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EXAMINATION OF PUBLIC POLICY FORUMS'

RELEVANCY AND PROCEDURES: A CASE STUDY OF

PUBLIC POLICY FORUMS ORGANISED BY TRACE
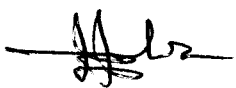
BY

COSMAS MWAISOBWA

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DECLARATION

I, COSMAS MWAISOBWA, declare that this project report is my own original work which has been done and presented specially as a partial fulfillment for award of the degree of Master of Science in Community Economic Development of the Southern New Hampshire University and has not been submitted for a degree in any University.

Signed:...

(Cosmas Mwaisobwa)

Date:......16/05/2005.........

SUPERVISOR'S CERTIFICATION

I, DR. ALLI A. MCHARAZO certify that I supervised, guided and read this work and it is ready for submission.

Signed:...

(Dr. Alli A. Mcharazo - Supervisor)

Date:......16 May 2005.........

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DEDICATION

To my wife Nambu and son Joel whose support, patience and understanding made it possible for me to concentrate and proceed with my studies and see a successful completion of the tasks associated with.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACRONYMS

ADD	Action on Disability and Development
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CED	Community Economic Development
EA	East Africa
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
FCS	The Foundation for Civil Society
FPA	Free of Press Act
IOGT	International Organisation of Good Templars
MCDGC	Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children
NEMC	National Environmental Management Council
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OD	Organisational Development
REDET	Research & Education for Democracy in Tanzania
RTI	Research and Training Institute
SHIVYAWATA	Shirikisho la Vyama vya Walemavu Tanzania
TANGO	Tanzania Non Governmental Organisation
TATEDO	Tanzania Traditional Energy Development and Environmental Organisation
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme

TRACE	Training and Facilitation Centre
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UDSM	University of Dar Es salaam

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CHAPTER ONE

*The new political movements have re-discovered in **the public***

***meeting** an effective forum for dissent. We were promised that*

television and the internet would promote participation; instead

they have provided our representatives with new screens to hide

behind. As radical movements struggle to escape from an enclosed

and virtual politics, public speaking has become the new rock and

roll.
George Monbiot, *The Guardian*, 8 February 2001.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Name of organization: TRACE

Historical background:

TRACE is an acronym for **TRA**ining and Facilitation **CE**ntre. It is a non-profit NGO dedicated to providing training and facilitation services to NGOs, CBOs, government institutions and other local and international organisations involved in development work. TRACE started in 1998 and was formally registered under the Trustees Incorporation Ordinance (CAP 375 of the laws of Tanzania) On 13 April 2000.

TRACE grew out of the practice of providing training and consultancy services to organizations in Tanzania in the framework of programme pursued by an international Non governmental organization called VECO (then Coopibo). The motivation behind

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the inception of TRACE lies on the deeply felt need for Organisational Development services by development organisations in Tanzania.

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TRACE's vision

TRACE has a vision of organisations, which are substantially more effective in

a) contributing to a vibrant civil society and

b) imparting on sustainable development

TRACE's mission

TRCE's mission is to build and strengthen the capacity of both individuals and organisations through

i)   training in a range of capabilities (OD, participatory approaches, facilitation, leadership etc.)

ii)   facilitating a range of processes with clients groups/organisations

iii)   publishing useful, user-friendly materials on organisation and societal issues.

TRACE's goals/objectives

i)   To promote Organisation Development (OD) approaches as means for strengthening organisations.

ii)   To promote effective use of participatory approaches to development

iii) To facilitate change processes with organisations

iv)   To publish and disseminate materials on OD and mobilise debates on organisation and civil society issues

v)   To enhance the capacity of TRACE as an OD service provider

1.1 Background to the public forums

1.1.1   Definition of terms

In an attempt to define the word forum, the Concise Oxford dictionary gives the meaning of the word forum as a Public place, market-place, place for assembly for judicial and other business, especially at Rome. Another meaning of the word public as given by the same source is a place of meeting for public discussion; periodical etc. giving opportunity for debate etc., court, tribunal. The Commonly used meanings of the word forum are "a public meeting or assembly for open discussion" "a public facility to meet for open discussion" A public forum therefore is a gathering that has attracted a number of people with a purpose of deliberating on issues, learning, resolving differences, exchanging ideas, learning and for acquiring information generally.

Public sphere: Jurgen Habermas coined the term public sphere to mean something similar to the public forum. He defines public sphere as "a discursive arena that is home to citizens' debates, deliberations, agreement and action"

In the public sphere, participants are able to freely share their views with one another guided by the following rules as propounded by Jurgen Haberman

1. Every participants with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in the discourse

2. Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatsoever

3. Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatsoever in the discourse

4. Everyone is allowed to express his/her attitudes, desires and needs. By allowing every participant the same opportunity to participate in the discourse, prejudices that limit some people from attaining their rights are eradicated.

5. No speaker may be prevented by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights.

Dialogue: An additional facet of the public sphere is the dialogue. This is an open and honest discussion between two parties. In this discussion the two parties learn about the other party's feelings, beliefs, interest and needs with no intention of judging the best. In a dialogue, a third party is essential to facilitate and ensure that everyone has an equal chance to share his or her views.

A common and probably most used definition of a dialogue is "a process of sharing and learning about another group's beliefs, feelings, interests and/or needs in a non-adversarial, open way usually with the help of a third party facilitator.

A dialogue is a special kind of a conversation where new thoughts emerge.

1.2 Why have public forums been popular in recent days?

Reasons behind organisation of public forums have always varied. Public forums have been organised to give people space to air views, ask questions and learn. Here participants are given the opportunity to make contributions to issues under discussion and seek clarifications from experts present at the forum. In some instances, participants' concerns or dissatisfactions over certain issues are aired.

These forums have sometimes been organised to introduce new concepts to the audience. Also forums have been organised as a promotional tool to introduce new products to the markets, where participants get the opportunity to discuss the suitability of the products and so on. In the political arena, new policies, election manifestos and other political messages have been unveiled through public forums.

It has become a means through which many organization use to obtain views quickly. It has also become a simpler way of availing corporate information through public forum than as it would have been through other means. Therefore, even sponsoring organizations do so with this view in mind.

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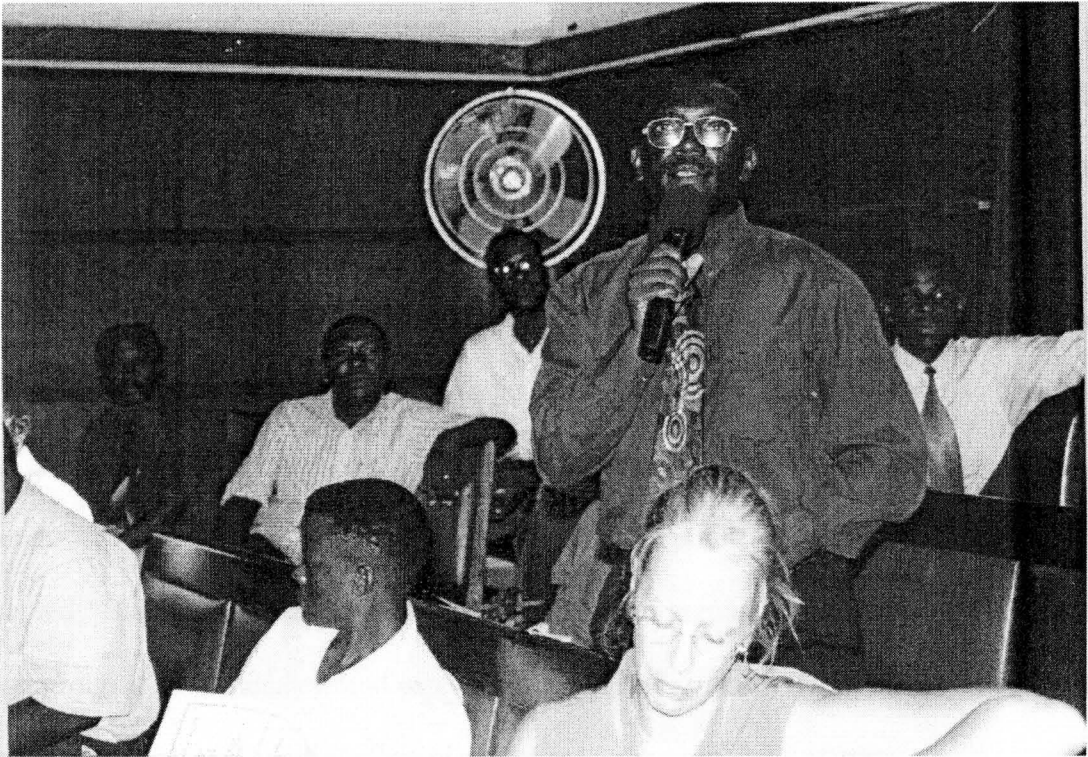
A participant makes a contribution in one of the organized public forums

1.3 Problems/Issues associated with public forums

Reasons that call for public forums are varied and so are the problems associated with them. Some public forums are organized for specific purposes of information acquisition, consultations, learning and so on. Failure to achieve the intended goals constitutes one of the major problems/drawbacks of public forums. When participants' expectations are not fully met and instead the organisers' objectives achieved, dissatisfaction and credibility of public of public forums suffer a great deal.

