Tanzania

Promoting the Right of Child Participation in Schools to Enhance Quality Education

Juliana Laurent Chacha, Nicholas Moshi and Benedict M. Missani

1. Introduction

Child Rights discussions are the world agenda. In 1991 Tanzania ratified the International Convections on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which outlines the basic fundamental rights enshrined in the United Nations (UN) CRC .These are the rights all children are supposed to enjoy without exception. Unfortunately, despite the ratification of the convection, the legal protection for children in Tanzania remained scattered throughout various unenforceable statutes and outdated laws. In November 2009, the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania passed the Law of the Child Act, No:21. This was a significant step towards protecting children's rights to survival, development, protection, participation and non discrimination The law addresses many issues that Tanzanian children encounter in their day to day and aims to protect them against discrimination, violence and neglect.

This report presents the findings from the study which was conducted in three primary schools chosen as a case study. The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City, in three schools from each municipality, these are: Ndugumbi Primary school in Kinondoni Municipality; Temeke in Temeke and Jitihada from Ilala.

2. Frame of Reference

The frame of reference of the project is built on the existing literatures and government support towards promoting Human Rights and rights of the children in particular. Ratification of the Conventions of Rights of the Child in 1991 and recognitions of the efforts of other human rights practitioners prompted us to pursue the project.

The right to education is fundamental to all children not here in Tanzania but all over the world. Tanzania being a UN member state ratified different conventions amongst

which is the Rights to education. The right to education in Tanzania is provided and protected by the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania under Article 11(1) which directs the State and all its agencies to ensure that all citizens young and old get education. In sub section 2 it states that, every person has the right to access education and every citizen shall be free to pursue education. Moreover the Education Training Policy 2014 has directed basic education which covers pre primary, primary and lower secondary school education free and compulsory. Despite the ratifications of right to education and. provision of free education in pre-primary up to lower secondary, this has not been practical because private sector has been charging big fee and likewise in public schools there is a lot of contributions like: Contributions for construction of classrooms, teacher houses, meals, purchasing or repairs of desks and many more, such kind of contributions is huge and is equal to paying school fees.

The Tanzania Population and Housing Census conducted in 2012 indicated that, the current Tanzania population is 44,928,923. Young population aged below 15 years consist 43.9 percent of the whole population. The age group between 7-13 which is primary school age is 8,584,317 which is 29.1 percent of the population. Youth aged between 15- 24 mostly are students in secondary school, tertiary education and those few who are out of school. All these groups are very important in national development in terms of upbringing them with special attention by observing rights of child and give them opportunity to grow with human dignity.

Tanzania Population Pyramid (Five-Years Age Group)
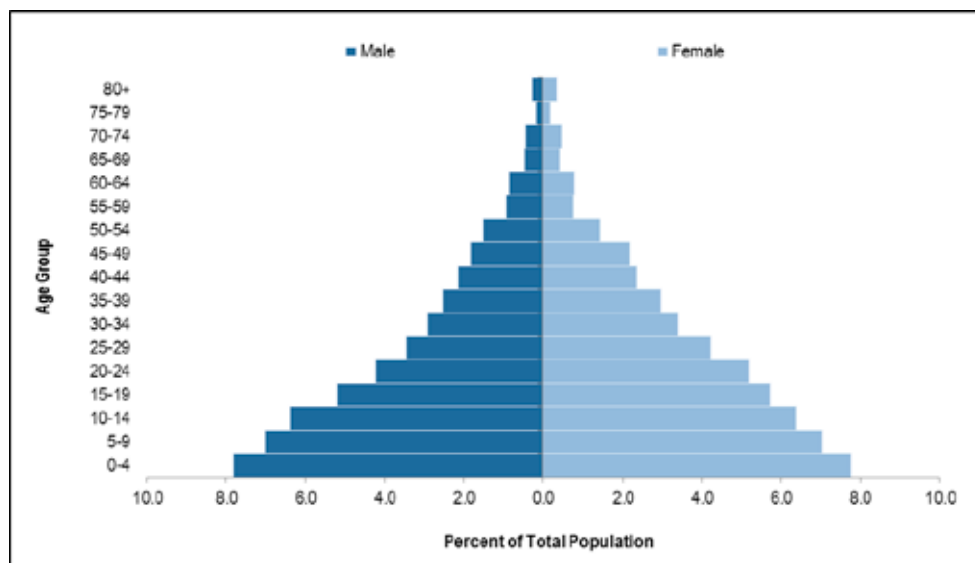
Source: National Bureau of Statistic, 2013.

