

# Sixty Years of Special Needs Education in Tanzania: Celebrating Audacity, Commitment and Resilience

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## **Abstract**

*This study traces the development of special needs education in Tanzania from 1950, and discusses the achievements and the persistent challenges that Tanzania faces as we celebrate 60 years since the first special education school was started. Both documentation and interview methods were used to collect information. The participants included 15 special education teachers. The results show that some remarkable strides have been made to educate children with disabilities. More learners with different disabilities are now in school, albeit very few; and the number of trained teachers has increased to some extent. Yet, tough challenges also persist. These include accessibility barriers, lack of and/or inadequate equipment and materials, and negative attitudes. The paper concludes that, although the journey travelled since 1950 gives some hope and encouragement, the destination is still a long way off. A lot needs to be done to ensure that persons with disabilities are protected, valued and given their rights as human beings, such as the right to be respected, and the right to live and get quality education.*

## **Introduction**

Tanganyika got its independence from Britain on 9 December 1961, and on 26 April 1964 it united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Tanzania inherited the British system of education and the government had to work hard to make changes that would meet the specific needs of Tanzanians, because the country was very poor economically, and the majority of people were illiterate. At independence, 85 percent of Tanzanians did not know how to read or write (*Nationalist Newspaper*, 24 August 1967 cited by Mushi, 2009 p. 4).

Although education is a human right, many children have not been given an opportunity to go to school. Article 26 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "everyone has the right to education" and "education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stage" (Verma, Bagley & Mohan Jha, 2007, p. 3). This right is also enshrined in the constitutions of all independent nations, Tanzania included.

It is important to note that one of the top priorities of Tanzania is the provision of primary education for all children (Tungaraza, 2009). The enactment of the Universal Primary

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Education Act (UPE) in 1974 was aimed at ensuring that every child in Tanzania completed at least primary education. This was, indeed, a very well meant policy, and yet, in practice, up to this moment, not all school-age children are receiving education in Tanzania, particularly those with disabilities.

### **Brief history of special education globally**

Globally, the history of special education shows that persons with disabilities have always been there, but they have not always been given the education to address their special needs. By the middle of the nineteenth century, several institutions, commonly referred to as **asylums**, were established to benefit citizens with disabilities (Gargiulo, 2003). However, asylums were not meant to be educational institutions (Bender, 1970). Educational historians usually trace the beginning of special education to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Gargiulo, 2003). One of the earliest documented attempts to provide special education can be traced to the French physician, Jean Marc-Gaspard Itard (1775-1838), who attempted to educate 12-year-old Victor, the so-called 'wild boy of Aveyron' (Gargiulo, 2003). Most historians trace the beginning of special education as we know it today to this Frenchman (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1994). In fact, some people refer to him as the 'Father' of Special Education.

### **The purpose of the study**

This paper provides the history and development of special education in Tanzania since 1950, and discusses the achievements and the persistent challenges that Tanzania faces as the country commemorates 60 years since the first seven blind students were admitted to Buigiri School in Dodoma Region.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the historical trend of education for students with disabilities in Tanzania?
2. What achievements have been made so far in providing them with education?
3. What challenges does special education in Tanzania face?

### **Research methodology**

The main method used to collect information was documentary review. Different government documents, books and researched papers were consulted to trace the historical development of special education in Tanzania. In addition, 15 special education teachers were interviewed to get their views on the achievements and challenges in the provision of special education in Tanzania. The interview schedule was divided into three parts. The first section was designed to gather pertinent demographic details of the participants. The second section contained questions designed to elicit participants' views on the achievements, and the last section elicited information on the persistent challenges. Teachers with a lot of experience were interviewed because they were

expected to be familiar with the history, achievements and challenges facing special education in Tanzania. In fact, one of the teachers interviewed was one of the first seven students to be admitted to Buigiri in 1950. Content analysis was used to analyse the interview questions.

## **Results and Discussions**

### *Background information of the respondents*

Of the 15 respondents interviewed in this study, 10 (66.7%) were males and five (33.3%) were females. Their ages ranged from 50 to 72: Five teachers were aged 50, two were 53, three 55, two 57, another two were aged 58, and one retired teacher was 72. Eight of the respondents were trained teachers for the visually impaired; four were trained for learners with hearing impairment and three were trained for learners with intellectual impairment.

