

**- The Tatu Tano child-led organisation -
Building child capacity and protective relationships through a
child-led organisation, North-western Tanzania
- Case study -**

A case study collaboration between the Interagency Learning Initiative (ILI) on
community-based child protection mechanisms, the Community Child Protection
Exchange, and Kwa Wazee, Tanzania

This case study tells the story of a child-led organisation called Tatu Tano which was started over ten years ago by a small NGO called Kwa Wazee (Kiswahili for older people). Kwa Wazee works with grandparents in a remote rural area of Tanzania. The area saw some of the worst impacts of HIV and AIDS with very high numbers of orphans, many of whom ended up being looked after by aged grandparents. Kwa Wazee began in 2003 as a cash transfer and social support project for grandparents looking after grandchildren.

On the request of the grandparents, the organisation began dialogues between the older people and their grandchildren, and when the children asked for the meetings to be regular the Tatu Tano Organisation was set up. As a first step, Kwa Wazee staff consulted over 100 children, asking **them** why they wanted regular group meetings. The children said they wanted the groups for friendship and so they could do income generation work together. Many of them were very poor as their grandparents were too old to earn an income. This poverty led to widespread discrimination against the children at school and in the community. Small groups of three to five children (Tatu Tano means “three five” in Kiswahili) were formed. They were small because the children suggested that it would be best to work with children who lived nearby.

At present there are 330 small groups that come together with neighbouring groups once a month in a cluster meeting run by the children. Kwa Wazee runs trainings in group dynamics, leadership, life skills, sexual and reproductive health, and agriculture, as well as running a loan and savings system so the groups can start their income generation projects.

This case study is part of collection of work undertaken in 2017 to document interesting or promising examples of community-based child protection in Tanzania and Uganda. The examples can provide insight into how different understandings of and approaches to community dynamics in various contexts can help support deeper community engagement in child protection. A synthesis paper which draws out some of the key learning from the case studies is forthcoming (2018).

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We have chosen to start this case study with a story that encapsulates much of the philosophy of the Tatu Tano child-led organisation, and points to why it has become an example of sustainable, child-led child protection.

Egbert's story

"I have drawn a picture here of a group-mate who I met when he was very young, and we have grown together. I was the oldest in our Tatu Tano group. I was 16 and the one I have drawn was three, another one five, and the next nine years. We all lived with grandparents.

So, this is the youngest - when we met in the group he was only three years old. When we wanted to start our meeting we would start with a song and the youngest had to give us the song. We were singing, and we laughed together. After laughing we started our meeting and were discussing about things.

Our group had a small business to sell firewood and when we were going to cut the tree I would go together with them. I asked the youngest to carry the panga (cutting tool). And the one who was five years old carried the axe. We cut the wood into small pieces to sell. At first, they were very young and I felt quite alone with the work but now they have grown up and they are doing good business. They are keeping chickens and selling the eggs and still selling firewood and cutting grass.

Now I have left the group because I am 26 years old and I am a Wafuatiliaji (Kiswahili for monitor and supporter) for Tatu Tano. I am caring for the Tatu Tano groups in the villages of Mbunda-Bisheke and Kitoko. I attend some meetings of the small groups and all the village cluster meetings and try to find out what is working well, what is not and why it is not working. I just advise or share the ideas from other groups and then the group can decide how to make their business go better.

I also have my own business now of animal keeping. For my future, I will stay in animal keeping because the training I have is making me to understand how to keep animals. My income I am getting from selling eggs. The interest from the business, it is what I use for my life, and the capital I can use for growing my business. Before joining Tatu Tano I didn't have any idea of doing such things, but I joined, and I learned from the group and we got training about different things. And for the moment I have the capacity to understand many things.

I still visit my Tatu Tano group and the three-year old, he is 13 years now. I feel very proud of them."

Egbert Rugenge, 26 years old, volunteer Wafuatiliaji/Monitor for Tatu Tano groups and ex-Tatu Tano member

Child-led groups - acknowledging the capacity of children

Egbert's story illustrates some of the key characteristics of the organisation. We discuss these in the sections which follow and look at why they make the Tatu Tano child-led organisation an interesting example of community-based and -led child protection.

Acknowledging the capacity of children is the cornerstone on which Tatu Tano is built. At every point the children lead and decide. The children were consulted from the start about why they wanted a group, and any new directions or decisions continue to come from the children (see the story about "Empowering Girls" and "Peace is a Decision" below).

Children of all ages and gender are embraced and valued by the groups

What we see in Egbert's story is that even a very young child is seen as having capacity. The three-year old was given a role to play - he sang the songs, he carried the *panga*. This approach is seen throughout the project - no matter how young, children are valued.



The photograph above also illustrates this value well. These young children are participating in a village cluster meeting where many Tatu Tano groups in an area get together once a month to report on what they have done in their groups, to hand in their savings, to ask questions, and raise issues or to look for support.

