

Teaching Challenges in Tanzania:

A Look at the Implications
of Rural Development and Language
of Instruction for Primary and Pre-primary
Teachers in Rural Tanzania



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Teaching Challenges in Tanzania: A Look at the Implications of Rural Development and Language of Instruction for Primary and Pre-primary Teachers in Rural Tanzania

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Abstract

This is a working paper focusing on the challenges that Tanzanian teachers face in rural primary and pre-primary schools. The paper provides background on rural development in Tanzania as well as an overview of education in the country including the issue of language of instruction. This working paper provides observations and reflections from first-hand fieldwork conducted in July and August 2013. The researcher spent 7 weeks in Tanzania, Africa visiting rural primary and pre-primary schools, observing the lessons, interviewing the teachers, and tutoring one Maasai orphan in English literacy alongside a Kiswahili teacher teaching Kiswahili literacy. The data collected were interviews, observation notes, video recordings, and pictures. From the data, conclusions are drawn regarding the implications of rural development and language of instruction for primary and pre-primary teachers in rural Tanzania. In light of the challenges that these teachers face, recommendations are made for teacher training in rural Tanzania.

Keywords: Tanzania, primary school, pre-primary school, rural development, language of instruction, teacher training

1.0 Introduction

In the impoverished and rural areas of a nation, it may be the assumption that development must occur before education can be implemented: people must have clean water and roads must be built before children can begin to learn. In reality, however, education is occurring in rural areas simultaneously with development in spite of the many challenges this presents to teaching. Furthermore, improved education itself can positively influence development just as more advanced development in rural areas can positively increase the opportunities for and quality of education.

This connection between education and development is recognized and promoted in the United Nations Development Program's Millennium Development Goals, particularly with Goal 2: "Achieve universal primary education" (UN, 2013). This goal illustrates the United Nation's belief that education is a key factor in improving the lives of people in developing regions. Similarly, UNESCO's Education For All Movement focuses on six goals that all aim to improve education, especially for girls and minority groups, as these types of students are often disadvantaged in rural or developing areas (UNESCO, 2013).

However, Ouane and Glanz (2011) content that "the connection between development and education is widely accepted on a priori grounds, but with little understanding of the exact nature of the relationship" (p. 19). It is important to better examine and understand the challenges teachers face when teaching in developing rural areas and to translate these findings into suggestions for improved teacher training so that educational goals such as the UNDP's MDG and UNESCO's EFA can be met more effectively in rural areas.

Though these goals of the UNDP and UNESCO are aimed at every child in every country—because education should be a universal human right—it is still important to recognize the uniqueness of people and their cultures and countries. Therefore, an inquiry into the teaching challenges arising in rural education can be narrowed to specific cases in order to gain a deeper understanding of the situation in one particular country or area. Thus, this report will focus on Tanzania as a case country to better examine education in rural areas there. The report will provide background on the rural development situation in Tanzania as well

as an overview of education in the country, including the educational issue of language of instruction. This report will also summarize data from first-hand observations and interviews conducted in July and August 2013 during a seven-week fieldwork visit to the rural areas surrounding Arusha in northern Tanzania. From the data, conclusions can be drawn regarding the implications of rural development and language of instruction for primary and pre-primary teachers in rural Tanzania. In light of the challenges that these teachers face, recommendations will then be made for teacher training in rural Tanzania.

2.0 Overview of Tanzania's Rural Development

Tanzania is a very poor country in Sub-Saharan, East Africa, with many people living in extremely underdeveloped rural areas. In fact, only 26.7% of the population was considered urban in 2011 (CIA, 2013). In 2012, it was calculated that the rural population of Tanzania was 34,783,330 people, or 72.79% of the population (World Bank, 2013). These rural people are not easily accessible as Tanzania only has 90,807 km total of roads of which only 14.9% were paved in 2009 (World Bank, 2013).



An unpaved road in rural Northern Tanzania, August 2013

These conditions result in reliance upon agriculture by the majority of Tanzanians, but with a poor standard of living and startling health statistics, despite the official development assistance and official aid received (\$2,435,840,000 USD in 2011). In fact, the CIA reports, “Tanzania is one of the world’s poorest economies in terms of per capita income” (CIA, 2013). Development is critical in Tanzania

particularly in the rural areas, which are underdeveloped in terms of agriculture, standard of living, and health.



Maasai widows being given a plough in rural area of Northern Tanzania, August 2013

2.1. Agriculture

In line with the rural nature of the country, 42% of the total land area of Tanzania is agricultural land available for crops and grazing, which is a total of 373,000 square kilometers (World Bank, 2013). Because of such large amounts of agricultural land, over 89% of annual freshwater withdrawals is used for agricultural purposes (World Bank, 2013). But though 13% of the total land

area is arable land, suitable specifically for crops, rural citizens are ill equipped for modern farming, as data from 2002 reported only 21,207 units of agricultural machinery (tractors) in the entire country (World Bank, 2013). According to the Tanzanian ministry of finance, “agriculture is still dominated by small-scale farmers; with about 70 percent of farming being dependent on the hand hoe; 20 percent on ox-plough, and 10 percent on tractors” (Ministry of Finance, 2010, p. 7).

Since the majority of Tanzania is rural, the majority of Tanzanians rely on agriculture for survival. In 2006, 76.5% of adults were employed in agriculture, and 85% of economically active children ages 7-14 were employed in agriculture (World Bank, 2013).



A Maasai child tending to goats in a rural village in Northern Tanzania, August 2013

Agricultural raw material exports resulted in 5.6% of total merchandise exports in Tanzania in 2011 (World Bank, 2013), and 27.7% of Tanzania's GDP comes from agriculture (CIA, 2013). Agricultural products from Tanzania include coffee, sisal, tea, cotton, cashews, tobacco, cloves, wheat, fruits/vegetables, cattle, sheep, and goats (CIA, 2013). Agriculture in Tanzania is affected by environmental issues, particularly soil degradation, deforestation, desertification, and droughts (CIA, 2013). Regarding rural development in Tanzania, "agriculture is central to poverty reduction in general and hunger/food poverty in particular" (Ministry of Finance, 2010).

2.2. Standard of Living

While most Tanzanians participate in agriculture to survive, the standard of living in rural Tanzania is quite low. The GDP – per capita (purchasing power parity) was \$1,600 in 2012 (World Bank, 2013), ranking Tanzania 201 out of 229 countries in world (CIA, 2013). This low GDP means that 36% of the population was living below the Tanzanian poverty line in 2002 (CIA, 2013). More staggering statistics show that in 2007, 68.87% of the population lived on less than \$1.25 USD a day and 87.87% of the population lived on less than \$2.00 USD a day.

