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## EDUCATION FOR ALL AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN TANZANIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

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### ABSTRACT

The educational development of children continues to dominate the global agenda. To date, the emphasis has largely been on universal access to quality basic education for all children. This paper examines the advances made in addressing the needs of Tanzanian children with disabilities under the global movement on Education for All (EFA) led by UNESCO. The paper opens with a brief synopsis of the educational system in Tanzania and then discusses the relevant global resolutions on education and developments relating to EFA and children with disabilities. It will be argued that, in spite of Tanzania's progress in the area of EFA, there remain significant barriers to providing quality basic education for children with disabilities. As Tanzania engages with post-2015 education plans and deliberations (now called UN Sustainable Development Goals, launched in Sept 2015), measures must be taken to address socio-cultural, economic, political, physical infrastructure, and other related obstacles to quality education for all, especially for children with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Disability, Children, Education For All, Tanzania.

### INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

Tanzania was founded in 1964 following the amalgamation of mainland Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar. Like other nations, Tanzania views education as key to providing the young with opportunities to achieve their full potential in terms of acquiring the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes needed for them to grow and develop and to enter adulthood and the workforce (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2000). As noted by the government, education is vital to "improving health; increasing productivity of the poor; creating competitive economies; enhancing quality of life in society; enlightening and empowering individuals; practicing good governance; and addressing problems such as poverty and conflict" (URT, 2000, pp. 5–6).

Tanzania's current education system is comprised of three levels: 1) basic education consisting of two years of pre-primary education and seven years of primary education,<sup>i</sup> which culminates in students taking the

Primary School Leaving Examination; 2) two stages of secondary education, which includes four years of Lower Secondary (often referred to as Form I to Form IV), and two years of Higher Secondary (Form V and Form VI); and 3) three or more years of technical and higher education which prepares students to enter various occupations and self-employment. The provision of education in Tanzania is informed by the Education and Training Policy, Higher Education Policy, Technical Education Policy, and Education Policy of Zanzibar. These policies are concerned with access, equity, quality, cost sharing, and other fundamental education-related matters (URT, 2000). However, starting in 2016, Tanzania's education practices will be informed by the 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP, URT, 2014). Among other changes, the new education policy has redefined primary or basic education, extending it from 7 to 10 years (HakiElimu, 2015).

**History of Education for Children with Disabilities in Tanzania:** The education of children with disabilities<sup>ii</sup> in Tanzania can be traced back to Christian missionaries in the late 1940s who established formal regular schools

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(Stone-McDonald, 2014; Tungaraza, 1994). Anglican missionaries founded the earliest special education school in 1950, and the Roman Catholic Church established the first known school for people with hearing impairment in 1963. Services for those with physical disabilities were introduced by the Salvation Army in 1967 (Karakoski & Ström, 2005). These services were all primarily missionary-based rather than under the auspices of the government. Although Tanzania gained independence from Britain in 1961, the country's education system remained largely colonial and prone to discrimination against students on the basis of race, class, religion, and political allegiance (Tungaraza, 1994). Before independence, segregation in education was the rule, with only "a few individuals earmarked to service colonial interests" allowed access to education under the 1927 Education Ordinance (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1995, p. i). Little effort was made to integrate or accommodate children with disabilities (Tungaraza, 1994). After independence, the government passed the Education Act of 1962 to regulate education and abolish all forms of discrimination in the education system that were based on race and religion (Mushi, 2009). Privately owned primary schools were nationalized and education was made free at all levels (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2000).

The role of the Tanzanian government in the field of special education expanded when in 1966 an annex for children with visual impairment was established at the Uhuru Co-Educational School in Dar es Salaam (Tungaraza, 1994). Moreover, in collaboration with religious organizations, the government established schools for children with physical and intellectual disabilities in 1974 and 1982, respectively (Stone-McDonald, 2014; Tungaraza, 1994). This growing commitment to special needs education led to the creation of special education teacher training programs at the Tabora and Mpwawa teacher training colleges between 1976 and 1983 (Tungaraza, 1994). In 1981, the government established the Department of Special Education at the Tanzanian Institute of Curriculum Development to develop curricula and teaching and learning materials for students with disabilities (Tungaraza, 1994). In 1982, the government opened a school for special needs education, the purpose of which was to provide services for children with cognitive challenges. A small number of services for children with autism and visual and hearing impairments were opened

in 1984 (Karakoski & Ström 2005; Mboya & Possi, 1996), and enrolments for these three groups of children increased rapidly (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1989).