During the writing of these case studies we attended the cluster meeting in Mbunda-Kagondo with Wiston John, the manager of the Tatu Tano project. We arrived late because the rain had washed a bridge away and we had to make a detour. When we arrived, the group was sitting under the trees at a local school. The leaders of the cluster - who were elected by the children - were seated in front and a boy of about 13 was giving a report on the work of his Tatu Tano group. He reported on earnings from the sale of eggs, that their rabbits had begun to produce babies, and how much the group had managed to save. He said savings were lower than last month as the sale of eggs had been slow.



A young girl of 15 then reported on the “Empowering Girls” group (also see page 11) that she led. We had missed most of the report-backs but we observed the groups handing in their group savings and recording them in an accounting book. They indicated at this point if they wanted to keep the money for their use or to pay back part of the loan they had been given to start their businesses.

Wiston apologised to the group for being late and the meeting continued with comments and questions from the members. A small girl stood up to ask Wiston what she could do about her sick goats and he answered with advice about local herbs and said if the problem persisted she should request antibiotics through the cluster mentor (Egbert’s equivalent).

Wiston also informed the cluster about a training coming up on how to incubate eggs and mentioned that if there are any tensions in their groups they must contact their cluster mentor to mediate for them. An older boy then reminded Wiston that he had promised the cluster a box in which to keep the learning group books. Many of the children have formed small informal learning groups to help each other with school work, and Kwa Wazee provides text books. Wiston explained that the boxes were being made and would be delivered soon.

What stood out, as we watched the meeting, was the fact that everyone was treated the same, and with respect, no matter their age or gender, and that the meeting was entirely child-led. Wiston was there only as a source of information and a link to training opportunities. An indication of the extent to which the organisation is child-led is the fact that there are at present 313 Tatu Tano groups with 1603 children (1074 girls and 529 boys) and Wiston is the only staff member. His role is to monitor the groups, with help from volunteer monitors like Egbert, and to run the agricultural trainings. Wiston was also a Tatu Tano member once, and like many of the children he works with today, an orphan.

“I faced many difficulties in my life, a harsh childhood, a relative was beating me every day. I was discriminated against by relatives, so I felt I was alone, but Tatu Tano became my family. I used that opportunity of being in the group to build a family. I made new friends and made a new family. I grew up and the organisation recognised me and sent me for training at the agricultural college, so now I am looking after the Tatu Tano groups. Working with the children I am working with, is not like I am doing a job, it means something to my life. The children are my relatives, are part of my family.” Wiston John, manager of Tatu Tano

This sense of being part of a family and the importance of relationships permeates the organisation, and this could be why everyone from Wiston down to the youngest member is seen as valuable.

Inclusion as a key aspect of the children's groups

Wessells (2015) identifies the inclusion of the most marginalised people in a community project as a characteristic of good community-based practice. The Tatu Tano groups are characterised by their inclusive nature. In 2010, a separate organisation started by Kwa Wazee for children living with HIV and AIDS who were looking after ill parents was integrated into the Tatu Tano organisation. The 30 groups integrated easily, probably because the value of acceptance and respect for everyone had become a central norm in the groups. Over time, children with many different kinds of vulnerabilities have also been integrated into the groups. In the quote below, Wiston describes how the children themselves decide who should be included in a group.

"Most of the children are living with older people and people living with HIV and AIDS, but even very poor children can join, any vulnerable child. The children in the group decide if the new child can join. The children know each other within the village so they decide if any child who asks can join their group, they decide if he or she is vulnerable. We find they are honest and careful and we facilitate the process if they ask us to." Wiston John, Tatu Tano manager

Children with disabilities are included too. Amelia, who cares for her grandson with sickle cell anaemia describes how Tatu Tano is supporting her grandson:

"My son died and left two children. These two children, one was suffering from sickle cell anaemia. So that boy, living with that disease, he is not growing. I got the information from someone and I came to Kwa Wazee and registered him in Tatu Tano, and myself, I am getting a pension from Kwa Wazee. This supported me in the care of these children and Tatu Tano is supporting the boy. He has become open and he can play with children when he is feeling not too weak. When he is sick he stays at home and they visit and he can get encouragement from other colleagues in the group." Amelia Clemence, grandmother, member of Kwa Wazee

Training for life – protection must be practical

Egbert's story (see page 2) focuses on the income generation work of the groups. At this point it is useful to look at why the groups focus on income generation and how this is protective.

