



REPOA

Strategic investments for inclusive economic growth

As Secretariat of a government-appointed research group, *Research on Poverty Alleviation* (REPOA) demonstrated how investing in agriculture and rural infrastructure could extend the benefits of economic growth to Tanzania's rural population.

SETTING THE SCENE —Despite fast-paced national economic growth and successive poverty reduction strategies, Tanzania continues to struggle with high poverty levels. This is especially true in rural areas, where the poverty rate is more than twice that in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's largest city. In 2013 four in ten rural Tanzanians could not afford food and other basic necessities.

**AMONG REPOA'S
"MAIN STRENGTHS
ARE THEIR
REPUTATION WITH
GOVERNMENT AND
DONORS, AND THEIR
GREAT NETWORK
AND TRACK RECORD."**

FORMER MANAGER
AT THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR ORGANIZATION

The government has established several multi-stakeholder working groups to monitor progress on poverty reduction initiatives. One of these groups – the Research and Analysis Working Group, or RAWG – was tasked with uncovering why poverty reduction in rural areas lagged behind Tanzania's overall impressive growth. And as a result of its reputation for being an established source of economic

policy-oriented research in Tanzania, Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) was asked to serve as RAWG's Secretariat.

WHAT REPOA DID —Over the years RAWG has monitored progress of government poverty reduction efforts and recommended improvements to make government policy more effective for the poor. It identified the reason for the discrepancy between national growth and rural poverty: Tanzania's economic development focused on sectors that did not include the rural poor. As RAWG's Secretariat, REPOA encouraged a nuanced approach that prioritized inclusive growth by making investments in sectors that would benefit the rural population – such as agriculture, the largest contributor to the national economy.

Through the working group, REPOA encouraged measures to improve farmers' livelihoods, and in recent years has promoted building small-scale farmers' earning capacity through interventions such as training in modern agricultural technology and increased access to finance.



RAWG also promoted investments in roads and other infrastructure in rural areas in order to benefit agricultural producers and rural populations more generally.

THE OUTCOME —The Tanzanian government demonstrated its commitment to inclusive growth through the country's 2009 *Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First)* strategy, which supports agricultural and rural infrastructure investments. It identified agriculture as one of its six priority sectors, and tasked a Presidential Delivery Bureau with monitoring the success of agricultural transformation.

Infrastructure investments have also improved, and from 2008 to 2011 the budget for roads increased from 9 percent to 14 percent of Tanzania's discretionary spending, with an emphasis placed on rural roads.

Overall, the input from this process reoriented the government's policy focus to address constraints to growth. In practice, the shift that REPOA, and RAWG overall, promoted has contributed towards greater government investment in rural infrastructure and agricultural support, aimed at ensuring more inclusive economic growth.

For more information on REPOA visit www.repoa.or.tz

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