

TANZANIA DIALOGUE I

Mivinjeni, Bagamoyo 11 August 2008

Marko Ulvila, study Director: There's been a realisation that some kind of societal/cultural transformation is needed: *What kind of transformations people around these countries where we are meeting foresee or for what kind of background and what kind of visions are there for a future that would be more sustainable?*

We would like to highlight the existing sustainability in the world community which can be found mainly outside the industrialised societies.

Marie Shaba, activist without borders: *I believe as the world moves towards more and more corporate globalisation which is becoming more fierce, ruthless, we need to give the business a human face.*

Jhikolabwino Siza Manyika, artist and activist: People are lost – even with regards to food and drink, a source of life in the real sense, which has become 'refreshment'. A lot of energy goes into producing profit and pleasure, despite the fact that this is killing us.

We need to take time to remember and discover the root of our problems. *Even those colonialists have to reach a stage where they acknowledge their crimes, they admit crime, and if possible they pay us a compensation for the wrongdoings that they did to us.*

We've been taught that we were put here to rule our earth. But the truth is that we need the environment more than the environment needs us. If we destroy the environment we are finished, but the environment could continue to exist without us.

Marie Shaba: Through corporate globalisation ("utandawizi"), and especially through organisations such as the WTO, there is patenting and the TRIPS which have stolen that ability of citizens to continue with their various experiments, e.g. on seeds, which is traditional knowledge. Corporate globalisation robs especially from women because seeds were in their domain. They were freely sharing, but now with patenting a lot of our indigenous seeds are no longer ours. We're brought those which you must buy every season so it's big business for the seed companies. So this has robbed the woman and Tanzanians as a whole that ability to use seeds freely in order to ensure food security.

Willian Genya, works for GTV: The introduction of cash crops has affected indigenous knowledge and the sustainability of our agriculture. Similarly biofuels since in many places people are now growing *Jatropha* and other types of crops which cannot be used for food. We should consider our food needs more, like in the past.

Maria Cidosa, Women's development worker: We are ignoring local knowledge. There's nowhere where we are passing it on to the new generation, so it is dying hard and the people are just going with it.

We are becoming modernised, commercialised but were we ready to go into the modern globalisation? Or are we just following and becoming like robots?

We are no longer dancing on our culture, we are dancing on other peoples' cultures.

We are trying to eat like Europeans, not our indigenous food or nor are we preserving our indigenous seeds. In terms of food as medicine, we have a lot of indigenous vegetables and herbs which are also dying hard and giving way to new vegetables. Actually if you look back at our people they were healthy, they were very strong, there were no BP. But today we find even a young child having high blood pressure because she's overweight. She's eating junk food, the food is not really originating from the indigenous people but from the Western world. It's not prepared in the way it should be. Because it's not their food.

There were lots of researches on food: What type of food we should eat? Which season should it be eaten? How should it be preserved so that it is not contaminated? How should we select the best seeds for our cultivation, for healthy eating? Which herbs should be preserved at these particular times so that it suits, like which for the dry season? All these knowledges were really put together for the benefit of the society.

With the new globalisation we shouldn't knock the indigenous knowledge; we should also incorporate it. It may look old-fashioned but surprisingly enough the people who used it were much stronger than the current generation.

Farida Nyamachumbe, independent producer: Most of our work is driven by donor wants. *One of the things that we as agents of change have to look into is: are we going to go on being ceremonial dancers; We dance to the tune but we don't know the ritual? Or are we going to be questioning and say hey, wait a bit. What is this whole ngoma (dance) about? Am I interested in it because I like the tune or do I have to be part of it?*

Mzee Madongo, artist and carver: Our major challenge now is to see where we went wrong. When it comes to a point that you are depending even on ideas then you are getting very, very low. *Our policies are killing the knowledge that we have inherited from our forefathers.*

Marie Shaba: We have been dialoguing for many, many years. Now it's time for action.

When the donor demands the agenda, demands the copyright, then we would rather not have a donor at all. If we have a donor that recognises that we as Tanzanians have a very important concern, that of food security and if they can support us without any strings, then we would agree.

- We need to preserve and promote local knowledge and demand a community patent.
- We need participatory action research which will document traditional knowledge. When we talk to the old people that's already a whole encyclopaedia of knowledge. We need to document whatever we can at this time because old people are dying.

Part of the outcome that I would have wanted from this dialogue is *a process whereby we collect, document and then promote and demand our patent because if we don't do that they will continue to patent everything and some say they will even patent our ovaries and our sperm!*

Maria Cidosa: My concern is that the world is moving so fast that if you lag behind, you are either left behind in development or you die hard.

There are many researches but the "owners" of the knowledge are not informed what becomes of it. It should be two-way, to have mutual understanding, not just one-way, where someone comes and we are treated like experimental grounds and then it disappears.

I remember during those days I used to receive a lot of story tales from my own peoples – the forests were sacred places, you were not supposed to collect a dry stick from there. If you do, you'll be told to take it back to that place. And the forests were really thick, they were so quiet, so beautiful. The waters were flowing throughout the year. But when we went for commercialisation,

see, look what we have done!

Marie Shaba: Actually nothing has changed since slave trade; Who sets the agenda? Who defines what development is? *The multinational companies are the modern day slave catchers and they use the IMF, the World Bank, the UN, our governments and even us as NGOs without knowing it.* Many times we promote agendas which have originated from the multinational companies especially those providing basic services.

Northerners have to have a self-examination to see whether they have really changed. And Southerners also need to question whether today they can still say they're to blame. What have we tried to do and where have we failed? We have tried but truly failed. Like when we tried *ujamaa* (villagisation policy) and self-reliance. That was one of the strategies to emancipate ourselves economically and socially as well as politically, and be self-reliant in mind and action. But how did it fail?