Research undertaken by Kwa Wazee (Clacherty, 2008) subsequent to the start of the Tatu Tano organisation, as well as work done elsewhere (Skovdal et al 2009; Clacherty & Bray 2009; Bray 2009; Evans 2010) shows that orphan children living with grandparents have many advantages, such as love from their grannies and the praise they receive from the community for looking after their grandparents. But they also face many difficulties. Elder-headed households tend to be poorer in Africa because there are often no means of accessing income (Kakwani & Subbarao, 2005), especially in rural areas. As an example of some of the issues faced by grandchildren and the psychological impact this can have, we have included the words of two children of grandparents which were recorded as part of research undertaken with Kwa Wazee in the same local area in 2008 (Clacherty, 2008).

"You just give up because there is nobody [to give you money for school]. Even if

you are studying hard nothing will happen.”

“I just feel I am weak because I am wandering around and begging because I should be depending on my gran but she is depending on me. But I have no ability to do the work that can earn me an income of more than 100Tsh (0.045USD). The work I can do is sweeping, weeding and that cannot bring us an income so I will always be weak.”

These quotes illustrate how poverty affects children in a practical way but also psychologically - these two children feel “weak” and ready to “give up”. An evaluation done in 2016 by Tatu Tano staff (Madoërin, 2016) shows how the income generation programme created both the means to reduce poverty, and how it also gave children a sense of agency. In the evaluation they asked the children to identify which competencies they felt they had gained from being part of Tatu Tano and to rate them. The most important competency the children identified was their ability to earn money through agriculture and business. The second most important competency they identified was that they now had “*self-confidence, self-responsibility and a feeling of having become a person I want to be*”.

Both of these competencies protect children. The ability to earn money means children are less easily exploited for their labour (a common violation in this area) or to other risks such as transactional sex. Being self-confident and feeling responsible are internally protective. Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane (2010) emphasise the importance of building internal characteristics in vulnerable children because these internal assets provide them with some agency and power to withstand exploitation.

During our visits to the Tatu Tano groups we saw many examples of how children were able now to provide for their own school fees, uniforms, soap and shoes as well as contribute to the family food needs. One of the most outstanding examples of how a child-led group can meet their own needs is the cluster/village cassava field we visited in Rwigembe village. The children in the photo below are all from small Tatu Tano groups who meet once a month. They are standing in the cassava field that they planted. One of the young women in the group described why they had started to plant cassava in a large field like this.

“We had two years of no rain and children were very hungry so we decided to plant a big field of cassava because in the dry time there is always cassava. It is like an insurance for our whole cluster. The land was given by the leader.”



Children manage their money

One of the unusual characteristics of the Tatu Tano organisation is the fact that the children manage money. Each Tatu Tano group is given a loan to buy animals, seeds or tools and then they slowly pay the loan back. The loans range between 5 000 Tsh (US\$2.20) for trading and 90 000 Tsh (US\$40) for animal keeping.

The one requirement is that someone in the group has to have completed a training course in agriculture and book keeping. Money is paid back at each cluster meeting with the children deciding how much to pay back. Records show that most loans are paid back after one to three years, depending on the type of project.

Most of the children use the money they make from their income generation projects for daily needs like food, soap, school materials and kerosene. Once the loan is paid back the group is taught to build up capital and use it to buy more seed or animals, for example, so their business can grow. The groups are also encouraged to save some of the money they make. The group treasurer - who has done a training in book keeping - keeps the group's savings, which are used for emergencies like a visit to the hospital, medicine or a funeral.

The group makes its own decisions about how to use their money and Tatu Tano has found that most of the children are very responsible with managing money and making decisions about savings.

Kwa Wazee also has a programme to provide school clothes, books and stationery for children who cannot afford them, so they can attend school. Note that, again, this was a project requested by the children. Jovinary Frances, a Kwa Wazee staff member, describes how this works:

"First of all, we do a yearly budget with the Tatu Tano members. We sit with each group and they identify what they need. They say 'we can use our savings to purchase exercise books,' someone can say 'my uniform is good but I need shoes' or 'my shirt is good and shoes is good, I need just a trouser or a skirt.' This helps us to make the budget and helps us to reach as many children as we can. And after making a budget we purchase and then distribute, and after distribution we can have a report back."

Other programmes, such as the "Peace is a Decision" and "Empowering Girls" programmes also have child-led management committees that manage the funds for the trainings. They are given a certain amount of money, work out a budget and then manage the book keeping themselves.

Building relationships

Having a supportive social network is understood as another protective factor for vulnerable children (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane, 2010). This photo below, taken as the group left the cluster meeting we attended, illustrates how the Tatu Tano groups have given children, many of who were stigmatised and isolated before, friends.



Grandparents also reported how the groups were important places for their children, and somewhere where they felt they belonged.