Reflecting their economic poverty, only 11.9% of Tanzania's total population and only 7.4% of Tanzania's rural population in 2011 had access to improved sanitation facilities (World Bank, 2013). While 78.7% of Tanzania's urban population had access to improved water sources in 2011, only 44.1% of the rural population did as well (World Bank, 2013).



A well in a rural Maasai area of northern Tanzania

In 2010, Tanzania's Human Development index was 0.398, which is very low, and the Global Hunger Index was 19.3 in 2012, which reflects a serious hunger problem (FAO, 2013).

The slow development of Tanzania can also be seen through other standard of living statistics: There were only 7 motor vehicles for every 1,000 people in Tanzania in 2007 (World

Bank, 2013). Only 14.8% of the population had access to electricity in 2010 (World Bank, 2013). In 2012, for every 100 people, only 13 in Tanzania were internet users (World Bank, 2013). However, 57 of every 100 people were mobile cellular subscribers in 2012 (World Bank, 2013). Overall, the rural situation of most Tanzanians is one of extreme economic poverty and a very low standard of living.

2.3. Health

In Tanzania, the life expectancy at birth in 2011 for females was 59 years and for males 57 years (World Bank, 2013). In 2010, less than 50% of births were attended by skilled health staff (World Bank, 2013). 42.5% of children under the age of 5 were malnourished for height and 16.2% for weight in 2010 (World Bank, 2013). In 2011, 38.8% of the total population was undernourished (World



Maasai women receiving informal herbal health care from an aid worker in rural northern Tanzania, August 2013

Bank, 2013). In 2008, the World Bank reports that 65% of deaths in Tanzania were caused by communicable diseases and maternal, prenatal and nutritional conditions (World Bank, 2013).

Only \$37 USD is spent per person in Tanzania for health care annually (World Bank, 2013). In 2010, there were only 0.7 hospital beds per 1,000 people, and only 0.008 physicians per 1,000 people in 2010 (World Bank, 2013). Because of the rural and remote nature of many Tanzanians, access to health care is practically impossible.

In 2009, there were an estimated 1.4 million people living with HIV/AIDS in Tanzania, which accounts for 5.6% of the total population (CIA, 2013). In 2011, 230,000 children ages 0-14 were living with HIV (World Bank, 2013). Only 40% of the people in Tanzania with advanced HIV infection received antiretroviral therapy in 2011 (World Bank, 2013). Even without the HIV epidemic, the availability of healthcare in Tanzania is extremely underdeveloped.

2.4. Assessing Progress in Rural Development

The need for development in Tanzania's rural areas is recognized and assessed by the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The government of Tanzania has incorporated the MDG into their own strategy for growth and poverty reduction, known by the Kiswahili acronym of MKUKUTA in Tanzania and MKUZA in Zanzibar (Ministry of Finance, 2013). MKUKUTA aims to reduce poverty and improve the quality of life and social well-being through education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, decent shelter and human settlement, and social protection and well-being of vulnerable groups (Ministry of Finance, 2013).

The UNDP reported on Tanzania's progress on the MDG in 2008. In an effort to meet the first MDG focused on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, "Kilimo Kwanza" (Agriculture First) was created on the national agenda to "transform agriculture through new and innovative technologies and increase food surplus, agriculture exports, sustain the life of people, and grow the economy" (UNDP, 2008). According to MKUKUTA, agriculture can support the rural poor, reduce malnutrition, and has "the potential of lifting many of the poor out of poverty" (Ministry of Finance, 2010). However, the report estimates that it is unlikely Tanzania will meet the goal of adequately reducing the proportion of the population below basic needs poverty line by 2015 (UNDP, 2008).

Though the health statistic previously presented seem bleak, the UNDP report that Tanzania is on track to meet the 4th Millennium Development Goal: "Reduce child mortality." However, Tanzania has made very slow progress in Goal 5 "Improve maternal health" (UNDP, 2008). Regarding Goal 6 "Combat HIV and AIDS, malaria and other diseases" Tanzania will need to increase human and financial resources in order to meet this goal (UNDP, 2008).

The challenges that inevitably result in remote and poverty-stricken areas means that rural development in Tanzania is difficult. The MDG will continued to be monitored as well as the goals of MKUKUTA as both the world and the Tanzanian government work toward improving development in rural Tanzania.

3.0 Overview of Education in Tanzania

As mentioned previously, an aspect of a nation's development is education, and Tanzania is no exception to this truth. Promoted by the second MDG specifically and all of the EFA goals in general, education is a key factor that must be considered in the context of rural development. An overview of education in Tanzania can build the foundation for best understanding its role in development. Public spending on education in Tanzania was 6.18% of the total GDP in 2010, and 18.33% of the government's total expenditure (World Bank, 2013). Most children attend at least some primary school, but secondary school is not widely attended and tertiary attendance is scarce. The literacy rate for adult females was 67% in 2010 and 79% for adult males (World Bank, 2013).

3.1. Primary School

Primary school in Tanzania encompasses grades 1-7 (World Bank, 2013). Only 34.69% of children were involved in any sort of pre-primary education in 2012 (World Bank, 2013). In 2008, the expenditure per student for primary school was 21% of GDP per capita (World Bank, 2013). The starting age for primary school is 7 years old (World Bank, 2013). The net intake rate in grade 1 was 88% of the official school-age population in 2007 (World Bank, 2013). The adjusted net enrollment rate of primary school in 2008 was 98% of the population of primary school age children, for both boys and girls (World Bank, 2013). However, there were still 137,123 children out of primary school in 2008 (World Bank, 2013). In 2012, there were 8,247,172 pupils in primary school and 180,987 primary school teachers (World Bank, 2013). This is a pupil-teacher ratio of 50.76 (World Bank, 2013). Almost all (96.6% of total teachers) are trained teachers (World Bank, 2013). Approximately 89.8% of students who begin primary school continue it to grade 5, and 81.3% persist through the last grade of primary school (World Bank, 2013). In 2012, 2.6% of the total primary school enrollment was repeating students (World Bank, 2013).