Farida Nyamachumbe: *Until you know where you're coming from, only then will you be able to tell where you want to go.* We should be talking about these issues in a healthy manner. If we cannot speak of issues that we do not know how to resolve, we're killing history. *If I step on your feet today and walk away, I don't think tomorrow you'll be smiling at me. You'll still think why did I step on you and I did not even say I'm sorry.*

William Genya: We have to go on living within a capitalist system, because that is the dominant way of life in the world today. *So to me the best way to go about it is each one of us in our own small ways start making some steps that would work towards the end of whatever problems we are facing, economic, social or cultural. We can apply four universal principles – integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion - which will help us decide what is right and what is wrong.*

Jhikolabwino Manyika: There's a disease; we have to know that disease, its causes and how to treat it, before any step can be taken. I think that all humans will die unless we admit to this disease and agree to leave it. Even if we have good will. Even our grandfathers and grandmothers because of their love, their patience and their hospitality, were taken, put in boats and into slavery.

In my view, you can't bring great change alone. We must have collective efforts. But we've already realised that people rely on the government, and the government relies on sponsors. *We don't have leaders; we just have a population of people who don't know themselves. Maybe, in this dialogue, we could start a new government.*

William Genya: *Until when should we wait for the government, government, government?! The big thing is for us ourselves to decide to solve our problems that surround us and our community. And only if that fails then we should seek help.*

Jhikolabwino Manyika: *There's nothing as beautiful as the truth. When people have already known the truth then that truth will set them free. But if we want to cover it over, and not make certain things open so that we look good, or hold, then the resulting problems could be even bigger.*

Africans had their ways. They were told that this is not the way, God is not in the mountain, God is in heaven. Until the African returns to that mountain, he will know that my strength and my being is within this mountain, because the mountain gives me water, it gives me rain, this mountain gives me fruit, therefore my God is there. When the African returns to that consciousness a solution will be found. But the African also needs to know where he was lied to.

James Mwaipopo, Community health worker: A big thing is dependence, and the problem of not believing in oneself.

If we had confidence that we can do certain things, we would free ourselves from these problems and we would continue to do good things which would benefit our children and the generations to come. For example if I know that I can cultivate my area and get my food, maybe cassava or potatoes, my family and I would get enough food from our plot. We wouldn't depend on the government to bring us, or sponsors to bring us.

And we should start with the young because to change old people is very difficult. For the adults we can use the law. We have public health laws but years can go by and no-one's been accused because of selfishness and other things like corruption. If we leave dependence, and believe in ourselves then we can cooperate and do things together.

Mzee Madongo: *Maybe we should change our mindset. That's where we are stuck. We could do anything if our minds are settled. The change should start from our minds. If we can't change our minds then we are doomed.*

Saidi Ali Mbungu, artist: I've thought that cooperation is something important in the working of society and in living a decent life. I thought of making an organisation with others but I realised that our society is one that does not believe. This is a big problem; no-one has hope. *All problems can be solved if we can be honest, clear and volunteer wholeheartedly to do something for society. Nothing else.*

Marie Shaba: *Only by believing in one another can we come together and be strong.*

William Genya: So a group can work together there must be people who complement one another, for example you have ideas to contribute but you can't implement them. There's another who is good at following up, and another who says 'I'll do it'. So one good way to make a group is to choose people to be in the group because of their values.

Jhikolabwino Manyika: Some come to NGOs just to find work to get an income. He looks for it in the newspaper. He sees some NGO it's involved in some issue he goes to apply. His motive for doing that work is to get a wage, and he doesn't go there because that issue touches him or to help society.

Marie Shaba: *As an African I believe in the human race, I believe in co-existence. There are things that I'm fighting like the whole system of segregation, based on colour, gender etc. because I believe that we were all created with the same needs. But if you want to be sustainable you have to consider that you co-exist with other human beings, with other species. Because that's where you can get perfect balance and harmony among all creatures of the world. So the issue of sustainability very much needs groups that can respect customs and traditions and the way in which people do their things.*

We have been a platform of war although we don't produce any weapons. If we don't produce or sell these war weapons, who makes them, who sells them and why, it's whose culture this whole issue of violence? This issue effects our relationships between ourselves and with other living organisms. War brings profit – in Iraq it's an open secret that they're competing for contracts to reconstruct what they've destroyed.

If Africans want to go to live in the West they need qualifications, unlike Westerners who come to live in Africa freely to do any business without any problem. There's one example of a Congolese woman who decided to pour petrol over herself and burn herself in Belgium because she was refused to put up a boutique. I thought that what made her kill herself was that Belgium exploited the Congo for years but she wanted to put up a small boutique and she was refused, so she didn't understand this. When we hear that business is growing it means that the youth have been hooked by multinationals and advertising that corrupts the mind.

On my side, there is hope because the human race needs to be rejuvenated. It is possible for us as ordinary humans to go back to the state of humanity. To see that every person is a human being and they need peace, love, to develop, everything. And we have to try to work together to fight against those multinational companies, among others.

Instead of talking about aid let's talk about reparation. Economic affirmative actions. Let's take out completely the word aid from our vocabulary because aid is not aid. They have looted a lot for centuries so now they are giving back aid but it's not aid as far as I'm concerned.

Then we should also speak about global peace because we don't manufacture guns. Those who manufacture are the same ones that preach peace. *In this dialogue we need to address this culture of violence and destruction in the name of democracy, free market, globalisation and sustainable development because without that we shall be talking hot air every day.*

Maria Cidosa: One time I visited the states – I was invited for an exhibition. But when I arrived at the airport I was delayed to check-in for my next plane simply because I was carrying a few tins of coffee. The kind of checking they did on me it was miserable. I felt sick. I felt like going back to my country. I said I love my country, I don't want to be here. I felt humiliated. I don't think there's anyone from the developed country who has been treated like that. Every person from the developed countries when they come here are warmly welcomed; today we have a lot of volunteers in Bagamoyo, they feel homely. When we talk about globalisation we should make the whole world for all of us, despite our colours. A harmonious world for us to be happy, but not whereby one is limited.

How do you expect us to go back to our roots and develop because my partner is not ready? When he comes to my country he has ulterior motives, takes my land and at the end of the day, I'm going to be a pauper. I have to go back and beg for my bread, when I used to bake my own bread. That's not a fair deal.