“My small granddaughter, Neema is a member of Tatu Tano. She was so alone before. None of the children wanted to play with her because she was sick and we were very poor. She had no shoes for school, so she stayed home. Now the small one [Neema] comes home from trainings and she shows me what they have learned. She knows how to look after the goats. Also, she has friends from the group who visit her now. She has made enough money from selling a goat to buy her own shoes and clothes for school this year. This is making me happy that she can join with the friends and chat without being alone at home.” Isaruwi Marungi, grandparent and member of Kwa Wazee



Neema (on the left) with a friend



Neema with her goats. The one she is feeding is her favourite. She told us with a smile that he is called Kajwemilile (we have stopped) – “because he never stops eating”.

Not only have children who were stigmatised now found friends, but they also have mentors. The intergenerational friendships created within the project are important because having an adult to trust and talk to has been identified as an important protective asset (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane, 2010). The two quotes below illustrate how the Wafitiliaji - the Tatu Tano mentors become these trusted adults.

“I have a child who is seven years old in one of the Tatu Tano groups that I am mentoring. With this group we are doing different projects, and to him, it is a little bit difficult to deal with because he is very slow learning. Before, he didn't know about money, not even how much you can charge for a piece of sugar cane. But we made sure he always went to sell sugar cane with a friend to support him. He is selling but the friend is watching. He is bargaining and giving out the change while others watching if it is actually the amount or not. And now he is learning slowly and understanding something. He is quite different, happy and smiling now.”
Wafitiliaji (Tatu Tano mentor)

What is noticeable is the gentle support that was given to this boy over time by the other children. Semeni Somaïda, another mentor, describes below how the relationship between mentors and children is an equal one of reciprocal learning and equality.

“We are together with the smaller children. The main reason why we are together with the small children is just so they can learn. The smaller children learn from the adults but also the adults learn from the children. And this working together builds the trust between the children.” Semeni Somaïda, 19

Child-led groups do need adult support

It is important to note that Kwa Wazee acknowledges that whilst children of all ages are competent, they do need support. In the first year of the organisation, 56 groups had been formed. The groups were created when grandchildren of grandparents who were receiving the Kwa Wazee pension were asked if they wanted to be part of a group. The groups were registered, told to elect a leader and then formed into clusters for a regular monthly meeting. They were then trained in their cluster groups in basic group management and how to start an agricultural project. The groups were given a loan if someone had attended an agricultural training, and they were taught how to save. But it soon became clear that more support was needed. Lydiah Lugazia, project coordinator, explains,

"I attended all the cluster meetings at this time and I noticed that there were many groups, but the quality was not so good. My main impression was that of the existing 56 groups only a few were really strong groups, others I considered as rather weak. The weakness was mostly in the economic performance. Many groups decided to sell either sugar cane or dagaa (a small dried fish) with the result that the market was not big enough to accommodate so many sellers - especially for sugar cane. I heard many times that 'we are planning this and this' but there was no sign of the implementation even though they had planned the new activities maybe two, three months before. In some groups the chairperson of the group knew how much funds the group had, but even the cashier didn't know about it, much less the ordinary group members. So, the question comes up: Who controls the funds of the group? Also, I observed that in some groups the members of the same group reported different things which meant that not all the members are aware about what is happening in the group. It was evident that something must happen in order to consolidate and strengthen the movement." Lydiah Lugazia, Kwa Wazee project coordinator

One strategy to strengthen the groups was to train experienced Tatu Tano members to become mentors. These mentors became known as Wafitiliaji - a Kiswahili term that means mentor. The mentors began their work by discussing aims and objectives with the groups, and they then assisted with the election of new leaders and began building a relationship with the groups. The mentors now attend all of the cluster meetings and follow up with groups that need help. This has improved the functioning of the groups.

Another strategy was to become serious about the income generation projects. The organisation has learned over the years that it was not enough for children to have small income generation projects such as grass cutting and selling a few eggs. The income generation had to make enough money for children to survive on. At this time, Wiston returned from agricultural training college with knowledge about crops and animal husbandry and how to make a small farm profitable. He began to train the groups in marketing research and small business strategy and gave them specific agricultural knowledge. This has been successful and the small groups are now making money from sales of produce.

Children who have outgrown Tatu Tano groups, such as Egbert, have begun to produce cash crops and have large-scale animal husbandry projects that can sustain them into the future. During the research for this case study we visited a number of these larger income generation groups that are creating long-term work for older members. Here is the story of one of these groups.

Epius Gidion, Jovinary Lucas, Nickson Alexander, Ezra Frederick and Avila Fredrick have all been Tatu Tano members for many years. They are now setting up an agri-business that they hope will sustain them into the future. They have recently started keeping rabbits, planted up three large fields of onions for sale at the market, and made extra beehives to add to the ten they already have. The five members of this group have all finished school and plan to turn their honey business into a large-scale business. Wiston is advising on markets for the honey. In the photos below, we see Wiston advising some of the group members on how to keep their rabbits free of disease, and the new traditional style beehives the group has constructed.



