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## **Learning Agenda Mini-Case #11**

### **Kenya**

#### **Pambazuko Mashinani (a teaching case)**

##### **Introduction**

Aggrey Otieno is waiting for someone to bring the keys so that we can open the office of Pambazuko Mashinani (PM), the Community Based Organization (CBO) he founded in 2011. He himself doesn't have the keys and as we wait on the balcony of the 2<sup>nd</sup> story of a partially finished building in the Korogocho slum, he explains why - he has several offices in other organizations, moves around the area from one to another, and also does some consulting.

Aggrey points out to us the only two tall buildings nearby where, he says, other NGOs have offices, and indeed we see signboards below announcing several working in health and education, along with a signboard for a traditional healer.

Korogocho slum ("Koch" for short) is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest of Nairobi's 10 officially designated slum areas, and lies some 10 miles from the city centre. Its population, living in nine "villages," we are told, with an ethnic and/or place-of-origin basis, is about 200,000, though the local chief, Chief Omanchi, tells us it is about 60,000. In any case, this slum has an extremely high density as the area in which it rests is just about 1.5 square km. (Over one half of Nairobi's population of about 4 million live in slums.)

And Korogocho appears to contain every imaginable poverty-related problem -- a 15% HIV/AIDS rate, a high crime rate with some organized gangs involved, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, and most of the diseases associated with lack of sanitation and high density.

Aggrey was born in Korogocho in 1978, and was raised by his mother, who made a living making illegal beer. Aggrey made his way out of the slum through education and ended up with a Ford Foundation scholarship to the University of Ohio to do an MA in 2009-2011. His thesis led him to found Pambazuko Mashinani (which means, loosely translated from Swahili, "grassroots awakening"); indeed it was officially started even before he came back to Kenya in mid 2011. He enlisted a number of his teachers at Ohio U. as members of his Board and used his Ford Foundation connections to get some initial money for the organization. He then immediately applied to the Rolex Award for Enterprise with a plan to set up a "tele-medicine" center; a clinic with a full time doctor and the technology to receive and redistribute medical information via cell phones. He won the Rolex Award of about \$110,000 in 2012 for the construction of a building to

house the clinic. Aggrey was one of only five Rolex laureates worldwide in 2012, and the first Kenyan to receive the award (the program has been running since the mid 1970s).

Aggrey comes across as charismatic, yet sincere and modest – interestingly his title at Pambazuko is “Technical Advisor,” not founder, not CEO, not executive director. Of the 14 organizations and 31 people we met with in Kenya in late May, 2013, Aggrey Otieno is the only person who did not have a business card to give us. And yet he has been on the worldwide conference circuit, has had several media pieces written about him, including in the Guardian (UK) and has been interviewed on television. He and PM are on Facebook and Twitter.

At the same time, PM is in many ways a version of a MONGO (My Own NGO). Aggrey is married with two children and his work at PM plus the consulting he does and work with other organizations – all of which build on his Rolex Award prestige -- constitutes his living. He has a car, and dresses very well. He is a social entrepreneur who seems equally ambitious for himself as well as for his organization(s).

He is clearly adept at organizing things and has brought on a few projects to PM with outside funding. And he wants to expand. From his original concerns - tuberculosis and pregnant women - he is branching out to democracy and civic education, peace building, youth empowerment and enterprise development. He is innovative. He formed a football team composed of some of the gang members in the slum. The clinic being built with the Rolex Award will be using a system Aggrey’s organization designed called “Mbirth” (copying the Kenyan M-pesa financial service format) which will link mobile phones with doctors, clinics, and traditional birth attendants in support of pregnant mothers.

He knows everyone in the area, is on excellent terms with the local chief, the local police, as well as the FM radio station “KOCH FM” – the first community radio station in Kenya. Granted a license in 2006, and with modest funding from Norwegian Church Aid and the Open Society Institute, KOCH FM acquired basic equipment and renovated an old shipping container (using egg cartons as soundproofing) as its broadcasting studio. With a PM linkage to the Nairobi County People’s Manifesto program, Aggrey has used the radio to talk about TB, pregnant mothers and other community issues.