You hear about depositing chemicals and the establishment of big manufacturing industries, which are being condemned in the developed world. These are brought to the third world because they get cheap labour and can deposit the waste. Yes, it's a dumping place.

We were too blessed (in the developing world), there is no harsh weather; we are kind of living in the Garden of Eden. I think this is what attracted our fellows to come here and take and take. So actually it's not now that we're getting donation from them. It's bringing back what they took from us so let's share it.

Mzee Madongo: We have been looking at different ideas, ways and means but *we have to go for the low hanging fruit because at the end of the day if we don't start somewhere, if we don't act, we won't have a place to act.*

Sometimes I think a good idea is to go tribally because that's the only way you can understand each other. We can concentrate on what a tribe has to offer because that it is an entity which believes in itself.

James Mwaipopo: If we think about where we should start, and what should we do fast – I think that we should consider these two things: *food and environmental destruction.*

Petra Bakewell-Stone, agroecologist: The language that we use is very important in shaping our conceptual worldviews and even our behaviour. We need to look carefully at the types of words that we use; if we say developing and developed world we're just perpetuating this idea that the West is more developed.

I think that Tanzanians are blessed in their attitude towards time, of taking things more slowly. It

seems as though Tanzanians are trying to copy the Western attitude towards time which I think is part of the problem, this relentless drive towards efficiency, growth and so on. Could the traditional ways and attitudes towards time be valuable in creating better lives?

We've talked about the importance of documenting local culture, but the dominant forms of documentation are written and that's why knowledge has been in the domain of the "North", or the "West", because they've been especially advanced in writing. Isn't there another, more African way of documenting which is more appropriate to the place and the culture? If there's no culture of reading and writing, what's the point now of writing all this indigenous knowledge just for it to sit in reports on shelves?

Maria Cidosa: There were a lot of messages on items and utilities in the families like the *kawa* (traditional food cover). When the woman is very close with the husband then she will use a certain food cover and when the husband comes to eat the food, he will understand that message. They used the rock paintings. They used to have their meetings and the old people would do storytelling in the evening, they would pass on the knowledge, the skills, and the education.

Marie Shaba: *We have no identity at the moment. We look at ourselves with the image of other people and that's why we're getting confused, why we're getting all these problems. We're just copycats and therefore the slavery mentality still continues.*

On the issue of documentation, we are oral people. And that's why I mentioned even old people. Today we have the advantage of technology. We interview them, they speak themselves and then you can use a multimedia approach. You can write, you can do documentaries, you can do films, drama.

Petra Bakewell-Stone: One big lesson that donors should take on board is that they need to trust that people know what their problems are and they also know ways in which to solve them.

Jhikolabwino Manyika: I think that we are talking a lot about now, but before we reach now we have to go back at least 500 years. Otherwise there'll be no direction. We are not living as free beings; we are just standing as shadows of others. We're trying to be something else but we don't want to be ourselves.

We should not ignore that there are other problems that people design. Even when we try to make strategies to move forward these people are sitting down to make this impossible. Many problems that I see stem from greediness and selfishness. We should just keep our culture and move according to our ways. And many cultures worldwide are suppressed, not only us, also in Europe, China etc. So if we know each other then we can have some kind of network, or coalition of a kind.

Rastas say check every spirit if it's of God. You can see someone who's black like you, beard like yours, he has hair like yours, but spirit is different. In order to check someone's spirit, you must have spiritual qualities. So you have to be a spiritual person if you are able to check if every spirit really is of God.

Marko Ulvila: It has come out very clearly from the dialogue that the development model and success of the north is based on violence, exploitation and de-linking from the nature, de-linking from the spirit. So I'm happy to take this message back to my colleagues in the north. What came out especially is, what is the direction, where to start? That this is the question that we can't solve in these few hours of discussion.

Report compiled by Petra Bakewell-Stone and Jhikolabwino Manyika

TANZANIA DIALOGUE II

Kaole, Bagamoyo 12 August 2008

The dialogue was held in Kaole village where fishing has traditionally been the main source of livelihood. Twenty participants contributed to the dialogue.

➤ Education

Jhikolabwino Manyika: *We have our professors, our educated people who study a lot but their education doesn't help us that much...All challenges that face us environmentally and culturally, if you want to tackle them and find solutions we have to go and search and learn from the people who are still living natural ways*

Rashid Chua: *Some years ago there were scholarships for Tanzanians to go to Europe to study but for one year up to 5 or 6 years and the traditions were there. Nowadays more than a 150 or 200 people per year are going out of the country. Those are the ones who are coming to kill the traditions. For example, my sister wears the veil when she goes to Europe and finds all these European ways, she and all her children wear trousers. When my kids see them they will also be tempted to dress like them. And if he goes to Europe he finds people with straight hair so he has to straighten his. How can the culture sustain?*

Educated people, when they return from Europe start their own farms, and private hospitals where you have to pay, rather than helping people. What can I do? If I don't go to make charcoal, what work can I get? Do they come and teach us? No! Where we're heading there will be more destruction because the root cause of this destruction is those who are educated.

John Sombi: *[The educated] don't want to hear that this tree treats a certain illness or if we preserve this forest it will be of what benefit in the future. They just think about a building a factory that takes about a hundred acres. And on all those 100 acres, you have to cut down the trees.*

You divert the waste from the large hospital in Muhimbili to the ocean via a big pipe with dirty water. Someone is swimming there, and accidentally drinks some of that water. This is already on the environmental side, and relates to education.

The wealthy don't invest in culture or the environment; they invest in breweries so that people get drunk, casinos, cultivating and trafficking drugs. Rather than investing in building our culture, we're investing in destroying culture.

Education is also contributing to destroying our cultural values for example elders like this when he tells me something, and they haven't been to school, so I disrespect them because I think I'm educated and I'm better than them.

The children don't inherit the cultural values. If you find a kid playing drums, they're told 'why are you doing that? You'll be stupid'. Even children are not taught to take care of the environment, water tree seedlings.