Kwa Wazee sees the creation of small businesses for graduated group members as important, as it provides real earning possibilities for young people and a form of economic sustainability for local families.

Empowering girls

In 2010, a group of girls from the Tatu Tano groups raised the issue of sexual violence against girls in their area. The girls asked specifically for training in how to stop boys and men attacking them as they moved around the local area. Staff at Kwa Wazee, realising that prevention was as important as self-defence, developed a broad training course in response to this request. It included basic self-defence; discussions about gender relationships, power, masculinity and femininity; information on puberty and reproductive health; and assertiveness training. The training takes place over 12 days and is targeted at girls aged 11 to 18 with the average age being 14 years.

By the end of 2014, Kwa Wazee had trained 1152 girls. After the training the girls continue to meet once a week or once a month to practise the skills they had learned and to do physical fitness work. The groups became part of the Tatu Tano structure reporting back on their activities to the cluster meetings. This focus on physical fitness for girls is seen as important as it allows girls to feel comfortable and confident in their bodies and more able to assert their own protection. The girls are also part of the inter-cluster Tatu Tano soccer league which is run completely by young people.



By the end of 2015 most of the girls who were part of the Tatu Tano organisation had attended an “Empowering Girls” training. At about the same time, local schools began to contact Kwa Wazee to find out about training the girls in their schools. The organisation did not have the capacity for this, so they trained a group of trainers from the Tatu Tano groups. Girls who had attended the trainings also elected a management committee of four older girls (aged 19 to 23). The management committee receive a budget from Kwa Wazee and now organise the trainings themselves.

Some 40 girls attend a residential training over 12 days. They are held in schools in the school holidays. In the week we visited Tatu Tano, 339 girls were attending trainings in five different local schools, organised entirely by the management committee and trainers. After the training, the girls set up small neighbourhood groups where they meet once a week to practice the skills and support each other. The management committee monitors these groups too and they report on their progress to the Tatu Tano cluster meetings. A Kwa Wazee staff member, who also has other duties within the organisation, supports the committee, so the trainers and management committee essentially run the programme themselves.

Beyond learning to defend themselves and improving their life skills, it seems that the trainings have begun to change the way girls perceive sexual harassment and violence; and it is no longer something to be ashamed of. Gelardina Charles, who is 19 years old and has been a member of Tatu Tano since she was ten, was elected by the girls to be a member of the “Empowering Girls” management committee. Below she describes one of the impacts of the programme.

“From Kabale Village one girl was going to the river to fetch water. Somebody tried to rape her but she used the techniques to protect herself, she pushed the boy away and ran. She recognised the man. So, after that she informed the child protection group and they went to the local leader and they took the person to the police. The second one, she was going to school in the morning and she had to walk a long way and it was dark. Somebody tried to rape her but she used the techniques of self-defence and she was shouting and he ran away - but she didn't recognise him. She also reported. Before the training they did not report, many of them were ashamed. They could not express themselves, and they are not confident. But after the training they are confident, they can stand and they say that this is normal, this can happen and it is not right. I have got my rights. If I can choose to do this [sex], I can do at the time I like. Not only when somebody does to me.” Gelardina Charles, 19, Member of “Empowering Girls” management committee

One of stakeholders involved in the broader community work of Tatu Tano described the girls' growing courage:

"And when you are talking to them you can see the courage they have. They get this courage to say these things to me and to advocate from the organisation [Tatu Tano]. They do understand about their rights." Fatima Nuru, District Councillor for Muleba and member of Pamoja child protection project

Empowering young children

In 2016, the young children in the Tatu Tano organisation also asked if they could learn self-defence skills because they were often harassed by adults and older children. In response, the organisation developed a programme for the young children. One of the trainers, an older volunteer Tatu Tano member, described the thinking behind this programme:

"The core of the activities is not to train them to fight. The core is to train the children to understand about self-determination and to make them to have ideas on how not to get into danger. But also, if danger happens you need to have skills which can help you. So, it is not training them to fight. Another thing is just to train them to be confident and to understand the different kinds of people. There are those who can call the children and ask them to do something they do not want to do. Most of the children can't argue with the adult person. But with this, we train them to understand if you feel that this is not good, this is not a good person, you need to do something so that you can get out of danger. You can shout and run and you must tell an adult or someone in your Tatu Tano group." Semeni Somaida, trainer

This photo shows the children playing a game where they have to shout to get a message to another group (Semeni is visible in the right of the photo). In both, the girls and the children's trainings it was very difficult for them to shout at first, they had been told to be respectful and quiet so often that they could not bring themselves to shout, but as Gelardina says, *"teaching them to shout out is important - with their voice the girls can feel confident."*



“Peace is a Decision”

Soon after the “Empowering Girls” programme began, the girls raised the issue that it would be helpful if boys could be taught to be less violent and that it was not right to put the responsibility for protection on the girls alone. Kwa Wazee began to talk to the boys in Tatu Tano and developed a programme called “Amani ni Uamuzi” or “Peace is a Decision”. Using a similar approach to that which was employed for the girls’ programme, the boys’ programme also included material on being a boy and reproductive health, but the real focus is on reflecting on what violence is; on stress and anger management; relationships with girls; and how the boys could choose to be men who are peaceful. The programme began by training 14 trainers in 2012 in a residential workshop. The trainers then applied their training under supervision. What emerged is a ten-day training programme, which to date, all male Tatu Tano members have received.