The focus on people with disabilities continued in Tanzania and in 1967, the Socialism and Self-Reliance Policy and the Education for Self-Reliance (ESR) Policy were developed to encourage equality and respect for all people, as well as equal opportunities in education (Tungaraza, 1994). The constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania prohibits all forms of discrimination and recognizes human rights including rights of people with disabilities (EFA National Review Report, 2015). The Tanzanian National Education Act was passed in 1978, making education compulsory for all children. Article 56 of the Act stipulates that every Tanzanian is entitled to receive education according to his or her ability (URT, 1978). Tanzania also signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Convention on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (2006) resulting in the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010, the Standard Rule on Equalization of Opportunities for People with Disabilities (1993), and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994). Although the principle of primary education as a human right was established by policies pursuant to this legislation, scholars such as Mboya and Possi (1996) have argued that it did little to increase educational opportunities for children with disabilities. This may be due, in part, to the fact that the majority of children confronting barriers to learning were, and still are, being denied the right to an education (Karakoski & Ström, 2005). Nonetheless, the identified legislative and policy initiatives by the Tanzanian government continued to inform developments in education in general and progress in special education in particular.

Following the ratification of various United Nations (UN) conventions including the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and the 1990 establishment of the EFA movement at the World Conference on Education, the United Republic of Tanzania introduced a series of programs promoting education, including the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP I and II) (Komba &

Nkumbi, 2008; Tungaraza, 2015). The government’s goal was to expand enrolment and increase access to quality primary education for all children. For instance, the PEDP sought to ensure that all children from various backgrounds, including orphans, children from remote areas, and those with disabilities, had access to quality primary education. Consequently, statistics on disability by Tanzania’s Ministry of Education and Vocational Training revealed that enrolment of students with disabilities in primary school increased by 60% during

the period 2006 to 2011 (from 18,982 to 30,433 students) as shown in Table 1 (URT, 2014). This increase in enrolment may be attributed to improvements in community awareness about disability, the government’s decision to abolish school fees, and the introduction of a mandatory enrolment policy for school-aged children under the PEDP program (UNESCO, 2014; Stone-MacDonald, 2014; Woods, 2008); these actions are in line with EFA initiatives.

Table 1. Enrolment of Students with Disabilities in Tanzanian Primary Schools, 2008–2013.

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of Students Enrolled	34,661	27,422	36,585	30,433	28,195	27,853

Source: MOEVT, BEST 2008–2013 cited by URT, 2014, p. 35.

However, enrolment decreased to 28,195 in 2012 and 27,853 in 2013, a decrease of about 7.4% compared to the enrolment of 30,433 in 2011 (Ministry of Education and Culture, URT, 2012). According to the Tanzanian EFA National Review Report (2015), enrolment of students with disabilities has continued to fluctuate, declining to 24,584 in 2013. Although no precise explanations were provided about these declines, the report indicates inconsistency in assessment and identification of children and students with a disability in the country. Reliable data on students with a disability is not just important but essential for planning and support purposes.

**Status of EFA for Children with Disabilities:** Since there is a dearth of accurate information about the numbers of students with disabilities enrolled in primary schools in Tanzania, much of the planning for EFA or for students with disabilities is based on annual school censuses, which are not reliable due to the use of unstandardized identification criteria (EFA National Review Report, 2015), and approximations from the national census results. For example, the 2002 national census estimated that there were about 1,900,000 people with disabilities in Tanzania (Karakoski & Strom, 2005). The 2008 Disability Survey, conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in collaboration with Zanzibar’s Office of the Chief Government Statistician (OCGS) and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in Tanzania, indicated that there were 2,421,276 persons with disabilities in the country. The types of impairments identified in the 2008 survey included sight, hearing, mobility, cognition, and communication impairments. Of the 2,421,276 people with disabilities, 375,071 were children aged 4 to 14 years. Only 142,527

(38%) of these children were attending primary school. This percentage of primary school-age children with disabilities attending school was well below the Millennium Development Goals target which called for 100% primary enrolment by 2015 (NBS, 2008). The NBS and OCGS report revealed that some children with disabilities (16%) were refused entry or registration, particularly into “regular” schools with children who are not disabled, because of their disability (NBS, 2008).

