

Education in Tanzania

“Kitanda usichokilalia humjui kunguni wake”

You Cannot Know The Bugs Of A Bed Until You Have Laid Upon It

Marie Yahl



“Mwana unleavyo ndivyo akuavo”

As you Bring A Child Up, So He Will Be

Imagine you are in grade school. You are about 12-13 years old, have just completed your primary education, and are about to transition into a new and exciting period of your life as you enter secondary school or high school if you are a student from the United States. You will be going to a new school and do not know what to expect, you are feeling nervous excitement. It is your first day of school and to your surprise, your classes are taught in a completely different language! You’ve had some lessons in this foreign language, but you certainly do not speak it, nor can you read it. What would you do in this situation and who could you turn to for help? Imagine how limited your opportunities would be if your education ended abruptly at the high school level because of a language barrier. This is your reality if you are a student in the Tanzanian education system. A system set up only for wealthy children to succeed and less than 30% of average students to achieve secondary education.

The education system in Tanzania serves primarily the wealthy population and the large majority of Tanzanian citizens achieve at best the mandatory primary education level. The core problem with the education system in Tanzania is that children are set up to fail as they transition from primary school to secondary school, as secondary school is taught in English. This is a huge obstacle for students to overcome and largely they do not understand what is being taught. In primary school, children from all backgrounds are mixed. Some wealthy children that have English are in the classroom with children from the lower income rural villages and have not been exposed to English at all. Additionally, there is not special help available or tutoring for children that fall behind. English is taught as a subject in primary school; however, many of the teachers are not fluent in English themselves.

There are many who do not even pass the exam after primary school and therefore, don’t get the opportunity to participate in secondary education. Those that drop out usually find work with their family or begin some type of labor allowing them to make a living into adulthood. Girls will likely help their mothers at home until they are married and begin having children.

Should the public education system in Tanzania continue to teach secondary education in English, a language other than the national language of Swahili, that contributes to the already low rate of children currently achieving secondary education and not continuing their education; or should the education system in Tanzania be modified to mandate all lessons taught in public schools in Swahili with English remaining as a subject in the curriculum and on the national exams, and even offer online education to children in rural areas and women ages 20-35 who have not advanced past primary education to ensure all can achieve at minimum a

secondary school education that will ultimately result in growth and development for the country?

It seems an education system set up such as this one does not benefit anyone. Certainly teachers do not gain happiness from the students' poor performance in class and not understanding the lessons. The students do not benefit from the language gap between primary and secondary school. The national language in Tanzania is Swahili, so overall the country does not gain from teaching students in a language different from the national language. The benefit if students do make it through the language obstacle of secondary school is the opportunity to find a good job as they are then bilingual. They will be able to benefit from the tourism industry in Tanzania and even have the opportunity to move to a country as an English speaker to find a desirable job.

The education system in Tanzania can be greatly improved to help students achieve both education and happiness. If secondary school was taught in Swahili with a focus on English, instead of only in English more children would pass and have access to better jobs. Even if primary school was taught in both English and Swahili it would help with this large transition from primary school to secondary school. I think there should be a language immersion program starting in primary school to help students achieve English fluency if secondary school is to be taught in English. Although formal education may not be necessary to achieve happiness and meaning in life, formal education does dictate how much opportunity a person has in their life.

As we look at the current education system, it is necessary to go back in the history of education in Tanzania. We need to look at the tribal culture in Tanzania to understand why some families, such as Maasai families, prefer their children to not attend formal education. We need to look at the governmental structure of Tanzania to fully understand this problem. The language barrier I have identified is imbedded in the government and education system, but this is a structural problem and the socio political environment of the government needs to be considered as that is where the change will be implemented.

Mvunja nchi ni mwananchi

"The destroyer of a country is a citizen of that country"

Tanzania has historically been a tribal country. Prior to colonization, all of Tanganyika (modern day Tanzania) was tribal land without formal borders. Each tribe spoke a different language and there was fighting between tribes as a result of competition for basic needs such as animals and food. Education was informal and traditions passed down from the tribal elders. Each tribe had

their own region, traditions, and customs. Tribal elders were the teachers and important life skills were acquired through the parents and tribal elders. This has been passed down from generation to generation as tribal customs are still passed down today.

“The Bantu-speaking peoples, who are in majority in modern Tanzania, migrated to the area some 2000 years ago. They adopted many of the customs of the local people and also introduced ironworking skills and new ideas of organization. The Bantu-language Swahili, which today is the national language of Tanzania, spread along the coastal regions as the language of the emerging trade empire. The trade network linked East Africa’s interior with trade partners throughout the Indian Ocean” (<http://tanzania.um.dk/en/about-tanzania/history-of-tanzania/>).

In the era of colonization, the Germans first and then the British sought to unify some of these tribes as a means to control the population. They began to introduce church and formal schools and encouraged the tribes to attend church or take up the ways of the Christian missionaries. If they could get people invested by faith, then they could have a better grip or control of the territory and cease some of the fighting between the tribes. They also wanted to unify the tribes to create a universal language so they could communicate. Formal school and education was also introduced at this time and the education system followed that of Britain. Since the period of colonization, elitists and foreigners have played a major role in the economy and distribution of resources in Tanzania. While the mainland is largely Christian, parts of Tanzania, such as the Eastern Coast and Zanzibar have strong Islamic roots, specifically Zanzibar as it was conquered by the Sultan of Oman.