1.4 Public forums practices

- **Traditional African settings**

In Africa, there existed various forms of forums that brought together people in search of a common consensus. There were different ways of converging for deliberations. These ways differed from one ethnic group to another ethnic group, country to country etc. Amongst the Wasukuma of Tanzania, for instance associations or organizations were formed for communal decision making, festivities and/or communal work. There was "Kinamhala" the organization of old men, whereas "Kisumba" was the forum for young men. The old women organization was called "Bagiculu" while that of young girls was named "Banhya" These groups/organizations were arenas which allowed those in that age group to meet, analyse and discuss issues of their interest. Also, these organizations were critical and influential as opinion leaders or key actors in matters of socioeconomic nature.

On public forum as an arena for learning, Mkapa (1996) contends that the culturing of minds need not be based on books and other publications alone. Indeed, books are a very recent addition to the means by which African societies cultured the mind of their young ones. Traditionally, an African child learnt the value and norms of its society on grandpa's or grandma's knee and at initiation ceremonies. Everything else was learnt by experience and apprenticeship depending on the means by which a parent provided for the family.

Similar to the coffee houses and salons that Habermas (1988) describes in the bourgeoisie Europe, the Sukuma had the "Shikome". Shikome means in daily parlance among the sukuma: "The teaching of the elders around the fire." The children of the family and other close relative met in the evening around fire to discuss important issues and seek advice from the elders, the fathers and the grand fathers talked about the knowledge and customs of the ancestors. The women were gathered in a group close by and voiced their concerns. This is how the children and youth were taught about the tradition of the land through stories and proverbs. They were taught how to do good deeds and avoid bad ones and they learnt other important skills in this way.

Different African societies had different ways of dialoguing and allowing for the members to confer to each other. The mode of operation would seem different but the aims and objectives were more or less similar (Cory, 1954)

- **Western/European setting**

The public forums in Europe are traced far back to the eighteenth century. During this time there were such activities as writing and reading of newspapers and journals and the public discussion of such writings taking place in salons, coffeehouses etc. According to Jurgen Habermas (1988) this is the point where people could convene and discuss/air view in an organised way. These and other forums were the cornerstone of the flourished democracy in the West. For Habermas, to flourish, democracy demands continuous conversation, open arguementation and debate.

In the early modern Europe, "Public" meant those circumstances and institutions, which immediately belonged to the state. The rulers and few people of noble status were referred to as "public persons" as their personality was thought to be consumed in serving the state. Similarly those who worked for the ruling class were conceived to be "public servants" These were the only public. They are the ones who assembled in salons and coffeehouses to discuss and deliberate upon issues.

With the disappearance of feudalism, the term public which had previously meant exclusively the person of the sovereign and, by extension, the feudal princes and lords whose authority on their own estates further represented the authority of the crown, now came to refer to the private individuals of civil society who, under the governance of the new public authority of the state, collectively made up the public body.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Poor preparations and improper logistical arrangements have contributed greatly to making public forums fail. As a result, public forums have been found to be not the best way of airing people's views/concerns especially in a public forum where the responsible people are not present physically and therefore the views raised tend to be left right at the venue.

This is further exacerbated by the absence of proper/firm follow up system on the deliberations and all issues that emerged in the discussion. In terms of informing and

educating the participants, these forums many times, lack appropriate speakers/experts who could really make strong presentations, respond to questions and offer candid responses.

Furthermore, the public forums are organised for the interest of the parent organisation and not for the interest of the public. Similarly, topics treated during public forums originate from the organisers and that they are directed towards fulfilling certain goals. Little or no efforts are made to engage the public in deciding the topics for discussion. There has been no proper planning and involvement of the public in as far as public forums are concerned. A need for public forum should rise from the people and should treat/touch issues that are of interest or concern to them.

The problem here lies on the fact that the way these public forums are organized does not make people learn or be informed. They don't facilitate airing of participants' views and ensuring that the views reach the relevant actors/policy makers. These forums also do not deal with issues that are really an eye-sore to the people and they therefore loose credibility.

1.6 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the organization and management of public forums and look at the relevance and effectiveness of public forums in informing, educating and facilitation of airing of the public's views/concerns.

The study specifically assesses the following main variables.

1. Purposes of Public forums

2. Attendance to the public forums

3. Ways in which the public forums are made known to the public or advertised

4. Usefulness/effectiveness of the public forums

5. Logistical arrangements necessary for the public forums

6. Issues/problems associated with public forums

1.7 Research questions

In this research an assumption was made that the organised public forums lack key qualities to make them educative, informative and facilitative in airing people's views/concerns. It was then assumed that the adherence to certain logistical arrangements in the organisation of public forum would make them effective/useful.

The following research questions were then developed.

1. For what purpose does the audience participate in public forums?

2. Through which channels are the public forums advertised? Which channel do most participants prefer?

3. Do participants find public forums educative, informative and concern-raiser?

4. What logistical arrangements do public forums lack to make them effective/useful?

1.8 Significance of the study

The significance of this could be viewed in light of contributions made to the overall organisation and effectiveness of public forums to the society.

The study would enlighten the organisations and the community at large on the need to adhere to the necessary arrangements that pertains to public forums in order to realise maximum impact. It would add to the body of knowledge the importance of public forums as a way of letting people discuss issues of common interest. In the same way help to demonstrate that public forums play an important role in educating, informing and entertaining. And help to minimise problems that render public forums ineffective and therefore fail to play the above roles.

Furthermore the study would help organisations, communities and individuals that intend to organise public forums to realise that there are key issues to consider and keep in mind in order to have a successful public forum.

Lastly, the present study will contribute in making the participants to the public forums realise that they are an integral part in making good public forums. The study is, therefore, expected to bridge the gap between what is currently practiced and what is ought to be practiced as far as organization and management of public forums is concerned.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Every public forum organised attracted only those who were interested in the topic.

Since the study dealt with people who were mostly not regular participants to the organised public forums it was very difficult to measure or evaluate effectiveness of these forums to these participants.

Limited literature related to the public forums in Tanzania led to the scarcity of information for reviewing. So far there is no study known to the researcher specifically on organisation and facilitation of public forums in Tanzania.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Forums for open discussions are increasingly being used as places where conflicting opinions seek compromise. Most people have tended to throw into a discussion issues that have already been decided upon and which will not make a contribution to changing the undesired situation for the benefit of discussants. Such a strategy will encounter the tension identified by Livingstone and Lunt (1999) between confining open discussion only to include positions that have already acquired social consensus, and the alternative process of using public debate for opening up issues at the point of contest and opinion formation which they believe does happen in some genres, notably the audience discussion programme. This genre amongst other things, undermine the distinction between expert or elite, and the public (but does not undermine the power of the mediator, who anchors the show to one of the three generic constructions – debate, romantic narrative, or therapy session.

Newspapers, radio and television, some of the time-clearly do still serve as a forum for discussion of issues of public interest among people who are knowledgeable, interested, able to speak on behalf of broader social interests, and whose discussions have the potential of being of political influence. The modern media, if may be argued, while they

no longer feed in directly to face-to-face group discussions of public affairs in the manner described by Habermas have instead invented their own publics and public forums for discussions. As the press freedom became more upheld, more space for discussion among the members of the public was created.

The first freedom-of-information law in the world actually predates both the American and French revolutions. In 1766, Sweden passed the Freedom of the Press Act (FPA), which legalized the publication of government documents and provided for public access to them. The reason was not the influence of Rousseau but *realpolitik* – the competition between political parties (Blanton, 2002). At present we are in a new era, in which international standards and expectations of openness play a more important role than particular local political quarrels. In fact, today we are beginning to see an extraordinary interaction between freedom of information and the globalization phenomenon. The importance of public discussions does not lie just on any old talk, rather on a talk that involves questioning ourselves, listening to others and making deliberate efforts to genuinely see new angles on things.

2.2 Conceptualising the public sphere

The concept of public sphere is derived from the 1962 work by Jurgen Habermas. In this work the history of a social, political and cultural practice namely, the practice of open exchange of views and discussion about issues of general social importance is given. It is

about the formation of a sense of the public not as abstract principle but as a culturally-embedded social practice.

Habermas elevates the eighteenth century coffee houses as a bourgeois public sphere, an ideal forum within which newspapers and journals were read and discussed in face-to-face groups, whose discussions were framed with reference to and on behalf of broader social interests than merely the interest of those who were physically present, and which helped to transform the relationship between aristocracy and the business classes. This public sphere was independent of church and state and in fact was open to all. However much the coffee houses and salons may have differed in size and composition of their publics, the style of their proceedings, the climate of their debates and their topical orientations, they all organized discussions among private people that tended to be on going.

They however, had a number of common institutional criteria such as presentation of a kind of social intercourse that, far from presupposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether. Also discussions within such a public presupposed the problematization of areas that until then had not been questioned. Thirdly, the public sphere became more inclusive. It could never close itself off entirely and become consolidated as a clique, for it always understood and found itself increased within a more inclusive public of all private people, persons who as a readers, listeners and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to

discussion. The issues discussed became general not merely in their significance, but to be their accessibility.

2.2.1 The media and the public sphere

Nicholas Grahams (1986) has emphasized the fact that journalists and politicians play a proper and necessary social function, although in relation to both groups there is a failure sufficiently to distinguish between to communicative functions within the public sphere, on the one hand the collection and dissemination of information and on the other the provision of a forum for debate.

Journalists within the public service broadcasting, under the banner of balance and objectivity, claim to carry out both functions and to do so in the name of the public. However, this produces a contradiction. On the one hand, the function of the information searches and exposition that carried out at its best, for instance, by teachers, can not simply be equated with political advocacy. On the other hand, journalists are not in any way accountable to the public they claim to serve themselves constitute a distinct interest.

It's clear that in order to enable collection, dissemination of information and provision of a forum for debate a structure for freedom of information is essential. It also needs much better trained journalists.