Considering the low primary school enrolment rates for children with disabilities identified in the 2008 Disability Survey, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzania recommended in 2011 that measures be taken to sensitize the community about disability and to identify and enrol all children with special needs in schools (Stone-MacDonald, 2014; URT, 2012). As such, the country continues to recognize the right of students with disabilities to an education. This is commendable given that Tanzania remains one of the 14 countries with the lowest number of children attending school (UNESCO, 2014). Over one million children are currently not attending school in the country, and children with disabilities are the most disadvantaged (UNESCO, 2014). As noted by Bhalalusesa (2005), more than 60% of school-aged children with disabilities in Tanzania are out of school, with the number varying according to gender and geographical location as well as the type of exceptionality. Nevertheless, Tanzania has taken positive measures to improve the educational status of children with disabilities by (i) developing disability policies, (ii) establishing inclusive schools, (iii) addressing the disability stigma, and (iv) improving teacher training. A discussion of these four measures follows.

**Disability Legislation and Policies in Tanzania:** Since independence, the rights of people with disabilities have become increasingly acknowledged in Tanzania as evidenced by the enactment of such policies and legislation as the 1977 Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania; Cabinet Paper No. 19 of 1981; the Disabled Persons Employment Act of 1982; the Disabled Persons (Care and Maintenance) Act of 1982; the Government Notice No. 464 of 1995 on Disabled People; the National Disability Policy of 2004; the Zanzibar Disability Development Policy of 2004; the Zanzibar Education Policy: Transition Towards Inclusive Education of 2006; Zanzibar's Rights and Privileges Act No. 9 of 2006; the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010; the National Disability Mainstreaming Strategy, 2010–2015; and the first and second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP I & II—in Kiswahili MKUKUTA I & II) policy (EFA National Review Report, 2015; URT, 2010b). Of particular importance are the first and second NSGRP policies and the Persons with Disabilities Act, which have implications for primary education. Let us briefly examine these initiatives.

The first NSGRP (2005–2010) “recognized disability as a cross-cutting issue” (p. 36) and provided guidelines for integrating people with disabilities into all spheres of Tanzanian life. The NSGRP plan advocated increasing the enrolment of students with disabilities in primary education from 0.1% in 2000 to 20% by 2010 (Karakoski & Ström, 2005). Through the first NSGRP (NSGRP I), the government committed to ensuring that all children, including those with disabilities, pregnant schoolgirls, orphans, and other vulnerable children have access to quality, child-friendly and gender-sensitive primary education (Karakoski & Ström, 2005; Mwaipopo, Lihamba, & Njewe, 2011). In line with this commitment, the NSGRP I prescribed the following steps as a way of improving education access for these vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities: (i) reviewing education policies to ensure they reflect inclusive education practices; (ii) providing in-service training for practising teachers to ensure they provide quality education that meets the needs of children with disabilities; (iii) providing transportation to children with disabilities in rural and remote areas; (iv) ensuring schools are accessible; (v) working towards early identification and intervention; (vi) providing facilities and resources for students with disabilities, including

hearing aids, audio-books, and print Braille books (Karakoski & Ström, 2005, pp. 6–7).

The second NSGRP (NSGRP II) was a continuation of the Tanzanian government's commitment to accelerating economic growth, fighting poverty, and addressing the needs of vulnerable populations as stated in NSGRP I. The implementation period for NSGRP II was between 2010/11 and 2014/15 (Mwaipopo, Lihamba, & Njewe, 2011; URT, 2010a). Regarding the education of children with disabilities, NSGRP II reiterated the NSGRP I provisions to expand education access at all levels of education. It also made provision for equipping laboratories, gyms and sports fields with accessible facilities for children with disabilities, addressing the problem of high drop-out rates, and promoting pre-service and in-service teacher training programs in regular and inclusive education (URT, 2010a).

As a result of the NSGRP commitments and the ratification of various UN conventions and movements, the government of Tanzania enacted the Persons with Disabilities Act in 2010 to protect the rights of all people with disabilities (URT, 2010a). Among others, Part VII, Section 27 (1) stressed that “persons with disabilities of all ages and gender shall have exactly the same rights to an education and training in an inclusive setting” (Tungaraza, 2015, p. 116). The Act specified that every child with a disability will have equal rights in relation to admission to public and private schools. The policy also mandated that a child with a disability will attend a regular public or private school, except where a need for sign language communication is required. Further, in regular schools, children with disabilities are to be provided with appropriate support and learning services from a qualified teacher or a teacher assigned for that purpose (Global Accessibility News, 2014; Mwaipopo, Lihamba, & Njewe, 2011; Tungaraza, 2015). The Act places emphasis on inclusive education so as to ensure an increase in the number of students with all types of disabilities who have access to education.

