

**This is an electronic reprint of the original article.  
This reprint *may differ* from the original in pagination and typographic detail.**

**Author(s):** Lehtomäki, Elina; Tuomi, Margaret; Matonya, Magreth

**Title:** Educational research from Tanzania 1998–2008 concerning persons with disabilities: What can we learn?

**Year:** 2014

**Version:**

**Please cite the original version:**

Lehtomäki, E., Tuomi, M., & Matonya, M. (2014). Educational research from Tanzania 1998–2008 concerning persons with disabilities: What can we learn?. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 64, 32-39.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2013.10.005>

All material supplied via JYX is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the repository collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone who is not an authorised user.

## **Educational Research from Tanzania 1998 – 2008 Concerning Persons with Disabilities: What Can We Learn?**

Lehtomäki Elina<sup>1</sup>, Tuomi Margaret, T.<sup>2</sup>, Matonya Magreth<sup>3</sup>

### **Abstract**

The global Education For All process and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have increased the attention given to marginalized and excluded groups showing the need to enhance the education of persons with disabilities. In Sub-Saharan Africa a number of poorly disseminated studies investigate education of persons with disabilities. This paper provides an analysed overview of a decade of Tanzanian studies and reports on the education of persons with disabilities produced from 1998 to 2008. Key findings are highlighted and gaps in the research identified and suggestions are offered for future investigations. The education of persons with disabilities needs to be addressed in research, policy and practice to efficiently reduce their clear marginalisation in education.

Key words: Tanzania, Sub-Saharan Africa, education research, persons with disabilities, Education For All, inclusive education

"Too often, policy makers and technocrats are more influenced by global frameworks, than indigenous knowledge." (Kisanji and Saanane, 2009)

### **Tanzanian research on education of persons with disabilities**

The global Education For All (EFA) process and the realization of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities have increased the attention given to marginalized and excluded groups showing a clear need to enhance the education of persons with disabilities. Also in Sub-Saharan Africa the assessment of policies and their implementation to achieve this goal has become a focus for studies, reports and a growing number of situational analyses. Increasingly, the reports published online have enabled possibilities for greater access. Others, however, are available only in university and civil society organization libraries and from published collections, often commissioned by local or international organizations with limited editions.

This paper reviews research conducted in Tanzania, among the first states to sign the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and ratify in 2009 (UN 2012). It provides an analysed overview of a decade of studies and reports on the education of persons with disabilities in Tanzania produced from 1998 to 2008, between two significant changes in education of persons with disabilities. In 1998 the first official initiative of *inclusive education* in Tanzania was begun by the Government of Tanzania, Salvation Army and UNESCO. At this time, a joint venture was carried out in Temeke, one of the districts in the capital Dar es Salaam (URT 2008).

---

<sup>1</sup> University of Jyväskylä, Finland, [elina.k.lehtomaki@jyu.fi](mailto:elina.k.lehtomaki@jyu.fi) (corresponding author)

<sup>2</sup> University of Jyväskylä, Finland, [margaret.tuomi@jyu.fi](mailto:margaret.tuomi@jyu.fi)

<sup>3</sup> University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, [matonya2007@yahoo.com](mailto:matonya2007@yahoo.com)

The aim was to introduce and pilot inclusive education in seven Tanzanian Primary Schools, assess the process and outcomes, and to scale up to other districts and regions in the country. In 2008 several reports were published by the government and non-governmental organizations in preparation for the next significant political and practical change in Tanzania regarding the rights of persons with disabilities to education. In 2009 the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training introduced a strategy for inclusive education, requiring a significant change in education policy. This change deserves its own separate review. Additionally, the reason for limiting the focus on a ten-year period is practical. In 2008 and 2009 an opportunity arose to conduct the time-consuming task to visit libraries and organizations, meet researchers and collect documents, otherwise unavailable. Only a small number of international referee journal publications on education of persons with disabilities in Tanzania was found. One of the questions discussed along the document collection and review process was how access to these documents would have been useful in planning the new policy and programme implementation. More recently, with digitalization of publications and increased access to internet also in Tanzania, the availability and dissemination of research publications has improved. The question, how research, policy and practice could be better linked is discussed in the final section of this paper.