Indeed Habermas himself seems to envisage such arrangement when he argues that the public sphere today requires that a public body of organized private individuals take the place of the now defunct public body of private individuals. Such organizations would themselves have to have to have democratic internal structures. The public sphere, he argues, could only be realized today on an altered basis, as a rational reorganization of social and political power under the mutual control of rival organizations committed to the public sphere in their internal structure as well as in their relations with the state and each other (Habermas 1979, P.201).

2.3 Fundamental issues that call for organization of public forums

Simply put, dialogues/public forums are processes that facilitate better understanding of each other and enhance abilities to make informed decisions. These processes may: lead to trust, respect and building of a shared future for the benefit of all, or clarify disagreements and the need to follow separate paths to separate futures.

Public forums attract participants who are in search of a common understanding over certain issues or those in search of understanding the other party. Participants discuss in these forums in order to come up with either understanding of issues which are unfamiliar or seeking common understanding of issues that lead to arising conflicts or disagreements. So, primarily the public forums are source of enlightment, agreement and network building.

Hunter; Bailey & Taylor (1995) view the rationale for a public forum as the need to raise awareness in a certain aspect and to provide space for exchange of experiences and to support cooperation among participants of the discussion.

In order for the participants to reach a consensus, the UN Non-Governmental Liaison Service demonstrates it using the UN model as follows: As negotiations near their conclusion, there may be some "give-and-take" as delegates consider the balance of elements in the "package," and whether they can let go of some pieces in order to retain others. (Sidhu, 2003)

It is therefore, emphasized that participants do observe rules governing dialogues. These rules are centred on respect to each other and respect to views which participants advance.

2.4 The expected outcomes of public forums

Outcomes of a public forum are enormous and vary from one forum to the other depending on the purpose of its organization and the subject matter treated. Open forums, in many instances, are organized with a purpose of collecting people's views and availing information that is vital in the day-to-day activities. Information acquired enables people to deal with emerging problems. Some organizations make use of public discussions to sell new ideas and policies that would be beneficial to them. In the recent past public discussions have been organized to introduce new ideas and allow

participants to lean new aspects of life. According to Cooperrider and Whitney (1999) open discussions accelerate organization breakthroughs by uncovering positive traditions and strengths, creating network-like structures that liberate an organizations positive core and enabling people to empower one another – to connect, cooperate and co-create. Changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized when the people constructively appropriate the power of the positive core and let go of accounts of the negative.

Guttal (2002) denotes that access to information is primarily a political issue that is embedded in power relations and the exercise of power. It involves not only the ability to access information that already exists but also the very generation of information that could enhance the public's ability to participate in making decisions about their future. The capacity to generate information and to enshrine this information in social and institutional memory as 'knowledge' is indeed a powerful one.

According to Roy and Dey (2002) many civic groups are using the right to information much like a weapon in their respective battles. The women's movement in Rajasthan, for example, has used it to track the progress on cases of atrocities against women, demanding that the women concerned be informed of the progress on their cases and contents of various important medico-legal and forensic reports. Many civil liberties and human rights groups across the world are now using the RTI principles to ensure transparency and the accountability of the police and custodial institutions.

The Belfast community dialogue centre[1] outlines some of the benefits that individual participants to public forums would get as understanding more clearly where someone else is coming from; clarifying ones own position; developing new insights into an issue; empowerment as a result of being heard and taken seriously and finding the basis for new relationships and new solutions to old problems.

2.5 The process of organizing public forums

The preparation of a public forum requires a strong and committed committee/task team to handle preparatory activities that are necessary for the forum to happen. Dale (1995) proposes a checklist of questions to ask when preparing for a public forum. Is a forum necessary? What are the alternatives? What is the purpose of the forum? Is it clear? Who needs to be at the forum? Are the key players available? What could be the appropriate date, time and location? Do these arrangements complement the purpose of the meeting? Is a written invitation needed? Telephone? E-mail? Newspaper? Television? Do resource materials need to be circulated? Available before the forum? What outcomes are needed from the forum?

It is also important to ask ourselves questions on what atmosphere is like in the forum venue, Are people's needs being taken care of? Do people already know one another (resource persons)? At this stage, it is also imperative to check on important roles of

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[1] The Community dialogue centre in Belfast was started in October 1997 by people working in different community groups and is committed to a cross-community solution to political, social and economic problems

facilitator, recorder, time-keeper etc so that these people are there to carry out their duties.

In light of the above considerations, the main responsibilities of such a team would include

i) Organising a panel of guest speakers/presenters and discussants. This activity involves identification of people who are well versed in the subject area to be dealt with. The committee looks not only into their expertise but also their availability on the proposed dates. Choice of speakers is a key issue in the success of a public forum and therefore it should be someone who has thought through the issues now and then.

ii) Fixing a date. The date and time will depend to some extent on the availability of the panel and facilitator. However, it is also important to make sure that the date and time is suitable to the targeted audience. There is a need to check that there are no other major events that might attract people at the time you propose to hold the public forum.

iii) Setting up a venue. The room/hall needs to be set in such a way that it easy to get to seats and which encourages audience participation. The committee would therefore consider a shallow semi-circle 4 to 5 rows deep sitting pattern as an appropriate one. The committee should make sure that the audience can see the guest speakers without too much distraction and that there is adequate lighting in the room. It is recommended

that the entrance should be behind the seats to enable people to come in and get out easily.

iv) Advertising/Publicising. When the time and the venue have been set, the committee must decide on an advertising/publicing mode and organize for the forum's advertisement through leaflets, posters, brochure, radio, television, e-mail etc. Many times these seem to be events that people often come to "off the street" as a result of seeing the advertising. So, a clear, eye-catching and thought provoking advertising is a plus.

2.6 The public forum session

The success of a public forum to a great extent depends on the chairperson/facilitator. This is the most critical role of the event. If it has not been done properly, then the meeting risks descending into chaos. When the audience is seated and ready to kick off the discussion, the facilitator/chairperson has to get up and welcome the participants and should give the participants the flow of events (programme).
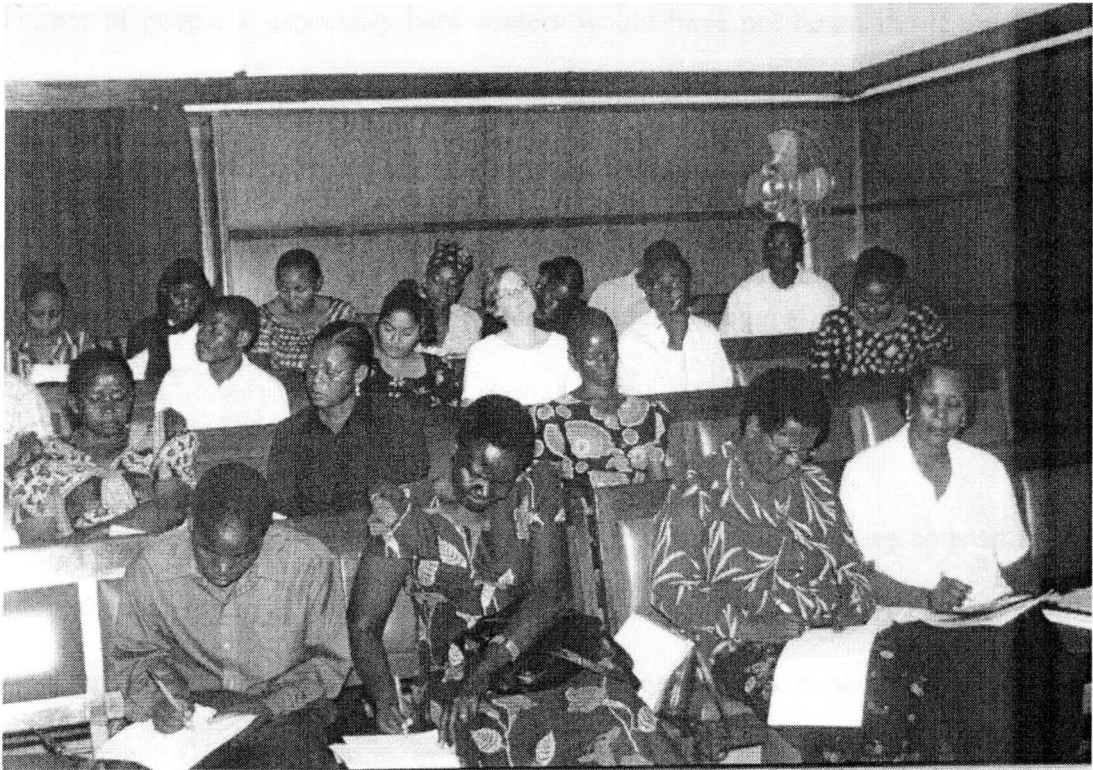
A section of participants at a public forum on "Maternal Mortality"

Guest speakers are introduced at this time and their role/area of presentation. According to Dale (1995) the facilitator needs to create an atmosphere that enables take-off. He/she needs to confirm the purpose of the forum and any required outcomes (specific), the start and end time and give some housekeeping details – all of which will make the flow of events smooth. After each guest speaker has had a chance to present, the forum facilitator opens the floor to the audience to ask questions and/or contribute to the presentations made. The questions are directed to a particular guest speaker who then attempts to answer. Questions that are not directed to any guest speaker are then directed to a speaker by the facilitator him/herself. It is also important that the facilitator

repeats questions from the floor for the benefit of the audience because often a good number of people – especially back-seaters would have not heard it. If the facilitator does not do this then the guest speaker should repeat the question before answering it. But it is imperative that the facilitator is time- conscious and has in mind adequate time allocated to questions and answers. This is important in order to clear doubts and questions that the audience has and to ensure understanding of the issues treated during the session.