It is crucial that Tanzania has official policies and laws that echo international resolutions aimed at promoting education for students with disabilities. However, intentions and policies are only part of what is required to improve access and participation of children with disabilities in the education system in Tanzania. There must also be efforts to address the current barriers to delivering quality education and progress towards Tanzania's goal of EFA (Woods, 2008). In order to

achieve EFA goals for children with disabilities, Tanzania needs a strong political will and commitment from leaders and politicians, plus adequate financial resources (Bhalalusesa, 2005).

**Establishment of Inclusive Schools:** In response to the international and national policies on education for children with disabilities, such as the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action 1994, Tanzania began establishing inclusive schools for all children with and without disabilities (Loreman et al., 2010; Mohamedali, 2011; Tungaraza, 2015). An inclusive school not only enrolls children with disabilities but also represents a shift from viewing disability as a problem to perceiving the curriculum, teaching methods, and school environment as barriers to learning (Polat & Kisanji, 2009).

Tanzania's creation of inclusive schools is a positive response to the call made by delegates at the Salamanca Conference of 1994 for governments to adopt laws and policies on inclusive education (Peters, 2004; Tungaraza, 2015). There were only four inclusive schools in Tanzania when the program started in 1998 (Tungaraza, 2015). By 2013, the number had increased to 377 (Stone-McDonald, 2015). However, and as mentioned above, the mere existence of these schools does not guarantee quality education for children with disabilities. Other factors, including qualified teachers, accessible environments, appropriate teaching and learning materials, and positive teacher and community attitudes towards inclusion are also essential (Polat & Kisanji, 2009; Stone-McDonald, 2014).

**Addressing Disability Stigma:** Although conflicting interpretations of attitudes, beliefs, meanings and perceptions of disability persist in Tanzania (Kisanji, 1995, 1998), there have been improvements in creating awareness about disability (Tungaraza, 1994, 2015). Organizations advocating for the rights of persons with disabilities include the Tanzanian government, non-governmental organizations, the Tanzania Federation of Disabled People's Organizations (SHIVYAWATA), the Organization for Intellectual Disabilities, associations of individuals with disabilities, sections of the mass media, and religious institutions. These bodies have helped to increase societal awareness about the exclusion and stigmatization of people with disabilities in schools, work places, and public places. The government has been training professionals, such as nurses, teachers, and social workers, in approaches to locating children

with disabilities in communities and bringing them to school (Tungaraza, 2015). The government is also encouraging multi-professional teams to create community awareness about disability (Carlsson & Kumerius, 2012). In addition, civil society organizations dedicated to helping people with disabilities are using theatrical performances, seminars, and workshops to sensitize the public on disability as well as to educate parents about the needs of children with disabilities (Carlsson & Kumerius, 2012). Recent ethnographic studies done by Stone McDonald (2014, 2015) in rural Lushoto district in Tanzania revealed that many parents are now, some for the first time, sending children with a disability to school and these children have reported positive experiences. Tungaraza, (1994, 2015) also reported that when children with disabilities are included in regular classrooms, stigmatization declines. This is because they get opportunities to make new friends and share new experiences, which leads to greater acceptance by their peers inside and outside of the school (Wood, 1993). Learning in the regular classroom also allows students with disabilities to develop a sense of appreciation of their worth, and of their acceptance by their peers in the mainstream, and this helps improve their self-esteem (Katz & Miranda, 2002; Williams & Downing, 1998). The Tanzanian government should, therefore, continue expanding quality inclusive schools and also find ways to encourage enrolment and keep more children with disabilities in the schools.