In 2008, the National Bureau of Statistics in Tanzania, in collaboration with the Office of the Chief Government Statistician, Zanzibar and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, published the first ever Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008). The survey applied the UN Convention definition for disability at the community level and used a three-stage systematic random sampling in data collection from 6882 households, a total of 32000 respondents, with an unusually high 98% response rate. The main result was that 7.8 % in the population aged 7 years and above had some form of activity limitation due to a disability. This prevalence rate is significantly higher than in any of the previous studies conducted in the country. According to the survey, there were differences in prevalence rates between regions, but no significant differences between rural and urban populations or among males and females (ibid.).

The 2008 Report on the Development of Education by the government of Tanzania pointed out that, already in 1974, the country's first president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (Mwalimu in Kiswahili means The Teacher) stated that "all citizens have the right to primary education, including persons with disabilities" (URT 2008, 20). The Government showed its commitment to the global EFA process and recognised that persons with disabilities continue to be marginalised in education, that it is associated with poverty and defined the necessary measures to rectify the situation. The Tanzanian government specified in its second Primary Education Development Plan (for 2007–2011, URT 2008) that inclusive education was the main approach for reaching children with special educational needs or disabilities.

According to Tanzanian government reports, in 2008 there were 280 primary schools with inclusive practices in 70 Wards (sub-districts) in various regions of the country (URT 2008a). A total of number of 8,410,094 pupils was reported including 34,661 pupils with special needs (URT 2008b). Calculating from these government statistics, 0.4% of the children were reported as having special needs or disabilities. The Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008) compares the enrolment rates of children in general with those with disabilities. They report that only 38.4% of the primary school aged children with disabilities were attending school. This is well below the target of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which calls for total primary school enrolment by the year 2015 (ibid. 96). The government of Tanzania has been committed to achieving the MDG concerning universal primary education and improving the quality of education for all. This paper discusses how research contributes to these efforts. The next section of this paper describes an analysis of the research reports produced in 1998–2008 on the education of persons

with disabilities.

### **An analysis of the Tanzanian research conducted in 1998–2008**

The documents for the analysis were gathered during 2008 and 2009. The institutions and organizations visited and persons met during the document collection are listed in Appendix 1. The material consists of forty two (42) documents, collected in Tanzania from libraries, universities, national and international organizations, and through consultation with leaders of organisations related to persons with disabilities, professionals and researchers (Table 1). The materials are comprised of government produced reports and plans, scholarly papers, master's theses and doctoral dissertations. Articles in publications, such as the journal 'Issues in Education and Development' by the Faculty of Education of the University of Dar es Salaam, where university lecturers had actively published publications on the education of persons with disabilities, form the majority of the documents analysed. For decades, this journal has been the main channel for Tanzanian researchers to publish their papers. All the international referee journal articles found and published during this ten-year period are included in the reference list of this paper. While newspaper articles and published opinions are important for public discussion, they are not included in this analysis which focuses on the scientific research produced. In other words, our paper does not investigate public debate and dialogue on education of persons with disabilities which would, however, be an important topic for research.

Table 1 Research on education of persons with disabilities during 1998–2008: Topics and types of reviewed studies (N=42)

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Type of study</b>			<b>Total (% of the total)</b>
	<b>Doctoral dissertation</b>	<b>Unpublished Master's thesis</b>	<b>Published reports, journal articles</b>	
Inclusive education of persons with disabilities (in primary education)	-	2	11	13 (30,95%)
Teaching and learning process and environments of persons with disabilities	1	4	5	10 (24,81%)
Situation of students with disabilities in higher education		1	6	7 (16,66%)
Accessibility to education for persons with disabilities	-	1	4	5 (11,90%)
Gender, disability and education	1	1	2	4 (9,53%)
Disabling social conditions	-	-	2	2 (4,76%)
Vocational education and training of persons with disabilities	-	1	-	1 (2,38%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>42 (99,99%)</b>

This research review paper focuses on what 1) topics were studied, 2) types of documents were produced, 3) methodological approaches were applied, 4) levels and types of education were

studied and 5) key findings were reported in the materials. Content analysis and cross-tabulations with frequencies were produced on the information available (Table 1). Results of the analysis are presented followed by the discussion on the key findings and identified research gaps.