When facilitating an open discussion a facilitator is making decisions constantly. How much should s/he say? When should s/he say it? etc. This important in ensuring that every participant participates equally and the chance to speak is not dominated by just a few people. On the question of organizing the flow of a discussion and ensuring participation of all, Kaner et al. (1996) proposes the stacking technique. This is a highly effective yet easy-to-master method for directing the traffic of an open discussion. Through stacking, the facilitator asks the group to raise hands before they speak and then s/he picks them accordingly. "We'll start with….and then you'll go next and ….will follow" The process starts again after the stack is complete. However, stacking has one major problem, it impedes spontaneity – no one has the opportunity to make an immediate response to someone else's remarks. One has got to wait till the end of the current stack to raise a hand and respond, no matter how provocative those remarks are.

Not all open discussions will benefit from the stacking technique especially where the flow of discussion falls under the spell of two or three high participating speakers who dominate the proceedings.

To check the problem of domination of the discussion as a result of stacking, Kaner et al (1996) suggest four techniques that will help the facilitator shift the focus away from the frequent contributors and create an opportunity for less frequent contributors to speak. These techniques are:

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(i) Encouraging – The assumption that underlies this technique is that some people may need a little nudge to speak. Encouraging is therefore a means of providing extra support for those who need it. In this way infrequent contributors feel more invited to offer their ideas without fear of appearing rude or aggressive. When applying this technique, a facilitator would say " Whoelse wants to say something?" "Could we hear from someone who has not talked for a while?"

(ii) Balancing – The balancing technique is best applied when most participants in a group discussion appear reticent to disagree with the opinion of the participant who has just concluded hi/her contribution. Using the balancing technique, the facilitator could simply seek other participants opinion on the same issue by saying " Does anyone have a different point of view?" "What are some other ways of looking at this?" This technique

give some support to those who do agree with the view – especially if given by someone higher in the hierarchy.

(iii) Making space – This is deliberate creation of space for specific participants to take the floor. The facilitator uses supportive statements or questions to allow the targeted participants to speak. The facilitator could ask "Gerald, did you have something you wanted to speak?' "You look like you want to say something?" Caution should be exercised when applying this technique as some people do not like to be singled out.

(iv) Using the clock – The technique of using the clock makes use of allocated time to allow those who have not spoken to do so. You could hear statements like "We have five minutes remaining, who has something to say?" "We only have time for one or two comments, perhaps we should hear from someone who hasn't spoken"

Emphasising the need for openness and inclusiveness in reaching consensus in a public forum, Sidhu (2003) uses the UN model when he says "Open or formal sessions which are part of the official record, can be attended by everyone with proper accreditation, including NGOs and the media. These usually include plenary sessions, where all delegates participate. Plenary sessions normally open a major intergovernmental meeting and are where member states make their individual policy statements. They are also the forums where formal decisions are made, including the final adoption of an agreed text, consensus or a vote, or the noting of reservations"

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents, among other things, the research approach, procedures and sampling techniques which were used for this study. It further describes the instruments which were used for data collection, analysis and validation and administration of instruments.

3.1 Research Approach

The case study approach was used in this study. Kothari (1990) asserts that the case study allows to study a social unit in depth rather than breadth. It places more emphasis on the full analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their interrelations, and deals with processes that take place and their relationship. Thus case study is essentially an intensive investigation of a particular unit under consideration. The objective of the case study is to locate the factors that account for behaviour patterns of a given unit as an integrated totality.

This study sought to evaluate effectiveness of public forums in terms of information provision, educating people, airing people's views/concerns and gathering views/opinions of people. It also looked at the logistical arrangements that are required for a successful public forum to happen. The nature of the study demanded exhaustive and intensive investigation to collect as much information as possible. Characteristics of the case study approach as indicated above, justified its use in this particular study.

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3.2 Target population

This study targeted all participants to the public forums that are organized by TRACE, officials from TRACE who are involved in the organization of these forums and an official from the Foundation for Civil Society who fund TRACE to undertake this activity. However, since it was not easy for the researcher to gather information from the entire population, 100 participants to public forums, two TRACE officials and one staff member of the Foundation for Civil Society were involved in the study.

3.3 Selection of area of study

TRACE based in Dar es Salaam, was selected for the study. The selection was based on the requirements for the MSc Community Economic Programme to have its participants attached to NGOs, CBOs, FBOs etc and offer technical services *pro bono*. The selection of the organization for project work was preceded by exchange of letters for application and acceptance (See appendix I for correspondences). An agreed workplan was made between the researcher and the organization to accommodate specific assignments that the researcher would do in the course of offering services *pro bono* (For details of the agreed workplan see appendix ii). TRACE receives funding from The Foundation for Civil Society to organize public forums with an aim of increasing public engagement in policy issues. A lion share of the researcher's time at TRACE went into organization of public forums. Most of the public forums organized were held at the Karimjee Hall – a hall that has the capacity of accommodating a big number of participants and it is located in an area which its accessibility is easier.

3.4 Population Sampling

Casley & Lury (1982) point out that the purpose of a proper selection of the sample is that, the findings based on it should as far as possible reflect similar characteristics as those of the whole population if it was surveyed. Random sampling, in most cases, has been found to be the most appropriate method because each member of the population is given an equal chance of being selected for the sample. In light of the above argument, this particular study used random sampling to get the research subjects from the large pool of participants to the public forums.

Since participants to the public forums come from different walks of life and have different aims of their participation in the public forums, stratified random sampling was used. According to Cohen (1980) stratified random sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous groups at different levels, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics. This technique is generally applied in order to obtain a representative sample of the hierarchy of classes. The population under stratified sampling is divided into several subpopulations that are individually more homogenous than the total population. These different subpopulations are called strata, from which the term stratification is derived. Then items are selected from each stratum to constitute a sample.

The sample of this study included 100 participants to public forums, two TRACE officials and one staff member of the Foundation for Civil Society.

TRACE staff

The two staff members from TRACE who were involved in this study are primarily the organizers of the public forums. From these two staff members I gathered information regarding objectives of the public forums, what they perceived to be the added value of these forums and logistical arrangements required in the organization of a successful public forum. They also availed the origin of TRACE's public forums and various topics which were treated before. For more details on the questions that were posed to TRACE staff see Appendix III.

Forum participants

Participants informed the researcher about their main motive for the participation in the public forums, usefulness of the forums, how they got to know about these forums, communication channels through which they learn about public forums and whether their attendance to these forums was a job requirement, part of study or personal interest. Participants also served a purpose of identifying topics for future public forums. The questionnaire administered to forum participants is given as Appendix IV.

Foundation for Civil Society staff member

This organization was included in the study because it gives funding for this activity. The Programme Officer in charge with grants to Civil Societies was the only official involved in this study. He provided information on the motive for funding this particular activity and how this activity fits in the foundations goals and objectives. For more

details on the questions that were posed to the official from the Foundation for Civil Society see Appendix V.

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, more than one research instruments of data collection was used. This is due to the fact that no single research technique is completely adequate in itself. Each instrument is complemented by the other in order to obtain better results. Thus, the combination of three instruments namely questionnaires, interviews and documentary reviews was necessary. Questionnaires and interviews are what Berk (1991) calls self-reports. They are self explanatory since they demand research subjects to answer questions, express their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, abilities, fears and beliefs. Tools and methods of data collection matched with their intended objectives are summarized in Fig. 1.

Questionnaires

Casley & Lury (1982) contend that, questionnaires are absolutely useful instruments widely used by researchers to obtain facts about current conditions, practices and also to make inquiries concerning attitudes and opinions. In addition to that they are widely used due to their ability to enable the researcher to gather as much information as possible all within a short interval of time. The questionnaire technique has been extensively used in this study to gather information that the research questions sought to find.

Fig. 1. A Matrix Showing Study Instruments and Linkages with the Study Objectives.

OBJECTIVES	Methods/Tools Used to Investigate Key Respondents in the Study		
	Participants to the Forums	**TRACE Staff**	**FCS Staff**
Investigation of the perceived added value of public forum from the side of a participants and reasons that drive participants to forums.	• Questionnaire • Interviews		
Examination of processes/procedures of organizing a successful public forum.		• Interviews • Documentary Review	
Exploration of the main objectives for funding public forum activity through TRACE..			• Interviews
Investigation on logistical arrangements necessary for a successful public forum	• Questionnaire • Interviews	• Interviews	• Interviews

The questionnaires that were given to respondents had the following types of questions:-

(a) Close-ended questions: These are questions that had "YES/NO" answers where respondents were required to choose by ticking the appropriate answer according to his/her knowledge about the given issue.

(b) Open-ended questions: In this type of questions respondents were required to fill-in the blank spaces provided to freely express their point of view, thoughts, opinions, experiences, feelings and roles in the public forums that they attend and take part. These questions brought back a lot of information including that information that the researcher did not envisage when constructing the questionnaire.

Interviews

Normally interviews are intended to countercheck information gathered through the use of questionnaires. Interviews allow the researcher to supplement explanations and to find further explanations from the interviewees so as to meet the researcher's needs. This technique was most appropriate first because some questions required elaborations from the interviewees and secondly because a big part of the information was collected through administration of questionnaires. This technique, on the other side, was important for better understanding of the interviewees and for reliable results/responses. The interviews were administered to a selected number of respondents who included participants to the public forums, TRACE staff members and an official from the Foundation for Civil Society. The interviews provided some information from interviewees' opinions, perceptions, thoughts, feelings and experiences about public

forums. Some interviews had to be conducted in Kiswahili to enable the interviewees to freely express themselves.