3.2. Secondary School

In Tanzania, students start secondary school at age 14, and continue secondary school studies for 6 years (World Bank, 2013). In 2009, only 40.9% of students in the last year of primary school progressed to secondary school; progression was lower for females

(37%) than for males (44%) (World Bank, 2013). In 2012, 1,884,272 pupils were enrolled in secondary school (World Bank, 2012). In 2012 the total secondary school enrollment accounted for only 35% of the secondary school aged population in Tanzania (World Bank, 2013). The pupil-teacher ratio in Tanzanian secondary schools was 26.39 in 2012 with a total of 80,250 secondary school teachers (World Bank, 2013). In 2010, the expenditure per student was 16% of GDP per capita for secondary school (World Bank, 2013).

3.3. Tertiary School

Tanzania has 16 universities and a number of colleges and institutions, both private and public (TCU, 2013). In 2010, the expenditure per student was 868% of GDP per capita for tertiary school. However, enrollment in tertiary education in 2012 accounted for only 3.9% of the tertiary aged population (World Bank, 2013).

3.4. Language of Instruction

One very complicated and controversial issue in education in Tanzania is the language of instruction. As a country, Tanzania has a diverse population who speak over 120 indigenous languages (Qorro, 2013). Therefore, Kiswahili has been adopted as the national language and official language of administration among the various tribes in Tanzania (Ouane & Glanz, 2011). Because Tanzania is a former British colony, English was introduced for formal secondary education and for more prestigious jobs during the colonial era (Qorro, 2013). Kiswahili has been the language of instruction in government primary schools since 1965 (Qorro, 2013). In 2005, 99.1% of primary school students were taught in Kiswahili, with only 0.9% of students learning through the medium of English in private schools (Qorro, 2013). Educational policy in Tanzania, though, maintains the tradition of colonialism and requires English to be the language of instruction for secondary and tertiary education (Qorro, 2013). This switch from Kiswahili to English for the primary school students who continue into secondary school causes problems, which hinders students' ability to learn school content because of inadequate English proficiency (Rubagumya, 1994). The Tanzanian Ministry of Education and Vocational Training introduced a revised education and training policy in 2009 allowing the language of instruction to be English even starting from nursery school (Qorro, 2013). Qorro (2013) contends that this will not fix the problem of language transition from primary to secondary school, but will only cause learning problems for more students at a younger age.

Qorro (2013) explains the harm that students can experience in their learning due to English being used as the language of instruction (LOI):

Using English as LOI does not only fail to help students learn English, it also goes to undo the best efforts of English language teachers. In the current situation, even with the best English language teacher, using the best method and applying the best practice in teaching English, students will still pick up the kind of English other teachers use in teaching history, biology, commerce, geography etc. [. . .]. This is because a large percentage of classroom time is spent speaking and listening to the incorrect form of English as it is used as LOI. In fact, the current situation whereby English is used as LOI does more harm than good to English language teacher/learning and to education as a whole. (p. 37)

Many researchers agree that “in order for the majority of Tanzanian people to participate meaningfully in education, that education has to be conducted in the language they understand” (Qorro, 2013, p. 41). Additionally, Ouane & Glanz (2011) explain that “the current research suggests that socio-culturally relevant curricula using African languages as the medium of instruction for at least six years and implementing multilingual language models in schools will not only improve the quality of education but also increase the social returns to investments in education” (p. 20). Unfortunately, Tanzania is cited as one of six African countries in a study that found these countries “have not yet reached an educational level which would significantly have an impact on economic development” as a result of various factors including “the lack of political will to adopt effective language-in-education policies” (Ouane & Glanz, 2011, p. 37).

When attempting to explain why English as the language of instruction has persisted despite its many downfalls and problems, Qorro (2013) explains that most policy makers in Tanzania are a product of the same education system that has all along been emphasizing the superiority of English over African languages” (p. 39). This language ideology is then passed on to the students. Observations in secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania have shown that classroom discourse, even with switches into Kiswahili, fortifies students’ misguided belief that English is a more appropriate language compared to Kiswahili for academics (Rubagumya, 1994).

The language of instruction in Tanzanian schools is an important consideration connected to development as Ouane & Glanz (2011) advocate “that there is no development without effective communication, which entails taking the language factor into consideration in all sectors [. . .] In order to move forward and deepen the understanding of the complex inter-relationship between language, education, poverty and development, interdisciplinary research and collaboration will be highly important” (p. 24). Progress must continue to be made in advocating for mother-tongue instruction in Tanzania and appropriate bilingual models that can promote effective English language acquisition.

3.5. Assessing Progress in Education

The Tanzanian Ministry of Finance reports in its National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty II (MKUKUTA):

“Access to education has increased at all levels, with tremendous increase happening with secondary school education [. . .] However, there are challenges of huge demand for teachers, textbooks, science laboratories and teachers housing which are being addressed and will have to be addresses more strongly in MKUKUTA II and beyond” (Ministry of Finance, 2010, p. vii).

For the second MDG, “Achieve Universal Primary Education,” the UNDP reports that Tanzania has been doing well in several indicators, and that this goal is achievable before the target year 2015 (UNDP, 2008). Concerning the EFA goals, Tanzania has been able to achieve universal access due to the establishment of free primary education (Woods, 2007). However “poverty is an important factor in school enrolment, affecting completion rates” (Woods, 2007, p. 5). One challenge that has resulted in education is that the “rapid expansion of education infrastructure” allowing Tanzania to reach universal enrollment does not guarantee quality (UNDP, 2008). Much work still remains to be done to improve education at all levels in Tanzania.

4.0 Summary of Fieldwork and Data Collection

During the months of July and August 2013, the researcher stayed in Arusha, which is a town in northern Tanzania near Mt. Kilimanjaro. During this fieldwork trip, the researcher visited a well-established English-medium primary school and teachers' training college to observe and interview teachers. Additionally, many visits were made out into Maasai villages to observe rural primary and pre-primary schools. The researcher also had the opportunity to work with one Maasai child, helping to develop her English literacy alongside a local teacher who helped her develop her Kiswahili literacy. The details of the fieldwork and a summary of the observations are presented below.

4.1. Teacher Interviews

During the fieldwork trip to Tanzania, the researcher visited an English-medium primary school in Arusha, which is on the campus of a teacher training institution called the Joshua Foundation. According to their official website, the foundation “pioneers leadership training, education, and development projects in Tanzania.” Additionally, they “train leaders and teachers, run and assist schools, upskill and empower the people, stimulate business, and provide aid” (Joshua Foundation, 2013).

