

Educational Possibilities in Dar es Salaam: A Documentary

An honors thesis for the Department of International Relations

Allison Fisk

Tufts University, 2012

Abstract

This is the written component of my senior thesis for International Relations at Tufts University. My thesis is a documentary about primary school education in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. I filmed this documentary over the course of four months, during which I shot about 180 hours of footage. I filmed at three very different schools in Dar es Salaam - an under-resourced public school on the outskirts of the city, an English-medium private Catholic school, and a relatively well-resourced urban public school. By filming these schools, I am creating a sense of space for the audience to be able to experience these schools, identify with the students and teachers, and understand what their lives are like intellectually and emotionally. In this paper, I explain my goals and reasons for making this documentary, my methodology, some of the challenges I faced, and what I want this film to become. This project has been made possible through the support of Jeanne Penvenne and Howard Woolf, the Tufts Undergraduate Research Fund, the Summer Scholars Program, the Schwartz-Paddock Scholarship in the Visual and Performing Arts, and the International Relations Research Scholarship.

Introduction

Many Tanzanians aspire to a good education and struggle against heavy odds to stay in school. Often, children cannot attend school because their families cannot afford fees for books, uniforms, and other supplies. Even children who attend school often find it difficult to learn because of classroom overcrowding, lack of resources, and under-qualified teachers. I researched primary school education by focusing on three schools in the region of Dar es Salaam, the effective (though not official) capital of Tanzania. As a method of researching this topic, I filmed and edited a documentary exploring the lives of students in three different schools.

I concentrated on the experiences of individual students and teachers when doing my research. I believe that seeing the schools, classrooms, and people's daily lives through film is much more powerful and engaging than simply reading about them. Seeing the students' and teachers' faces helps the audience to empathize with and care about issues such as class size and educational resources. My goal is to have this

documentary reach a large audience and to draw the audience into Dar es Salaam classrooms, the rhythms of the day, and the contrasts among schools.

The three schools I selected are Bunge Primary School, Uwanja wa ndege Primary School, and Montfort Primary School. Bunge is a relatively well-resourced public school in central Dar es Salaam. Uwanja wa ndege is a struggling public school outside of Dar es Salaam. Montfort is an English-medium private Catholic school outside Dar es Salaam and ranks as one of the best schools in the area. I picked these schools because they had very different environments, resources, and opportunities. Comparing and contrasting these schools gives the audience a good idea of the overall educational system in Dar es Salaam and highlights issues such as class size and availability of books and other resources.

I centered my attention on one student per school: Safia at Bunge, Ramadhani at Uwanja wa ndege, and Elizabeth at Montfort. They are three children with three very different lives and educational opportunities. Safia was a social, friendly girl who was quick to smile but sometimes struggled to pay attention in class. Ramadhani was a quiet boy who often sat at the back of the room but loved to learn and tried his best. Elizabeth was a natural leader and the smartest student in her class. I focused on these three students in order to provide the audience with a familiar face, a story to follow, and a person with whom to identify.

While not directly addressed in my film, I developed a set of research questions to guide my observation and inquiry. The main question I wanted to address through my research was: What is the effect of education on a child in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania? In order to explore this question, I asked related questions such as: Does an education lead

to opportunities unavailable to the uneducated? Does an education empower a child, and if so, can that lead to breaking the cycle of poverty? Do educated people give back to and improve their communities, and if so, how? How do children think about the future? What do they aspire to, and how is that related to education? What do students and teachers think are the most important issues in education that should be addressed? What happens to the uneducated? These questions form the visual subtext of the scenes I chose to include.

In Tanzania in 2009, 91.86% of students were enrolled in school and the average class size was one teacher for every 54 students.¹ But these numbers can be deceiving. In 2010, one study found that there could be anywhere from ten to 283 students per teacher in a classroom.² This variation is crucial because classroom size is correlated with the quality of education in Tanzania, as measured by results on the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). In Dar es Salaam, there are 44 students per teacher on average and 73.86% of students passed the PSLE in 2008.³ In Shinyanga, a more rural region of Tanzania, there are 71 students per teacher on average and 34.03% of students passed the PSLE in 2008.⁴ Dar es Salaam had the second lowest student teacher ratio in the country and had the best scores of any region on the PSLE.⁵ Shinyanga had both the highest student teacher ratio in the country and the worst scores of any region on the PSLE.⁶ The students from Shinyanga who were in larger classes did far worse on the PSLE than the students from Dar es Salaam who were in smaller classes.