The research reflected a wide range of topics and interests, from inclusive education policy implementation and evaluation, to classroom teaching and learning and enrolment of students with disability. Three quarters of the documents are published reports and journal articles, one quarter unpublished master's thesis and only two doctoral dissertations, both published in 2002. Most research focused on the education of persons with disabilities in general. The policy level however, received more attention in comparison to classroom and school level practices or system level issues. Most studies investigated inclusive education in general, without reference to the level in the Tanzanian education system. Additionally, studies on primary education (Standard 1-8) outnumbered the documentation of other levels of the system, secondary or higher education. Only one document reported on vocational education and the training of persons with disabilities.

No research was found on a number of topics, such as early childhood education, transitions from school to work, lifelong learning, educational leadership or teacher education. A number of studies investigated the situation of students with visual impairments but only one was found on the education of persons with learning disabilities. This, however, does not mean that they do not exist, but rather, in the wide search conducted for this study, they were not identified.

Out of the 42 documents analysed, qualitative research approach was used in all but two of the investigations found. In these two, mixed methods were implemented in one and the other was a purely quantitative study. In most cases a justification was not offered of why a methodological approach was chosen according to the phenomenon under study or the research questions. When presenting the qualitative research methodology implemented, interviews were used as a means of data collection in most cases.

### **Key findings concerning education of persons with disabilities**

The key findings of the collected materials covered the following themes: 1) inclusive education policy and its implementation, 2) accessibility to education, 3) teaching and learning processes and environments, 4) multiple-discrimination of girls and women with disabilities and 5) disabling social conditions, see Table 1. The summarised findings are drawn from the data, most of which are unpublished. References are made to the published documents. The focus is on the *qualitative contents* and *implications of the findings* and, therefore, only an indication with the proportion within the total number of studies in relation to the research topics is provided.

#### *Towards inclusive education in Tanzania*

Policy implementation and the evaluation of inclusive education were the topics of approximately one third of the research reviewed (31%), an impressive amount considering that it was only in 2008 that inclusive education was defined as the national approach for the education of persons with disabilities. This shows that researchers and students of education were aware of the topic. According to the research however, the understanding of the concept of inclusive education was somewhat unclear, requiring interpretation among Tanzanian administrators, teachers, parents and other educational stakeholders. Additionally, the fact that persons with disabilities had the right to an education was still not widely known. According to Mmbaga (2002), Possi (2006) and Tugaraza (2005) only some small characteristics of inclusive education had been integrated into

the education system making it difficult for the authorities, leaders, teachers and the broader community to understand the concept and its implication in practice. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training also reported (URT 2008b) that lack of a common national understanding of inclusive education caused dilemmas concerning the implementation and evaluation of inclusive education (see also Lewis & Little 2007).

Since teachers lacked clarity concerning the meaning of inclusion, they lacked a justification for including students with disabilities in their classrooms and enabling their learning. According to Mmbaga's (2002) doctoral dissertation on inclusive classrooms, teachers' professional development concerning diversity among learners and child-centred approaches improved teaching practices in general. The main challenge however, was sharing good teaching practices, receiving recognition for these practices from school leadership and education authorities and scaling up those pilots which were successful. In Macha's (2002) doctoral dissertation on gender, disability and access to education she concludes that, while the EFA process aims to include all, it unfortunately, only looks at government level policies and enrolment rates. The EFA process needs to be re-defined with a clear focus on learning and the achievement of these strategies at the individual, school and classroom levels.

#### *Poor accessibility to all levels of education*

Only five of the 42 studies reviewed (12%) focused on the accessibility of students with disabilities to education with reference to the development goals of the Tanzanian government concerning general changes in the education system. During the timeframe of this review, the rapid expansion of access to primary education was one the biggest challenges in education development (see Davidson 2004, Sifuna 2007). Two of these five studies investigated primary education, while the other three examined access in general at all educational levels. According to the Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008) the two most common reasons why children with disabilities failed to access education were 'disability' and 'sickness'. Furthermore, the report states that illiteracy was significantly higher among adults with disabilities (42%) than in the Tanzanian population in general (24%). Educational opportunities for persons with disabilities were reported to be limited due to poor physical accessibility and inappropriate buildings and facilities, including a lack of ramps, elevators, escalators and railings.