An interview with an Australian teacher who teaches pre-primary at the Joshua Foundation revealed that the Joshua Foundation has a two-year teacher-training program. They currently have five trainee-teachers who have completed one year of the training and will be shortly beginning their second year. The school on the Joshua Foundation campus has two pre-primary classes and then primary classes up to Standard Four (or fourth grade). Then each year, the school will add an additional standard, so that next year they will also have Standard Five.

The trainee-teachers in the training program do some of their practice teaching in the Joshua Foundation primary school during their first year and then go out to other schools to do practice teaching during their second year of training. Because this teacher-training program is private, it is different from government teachers who do not have a choice in where they

work once they are trained by the government. The teacher training is not a university degree, but the current primary school principal and one of the other teachers at the Joshua Foundation are doing a university degree in addition.

To participate in the teacher training program, applicants must have finished secondary school with good marks and must apply and go through an interview. Also, because the program is taught in English and the primary school is an English-medium school, the applicants must have strong English language skills. The principal of the training school is from New Zealand. The Australian teacher who was interviewed said that this training college is a “really positive, great form of education.” When the teachers are practicing out in the schools, they are observed more often and given more feedback than teachers who are trained by the government. The training provided by the Joshua Foundation is aimed at helping teachers begin to “think outside of the box,” which is something not generally taught to teachers in Tanzania. Also the Australian teacher expressed a realization that she and other foreigners will not always be in Tanzania, so their goal with the Joshua Foundation is to equip and empower teachers so that Tanzanians can improve the education in Tanzania.

The visit to the primary school at the Joshua Foundation provided the opportunity to observe some classes. The school is situated with different classrooms around a soccer field. Some of the classrooms are made out of shipping containers. The students wear a normal uniform, which is a white collared shirt with a red sweater and either black trousers for the boys or a black skirt for the girls.



The soccer field at the Joshua Foundation school



Photo of a classroom made out of a shipping container at the Joshua Foundation

The first observation was conducted in the Standard 3 classroom. There were sixteen students in the class. As the school has a religious affiliation, the students began with devotions and sang and prayed in a circle. Some of the songs were English and some were Kiswahili. Then the students sat in their desks to discuss the Biblical story of Joseph. The teacher began by asking the students what they had already learned. The class brainstormed some

words such as “making choices,” “spiritually,” “academically,” “physically,” “character,” and “relationship.” The teacher then finished telling the story of Joseph (sometimes translating into Kiswahili) and asked the students to get into groups of four and write down how they think Joseph showed excellence in the areas that they previously brainstormed. I noticed that this class was very student-centered and interactive. The students were engaged in the story and were called upon to think and analyze.

The second observation was conducted in a pre-primary class, which was taught by the Australian teacher. Her class had more than 25 students, but there were two additional teacher helpers. The students were divided into different groups and doing different activities at various stations. Some students were painting, some were measuring objects with measuring tapes, some were building sculptures with play



Photo of students in Standard 3 singing in a circle at the beginning of devotions at the Joshua Foundation primary school

dough, some were counting, and some were playing with puppets. The teachers spoke to the students in English, but the observation revealed that many of the students at the stations talked among themselves in Kiswahili. After the activities, the students had porridge time, and each student had a cup of porridge before going outside to play. The observations in this classroom were very positive, and it was clear that the activities were student-centered and interactive.



*Students in a pre-primary class
at the Joshua Foundation working in stations*

In addition to lesson observations in the Joshua Foundation primary school, four teachers were interviewed. The first teacher was “Leon” who is a Tanzanian that has been teaching for two years in the Joshua Foundation primary school since completing the 2-year teacher-training program. He speaks the tribal language Kimaasai as well as Kiswahili and English. When asked about why he wanted to become a teacher, he replied that it is fun and that he enjoys being around kids.

The second teacher who consented to be interviewed was a Tanzanian teacher named “Masane” who speaks the tribal language Kihaya as well as English and Kiswahili. He also went through the 2-year teacher training at the Joshua Foundation and is now teaching students in Standard 3. Masane explained that most schools in Tanzania are teacher-centered and do not involve the students in activities, but that the methodology he learned at the Joshua Foundation is very different and more student-centered. When asked why he became a teacher, he said initially after secondary school he did not want to be a teacher but he had the opportunity, so he tried and found that he loved the students and enjoyed helping children solve their problems. He said that some of the children do not have fathers and so they call him father.

The third interviewee was a Tanzanian teacher named “John” who speaks the tribal language Kihaya as well as Kiswahili and English. He differs from the first two interviewees in that he did not go through the teacher training at the Joshua Foundation, but he was trained in a government college in Kilimanjaro for two years. Then he taught for twenty years in government and private schools, and has been teaching at the Joshua Foundation for six months. As a student in the 1970’s, John attended primary school in the USA and then joined government Kiswahili school when he moved back to Tanzania. He decided to become a teacher because many people in his family are teachers and he wants to help students get a better education. In his classroom at the Joshua Foundation he teaches Standard 4.

The last interviewee was a teacher named “Lena.” She is a Tanzanian who speaks the tribal language Meru as well as English and Kiswahili. She has taught for 12 years and is now pursuing a bachelor degree in teaching. She says that she chose to be a teacher because she wants to be a Christian teacher who teaches in God’s way.

The interviews conducted with the teachers at the Joshua Foundation primary school were very informative. It is important to recognize that this school and its teacher-training college is one of the more modern and advanced in Tanzania. The teachers at this school are generally not the same as the average teachers in the government schools. Also, these teachers teach at an English-medium primary school, so this is also different than the majority of Tanzanian primary schools, which are still officially taught in Kiswahili.

4.2. Observations in Rural Primary and Pre-primary Schools

Part of the fieldwork in Tanzania involved travel into very rural areas outside of Arusha in northern Tanzania to visit and observe schools, including three different primary schools and two different pre-primary schools.

The first school was a primary school in the village of Enkewa. This visit was conducted with a group of foreign aid workers who were delivering a donation of wooden desks to the school. This primary school had around 400 students, with about equal numbers of male and female



A photo of delivering desks to the primary school in Enkewa located in rural northern Tanzania

students. The school has all seven primary school grades and teaches 8 content subjects in Kiswahili and one subject of English. The school has only four teachers. The classrooms were very bare with a chalkboard at the front. Some of the rooms had desks, but not nearly enough for all the students. The desks that the aid workers donated during the visit were only enough for one classroom, and the students still needed to sit with three students in a desk. The school did not have books or materials, and most students come to school without pencils or paper. The students were very happy to receive the gift of the desks, and the headmaster gave a small speech about the importance of taking good care of the new desks.