Basing on difference literatures and data like 2012 Population and Housing Census, constitution of Tanzania, Education and Training Policy and ratified convections, change agent batch 19 has realised that issues related to Rights of the Child especially Right to education has not been addressed properly. The setback learned from the existing literatures motivated the group to conduct study and implement the project focusing on implementation of the convention on the rights of the child through Promoting Child Participation in Classroom and School management.

3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to assess the implementation of CRC, national laws, polices and guidelines to ensure pupils participation in schools to enhance quality education is observed.

Specific Objectives

- To build capacity to pupils, teachers and school committee members on the rights of child in order to enable them change behaviour and provide more space for pupils to participate in decision making;
- To strengthen teaching and learning environment with focus of learner centred approach; and
- To advocate issues which address the violence against children in schools, family and community level.

Given the fact that, Tanzania is one of the UN member states it is obliged to implement its Polices and Strategies in compliance to the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child, this influence the report to zeroed on Participation of pupils in classroom and school management in enhancing quality education. Discussions were made to pupils, teachers and school committees to see how pupils were given opportunity to participate in teaching and learning process and decision making as their fundamental right through the process from planning to evaluation of the learning outcomes.

4. Methodologies

In order to get the information on how selected schools adhere to Convections on Rights of the Children (CRC) with focus of Protection, Provision and Participation (3Ps), different methods were applied to inquire information which has helped in writing the report.

The report went through different stages as discussed here under:

4.1 Preparation stage

The process passed through different stages which includes desk review before attending face to face training in Lund University in 2013. Each country team was assigned a task of reviewing different literatures and develop an idea on the area could work on as far as the rights of children are concerned.

4.2 Face to face training

This was a second phase in the training process whereby group of batch 19 met at Lund University in September and October 2013. The group comprised 30 participants from different 10 countries and had opportunity of learning from each other under supervision of the team of lecturers in the same University.

The CRC study program gave an opportunity to members in batch 19 to share experiences about issues related to child rights from their home countries, human rights and any valuable information that could enrich the training. Later on all member country groups were asked to develop action plan on how they would implement the program in their countries.

4.3 Meeting with Officials

On our arrival from Sweden each change agent made de briefing to their sector / administrators in their respective institution, Presentations were made on what was learnt from face to face session, Project plan on CRC and strategies to implement it in the country. After presentations and discussions the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training granted permission to conduct study and thereafter training schedule for selected schools was prepared accordingly to suite with the learning environment.

4.4 School Visit

The team made school visits to familiarize with Pupils, Teachers and School Committee members and agree upon the modality of conducting training, explaining the purpose of training and share the project plan.

Furthermore, the team intended to explore the information from pupils, teachers and school committees on their understanding about the rights of the child and see what the schools have done so far to implement the UN CRC and other international treaties.

Different techniques were applied during the visit in order to obtain the information which could answer the problem, these includes: interviews, group discussions and observations as discussed in the subsequent sections.

4.4.1 Interview

Kvale (1983) defines the qualitative research interview as process to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". Collecting these data can be done in several ways, one of which being through face-to-face interviews which is commonly done by many people.

Besides Face-to-Face (FtF) interviews, interviewing by telephone, computer mediated communication (CMC) where messages are electronically transferred from a sender to one or more recipient(s), both in synchronous (in real time) and in synchronous (independent from time and place) setting. Examples of tools used for CMC are e-mail and chat boxes (as MSN messenger), which can also be used for interviews.

The team organised interview with pupils, school pupil leaders, teachers and school committee. The aim of conducting interviews was to get the real picture of issues under discussion and compare the information received from others. This approach was very productive as pupils could give the real picture on how they are involved in teaching and learning and decision making process.