¹ Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania* (July 2009), p. 14.

² HakiElimu, "Restoring Teacher Dignity," Vol. 1: Learner Outcomes, TDMS, and the 2010/11 Budget (Nov. 2010), p. 5.

³ *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 35, 41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 35, 42.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35, 41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 35, 42.

Even within Dar es Salaam, class sizes can vary greatly. Two of the schools where I filmed, Bunge Primary School and Montfort Primary School, had average class sizes, at one teacher for about forty students. But the less privileged suburban school, Uwanja wa ndege Primary School, had one teacher for about 100 students, which is far higher than the average of one to 44. The students at this school were at a great disadvantage as compared to those at the other two.

The deceptive nature of official statistics also holds true for resource distribution. All public schools are supposed to receive equal government funding, based on the number of students attending the school. Tanzania's Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) has attempted to increase available resources by granting the equivalent of ten U.S. dollars of funding per student. However, the PEDP does not take into account the fact that getting resources such as textbooks to children in rural areas is far more expensive and complicated than getting them to children in urban areas. Instead, the PEDP dictated that "each school was to receive a flat rate per child regardless of whether they were located next door to a bookshop in Dar es Salaam, or 100 kilometers from one deep in western Tanzania."⁷ Even the suburban public school where I filmed had far fewer resources than the urban public school in downtown Dar es Salaam, despite the fact that they are only an hour apart by car.

Policy makers, international organizations, and donors should not base their understanding of education in Tanzania on these statistics without delving further into the intricacies of certain issues by observing what different schools are like. Observation is an important prerequisite for understanding what education means to a child in Dar es

⁷ Jeanette Kuder, "UPE in Tanzania: SWAP-ing quality for quantity – again?" *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 2005), p. 177.

Salaam. My documentary makes the process of observation more accessible and allows a broader audience to understand what education in Tanzania is like by seeing the schools, the conditions of the classrooms, the environment surrounding the schools, and the students' and teachers' lives there. The understanding and questions that come from this observation serve as a platform for discussing the intricacies and nuances of the education system and what school is like in Dar es Salaam.

Literature Review

The only documentary I have found about education in Tanzania is *In Search of Teachers* by Herman Kruijer, which merely accompanied a more in-depth research paper. The documentary was poorly filmed and edited and attracted a limited audience. Other films about education outside of Tanzania have been much more influential for my work.

Davis Guggenheim's *Waiting for Superman* provides a good overall picture of the public school education system in the United States by following five students in very different life situations and very different schools. The film has been accused of being biased towards charter schools but was generally well received by critics and the public, and had a far larger audience than most documentaries. This film was influential for me as I was thinking about beginning my documentary. I enjoyed how the film examined the system of U.S. public schools by looking at individual students at different schools in order to personalize the themes the film addressed.

Frederick Wiseman's *High School* is a film about a large school in Philadelphia, and explores daily life there by presenting scenes from the classrooms, hallways, and administrative offices of the school. There is no narration in the film and Wiseman does not directly express his point of view on different issues. Instead, through his editing,

Wiseman provides enough information and guidance for the audience to draw their own conclusions about what is going on. He allows viewers to think for themselves, rather than dictating a singular understanding of the different scenes. I came to appreciate Wiseman's strategy of expressing his view indirectly through the structure of the film and his editing, rather than through a narration. Wiseman's ideas, interests, and opinions are present, but not overwhelmingly so. I have tried to emulate this indirect and more open stance in my own film.