Mtumwa Mrisho Makilimla: *If we don't have education we'll become captives. But if we're too educated also it's a problem, because that's when we start imitating.*

Rashid Jusufu Sekamba: *Education has changed the environment of our culture. We send our youth to Europe to study. If they come back they should go to the villages to teach agriculture. But they return with money, they buy 100 acres and establish a private project.*

Norms, values and behaviour

Fatma M. Muhidin: *In the past you couldn't find someone polluting the place with rubbish, cutting forests. Now you can't say anything to the people who are destroying the environment. You just look at them, and it is considered normal.*

Another big problem is the deterioration of behaviours, especially in relation to bringing up children. Every parent is worrying about his/her own. You can't now find in this village a young person who does something wrong to be taught by other elders. The kids will react and fight back to the elder and even the parents will join and support their kids. In the past, like myself all the mothers who are older than me they are all my mothers, like my parents and for those who are younger than me they are my children. But now we don't have this any longer. There's a strange energy or wave coming in.

Parents are going with the modern times, they don't correct their children when they're wrong. Children are not guided in the same way; every family guides their children in a different way. That's what contributing to the deterioration of culture, environmental destruction and cultural degradation in general.

Omari Suleiman Musa: *Manners are deteriorating: You can hear kids swearing at each other in front of their parents and the parents don't say anything. In the past, if you eat with the elder, even if you caught the fish yourself, you cannot just jump in and start eating first. You have to wait for the elder before you eat.*

In the past when an elder is coming from the sea you carry his basket straight to his house and it's not that you just leave the basket there, you have to wait for him, and that's when he says thank you and you go. But now kids just pass by.

➤ **Local cultures (knowledge, traditions, customs)**

Mzee Rashid Jusufu Sekamba: *I want to go back to the customs, traditions and the taboos that we used to respect. We respected certain forests which could not be cultivated, it was taboo. And surely and truly nobody dared to cultivate them. Taboos around the use of food, they told us certain types of food were taboo to eat.*

We cultivated but we reserved this forest that is forbidden to cultivate on. We got enough food for two or three years from the land that we cultivated, without using any fertilisers but just farming. Each place that we cultivated we could use for three or four years and then moved to another place while the last one rests.

Use of fuel: we were collecting firewood and dry wood and now we're using charcoal. Forests that were forbidden are now cultivated and harvested even to the graveyard people are cultivating.

The other thing is the type of food. In those days I didn't hear anything about heart disease and people lived for a long time and there was no blood pressure. If you cook you use cucumber, sesame, those were our ingredients which did not cause diseases. Now with these modern things are different, things are made in the factories, they come with oil made with machines, I don't know where from, cottonseed oil. But in the past things were prepared by the mama, roasted and peeled and pounded and she made the spices and ingredients.

The root cause of deterioration of behaviours is abandoning the good culture we see in taboos and not taking care of our own health, we are modernising it and then it becomes harmful. And this “expertise” ignores the knowledge of the past, and claims that it’s out-of-date.

“Zenzerere”; Story about tradition and taboo in Tanzania

I have one story. A young girl of initiation age who is being trained for three years. In the second year, by the will of God, there was a drought so the parents were thinking after this initiation they could celebrate but at that time they didn’t have enough food.

They went to the ancestors to beg, that ‘we’re short of food and we have this young girl’. The ancestors gave them a bird called Zenzerere and told them to put the bird in the roof because usually the food storage is in the roof. They said the taboo is that the girl shouldn’t go up to the roof. In any circumstances, she shouldn’t go up there.

So they came back and told the young girl never to go up to the roof. ‘If you need anything you should just wait for your mother to come back, say from the farm, to bring you something you want from the roof’.

That year they got a big harvest and the roof was full of foodstuffs and then they were preparing the celebration for the girl to come out. So the young girl asked herself, ‘what is so special up there, why don’t they want me to see? I shouldn’t go up there even once; I’m just staying down here? Wait a second, I think I’ll go and check it out’.

When she went up she saw the bird, Zenzerere, so that was the taboo, she broke the taboo. The bird got very upset and flew out past her. When the parents came back they found that the bird was not there and all the food also disappeared.

That young girl caused hunger amongst the family, and the whole clan. And that’s why in the past taboos were respected and brought damage when they were disrespected.

Omari Suleiman Musa: *Some of the traditions are also harmful, like female circumcision. We just have to be straightforward and open, we shouldn’t be afraid of each other. If you see someone doing something wrong just tell them. If you see someone polluting the environment, throwing the garbage, just tell them.*

Jhikolabwino Manyika: *Circumcision was just a small part of the whole tradition. Traditionally before they concluded by circumcising there was a lot of teachings..*

Rashid Yusuf Sekamba: *The government and even internationally, people are against circumcision but when I said about taboos I was talking about traditional teachings. The circumcision part is not in every tribe in Tanzania but the teachings are in almost all communities for example a young girl takes up to 3 years training before she becomes ready to get married. Actually they don’t want to do it quickly because they don’t want her to get married when she is too young. She stays for 3 years, they celebrate, and bring her out, they teach her.*

Also a young man at puberty, now they realise that our son, our child is grown up they bring him to the forest before circumcision for seven days. At home they prepare alcohol, and he is trained there on customs and traditions, respect etc.

Then they arrange marriage when they are ready. The taboos are both for the boys, who have their

taboos, and the girls. For all this time when they are in the training, they follow the taboos and they don't break them.

As the old man says, customs are being forgotten, even those that have teachings. Our ways were turned upside down. We have to stick to the traditions because they are the teachings of any sort in your language that you use at home. Those traditional customs that you inherited.

It's true we're fighting against those customs that are not productive, we are leaving them. In some customs in the past we killed one another. Suspected wizards and murderers were burnt. Then they go catch Rashid [if he was suspected of being a wizard], they tie ebony wood to him, they throw him down and set him alight. The traditional healer is just a human being like me so how can he know this, that someone's a wizard or a witch? But this was accepted, and people were burnt. So this was our tradition but we realised that we don't need it anymore. So these backward customs we say that they are not acceptable but the ones encouraging respect sustain our culture, like in the example of Zenzerere.

Rashid Chua: Our big people check how they do it in Europe, take their children to the hospital, circumcise in one day and next day they are ready to be taken to school so why should I take my child to the forest where they need to stay a month or five weeks? No. I'll also take my children to the hospital. Will our traditions continue this way? No, let's not lie to ourselves.

