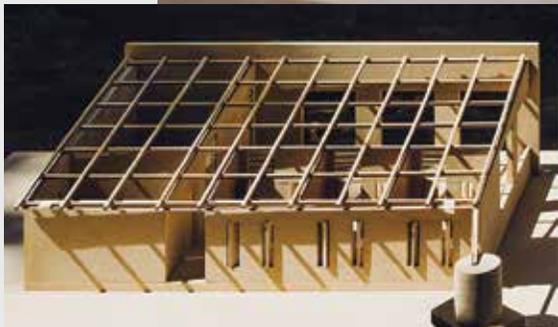


The context

Good governance at the village level is one of the key priorities of the Local Government Reform Programme. SULGO supports the Government of Tanzania in strengthening capacities at the lower administrative level and bringing decision-making processes and services closer to the people. Hence, building a new home for village governance is an important element to factor into this process. The construction of a village building can improve the relationship between ordinary citizens and the village administration, starting with a successful partnership which results in the visible building to the subsequent utilisation of this asset by the whole community.

The 'Village Building' concept is now ready to be scaled up in other regions in Tanzania. Interested village communities and

respective LGAs can make provisions for the construction of a village building in their budgets in their upcoming MTEF and easily replicate the experiences from Handeni.



German Development Cooperation

The Support to Local Governance (SULGO) programme is a cooperation between the governments of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Federal Republic of Germany. It is implemented by the Prime Minister's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The overall aim of the programme is to improve access to public services for citizens through stronger local governments. It has been implemented since 2008, with the current phase running since November 2010.

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<http://www.sulgo.or.tz>

<http://www.pmoralg.go.tz>

A refuge in which to deliberate village affairs

SULGO
better lives through better services



Village buildings

Many Village Executive Officers, village chairpersons or village extension officers for agriculture often have no roof over their heads, literally, when performing their duties. Many of them can be found executing their work under trees or from their homes. This situation jeopardizes important documents such as birth registers, maps marking the village land boundaries or certificates of land ownership. Without offices, local authorities also lack a permanent place to set up a noticeboard on which to post important community information. To address this situation, SULGO developed a standard model for the village community building and piloted the construction in three villages.

A joint venture

Building a new home for village governance needs to be a joint effort between the village community and the LGA. It is therefore important from the early stages to foster mutual understanding and commitment by clarifying the roles and expectations of the partners as well as the funding for the project.



SULGO has provided a guide titled 'Village Building' which is meant to provide communities and LGA administrations with a sample of tools and best practices to guide them on some of the issues that they need to reflect on, even well before the actual construction starts.

In addition, SULGO reviewed existing building plans for the office building for the Village Executive Officer and made recommendations for a multi-purpose village office. The new model provides additional space for the elected chairperson and other officers working at village level, safe storage of important documents, and for meetings and bigger gatherings under a covered open space. To the extent possible, the new standard model utilises materials available in rural Tanzania.

In 2013, Handeni District Council in cooperation with GIZ started the construction of the new model in three villages in Handeni district with the aim of showcasing best practices for districts and villages.

Other criteria for the new architectural design include minimizing construction and maintenance costs, keeping construction simple but durable, allowing cross-ventilation and rainwater harvesting, and providing safety features.



Addressing the challenges

Construction of the buildings was a joint effort between the District Council and the communities concerned, and the undertaking was documented in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the parties.

Joint undertakings such as this are invaluable in creating a sense of ownership across the board, improving relationships and enhancing the community pride. However, they are also subject to various challenges which may range from technical aspects such as the wrong brick size or poor quality aggregates to social issues like inadequate and sometimes unwanted leadership as well as unpleasant local politics. For this kind of cooperation to be successful, there has to be good coordination at both the council and the village level.

Procurement of industrial materials (usually the responsibility of the council) and local materials (by the village) must be well planned and coordinated. Supervision of 'soft' issues, such as villagers' mobilisation and meetings, is done by the District Community Development Officer, while the District Engineer takes care of technical matters like quality and quantity assurance, timing and payment of the contractor. Both officers are members of the coordination committee at the council level, together with the procurement officer and the planning officer.



The results

Kwaluwala and Magamba, the first partner villages in Handeni district, have already completed the construction of their buildings using the new model. The VEOs and village chairpersons have moved into their new offices, and the buildings are now open to the communities. Village Council Meetings and other gatherings take place in the new facilities and the noticeboards with information for the public have been placed in the covered open space.



Furthermore, in 2012 and 2013, SULGO has systematically documented the experiences in the pilot villages in Handeni and the useful lessons learned have been made available together with the building plans for the new standard model.

Good practices include the following aspects:

- ▶ Initiating the process of the construction of the village office.
- ▶ Applying the right criteria for selection amongst candidate villages.
- ▶ Sensitizing and getting the villagers' buy-in and commitment.
- ▶ Defining and formalizing the roles of villagers and the district administration.
- ▶ Planning and budgeting at different levels.
- ▶ Making use of the new building plans and of the new standard bills of quantity and controlling the quality of the building.
- ▶ Organizing the work on the sites.
- ▶ Storing and keeping stock of building materials in the village.

