



Leveraging the World Bank's Access to Information Policy

During the breakout sessions at civil society organizations (CSOs) Week, a comprehensive session was held to discuss the use of the World Bank's Access to Information Policy.

The session, Led by Sumir Lal, ECR Regional Director of the World Bank, and moderated by Prudence Zoe Glorious, Strategic Advisor at Foundation for Civil Society (FCS), the session aimed to equip CSOs with the necessary tools and knowledge to access and leverage critical information from the World Bank's vast portfolio.

This information includes essential documents, reports, and data crucial for transparency and accountability in global development.

The World Bank's Access to Information Policy is a fundamental part of the institution's commitment to transparency and accountability.

It ensures that the institution's development processes are transparent, and that information about its projects and decisions is easily accessible to the public, particularly to civil society actors.



Sumir Lal presented a comprehensive overview of the policy, emphasizing its fundamental principles, the types of available information, and the procedure for submitting information requests.

The session emphasized how improved access to information empowers local communities, enhances the outcomes of World Bank-funded projects, and fosters a more inclusive development process.



CSOs were encouraged to use this access to closely monitor projects, ensuring that the needs of the communities they serve are addressed.

The panel also highlighted that increased information access enables CSOs to play a more active role in project implementation and oversight, advocating for transparency, accountability, and community-driven development.

The discussion also included insights on navigating the World Bank's portfolio of information and research publications.

Senior External Affairs Officer at the World Bank, Loy Nabeta, guided participants on how to access different reports and research findings relevant to various sectors.

The goal was to help participants find detailed information on ongoing projects, impact assessments, and other essential data needed for effective civil society engagement.

Key themes emerged from the discussion, including the role of resilience in development and the need for smarter impact mitigation approaches.



The speakers emphasized the importance of civil society organizations in tailoring development projects to meet the actual needs of the people they aim to serve, particularly in countries like Tanzania.

The concept that “information is power” was highlighted, with the World Bank's policy enabling civil society to participate meaningfully in project oversight and evaluation.

This access is crucial for ensuring that projects are effective, inclusive, and responsive to the populations they are intended to benefit.

Stakeholder engagement was identified as a critical element in the successful implementation of World Bank projects.

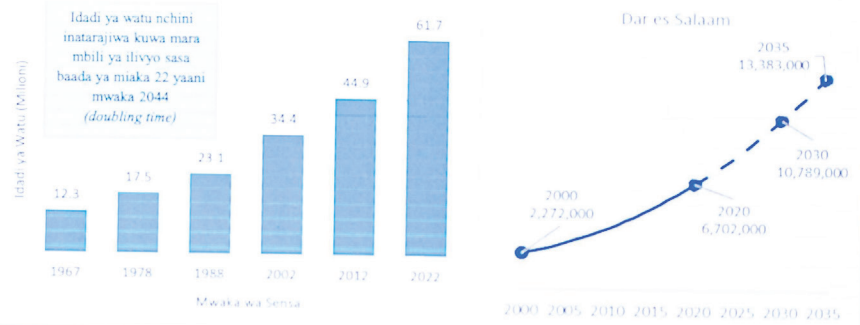
The panel stressed that CSOs must be actively involved throughout the entire project cycle—from design to implementation and evaluation.

Their participation ensures that local community voices are heard and that development initiatives are aligned with actual needs.

Through this engagement, CSOs can provide valuable feedback, ensure accountability, and advocate for better project designs and outcomes.



Our population is exploding



129 million citizens by 2050

Sources: National Bureau of Statistics, United Nations Population Division

Fables of our future world

In a session organized by Twaweza, Aidan Eyakuze and Dr. Baruani presented their vision for Tanzania. The session aimed to forecast the future state of life in the country 50 to 100 years ahead. They used the analogy of observing your body each morning to evaluate the nation's current health status. They suggested that we should emulate the eagle, which soars high to gain perspective before making decisions.



