 100 |
| 3. | Drivers/Mechanics | 15 (40) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| 4. | Security | 21 (74) | 1 (40) | 5 (5) | 34 | 0 | 0 |
| 5. | Accounts | 5 (22) | 3 (7) | 60 (31) | 5 | 1 | 20 |
| 6. | Stores/Logistics | 10 (12) | 0 (4) | 0 (33) | 10 | 3 | 30 |
| 7. | Social work | 5 (6) | 3 (6) | 60 (100) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 8. | Administration | 9 (19) | 2 (2) | 22 (20) | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| 9. | Others | N A (106) | N A (61) | N A (58) | 8 | 4 | 50 |
| 10. | Any post | 43 (96) | 17 (43) | 40 (45) | N A | N A | N A |
| Total | | 163 (422) | 61 (160) | 37 (38) | 111 | 24 | 22 |

Figures in brackets are for 1999

Source: Caritas Kigoma records

response from women. For example, out of 6 people who were selected for interview for the Accountant post only 1 was a female candidate

while only 2 out of 16 candidates interviewed for the posts of two coordinators were women. As the result, the four people selected to join Caritas Kigoma (in 1997) were all men. Additional analysis has been made regarding the present staff and the applications send to Caritas Kigoma for two periods: January 1997 to 25 May 1998 and January to 22 June 1999. The results show that, compared to their male counterparts few females seek employment with Caritas Kigoma. For example, during the first period under review out of 163 applicants, who on their own initiatives, sought employment only 37% were females (Table III). The picture did not change much after one year as women applicants accounted for 38% of all people looking for jobs at Caritas. It is interesting to note that, for both periods, not a single female person has applied for the post of a driver. Further analysis revealed that the majority of women applicants looked for positions of secretaries, social and health workers whose employment opportunities are very limited. *It is not surprising, therefore, that women employees with Caritas Kigoma occupy secretarial and health related posts and account for only 22% out of the total workforce of 111 people.*

2.6 The Future

Caritas Kigoma has prepared a three year plan of activities from 1998 to 2000. During the planning workshop in Kasulu gender information gathered during the survey was used as input for the formulation of relief and development work. Women, as a target group, was given priority. The WID unit will continue creating awareness among women to realise their democratic rights and responsibilities to enhance their participation in carrying out development activities for the welfare of the Nation and their families. The proposed plan of action to improve gender awareness in general

and the position as well as the condition of women in particular consists of the following:

- i. Gender and civic education will be conducted in all the three districts in the region.
- ii. Seminars for 120 mobilisers of women activities will be organised every year.
- iii. Study tours to exchange experiences with other women groups will be organised both within the region and other neighbouring regions. About ten women will benefit from this activity every year.
- iv. Training of women and youth groups on entrepreneurship will take place and this will benefit about 100 people each year and professional advice will also be provided.
- v. Fund mobilisation efforts, including credit schemes, for economic projects run by women, will continue.
- vi. Staff training on gender issues will be enhanced.
- vii. Financial support will be given to girls who cannot meet fees to pursue secondary education.
- viii. Data collected from the Food Security Survey in Kibondo will be used in designing agricultural projects aiming at improving production and productivity of women agricultural activities.

In its efforts to incorporate gender analysis into its development, Caritas Kigoma will continue with its approach of consulting with and listening to women so that their roles and resulting needs are better understood. This approach will enable Caritas Kigoma to design projects and programmes to help women in their gender tasks with the ultimate aim of enhancing their performance in their existing roles. The ultimate aim being the empowerment of women.

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Summary and Conclusion

Gender inequality of all kinds increases women's vulnerability to several abuses. In order to have a peaceful life all kinds of discriminatory habits have to be abandoned. Any NGO should not turn a blind eye to gender issues in its development work. Gender balance issues should not only be reflected in the organisational structure but ought to be translated into practice. The position of women in decision making and participation in the development of NGOs has to be respected. Gender-fairness should be a concern of everyone and not confined to women alone.