Trainings are also run with boys from local secondary schools. By mid-2017, 886 boys had been trained, and there are also five main trainers and 28 assistant trainers. The boys meet regularly once a week in groups after the training to have discussions and practise the skills. In the photo below three boys who are sharing the “Peace is a Decision” manual listen intently to the trainer, an older Tatu Tano boy.



During our research for this case study we attended a “Peace is a Decision” meeting at a local school. The next photograph shows the group giving the “Amani ni Uamuzi” cheer that they use at the start and end of every meeting. The programme uses simple slogans and rituals to teach quite complex ideas, such as how social norms around masculinity are created, and how boys can create new social norms.



We also met with a group of the assistant trainers who told us what the training had meant for them personally. They are referring in the quotes below to an activity we did that asked them to draw themselves before they attended the training, and then after. The kind of change they describe is typical of what the programme does, it helps boys understand themselves, helps them to break the cycle of violence, allows them to develop respect for girls and to make peaceful and targeted decisions for their future so they can live as productive, good men.

“The first picture I have drawn with a black colour. This means that I didn't know anything about myself. And at that time when I was in the school, the people who were older than me used to beat me and I reacted by beating the younger ones. So, after the training I understood what good I can do - that I do not have to react, I can be the player, not the ball. And this has built a new life for me because I started listening to people and became a person who can train some of the other boys about “Peace is a Decision”. Here, I have drawn a heart because I am in love with other people and I feel more peaceful.” Giles Alex, trainer for “Peace is a Decision”

“Before the training I was just an unkind person. I didn't listen to what I was advised. I did what I felt is good to my life, which sometimes caused me to be in trouble. But after the training I identified how I was and how I should be. So now I can listen to what other friends say to me and I can understand.” Anord Protazi, trainer for “Peace is a Decision”

“So, before the “Peace is a Decision” I had a tendency of making the decisions that I think is good. And also, I didn't balance myself, balance the way I can work with girls. Because I thought that girls are weak and I felt that they cannot do anything. I felt that I am stronger than them and there is no need to listen to them. And during this training and after the training I identified who is a real man and what the real man does. I changed some of the attitudes which I had before and I am trying the best to reduce violence, and whenever I meet with other people I can advise them about the impact of the violence and how it can affect them in their life.” Egbert Rugenge, trainer for “Peace is a Decision”

Training programmes are developed with the children

The main role of the Kwa Wazee organisation is to provide training for the children in the Tatu Tano groups. Throughout this case study we refer to the income generation training, the “Empowering Girls” and “Peace is a Decision” training, the training in book keeping, and the leadership training. Kwa Wazee developed all of these training programmes with the help of the children by engaging in a consultation, piloting and feedback process. Firstly, a consultation is held with different groups of children, and then the findings inform a draft training course which is developed and trialled with a small group. The group then gives feedback at the end and the revisions are made.

Here are some notes from a consultation held with grandchildren, and then an extract from the subsequent training that was developed that illustrates the consultation phase.

Kwa Wazee: Consultation with grandchildren to inform a training programme for Tatu Tano groups on ‘How to live with Granny’ (September 2007). Three consultation sessions were run in Nshamba, Kihumulo and Itongo.

We asked the children to tell us things that make sometimes make it difficult for them to live with their grandmother.

In Kihumulo the children had a big concern about the frailness of the granny, for example they said, “My *bibi* (granny) gets sick a lot, and when I’m also sick, I can’t support her.”

Here is an extract from the training material informed by the consultation with the children:

Topic 5 Tatu Tano

Unit: 1 “Caring for Granny”

Purpose of this activity:

Children will express their concerns regarding possible illnesses of the grannies and the possible disruption of care. They will also identify support people and practise getting support. The facilitator says: “*Imagine you wake up in the morning and you see that the bibi is not yet up. There is no fire. The bibi has obviously heavy pains (how you will know that she has heavy pains?) The bibi can’t move.*”

The activity then goes on to ask children to role play the situation, discuss how it makes them feel and then identify neighbours who can help them.