The questionnaires and interviews were designed in such a way that they probed the entire process of organization of public forums and the would-be benefits of these forums.

Documentary review

This technique was also employed. It involved reviewing other related documents on the organization and management of public forums. Documents reviewed included official reports from TRACE and the Foundation for Civil Society, reports of previously organized public forums and other documents. This technique, to a great extent, helped the researcher to make conclusive decisions by comparing the documentary findings and the existing situation of public forums.

3.6. Validity of Instruments:

For the purpose of testing the validity, all instruments were pilot tested during a public forum on "Maternal Mortality" which took place at the Karimjee Hall. This pilot test aimed at checking the effectiveness of the instruments in tapping the required information. The result of this pilot test helped the researcher to make rectifications and correct all identified gaps.

3.7. Administration of the Instruments:

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by a forum secretariat constituted by TRACE staff members. The secretariat had a table at the entrance to the hall and apart from registering the participants they handed out questionnaires. Filled-in questionnaires were then returned to the secretariat at the end of the session. Interviews were all conducted by the researcher in person. Information emanating from the interviews was recorded instantly.

3.8. Treatment and Analysis of Data

The presentation and analysis of the gathered information involved both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This study is based on two types of data namely, primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of raw data which were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. These were the first hand information obtained from sampled participants of the public forums, TRACE staff members and an Official from the Foundation for Civil Societies. The secondary data, on the other hand, included various documents on public forums

For easy analysis of data, the information obtained through close ended questions was tallied and converted into simple percentages for interpretations and conclusions. The data gathered through open ended questions, structured & semi-structured interviews and documentary review was subjected to content analysis for interpretation and conclusions. Qualitative data, therefore, provided more clarifications and explanations on quantitative data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction:

This study sought to examine the process undertaken by TRACE in the organization of public debates/forums. It also examined the value added of these forums to its participants and their communities at large. This particular chapter presents, analyses and discusses the research findings obtained through questionnaire, interviews and documentary review concerning merits of public forums and the entire process of organizing them. The findings are presented and analysed in sub-headings according to the set research questions.

4.2 Motive behind the audience's participation in the public forums.

It was assumed that the participants' motive behind participation in the public forums differed from one another. In the research questions, some variables on reasons that drive participants to engage themselves in public forums were investigated. The variables included attendance for the purposes of acquiring information, for education, for networking and attendance for the purpose of leisure as shown in Fig. 1

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Fig. 2. Reason for attendance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
For infor acquisition	30	30.0	30.0	30.0
For education	46	46.0	46.0	76.0
For leisure	17	17.0	17.0	93.0
For networking	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Study findings

Figure 2 shows that all participants to public forums attend them with different motives. It appears that the majority (46%) attend public forums in order to acquire education. 30% of the participants make their way to public forums for the purpose of acquiring information on different issues discussed in the forums.

Due to the fact that sometimes during the public forums there are entertainments such as dramas and songs and other entertainment activities, some participants (17%) make their attendance just for that purpose. After the closure of the discussions, there is an opportunity to mingle and get to know each other while enjoying cold drinks and some bites. Many times this is also the time when presenters/speakers get the opportunity to closely interact with participants. In some instances this opportunity is taken to sum up or go over areas/issues that both speakers and participants did not agree. In terms of networking, this opportunity, in many forums, were taken to acquire new members/affiliates or even mark the beginning of formal relations among participants and between participants and speakers/presenters. For instance, a public forum on

"Consumer rights" facilitated registration of a good number of new members to the Consumer rights Association of Tanzania. Those that are driven by this motive of meeting different people and networking constitute 7% of all participants to public forums

The location of the venue has also to a great extent enabled each participant who has a different motive to easily make his way to the forums.

Fig. 3. Mission of attendance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Job requirement	17	17.0	17.0	17.0
Studies	38	38.0	38.0	55.0
Personal interest	45	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Study findings

This study found that some participants (38%) have been regular attendants to the public forums as part of their studies. This is to say that the topics under discussions are directly or indirectly linked to their area of study. By participating in the forums, the participants learn issues that in turn help them in their studies. For instance there was a big turn up of medical students from Universities and other colleges when a topic on "Maternal Mortality" was treated. Generally, there is always a good turn up of university students as could be noted in registration papers and while introducing

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themselves before asking questions. Those whose drive for attending these sessions is connected to studies constitute 38% as shown in Fig.3.

In addition to those whose attendance is for studies, 17% of respondents participate in public forums as part of their job. These participants are required by their employers to attend these forums and give feedback to their organizations. In this group, we find journalists, teachers and NGO representatives.

Fig. 2 also shows that the biggest number (45%) of participants to public forums was driven by their personal interest. These are the people who are interested in the topics being discussed and committed to such a discourse. In some cases these participants are those that are affected/touched by a particular issue that is being treated. For instance a public forum on "Old age pension" was attended by a big number of retired men and women. Also in this group are those participants who find their way to the venue because of either being in the vicinity or pulled by friends.

4.3 Ways in which the public forums are advertised or made known to the public.

It was assumed that channels used to publicise the public forums have played a role in the participation of many people. In the second research question, some variables on means of advertising the public forum were investigated. The variables included use of notice boards, radio, television, e-mail, newspapers and through friends/colleagues.

Fig. 4. Advertising means

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Thru notice boards	43	43.0	43.0	43.0
Thru television	18	18.0	18.0	61.0
Thru a friend	26	26.0	26.0	87.0
Thru radio	10	10.0	10.0	97.0
Thru email	2	2.0	2.0	99.0
Thru newspapers	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	1000	100.0	100.0	

Source: Study findings

Figure 4 shows that more participants (43%) had learnt about public forums through reading on notice boards. Notice boards appear as the top means of publicity because it's the easiest to use and it is less costly. When a forum is planned notices are sent to various organizations/institutions such as NGOs, CBOs colleges, schools etc. which in turn post them on notice boards for people to read. An added advantage of notice boards is that it lets even visitors to these organizations get the information.

26 participants (26%) indicated that they have participated in public forums after having heard from friends/colleagues at work. This is to say there is a multiplier effect i.e. those who got to know through other channels have also informed others. This kind of publicizing of the forum occurs more informally over lunch, at work or even at other social activities.

Television was cited by 18 participants (18%) as being the means through which they learnt about the public forums. Though TRACE has not been able to put up advertisements of the forums on TV, the coverage of the forums by this media channel has alerted viewers about the existence of the forums. The outcomes or proceedings of public forums have featured on several television stations as news items. Another means of publicizing which participants (10%) cited was radio through which they learnt about public forums. Similarly, publicity through radio has not been in the form of an advertisement but rather as news item in various news bulletins. Also 2 participants (2%) cited e-mail as the means through which they got to know about the public forums. This is an ever growing means of communication in this technological era. It is one of the effective and efficient means of communication used in the modern world. The main hiccup of this means is its initial cost as not many Tanzanians can afford computers and installation of e-mail connectivity. It is simple as one message can be sent out to many recipients all at once.

Means through which the public forums are publicized are many and the choice of each depends on ease of use, cost effectiveness and accessibility by the target group. E-mail for example is one such means through which not many people can be reached – due to technological hindrances that bar many people to access. Very few Tanzanians are connected to the internet though in towns a relatively big number of people have that access. Television is another way of publicizing but it also has the same limitations of

being costly and limited access to the majority of the people. Newspapers were found to be least popular means.

Fig. 5. Overview of Public Forums conducted during the year 2004.

Date	Theme/Topic	Objectives	No. of participants		
			M	F	Total
09 Feb. 04	Is the Governance Agenda Donor Driven?	Deliberate on how the government and organizations in Tanzania perceive, internalize and operationalise the concept of good governance, not just to appease donors but creating a sustainable home-grown democratic culture	44	31	75
29 March '04	Consumer Rights: Who is to protect them under globalization?	To highlight on the plight of a Tanzanian consumer and figure out measures that can sustainably and comprehensively protect his/her rights in a wake of liberalized (and globalised) economy that has to a greater extent been proven not centred on the welfare of people but on maximization of profit	68	42	110
15 June '04	Maternal Mortality: Why are our mothers dying at this rate?	To focus on maternal mortality not only as health problem but also a social- economic problem that is costing our nation more than we might have been thinking. It was an attempt to make the public think critically of not only the problem but also of what they can do in their institutional and individual capacities to address it.	50	68	118
17 Sept. '04	Are our concerns included in the PRS II?	To enhance people's (ordinary citizens) sense of ownership of the new Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS II) by providing them with an opportunity to be informed of the process and contents of the draft PRS II and contribute their suggestions and ideas with a view of improving the draft in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Vice President's Office. The forum also aimed at increasing appreciation of the need to provide feedback to the people and engaging them beyond the scope of one-time consultation.	71	56	127

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Though there is an array of newspapers in the country at present, the hindrances to access remains to be the cost and choice of newspaper in which the advert is placed. These difficulties are to a certain extent due to language of the paper (most forums were advertised through "The Guardian" newspaper) With the already identified gaps of each means of publicity of forums, it is therefore imperative to design a publicity plan which encompasses almost all channels. Advertising should be done through combined channels to ensure access by many.

In terms of accessibility to channels used to publicise the forums, most participants pointed at notice boards, radio and e-mail as being accessible to most of them.

4.4 Logistical arrangements necessary for a successful public forum

An assumption was made that there are certain logistical arrangements that are important for the success of a public forum.