This project realised that pupils had a lot of information to contribute to teachers and school management, but there was no room to enable them to speak, practice or share a little bit of information they had properly.

After discussion and interviews conducted and later on training, pupils managed to speak out their inner stories and problems they had within and out of school. The team advised them on how they could channel their problems to the school administrators and other actor dealing with Rights of Child.

4.4.2 Focus Group Discussion:

A focus group discussion (FGD) is situation where by a researcher gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. Kruger, R.A (1988). The group of participants is guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves.

Different groups were formed and conduct discussions about right of children to participate in school. The group was formed in different levels; there was a group of pupils' representatives which included class monitors and school pupils' leaders elected from each class, the second group was teachers and the third group was school committee members. The team organised discussion and interview to assess the level of understanding about child rights, classroom and school management.

During discussion with pupils, teachers and school committee it was learnt that, all groups interviewed had general knowledge on the Right of Children. This was very good step to start sharing what we had learnt from Lund University. Explanations were made about CRC and the purpose of the visit, more focus was made on pupils' participation in classroom and school management.

Despite of the knowledge teachers had on the Rights of Children, it was learnt that some of them were not ready to change their behaviour and attitudes because they had a feared to lose power over pupils. For example one teacher said *"If we don't cane/ punish them they won't behave well"* to him canning or punishment was a means to correct modelling bad behaviour. When was asked, have you discussed with pupils to get their opinions about why they misbehave, or what they would rather want from teachers to do for them? The comment was *"pupils they need not to be given that opportunity, teachers must decide what they can do over the pupils"* from the discussions a team noted that there was big violation of Child Rights as far as participation and involvement of children in the classroom and making decision of the school. The team realised that canning and use of abusive language was common in all three schools visited.

4.4.3 Observation:

Is acquisition of information from the primary source. Bandura,A (1971) outlined four stages involved in observation learning, these includes:

4.4.3.1 Attention:

The theory state that observer cannot learn unless pay attention to what is happening around them, this process is much influenced by characteristics of observer, his or her expectations and level of emotion. This process was applied in all three visited school.

Some time we spend time sitting and chatting with pupils even teachers discussing different things, since this was done informally we were able to see what was happening in schools and classes.

4.4.3.2 Retention / Memory:

Is the situation where by observer must not only recognise behaviour but also remember it at some time later. It depends on ability to code and easily remember the information. This was done in different ways such as note down some key points, use of camera for capturing some information etc. The information gathered was shared and used to prepare training manual and use observed behaviours as a case studies during training.

4.4.3.3 Initiation:

Is the intellectual ability to rehearse the model's actions, possess the necessary responses. During the visit and observation process we were able to retrieve events happened in different school visited.

4.4.3.4 Motivation:

Is giving pep / activeness talks which gives encouragement in any learning process. In our observation we were able to use different stories and share life experiences regarding rights of children and how school as an agent of change could promote those rights. As they were talking we noticed that, they were not happy with our comments prohibiting them not punishing pupils, they said "spare a rod spoil a child" some time they even referred to some religious scriptures from the holly books saying parents have the right to corrects their kids behaviour by punishing them without harm. Such comments were controversial especially when teaching the CRC and promoting Right of Pupils to participate in class and school management.

4.5 Preparation of the Training Manuals on CRC

School visits contributed a lot of information which was useful to prepare a training manual. The training manual was titled *"A training Manual on the Rights of Child -A Right to Participate in Teaching and Learning in class and school Management to enhance quality education"* the manual sandwiched knowledge learnt from Sweden on different Convections on the Right of Children, situation of Right of the Children in schools and how the Right to participate could be promoted in schools in order to enhance the quality of education.

The other contents of the manual covered the roles and responsibilities of pupils to teachers, parents and community; roles of teachers to pupils and committee members. The other important area which was included in the manual is code of conduct and ethics for teachers as custodian of the rights of child but as a professionals and care taker. Copies of the manual were provided to pupils, teachers and school committee members for reading.