Methodology

In order to prepare for filming this documentary, I began researching Tanzania's education system in the spring of 2010. In the fall of 2010 I continued this research, received approval from the Tufts' Institutional Review Board for the project, and began studying Swahili, one of the national languages of Tanzania. I continued my study of Swahili while in Tanzania, in the spring and summer of 2011. Being able to speak basic Swahili was crucial for my project because it helped me gain the trust of school administrators, teachers, and students' parents. Being able to speak directly to people, without a translator, made them more comfortable and helped them open up to me. To help me with complicated logistics, research permits, and interviews, I hired a research assistant and translator, Batista Sanga, without whom this project would have been impossible.

Once I received my research permits and met people at the three schools, I began filming. I rotated among the three schools, filming at one of the schools twice a week, for four months. During this time I shot about 180 hours of footage. The majority of what I filmed is observational footage. I spent a great deal of time at the schools with my

camera, filming in the classrooms and in the courtyard areas of the schools. I did this in order to get the students and teachers used to my presence and the presence of the camera so they would pay less attention to me and act naturally. Gradually people became accustomed to me and ignored me more, allowing me to film natural moments at the schools, rather than just repetitive scenes of people waving or posing. This was a great time investment, but greatly enhanced the quality of my film.

Editing the scenes in the film is a form of storytelling and indirectly expresses my ideas and opinions. I condensed many hours of footage into succinct scenes creating a twenty-six minute film, making many choices about what was important and what details were the most engaging. Some of the choices are artistic, based on composition, lighting, sound quality, and fluidity of camera movement. Other choices are very analytical, equivalent to the choices a writer makes. These choices are based on enlightening key moments, important themes representative of larger issues, and elements that serve as the basis of comparative analysis between the three schools. I have to rationalize why each shot is included in the film, what order they are in, and the meaning of the relationships between different shots. For example, during the morning assembly at Uwanja wa ndege Primary School, there is a shot of a little girl watching students singing the national anthem. I included this shot as a way of commenting on the injustice suffered by girls who do not go to school and inviting the audience to question why she is not in school, singing with the other students.

I have gone through many different versions and styles while editing this film. I originally envisioned the film having more direct analysis of certain issues pertaining to education in Tanzania, but that style did not work well in a short film because it was too

complicated and overwhelming for the audience in such a short period of time. So in this version of my film I decided not to include the nineteen interviews I conducted with students, teachers, parents, and administrators, but instead to focus on creating a sense of space for the audience, examining one school at a time. This way, the audience is able to experience a day in the life of these schools, identify with the students and teachers, and understand what their lives are like intellectually and emotionally.

Challenges

The most difficult and unexpected issue I had to deal with in Tanzania was corporal punishment. I knew that I might encounter it, but I did not expect it to be as harsh or widespread as it was. I saw many instances of corporal punishment but the most shocking example was told to me by one student's mother, who explained that the school illegally demands contributions from the students to pay for exam tutoring and other "services." Children's families often cannot pay these contributions, and the child is beaten as a result.

Corporal punishment practiced as I witnessed it in the schools is illegal. And yet, according to my research, corporal punishment is allowed on a case-by-case basis and must be approved by the head teacher or another appointed teacher.⁸ However, this process of going to the head teacher for approval never seemed to be observed. Also, teachers often did not limit the punishment to a few hits on the hand with a stick. Many times punishments were much more brutal and were meant to humiliate the students.

⁸ "United Republic of Tanzania – Country Report," Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, January 2012. <<http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/reports/un-rep-tanzania.html>>

It was extremely difficult to watch these punishments take place and to decide the most appropriate way to include them in my documentary. I plan to screen the film in Tanzania and the people in the film, as well as people in the government, will see the film. I did not want to humiliate the children who were punished, because you can see their faces in the film (there is no such thing as anonymity in film). I also did not want the teachers to lose their jobs, partly because the teachers trusted me enough to allow me into their schools and were very kind to me and partly because, in the Tanzanian economy, jobs are scarce and losing a job is catastrophic. However, I also wanted to raise this very important issue and cover it in my documentary – I did not want to be another censor. I wanted to show the schools as they are, with both their strengths and their weaknesses.

