

Civil Society Organizations Guided Towards Activism

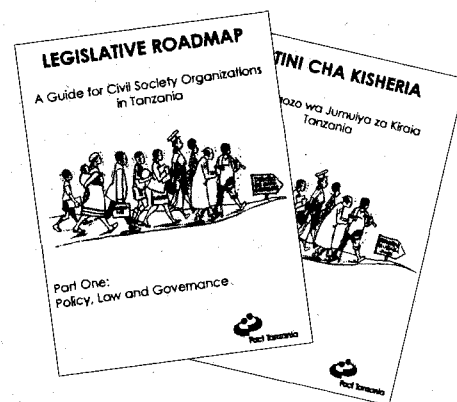
After 30 years of socialism, Tanzania's transition to democracy has encountered many challenges. Since the first democratic elections in 1995, the balance of power has favored the executive branch, civil society has not yet emerged to its full strength, and the government has continued to consist primarily of one party.

Tanzanian citizens do not yet fully participate in their own governance, though it is a basic right guaranteed by the Tanzanian constitution. Tanzanian advocacy civil society organizations (CSOs) also lack the capacity to effectively understand and articulate the needs of their constituencies to the government.

Through training and assistance focused on organizational development and advocacy, CSOs are beginning to have a

more influential role in Tanzania's transition to a free and fair democratic society. As part of its efforts to ensure citizen participation in public affairs, USAID funded the Tanzanian Advocacy Partnership Program administered by the U.S. private voluntary organization, PACT, to compile accurate and easy-to-understand information on the public policy making process in Tanzania. This information was published as user-friendly guides on how CSOs and citizens can influence government policy-making.

USAID's civil society capacity building program has spearheaded the effort to educate Tanzanian citizens on how to participate in governance. The publication—called *Legislative Roadmaps: A Guide for Civil Society Organizations in Tanzania*—provides an overview of Tan-



zanian law, public policy, and legal as well as institutional structures of the government.

The guide defines law and public policies as well as identifies their sources, and explains how they are made. It also provides information on how CSOs can use the information to influence change, and identify the ways for civil society to express its needs based on the existing government structures. Printed in English and the national language of Kiswahili, the publication contains diagrams and a glossary of terms to make it comprehensible and user-friendly.

The Good Governance Coordination Unit in the Office of the President in Tanzania has requested copies of Legislative Roadmaps to use in its civic education programs as has the Ministry of Education for use in secondary school civics courses. Partner NGOs report that having the information available in such an easy-to-use format has stimulated activism by many CSOs. The book has also been featured on television and in major English and Kiswahili daily newspapers. The first batch of 5,000 copies was distributed through partner organizations, and PACT printed an additional 10,000 in response to popular demand.

For more information or an electronic version of Legislative Roadmaps and the related Media Guide: A Handbook for Tanzanian Civil Society, visit www.pacttz.org/docs.htm.