In the quote below we see how piloting is another way in which the young people are consulted about the development of the programme:

“The first training we ran a session that we thought would be easy - it was to discuss what sexual- and gender-based violence is. But what happened was that the girls started to tell us their own stories and then they cried and it was very traumatic. We realised that this was an important part of their own healing - to talk in a safe space about their experiences. We talked to the girls the next day about the session and asked if they thought it was good to tell their stories and how we could help them to feel safe. Now we still have this session but we structure it very carefully as ‘telling stories’ and do it in small groups.”

Changing the environment

What the Tatu Tano child-led organisation and its two key programmes, “Empowering Girls” and “Peace is a Decision”, have done is to give the poorest and most vulnerable children an ability to:

- look after themselves,
- build their protective personal skills,
- reduce violence against women in the community by slowly changing perceptions of women and masculinity amongst the children.

But this work is not enough if the environment in which the children live does not also respond more generally to the children’s growing awareness and power. Kwa Wazee is aware of this and has set in place two more key interventions alongside the Tatu Tano organisation.

The first is a local Child Protection Committee (CPC) set up by Kwa Wazee in each village to support the government-led CPCs which operate at district level. For example, in Muleba District, there is a government-led district child protection committee set up under the Department of Social Welfare. This committee is strong and supportive of children but the district is large, so the village-based CPCs set up by Kwa Wazee play an important role in linking children to formal services. Meryness Lauria, a Kwa Wazee staff member, describes how the Tatu Tano child protection committees came to be set up:

“How it was started is it comes from the “Empowering Girls” groups. When the girls had a problem and to deal with it they needed to take it to the police, they were not accepted, not fully listened to by the adults. When they took their case to the chairperson, the chairperson did not care about their case and he was saying that they are just having bad habits, it is their fault. So, the children told us this at Kwa Wazee and they asked if they can have an adult when following up to go with them. So, we helped to set up what we call a Child Protection Committee.” Meryness Lauria, child protection committee coordinator, Kwa Wazee

Child protection or welfare committees are common models of community-based mechanisms which are often employed by external organisations wishing to support child protection. However, what is different about the CPCs that were set up by Kwa Wazee is that the children selected the adult members. After agreeing to be a member of the committee, the adults then received training from Kwa Wazee on how to deal with any cases reported to them. One of the committee members describes this process:

“How I became a member of the CPC is that we were selected by the children themselves within the village. I think the children themselves thought ‘who was an adult who would support them?’. Maybe that is why I was selected by the children. After being selected I was invited by Kwa Wazee for the training. Having got the training, I felt now I need to do something because I am trusted by the children. That was an important idea to be selected by them. We don't know how they got that idea that the children themselves appoint the members, but to us it was wonderful. I didn't know that I have a value also to the children. But what I knew was that I was a politician in the village. And with the politicians you are just doing and saying something to the people so that people can choose you. I didn't realise the children also knew how important I am to them.” Nalisisi Nchumilane, CPC member

It is clear from our discussions with members of the CPCs that being selected by the children made them feel honoured and gave them an added sense of responsibility. Child selection of members also means that the CPC is more accessible to the children - they know these people, as they have selected them.

What stands out about the process of forming these particular CPCs is they are unlike many other programmes, where the CPC is formed first and then followed by work to promote child protection amongst local adults and children. In this case, the Tatu Tano approach worked the other way around. First the children formed their own groups and did prevention work. Later, they requested the help of adults to help mediate between the children and the formal system. At present, there are 233 CPCs - almost one for each Tatu Tano group. Thirteen cases were reported and followed up on in the last year. However, the CPC members acknowledge that the volunteer work they do is not always easy.

"I, as a leader in the village, but also as a committee member, a CPC member, we are receiving children unplanned - it may be during the day or during the night and this, when it happens during the night, is difficult. You have to keep the children because some of the children run away from their family because of the conflict and you need to find out how you can support the children without harming that child. It can be difficult." Francis Kamzora, former Ngeenge village leader, CPC member

"With this, supporting and advocating, you are putting yourself into danger. Because someone who is doing something wrong to a child will be against you. There are some people, after the parents died, they have sold everything the children had, and if you advocate for the children to stay and to live in their home, they will not feel well toward you. So you need courage. But that's why the children are appointing us. They knew that we had courage." Consolatha Aroni, CPC member

The second initiative which targets the context in which children live focuses on changing attitudes towards violence. This initiative is called "Pamoja" which means "together" or "oneness" in Kiswahili. Its aim is to mobilise everyone in the community to be a person who stands against violence. The programme begins with a meeting between Kwa Wazee staff and the community leader. The community leader is asked to suggest adults to sit on an organising committee. In some areas children also recommend members, for instance, some of the CPC members are also members of Pamoja.

The group is given training on violence prevention for children and adults and everyone signs a pledge to "be an adult who will never harm a child and to be a peaceful person". The Pamoja group does hold awareness raising meetings in homes to share learning about non-violence but essentially members use their personal contacts and everyday work to share what they are learning about protecting children and being a person who stands for non-violence in the community. Pamoja members can also support women and men who want to report violence to formal structures.