In order to address this issue, I sought advice from my thesis advisors as well as Professor Erin Kelly, a faculty member in the Philosophy Department who specializes in ethics. We watched all the different examples of corporal punishment I filmed and decided that the most appropriate clips were those that were filmed from a distance, where the children's faces were not visible and where it was also difficult to discern the teacher's faces. We decided that this was a better option than obscuring people's faces with black bars or blurring, which would have strongly conveyed a sense of darkness and wrongdoing and did not fit with my decision to leave scenes open to interpretation by the audience. I also decided to exclude the most brutal examples of punishment that I witnessed, which were less representative of the typical level of violence.

Government bureaucracy and corruption also posed much more of a problem than I had anticipated. Once, while filming outside a public school in the center of downtown Dar es Salaam, I was accosted by a man from the Ministry of Information who claimed

that I was filming without proper permits and that I was in violation of Tanzanian law. He said I was aware that I was breaking Tanzanian law, but did not care because I was an American who thought I was too good for these laws. He ordered me to report to the Ministry of Information, which I did. I had already received permits from the Ministry of Education to research and film in the schools, but the officials at the Ministry of Information claimed these were the incorrect permits and that I would have to go through an official process that would take several months and pay upwards of \$1,000 U.S. dollars in order to receive the proper permits.

After several months of trying to figure out this situation, I had a meeting with two men at the Ministry of Education. They initially took the side of the men at the Ministry of Information. They did not believe that I was a student at the University of Dar es Salaam until I produced my student identification. When I showed them my permits, they momentarily questioned whether they were authentic or forgeries. However, they then conceded that I did have the proper permits and had gone through the right channels to receive them. I believe the men at the Ministry of Information had merely been trying to extract a bribe from me. However, it is possible they did not actually understand the process of getting the permits. If I had not been a student at the University of Dar es Salaam, I would have needed to go through the process they described to me.

Conclusions

I consider my documentary to be a work in progress. I want this film to become a discussion of the intricacies and nuances of the education system and their impact on the people in the three schools I examined. I will continue working on this project in order to

expand it into a longer film. I want to include parts of the nineteen interviews I conducted with students, students' parents, teachers, and school administrators in order to allow them to speak for themselves and explain their opinions and views about the schools and the country's education system.

In these interviews, the students describe their favorite classes, aspects of their schools they don't like, and their determination to succeed. Parents discuss struggling to pay mandatory "contributions," the injustice of their children being beaten in school, and their hopes for their children's futures. Teachers explain their responsibilities, their struggles to live on low salaries, and why they love teaching. Administrators bemoan the lack of resources at their schools and describe what they are doing to make their schools better.

Further elaboration through the interviews would clarify certain issues, such as the difficult issue of corporal punishment – what is legal, what is illegal, and how people think about it. For example, teachers had very different perspectives when discussing corporal punishment with me. One teacher was very honest with me off-camera, saying that he had to beat the students in order to keep discipline and keep them in order. However, on camera he only talked about how beating children discourages them from coming to school and increases the dropout rate and that, therefore, other disciplinary alternatives were necessary. Another teacher was more open and very honest with me on camera. He said that parents wanted teachers to beat their children and that, if they didn't, it would be "the worst kind of society" and that the discipline system would collapse.

One student's mother explained to me that the school illegally demands contributions from the students to pay for exam tutoring and other "services." According

to the law, primary school education is supposed to be free and mandatory contributions are supposed to be eliminated.⁹ This woman's family had once been unable to pay these contributions and her child was beaten as a result. She was vehemently against corporal punishment and believed it made the school a frightening and unsafe place for her child.

To fully explore the nuances of issues such as this, I will need to continue work on this project in order to make it into a much longer film. From this version of my film, I would maintain the sense of place and the lack of a dictated singular interpretation of scenes by a narrator. But I also want to explain how these three schools fit into the larger context of education in Dar es Salaam and delve further into different themes by presenting the interviews in a cohesive way.

⁹ Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC), "Primary Education Development Plan (2002-2006)," (July 2001), p. v, 5.

Appendix A

My documentary can be found online at: <http://vimeo.com/41957871> and has been submitted to the Digital Collections and Archives at Tufts University.