Comprehensive research on the accessibility of children with disabilities to education was designed and conducted by the staff of the non-governmental organisation HakiElimu and the University of Dar es Salaam (HakiElimu 2008). They used mixed methods to examine the challenges and opportunities for access to (primary) education for children with disabilities. Five major barriers were identified. First, the inappropriate architectural design of school buildings made them inaccessible, especially to children with visual and physical impairments. Second, teachers, school administrators and the public at large, failed to identify children with disabilities and their needs. Third, many teachers lacked training, knowledge and experience regarding disability and, consequently, considered inclusive education, that is, having children with disabilities in their school, to be beyond their professional capacity. The fifth barrier reported was lack of the essential teaching and learning materials and facilities. The report concluded that perhaps the largest obstacle is that "not much concerted institutionalised efforts are being made to break these barriers" (HakiElimu 2008, 25).

The HakiElimu (2008) research, in concurrence with the Tanzania 2008 Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008), showed that only a very small proportion of school-age children with disabilities were enrolled in schools. Furthermore, based on community and district

level statistics, the two reports confirmed that the enrolment rate of children with disabilities was clearly far below the national average and pointed to the need for accurate data to monitor the enrolment variations of children with disabilities. The official education statistics show a gradual increase in the number of students enrolled in recent years, but the proportion of the total number of students remained the same, less than 1% (URT 2008a). Cultural and traditional beliefs were found to contribute to the negative attitudes in society, among parents and school communities, and to the discrimination of children with disabilities, resulting in poor enrolment (HakiElimu 2008; Tungaraza 2005; Tungaraza & Mkumbo 2008).

Seven studies (17% of the total number of studies) explored the situation of higher education students with disabilities. The small number of students with disabilities in higher education was explained by the poor quality of education found in primary and secondary schools and special education settings. Macha (2002) pointed to the lack of contextualization of inclusive education policy. Tungaraza & Mboya (2005) reported on poor accessibility to classrooms, libraries, bathrooms and student dormitories. Ndume et al. (2008) stressed the lack of access to information technology. Additionally, Tungaraza & Mboya (2005) and Mboya (2008) draw attention to inadequate trained human resources, teachers, Sign Language interpreters and personal assistants.

#### *Teaching and learning processes and environments*

Ten of the 42 studies (24%) highlighted serious challenges to learning, high risks of dropout and the poor quality of the educational system of Tanzania as a whole. The general need for urgent quality improvement to enhance learning outcomes was emphasised in several studies (see Brock-Utne 2007; Sifuna 2007; Sumra 2003; Wedgwood 2007; URT 2008b, among others). The examined research identified that the overall poor quality worsened the possibilities for the education of students with disabilities. This was mainly due to teachers not being prepared to meet diverse needs and teach students with disabilities (Mmbaga 2002; Tungaraza 2005; Tungaraza & Mkumbo 2008). Furthermore, the poor teacher-pupil ratio challenged learning in general, particularly students with disabilities (HakiElimu 2008). Additionally, teacher education colleges lack curricula offerings and qualified experts to teach inclusive practices (Mmbaga 2002).

Research concerning the teaching and learning of students with visual impairment found that equipment and materials available in schools, such as Braille typewriters and textbooks, enlarged reading and writing materials were outdated and most teachers did not know how to use them. Both Macha (2002) and Mmbaga (2002) stress in their dissertations that lack of appropriate teaching equipment and materials and inadequate teacher training limited opportunities for learning and also significantly increased the risk for students with visual impairments to drop out of school. They emphasized the role of school leadership in the procurement of appropriate materials and equipment.

A total of 46 the visually impaired women were interviewed by Macha (2002). Of them, 60% (n=35) had attended primary school but 26% had not completed primary education and only 19% had advanced to secondary and post-secondary education. Most of the interviewed women had no access to Braille or audio materials after their departure from school so that the continuation of learning and communicating was extremely difficult. Macha viewed this as “a high level of ignorance about new inventions, innovations and challenges” (2002, 179). The rapid expansion of primary education created pressure on secondary schools. However the response of the government to this increase in demand relied on traditional means for learning and teaching. Macha’s point was supported by Ndume et al. (2008) who stated that adaptive technology and ICT solutions, which would have enhanced the accessibility of learning and teaching materials for students with

disabilities, particularly in secondary and higher education, were not efficiently sought for and used. While the studies on challenges in teaching and learning referred to overcrowded classrooms as one serious barrier to inclusion of students with disabilities, this was mentioned also in the studies on higher education.