**Improvements in Teacher Training:** The attainment of quality education for all depends on, among other factors, the process of preparing teachers (Darling-Hammond, Hammerness, Grossman, Rust, & Shulman, 2005; Lukanga, 2013; Shulman, 1987). Research (e.g., Lukanga, 2013; Shulman, 1987) shows that well-trained teachers are an important influence on student success and that strong teacher education programs pave the way for quality education. Though still far from meeting the standards and expectations for students with special needs, the training of Tanzanian teachers in the area of special needs has immensely improved. In the past, only a handful of teachers had a bachelor's degree in special education or a certificate or diploma in the field. At present, many teachers are acquiring some skills in special education, and this is evidenced by the fact that in 2005, more than 1,000 teachers have graduated with a bachelor's degree in special education and others have

obtained diplomas and certificates in special education (Stone-McDonald, 2014). This is one outcome of a broad policy of the Tanzanian government of mandating post-secondary institutions to provide training in special needs instruction. A number of colleges and universities in Tanzania are now offering special education degree programs as well as diploma and certificate programs, including the Open University of Tanzania, the University of Dodoma, St. John's University, Tumaini University, and Patandi Teachers College (Tungaraza, 2014).

**Obstacles to Realizing Education for All for Children with Disabilities:** The primary barrier to achieving EFA for the children with disabilities in Tanzania is the nation's poverty. The majority of the national community lives in poverty (Abdu, 2013) and there are inadequate resources left for meeting the educational needs of the population. With funding that is far lower than is the case for other East African countries, the government of Tanzania continues to perform dismally when it comes to providing materials and resources essential for teaching students with disabilities (Mohamedali, 2011; Stone-MacDonald, 2014; Tungaraza, 1994, 2015; Woods, 2008) and even those without disabilities (Bhalalusesa, 2005; Woods, 2008). As in other low-income countries, Tanzania relies in part on donor funds to bridge the budget gap (UNESCO, 2014). Unfortunately, most of these donor funds are conditional, unreliable, and insufficient to meet the country's educational needs. For example, in the case of cuts in financial aid from the World Bank to developing countries, financial aid to Tanzania fell from US \$88 million in 2002 to less than US \$0.3 million in 2011 (UNESCO, 2014). These cuts have had serious consequences for developing nations, and particularly for their education and education sectors.

As a result of these economic challenges, there is a shortage of well-trained special needs teachers. Although Tanzania has made improvements in the training of special needs teachers, the shortage persists. Stone-MacDonald (2014) noted that only about 1% of the 118,000 teachers in the country have a certificate or diploma training in special education. Massenga and Mkandawire (2007) add that many teachers in inclusive schools lack the skills required to work with children with special needs (see also Kapinga, 2012; Tungaraza, 2014), with most teachers trained only to work with mainstream children (Mmbaga, 2002). Because most

teachers are not sufficiently prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities, Stone-McDonald (2015) found that some teachers end up viewing the students as a burden or a problem. For this reason, the teachers either deny students with special needs entry to school or avoid teaching classes that include them, particularly those with visual impairments (Tungaraza, 2015). These practices contradict the UN Conventions on Human Rights and Child Rights and EFA, all of which Tanzania has signed or committed to implementing. Teachers who discriminate against students with special needs also deviate from the 1995 and the 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP), which stipulate that every child has the right to adequate primary education (Kapinga, 2012; URT, 1995, 2014). Indeed, the rising number of inclusive schools mentioned earlier largely reflects an improvement in the quantity rather than the quality of education for children with disabilities. It is important that every inclusive school has sufficient resources, in both quality and quantity, including qualified teaching staff, to meet the needs of such students.

The other limitation to the realization of EFA for children with disabilities is the lack of adequate teaching and learning resources. There are only a few up-to-date resources that teachers can use to support students with disabilities (Hommes, 2007; Kisanji, 1995; Polat & Kisanji, 2009; Tungaraza, 2015). Because schools are poorly funded, very limited resources are available to carry out the requisite assessment and intervention processes (Bhalalusesa, 2005; Hommes, 2007; Mohamedali, 2011; UNESCO, 2014). In Tanzanian schools, there are insufficient resource specialists, combined with inaccessible classrooms and a lack of Braille materials and sign language interpreters. Class sizes are large, which poses a challenge to delivering quality instruction (Polat & Kisanji, 2009; Tungaraza, 2015). Even though teachers strive to support children with disabilities, it is difficult to do so effectively with classes of 45 to 50 students (see Mamdani, Rajani, Leach, Tumbo-Masabo, & Omondi, 2009). Ample financial resources are required if schools are to offer quality education to students with disabilities.