Another school visit was conducted at a primary school in the rural area of Emurutoto. The primary school in Emurutoto looked very similar to the one in Enkewa. The buildings were concrete with metal roofs, and the classrooms had wooden desks and chalkboards. There are two classrooms, but the school is trying to build more. The school also has an outdoor kitchen that cooks maize for the students, but the World Food Program will stop donating the maize in September unless the school can build an indoor kitchen.



A photo of the primary school in Emurutoto



A photo of the partially constructed classroom in Emurutoto primary school

This school has 142 students. The headmaster explained that the students divide into two groups, one older and one younger, but that within one group in a classroom there are different grades. The younger class has students from grade 1-3 and the older class has students from grade 4-7. There are four teachers who teach the classes, and they go back and forth from each room. The



Photo of the teaching resources at the Emurutoto primary school

teachers do not always come to school everyday, though. The headmaster also teaches some classes as well. The school has some books and resources, but many students do not have pencil and paper.

Some of the students have to walk two hours or more to reach the school, and some travel at least 12 kilometers. The headmaster said that parents are beginning to agree to send their children, but that students cannot always come to school on time because they must take care of their animals before. During the observation, many students came late for the school day.

The headmaster said that they subjects are taught in Kiswahili, but sometimes they use the Kimaasai language to explain things. An observation was conducted in a lower grades math lesson where the teacher was teaching addition. Few of the students had pencil or paper, but would raise their hand to solve the math problem the teacher had written on the chalkboard. Then an observation was conducted in an older grades English lesson. The headmaster taught this lesson using only English as the language of instruction. The students repeated the words that the teacher said: go, sit, stand, play, sleep, wash, sweep, buy, and jump. The teacher tried to have the students demonstrate the actions, but mostly the students did not understand the instructions as they were given in English. The observations from this primary school showed that there are not enough teachers for all of the age levels and that students mostly repeat, but do not interact.



After the primary school in Emurutoto, the researcher went to the pre-primary school of Emurutoto, which was a bit far from the primary school and not accessible by road. The pre-primary school consisted of 34 students ages 3-5. There was one teacher, and the students met under a tree.

A photo of the pre-primary school in Emurutoto meeting under a tree

The teacher was teaching numbers to the students in English. He said that he speaks to the students mostly in Kiswahili, but the observation showed that he used a lot of English, which the students did not seem to understand. The children mostly only understand their mother-tongue, Kimaasai. The teacher would point to the numbers written on a small board and the students would repeat. Then the teacher wanted students to practice writing the numbers. Since most did not have pencil or paper, they wrote in the dirt with their fingers.



A photo of a pre-primary school student writing numbers in the dirt

This school visit revealed an instance where the students did not understand very much of what the teacher was trying to teach them in English. It also showed the lack of teaching resources that rural teachers have and how they must cope with this challenge.

Another school visit was conducted at a pre-primary school in another Maasai village called Oltinga. Similarly to Emurutoto, these students met under a tree outside because they do not have a building.

There were 18 students and one teacher at this school. What was special about this pre-primary school was that the teacher was much more student-centered and interactive in his lesson. The students were learning numbers in English like in Emurutoto, but the teacher also practiced the numbers with the students in Kiswahili.



A photo of the pre-primary school at Oltinga

Then the teacher created flashcards with available materials such as cardboard and seeds. The teacher would say a number and the students would choose the correct card from among all the cards on the ground.

Then the teacher had outlined letters and the students' names on additional pieces of cardboard and the students used sticks to trace glue onto the letters and paste seeds so they could have their own cards to take home and study. At this school, in spite of having no building or published materials, the teacher was able to effectively teach and engage students in this very poor and rural pre-primary school. A foreign aid worker explained that this teacher had attended some training, which is where he learned to create resources from available materials. The observation at this pre-primary school shows how important teacher training can be to improve education in rural areas.



A photo of the interactive lesson at the Oltinga pre-primary school

A visit was also made to a primary school in a village called Matale B, which is very near to the Kenyan border. Some of the students at this school had never seen a person with white skin, so they were apprehensive and even scared at first. There were about 50 students at this school and one teacher. Their school is one room made out of tin with a chalkboard at the front and wooden benches for the students.



A photo of the primary school in Matale B

During the observation, the teacher led the students in the song, “head, shoulders, knees, and toes” and completed math problems on the chalkboard. The teacher was asking the students in English about the math problems. Then the teacher had an alphabet chart and would say the letter and the corresponding word for the students to repeat. Unfortunately, the teacher did not know how to pronounce some of the English words, or even what the words was.

Overall, the fieldwork visits and observations in these rural schools in Tanzania were incredibly insightful and eye-opening. The challenges that these rural schools face are daunting. The students have to walk long ways, the buildings and resources are very primitive, and there are not enough teachers. It was also insightful to witness English being used as the language of instruction for these students and to begin to glimpse the problems that this causes in their learning. These observations in rural Tanzania have highlighted the necessity for more research to be conducted on languages of instruction in Tanzania. This information is needed to influence policy makers to make better policies that will improve education and learning for students in Tanzania. The fieldworks observations reported here also reveal the challenges that poverty and underdevelopment bring to education in rural Tanzanian schools and highlight the necessity of training teachers to overcome these challenges and provide effective education for students in spite of their poverty.

4.3. Literacy Case Study

For one week, the researcher tutored a Maasai orphan named “Peace”. The tutoring was co-taught with a Tanzanian teacher named “Anna”. The purpose for the week was to help Peace in English and Kiswahili literacy. The case of Peace is a prime example of the impact of language of instruction on the most rural students of Tanzania.



A photo of Peace and Anna during the week of tutoring

Peace is about 12 or 13 now, but became an orphan at a very young age. Her family is from Enkewa, which is a Maasai village about 3 or 4 hours from Arusha by unpaved roads. Enkewa has a primary school (as described from the researcher’s school visit in the previous

section) and a nursery school. Peace's grandmother still lives in Enkewa, so occasionally she visits there. However, Peace was also being taken care of by a family in another village, Mairewa. So, sporadically, as a young orphan, Peace had been attending primary school outside of Mairewa. However, since January 2013, she has been going to a boarding school in another village closer to Arusha called Longido, which is an English-medium primary school. At Longido, she was placed in the first class, but previously in Mairewa she had been in the 2nd or 3rd class before. However she didn't pass the test for Longido, so she was put in the 1st class when she started in January. Though the primary school at Mairew is Kiswahili-medium, Peace didn't know very much Kiswahili when she arrived at the school in Longido and she knew no English. Since she is from the Maasai tribe, her mother-tongue is Kimaasai.