➤ Root causes of problems

Mtumwa Mrisho Makilimla: The economy drives us to destroy the environment.

In the past the forests were possible to preserve. It has its taboos but now it's not possible to preserve them. The thing that corrupts everything is craving/greed. There is currently a great excess of emotional and physical craving amongst human beings.

In farming people used to invite each other to go harvest together but now there is no community and togetherness. Now people just do it as a business. In the past we used to just share and there was generosity. This culture is no longer. It's very dangerous.

The culture of copying spoils children. Those economic experts from the West invented things which are destroying us like video. In the middle of the night children are coming from watching videos – they see a lot of stupid things, they copy everything even to their parents. So now you see young kids are doing disgusting sexual moves things in front of their parents. Girls wear tight trousers in front of their parents...Our customs are not that way; our culture is to be respectful, show humility. This copying is eroding our culture and our respect of African and Tanzanian is gone.

Because in our traditions, culture is where we learn humanity. New things are brought and different ways are coming and we love to copy. A European comes from Europe, maybe there it is very cold, so here is very hot for him so he has to walk with underwear and we think its fashion and copy.

Two things are the destroying the environment of the world – craving and losing ones own culture because of copying.

For us who think that we need to go forward we have to reclaim our ways. We think we don't have knowledge, so we look for knowledge. But what we think is knowledge is the thing that is misleading us. Knowledge is getting lost. Someone doesn't know even how to prepare food. S/he goes to buy a tin. So if s/he prepares his/her own food they do not kill the vitamins. Doesn't put in cooking oil if cooking cassava leaves, just use vegetable and salt in order to get the nutrition. People are getting heart diseases from this same industrial cooking oil. They add it thinking that it makes it sweeter; actually it kills!

We have to take precautions. Humans have to return to the ways of the past, return to our traditional

cooking if we have to stop depending on the canned food.

We're talking about three things: loss of culture; craving which takes faith away; and copying which takes culture away.

John Sombi: *There's different types of copying: there's copying whilst you're learning and there's adopting completely. You have something of your own 100%, but you can adopt from other cultures 20%, and you can remain with your own 80%. But if you copy 80% and have your own 20%, you're gone!*

On globalisation, the global village. Mother, here I bring you my wife who is white. So I mix another culture to that of my own. So we want to be together so we have to be one culture.

Fatma M. Muhidin: *the government interferes in a big way in the day to day life of communities. In the past... the people who were in charge were the traditional leaders like Chiefs who supervised things. But now things are reversed, the powers of the Chiefs are with the government. Even today if we want to do some traditional rituals / peace offerings to the spirits of the dead, I don't know who to see in Kaole, who is in charge.*

People stop following their tradition and even their religions, e.g. I am Muslim but my kids don't know anything about God. If you ask them which denomination they are, they don't know. Even when I ask them who is your priest (your Sheikh) they don't know. It starts in the household. If you follow these religions completely, there's ways in which they guide us and make us respectable. But if you take them away then the child is free to do whatever they want without any guidance, they take drugs, they go with the times, they say when they inject themselves they feel high and they fly to Europe.

Our biggest problem is that everyone wants to go to Europe. But when we come from Europe we want to take the culture from there, and we come here to show off and think we are more advanced. So this maybe we can call it slavery or lack of understanding, or lack of education.

The big problem is that the government just gives orders, rather than educating. If someone is caught cutting trees, he is taken to jail but still the authorities are the ones who are smuggling all the natural resources. They take bribes and allow people to cut the trees. The same person who is given the responsibility to supervise, is the same person who contributes to this, so the government contributes and also our religious associations are following the same trend.

Rashid Chua: *The only thing that makes our ways go astray is the politicians who want to be elected, they are responsible for the deterioration of our ways and customs because*

➤ **Health, medicine and traditional healing**

Habiba Amiri: *The big facilitators (big companies, aid agencies, national factories) also bring a lot of problems, for example in the atmosphere. In the past we didn't have much asthma but now everyone is suffering from it. It used to be a genetic problem that was inherited, but now everyone can suffer from it. Now it's like a fever, like malaria, anyone can fall sick any day.*

Saburi Mtoro: *Before there were these medicines – cafenol, aspro, vidac but now you just find really strong ones – fansidar. And diseases are many. I don't know but my worry is that by using all these strong medicines we are making ourselves sick.*

Kassim Milao: *If people reach 50 or 60 we say goodbye to them. But in the past, people reached 80 or even 100 but were still strong. But there were no hospitals, and we used traditional medicines and they healed us completely. Not like the drugs which you take and later illnesses return. They healed us completely until the illness went, maybe until you get another illness.*

Mama Karim: *We are told to rely on hospitals. But in the past, when we fell sick, our parents would go to the backyard, find a root of a certain tree and boil for us. We drank it and got well.*

Like if a young child has a stomach ache and is vomiting, they went back into the yard and dig Mkomwe roots, boils them, and then we drink, and we got better, because our faith was in them.

If you have a tooth ache your daddy will go out and harvest the bark of the cashew tree, boils it and then you swirl it in your mouth. Or mbaazi (pidgeon pea) roots – gives you three times, just like a hospital, in the morning, in the day and the evening. And later you feel better. But nowadays when you get a tooth ache we leave these indigenous ways and we go to hospital to take out the tooth.

Mwanaidi Rajabu: *If a child had a fever you just go to where we throw kitchen waste, you can take the leaves of a certain Manukauvundo tree, you pick some soil from all four corners of the house, you take hot charcoal and you bury it so that it smokes like incense and you heal the child. So you grate coconut and mix it with the leaves and soil of the tree and then you massage the child's body with it, and the following day the child is fine. But these days we fail to do these things. Even the young pumpkin – if you grind it and give it to a child it can heal.*

Roots of Mkomwe, if a child has a hernia you boil them up, and the child can drink it and recover. Now there's none of this.

Nowadays we fear each other because of campaigns about getting infected. We live in fear. Now it's impossible, in the past it was possible, you could do your things, your business, you could heal your children. Now you can't dare!