The transition rate of students with disabilities to secondary education was reported to be very low. The shortage of qualified teachers, equipment and materials was even more serious in secondary schools than in the primary schools. Tungaraza and Mboya (2005) stated that access of persons with disabilities to education and their progress from primary to secondary and tertiary levels was significantly hindered by teachers' ignorance of the abilities of persons with disabilities and teachers' failure to understand the significance of education in the lives of persons with disabilities. They emphasised the importance of teacher education and professional development.

*The significant challenges of multiple-discrimination: The education of women with disabilities*

The four studies (10% out of the total) focusing on gender, disability and education stressed the importance of education in reducing the vulnerability and the multiple-discrimination experienced by girls and women with disabilities in society. The studies referred to human rights and equality as key goals in educational development in Tanzania and clarified how a lack of education further increases the disadvantages in personal development and in the labour market. While the educational needs for girls and women have been noticed in policies and programmes, the combined issues of gender and disability have gone unnoticed (Okkolin & Lehtomaki, 2005). Macha (2002) provides a powerful description of the specifically challenging situation of girls and women with disabilities, ignored by both advocates of gender equality as well as by disability rights activists. The constraints to education reflect the cultural construction of gender and disability and, consequently, girls and women with disabilities "are patronised as objects of pity and charity. Some of the parents or guardians overprotect, neglect or reject them. Some of them consider investing money on their disabled children's education to be a waste of resources. The few who happen to go to school are further confronted by disappointing circumstances such as sexual violence, early pregnancies or insecurity in travelling long distances" (Macha 2002, 175–176). A significant challenge, according to Possi (1996; 1998), is that girls and women with disabilities lack role models and may not know about other educated girls or women with disabilities. She stresses the importance of learning from successful peers with disabilities who have joined school, worked hard, stayed in school, graduated and found jobs or became self-employed.

In their analysis of the community and district level data HakiElimu (2008) found that the number of male (57.7%) disabled students enrolled in (primary) schools was higher than that of female students with disabilities (42.3%). This was inconsistent with the overall gender balance in primary school enrolment rates and raised the question "whether the difference in enrolment between disabled schoolboys and girls is caused by the actual difference of male and female children with disabilities in the society, or by the society's more favourable attitudes towards male disabled children than female" (HakiElimu 2008, 7). The report cautions however, that due to lack of reliable national data on childhood impairments and children with disabilities, it is not possible to provide a full description with the actual proportion of enrolled and out of school children with disabilities (ibid).

*Disabling social conditions*

Most of the reviewed studies mentioned the disabling conditions in Tanzania caused by poverty, lack of access to health care and rehabilitation services, strong traditional beliefs concerning



impairments and disabilities, negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities, weak infrastructures and ignorance among stakeholders. Poverty in combination with socio-cultural traditions has been found to affect school attendance in general (e.g. Burke & Beegle 2003); disability, however, increases marginalisation and exclusion. According to Possi (1999) traditional beliefs concerning persons with disabilities in Coastal Tanzania resulted in superstitious behaviour thus hindering social and educational inclusion. She suggested that the situation is similar throughout the country but particularly in the rural areas and could be changed only by culturally appropriate and accepted ways in collaboration with community leaders.

On the basis of the population statistics, the Tanzania 2008 Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008) calculated that over 80% of the approximate 1,050,000 people with disabilities lived in rural and remote areas with limited or no access to health and rehabilitation services and where traditional witchcraft practices are commonly maintained. According to the report, some of these practices, poor nutrition, diseases and accidents contributed to impairments and disabilities. Directly and indirectly these living conditions further reduced opportunities for schooling and discouraged families to send their children with disabilities to school.

While many studies mentioned parental attitudes as a barrier to education for persons with disabilities, Macha (2002) stresses the interrelation between disability and poverty and that most parents make their choices in the harsh conditions of poverty. Women with visual impairments interviewed for her doctoral dissertation reported that vaccinations, which would have prevented their disabilities, were out of reach for their parents, especially those in the rural areas. During an interview concerning her doctoral thesis research Macha was asked about the impact of family poverty on the schooling of children with disabilities and she responded,

“because of the impairment, some parents had to spend so much money, even go in debt, to take these children to the hospitals. So poverty can cause impairment, and impairment can exacerbate poverty. If parents have a disabled child they will use all the resources they have to try to do something for her. I came across a family that told me that they had to sell their cattle, and they had to sell every harvest they had, for their child to go to school and have a technical aid. They use all of what they have, making them poorer and poorer. So they are interrelated, these two phenomena.” (Hershey 2001)

In this interview Macha made it clear that impairment, poverty and access to education are tightly intertwined. Understanding the interrelationship is necessary for creating access and providing enabling social conditions for participation.