Peace came to Arusha to spend the first week of holiday after her term ended at Longido in August. This was her first time to Arusha, and she was brought here by the American missionary who supports her school fees, Rachel. Rachel's main goal for the week was to give Peace some attention and care, and also to continue her schoolwork. Anna, the Tanzanian teacher, had worked with Peace previously on weekends, so Peace was already familiar with Anna and her tutoring. Rachel wanted an intensive week to give Peace encouragement on fundamental learning and to give her one-on-one help and to see what she really had learned at Longido. From Rachel's observations, Peace had learned a lot more Kiswahili and English than she expected. However, Peace still needed help with the fundamentals of literacy and learning how to read because she was not receiving this at school. Rachel's hope for Peace is that she will stay at the Longido school for as long as she wants to go, and Rachel will do her best to make it happen by helping Peace get tutoring and supporting Peace's school fees.

So for one week in August 2013, Anna and the researcher worked with Peace in Arusha for about five hours a day. Observations during the week revealed that Peace did not have a firm grasp of the alphabet. She knew the alphabet song, but had a lot of trouble saying the names of the letters from E, F, G, H, and had trouble recognizing the letters. Peace played a lot of games with the alphabet and worked on recognizing the letters and producing words that had the same initial letter. Fortunately, the alphabet and the corresponding phonetic

sounds are very similar for Kiswahili and English, so both Anna and the researcher could help Peace, and there was positive transfer between the two languages. Tutoring also involved helping Peace with math (subtraction) and learning the names of colors and shapes in both English and Kiswahili.

Though it is impossible to teach a child to read in a second and third language in just one week, the intensive week of tutoring Peace was productive. She gained some foundational knowledge of the Kiswahili and English alphabet and phonetics, and will hopefully be able to build on this as she continues to study at the English-medium primary school in Longido. However, observations of Peace during this short case study also reinforce the claim that language of instruction in Tanzania causes many problems for students, and that something needs to change in order that education can become more effective for Tanzanian students so they can use their education to continue progress in rural development.

5.0 Challenges that Tanzanian Teachers Face

The previous summary of fieldwork and data collection highlights some of the many challenges that Tanzanian teachers face in rural primary and pre-primary schools. Some of the main challenges revealed through this data include obstacles that result from the school buildings and furnishings, the curriculum and teaching materials, the teacher to student ratio, and language issues. These challenges are further reflected upon in the following sections.

5.1. School Buildings and Furnishings

The first and most obvious challenge that Tanzanian teachers face in rural primary and pre-primary schools results from the impoverished and inadequate school buildings and furnishings. The primary school at the Joshua Foundation in Arusha was the least rural and subsequently had the most advanced campus. The teachers at the Joshua Foundation faced minimal challenges resulting from the buildings and furnishings because there were enough classrooms for each grade and enough desks for each student. Some classrooms were even

resourcefully made out of shipping containers. Also, the school was equipped with kitchen facilities so that the students could be served porridge and lunch. The Joshua Foundation primary school is an elite exception, however, and observations in the more rurally located schools showed quite a different situation.

The primary schools in Enkewa, Emurutoto, and Matala B had fewer classrooms and desks. Even a donation of desks to the primary school in Enkewa was barely enough for one class, and the rural location of the school made delivering these desks a long and difficult drive over unpaved roads into the village. These rural classrooms were starkly furnished with only a primitive chalkboard at the front. The pre-primary schools in Emurutoto and Oltinga did not even have classrooms, meaning the students sat in the dirt (Emurutoto) or on wooden benches (Oltinga) underneath a tree. These situations result in minimal protection from the weather and the occasional herd of goats walking through the class. However, the lack of physical building did provide one benefit for the pre-primary school in Oltinga in that the school was easily moved out of a flood plane to a better location (under a different tree).

Another issue in these rural schools besides a lack of classrooms and desks is inadequate kitchen facilities. For example in the Emurutoto primary school, the outdoor kitchen does not meet the requirements of the World Food Program, meaning that food donations will be halted unless the kitchen can be improved. This is a serious challenge because the one meal served at school may be the best source of nutrition that many students receive. In the pre-primary schools observed, there were no kitchen facilities at all, which is to be expected since these schools do not even have classrooms either. The only food the pre-primary students had was the goats' milk that they brought themselves. It can be very difficult for malnourished children to learn, adding to the difficulties teachers face in teaching without enough classrooms or desks. Lack of development in Tanzania's rural villages is evident in the school buildings and furnishings, and these problems in turn create challenges for teachers at these rural primary and pre-primary schools.

5.2. Teaching Materials and Curriculum

Related to the issue of school buildings and furnishings is that of teaching materials and curriculum. The rural primary and pre-primary schools that were included in this fieldwork not only lacked adequate classrooms, desks, and kitchens, they also lacked supplies and

teaching material, which negatively affects curriculum and therefore the quality of teaching and learning. From among the hundreds of students observed during the school visits, very few had paper or pencils to bring from home, and the school had no supplies to give students either. For example during math lessons at both the Matale B and Emurutoto primary schools, the teacher wrote math equations on a chalk board, but few students were able to practice these problems by writing them down on their own paper. In the Emurutoto pre-primary school, the teacher tried to overcome the lack of supplies by having students trace their numbers in the dirt with their fingers or with small twigs. When students do not have adequate materials such as paper, pencils, or books, teachers face a huge challenge. Often this challenge resulted in very teacher-centered classrooms where the students could only watch and listen to the teacher write things on the chalkboard at the front of the classroom.

Connected to the teaching materials is the curriculum, which can present another challenge for teachers. For example in the Matale B primary school, the teacher was reviewing the English alphabet with students using a chart probably donated from another country. The chart showed a picture of a queen for “Q” and yacht for “Y.” The students in this rural Maasai village do not know what a queen or a yacht is and neither does their teacher. This observation showed that lack of teaching materials or inappropriate materials limit the curriculum, sometimes making the content of lessons incomprehensible for students. It is important for students to be taught lessons that relate to their lives and their experiences. This opinion was also expressed in an interview with Lena, a teacher at the Joshua Foundation primary school. Lena explained that the syllabus in Tanzanian secondary schools, which is adopted from Britain, is not practical. For example, students learn about fishing, but there are no rivers or seas close to the students. Rather, Lena believes they should learn deeply about what is close to the Tanzanians, such as agriculture. Lena says that “curriculum of Tanzania is from abroad, but it doesn’t match the environment.” It is clear that teachers face a huge challenge with a lack of materials and inappropriate curriculum in rural schools.