4.4.1 Hand outs and copies of presentations made in the forums are such an important element in the success of a public forum. 79% of total number of participants who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they would always want to have copies of the presentations made. They said these handouts help them to follow the presentations but also to refer to it after the forum. 16% percent of the participants did not see the importance of having copies of the presentations. On the format of handouts/copies, the majority (79%) would want to have them as hard copies. 16% of respondents would prefer to have handouts/copies as soft copies (in diskettes). 5% would like to have soft

copies of the presentations as attachments sent to their email addresses. Participants

indicated that they would like to have these handouts/copies distributed in the hall during

the forum, sent by post or e-mailed to each participant before hand.

4.4.2 Language used in the public forum is another important factor that is needed for its

success. In the present study, 71% of all respondents recommended the use of Kiswahili

in public forums. Among reasons given in support of Kiswahili include its wide use

amongst Tanzanians. They also argued that Kiswahili is more suitable than other

languages because the majority of participants to the public forums are Tanzanians.

16% of respondents indicated their preference of having both Kiswahili and English

used in public forums. This group of participants argues that since participants to these

forums include foreigners/non Tanzanians then it is better to use both languages for the

benefit of all participants. Another arguement in favour of usage of both languages is

that some topics under discussion are technical and it is hard to find the right terms in

Kiswahili. So, it would better to make presentations in English and discuss it in

Kiswahili.

Fig.6. Preference of language used.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
English	11	11.0	11.0	13.0
Kiswahili	71	71.0	71.0	84.0

Both E & K	16	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Study findings

11% of all respondents favoured the use of English as it is an international language and an official language for Tanzania. These people based their argument on the fact that Tanzania is not isolated from the rest of the countries in the world. The fact that there are non Tanzanians participating (however few), there is a need to use a language that is easily understood by all. There are participants who are not fluent in English who find it difficult to follow thoroughly well the presentations and a result they can not participate well especially during plenary sessions. In the same way those who are not Kiswahili speakers find it difficult to follow especially when a Kiswahili speaker contributes. As a result of this, a forum on PRS II compelled the chairperson to play a role of a translator each time a speaker made a contribution.

4.4.3 Another important logistical arrangement that this study investigated was time management. The majority of participants (82%) found time allocated to presentations, plenary discussions and after forum networking to be inadequate. For instance, time allocated for contributions to the presentations need to be doubled. This is the time when participants have to contribute, ask questions and seek clarifications. Another area that participants wanted to see more time added to it was the presentation part. Presenters need to have enough time in order to make a thorough presentation.

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However, the general picture that one gets from this variable is that time allocated to sections of the public forum and the forums themselves was inadequate. The responses given to the question on timing and time allocated to the public forums and its sections revealed this inadequacy. For instance there are respondents who had wanted to have the presentation time shortened so as to allow more time for the plenary session. Also there are those who indicated that the public forums should start earlier (preferably at 1.00pm instead of 3.00 pm) so that enough time is left for presentations and discussions. To substantiate this, some forums ended when it was almost dark. For instance, a public forum on "Corporal punishments" in schools ended at 7.05 pm.

4.4.4 The venue in which the public forums take place was another variable involved in the investigations. 92% of all respondents indicated that the present venue i.e. Karimjee Hall was an appropriate one. Reasons given in favour of this venue was the ample space, good ventilation, good seating arrangement and security. 7% of all respondents found the venue to be unsuitable. It was unsuitable because it is not centrally located and as a result participants from some parts of the city did not manage to make it to the forums. 1% of all participants did not indicate whether the venue was suitable or not.

Karimjee hall was preferred because of its facilities which many other halls lack. It should be remembered that this hall was once being used for parliamentary sessions hence this good quality.

4.5 Do participants find public forums educative, informative and concern raiser?

On whether public forums provide information to its participants, 85% of respondents agree that they get informed. They acquire information through various speakers who make presentations, through publications distributed and through fellow participants during plenary session and after forum networking. 11% of respondents did not find public forums to be informative. 4% did not comment on whether it is informative or not.

Fig.7. Are public forums Informative?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
N	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
Y	11	11.0	11.0	15.0
Total	85	85.0	85.0	100.0
	100	100.0	100.0	

Source: Study findings

On the extent to which public forums have been informative, 58 respondents (58%) accent that public forums are very informative. 29 respondents (29%) found public forums to be somehow informative whereas 10% of participants view public as not informative as Fig. 8 shows.

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Fig. 8. Are Public Forums Informative?
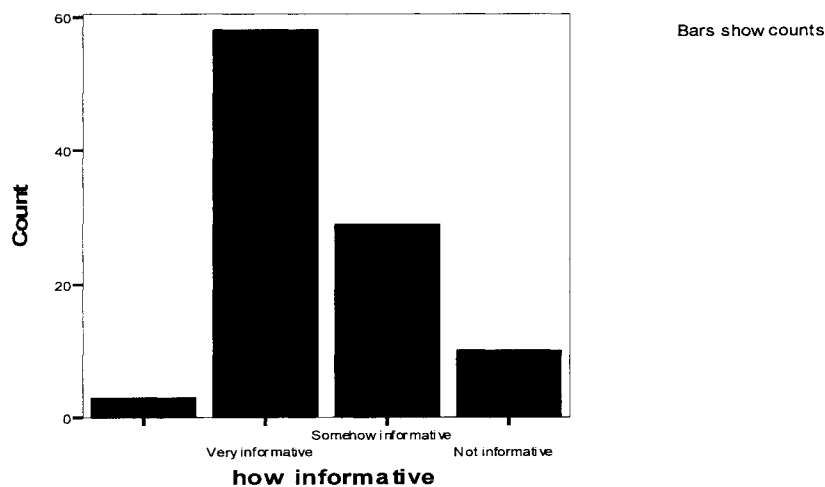
Source: Study findings

On raising concerns, majority (94%) agree that public forums are appropriate avenue to raise people's concern. They find it to be appropriate especially if there is a presence of people in powers or control e.g. policy makers or those that the concerns have been directed to.

Public forums also play a role in provision of education to its participants. 86% of respondents agreed that public forums are educative. They get educated through presentations and discussions especially on topics that were previously unfamiliar to them. Education is also acquired through interactions with other participants at the end of the forum. During this time different people get to know one another and exchange views. Fraser & Restrepo-Estrada (1998) share the same view when they say "In general terms, for today's change and development strategies, the communication aims are to

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stimulate debate and "conscientization" for participatory decision-making and action, and second, to help people acquire the new knowledge and skills they need. A third aim is to use communication to promote better team work, cooperation and coordination between various governmental or no-governmental organizations involved in multidisciplinary development programmes"

11 respondents (11%) did not find public forums to be educative. 3% of the total number of respondents did not indicate whether they viewed public forums as educative or not.

Fig. 9. Are public forums educative?
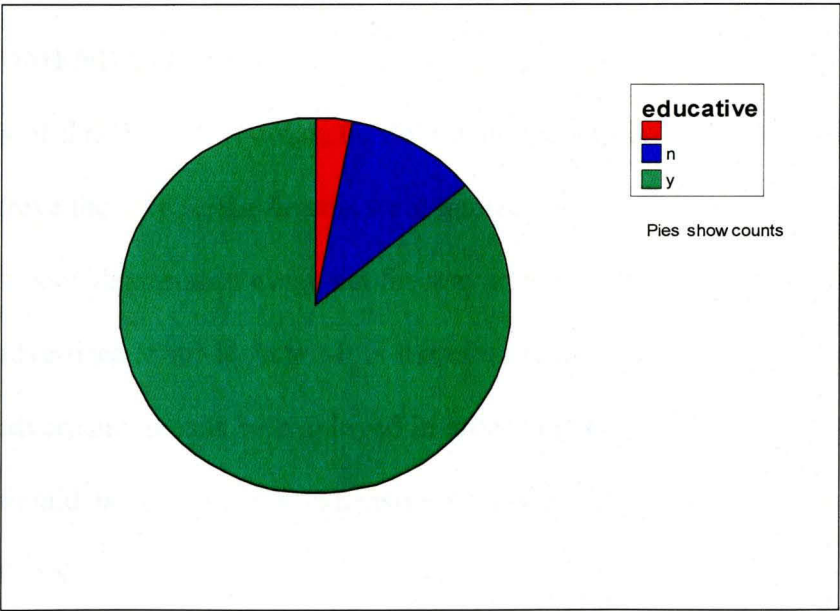
Source: Study findings

To what extent have public forums been educative? 62% of respondents agreed that public forums have been very educative. Topics that have been brought up for

discussion were so enriching. The presence of experts at the forums enabled them to seek clarification and explanations from them. 27% did find public forums to be somehow educative and 9% indicated that public forums were not educative. 2% of respondents did not have any comment on this variable.

Another important variable that this research sought to investigate was to find what participants liked in the whole forum i.e. what part of the forum was interesting to them. This was important to know in order to be able to improve the parts that were found to have some weaknesses. The plenary part was found to be more interesting to about 50% of all respondents. Then the after forum/networking part was seen as interesting by 28 respondents (28%). The presentation part was third in terms of interest by 22%.