Appendix B

The following paper was originally written for “Human Rights and American Foreign Policy,” taught by Professor Katrina Lantos-Swett, in the Fall of 2011. I am including it here because of its relevance to my senior thesis.

Education as a Human Right in Tanzania

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) declare that all people have a right to a free education. The ICESCR also recognizes the right of people to a *quality* education. Countries such as Tanzania, where 91.86% of students were enrolled in school in 2009, seem to be meeting their citizens’ basic human right to an education.¹⁰ However, an education does not merely mean being enrolled in school. The quality of education that students receive in school is crucial. In Tanzania, children’s human right to an education is being violated because primary school education is not really free and because of the poor quality of education many students are receiving.

This paper will examine how primary school education in Tanzania is not really free due to required “contributions” and the cost of uniforms and other supplies. These

¹⁰ Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania* (July 2009), p. 14.

contributions and costs are a violation of the right to a *free* primary school education and prevent many children from going to school. This paper will also explore some of the causes for the poor quality of education in Tanzania, such as student-teacher ratios, quality of teaching, and availability of learning materials. Finally, this paper will examine the extra challenges girls face in trying to receive a good education.

Education as a Human Right

Free primary school education is a recognized human right in several international human rights agreements. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares, “everyone has the right to education” and that “education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.”¹¹ Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child “recognize[s] the right of the child to education” and declares that states must “make primary education compulsory and available free to all” in order to achieve the right of education “on the basis of equal opportunity.”¹² The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which Tanzania has signed, recognizes “the right of everyone to education” and declares, “primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all.”¹³

The ICESCR goes one step further by “agree[ing] that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society.”¹⁴ This clause is important because it recognizes the importance of a *quality* education. Simply being present in a classroom would not enable a student “to participate effectively in a free society.” Being an effective member of society requires the student to receive a quality education that

¹¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26.

¹² United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child, Article 28.

¹³ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Part 2, Article 13.

¹⁴ Ibid.

adequately prepares him or her for life as an adult. What defines a quality education must be decided on by individual states so that education is locally relevant and effective.

Education is Not Really Free

Tanzania has had a mixed history when it comes to fulfilling children's human right to a free primary school education. In 1967 the "Education for Self-Reliance" policy instituted universal free primary school education but this was reversed in 1995 when school fees and cost-sharing techniques were reintroduced.¹⁵ Free primary school education was reinstated with the Education for All Act of 2002. The government's Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) declared that

"ALL children [should] have equitable access to a good quality primary education. No child should be denied the opportunity to participate in education because of poverty, gender, disability, or because of lack of school uniform, fees or other parental contributions, or because of lack of school facilities, material or teachers."¹⁶

The PEDP also stated, "the Government will abolish school fees and all other mandatory parental contributions from January 2002 so that no child may be denied schooling."¹⁷

However, primary school in Tanzania is still not free. Parents must purchase school uniforms and school supplies, such as notebooks and pencils, which are very expensive for poor families.¹⁸ Students without school uniforms or with ragged, torn notebooks are sometimes beaten by their teachers.¹⁹ In one district of Tanzania, 1,337 children, four

¹⁵ HakiElimu, "How can communities make education better for their children?" (June 2010), p. 2.

¹⁶ Basic Education Development Committee (BEDC), "Primary Education Development Plan (2002-2006)," (July 2001), p. v.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁸ Frances Vavrus and Goodiel Moshi, "The Cost of a 'Free' Primary Education in Tanzania," *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies* (2009), p. 38.

¹⁹ Jonatan Davén, "Free Primary Education in Tanzania?" (Bachelor's thesis, Södertörn University College, 2008), p. 15; Writer's own field research.

percent of the district's children, did not have school uniforms and therefore were not permitted to go to school.²⁰

Mandatory parental contributions, while officially banned, still exist. Teachers ask parents for contributions such as money, labor, and food.²¹ Teachers sometimes demand money for examination preparation or crucial weekend classes.²² Some teachers claim that government development funds do not fulfill the needs of the schools and they must require parents to contribute.²³ However, parents' contributions do not always benefit their children or their children's schools because of corruption and embezzlement of money by teachers and administrators.²⁴ Children whose parents do not give contributions to the school are sent home by their teachers, preventing them from attending class.²⁵

These hidden costs of education inhibit poor children from attending school, violating their human right to a free primary school education. The expense of school uniforms and materials, and mandatory contributions force poor students to miss school, to start school late, or to drop out entirely.²⁶ School fees paid to the government were abolished in 2002, but mandatory contributions and other expenses are still widespread and prevent poor children from receiving an education.