The mainland of Tanzania is 99% African (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 tribes), other 1% (consisting of Asian, European, and Arab) and Zanzibar - Arab, African, mixed Arab and African (www.cia.gov). While there are well over 130 tribes in Tanzania, I primarily spent time with the Maasai and Chagga tribes of the Kilimanjaro region. The Maasai are warriors and these two tribes have a long and violent history. Many of the roles and traditions passed down to boys were warrior or fighting skills. They were needed in the community to fight and protect the women and children. The Chagga tribes are focused on agriculture and not warriors like the Maasai. They actually created caves as protection from the Maasai, who historically travelled into the mountains in attempt to capture the Chagga land. These tribes still exist and the traditions of coffee making, agriculture, and mud huts continue.

Kiswahili or Swahili is the official language of Tanzania. “Kiswahili is the mother tongue of the Bantu people living in Zanzibar and nearby coastal Tanzania; although Kiswahili is Bantu in structure and origin, its vocabulary draws on a variety of sources including Arabic and English; it has become the lingua franca of central and eastern Africa; the first language of most people is one of the local languages” (www.cia.gov). It is an oral and written language and commonly spoken amongst the tribes. It was made the official language upon independence. English is not the national language; however it is the primary language of commerce, administration, and higher education. Arabic is widely spoken in Zanzibar and parts of the capital city Dar Es Salaam and there are many local languages or tribal languages still spoken throughout Tanzania.

As a result, the elite, government, and business people of Tanzania achieve a higher education than the remainder of the population. Is this a coincidence? Rural villages and lower to middle income citizens of Tanzania speak Swahili, not English. Is this a result of colonial prejudice against the tribal culture of Tanzania? Why does the population of Tanzania need to learn English if it is only used for business and higher education? 80% of the population works in agriculture and 20% in the service industry, so why need the need for language? (www.cia.gov).

One reason could be that it segregates the rural populations and creates an insurmountable barrier that must be crossed to participate in government, higher education and business. The key in this is government. How can the local population advocate for changes in their country and be active participants in government if they don't speak the language of the government? How can you ensure the government is working for you if you can't understand what is being said? Corruption has been a pattern not only in Tanzania, but in all of Africa, and runs rampant in government throughout the world.

In many African countries there is an abundance of natural resources; yet political corruption and foreign control inhibit the majority of the population from benefitting from the profits of these natural resources. The first president of Tanzania, President Julius Nyerere, put a huge focus on Nationalization, but he did not have experience with the broader economic system. Nyerere came from the precolonial ruling class and was the son of a chief (Africa; *Altered States and Ordinary Miracles* pg. 65). "Julius Nyerere of Tanzania was a University educated schoolmaster. He kept the title of Mwalimu- 'teacher' in Swahili - and tried to guide Tanzania towards a model of Christian socialism. He remains one of the most respected -and loved- of all African first presidents" (pg 68).

"In most African countries the elite grabbed the postcolonial state for themselves and boarded it up against the people. They embraced all the repressive colonial laws and changed very little except the size of their bank accounts" (pg. 69). Nyerere was a different kind of leader and made huge progress in education among other things. "Primary school enrollment increased from one quarter of the school- age population to 95 percent; adult literacy from 10 to 75 percent; four in ten villages were provided with clean water, three in ten had clinics; life expectancy increased from forty one years to fifty years" (The Fate of Africa pg. 259). Despite his progress he relied heavily on foreign aid and much of the progress is credited more to foreign interference and aid than to Nyerere's strategy (pg. 259). With large amounts of foreign aid and interference, the local government is heavily dependent and susceptible to foreign control.

As of 2014, just 30.9% of the population in Tanzania is urban; the majority of the urban population is in the capital city of Dar Es Salaam. Based on information from the CIA's website with International statistics and data, Tanzania is at a high risk for infectious diseases. The most common diseases in Tanzania being malaria, dengue fever, typhoid fever, hepatitis A, and Rift Valley fever. As of 2014, there are 4.95 children born per woman with a low contraceptive rate of 34.4% (www.cia.gov). Of the total population only 12.2% have access to improved sanitation

facilities while the remaining 87.8% of the population live with unimproved and less than desirable sanitation facility access. 92% of the rural population has unimproved sanitation facility access (www.cia.gov). Water sanitization is critical and impacts quality of life, health and well-being, to include education.

“Tanzania is one of the world's poorest economies in terms of per capita income, but has achieved high growth rates based on its vast natural resource wealth and tourism. GDP growth in 2009-14 was an impressive 6-7% per year. Tanzania has largely completed its transition to a market economy, though the government retains a presence in sectors such as telecommunications, banking, energy, and mining. The economy depends on agriculture, which accounts for more than one-quarter of GDP, provides 85% of exports, and employs about 80% of the work force” (www.cia.gov). Tanzania does still rely heavily on foreign aid from the World Bank, UN development programs, and NGO's. NGO's play a huge role in Microfinance loans to support under resourced women and education for children. There are countless NGO's throughout Tanzania that provide pre-primary and primary education. This both helps and further complicates education in Tanzania as it makes the education system less uniform. NGO's cannot reach everyone and will not always follow the curriculum or subject matter taught in government schools, therefore by far not all Tanzanian's education is equal.

NGO's are helping small and select parts of Tanzania to achieve education and fluency in English; however, there are still many areas without resources. English fluency would help the local population participate in the industry of tourism and generate even more wealth. Higher education, or above primary school education, would allow the 80% of the population participating in agriculture to compete in the world market and develop business skills and acumen. This would also empower Tanzanians to reduce the reliance on foreign aid and NGO's, creating a more sustainable economy overall.

“Mvumbika change hula mbova”

One Who Stores Half Grown Fruits, Eats Them Rotten

The history of education can be broken into three parts: pre colonization, colonization, and post colonization. The formal education system is a result of colonization, first by the Germans, then by the British. I was fortunate to meet Basil Lema in Tanzania, a retired teacher now politician, who discussed the education system with me in depth. Basil is very passionate about education and has completely changed his career from a professor to politician to change some of the corruption within the government, and make strides towards a fairer and more opportunistic education system for all citizens of Tanzania.