### **Valuable information for the future**

In Tanzania, the percentage of persons with disabilities in formal education has remained very small, according to the recent estimates below 1% (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training 2009). This review of Tanzanian studies and reports focuses on the ten-year period between two significant changes, from the first reported pilot of inclusive education to the government decision to introduce inclusive education as the main approach to provide schooling for persons with disabilities. When evaluating the research reports reviewed for this paper, one must be reminded that there may be reports and investigations which have not been found as of yet. These should be identified and included in the corpus of knowledge collected. The types of studies and reports and key findings presented here show the amount and contents of available knowledge found which would have been useful for planning changes.

The studies reviewed for this paper provided important information about the challenges and possible solutions necessary for realizing inclusive education. One third of the research reports focused on policy implementation. One of the reasons may be university education which focuses on theory. Another possible explanation is the limited resources for field work, data collection and supervision of thesis. Moreover, it can be assumed that the research interests respond to the demand for linking policy and practice or reflect the coming change in policy. There is, however, little evidence on how research has been disseminated and discussed and whether it contributed to the policy shift to inclusive education in 2008. With this paper we highlight the available knowledge and the need to disseminate it more efficiently by enhancing stakeholder collaboration, with the emphasis on the voice of persons with disabilities, both of those in school and the majority who are still out of school. On the other hand, research on the education of persons with disabilities seldom refer to other studies concerning the broader picture and the national situation. One apparent reason for this is poor information dissemination and dialogue. Most of the studies and reports conducted still remain in the hands of the few researchers and organisations actively involved with enhancing education of persons with disabilities but without a forum for dialogue on research findings and their implications.

The first ever Tanzanian Disability Survey Report (National Bureau of Statistics 2008) and the World Report on Disability (WHO and World Bank 2010) point out that baseline data, monitoring and careful analysis are necessary to determine whether changes that are seen as improvements, actually are (see also Mont 2007). However, Croft (2012) suggests that service provision and data collection should be carried out in concert to reduce the marginalisation of persons with disabilities in education. In this study, the meta-analysis shows that improved dissemination and application of available information is another requisite to reduce persistent marginalisation in education. The education of persons with disabilities must become *the issue* in education policy, programmes and cooperation, to efficiently reduce their evident marginalisation.

The studies and reports reviewed for this paper emphasise the collaboration between communities, teacher education and higher education in knowledge production. The doctoral dissertations of Macha (2002) and Mmbaga (2002) show that knowledge of community and school level experiences on the ground can significantly compliment policy level studies for better understanding. A case in point is research on parental attitudes, assumed to be negative by policy level studies, but found rather to be more the results of poverty (Macha 2002). In an earlier study, Kisanji (1995) stresses the importance of culture as the basis for inclusive education. This emphasis on culture is further extended by Possi (1999). Overcoming marginalisation and exclusion requires not only understanding, but also finding culturally appropriate ways to change traditional beliefs associated with impairments and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, Possi (2006) calls for research, particularly action research, to improve education by identifying concrete examples of successful interventions and activities and to provide valuable information for the policy development process. In conclusion, an important request for the research community is the follow-up and monitoring of the new policy implementation and more efficient knowledge sharing.

We interpret these recommendations as requirements for the education policy and programme implementation to reach beyond the school to communities and families in order to enhance educational inclusion, not only in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa, but also globally. Since 2008, following the change in education policy with the emphasis on inclusive education, research has brought up the significance of socio-cultural issues contributing to schooling (e.g. Miles 2011; Okkolin et al. 2010). While Hartwig (2012) and Polat (2011) emphasise social justice as the framework for enhancing equality and equity in education, we refer to the approach of Macha (2002) who travelled to rural areas and had women with disabilities identify themselves what needs

they had to access and participate in education in their own environments. This kind of pragmatic and contextualised knowledge is necessary for schools, teachers and decision-makers. There are still many questions left to be addressed concerning research and dissemination of findings to those who need the information. Have the reports of research been shared and discussed with education planners and implementers? How could this knowledge be better shared? As Croft (2012) has stated, the voice of children, students and adults with disabilities needs to be heard in planning education, designing teaching and learning practices. They are the missing stakeholders in the Tanzanian education development also. These students and those who have not yet accessed education need a voice to show how they best gain access to education, participate and learn.