In the past when you have problems you go to where your foreparents are buried, to the graveyard and speak all your problems to the ancestors and when you come back everything is ok. But nowadays the graveyard is fenced and you have to pay if you want to go in. If you go to the ancestors, and once you get what you want you go back to thank them, and you live as normal.

Rashid Chua: *We are killing the traditions of medicine, and tradition in general. We human beings have to know that money is killing our culture. Something called money has sprung up.*

First if I have money before they show me a certain herb. So money is involved and it's destroying. Because of that [money] these people who know medicine, they don't teach their knowledge and eventually they die with their knowledge.

Money is valued more than civility.

Mwanaidi Rajabu: *If you don't want, you will never get it. If you want, you will get it. If you come to me, like you don't trust me – like I will kill your child, so if I know you don't trust then I won't tell you. I will tell you that I don't know and I don't want to tell you. You have already planted some bad energy.*

If a child fell sick, you carried him/her to an elder. Then the elder would treat the child and within a short time, the child would be well. But nowadays an old woman like me, nobody trusts me. So nowadays if you try to be good and help people, it will be your downfall. So we elders fear, that's why. It's not that we want money, but we just fear. You have already crossed us out.

Fatma M. Muhidin: *In the past, we had medicine for asthma and all these children's diseases. Actually until now there's been no medicine to heal asthma in the hospital. There's just medicine to alleviate it. Only traditional medicine can heal asthma.*

In the past we believed that everyone had their own time to pass, so everything is in the will of God. But

now the government says that there's carelessness which is causing deaths.

Rashid Jusuf Sekamba: *Convulsions, which we're afraid of for our children, even snakes, these didn't have offerings. Nowadays, especially in Bagamoyo the truth is even if someone is bitten by a snake, people start bargaining, when you say my child has been bitten by a snake. How much will you pay me? I have the medicine, but need payment. That's how it is.*

So in the past the healer would heal someone who is sick and then you stay for 3 months, taking care of the sick until they are well recovered and that's when you take the offering to the doctor, prepare some alcohol, some food, or other things. And then there will be some kind of ceremony when the doctor is invited. And then if you have anything extra, like a gift, the doctor doesn't tell you exactly what you have to give, so anything. But these days, the truth is that healers are asking for money.

In the past, it was a taboo for healers to ask anything for children's diseases. There was no certainty that they would recover. If someone is bitten by a snake you cannot ask for money. Sometimes you don't know exactly what kind of snake or poison it was. In the past it was not just one person who healed, it was a group of healers coming together to heal such a patient, and everyone brought their own medicine

Even if you have a hernia, they just say that you have malaria. So now even the hospital people only think about malaria and whenever you go there they just give you malaria medicine. But in the past, we used Mkwizingu tree which is very bitter, when you drink that you will feel like the gas comes out of the stomach, all the muscles relax.

➤ **A European Perspective**

Marko Ulvila: *I also tell a little bit of our history and how we would like the future to be. So when my grandparents were born about 190 years ago, the culture was very different, people lived from the land, the forests, agriculture and fishing. And the three important things were religion, family, and because the livelihood came from nature, living with the nature was very important.*

But now I have two small children born into a very different world. Hardly anyone lives off the land, most people are secular, not religious and families are smaller and smaller. Instead of religion the value of money has taken its place. Life is centred on earning and consuming. Before they went to church, now they go shopping on holy days and that's the centre of life.

There are more and more people who think that this is a bad development. People are not happier or healthier than before. The way we live and treat the environment we are making it difficult for future generations to live. We are trying to teach our children differently. Money is not so important. But the way we live in the nature is important, how we give back and do not just steal from the nature, and also the way we live with each other without causing other people hardship.

Happy to be here in Tanzania again where these old family values persist and there's understanding nature of, and religious orientation - that we have been created and that there is a creator.

➤ **Ways forward**

Rashid Chua: *So you have to start from the top to raise awareness the big guys then it might be easy, otherwise it's a big, big challenge. To sit on the traditional mat, but for the life of day I cannot agree, I have to go to the shop to buy a plastic carpet. That's not maintaining the tradition, that's destroying the tradition. There's work to lobby the policy-makers.*

Rashid Sekamba: *You have to take it to the household level, and to take a stand. First my stand as the father of the house and the children. Before my kids go to school I have to really show them how to*

behave so than they can keep the ways, even when they get educated. They don't have to forget their ways. Otherwise they completely forget where they've come from. So the duty is in the hands to the parents before the kids go out to school they have to be prepared.

Husna Hussein: *If we live together with understanding, my child is another person's child, and another person's child is my child. So from there we can keep our culture, and that's how our parents used to live. Even if we have something small like food – if we come together it becomes a lot.*

Jhikolabwino Manyika: *Oil comes from Arabia, in the desert. Here we have coconuts, groundnuts, sesame. Why don't we extricate ourselves as small as we are, with those things?*

Fatma M. Muhidin: *Actually what's really important is your culture, and to be who you are. I'm a Tanzanian, I'm someone from Kaole. I'm from the coast and I have my ways. So I'm recognised wherever I go, that I'm Tanzanian, but they know I'm from the coast, the way I look – I put on henna, I wear a khanga.*

John Sombi: *We just complain about the government, but it's us to start, to follow our traditions and customs. What's the end for us here? How should we prepare the community, and how should we bring up our children?*

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TANZANIA DIALOGUE III

Envirocare, Dar es Salaam 13 August 2008

Marko Ulvila: Part of the purpose of the project is to interrogate how societies should be so that the threat of environmental hardship is not there for humanity.

Marie Shaba: I'm also allergic to certain terminologies, like "poverty" and "less developed countries" – would rather use "less industrialised countries", because I don't understand development. As civil society organisations we have to have our own glossary of these terms and interpret them differently because a lot of time part of the unsustainability of our efforts is due to the abuse of these terminologies.