### *The development and history of special education in Tanzania*

This section discusses the history and development of special education in Tanzania. The history of each category of disability is presented here and other areas dealing with special education are also discussed.

*Education for children with disabilities during British rule in Tanzania:* The colonial government did not put much emphasis on the education of children with disabilities. So, in Tanzania, the first school for children with disabilities, Wilson Carlile School for Blind Boys (now Buigiri School) in Dodoma Region, was established on 30 April 1950, by a charitable, Non-Governmental Organisation, under the aegis of the Anglican Church when the British were still administering Tanganyika. The school named after the founder was started for blind boys only. At present, Tanzania provides special education for children who are blind, deaf, mentally retarded, autistic, physically disabled and deaf-blind.

### **Education for learners with visual impairment**

The history of special education in Tanzania is short. Yet, despite its short history, there is one thing similar to European history in this regard—that the first special school in Tanzania was also for children with sensory impairments (Tungaraza, 2010). However, just like many other African countries, Tanzania had no special education institutions. Only seven students were enrolled in 1950. One of the first seven students, who was the last to be enrolled on 23 September 1950, had this to say:

On 23 September 1950, my brother and his newly-wed wife escorted me to Buigiri and I was received by Captain and Mrs. Varley. There was no classroom, but we held classes in a room which was originally built to serve as a car garage. The

environment was not conducive for learning, because we did not even have a dormitory. We lived in a house where, when it rained, we had to stay awake because rain seeped through the roof. We had a shortage of teaching and learning materials, but both teachers and students worked hard, and so we survived.

The first schools for blind students in Tanzania were started by charitable organisations. It was only later that the government of Tanzania came in and started some schools. Tables 1 and 2 show the first primary schools for blind students, which were established by charitable organisations and the government of Tanzania, respectively.

**Table 1: Tanzania's first primary schools for blind students established by charitable organisations**

Year started	School/integrated unit	Managing agency
1950	Wilson Carlile School for Blind Boys, now Buigiri School for the Blind (Dodoma Region)	Anglican Church
1962	Swedish Free Mission Blind School (now Furaha) (Tabora Region).	The Catholic Church
1961	Irente School for Blind Girls (became co-educational in 1972) (Tanga Region).	The Lutheran Church
1967	Buhangija Integrated Primary school (Shinyanga Region).	The Catholic Church
1967	Mugeza Integrated Primary School (Kagera Region)	The Catholic Church
1968	Kabanga Integrated Primary school (Kigoma Region)	The Catholic Church
1968	Masasi Integrated Primary school (Mtwara Region)	The Catholic Church

Source: Institute of Education, 1984

**Table 2: Tanzania's first primary schools for blind students established by the government**

1966	Uhuru Coeducational School (Dar es Salaam Region).	Tanzania Government
1968	Ikungi Integrated Primary school (Singida Region).	Tanzania Government
1968	Pongwe Integrated Primary School (Tanga Region)	Tanzania Government
1970	Hombolo Integrated Primary School (Dodoma Region).	Tanzania Government
1973	Mwanihala Integrated Primary school (Nzega, Shinyanga Region).	Tanzania Government
1974	Makalala Integrated Primary School (Iringa Region).	Tanzania Government
1978	Longido Integrated Primary School (Arusha Region).	Tanzania Government
1978	Rutengano Integrated Primary School (Mbeya Region).	Tanzania Government
1978	Misungwi Integrated Primary School (Mwanza Region)	Tanzania Government
1978	Mwisenge Integrated Primary School (Mara Region)	Tanzania Government

Source: Institute of Education, 1984

**Primary education:** According to the records kept by the Special Education Unit at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), in 2010 Tanzania had three primary schools and 34 special education units that delivered educational services to learners with visual impairments. The number of learners with visual impairments in primary schools was 1,615 in 2010: 931 males and 684 females (The United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 2010). Some students have low vision such as learners with albinism. In the same year, there were 2,416 students with albinism in primary schools: 1,567 male students and 849 female students.

**Secondary education:** The first secondary school to admit students with visual impairments is Mpwapwa Secondary School. This school was established in 1960 in Mpwapwa, Dodoma, where the first primary school, Buigiri, is also located. In 2010, there were 16 secondary schools that enrolled students with visual impairments. According to the MoEVT statistics, in the 2010 there were 539 students with visual disabilities in Tanzania's secondary schools. There were also 331 students with albinism in secondary schools in the same year.