“Every decision you make is a prediction of the future. You can be right or wrong. This is akin to a goalkeeper deciding where to dive for a penalty. Even without knowing the exact direction of the ball, they must act, accepting the possibility of success or failure (by conceding a goal),” says Aidan

Similarly, decisions made by individuals, families, or nations shape our future. We all have aspirations for our children's success and well-being. Basic questions to consider include: How will our desires be realized in 50 years? How prepared are we? What strategies should we adopt? A practical approach is to create a narrative about our desired future.

We must envision the future we want by crafting our own stories. These narratives can be positive or negative but should reflect reality and be relevant to the individual. They should also be thought-provoking and stimulating.

Aidan mentioned developing scenarios that might emerge in the future. For example, one scenario is

political unrest similar to what has occurred in Kenya.

What is the current reality in Tanzania? According to research, Tanzania faces intense competition for resources such as land, crops, water, and fish. This situation resembles a goalmouth scramble, with everyone bickering for a piece.

The primary cause of this competition is the rapid population growth. By 2050, Tanzania's population is expected to reach around 129 million, with Dar es Salaam alone projected to have 13 million people by 2035.

Another contributing factor is environmental disasters, which are both inevitable and unpredictable. For instance, the Karatu disaster is an example. Climate change, driven by deforestation and pollution, results in severe weather events like heavy rains, droughts, and floods.

As we face an uncertain future, we must ask ourselves difficult questions: What decisions will we make? What values will guide us? What outcomes can we expect? Are we prepared for the results?

Even with strategic planning, surprises may still occur. Dr. Baruani cited examples such as Israel's technology failing to prevent the Hamas attack and the unexpected escalation of conflict in Ukraine. Despite efforts to strengthen democracy, military coups in West Africa could still happen.

At the end of the session, participants were divided into groups to create stories describing different scenarios for Tanzania by 2050. These stories reflected a mix of hope and concern, depending on the actions taken or not taken.

Revitalizing CSO Engagement in EAC Integration



A recent podcast panel brought together prominent stakeholders to discuss the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the East African Community (EAC) integration process.

Moderated by Neema Bwaira, Programme Manager for Civil Society at the European Union in Tanzania, the session aimed to explore the roles, challenges, and opportunities for CSOs, as well as to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing their participation in shaping the regional integration agenda.

The panel featured distinguished speakers, including Ms. Karina Dzialowska, Head of Economics and Governance at the European Union in Tanzania, Mr. Morris Tayebwa, Programme Assistant at the EAC Secretariat, Mr. Marius Weist, Component Lead for Organization Development and Outreach at the GIZ-EAC Programme and Ms. Lilian Alex Kimaro, Executive Director of the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum (EACSOF).

Their insights collectively addressed the multifaceted role of CSOs in the EAC integration process.

The discussion began with an examination of CSOs' contributions to policy formulation within the EAC.

Historically, CSOs have played a crucial role in influencing policy on economic integration, governance, and human rights through their collaboration with institutions like the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA).

Despite their significant contributions, the panelists observed that CSO engagement has not always been fully optimized, particularly at the regional level.

For the EAC integration process to be genuinely inclusive, it is essential to involve a wider range of civil society actors who can effectively represent citizens' voices and advocate for their needs in regional policymaking.

A major theme of the discussion was the shrinking civic space, a challenge that has increasingly impacted CSOs at both national and regional levels.

As the podcast session neared its end, Ms. Kimaro emphasized that many civil society organizations have experienced a decrease in their capacity for meaningful dialogue and advocacy due to restrictive political environments and reduced funding opportunities.



The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges by halting many CSO activities and limiting their ability to engage with policymakers.

The panelists agreed that revitalizing CSO engagement is crucial to maintaining a people-centered approach in the EAC integration process.

To address these challenges, the panel explored various opportunities for CSOs to enhance their involvement in the regional integration process.



One significant initiative discussed was the CSO Summit, an annual event designed to gather civil society organizations to discuss emerging issues, share best practices, and collaborate on regional advocacy efforts.