It has been mentioned earlier (page 15) that traditional practices and cultural as well as religious norms seem to hinder development for the community, especially women, in Kigoma Region. Gender education, therefore, could demystify the patriarchal system in the Kigoma community. Training in leadership skills and good governance as well as civic education at all levels could also help in enlightening leaders and the community of their rights and obligations. Mutakyahwa (1997) argues that civic education will promote civic participation and democratic values among the citizens, including women. It is expected that the re-introduction of multiparty democracy in Tanzania offers women new opportunities to take an active role in the political process and thus influence the development process. We need a society in which there is a complete transformation in power relations between men and women, young and old, rich and poor, dominant and marginalised groups at all levels. Transformation designates equal access to and control over economic resources, equal participation in decision making,

abolition of negative gender and cultural values and practices and abolition of inferiority/superiority at individual and group levels.

Caritas Kigoma, as an 'enabler', co-ordinator and donor, is regarded by the community in Kigoma as a reliable institution to play a big role in the development and in the establishment of gender fairness and women empowerment. Caritas Kigoma, therefore, has to continue its mission of assisting the needy in line with gender-balanced principles. Women need support to increase knowledge, skills and awareness on their rights and obligations. For agencies, including NGOs, which espouse social change, justice, peace and empowerment, meeting women's needs should be within the adopted policy approach to gender. The Church, through its relevant organs, has an obligation to uplift the status of women in society. The word of God on love, justice and peace must reach all the population since development is a process that should involve all members of a society to the same extent, according to their individual needs.

3.2 Recommendations

In carrying out women empowerment programmes, NGOs face a number of constraints or threats. Some of these obstacles are within the mandate of the concerned NGOs while others are outside the control of NGOs themselves or concerned individuals. Actions are being taken to overcome or minimise these problems. Women political empowerment cannot be achieved unless there is gender balance and equality in our society. Gender balance and equality will be attained, if and only if, concerted efforts are taken. This task of gender equality and women's empowerment cannot be left to a few people or a few sectors only. Each one of us and each institution must take responsibility of building a better future. The social and economic

development of women in Kigoma, therefore, cannot be left only to the Kigoma based NGOs but moral and material support from national NGOs such as TGNP, TAMWA, TAWLA and others is necessary. Implementation and follow up of recommendations made at various fora has to be taken seriously. For example, in the past several measures to be taken to increase women and girls participation in education have been suggested but the implementation has been slow and in some cases there was no action at all. The success of women empowerment in political, economic as well as in social terms will depend on other actors and stakeholders. Some of the stakeholders are indicated below.

3.3.1. Women:

- a) Stop shying away, but come forward to take up positions which are currently male dominated;
- b) overcome inferiority complex which leads to dependence of women on men whose interests do not always coincide with women's needs to protect themselves, i.e. thinking that nothing can be done without the presence of a man;
- c) unite and advocate for the elimination of socio-cultural practices that endanger the rights of women;
- d) implement all agreements which have been made in the past;
- e) take advantage of economic opportunities to improve their welfare.

3.3.2. The Community:

- a) set up campaigns for the elimination of social and cultural laws which discriminate against women;
- b) pressure the government to make and implement laws and regulations against social injustice and review them from time to time;
- c) establish and support economic groups.

3.3.3. The Media

- a) Educate people on dangers of gender inequalities in our society;
- b) continue exposing evil acts, including sexual assault and harassment, which endanger women rights and women empowerment;
- c) avoid publications or advertisements which are not in line with the whole idea of women empowerment.

3.3.4. Religious Bodies

Religious institutions, which are expected to be in solidarity with the oppressed and the marginalised, obviously cannot turn a deaf ear to the practices which discriminate against women and any other groups in our society. These institutions have to respond to the community in various ways to meet human needs recognising the inseparable physical and spiritual nature of man. They are capable of educating large numbers of people because of their close contacts with people at the grassroots level. Specifically, they can do the following:

- a) Campaign against evils and the violation of human rights;
- b) continue assisting women in their pursuits for equality;
- c) establish and strengthen programmes aimed at poverty reduction.

3.3.5. The Government

- a) Fight poverty by creating a good environment for economic and income generating activities. This will include the provision of financial loans as well as other resources and facilities.
- b) encourage and protect local savings initiatives by various groups of small income people, including women. Special effort be started on how to organise local small scale savings and investment channels.
- c) Ensure human rights are respected and protected.

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