



WAWATA – a Catholic Tanzanian Womens’ Initiative

Wanawake Wakatoliki Tanzania (“Catholic Women of Tanzania”), popularly known as WAWATA, is a unifying body of all Catholic women in Tanzania for the promotion of their contribution and participation towards their own development, in the Church and in society. Established by the Catholic Women of Tanzania in 1972, WAWATA promotes the teaching of the Church to achieve individual and collective spiritual formation and development to uphold and defend Christian education/teaching and values in the modern changing world. WAWATA works closely with all institutions involved in the spiritual formation and evangelization through Small Christian Communities by the promotion of socio-economic empowerment and development to emancipate women from oppression, to enable them to attain equal rights and opportunities in decision-making organs.





In specific terms WAWATA was established with the following aims:

- to unite and support Catholic women in the country as Christian women and citizens who have joined various groups to develop the Church and society;
- to mobilize such women to enable them to collaborate with all other denominations in creating good Christian families all over the country;
- to encourage Catholic women in their struggle for socio-economic development, at the same time recognizing their role and position in the Church to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities, as the Church requires them;
- to empower Catholic women to participate fully in all activities of Tanzania Laity Council, lay associations and organizations from Small Christian Communities, through the parishes, the dioceses and up to national and international levels;
- to mobilize all Tanzanian Catholic women to enable them to participate in various developments and join with the Catholic women around the world in fostering the moral teaching and the ethics of the Catholic Church;
- to educate and mobilize WAWATA members, to enable them to participate fully with all Tanzanian women, in bringing social justice to society. Women are also encouraged to join various women's groups and organizations in the country, which share the values and norms of the Catholic Church.
- As members of the World Union of Church Women's Organizations WAWATA works with all Catholic women in the world towards equality, social development and peace.

The structure of the Catholic Women Organization in Tanzania starts at basic grassroots Small Christian Community level. Several communities are coordinated at village level, villages are coordinated at divisional level, divisions are coordinated at parish level, parishes are coordinated at diocese level, and dioceses are coordinated at national level. At all of these levels WAWATA has a democratically elected leadership elected every three years. At all levels there are councils, and they hold regular meetings to plan, implement and follow up programs and activities. WAWATA is also affiliated to the World Union Of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) as a full rights member.

Being a church community, WAWATA deals with the integral development of women both physically and spiritually, so that they are able to contribute towards the development of the Church and the community.



Main activities include the following:

- spiritual formation and charity activities
- agriculture
- economic empowerment through credit provision for the income generation in order to give more power to women at grassroots level
- family-life education
- child-care facilities and education
- nutrition and health programs
- women's skills development, vocational training and education for youth, especially girls' education
- environmental programs
- HIV/AIDS-awareness programs
- women's legal rights
- justice and peace
- provision of shelter to refugees.

Work priorities for the years 2006 to 2010 are:

- spirituality for deeper evangelization
- HIV/AIDS programs
- poverty alleviation
- social justice in society (fighting against corruption, violence in the family, instilling morality, etc.

(Information: Oliva Luena, WAWATA-Secretary General) ■