²⁰ HakiElimu, "How can communities make education better for their children?" p. 16.

²¹ HakiElimu, "How can communities make education better for their children?" p. 16; Vavrus and Moshi, "The Cost of a 'Free' Primary Education in Tanzania," p. 38.

²² Writer's own field research

²³ Vavrus and Moshi, "The Cost of a 'Free' Primary Education in Tanzania," p. 38.

²⁴ HakiElimu, "How can communities make education better for their children?" p. 16.

²⁵ Vavrus and Moshi, "The Cost of a 'Free' Primary Education in Tanzania," p. 38.

²⁶ HakiElimu, "How can communities make education better for their children?" p. 15

Quality of education

Students must receive a quality education, not merely be enrolled in school. In the Education and Training Policy of 1995, Tanzania defined education as,

“a process by which the individual acquires knowledge and skills necessary for appreciating and adapting to the environment and the ever changing social, political and economic conditions of the society and as a means by which one can realize one’s full potential. Education is the process of preparing an individual through learning in his/her environment so as to enable one to play his or her role in society.”²⁷

Tanzania measures the quality of its students’ education and their ability to realize their full potential and play a role in society with the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Students must pass the PSLE in order to be eligible to move on to secondary school. Students’ performance on the PSLE has been very poor recently. In 2009, only 49.4% of students passed the exam, which was a decline from 2006 when 70.5% of students passed.²⁸

The data that could be used to explain the drop in test scores between 2006 and 2009 is inconclusive. Between 2005 and 2009, the number of primary school students increased from 7,541,208 to 8,441,553, an 11.9% increase of students.²⁹ In this same time period, the number of primary school teachers increased from 135,013 to 157,185, a 16.4% increase of teachers.³⁰ Because the number of teachers has increased at a greater rate than the number of pupils, average class sizes have shrunk, but students are still scoring worse on the PSLE. Meanwhile, in the same time period, the number of primary schools increased from 14,257 to 15,727, a 10.3% increase, meaning that there are more

²⁷ HakiElimu (Mtemi Gervas Zombwe), “How can parents help children to learn? Home is the child’s first school,” *HakiElimu Working Paper Series* (2010), p. 3.

²⁸ HakiElimu, “Restoring Teacher Dignity,” Vol. 1: Learner Outcomes, TDMS, and the 2010/11 Budget (Nov. 2010), p. 4.; *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 33.

²⁹ *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 12.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

students per school on average.³¹ It is unclear whether there are enough new classrooms to hold these students. There is also no clear data on whether resources such as desks and textbooks have increased at the same rate as the number of students. Because this data is inconclusive, rather than focusing on the decline in test scores between 2006 and 2009, the remainder of this paper will focus on possible causes of the poor quality of education in Tanzania in general.

Class Size

Average class sizes in Tanzania have remained relatively constant, but these numbers can be deceiving. The average class size has changed from one teacher for every 58 students in 2004 to one teacher for every 54 students in 2009.³² But in 2010, one study found that there could be anywhere from ten to 283 students per teacher in a classroom.³³

Despite the fact that class size cannot be definitively tied to test scores to explain the national drop in scores between 2006 and 2009, there is still a correlation between the number of students in a classroom and how well they perform on the Primary School Leaving Examination. In Dar es Salaam, the effective (though not official) capital of Tanzania, there are 44 students per teacher on average and 73.86% of students passed the PSLE in 2008.³⁴ In Shinyanga, a more rural region of Tanzania, there are 71 students per teacher on average and 34.03% of students passed the PSLE in 2008.³⁵ Dar es Salaam had the second lowest student teacher ratio in the country and had the best scores of any

³¹ Ibid., p. 18.