Basil explained the three parts of the history of education in Tanzania as he saw it: the informal education system of pre-colonization, the colonized education system in which formal education was introduced, and the post colonization system or the current education system of Tanzania. The non-formal education system was education of the tribe one was born into. For

example, men learned to hunt, kill, and be the leaders of the tribe, whereas women learned to build huts, cook, and plant fruits and vegetables. This education was passed on by the parents and tribal elders.

The second system of education was introduced through colonization. Tanzania was first colonized by the Germans in 1893 and the first government schools were established (<http://chekaschool.com>). War broke out in 1914 and when the education system collapsed, Great Britain took control and established a new system under colonial powers. The country then gained independence in 1961 and Tanganyika and Zanzibar were combined to become Tanzania in 1964 (<http://chekaschool.com>). The general perspective I've observed towards the formal education system is positive, interlaced with discouragement and sadness towards the structure of the current system due to the lack of opportunity for the local population. The United Republic of Tanzania today has over 45 million inhabitants (<https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-tanzania.pdf>). Tanzania is considered a low income country per the World Bank standards (<http://Worldbank.org>). To give some perspective, a survey conducted by UNICEF between 2007-2011 shows that 67.9% of the population in Tanzania is below the International poverty line of US \$1.25 per day (UNICEF).

Shortly after Independence and the nationalization of the education system, the president shifted the focus to developing rural livelihoods, as most of the country is rural, and put less of an emphasis of advancing past primary education. Initially under colonization, private primary schools were illegal, however, in the 1970's private primary schools did open in an Independent Tanzania. It was also at this time that a universal primary education program was initiated and schools fees discontinued for public schools. This did change again in the 1980's when school fees were reinstated for primary and secondary schools, impacting the number of students enrolled in schools. In addition to the school fees, children also need to supply uniforms for each grade year of school and books, which few families can afford (<http://chekaschool.com>).

"Since the mid 1990's, however, numerous Development plans and programs have been introduced to help provide formal education for Tanzanian children:

- 1997: Education Sector Development Program
- 2001: Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP)
- 2003: Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP)
- 2004: Government expansion of secondary schools under SEDP" (<http://chekaschool.com>)

Overall, progress in the education system has been made since independence; however, there are still elements of opportunity. It should also be noted that progress is hard to measure, as there are not regular evaluations of the education system, the last one being in 2011. "As of 2007, Secondary enrollment in Tanzania is among the lowest in the world at 20%" (<http://chekaschool.com>). Tanzania has one of the highest net enrollment rates in Africa, yet while many enroll in primary school a huge number drop out before finishing primary education. "At higher levels of the education system, the situation is even worse: the net enrollment rate for lower secondary education is 30.8 percent, and for upper secondary

education only 1.9 percent. The results of a study on the quality of education showed that when Tanzanian children finish primary level their performance is extremely poor with seven out of every ten children unable to read basic Swahili and nine out of every ten children unable to read basic English" (<http://www.usaid.gov>).

A UNICEF report on the education statistics shows that while attendance and participation in primary school is high in the 80% and 90% range, secondary school participation and net attendance ratio (%) 2008-2012* for both male and female students is between 24% and 26% (<http://UNICEF.org>).

The current education system is organized as follows:

Compulsory education is just 7 years in Tanzania, compared to the United States which is 12 years (<http://www.nationmaster.com/country-info/profiles/Tanzania/Education>). Primary education is grades 1-7, or what would be elementary and middle school in the West. Primary school is 7 years and there is a national exam at the end of primary school that the student needs to pass to move onto secondary school. About 50% of students pass the exams and move onto secondary school (<http://kisaproject.org>).

Secondary school is grades 8-13 and would be about the high school level if compared to the Western system of education. There is another set of exams at the end of secondary school and they cover about 4 years' worth of material in 10 subjects (<http://kisaproject.org>). Only roughly 18% of students pass the secondary school exams to move onto Form 5 or what would be grades 12 and 13.

The examination scores are broken down into divisions and the scores determine the student's success within the education system. Division 1 is the best score a student can get (between 7 and 21 points) and a very small portion of students receive this score (<http://kisaproject.org>). Division 2-3 scores will allow the student to continue their education while Division 4 and 0 scores cannot continue their education and student will then seek out a vocation or vocational training elsewhere. "When a student scores highly on their national exams, the government 'selects' them to a government school, meaning that they are assigned to the school at which they will continue their education. If a student does not score well on the exams, and therefore are not 'selected' by the government to join a government school (where school fees are lower), they have the option of paying high school fees to attend a private school. In Tanzania, it is therefore more prestigious to attend a government school than a private school" (<http://kisaproject.org>).

Wealthy families can get around this system, by sending children to private boarding schools, where they will learn English and are most likely to attend and graduate from college. The majority of the country lives in lower income rural areas and attends public and private primary schools if they are in walking distance. Private schools, or schools run independent of the public government schools, will open as not all children can make it to public schools. When a student has a hard time physically getting to the schools, it is likely that the student will not go at all.

I visited a private nursery or pre-primary school called Best Hope in Moshi, Tanzania and the director Emmanuel Kyna said he started the school because the kids in the local neighborhood had no access to education. There is not a school within walking distance and no public transportation system such as buses available to the children. The school was rather poor and had but two classrooms that were connected by a thin wall. The 'playground' in the back of the school was simply a bare field with a barbed wire fence separating it from the street on the other side. Resources such as paper, pencils, even soap for washing hands is lacking. This is the reality for many rural schools, yet is better than the alternative of no education at all.