4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of this study's findings, the following recommendations are put forward in a bid to improve the way public forums are organized.

i)   It is evident in this study that the way in which public forums are announced/ advertised is inadequate. It is therefore recommended that a combination of advertising means be employed in order to reach the masses. More emphasis should be put on less expensive means like notice boards, brochures and flyers.

ii)   To avoid the risk of rendering public forum ineffective in educating, informing, entertaining and facilitation of raising concerns, strategic choice of language used should be made. It is recommended that as much as

possible an interpreter should always be available should his/her assistance be needed.

iii) To ensure standards and uniformity in the way public forums are organized, it is recommended that the suggested guidelines in the implementation part of this chapter be published in a user friendly manner and distributed widely to NGOs, CSOs, Women/Youth groups and institutions.

iv) In order to enable participants raise own concerns or tackle real issues at stake, TRACE should undertake a special exercise with stakeholders in order to identify areas/themes/topics that will be tabled for discussions in the forums. The present arrangement is that the organizers in consultations with a few people decide on what to be discussed.

v) As found out in the study, handouts are essential for most participants to refer to and concretize the knowledge/information gained. It is recommended that apart from hardcopies produced, TRACE establishes a website where highlights or proceedings of these public forums will be uploaded for participants to refer to should a need arise.

vi) Plans should be made to encourage replication of such forums within communities and other organizations/institutions in order to enhance and promote public dialogues on issues of their concerns and therefore opening up space for ordinary people to discuss and participate in the key policy processes.

vii)   If TRACE's forums are to have greater impact, it is recommended that an

arrangement be made to network with other organizations that are strong in

policy issues such as NGO policy forum, TANGO & FES so that they can

pursue and make follow up of recommendations or issues that are brought up

in the forums.

4.7 AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER WORK

In line with this examination of public forums and their relevancy, future participants in

the CED programme could be placed at TRACE to look at other angles relating to public

forums. These are such as:

i)   Developing and putting in place a mechanism that will facilitate

documentation and sharing of lessons learned in the organized public forums

ii)   Working on modalities of encouraging replication of public forums in other

parts of the country including organization of similar forums at

local/grassroot level

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents mainly implementation plan for the project with regard to identified gaps.

It is confirmed in this study that the preparation part of the public forum and the required logistical requirements are crucial in realizing the intended objectives. This part of the chapter offers a handbook of guidelines that have been designed to assist organizers of public forums achieve most of the objectives that were set for the forums. These guidelines dwell on three main areas namely facility and logistical arrangements, publicity and facilitation and after-forum networking.

A HANDBOOK FOR ORGANISERS OF PUBLIC POLICY FORUMS
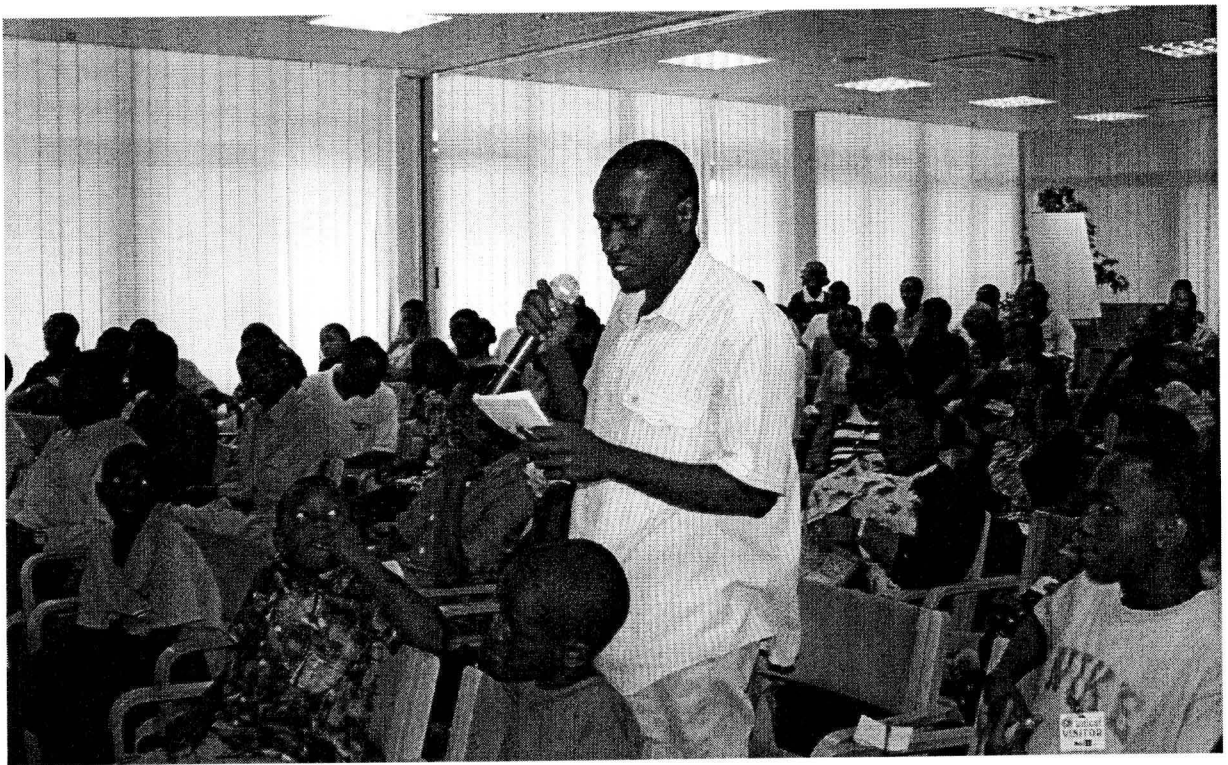
TRAINING AND FACILITATION CENTRE (TRACE)

1.0 Introduction:

Public forums are avenues in which different people with a common interest gather to discuss, deliberate and share information. They facilitate learning and consensus building. Public forums are increasingly being used as arenas for conflict resolutions and reconciliation.

1.1 Aims of a public forum.

A public forum may have different aims depending on the nature of its organization and what it actually wants to achieve at the end of it. Some of the common aims include:

- To publicly oppose a policy and promote a policy alternative

- To bring together people who share the aim of promoting the policy alternative

- To collect the names and contact details of these people

- To obtain publicity in the local, and international , media for the policy alternative

- To plan further action in order to promote policy alternative

- To educate and raise awareness of the policy alternative both locally and internationally

- Ultimately, to get the policy alternative on the national political agenda, and change the government legislation.

Part I: Facility and logistical arrangements

2.1 Hiring a hall

Prior to hiring a hall your first priority should be fixing a date and a time. Then a decision on the venue should be taken.

While at this stage take time to ask yourself the following questions. How much time do you have to the day of the forum? Do you have time, ideally, to place a report and/or an advert in the media in time for the forum? Are there any other meetings on at the same time, or any other big national events that are likely to coincide with the forum?

Participants in a spacious hall

- Hire a hall

Through your knowledge of the local area, you need to identify a suitable venue and book it. A deposit may be required and you should always be prepared to make a deposit when booking.

- Time and length of the forum

The length of a meeting will depend upon a number of speakers and their allotted time. Always book the room for at least an hour after the official end of the meeting, to ensure plenty of time for very important networking and mingling. Always start and finish on time.

2.2 Preparing the hall

- Public address system

Ensure that there is an effective public address system. Even if you have speakers who can project their voices well, it is still a good idea to have a microphone on the platform. However, microphones which are constantly malfunctioning just make the forum look farcical and therefore ensure that they work. A "roving mic" to take questions from the audience is a bonus.

- Presentation gadgets

Depending on the nature of presentation and technological level, ensure LCD projector, Slide projector, Overhead projector are connected as appropriate. It is still important to have flip charts and maker pens by the side should the need for their use arise.

- The platform

Depending on the size of the hall, the speakers' platform should be on the same level as the audience in a small hall and a raised platform in big hall so that participants can have a direct view of the speaker.

- Banner

Where possible try to have a banner across the front of a platform and a slogan, or a website address prominently displayed. This creates atmosphere and gives any press photographers a photo opportunity, resulting in subsequent publicity for the cause.

- Video the proceedings

It is always advisable to have the proceedings of the forum captured into a video for documentation purposes. This way, videos of the meeting can circulate and be seen by potentially many other people. It is important to note that, some speakers may not want to be videoed and therefore a need to ask their permission individually before the meeting begins.

- Refreshments

It is quite good if tea, coffee and/or other refreshments are provided on a separate table in the corner of the hall, or somewhere in the corridor. Provide glasses and jugs of water or bottled water for the speakers. The after forum part in which participants use to network, chat and exchange ideas is usually the best opportunity for refreshments.

- Exhibition/publications tables

This is essential especially for distribution of publications that are relevant to the topic of discussion or other related topics. The same table can be used to display or exhibit some documents regarding the same topic. The table can also be used for petition signing and merchandise.

- Collection buckets

The buckets can be used to collect votes especially when participants resolve to vote for something. Do not forget these most essential of requirements otherwise these processes will be hindered.

Part II: Publicity

3.1 Use of local media

Using the local media is the primary means of getting both the meeting and its aims widely publicised.

Moreover, achieving publicity in the media is one of the main aims of a public forum.

How successful you are in achieving publicity may depend upon the local journalists, their time, their interests, and how well you are connected with them, but generally speaking, the local media is more likely to be interested in reporting your activity if it concerns a topical, and also a local, issue.

So, in order to ensure publicity of your forum the first considerations should be:

Slogan

The slogan should be short, catchy and that easily conveys both the topic and the purpose of the meeting. This helps participants to decide whether the topic is of interest to them or not and whether they should attend or not.

Establish a database of local media contacts

For you to be able to do this, you need to have

a) the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and, especially, the fax numbers for all the local and regional papers, even the free papers including their frequency i.e. their days of publication,

b) the local radio stations,

c) the local television stations.

It is also important to have a list of other possible media contacts because you will also want to inform any related channels/publications which are concerned with the issue you will be discussing. These channels may also help to further publicise the forum.

3.2 Contacts with the local media.

After the creation of the database, and in the 10 days leading up to the forum, fax each of the local media station with a one- page press release, at least twice.

Email is still a problematical way to deliver a press release. A one-page fax is something tangible which will be placed in someone's hand. An email, however, always risks being lost inside the computer.