The CSO Summit has quickly become an essential platform for civil society actors across the region to exchange ideas and strategize on influencing regional policies.

The panel also underscored the importance of building partnerships with regional and international bodies such as the European Union and the German Development Agency (GIZ).



These partnerships are aimed at raising awareness about opportunities within the EAC integration process and providing critical support for CSOs, particularly in terms of capacity building and funding.

Looking ahead, the panelists offered several recommendations to improve CSO participation in the EAC integration process.

They emphasized the need for CSOs to strengthen their networks and coordination at the national level, citing national consultations like Tanzania's CSO Week as crucial platforms for aligning civil society objectives with EAC goals.

Capacity building, particularly for women and youth-led organizations, was also highlighted as essential to ensure effective engagement in regional policy discussions.

In the same vein, the panelists called for continued collaboration between CSOs, regional bodies, and international partners to ensure that civil society voices are heard in the EAC integration process.

For his part, Mr. Weist from GIZ noted that the Lifted Project would provide significant support for CSO engagement, including funding opportunities for innovative projects addressing key regional issues.

Combined with platforms such as the SDG Forum and the CSO Summit, these initiatives will provide civil society organizations with the resources and visibility needed to actively shape the region's future.



SHE CAN STEER HER SHIP



In one of the lively discussions held at CSO Week this year, both government representatives and civil society leaders came together to explore the ongoing efforts and challenges in amplifying women's voices in Tanzania.

The session, titled *Sauti ya Mwanamke*, highlighted the crucial role that grassroots women leaders play in holding the government accountable while addressing gaps in policy, legal, and institutional frameworks that hinder women's full participation in leadership.

Led by keynote speaker Anna Kulaya, Executive Director of WILDAF, and a diverse panel including Mrs. Fatima Amiri, Principal Community Development Officer (Arusha), Mrs. Saumu Mjema, Councillor Special Seat (Arusha City), and Ismail Biro, Deputy Director of the Tanzania Bora Initiative, the conversation explored the multifaceted barriers women face, such as sexual harassment, gender-based violence, and systemic inequalities in leadership roles.

The session was moderated by Lulu Ng'wanakilala, Executive Director of the Legal Services Facility.

The panelists underscored the progress made in empowering women through government initiatives and policies aimed at increasing gender equality. However, it became evident that despite these efforts, women, particularly those in rural areas, still face significant hurdles. Sexual harassment remains a major obstacle for young women aspiring to leadership roles, while time poverty and unpaid care work disproportionately affect women's ability to engage in civic activities.

Panelists noted that grassroots women leaders, often supported by CSOs, are at the forefront of advocating for more inclusive policies that create

opportunities for women in social, economic, and political arenas. To achieve this, greater collaboration between the government and civil society is needed to ensure women's voices are amplified and their leadership potential fully realized.

Beyond addressing these challenges, the panel provided clear recommendations for enhancing women's roles in leadership, including policy reviews to strengthen grassroots participation, targeted support for women's economic empowerment, and greater efforts to challenge traditional gender roles.

The conversation also called on families and communities to encourage girls to pursue leadership opportunities, particularly by dismantling the cultural notion that certain tasks or roles are strictly for men or women.

The panel concluded by acknowledging the strides that have been made, but stressed that much work remains. Civil society and government partnerships must continue to focus on creating supportive environments for women leaders.

As Tanzania works toward its Vision 2050, ensuring that women's voices are heard and their leadership embraced will be crucial for achieving equitable and sustainable development.





Don't involve us simply to meet a quota

Policy Forum, HakiElimu, and Restless Development recently convened a dynamic 'Kigoda Session' during Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Week, bringing together Tanzanian youth aged 14 to 25 to reimagine the future of their country through the lens of education.

The session featured both in-person and virtual participation, enabling young people from diverse backgrounds to engage in age-appropriate dialogue about shaping the future through quality education.

The conversation was youth-led, with participants voicing concerns about their limited involvement in democratic processes.

Many shared their frustration over the fact that they are often informed of decisions that have already been made, rather than being consulted or involved in the decision-making process.