"Muacha asili ni mtumwa"

He who renounces ancestry is like a slave

The Maasai are a pastoral semi nomadic people that reside in Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania along the Great Rift Valley (<http://www.maasai-association.org/maasai.html>). A large majority of the Maasai tribal community does not have access to education and have not advanced past primary school if they have attended school at all. Attendance at school is mandatory, yet not enforced. Additionally, the Maasai elders feel education is not necessary for those that do have access, as men and women are pastoral and everyone has an important role within the village. They have informal education which is passed down from the Maasai elders. This informal tribal education is a strong part of their culture and the only education the tribal leaders know.

I traveled to a Maasai village near the Ngorognoro Crater in May of 2015 with Anita, a NAFGeM worker, to observe the Maasai culture and discuss education, as Anita knew one of the tribal men who spoke English. We arrived at the village in the late afternoon and were greeted with a traditional ceremony of song and dance or jumping. The Maasai wear beaded plates around their necks, colorful red robes, and jump repeatedly as a traditional welcome. Upon arrival we met an English speaking Maasai boy, Musa, about the age of 18 who took us around the Kraal, or village, and volunteered to answer our questions. Musa was the only fluent speaking Maasai in the village and the remainder of the people we met did not have any English at all.

Immediately, I noticed the conditions of the village and the children who ran up me in greeting. There were about 15 children running around the village and they were very dirty as they had been playing all day. There was a significant problem with flies and the children were covered with dirt and flies. The flies create a problem for the children specifically when they gather around their eyes. I noticed that many of the kids were having a hard time keeping the flies out of their eyes and away from their faces. Anita explained to me that they do not have a modern bathroom and the waste is too close to the living area of the village. This causes excessive flies and can lead to serious disease to include blindness and health risks. I also notice the children's missing teeth and the small teeth rotting away in some spots. I found out from Musa that

access to water is a challenge for this Maasai village. There is not a supply of clean water nearby, so children wash very infrequently, even as infrequent as once a month.



The Maasai tribe is a polygamist community and each village is comprised of one man and his wives. The size of each Kraal depends on the number of wives and children a man has. The tribe I visited had a total of seven huts, one hut was for the man and the remaining six huts for each of his wives and the children. “The inkajjik, or hut, is loaf-shaped and made of mud, sticks, grass, cow dung and cow's urine. Maasai women are responsible for making the houses as well as supplying water, collecting firewood, milking cattle and cooking for the family” (<http://www.maasai-association.org/maasai.html>). The circular inkajjik has small holes around the structure to serve as windows. Inside there are two beds made of mud and sticks separated by a stick wall, and an open space with a small fire that fills the hut with smoke. This is where the meat is prepared and the blood from the meat is drunk by the Maasai men and women. The Maasai men are primarily responsible for tending to the livestock.

The structure of the tribe is such that the man acquires as many wives as he can afford, which depends on how many animals he has. The Maasai women are then to build their own hut in the village and the huts are basic structures with just an open area containing a fire inside and two beds separated by a wall. One bed is for the woman and the other is for the man. The only time they will be in a bed together is to have sex. The man will choose which hut he would like to visit each night, or which wife he would like to have sex with. He will then go back to his hut

afterwards for rest and to sleep. Musa was asked to demonstrate how the man calls attention to the women he would like to have sex with that night by poking a stick through a small opening in the hut or what serves as a window.

Anita works with the Maasai tribes as part of NAFGeM, an organization that raises awareness and works to prevent female genital mutilation. She is influencing the tribes through education about the dangers of female genital mutilation, a practice in about 90% of Maasai tribes. Sex for the Maasai women is not a pleasurable act Anita tells me. The Maasai women are mutilated at a young age when the transition from a girl to a woman takes place between the ages of 12-17. A Maasai woman is mutilated so she can be married in a Maasai tribe. "The young girl is not told before the mutilation what will happen to her. She is just told that after this special celebration you will become a woman and it is very important" (Anita from NAFGeM). All the girls from the village are taken on one day to be mutilated and some of the girls do die from this 'surgery' as it is often done under unsanitary conditions. Sometimes the same knife is used to mutilate all the girls and disease can spread quickly. After the mutilation girls cannot wash the wound frequently leading to infection. This operation and healing process will also cause the girls to drop out of school. Since sex can be painful for the women, there are women in the Maasai tribe that will stop bathing altogether to prevent the husband from coming to their hut to have sex with them.

Anita emphasized it was most important to educate the men about FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) which was puzzling to me. I then discovered it is taboo for the man to look at the women's genital area at all. The man has no idea what is happening to the woman or what female genital mutilation is. He does not know how painful the operation is, what it looks like, or the excruciating process the woman goes through. The women do not talk about it with the men and keep it a secret amongst themselves until a girl is old enough to go through with the procedure. Once NAFGeM educated the men about FGM, they decided the practice should stop in their village. Education has been very effective to preventing this.

Online education would also be a great option for the Maasai as they are semi-nomadic and live in very rural areas. The areas where Maasai live are very spread out and schools can be inaccessible. The Ngorongoro Crater is protected area for the Maasai where they can raise cows; however, there is not reasonable access to schools for the children. If the village is big enough, a school will be built for that village, however this is more of the exception. Online education would allow the Maasai women and children to learn about health in their local communities and still continue the pastoral, nomadic lifestyle. Another challenge for the Maasai, Anita explains to me, is that the girls attending school do not have pads or tampons. When they are menstruating they rely on kanga or some type of cloth to act as a pad and will wash it frequently throughout the day. This prevents girls from attending school at least a few days to a week out of every month and the girls can fall behind. It then seems like a better option for the mother to pull the girl out of school altogether to help out with the tasks the village.