4.6 Training on the Rights of the Child.

The training was mainly focusing on building capacity of teachers, pupils and school committees in three schools which were selected by the Municipal authorities based on the experience of violation of child rights especially the rights to participation.

4.6.1 Training of Pupils

Training of Pupils in all three schools was done after class session because it was difficult to get pupils in Saturdays unlike teachers and school committee's member who proposed Saturdays for their trainings.

Training was conducted to pupils' representative from classes, the group constituted pupils council. / school baraza. During the training pupils showed that they had general knowledge on some their rights. They also showed that some time some pupils tried to demand for their rights but it was not possible because they had no unity so was easy to be defeated by teachers. The change agents met with pupils from standard three to seven and most of them were prefects and monitors whom we thought have greater understanding on CRC and also their capable to advocate CRC to other pupils. Pupils in this schools acknowledged having conducive learning environment despite of few challenged existed which is common to many schools in Tanzania.

The session was facilitated according to the prepared manual, different concepts were clarified and enquire their knowhow on how does those rights can be applied in their day to day classroom teaching and school management. After going through various examples and role plays finally we sat together and reflect about the training. During the evaluation and reflection pupils has to tell us what they learnt compare to what was happening in school.

Pupils told us that lack of child rights knowledge among teachers infringed their rights to participate fully in the classroom and in school management processes. It was envisaged that there was no cordial relationships between pupils and teachers. Teachers were chasing and hunting pupils in order to punish them and pupils were escaping from the classes fearing to be punished by teachers when they fail their subjects. The situation was hostile. "Some teachers they would like to use pupils for their economic gain and when you refuse they punish us" Student from Jitihada Primary school.

Pupil shared with the team a shocking story of violation of children's rights at schools and at home which they had not told their teachers. When we shared the stories with teachers they were all shocked, they promised to make a follow to see what happening at their homes and in school environment. It was further noted that, there were issues of rape, bullying and brutal social discrimination in the community. Information given assisted the team to propose the steps could be taken by pupils, teachers and school committee.

The training empowered the pupils to speak everything that they thought violating child rights and hence be free psychologically. Few days after training, the team collaborated with the Head teacher of Jitihada primary school and managed to intervene in a case of rape which was reported by the pupil. The joint effort assisted to arrest a

culprit, the case is at the magistrate level the team is making following up in order to see the justice is done.

In reference to this case , the authorities suggested to roll out the training to other schools so that can empower pupils / children to speak out and reduce violence against them and enable pupils participate fully in the teaching and learning process and in school management processes for decision system.

Training of pupils conducted at Ndugumbi Primary School in Kinondoni Municipality

4.6.2 Training of Teachers

Facilitation to teachers was conducted to all three visited schools in Temeke, Jitihada and Ndugumbi. The training used various methods that were deemed appropriate to deliver the message. The focus of training was child participation in classroom and school environment to enhance quality education.

Among other techniques were plenary discussion and focused group discussions. These techniques were designed to encouraging teachers to involve pupils in whole process of teaching and learning and issues related to school management and decision making.

During discussions teachers highlighted different challenges which drawback provision of quality education which includes: lack of funds which limit service provision; large number of pupils compared to the number of teachers available and poor response in teachers demands like low salaries, un paid leave just to mention few.

In discussions, teachers emphasized on the importance of teaching material as the necessary component stipulated in the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), the program explicitly explain the need for schools be supplied with teach-

ing and learning material and set specific target for improving its availability. Training explored various techniques used by teachers to promote participation of children in teaching and learning process and decision making in school plans.

Facilitation of CRC to Ndugumbi Primary School Teachers

During facilitation teachers made it clear that they do not deliver proper teaching and create venues for pupils participation in teaching and learning process because of big number of pupil in classes, few text books and lack of inadequate teaching and learning materials for pupils with special needs, as result pupils missed the right of participation and enjoy learning such circumstances has also affect and demoralised teachers.

A picture showing pupils crowded in a class with deferent needs

4.6.3 Training of the School Committee Members

A total of 28 school committee members were trained from of Jitihada, Temeke and Ndugumbi primary schools. Both plenary discussion and group discussions were used to allow them reflect their roles and responsibilities to see are in line with best interest of the child.