5.3. Student to Teacher Ratio

In the rural primary schools, another challenge results from an unbalanced student to teacher ratio. Overall, there are not enough teachers in rural schools as was previously cited in the national statistics—a 50.76 primary school pupil-teacher ratio (World Bank, 2013). This was observed during fieldwork. For example, the primary school in Enkewa had only 4 teachers

for nearly 400 students. One reason there is such a lack of teachers is because of salary. The poverty of rural schools reflected in their inadequate classrooms and teaching materials extends to the teachers' wages as well. The salary for rural teachers is not high and there is not much incentive to teach at rural schools. It was even mentioned by a teacher at the primary school in Emurutoto that their teachers do not always come to school everyday. When there are not enough teachers, students do not get enough individualized attention. In these rural schools, one teacher may have to teach a group of students from different grades or levels, or teachers may have to go in between groups of students. Instruction and learning will invariably suffer when there are not enough teachers. Additionally, in the rural areas, people are more spread out in the villages, so some students have to walk a long distance to reach their classroom. This means that students often arrive late or have sporadic attendance, as was observed in the Emurutoto primary school. When teachers already are responsible for large classrooms, it can be too much of a challenge to attend to the students who arrive late or have missed many classes. Once again these challenges in the rural schools are blatant and obvious when compared to the more elite primary school at the Joshua Foundation. At the Joshua Foundation, class sizes were much smaller, allowing the teachers to give more attention to individual students and creating more learner-centered activities.

5.4. Language Issues

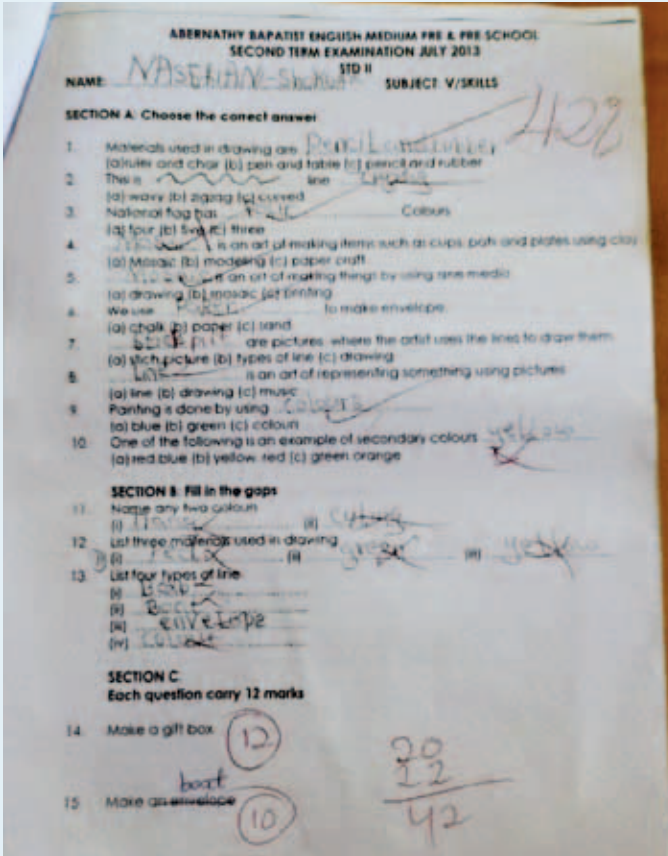
The last challenge to be discussed in this working paper is the challenge teachers face in Tanzanian schools due to language issues. The linguistic diversity of Tanzania and the controversial use of English as a language of instruction have already been previously discussed, but the following section will reflect on how the observations conducted during fieldwork exemplify and demonstrate the reality of these language challenges in specific situations in rural Tanzania.

During the observation of an English lesson taught at the primary school in Emurutoto, some challenges resulting from language issues were seen. During the lesson, students repeated the English words they were supposed to be learning (go, sit, stand, play, sleep, wash, sweep, buy, and jump). But when the teacher tried to teach these words further by asking the students to demonstrate the actions, the students had trouble participating because English was being used as the sole language of instruction. The students had not understood

their teacher's instructions to act out the words. It was also observed that the teacher was teaching incorrect forms of the verb. For example he said: "Stand. I am stand" instead of "I am standing." In this situation, both the students' level of English and the teacher's level of English presented a challenge for quality teaching and learning. Similarly, in the primary school in Emurutoto, the teacher was using English to teach numbers, but the students showed many signs of confusion and lack of understanding. Likewise in the primary school in Matele B, the teacher was using English to explain the math problems, which the students seemed not to follow. While teaching the alphabet in English, the teacher was also exhibiting incorrect pronunciation and confusion about some English vocabulary. The observations in this school showed once again that using English as the language of instruction is not always best for education.

From the observations conducted during the literacy case study with Peace, many other examples emerged showing the challenges that exist in Tanzanian education due to language issues. The situation of Peace is likely similar for many students in rural schools who have a tribal mother tongue, but must use a second and third language (Kiswahili and English) at primary school. In the case study of Peace, she had first been attending primary school taught in Kiswahili but now attends primary school in taught using English as the language of instruction. Because her language skills in both English and Kiswahili are very low, she is back in the first grade of primary school despite already being 12 years old. Throughout her schooling, Peace has not been supported in obtaining literacy in her mother tongue (Kimaasai) and has yet to be effectively taught basic literacy skills in either English or Kiswahili.

Peace had received low marks on her exam in July, so the goal of the intense literacy tutoring was to help her learn what she had struggled with. Observations of Peace support the claim Ouane & Glanze (2011) make that "the language used in examinations has a great impact on students' performance in exams." and that "in all subject matters students' scores reflect their proficiency in the language used in the exam and that difficulties with, for example, English have a negative effect on results" (p. 35). In her test, it was clear that Peace did not understand the questions as they were written in English, and so she simply filled in the blanks with English words she knew would be answers somewhere on the test, though she didn't know to which questions they were the correct answer.



