

An enquiry into gender mainstreaming in local councils in Arusha city and Meru district council in Tanzania

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PhD (Development Studies)

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This study inquired into the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategy in Local Councils (LCs) in Tanzania with the case studies of Arusha City and Meru District local councils. The study was guided by four specific objectives. The first specific objective examined whether the basic pre-requisites of implementing gender mainstreaming strategy were adopted in the local councils of the study. The second one assessed the capacities of employees to implement the strategy in LCs. The third objective identified the outcomes of gender equality initiatives in LCs of the study. The fourth, explored the challenges faced by LCs and coping measures towards adequate implementation of gender mainstreaming strategy in the selected local councils. This study employed the Critical Third World Feminist Theory (CTWFT). The study adopted descriptive research design with a case study method. The mixed method research approach was used to collect data. The sample comprised of 382 respondents comprising 130 men and 252 women who were purposively and randomly sampled. Instruments for data collection included questionnaire guides, Focus Group Discussion checklist, interview guides and observation checklist. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics with tables of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data were analysed by content analysis. The findings of the study revealed that there were some elements of considering men's and women's needs in development interventions in the LCs of the study. However, most of the basic pre-requisites to implement gender mainstreaming strategy were not yet evidently adopted in the studied local councils. For instance, the two councils had no gender mainstreaming tools or guidelines providing approaches to mainstreaming gender strategy. There were no visible capacities of employees to implement gender mainstreaming strategy in the area of study. There was crude evidence to demonstrate the outcomes of the initiatives of gender equity and equality in the selected local councils. The major challenges towards execution of gender mainstreaming strategy included lack of political will, insufficient financial resources for employees' capacity building, and constraining cultural discriminating practices. The conclusion made by this study as a contribution to knowledge is that there was no consistent or planned

implementation of gender mainstreaming strategy in the selected LCs. Consequently, gender equity and equality as end goal of the implementation was not yet attained. As coping measures, the study recommends strong gender awareness creation programmes and designing the tools or guidelines providing approaches to implementing gender mainstreaming strategy. Moreover, creating a strong networking with institutions implementing the strategy to assist in the process is found necessary. Elimination of all forms of gender discrimination resulting from traditions and culture is also recommended.