During the discussion it was noted that most of their plans and implementation process of different activities at school did not consider involvement of the pupils. They acknowledge that, there has been a very huge gap in involvement of pupils in decision making for the matters of the school and themselves. There was no time to consult children on the matters of their concerns before making the decision and therefore the decision sometime was made out of arm chair speculation.

This was violation of child rights according to the convention that we have ratified and agreed to implement. The participants agreed that they need education on the rights of the child and promised to provide more space for pupils to participate during school committee meetings. It was envisaged that participation of pupils in decision making process helps to prepare them to become leaders of tomorrow. On the other hand if pupils are not involved in decision making at school and at home is a missed opportunity of creating leaders who will be serving in different areas and different positions in future.

During our discussion one member of the committee from Temeke said *"When we are executing our responsibilities we tend to forget that we have our children who are supposed to put on our shoes and we do not bother prepare them to take responsibilities hence some of them ends up in corruption when are entrusted as leaders"*

Another school committee member from Temeke primary replied saying that *"after all the decision we are making here are concerning their matters, so it would be nice for pupils to be here to make contribution"*

Leaders had time to discuss about attributes of a good leader and obstacles to obtaining good leaders. They were able to reflect the whole period of their leadership and see what was done better during that period and measure the performance. Finally they agreed that it's important to involve pupils during the process of implementing the school projects for as capacity building strategy. They gave us an example that some time pupils raised a concern about the performance of pupils which was very much affected by the commercial activities that were going around school environment. *"The pupils complained that most of the school time table was interfered by the so called school projects and sometimes classroom sessions were postponed by teachers because they wanted to attend their commercial activities".* Member of school committee complained. Unfortunately no one paid attention to what was said by pupils. That was among the violation of their rights to be listed. While presenting what was discussed in the groups the committee members come out with action points which shown that they will start involving children in their decision making of school matters.

5. Discussion and Reflections

5.1 Discussion and Reflection with Teachers

During reflection with teachers it was discovered that there was a gap existed between teachers and pupils and between pupils and school committee. All of them accepted the fact that they had very little knowledge on the rights of children. Some of them went far saying that they thought the rights of child are the western styles which are now brought to Africa to spoil children, make them rude and unruly. So the training helped to address those gaps and come up with sustainable solutions.

It was also observed that some teachers thought it was the right of the children to be punished when they arrive late to school or when they fail exams and when they misbehaved. Before the training the word child right was misconceived by teachers and even some of the school committee members who are the parents of pupils. This misconception of the concepts made us to define the concept and tell them why child rights emerged, where it emerged and how is practiced. We also observed that teachers were using old methods' of teaching since they had never been oriented to the child rights / friendly methods and learner centred approach.

At the end of the training teachers acknowledged that the training has helped them to improve their relationship with pupils and give them more time of doing other

things instead of spending much time to chase pupils who misbehave. Also it has reduced fatigue of going around the class to monitor every pupil activities because pupils themselves in their respective groups were able to divide selves' roles and responsibilities which initially were done by the teachers.

It was also commented by teachers that child rights education has redeemed their relationship with pupils and families and therefore has opened a new avenue for involving them in decision making which was not practiced before the training. '*this training has improved the way we act or we look at our children, because we used to look them as offenders and recipients instead of active participants and real participants in our development endeavours at school as well as at home*' a head Teachers of Ndugumbi Primary school said.

Another teacher Jitihada commented *"Our schools have been suffering from the problem of inadequate teaching and learning materials but using this new approach of teaching pupils in groups and in round tables will alleviate the problem because they are now able to share few resources / books in the groups and allow everybody to use it through discussion".*

5.2 Discussion and Reflection with Pupils

(Unicef 2007) emphasizes that "children do not lose their human rights by virtue of passing through the gate" and highlights the importance of school respecting children's participation rights. Thus efforts to promote children rights must be enforced not only in the curriculum but also in the education process, in the pedagogical methods and the environment in which education takes place. Thus the education must be provided in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the child.