## References

- Brock-Utne, B. (2007). Learning through a familiar language versus learning through a foreign language – a look into some secondary school classrooms in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development* 27 (5), 487–498.
- Burke, K., Beegle, K. (2004). Why Children Aren't Attending School: The Case of Northwestern Tanzania. *Journal of African Economies* 13 (2), 333–355. Doi: 10.1093/jae/ejh011
- Croft, A. (2012). Promoting access to education for disabled children in low-income countries: Do we need to know how many disabled children there are? *International Journal of Educational Development* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.08.005>.
- Davidson, E. (2004). The Progress of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) in Tanzania: 2002–2004 Working Paper. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Haki Elimu.
- HakiElimu. (2008). Do Children with Disabilities Have Equal Access to Education? A research report on accessibility to education for children with disabilities in Tanzanian schools. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: HakiElimu.
- Hartwig, K. (2012). Using a social justice framework to assess educational quality in Tanzanian schools. *International Journal of Educational Development*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.05.006>
- Hershey, L. (2001). Tanzania: Researcher Explores Lives of Disabled Women & Girls. Interview. *Disability World*, 8 May-June. [http://www.disabilityworld.org/09-10\\_01/women/tanzania.shtml](http://www.disabilityworld.org/09-10_01/women/tanzania.shtml)
- Kisanji, J. (1995). Interface between Culture and Disability in the Tanzanian Context: Part I. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 42 (2), 93–108. DOI: 10.1080/0156655950420202
- Kisanji, J., Saanane, C.B. (2009) Responding to Marginalization and Exclusion in Education in Tanzania, Chapter prepared for the Research Forum, Institute for Inclusive Education, State University of Arizona. Cited in A Tribute to Dr Joseph Kisanji (1945-2010) [http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/eenet\\_newsletter/news14/page2.php](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/eenet_newsletter/news14/page2.php) .
- Komba, W.L., Nkumbi, E. (2008). Teacher professional development in Tanzania: perceptions and practices. *Journal of International Cooperation in Education* 11 (3), 67–83.
- Lewis, I. & Little, D. (2007). Report to NORAD on desk review of inclusive education policies and plans in Nepal, Tanzania, Vietnam and Zambia. [http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Policy\\_review\\_for\\_NORAD.pdf](http://www.eenet.org.uk/resources/docs/Policy_review_for_NORAD.pdf)
- Macha, E. (2002). Gender, Disabilities and Access to Education in Tanzania. PhD Thesis. University of Leeds. <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/282/>
- Miles, S. (2011). Exploring understandings of inclusion in schools in Zambia and Tanzania using reflective writing and photography. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(10), 1087-1102.
- Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. (2009). National Strategy on Inclusive Education