Anita also told me the story of four Maasai women who ran away from the tribe to escape mutilation and found NAFGeM, where they were taken in for protection. They learned basic skills such as reading, writing, and craft making to include sewing and soap making. They now have their own business making soap and other cleaning products they sell to support themselves. These women now have a choice in life and control of what happens to them because they were educated and have a way to make a living. There are some other Maasai that find ways to leave the tribe and move to the city; however this is not common since few have the resources to leave.

Education would help to empower women, decrease disease and health risks, and minimize female genital mutilation. If the tribes were educated past primary school, or educated at all, they would have the opportunity to understand how harmful mutilation is and possibly have the resources or creativity to continue their traditions in a less harmful way. Additionally, young people growing up in this Maasai culture would have the opportunity to choose their path instead of being forced into the Maasai tribal lifestyle. The Maasai do not learn English growing up and therefore struggle in the school system if they even make it past primary education to secondary education taught in English. If the children were able to advance past primary and secondary education the possibilities would open up for the Maasai people. They might even be able to capitalize on the tourism industry and learn to benefit from it while preserving their culture.

“Mwenye njaa hana miiko”

A hungry Man observes No Dietary Restriction

I knew Mama Thea before I traveled to Tanzania, but I had no clue the impact she would have upon me once I arrived in country. I went to Tanzania to work with a small local women’s group on a micro finance project as part of my job and quickly realized Mama Thea is the glue that holds everything together. Thea is the Tanzanian Country Director for the nonprofit organization I work for and organizes volunteer projects in education and global health for volunteers from around the world. She also facilitates cultural learning activities to help foreign volunteers gain a deeper sense of Tanzanian culture. The most amazing thing about Mama Thea is her story, which I had the pleasure of learning one evening over dinner.

Mama Thea was born into a very poor family in a Chagga village in rural Moshi. Her family is of the Chagga tribe and she grew up in a mud, wood, and straw hut with all five of her siblings. I actually traveled to the village she grew up in about 10 minutes away from Moshi, the town I was staying in, and saw the hut she spent her early years in. It consists of one room, separated into three sections by vertical wooden boards. One area is a bed made of animal skin pulled taut for the mother and all children to sleep on. Next to the family bed is a fire that is burning at all times to preserve the wood in the hut and the mother must constantly tend to. The mother is responsible for all the cooking and caring for the children. The papa has a separate bed that is

connected by a wood plank to the bed of the family. When the father wants the mothers' attention he will tap on the wood to alert the mother. The second part of the hut is a sitting area for guests that consists of about 5-6 large rocks. Opposite all of this is the third part of the hut which is for the families animals. The animals are kept inside to prevent them from getting stolen, and to preserve the health of their hooves as they can get diseases from the dampness outside during the rainy season. The animals sleep in the hut with the family at all times and once a week the family must clean out the waste from the hut. What struck me most about being inside the hut was the smoke from the fire. It was very hard to breathe and my eyes burned from the steady smoke that permeated the hut.

Mama Thea's mother passed away when she was very young and Thea then became the primary care taker of her family at the age of about 10. Her father worked, yet they were very poor and Thea took care of all her brothers and sisters. Thea had a dream of one day making something of her life and attending school, something neither her mother nor father was able to do. Mama Thea had a friend named Mary around this time. Mary spoke a little English and was enrolled in and attending primary school. Mary wanted Thea to attend school with her and after begging her father to let her attend, she enrolled very late in primary school. Mama Thea loved school and only attended a few years before she had to take the exams that are supposed to come at the end of 7 years. Thea failed the exam and was devastated, yet she was determined to go on to secondary school. She set up a meeting with the principal to ask if she could move on anyway and the principal told her that if she could reach over her head and grab her ear, she could go to secondary school. Mama Thea reached over her head, grabbed her ear, and continued her education. Her friend Mary was not as fortunate and dropped out of school after primary education, but encouraged Thea to continue on.

Mama Thea was completely unprepared for what came next in secondary school. Growing up in the Chagga village, the only exposure to English she had been from her friend Mary, and secondary school was taught in English. In her own words, "I cried every day and was so far behind I wanted to give up. All I did was study English and I was determined to stay in school. The first year my marks were horrible and I was so discouraged but I wanted to succeed. After about one year I started to pick up the language and my marks improved. By the second and third year, I was top of my class and everyone was so impressed that a Chagga girl was at the top."

Mama Thea passed her secondary school exams and continued onto college. She then went on to work for a company that hosted volunteers from around the world before opening up the Cross Cultural Solutions volunteer program in Tanzania. If her story alone wasn't inspiring enough, it gets even better. Thea heard that her friend Mary who inspired her to attend school wasn't doing so well, so she went to find her in a small Chagga village. Mary had a few children at this time and was struggling to get by. Mama Thea took her into the volunteer home and began teaching her skills such as cooking and cleaning until Mary could be employed by the organization. Mary is now the head cook and one of the kindest women I've met. Her kindness and gratitude can be seen in her smile each morning when she is making chapatti for the volunteers. While this story is inspiring, it is an exception to the norm. It is an example of hard

work and the small percentage of the low income Tanzanians that push through the secondary education system.

I had an opportunity to see the other side of things too working with the local women's group. The size of the group varied on any given day, but on average there were about 10-20 women that are part of the Mkombozi women's group. There were 3 women that spoke enough English for me to have conversation with and their stories came out over the course of 2 weeks.

This group of women had not advanced past various levels of primary education. I asked multiple women why this was and the answer was the family needed them at home, the school was too far, and it's not common for women to continue education past primary school. The family just did not think it was necessary. Most of the women were married rather young, about 18-20, and their primary responsibility was domestic duties. It was common for the husbands to be gone frequently during the week and to leave the women with domestic chores and housework. The challenge for most of these women is they had no money or tangible skills to gain employment and generate income. Each woman had between 2-5 children at home of various ages.