The first release should announce the meeting and its aims, with quotable quotes and contact numbers. This should be sent in time for a possible report to appear in the local papers before the meeting.

If the targeted paper comes out on the Friday morning, then the newspaper will usually be ready for printing on Wednesday afternoon. Therefore, you need your press release to be with them for the Monday or Tuesday so they can find space for a report.

Another press release should be sent on the morning of the meeting, as a reminder, and should include the full agenda for the meeting.

Local radio wants to hear about local news and activity all the time. Therefore make sure you phone them or fax a news release to them every day. They may interview you. If you have an important news angle then hold on to it until the last 48 hours, in order to ensure maximum publicity on the eve, or day, of the meeting.

3.2.1 Make use of personal media contacts

If you know any journalists, or if any of the activists/organisers know any journalists personally, then ensure they are contacted and told about what you are doing. This can certainly pay off.

3.2.3 Prepare written material to give to the media

Have copies of your speech, or any relevant statements, to distribute to the media present at the meeting, and to members of the audience. This facilitates the media people with relevant sources of information for writing up of feature stories and bulletins.

3.2.4 Prepare a follow up press release

You should provide all local and relevant national, media with full reports of the meeting, whether or not they send a reporter.

Therefore, send another one-page press release, in time for the very next edition of the local media, which reports the meeting, explains what was achieved, and what you intend to do now.

Write it in a journalistic style which can be lifted exactly as is, and reported verbatim. Put more emphasis on elements which make it newsworthy. This will ensure that every local media contact, whether or not it had a journalist present, will have a report of the meeting, and it means you're likely to get another week's publicity.

3.3 Local advertising

In addition to the work with the local media, here are more ways of getting the meeting publicised.

- **Make use of individual publicisers**

Let people do what they're good at and comfortable with in publicizing the event. There are bound to be a few people who can talk well. Therefore, delegate them to phone round their friends and colleagues and get things stirred up. This way has proved to be effective especially where targeted participants are those in institutions/companies etc.

- **Use leaflets and put up notices**

Depending upon funds and the length of time before the meeting, a leaflet campaign may be possible. The flyer should include the slogan you've decided upon, the day, date, time, place, full contact details and a map showing the venue. Local libraries, display stands and so on are all possibilities for posting notices. Keep a bundle of flyers with you and put up a notice wherever you find to be suitable. Notice boards have proved to be effective in the publicity part of the forum.

- **Use of email**

Email everybody you know who is likely to be interested regardless of where they live, and encourage them to forward on the message. Some people will often travel the length of the country to get to a meeting, and will certainly tell others whom they know in your area, and who presently may be unknown to you.

Part III: Facilitation and after forum Networking

4.1 The role of the Chairperson

This is the most critical role of the whole event. Should it not been not done properly, then the forum risks descending into chaos. To avoid this to happen, the following are important considerations for the chairperson:

- **The agenda**

It is good to have a printed agenda given to people as they enter, or placed on their seats or tables. The printing of this agenda lies in the responsibility of the Chairperson and his/her organizing team.

For instance, the Agenda may look something like this:

Time	Event	Responsible
2.30pm	Opening remarks	Chairperson
2.35pm	Presentation on "Iodine Deficiency"	Juma Salum
2.50pm	Questions on content of Juma Salum's presentation	All
2.55pm	Presentation on"Malnutition and Infant Feeding"	Mary Mwangi
3.10pm	Questions on content of Mary Mwangi's presentation	All

| 3.15pm	Presentation on "WFP's efforts to tame hunger and starvation"	Brighton McKnight
4.00pm	Plenary/ General Discussion	All
4.55pm	Closing remarks	Chairperson
5.00pm	Refreshments and networking	All

- **Opportunity to make a contribution:**

Announce to the participants when introducing the meeting about the chances for participants to speak. It will ensure the audience knows exactly when they will have their chance to a) ask their questions, and b) make their points.

- **Managing time for questions, answers and comments**

The contributions from the audience are just as important as the contributions from the speakers at the platform and so the Chairperson should structure the meeting in such a way that participants will have their chance to ask questions and make their own comments.

The best way to do this is to state at the outset – so everybody knows – that there will be an opportunity to take questions for clarification on anything specifically which the

speaker has said, for a set time. Then when everybody on the platform has spoken, the meeting will be opened up to comments and discussion from the audience.
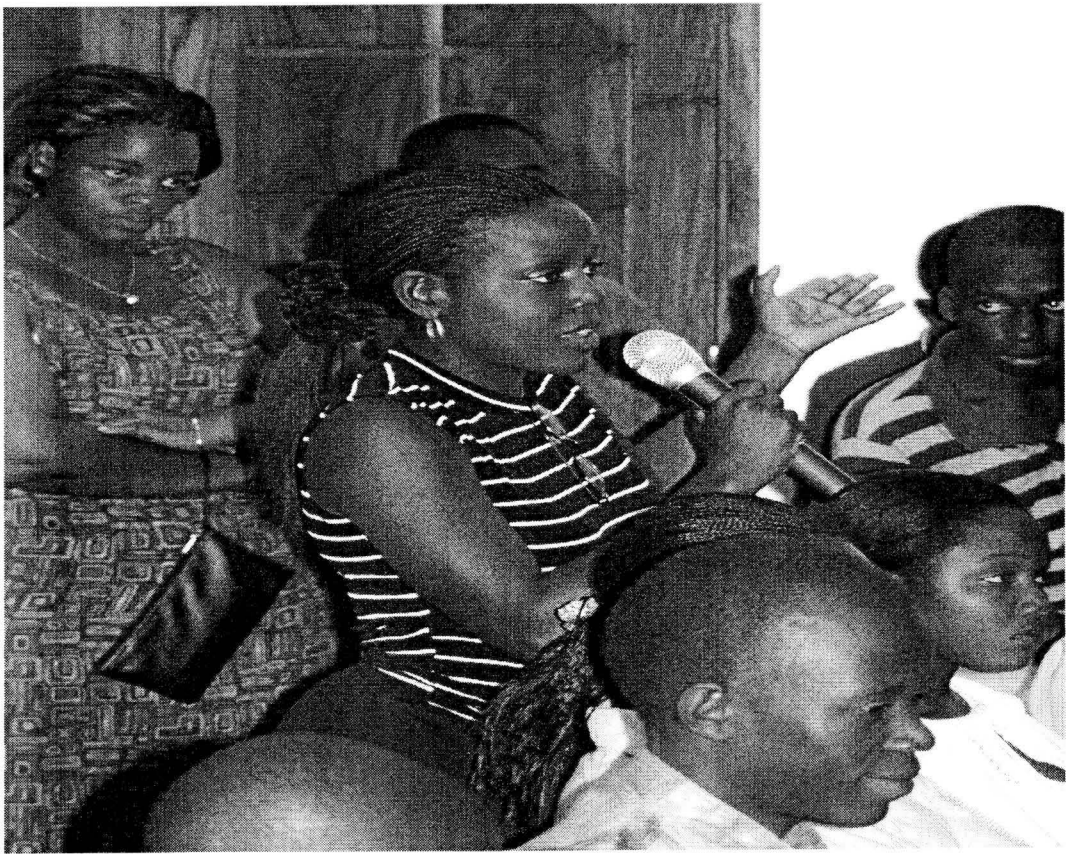
A participants making a contribution at a public forum on PRS II

- **Introduction of speakers**

It is the duty of the Chairperson to facilitate introduction of the speakers. There are several ways of doing this. One could be the speakers to directly introduce themselves and the other way is for the speakers to each prepare a paragraph on who they are, and what they do, for the Chairperson to use when introducing them.

- **Leading the question and answer session**

In this role the Chairperson identifies and allows participants to ask and make contributions in turns. If an audience member asks a question then he/she repeats the question for the benefit of the audience. This is because often the only people who heard it were the people at the front of the hall. If the Chairperson doesn't do this then the speaker should repeat the question before answering it. This is a crucial part of the forum therefore the Chairperson needs to apply the techniques that Kaner..et al proposes (i.e. encouraging, balancing, making space and using the clock) in order to shift the focus away from the frequent contributors and therefore create opportunities for others to contribute.

- **Chairperson's final remarks**

This is the time when the Chairperson takes the opportunity to thank both speakers and the audience for the participation and contributions. He/she should also draw the attention of the audience to the literature and merchandise available, and encourage them to action. For example, signing a petition available, leaving their names and contact details on a special list, and attending the next event.

5.0 After the forum/meeting

- **Networking**

Again, it is important to book the hall for at least another hour or so after the official close of the meeting, so that contacts can be made. Remember that people who have made the effort to attend are likely to be more highly motivated than most. They can make use of this time to exchange contact details and know each other. This is particularly important especially for creating initial contacts that will assist in making follow ups to issues or recommendations brought up in the public forum.

- **Signing of a petition**

When a need for signing a petition arises, ensure that you have a special table for this, and ample pens and petition papers for participants to sign. It may also necessitate having people who will take petition papers around the room for participants to sign them.

- **Promote literature and merchandise**

An enthused audience will be eager for more information about the topic discussed. So take this time to distribute any relevant literature available. Therefore, have handouts which summarize the content of the forum and which provide contact addresses distributed to participants.

A forum is wasted if there is no literature or merchandise to provide to the audience. Situate your literature and merchandise tables near the exit so that everyone who exits may be able to see and pick them.

Conclusion:

These guidelines have been suggested in order to ensure uniformity in terms of organization of public forums and they aim at maximizing the impact of the forums. In themselves, they are not biblical. They ought not to be followed as they are but can be changed and/or adopted differently in accordance with the situation and issues at stake. It is envisaged that use or adoption of these guidelines will enhance efficiency and increase participation in forums.

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