The youth are at a stage where they need to take a seat at the table because the systems in place don't actively engage us,"

Panelist

One youth representative, speaking on behalf of others, stated, *"We don't get a chance to participate in democratic matters. Information only reaches us after decisions have been proposed. Especially in rural areas, we are left out completely, and sometimes, we don't even get access to these decisions."*

This sentiment was echoed by a Form Five student on the panel, who noted that while students in schools

are sometimes given opportunities to participate in democratic discussions, their suggestions are rarely acted upon.

"We lack representation on school boards, which could serve as an important platform for us to voice our concerns. Being denied this representation signals that our input in decisions that affect us is being made by others," the student remarked.

The student emphasized that this lack of representation, starting from the lower levels of education, could negatively impact the ability of young people to participate in decision-making as adults in broader societal contexts.



As the session progressed, the discussion became more interactive, with participants exploring the systemic limitations that hinder youth engagement.

One attendee raised a thought-provoking point: although opportunities for youth involvement may be limited, what have young people done to actively engage themselves?

“Indeed, young people aren’t included in decision-making processes, but what efforts have we made to participate?” the panel debated.

The consensus was that while there are barriers, the onus is now on young people to step up and claim their space in these processes.

“The youth are at a stage where they need to take a seat at the table because the systems in place don’t actively engage us,” another panelist stated.

Interestingly, the panel highlighted that although civics education is taught in schools, it has little real-life impact.

“Civics is just another subject to pass, but it doesn’t influence our lives in a meaningful way,” they observed, while stressing that the current system lacks the practical integration needed to inspire civic participation among young people.

The conversation also touched on gender inclusivity, with the panel acknowledging that election laws at the local government level provide opportunities for women but leave young people without a clear path to participation.

There are numerous examples of young people who achieved great things when given leadership roles, but Africa remains a continent dominated by older leaders, despite having one of the youngest populations in the world.”

Panelist

Reflecting on Africa’s political history, one panelist remarked, *“There are numerous examples of young people who achieved great things when given leadership roles, but Africa remains a continent dominated by older leaders, despite having one of the youngest populations in the world.”*

The root causes of this disparity were attributed to cultural traditions, poverty, and systemic barriers.

“Cultural norms and economic challenges play a significant role in sidelining young people from leadership and decision-making,” the panel noted.



However, they remained optimistic that with continued advocacy and reform, the youth could play a critical role in shaping Tanzania’s future.

The session underscored the urgent need for greater youth engagement in democratic processes and decision-making, starting with education.



I'm here to work, not to compromise my dignity

Millions of women in the country run small businesses that support their families and contribute to the national economy, but they face significant challenges, especially gender-based violence (GBV). At a session organized by Equality for Growth (EfG), these challenges were discussed, along with strategies to address them. EfG's "Give Payment, Not Abuse" project highlighted the struggles of female vendors, particularly in markets where GBV is often normalized. Many women endure inappropriate touching, degrading remarks, and clients who delay payments or harass them for continued business.

Physical abuse also affects their psychological well-being, reducing their confidence and productivity. Despite laws against GBV, the issue remains widespread.

EfG Executive Director Jane Magigita shared their journey. *"We operate in 47 markets across 10 regions in Tanzania, and we plan to expand to 5 more regions, particularly in border areas. The program started in 2007, partnering with local authorities, NGOs, and traders,"* she stated.

The government has praised EfG's efforts, resulting in strong collaboration. Susan Sita, a program officer at EfG, said, *"Together with the government, we developed new guidelines to combat GBV in public spaces like bus stations, ferries, ports, and factories. The guidelines recommend setting up desks to stop these acts."*

Thanks to these initiatives, cases of GBV have dropped from 96% to 15% by 2023.

One beneficiary, Kidawa, spoke about her experience. *"Before the project, we struggled. One day, I ran out of business capital and took a job delivering food. Men said*

We operate in 47 markets across 10 regions in Tanzania, and we plan to expand to 5 more regions, particularly in border areas. The program started in 2007, partnering with local authorities, NGOs, and traders,"

Jane Magigita
EfG Executive Director

if you don't get touched, you can't sell food. I came back without selling anything." Her boss told her she wasn't fit to work in the market.