Mama Thea helped this group of local women to start a micro finance group and begin small income generating businesses through loans. They then pay this money back at a much lower interest rate than a bank and generate some income for the group and for themselves. Mama Thea found a soap making expert and brought him in to teach the women. The group collectively has started a soap making business with the income generated from the loans and has now trademarked it with the group name Mkombozi or Waka, which means light.

I supported this group on the business side of things, as the women had no knowledge of how to run a business or market the products. I taught basic conversational English lessons and business acumen to assist them in getting their products into the global market. As part of a conversational English lesson, I had the women tell me what they liked and what they wanted in English. Their answers were surprising to me; over half the women said they wanted money. A majority of the others said they wanted to speak English and liked learning English. At least 90% of the women said they liked working and the specific income generating trade they had chosen, for example farming or tailoring. The women have sought out support in the local community with other women to create an opportunity that has been unavailable to them. With the extra income from their business they are putting their kids through school, an opportunity they did not have.

These women were so inspiring to me and some of the most hardworking women I have met. The desire for more is there among women in Tanzania, unfortunately the resources are not. The women I met are ready to learn and utilize the resources available to them. If there was a local library with computers where they could take online courses, they would walk miles on bare feet to get there and learn. As it is now, volunteer organizations and NGO's such as Cross Cultural Solutions do have a steady stream of volunteers that teach the women income generating skills and English, but what about the women in other rural areas? What resources

are available for them? Is the population that has not achieved education past the 7 mandatory primary school years to be left behind?



“Mtaka cha mvunguni sharti ainame”

One who requires something under the bed must bend for it

The solutions to the language problem or language disconnect from primary education to secondary education are complex. There is not one simple solution, as the problem is deeply imbedded in society and has multiple parts. I feel there is some social political prejudice against non- English speaking or tribal citizens of Tanzania. It does not make sense for ‘higher education’ or secondary education to be taught in a language other than the national language. In addition to this, I think both primary and secondary education should be mandatory with a language immersion program starting in primary school. The ideal solution would be for all education to be taught in the national language with English as a core subject, similar to how it is in primary education. However, if this is not changed, I recommend for a language immersion program to start very early on in primary education.

As we look at the language problem or language barrier in education we must look at linguistics and the successful bilingual individual. There are many countries that do a great job of integrating a second language into the curriculum, Canada being the example for successful bilingualism in schools. Children begin to learn a second language at a very young age and

language is built into the education curriculum throughout both primary and secondary education.

In Tanzania, some private primary and pre-primary school days are half days, usually beginning at about 8am (Tanzania time, so this could be 9) and ending at 12:30. This averages to be about 3 hours of lessons and a small portion of this is 'English'. This English is taught by teachers that are not fluent in English and often incorrect grammar and words are passed along to the children. I visited a primary school where the kids were saying the alphabet and I noticed they said n-meno-p-q etc. I had the kids write the a-b-c's to confirm this is actually what they were saying and it was true. The teacher did not correct this error because she did not know it was an error. The solution to this is to have trained English teachers in primary schools to support this immersion program so children learn the correct grammar from the beginning. If trained English teachers are not available, the children could take online English immersion courses and activities the second half of the school day.

"The environment (nurture) is also key to language development. Children learn to conduct conversations by paying attention to what others around them are paying attention to by tracking eye gaze, body posture, and physical orientation" (Linguistics for Dummies pg. 237). Therefore how can a child learn a second language from a teacher that is not fluent in that language and not comfortable speaking it? Naturally the children will pick up the same habits and not be comfortable speaking English as the teacher is not comfortable.

Some factors to be considered when introducing a second language: the language spoken at home, the amount of time or opportunity the person will have to practice, the internal motivation or drive to learn, and the reason it is needed (www.asha.org). I am not entirely sure if children are aware that secondary education is taught in English, as everyone I have talked with and interviewed seems to describe a period of shock upon entering secondary school as if they were not prepared or did not know that was going to happen. This is a huge opportunity to better prepare students about the entirety of the education system upon entering primary education so they are motivated to learn a language they will need if they want to advance past primary school. It is also important to make children aware that it is important to advance past primary school and that they will need at minimum a secondary education to achieve many jobs in the global world.

"There are different ways to introduce the second language:

- by setting (e.g., English is spoken only in the school, and Swahili is spoken only in the home)
- by topic (e.g., French is spoken only during meal time, and Spanish is spoken during school/work activities)
- by speaker (e.g., Mom will speak only in German, and Dad speaks Russian only)" (www.asha.org)

I recommend at minimum that only English be spoken in English class. Currently, English is primarily taught in Swahili (likely because the teacher is not comfortable in English). For the children to become comfortable speaking English, only English should be spoken in English class and ideally in other classes too. Swahili will be spoken at home in the average family in Tanzania so the only exposure the child will have is in school, however, to have a truly bilingual society, English must become part of the home life as well. It would be beneficial for the last two years of primary school to introduce lessons taught only in English as a transition to secondary school. If the children have a foundation of English after five years of primary school, this will make the transition to secondary education easier and more efficient. English and Swahili games and activities should be introduced so the children will find English fun and want to learn.

“The ability of a person to use a second language will depend on his or her family's ability to speak more than one language. It is important for parents/caregivers to provide a strong language model. If you cannot use the language well, you should not be teaching it” (www.asha.org). The change in language will have to be generational, as the generation starts to speak English it will be spoken more at home and therefore be passed down to the next generation. The family will need to support the child in speaking English and try to use the language at home. Further, the family will need to want to use English, and adapt English into work, play, and all aspects of life.