Additionally, there is a lack of adequate, accessible physical infrastructure to allow easy access to school for the majority of children with disabilities (Cabot, 2010; Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2010). For instance, classrooms in many schools in Tanzania have one or more staircase. Students with physical disabilities are

carried up these stairs by their peers, a practice that is unsafe for both parties. There are also inadequate and often inaccessible sanitation facilities (Cabot, 2010; Kisanji, 2009; Mohamedali, 2011; Tungaraza, 2015). Washrooms are small, and a student using a wheelchair cannot easily navigate these spaces. Altering some of the physical features of schools, both within and outside school buildings, is critical to realizing the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Challenges posed by the curriculum continue to frustrate efforts to meet EFA goals. Relevant curriculum that meets the needs of diverse groups of learners is critical to making quality education a reality. Children with disabilities struggle to cope with the demands made by the curriculum owing to such factors as reading difficulties, failure to comprehend information (Martinussen, 2013), and visual or hearing impairment. Teachers are constrained in their ability to adapt and modify curricular content to enable students with disabilities to participate in the learning process (Soukop, Wehmeyer, Bashinski, & Bovaird, 2007). For example, Tanzanian students of all abilities at every grade level are subjected to a single rigid national curriculum and pedagogy with only minor modifications by teachers (Tungaraza, 2015). Moreover, teachers are under significant pressure from the Ministry of Education, school administrators, and education inspectors to complete the set syllabus on time (Mamdani et al., 2009; Polat & Kisanji, 2009). These pressures limit teachers' flexibility and ability to modify curricular content and pedagogy to meet the needs of children with disabilities, especially in inclusive classrooms (Tungaraza, 2015).

Social-cultural factors are also a significant barrier to EFA for children with disabilities. Education of children with disabilities is impacted by the Tanzanian people's deep prejudices against people with disabilities (Kisanji, 2009; Pascale, 2011; Possi, 1999; Stone-MacDonald, 2014). Many people tend to associate a disability with a curse, evil spirits, or witchcraft (Legal and Human Rights Center, 2012). For instance, some individuals have attacked and even murdered people with albinism, in the belief that their body parts will bring good fortune and good health (Cruz-Inigo, 2011; Legal and Human Rights Center, 2012). Consequently, many parents have prevented their albino children from going to school. Often parents of children with disabilities are influenced by the stigma attached to disability and will not take

their children to school or indeed to any public place. Many children with disabilities are still hidden away or neglected by their families and thus never enrolled in school (Possi, 1999; Stone-MacDonald, 2014). Tungaraza (2015) reported that some parents abandon their disabled children once they are enrolled in school. As a whole, support from parents and the community for educating children with disabilities is still unsatisfactory in Tanzania (Tungaraza, 2015).

Given these social and cultural challenges, the Tanzanian government and non-governmental initiatives for EFA for children with disabilities must target the creation of greater awareness and involvement on the part of families as well as the community at large. Unless families and society as a whole change their prejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities, it will be difficult to address other important aspects such as infrastructure, funding, and resources for children with disabilities. The successful implementation of EFA for children with disabilities requires full involvement of all stakeholders, including government sectors, private sectors, parents, schools, people with disabilities, and the larger community. This involvement will not be forthcoming until the broader negative attitudes towards people with disabilities are tackled.

**Recommendations for Improving EFA for Children with Disabilities in Tanzania:** Today, in 2016, Tanzania faces immense challenges in the matter of actualizing EFA for children with and without disabilities. What is required, in particular, is additional teacher training and changes to the curriculum, along with increased funding, political will, accountability, and collaboration among all the stakeholders in the education system.

Tanzania needs to increase its investment in the education of children with disabilities, particularly in the areas of teacher training and school personnel (Massenga & Mkandawire, 2007). Although the Ministry of Education has called for special education to be taught at teacher education colleges (Tungaraza, 1994), this alone will not suffice. It is important that the existing training programs be expanded and sustained. The training should also focus on the social perceptions of disability to help promote greater understanding of how, aside from the functional limitations an individual may have, society plays a key role in "disabling" people (Oliver, 1990, 1996).