- 2009–2017, Final draft 27 March 2009. [http://www.ed-dpg.or.tz/pdf/CCI/Inclusive%20Education%20Strategy\\_2009-2017.pdf](http://www.ed-dpg.or.tz/pdf/CCI/Inclusive%20Education%20Strategy_2009-2017.pdf).
- Mmbaga, D.R. (2002). *The Inclusive Classroom in Tanzania: Dream or Reality?* Dissertation. Studies in Comparative and International Education 59. Stockholm: Institute of International Education, University of Stockholm.
- Mont, D. (2007). *Measuring Disability Prevalence*. Social Protection, Discussion Paper 0706. The World Bank.
- National Bureau of Statistics. (2008). *Tanzania 2008 Disability Survey Report*. <http://nbs.go.tz/tnada/index.php/catalog/5> (Accessed 12 Dec 2012).
- Ndume, V., Tilya, F.N., Twaakyondo, H. (2008). Challenges of Adaptive ELearning at Higher Learning Institutions: A case study in Tanzania, *International Journal of Computing and ICT Research*, 2, (1), 47–59.
- Okkolin, M-A. & Lehtomäki, E. (2005). Gender and Disability - Challenges of Education Sector Development in Tanzania. In O. Hietanen (Ed.). *The University Partnership Network for International Development (UniPID)*. Finnish Development Knowledge. Finland Futures Research Centre Publications 6, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration, pp. 204–216. [http://www.tse.fi/FI/yksikot/erillislaitokset/tutu/Documents/publications/tutu\\_2005-6.pdf](http://www.tse.fi/FI/yksikot/erillislaitokset/tutu/Documents/publications/tutu_2005-6.pdf)
- Okkolin, M.A., Lehtomäki, E., Bhalalusesa, E. (2010). The successful education sector development in Tanzania – comment on gender balance and inclusive education. *Gender and Education* 22 (1), 63–71.
- Polat, F. (2011). Inclusion in education: A step towards social justice. *International Journal of Educational Development* 31(1), 50–58. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2010.06.009>.
- Posti-Ahokas, H. (2012) Empathy-based stories capturing the voice of female secondary school students in Tanzania. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, doi:10.1080/09518398.2012.731533.
- Possi, M.K. (2006). From Special to Inclusive Education for Children in Special Needs in Tanzania: Old wine in new Bottle? , Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam, *Journal of Issues and Practices in Education* 1(2), 47–63.
- Possi, M. K. (1999). Culture and disability: Superstitious behaviour towards people with disabilities in Coastal Tanzania. *African Journal of Special Needs Education* 1, 22–35.
- Sifuna, D. (2007). The Challenge of Increasing Access and Improving Quality: An Analysis of Universal Primary Education Interventions in Kenya and Tanzania since the 1970s. *International Review of Education*, 53 (5-6), 687-699.
- Sumra, S. (2003). *Implementation of the Primary Education Development Plan: Voices from the Community*. Dar es Salaam: HakiElimu.
- Tungaraza, F.D. (2005). *Inclusive Education as a Rational Choice for Tanzania: Advantages and Obstacles to its Implementations*. Faculty of Education, University of Dar es Salaam. *Papers in Education and Development* 20.
- Tungaraza F.D. & Mboya, M.W. (2005). *Orientation and Mobility Training and Transition Issues for Student with Disabilities in Tanzania Institutions of Higher Learning*. Needs Assessment Report. Funded by NORAD/ University of Dar es Salaam 2005.
- Tungaraza, F.D. & Mkumbo, K. (2008). *Inclusive Education as Practiced in Tanzanian Schools: A Step towards Equity in Learning for All*. Report Funded by NUFU/ University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.
- UN (United Nations Enable). (2012). *Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications: Countries and Regional Integration Organizations*. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/countries.asp?id=166> (Accessed 12 Dec 2012).
- URT (United Republic of Tanzania). (2008a). *Report on the Development of Education*. [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/tanzania\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/tanzania_NR08.pdf) (Accessed 12

Dec 2012).

URT (United Republic of Tanzania). (2008b). Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP), Education Sector Performance Report 2007/2008. Education Sector Development Committee, September 2008.

Wedgwood, R. (2007). Education and poverty reduction in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development* 27 (4), 383–396.

## Appendix 1

### **Institutions and organizations visited and professionals met during document collection in 2008–2009**

Ministries	The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) The Ministry of Development of Gender, Women and Children
Libraries	Faculty of Education Library East Africana Section, Institute of Development Studies The Open University of Tanzania Library Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)
Professionals	Prof. Bhalalusesa, E. P. School of education, University of Dar es Salaam Prof. Possi, M. K. Department of Adult Education, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Mboya, M.W. Department of Psychology, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Tungaraza, F.D. Department of Psychology, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Bagandashwa, Department of Special Education, The Open University of Tanzania Dr. Mmbaga, D.R. Department of Psychology, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Mkumbo, K. Department of Psychology, University of Dar es Salaam Dr. Rutachwamagyo, K. Information Centre on Disability
Organizations	Information Centre on Disability University of Dar es Salaam Special Unit Tanzania Gender Networking Programmes HakiElimu Tanzania Tanzania Association of the Physically Handicapped Association of Disabled People Tanzania League of the Blind Tanzania Albino Society Tanzania Deaf Society Tanzania Association for Mentally Handicapped Disabled Organization of Law, Social Economic Development Tanzania National Institute of the Blind
Community Centres	Buguruni Mwenge Mtoni Mtongani Sinza in Dar es Salaam