I also think primary school days should be longer, at minimum 6 hours to cover all subjects the children need to succeed in education and fully prepare them for secondary education. After the 3 hour day, the children usually take their time going home, play, hang around a community shop or house and don't go home until the late afternoon when they would be getting home from school anyway if it was a 6 hour school day.

“Some linguists believe that in addition to statistical learning (which is input driven), second language learners are also guided by principles of universal grammar” (Linguistics for Dummies pg. 236). The students should have a basis of grammar when they begin to learn English. To develop the necessary grammar skills in Swahili to obtain English fluency, I think more core curriculum material is needed and a longer school day to set the children up for success, as statistically just over half the children in the current system can read and write basic Swahili when they finish primary school. If a child is falling behind, special help should be available or a tutor should be set up for that child. Lack of resources is a challenge in all areas, so some creativity might be necessary. If a tutor is not available, peer to peer tutoring is an option. The schools could utilize children that are ahead of the class to help the children falling behind. These children could become tutors in the under resourced classroom and additionally create a supportive bond between the students.

“The window for learning the building blocks of syntax and phonology begins at birth and ends at puberty - the building blocks must be in place by puberty in order for the rule system to be fully acquired. After puberty you continue to learn new grammatical patterns, and you can make adjustments to your dialect, but only if the building blocks are already in place. The

window for learning vocabulary is optimally between birth and puberty- the critical period, but you continue to learn new words throughout your entire life” (Linguistics for Dummies pg.236). This is why students must begin learning English as a second language in primary school to become successful English speakers by secondary school. If children are not introduced to English as a second language before entering secondary school, it will be very hard for them to grasp as it is near the end of this critical period and for some even after depending on when the child hits puberty.

One argument that can be made for the language barrier, is that only 7 years of primary education in mandatory and secondary education is optional, so why implement language immersion if only a small percent of the population will need it? The large majority of the population in agriculture will not need this skill. English is not a requirement to make it through school since secondary education is ‘higher education’ and English is only for higher education, business, and government. If Tanzania wants its educated citizens to become global and compete in global markets, they must compete with people and work with people that have completed at minimum 12 years of education, which would be the equivalent of High School. Many will have a college education on top of this as a basic requirement to achieve a job in the global market. This would significantly help the country develop and generate income as the government and wealthy businessmen are controlling most of the income generated in Tanzania currently and it continues to be a low income country. If more of the population had the opportunity to participate in business and government, it could generate more wealth for Tanzania and result in economic health and stability.

“Ukiona vinaelea vimeundwa”

If You See A Vessel Afloat, Remember They Had to Build It

A reform in the current education system is needed at the government level with the support of the local population. The government will need to make a large investment in the people of Tanzania and in the education system. This needs to be a locally driven initiative to be sustainable and serve the needs of the Tanzanian people. Tanzanian citizens first need to realize that the path to development and creation of wealth for the country lies in education. Ideally, the nationalized education system would go through a complete transformation, and there are many models of great education systems to use as examples as the country develops an education system that is ideal for the culture and people of Tanzania. I would like to look at the principals within the education systems of Hong Kong, Finland, and South Korea. These state run education systems are considered to be some of the best in the world with students reaching high levels of achievement academically. While each culture is different, the techniques, ideas, and principals of each system can be incorporated.

The focus of this reform should start within elementary school or primary school, as this time period is essential to brain development and the students’ academic future. The first challenge is that each public school in Tanzania is doing something different and there is very little

structure, if any. Classes rarely start on time and are a consistent length. Class itself is inconsistent and it is not uncommon for class to be called off if it is raining as most students walk to school, or if a teacher is sick since there are no substitute teachers. Public school is actually more structured than primary schools, but by far the best education that only the wealthy have access to is a boarding school.

"During the early elementary years, fibers continue to grow between neurons and the white matter of the brain (also called myelin). The growing neural networks of connected neurons and fibers are essential to the transmission of information throughout the brain. As the brain matures, more and more fibers grow and the brain becomes increasingly interconnected. These interconnected networks of neurons are very important to the formation of memories and the connection of new learning to the previous learning. As neural networks form, the child learns both academically and socially. At first, this learning is mostly rote in nature. As skills become more automatic, the child does not have to think as hard about what he or she is learning or doing, and the brain resources are freed up to be used for complex tasks that require more and more attention and processing. Skills in reading, mathematics, and writing become more specialized and developed" (<http://www.apa.org/education/k12/brain-function.aspx>).

Therefore the primary education years are critical. The students should be engaged in learning and take these years very seriously because it will impact future skills such as memorization. Children in Tanzania should have access to excellent education in primary school for their brain development so they can succeed in higher education. A strong core curriculum should be in place so children will be able to read and write Swahili and English upon completing primary education.

A strong and capable leader will be the cornerstone of this reform; excellence starts from the top with a strong leader and trickles down. "Prof Bob Adamson is head of department of international education and lifelong learning at the Hong Kong Institute of Education and speaks on the emphasis on diligence: It's not natural ability, it's hard work. Hong Kong was built on hard work, as a refugee society. There was no in-built class system and the way to achieve social mobility was through education. There was no social security blanket, so you were investing in your pension by educating your child. It's called the elderly parent tax" (www.bbc.com).

Not only is Professor Adamson committed to the children's education, the family and parents are also highly committed and invested in their children's education. Parents are involved in the students' homework and will even complain to the school if the child is not given enough homework. In this way the parents hold the teachers and school accountable. The same sense of accountability can be implemented in Tanzania, but will require educators, parents, and students to be committed to it.

"In Finland Prof Kristiina Kumpulainen, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki talks about the welfare society: There is an emphasis on supporting every individual, every child regardless of their economic or social background. This basic principle of equality applies to our

education system but also healthcare and social care. It's a holistic approach. We pay for it through taxes and the government tries to support every family" (www.bbc.com).