*We the global citizens are the majority so we have nothing to fear.
We are not poor and everybody needs to know that.*

Jhikolabwino Manyika describes the dialogue in Kaole village but with more real people than books people. *They think educated people bring unsustainability and they come to erode the culture. Because when people go to study, they come back with new ways and then everybody tries to be like them.*

Godfried M. Swai (Ras Makonnen): The political system has neglected us and this is no different from when our chiefs were selling our fathers, children and mothers to slavery. This is generating intensive rivalries and conflicts between and within nations exposing a great scramble for power and material supremacy.

Regarding our general visions on the future of all people and creation, *it is enough to put our faith in the almighty so that he may not desert us and allow us to destroy humanity. We have to become determined, courageous, great in spirit to meet our obligations and rise up as a new people to live in harmony with creation.*

Partnership with Europe and America depends on them realising the fact that the African continent has passed through a lot during its dark ages, the atrocities committed during the colonial occupation and deprived the state which now means that we depend on foreign aid. *There's just a big hand asking the small hand to give it something.* All that has been ripped from us has strengthened the capitalists. *They have controlled us using our own resources.*

I'm not here to blame anyone for these atrocities, I'm just expressing the immorals which were caused with such evil intention. If this is not talked about, it's going to spring out the same atrocities which happened during those days.

These evil intentions are very sophisticated that we cannot really realise what is happening. We just see things are just going on, we just enjoy the day, we just come back home, everything is just fine, but there is something boiling within. *When it starts blazing fire, I think there is no water that is going to put out this fire because even the water itself is boiled by the fire.*

We would stress our solidarity with the West to be based on mutual agreements. *We are not seeking charity.* This African continent especially Tanzania, I would say it is having human, labour and natural resources at its disposal which can make a new way of life of sustainability.

To maintain this solidarity means to be prepared to supply some of the essential elements and to

help lay the foundation of a sound and independent economy capable of full productive participation in the world market potential, e.g. managerial skills, agricultural machinery and proper education. *We stress the use of agriculture to improve the standard of life of our people.* Land reform is imperative.

It is everyone's constitutional right to preserve life in its purest form. We are obliged to revive our vows based on strong moral and spiritual foundations. The superimposed economic and legal systems should be reformed to acknowledge sovereignty of the people without subordinating our interests to those of a foreign power, meaning non-alignment.

Hawa Kimolo, organic farmer and activist: The Green Revolution and modern agriculture is a great threat that will jeopardise the environment.

We should not forget about smallholder farmers who are farming sustainably because they are not using chemicals, they are using the little water which is available.

Before the coming of colonialists I don't think that there was a problem of food in this country. The people who were feeding Tanzania were the smallholder farmers. In Kagera there was a strong administration, a chiefdom, and the household was obliged to produce their own food and the one who could not produce the food, was given a small task by the chief so he could produce, or if he doesn't produce then he had to do something. So those systems were dismantled. *So if we go back to our small farmers and organise things, I think we can feed the world.*

A tea factory built by investors is now destroying a traditional forest in Korogwe which has been preserved by the local people.

The worst of all is semi-educating our people. Since they are born, that's when we should start teaching our children skills. Even affluent people don't know how to eat. I call it 'no-food' because if you put rice, chips, meat and fish and no fruit, no vegetables is that food? That's not food, that's pollution, polluting your own body actually this is the aftermath of semi-education.

Instead of putting a very big budget for health, why don't you put a big budget for nutrition creating awareness on how to eat and what to eat?

By giving and taking we can learn from one another and sustain our mother Earth.

Loyce Lema, Director of Envirocare, contributes as an organisation by describing the 'Culture and Biodiversity project' which connects children with teachers and elders at schools with story-telling on environmental issues (seeds, trees) and how they were preserving nature in the past. A small village is created in the school, with huts where the elders sit and surrounding them traditional crops and indigenous trees. Children collect seeds, do the planting, and while doing so, the elders explain the trees, how they can be used (e.g. medicine, food, water conservation). Has really worked very well.

Also ecological governance: Committees which know how to manage their own environment. Villagers have sacred forests which help with conservation. Nobody is allowed to go there, pick or destroy. People are afraid to go there. We don't tell them to be afraid, that there are a lot of ghosts etc., but rather we try to help them understand how they can live in harmony with nature, having by-laws, good plans on how to harvest sustainably, and continuing the teachings that were carried out in those sacred forests.

Also raising awareness on biopiracy: People taking knowledge from the community for their own uses. People who come to do research work, they are just stealing knowledge from you and later they will sell this knowledge back to you in a very expensive way.

And working on issues of seed conservation: Big push from the government to use fertilisers, new seeds, new varieties. Not really sustainable at all. *We have plenty of varieties of bananas in Tanzania, why should we go to GMOs?*

They are saying that we are hungry, but we think that this is the big corporations are hungry to make more profit from us.

This type of dialogue is very important and maybe we have to look for a bigger audience, so that people maybe outside of Dar can watch and contribute.

Really a disaster what is happening now. Everything that comes from outside is thought to be good for us and we abandon our own things thinking that they are backward and copy everything from outside. Also they are really targeting young people; even the biotech is even targeting young researchers.

Azaveli Lwaitama: you have to be very careful. Always remember voice on the escalators at Amsterdam or London saying 'Mind your step, mind your step', meaning that if you go on an escalator and you are not looking where you are going you might fall at the end when you are stepping off. It's the same in the world.

Who told you it was 2008?! It is an arbitrary day based on the birth and date of a person who was born in the Middle East, which is again a sense of dominance. Some people have popularised this as today is a certain date. Isa bin Mariam wasn't even of their kind! But it's convenient. They found the thing is already there so they are using it to control the world.

My job is always to tell students to mind your step. Don't take everything that you're told to be literally true. You are being socialised in certain things for the convenience of certain forces in the world. Resistance in the world is sometimes called terrorism.

Like terrorism and school buses: school children are beaten by the police force as they struggle to get on public buses in Dar es Salaam, it's violence itself! These school buses contribute to their being more risk behaviour on the part of some students, and they are likely to get AIDS. So this fellow comes along and gives you mosquito nets but doesn't give you a bus, so you contract AIDS and then this fellow gives you ARVs.