Throughout the training and discussion it was revealed that pupils have a lot of information which are useful to teachers and school committee, however they were not given enough space to share what they have. For example on discussion, pupils' revealed that only during selection of class monitor were given freedom to nominate and elect them, but on election of the school prefects and head prefect the process is led by teachers. Pupils criticized that behaviour because sometimes teachers select pupils who do not represent their interest.

After school visit and training there was some new development noticed such as preparations of posters displaying different messages which aims to enforce school rules like: observe school rules; don't litter waste materials; wash your hand after using toilets; don't cross on the garden, preserve school environment etc. These messages was designed and painted by teachers and pupils. Since this process involves pupils they were very keen to those rules and regulations because they were part and parcel of the decision to have them.

Posters designed and painted by pupils and teacher to enforced school rule

5.3 Discussion and Reflection with School Committee

Community engagement in schools development has greater influence in promoting quality education. Active community participation can lead to responsive government, accountable and competent teachers, effective use of school funds and improvement of service in school to attaining better learning environment. However in many cases school Committee member who act as link between parents and school fail to participate fully in school plans due to lack of knowledge on how to engage in school programmes.

The school visit and training has revealed that, school committee member need capacity building on their roles and responsibilities to enable them attain skills of managing school and other education policies.

Despite of existence of school committee members it was learnt that, they had poor attendance of statutory school committee meetings which have greater impacts in decision making. However, poor support from parents / community members to respond on issues related to their children development in school has increased hardship in implementing their responsibilities.

5.4 Reflection from change agents

- During discussion we learnt that there was a need for conducting more studies and training on child rights in schools.
- Pupils should be given more avenues to share their concerns and build their capacity and prepare them as future leaders.
- Issues of children rights should be incorporated in the teachers training curriculum.
- Support needed to head teachers to implement child friendly curriculum.

6. Conclusion

The finding from study and evaluation of project implementation revealed that, there was increase of awareness on the Rights of Child to pupils, teachers and school committee member. It was acknowledged that in some point they violated these rights unknowingly because they lacked the knowledge on CRC and hence the project opened their mind and agree that, each group has role and responsibility to each other to make school CRC compliance.

It was further noted that, pupils had a lot of potential in school development if are given opportunity. Having realised that, teacher and school committee members agree to involve them in all school undertakings and observe their right.

7. Way Forward

Implementation of the project enlightened the team understanding of the schools as institution and agent of change on the Rights of Child. Through knowledge sharing, the team were happy to learn that teachers and school committee members accepted to had little understanding of Right of Child, having realised that they received training positively and promised to change their behaviours and attitudes on pupils. They also pledged to encourage participation of pupils in all teaching and learning process and school decision order to enhance the quality of education.

During summing up of the training there was reflections and agreed key areas which project members, pupils, teachers and school committee members commended to continues in order to make the knowledge gained practical and sustainable. The following was agreed:

- To expand the training to other surrounding schools in order to promote education on the Rights of Child;
- The team to conduct meeting with education Administrators at District and Ward level to share the knowledge in order to give support to schools and monitor how Rights of Child are observed;
- To continue network with other change agents, actors of Human Rights and Right of Child to ensure that CRC is observed in schools and at community level; and
- Advocate CRC issues at any point in time or given opportunity.

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Appendix

Content of the training manual on promoting the right of child participation in schools to enhance quality Education.

Chapter One

- Introduction: Short description of the manual on what is designed for,
- Objective of the Manual
- Definition of terms (Who is Child), Rights of Child; Violence Against Children,; Types of Child abuse; Meaning of education; School ; Education ; Provision, Participation and Protection(CRC)

Chapter Two

- Important of adhere to Child Right (Social and economic effects)
- Effects of Violence Against Child Rights (Social and economic effects)

Chapter Four

Roles of different actors in schools
- School committee ;
- School management;
- Teachers
- Non teaching staff
- Pupils

Chapter Five

Promoting Child Participation in school
- Techniques for promoting pupils participation , advantages and disadvantages;
- Important of promoting Pupils participation in teaching and learning process and decision making in school;
- Roles of school actors to Child Rights.
- Way forward: What is to be done to promote Right of Children?