A huge part of the success of the Finnish education system is highly-qualified teachers. This is a huge opportunity in Tanzania as some of the teachers are not even qualified to teach and do not have a background in education. Many of the English teachers are not English speakers and cannot effectively teach English. The teaching profession in Finland is valued very highly and the teaching programs are very competitive. "The programs are so competitive that often the students do not get a place. We get highly motivated students and the five-year courses are to masters level. Even if you teach at a primary school, you need to have a masters qualification. This is not the same in other Nordic countries" (www.bbc.com).

I recommend implementing a strong teacher training program, producing highly trained local Tanzanian teachers, fluent in both English and Swahili. Since less than 30% of the population make it through secondary education, there will need to be an immersive and supportive teacher training program that children are prepared for in the last few years of primary school, and that starts upon entering secondary education. Once the student completes secondary education, they would move on to an intensive teacher training program before graduating to be a teacher in the public school system.

In South Korea, education is a national priority and that is clear on examination day. "South Korea Prof Paul Morris, from the Institute of Education, University of London, is a comparative educator who specializes on East Asian education systems and he talks about the connection between exams and the curriculum: The prevalence of testing and examinations has a long history and is embedded in the culture. The curriculum is effectively defined by what is examined. Places come to a standstill on days of public examinations such as the university entrance examination. Traffic is stopped and planes will be diverted to minimize noise" (www.bbc.com).

Another key component to a great education system is core curriculum and key examination subjects. "In Hong Kong there is a curriculum to be followed, a book to be covered and a scheme of work that teachers stick to. It's largely academic. Chinese, maths and English are the core subjects. English classes can amount to a quarter of all weekly classes. Art, music, drama and physical education are usually one or two lessons a week but they get chopped in the run-up to exams" (www.bbc.com). Similar to the education system in Tanzania, exam scores determine the future of the students' education and are considered very important. Some big opportunities with the education system in Tanzania are the lack of organization and uniform core curriculum, and structure within classes. Exam scores are highly important, but it seems like there is little commitment or investment through the education year to test students on exam subjects. This would ensure retention with memorization so that students will pass the exam and understand what they are learning.

"South Korea understands that English is an important element of social mobility and the curriculum is dominated by languages, maths and science" (www.bbc.com). Again there is a

strong support and even pressure from the parents for the children to succeed, as their performance in school will determine the students' future and social standing. South Korea has set the bar of International rankings in school and has a culture of diligence. "Children are expected to put the time in. There's a belief that people have differing abilities but everyone can get there - it might just take some a lot longer" (www.bbc.com).

Other principals that could be adapted from these systems include individual attention to students. Children that are falling behind need to get specialized attention and support to include tutoring, I recommend a peer to peer student tutoring system. Strong core curriculum specific to Tanzania with a balance of other subjects or activities to shape well rounded students culturally and socially is needed. In order to change the education system in a country, you need to change the parents' mindset and activity in education, the teachers' commitment to education and skill level, and the classroom structure or the entire school structure. Education and bilingualism need to become an integral part of the culture, just as agriculture is a core part of life in Tanzania. A lot can be taken from systems that are working and working well, such as the three education systems outlined, along with the French Canadian education system as a guide to successful language immersion to produce bilingual students. These education systems are not a uniform 'one size fits all' and the structure likely will not work for all countries; however, the principals are applicable and can be modified to fit the Tanzania culture.

This change may not start with the government, but with local Tanzanian's demanding a higher education and better resources to learn English. Many social movements that produce change start at a grassroots level. This may look like locals opening private primary schools that offer language immersion to help students prepare for secondary education. This could take the form of local awareness and protests that demand language immersion and more language skills in primary education. This is something the citizens of Tanzania must demand if they desire higher education and if they believe in it, they can make it happen.

Is education necessary to achieve happiness? Is education necessary to achieve meaning in life? I think the way the education system is set up does create some sense of unhappiness as it makes the transition from primary school to secondary school a challenge for the average citizen. I think those that are happy generally have more of their basic needs met to include food, shelter, and clothing. The tribes I visited in Tanzania generally seem happy with what they have, although they have very little formal education. They have a sense of community within their tribe and a purpose in the daily activities needed to achieve food and shelter. The only thing they cannot achieve without a formal education is the option to do something else.

This puts the people and the country at a disadvantage in a world where education is a requirement to achieve a certain job level, or any job at all. With less than half of students achieving secondary education, an opportunity to create jobs and wealth for the country lost. In addition to this, the population of Tanzania is growing and 45% of the population is under the age of 15. These children are a missed opportunity since over half will not make it to secondary education and their career options will be immensely limited.

What will happen if the education system doesn't change? Is education necessary for Tanzanian citizens? Is education a right or a privilege? Tanzanians can be happy without education, but they could attain a higher level of happiness with education along with the opportunity to achieve more. It has been shown that women who are educated tend to have more control over their lives, marry older, and have less children. Therefore, women who do achieve education are likely to have a greater level of happiness and meaning in their lives.

It is important to have formal education to achieve full potential in life and a certain level of meaning. The key is that everyone should have the same or equal opportunity to achieve education. Tanzanians do seem to be happy and content with what they have, yet if asked, they do want more. In contrast to happiness, I would say that few feel their life has meaning or truly know what that is. Those that do feel their lives have meaning are educated and have found a career as a result. In this career they've found a purpose and a way to contribute to the lives of others or help people. All that have passed through the education system are aware of the flaws within the system, are discouraged by it, and would like to see the education system changed. Tanzanian citizens, if educated beyond primary school, could play a bigger role in the economic and political activities of their country, and therefore control their destiny.

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