³² Ibid., p. 29

³³ HakiElimu, "Restoring Teacher Dignity," p. 5

³⁴ *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 35, 41.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 35, 42.

region on the PSLE.³⁶ Shinyanga had both the highest student teacher ratio in the country and the worst scores of any region on the PSLE.³⁷ The students from Shinyanga who were in larger classes did far worse on the PSLE than the students from Dar es Salaam who were in smaller classes. Access to resources and quality of teachers also probably affected students' test scores, but the correlation between class size and proficiency on the PSLE are still significant.

Quality of Teaching

Teaching is generally seen as an undesirable profession in Tanzania. Teachers believe people do not respect them and see them as failures, and claim that “though they have more students to teach than ever, teachers’ increased responsibility has not been met with increased appreciation.”³⁸ Teachers believe that working conditions and housing are poor, especially in rural areas, and point out that their salaries are lower than those of their counterparts in many of Tanzania’s neighboring countries.³⁹ Many teachers’ salaries are not enough to support their families and therefore they must spend time earning money in other ways, which can contribute to teacher absenteeism.⁴⁰ Poor working conditions and low salaries lead to frustration and lack of motivation, which hurts their performance in the classroom and is bad for the recruitment of good candidates and the retention of teachers.⁴¹

Conditions are so poor that most people have very little interest in teaching, other than as a last resort. The number of people enrolled in teacher colleges, which train future

³⁶ Ibid., p. 35, 41.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 35, 42.

³⁸ HakiElimu, “Restoring Teacher Dignity,” p. 2.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁰ HakiElimu (Euan Davidson), “The Progress of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) in Tanzania: 2002-2004,” *HakiElimu Working Paper Series* (2004), p. 6.

⁴¹ HakiElimu, “Restoring Teacher Dignity,” p. 2.

teachers, has declined from 30,892 people in 2004 to 16,700 people in 2008.⁴² In 2008, 1,468 new teachers graduated, but only 905 of them (61%) took up jobs in teaching.⁴³ HakiElimu, a non-governmental organization in Tanzania, claims that this lack of interest in teaching forced the government to start hiring unqualified teachers who “lack professional teacher training” in 2005, a practice that has continued to today.⁴⁴ Children who have untrained teachers are at an incredible disadvantage.

Children in rural areas are in an even worse position because most teachers favor urban areas over rural areas. Teachers in rural areas have less access to electricity, clean water, health care, and opportunities for “professional learning” and advancement.⁴⁵ Teachers in rural areas also generally have poorer housing and must spend more of their income in order to travel to the district office to collect their paychecks.⁴⁶ Because of these conditions, there is a migration of teachers to urban areas:

“Though Dar es Salaam and other urban areas were allocated 197 new teachers in 2008, by the end of the year there was an increase of 461 new teaching staff. Meanwhile, though rural councils were to receive 1,271 new educators, there were only 444 new staff at the year’s end.”⁴⁷

Urban areas actually received more new teachers by the end of 2008 even though far more were needed in rural areas. This data suggests that class sizes are shrinking in urban areas while they continue to grow in rural areas, hurting the educational opportunities of children from rural areas.

⁴² HakiElimu, “The Significance of Quality Teacher Training for the Development of Quality Education – Preparing teachers for the ever changing world,” HakiElimu Position Paper 03 (Oct. 2009), p. 9.

⁴³ HakiElimu, “Restoring Teacher Dignity,” p. 6.

⁴⁴ HakiElimu, “The Significance of Quality Teacher Training,” p. 2.

⁴⁵ Angeline M. Barrett, “Teacher accountability in context: Tanzanian primary school teachers’ perceptions of local community and education administration,” *Compare*, Vol. 35. No. 1 (March 2005), p. 48.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁴⁷ HakiElimu, “Restoring Teacher Dignity,” p. 6.