"Pamoja is a slow infusion process. We want to infuse the idea of non-violence through all members of a community. We start with a few influential people who talk about it and we use the pledge as a simple message of non-violence." Edimund Revelian, advocacy programme officer



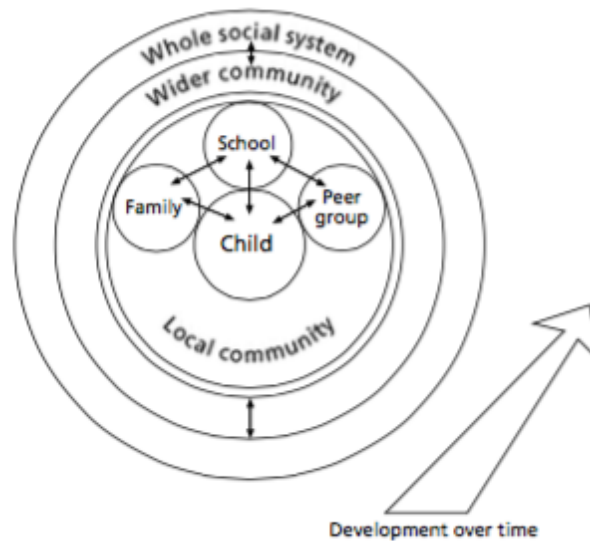
We met with some members of the child protection committees and Pamoja groups at the same time. When we asked for a photograph of them one of them said, “Yes, we need a photo of the *Child Protectors!*” as if they were a band of super heroes in a Marvel comic.

This idea of “standing” for children was something that was expressed often during discussions with the adults and suggests that they have taken on an identity as a protector. This is the beginning of a process of changing attitudes to children and to violence in general.

This contextual work reinforces our reflection that the Tatu Tano organisation is an interesting example of a programme built on an ecological model of child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The ecological model *“highlight[s] the importance of the social environment in children’s development, and ... emphasise[s] that actors at different levels affect children’s well-being. According to this model, children’s protection and healthy development depend critically on the care and protection provided by caretakers - typically, family and extended family. However, families’ ability to provide care and protection for children depends on having a secure, protective environment.”* (Wessells, 2009)

This protective environment beyond the family is often represented as a set of interacting systems around a child. What we see in the diagram¹ below is that protection relies not only on the family and community but also on broader circles of support from the wider community, including government services such as social workers, police, health workers. Beyond that, even broader circles of support are created through sound policy, justice and legal systems, as well as systems of positive social norms and values such as gender norms, and an appreciation of the worth of all children.

¹ From Donald, Lazarus and Lolwane, 2010.



A social ecological system of support for children

In this case, the CPCs help link children to the formal legislative system of protection. The Pamoja programme fits into the community circle, as it tries to encourage protective community action for children, and it also works at the level of influencing broader social norms. The focus on practical income generation can also be considered eco-systemic as it seeks to help children beyond the psychosocial into the economic livelihood sphere. The recognition that child protection is linked to poverty, as expressed by the community, and therefore can to some extent be addressed by income generating initiatives, is an interesting and less common approach to child protection.

Reflections and conclusions

The Tatu Tano organisation is an interesting example of a child-led, community-owned child protection programme. The Kwa Wazee organisation that oversees the work of the organisation plays a capacity building and funding role, but the children own the ongoing work of the programme.

Kwa Wazee has also developed many of the training programmes that make up the organisation's work, but it has done this in response to requests from children, and in close consultation with the children. Additionally, the means of replicating programmes such as "Empowering Girls" and "Peace is a Decision" has rested with older members of the organisation. The Wafitiliaji/monitors oversee the Tatu Tano groups and clusters, and the management committees and trainers for "Peace is a Decision" and "Empowering Girls" all come from older members of the organisation.

The fact that there is only one full-time staff worker responsible for the Tatu Tano groups, and only part-time staff workers responsible for "Empowering Girls", "Peace is a Decision", the CPCs and Pamoja are evidence of this. Ownership is also evidenced through the power the children have over money and budgets.

What we see in Tatu Tano is a child protection programme that now spans two generations, with the older generation taking responsibility for the work, and thus allowing it to be almost completely community-owned and -driven.

Perhaps one of the most useful lessons we can gain from Tatu Tano is that it has chosen to intervene in a slow, long-term way. The founder of Kwa Wazee, Kurt Madoërin, is fond of quoting Harris (Gilligan, 2004) who suggests that support "*might be more valuable coming in the form of a 'milk van' - low key, discreet, unobtrusive, nurturing, regular, reliable, long term - rather than a 'fire brigade' - sudden, one off, invasive, crisis driven, hyped*" (p.97).

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