After visiting the radio station we make a courtesy call on Chief Omanchi. The chief greets us in a bare office behind a courtyard containing broken down vehicles collecting dust, and a fallen down signboard in one corner. He is well dressed and talks in stream of consciousness fashion about the slum and the government, and how many problems there are and how much is being done, and the involvement of women, and youth, and democracy and accountability and governance etc. At the very end of his 20 minute monologue he notes that the government cannot afford him paint for his walls or to replace his plastic chairs and wonders aloud if perhaps USAID can help him acquire these things.

Later we ask Aggrey and his staff what capacities they would like to acquire as an organization. “We want to acquire the ability to write reports; we would like a “tech

officer” from USAID to work with us to help us understand the “project cycle.” The tech officer would be a point of contact for us, available and accessible and would come and visit on demand. And we need core funding for infrastructure, furniture, computers, etc.”

As we talk, it emerges that the Rolex Award-funded building is not finished; they appear to have run into some problems. Also, we are told that they are altering the original plan to add a 2<sup>nd</sup> story that would be used to generate revenue by renting out space.

It seems possible that in fact the Rolex money has not been adequate to finish construction of the building. But aside from the building itself, much of what is done in PM requires relatively little money- supporting a staff of 3 or 4 plus some Community Health Workers (CHWs), plus keeping computers up to date and paying rent and utilities. All of this might require \$30,000 to \$35,000 per year.

USAID cannot handle a grant of that size – it is simply too small, and the current compliance requirements would be inappropriate to impose on PM for such a grant. And of course, there are really no ‘deliverables’ here – what Pambazuko Mashinani is doing is community organizing, raising awareness and trying to change behaviors.

How then could/should USAID support it in order to help the sector in general and PM to become a more effective, more sustainable organization?

**Some options:**

- 1) Give them an endowment of \$1,500,000, which at 2% would provide them with an annual income of about \$30,000.
- 2) Have USAID introduce them to one of its prime contractors, for example one involved in a Civil Society Strengthening program where they learn strategic planning, develop a human resource policy, an M&E system, communications, project management, governance etc. After 6 months, they would then go through an OCA led by the prime firm, and attend a 5 day workshop on USAID compliance. Then they would be encouraged to apply for a “mentored grant” of say, \$100,000 to expand their outreach via CHWs to TBAs in the slum, and to replicate the same in a nearby slum. They would need a results framework and a timetable for measurable deliverables over a 24 month period. The grant would also provide for the acquisition of 4 motorcycles and a second office space along with 2 new accountants.
- 3) Provide a “platform” for a dialogue with local officials and elected slum dwellers and local NGOs, and perhaps private sector representatives. USAID would provide a venue, logistical support and help develop the agenda.
- 4) Provide salary support to several government departments in order to release one to two mid-level bureaucrats from the Ministry of Health or another relevant Ministry for a one year secondment to PM.

5) Provide funding and logistics for a study tour to Morocco to look at, and interact with officials of King Mohamed VI's slum elimination program (Villes Sans Bidonvilles.) The study tour would consist of 6 to 8 people – 4 from govt (including the Chief for Korogocho) and 4 from the slums. Pambazuko would be given a fee for playing a role in vetting the slum dweller participants and helping to form a curriculum – with required homework assignments - for the tour. The participants would be bonded to return.

6) No support at all. Leave PM alone.

7) Promote a “sister slum” campaign with other African city slums;

8) Set up an ethnographic research fund for graduate PhD students to study different aspects of life in the slums.

9) Provide uniforms for sports teams.

**Questions to ask:**

- What are the possible unintended consequences of each option?
- Which is most likely to achieve (or set things out on a path to achieve) long term change in slum conditions?
- Which is most likely to further support PM's development as a strong, independent, mission-driven organization?
- Which is most likely to promote the organization's learning?
- Over a two year period which approach uses the most USG money?