Solidarity with who? They say you don't look like me so you don't belong. So if you die it doesn't matter. In the Iraqi war people counted how many American soldiers died. That's more important, than how many Iraqis have died. In the world we are not the same, we don't treat each other the same.

Your mind is already trapped. *Even this business we are doing here of dialoguing, I mean dialoguing means seeing, smelling, sharing, accessing each others smells, each others' voices, but how can you access my mother's voice in English?!*

My mother is threatened by more serious things than climate change – it's you! And education which takes away her children and she's left on her own in the village!

What is this American fellow doing in Tanga distributing mosquito nets? You think it's from compassion? It's developing acclimatisation, access to culture, so they're engaging in dialogue to dominate. *To dominate you need to finance cultural dialogue.* Don't forget that the sociologists and the anthropologists were very crucial for colonisation.

There are two things you use when you want to dominate people, the soft-spoken people and the violent ones. You put the soft ones first and then deal with those who are resistant violently. You finish the job.

Even to get money to do the right thing, you have to behave like me, you have to get a job. You have to write a nice proposal, talk about trade, dialogue and peace, then you get money. If you are going to be

useful, you lead two lives. The one for which you are paid, and the one for which you pay yourself through happiness.

There are dangers in the language that we use. Traditional, what is traditional? A lion has not increased the material circumstances which make it a lion, but human beings we have escalated the amount of things that we need to swallow to say that we are human beings. That's conflict, because they have defined progress as accessing everything for themselves and not linking what they are doing with sustainability.

You might also want to use the information to feed it back if you can include in your dialogue science, physics and less touristic things. Go to villages which are said to be under stress, where everything is devastated and people have not lost memory, because for rest of us, the media is there to make us lose our memory. It disconnects us from the memories of our ancestors.

The media is very clever; advertising, consumerism. *Every time you are using the mobile phone dollars are leaving the country but everyday Vodacom is telling you, 'why are you not talking to someone?'* Also everyday you are being socialised into the culture of violence as pleasure. The most ghastly level is child pornography. Because your gun is nicely put under your belt, you look smart with a necktie but because the Maasai is seen with a spear, he is violent, primitive fellow.

Let's continue with the dialogue, but there are many levels and there are too many people who are benefiting. Don't kid yourself into thinking that only the good are benefiting, even the war mongers are benefiting.

Katti Ka-Batembo, educational comic artist and graphic designer: Very confused - cannot even tell what's the main subject that we're talking about - heard about agriculture, politics and everything.

We shouldn't forget that we have a diversity of cultures, causing cultural conflict, e.g. one generation feels superior to another. During our school days there was the introduction of *ujamaa* (villagisation), the history we were studying was not the real one; it was distorted. We were told that if someone is sick he has to be taken to hospital and not to traditional healers. Everything traditional was discouraged. Many times I had conflict with my parents, because they invited me into something traditional, but I resisted saying that it was not important.

Now where shall we start? The entry point should be education

Anyambilile Mwakatole, chemist with Envirocare: In Kiswahili there's a phrase from the bible saying '*imani bila matendo imekufa*' (belief without deeds is dead). Envirocare is doing something and creating the nucleus of action.

Action and reaction are equal and opposite. I'm not sure as to when this equilibrium will come between the civilised culture, and the backward culture of the south. I'm sorry to use those terms anyway. To me the civilised world is imposing a sort of culture which will not threaten their livelihoods, so when an African reacts, saying 'we don't like that culture', they tend to react the opposite.

This sort of dialogue about global cultural sustainability is very sophisticated and complicated because you are bringing these cultures together, and these cultures are always reacting. This dialogue has been initiated from the north so one may question whether it has sinister motives.

When I want to buy a land rover from England, I don't determine the cost, but if I want to sell my gold (cotton) to England they would determine the price. I don't think that we will ever come to a compromise because that is the culture of the North, or the culture of Englishmen, to sell in that way. We don't have the culture of determining the values of our crops.

Such intrinsic dialogue would have been easier if it was only in Tanzania or the African region but interacting with north and south and putting together the cultures which will produce a sustainable culture, I can't imagine.

Jhikolabwino Siza Manyika: Our people in Africa have been brainwashed for a long time so before we can take action we have to educate our people and to be ready to learn from people who are still living in the original ways. In the west the problem is greed. *They want all and at the end of the day they lose their soul. So these problems of sustainability link with spirituality that the morals are not there in the world.*

You cannot love the next man before you love yourself. *If people start with themselves with that dignity and respect and love and honesty then we'll find a solution.* All these problems we are having are not because we are lacking information, or we are lacking education. These are engineered and planned, all this destruction. *People are sitting and using their brains to cause all this destruction.* Even if today we decide in our families, but some people will see it and then corrupt it. *I think morals should come first, and honesty and love and dignity.*

Marko Ulvila: The government of Finland has the copyright for this product. Authors are encouraged to share the information, so it's not the 'safe copyright'. Ownership is with the government of Finland but with a free license to distribute it non-commercially. *These are the terms that we have adopted when dealing with one part of our lives – the earning part of our lives.* Fortunately there is another part of the life where we act as citizens, members of family and radicals or conservatives or whatever, we are not bound by these rules.

Marie Shaba: This is part of the problem; *we have agreed to be part of the process, but then someone because they have given the money, because it is quantifiable, then they have the copyright, but those who have made it happen using their intellect, their time, they are marginalised.*

Azaveli Lwaitama: What is 'we'? To me, 'we' means animals and plants, people of different nations. If we accept that 'we' are 'we', not just animals, not just homo sapiens but 'we', then we will have environmental sustainability.

What brings us together is like-mindedness. The idea that some people are from the north, and some people from the south, to me is not the issue, I think appreciating what people in very difficult circumstances are trying to do us also part of the dialogue. You also face challenges like I as a lecturer at the University which is promoting wrong knowledge. I have to survive. So I use the occasion to do other things. I'm sure that people like you are also trying to use spaces, use the same language to do different things. But if you don't, you don't get the money to be here, and you wouldn't be here actually.

Compiled by Petra Bakewell-Stone and Jhikolabwino Manyika, Afrikabisa.