"Campaign posters in the market helped deter harassers. After training, I joined a women's savings and loan group. We even received support from our MP to transition from charcoal to gas stoves," Kidawa said, crediting the project for boosting her confidence.

Similarly, Neema Mayega, Chairperson of Kiwalani Market, shared her own story: *"I've had the opportunity to lead many people, including men. The training empowered us to run businesses for eight years, and GBV has significantly decreased in the area I lead."*

John Miola, Director of the Agape organization in Shinyanga, added that the region has high rates of violence and child marriages. *"Women are the main victims of violence due to their lower societal standing. Yet, women accomplish a lot in their communities,"* he noted.

The project, which started in five markets, has now expanded to help hundreds of women.



Competing in Global Markets: Are We Ready?

Tanzania is well-positioned to capitalize on international business opportunities like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which became operational on January 1, 2021. This agreement, involving 54 out of 55 African countries, aims to boost intra-continental trade by reducing tariffs, safeguarding investments, and promoting digital commerce.



A broader vision is needed to empower them to compete internationally. Businesses struggling to secure 10 million shillings in loans or 5000-dollar incubation support cannot take us far,”

Carol Ndosu
Co-Founder The Launchpad Tanzania

At a discussion organized by Stanbic, the question of Tanzania’s benefits from AfCFTA and the factors influencing its competitiveness within the broader AfCFTA market were explored. Key speakers shared strategies for strengthening human capital and enhancing Tanzania’s competitive edge.

Elibariki Shamy, Managing Director, Trademark Africa, emphasized that trade agreements like AfCFTA are underpinned by policies designed to enable stronger relationships between countries. By 2023, Africa’s economy had reached a value of \$3.1 trillion, with significant growth potential if the continent optimizes its resources, including its rapidly expanding population.

While some Tanzanians have begun exporting to countries like Ghana, the private sector was initially unprepared for AfCFTA’s opportunities. Many lacked the necessary knowledge to leverage new markets, a gap the government has been working to address.

A pressing question remains: How can Tanzania’s youth, who constitute 70% of the population, be equipped to seize these business opportunities?

Carol Ndosu, one of the panellists, pointed out that young entrepreneurs, particularly women, face numerous challenges, including limited business education, complex registration procedures, high taxes, and restricted access to capital. Furthermore, language barriers hinder effective participation in international business.

“A broader vision is needed to empower them to compete internationally. Businesses struggling to secure 10 million shillings in loans or 5000-dollar incubation support cannot take us far,” Ndosu emphasized.



Frederick Max from Stanbic Bank added that beyond capital, the solution lies in investing in education and values that encourage integrity, hard work, and innovation. He highlighted the importance

of early investment in areas like nutrition, education, and technology to develop a competitive workforce.

Stanbic is contributing through initiatives such as the Business Incubation Program, which has provided free business training to over 3,000 youth and women. Additionally, the bank's efforts have helped 200 businesses, 60% of which are led by women, secure tenders worth over TZS 20 billion.

The discussion also touched on the broader impact of AfCFTA. While the free market framework is a promising step, challenges such as outdated technology, inefficient



transportation, and market access remain significant barriers. Carol Ndosu emphasized the need for more innovation and platforms like iSOKO and Tunzaa to empower entrepreneurs and improve market accessibility.

The discussion concluded on a positive note. *“While there are challenges, our country is making progress in facilitating trade. We can still do better. To enhance our competitiveness, we must streamline our operations and eliminate existing bottlenecks,”* said Elibariki.





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The background features a gradient from purple on the left to blue on the right. It is decorated with thin, wavy, light-colored lines that create a sense of motion and depth. Scattered throughout are numerous small, semi-transparent blue circles of varying sizes, some of which appear to be part of the wavy lines or floating independently.

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