Page from Peace's exam from her school in Longido

For example, question 11 asks the student to name two colours, but Peace wrote “red, green, yellow” for question 12, which asked the student to name 3 materials used in drawing. When Peace came to be tutored, she knew all of the colors in her mother tongue, but did not know them in Kiswahili or English. The test written in English did not allow Peace to demonstrate her knowledge of colors because it was written in a language she did not understand. Just one week of intense tutoring with Peace revealed the debilitating struggle that students must endure in rural Tanzanian primary schools when learning in a second or third language. If a

teacher had an entire classroom full of students like Peace, it would be an intense challenge to address their all of their linguistic and learning needs.

Regarding language issues in Tanzanian education, the interviews with teachers at the Joshua Foundation provided insightful first-hand information. Leon said that as a student himself in Tanzania, he was in an English medium school for grades 1-4 but then switched to a Kiswahili medium school because the English school was too expensive. In his classroom now at the Joshua Foundation, Leon says that some of his students struggle in learning because English is their third language. Many of his students have a tribal language as their mother tongue and then Kiswahili as a second language, so he feels that especially reading and writing in English is the main problem for many of his students. Leon also said he felt the switch from Kiswahili-medium primary schools to English-medium secondary

schools was a problem in Tanzanian education, so it would be better if all schools were either English-medium or Kiswahili-medium. Then he admitted that he felt students would have an advantage in life if they knew English, so perhaps the government should make a law to change all schools to English-medium schools. However, he also felt that it would be very important to train teachers well in English. Leon thinks that when he is a parent, he will put his children in English-medium schools starting in nursery school.

When asked about languages of instruction in Tanzanian schools, Masane said that he was taught in Kiswahili for primary school and English for secondary school, but that there was not a strong insistence to actually use English in his secondary school. Now that Masane is teaching at an English-medium school, he said that in his opinion English-medium schools are better than Kiswahili-medium schools. His reason is that children can learn Kiswahili just by living in Tanzania, but when they learn English at school, it can open a whole new world to them. In his classroom some students know Kimaasai, but they only use Kiswahili or English at school. If his students do not understand something he says in English, he sometimes translates into Kiswahili for them.

John's secondary school was English-medium, but he noticed that most students transitioning from Kiswahili-medium primary schools found it very difficult. He thinks the current situation is better because many more students come from English-medium primary schools, so they are able to cope with English-medium secondary schools. John says his students like English because it is a challenge and they are interested in learning. His class seems to contain two groups, though, one group of students who have been learning in English-medium for all of primary school and the other group of students who have transferred from government schools and struggle much more in their English. John says that he does not often translate into Kiswahili for his students, but instead looks for an easier way to explain difficult concepts in English. John's opinion is that the switch from Kiswahili-medium primary schools to English-medium secondary schools is very hard. He does not think having Kiswahili-medium secondary schools is a good solution, though, because there are not enough books or technology in Kiswahili. His conclusion is that the government should change primary school to English-medium. John also believes that students may not need English in their jobs in Tanzania, but they will need to have a certificate in English from secondary school to get a good job.

When asked about language of instruction in Tanzania in her interview, Lena answered that it is very important for people in Tanzania to know Kiswahili. Also, since many of them will stay with their tribes, it is important to know their tribal languages. However, she feels that tribal languages, like Kimaasai, are becoming lost. Lena's father was strict with her about using her mother tongue, but became more lax with her younger siblings. The result is that she thinks she is the last one who knows her mother tongue fluently. Lena also says that English is important because it is an international language. However, the switch from Kiswahili-medium primary school to English-medium secondary school is too difficult. In the last year, she says there was a mass failure in Tanzanian secondary students. Lena proposes that the last year of primary school should help students to slowly adapt to English. She says if she were in charge of education, she would focus on training the teachers well and training the community so they understand what is happening in the schools.

It is interesting that all the teachers interviewed at the Joshua Foundation agreed that transitioning from a Kiswahili-medium primary school to an English-medium secondary school is a problem for students in Tanzania. Because these teachers teach at an English-medium primary school, they also see students struggle who transfer from Kiswahili-medium primary schools. Some of the teachers believe that the solution would be for all of primary school to be English-medium. However, Lena also recognizes the importance of Kiswahili and mother tongue languages as well. These interviews show how complex and critical the issue is of language of instruction in Tanzania and how it presents many challenges to students and teachers.

6.0 Conclusion and Implications for Teacher Training in Tanzania

This report has been just a glimpse into the rural development and educational systems of Tanzania. The statistics show the challenges that Tanzanians encounter everyday because poverty and underdevelopment. Especially in rural villages, people face challenges of hunger, inadequate health care, low standard of living, and underdeveloped agricultural systems. Education in Tanzania is affected both by the challenges of rural development and poverty, but

also by the policies and ideologies concerning languages of instruction in Tanzania. It is already established by the MDG that education is a vital part of development in any country. Tanzania needs to improve education so that its better-educated citizens can contribute to development.

One way to improve education in Tanzania is to better equip teachers to meet the challenges that poverty and underdevelopment have created in rural schools. This can be done through improved teacher training. The teacher training provided at the Joshua Foundation is already a good example as it is aimed at helping teachers begin to “think outside of the box.” Observations at the Joshua Foundation primary school showed that the teachers had already begun to create more learner-centered activities and engage the students in their classes. Of course the primary school at the Joshua Foundation does not face as many challenges as the primary schools in more rural villages. But teacher training can help teachers engage students even when there are no classrooms or books. The best example from the fieldwork is the pre-primary school at Oltinga. The teacher there used his training to create learning materials out of available resources such as cardboard and seeds. The teacher at Oltinga did not ask students to simply recite numbers, but created an interactive and tactile lesson with flashcards. This teacher also addressed the language challenge by delivering a “bilingual” number lesson using both Kiswahili and English numbers. The curriculum at Oltinga was more linguistically accessible to students because of this. Also, the teacher made the lesson more relevant to students by using their own names to teach letters and writing. Students were not confused about “queens” and “yachts” but were beginning to connect letters and phonetics to words they already knew. The school at Oltinga did not have a classroom, did not have books or paper, and did not have multiples teachers, but because of a little bit of training, the lone teacher at this school was able to provide an engaging lesson to the group of rural and impoverished pre-primary students sitting under a tree.

The information reported in this working paper and the inclusion of first-hand observations and reflections from fieldwork are just the beginning in the process of shedding light upon teaching challenges in Tanzania due to rural underdevelopment and language issues. It is vital that more research is conducted and that improvements continue to be made in education through teacher training. It is heart wrenching to see hungry children writing numbers in the dirt, but it is also encouraging to see a teacher overcome many challenges to engage and teach students using just some cardboard, glue, and seeds.

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