It is crucial that the government of Tanzania makes

specific changes to teacher training and general educational practices. For example, teacher training should address the use of outdated and offensive terms such as *shida* (problem or troublesome), *mbovu* (defective), *mvivu* (lazy) and *mzigo* (burden) to refer to people with disabilities (Stone-MacDonald, 2015). Moreover, in order to achieve effective learning in an inclusive classroom, it is necessary to make changes to the curriculum (Loreman, Deppeler, & Harvey, 2010; Peterson & Hittie, 2010; Silver, 2006). While students with disabilities should participate in the regular classroom as much as possible, they will benefit from teachers adapting and modifying curricular and learning materials, differentiating instruction, providing special conditions for assessment and other accommodations, and providing a highly individualized curriculum (Martinussen, 2013; Peterson & Hittie, 2010; Silver, 2006). Udvari-Solner (1994) suggested that the conceptualization, selection, and implementation of curricular adaptations for students with disabilities should be a team approach that takes into account the structure of instruction, evaluation criteria for the tasks to be accomplished, the learning environment, materials for learning, and alternative activities that can foster participation and interaction. In Tanzania, there is a need to design curriculum and instructional and assessment methods that match the diverse needs of learners. Such a curriculum would require collaboration between planners, curriculum developers, school administrators and teachers who are well versed in course content, pedagogy, and the ethics of caring (see Noddings, 1988).

Successful and sustainable EFA initiatives require a strong national economy. With a strong economy, Tanzania will be able to fund accessible infrastructure and teaching and learning resources required by students with disabilities. That means developing the economy and minimizing dependence on external aid (UNESCO, 2014). While aid plays an important role in supporting EFA programs in developing nations like Tanzania, a focus on revitalizing the country's economy and making it self-sufficient is key to implementing sustainable EFA initiatives. Tanzania is endowed with a rich bounty of natural resources, which, if well managed, can help to build a thriving economy and to reduce reliance on foreign aid. No country has achieved sustainable development through foreign aid alone (Tungaraza, 1994).

In addition to growing the economy, Tanzania should work towards the establishment of partnerships and multi-sectoral collaboration among government agencies and ministries, NGOs, and private sector institutions supporting special needs education. The nation should foster collaboration between communities and families in matters relating to the education of children with disabilities and encourage community-based advocacy programs. Strong advocacy will help minimize discrimination, stigmatization, and negative beliefs, which are a huge stumbling block in the identification of people with disabilities and in the ability of individuals with disabilities to exercise their rights, including the right to education.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the past decade, there have been important improvements in primary school enrolment and completion rates in Tanzania (UNESCO, 2014). For example, primary school enrolment has increased from 14,257 schools enrolling 7,541,208 students in 2005 to 16,538 schools enrolling 8,202,892 students in 2015 (HakiElimu, 2015). With respect to primary education for children with a disability, the country has made progress, but there are many shortcomings that still need to be addressed. Efforts have been made by the Tanzanian government to establish policies and enact legislation aimed at promoting education for these children. There have been notable attempts to establish inclusive schools to provide children with special needs greater opportunities to access education. For example, by 2013, there were "21 self-contained primary schools and 377 inclusive primary schools" in Tanzania (United Republic of Tanzania, cited in Stone-MacDonald, 2015, p. 202). Moreover, in the past few years, there have been improvements in training both general education teachers and special education specialists.

While these developments are laudable, attention should be paid to qualitative concerns when expanding inclusive schools. For example, examining how teacher training institutions are restructuring teacher education programs to better prepare teachers for inclusive classroom and school settings that promote EFA would be helpful. Furthermore, in school settings, general and special education teachers should be encouraged and prepared to provide quality inclusive education for students with disabilities. Existing studies (e.g., King-Sears, 1995; Villa, 1996) show that successful inclusion requires general and special education teachers to collaborate. Such



collaboration is most successful when both groups receive the kind of preparation and support that will enable them to understand each other's backgrounds and perspectives (King-Sears, 1995; Villa, 1996). Further research is needed to determine ways of fostering collaboration between the two groups in Tanzania.

There has also been an increase in community awareness regarding the rights of individuals with disabilities. The Tanzanian government should nonetheless avoid resting on its laurels, as more work must be done to ensure equality of "education for all" children, including children with disabilities. Of critical importance is the creation of a reliable system for identifying, assessing, and supporting children with disabilities, and for raising their school enrolments. The Tanzanian government must address the lack of resources and support that is currently plaguing inclusive schools and affecting the quality of education students with disabilities receive. Finally, research on disability and education, with a focus on shifting perspectives on disabilities, requires sufficient support from all education stakeholders in order to establish a strong knowledge base that educators can tap into to improve their practice.

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<sup>i</sup> Primary education refers to what in North America is called elementary education.

<sup>ii</sup> Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (n.d.) defines persons with disabilities as those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.