Lack of Resources

A lack of school resources makes learning more difficult for students. Three to five students often must share one book, which makes learning and completing homework more difficult, and this number can increase to more than ten children sharing one book in areas outside of main cities.⁴⁸ Seeing the pages of the book, let alone practicing reading skills, is very difficult in this context. Many students also must share desks or sit on the floor, which can make it difficult to pay attention to the teacher and hurts their handwriting skills.⁴⁹ A lack of resources also makes teaching more frustrating and demoralizing for teachers, which can contribute to teacher absenteeism and apathy.⁵⁰

Tanzania's Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) has attempted to increase available resources by granting the equivalent of \$10 of funding per student. However, the PEDP does not take into account the fact that getting resources such as textbooks to children in rural areas is far more expensive and complicated than getting them to children in urban areas. Instead, the PEDP dictated that "each school was to receive a flat rate per child regardless of whether they were located next door to a bookshop in Dar es Salaam, or 100 kilometers from one deep in western Tanzania."⁵¹ This further increases rural-urban inequalities for students.

Girls' Extra Challenges

Girls face even more challenges than boys in their efforts to receive a good education. Although there is gender equity in terms of enrollment, there are huge

⁴⁸ Daniel N. Sifuna, "The Challenge of Increasing Access and Improving Quality," *International Review of Education*, Vol. 53, No. 5/6, Quality Education in Africa: Challenges and Prospects (Nov., 2007), p. 696-697; Writer's own field research.

⁴⁹ Barrett, "Teacher accountability in context," p. 48; Writer's own field research.

⁵⁰ Barrett, "Teacher accountability in context," p. 48.

⁵¹ Jeanette Kuder, "UPE in Tanzania: SWAP-ing quality for quantity – again?" *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 2005), p. 177.

discrepancies between girls' and boys' performance on the PSLE.⁵² In 2008, boys scored better than girls in 20 out of 21 regions of Tanzania.⁵³ In the region of Kigoma, 61.46% of boys passed the PSLE, but only 29.62% of girls passed.⁵⁴ Girls generally have more chores and responsibilities at home, which take time away from doing work and studying, and can be exhausting.⁵⁵ A lack of water and toilets at many schools is another problem girls face, especially when menstruating.⁵⁶

Girls also face challenges that prevent them from going to school at all. One phenomenon called bridewealth, in which a bride's family receives cows, money, or other wealth from the groom's family, has been particularly problematic for schoolgirls. Some parents "marry off" their daughters at a very young age in order to receive bridewealth, sometimes because of greed and sometimes as a way of supporting their other children.⁵⁷ Schoolgirls sometimes have sex for gifts or money, which puts them at risk of becoming pregnant and contracting HIV and other infections.⁵⁸ And in accordance with Tanzania's Education Act No. 25 of 1978, schoolgirls who become pregnant will be expelled from school.⁵⁹ Pregnancy as a reason for total students dropping out of primary school has decreased from 6.2% in 2004 to 4.6% in 2008, but it still a significant issue and the expulsion of pregnant girls from school is a violation of their right to an education.⁶⁰

⁵² *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 23-24.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Timothy Kitundu, "Education inequalities demise for have-nots," *The Express* (March 16, 2011), p. 2; HakiElimu, "How to Ensure Educational Success for Girls – They have the right to complete their studies," *HakiElimu Position Paper* (December 2010), p. 13.

⁵⁶ HakiElimu, "How to ensure educational success for girls," p. 15.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁶⁰ *Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania*, p. 19.

Conclusion

Tanzanian children's human right to a free primary school education of a sufficient quality to prepare them to live productive lives is being violated. Primary school in Tanzania is not really free due to forced "contributions" and hidden costs. These costs prevent poor children from receiving an education. The poor quality of education in Tanzania, measured by students' performance on the Primary School Leaving Exam, does not prepare students to realize their full potential and contribute to society. Large class sizes, poor quality of teaching, and a lack of resources diminish students' educational opportunities, and their opportunities in life. Inequalities between rural and urban areas hurt students in rural areas, and girls struggle even more to achieve an education, generally performing worse on the PSLE. The Tanzanian government must address these issues and inequalities in order to provide a quality education for all Tanzanians and improve the future of their entire country.