**University education:** The first two male students with visual disabilities were admitted to the University of Dar es Salaam in 1978. The university's records show that from 1978 to 2009, sixty-four students with visual disabilities had enrolled at the institution as undergraduates. In addition, eight students had obtained Master's degrees and one had a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (Tungaraza, 2010). Some students with visual disabilities were also admitted to Sebastian Kolowa University College (SEKUCO), one of the colleges of Tumaini University in Tanzania, the University of Dodoma and the Open University of Tanzania.

### **Education for Learners with Hearing Impairment**

**Primary education:** The second group which benefited from education was that of learners with hearing impairments. The first school for these learners was Tabora Deaf Mute (now Furaha) School established in 1963 by the Roman Catholic Church. In 1974, the Tanzania Society for the Deaf started the Dar es Salaam School for the Deaf in Buguruni in Dar es Salaam. The Lutheran Church also started two special residential primary schools in 1981: Bukoba School for the Deaf and Mwanga School for the Deaf, in Kagera and Kilimanjaro regions, respectively. Records kept by the MoEVT show that at present there are ten schools and 36 special education units that cater for students with hearing impairments. In 2009, there were 5,064 learners with hearing impairments at the primary school level (URT, 2009).

**Secondary education:** Besides the primary schools and units for learners with hearing impairments, there were eight secondary schools that offered education to a few students

who got the chance to go to secondary school. The MoEVT records show that students with hearing disabilities in Tanzania's secondary schools included 300 male students and 220 female students in 2010.

**University education:** In recent years, some students with hearing impairments have been admitted to college and university. In 2009, the University of Dar es Salaam enrolled eight students with hearing disabilities. One student, who was partially deaf, joined the University in 1990. Also, a totally deaf student was admitted to the University in 2006. The University of Dar es Salaam had, for the first time, to employ a language interpreter to work with her.

### **Education for learners with intellectual impairment**

**Primary education:** Education for learners with intellectual impairments was started by the government of Tanzania in 1982 at Lulindi Primary School in Mtwara Region. In 2009, there were five schools and 148 special education units that delivered services to learners with intellectual impairments. In 2010, there were 7,936 learners in these schools.

**Secondary education:** There are three ordinary level secondary schools in Dar es Salaam Region and two such schools in Arusha Region, which offer secondary education to learners with mild mental retardation. The schools had a total of 170 students, 115 males and 55 females in 2010 (URT, 2010).

### **Education for Students with Physical Disabilities**

**Primary education:** Many children with physical disabilities have attended ordinary primary schools and secondary schools in their communities. However, those with severe problems attended the schools assigned to them. The Salvation Army—a religious organisation—started the first primary school for children with physical disabilities in 1967 in Dar es Salaam. In 2009, there were two primary schools and four special education units, which provided education for children with physical disabilities. The total number of learners with physical disabilities in primary schools, in 2010, was 13,936 (URT, 2010).

**Secondary education:** There are two secondary schools in Dar es Salaam that enrol students with severe physical disabilities: Pugu for boys and Jangwani for girls. Many of the students with physical disabilities attend secondary schools with other normal students. In fact, there were 2,825 students with physical disabilities in secondary schools in 2010 (URT, 2010).

**University education:** A good number of students with physical disabilities attended different university programmes without attending special schools first. In 2009, the records kept by the Special Education Unit at the University of Dar es Salaam indicated

that 144 students with physical disabilities had benefited from the different programmes offered by the university and had graduated (Tungaraza, 2010).

### **Education for Students with Other Disabilities**

*Primary education:* In recent times, more learners with other disabilities are increasingly being considered for education in Tanzania. In 2010, there were eight schools which provided deaf-blind learners with education and seven primary schools for children with autism. In all, the number of deaf-blind blind enrolled in these schools in 2010 was 1,345 and that of children with autism was 557 (URT, 2010)..

All-in-all, something has been done about the provision of special education in the country, but Tanzania still lags far behind in terms of educating persons with disabilities. Far more still needs to be done as the statistics show that only about one percent of children with disabilities attend school in Tanzania. As Karakoski and Strom (2005) note:

...but the percentage of those with access to school can be estimated to stand at below 1%. This means that the overwhelming majority of more than 99% of children with disabilities and other problems of learning are excluded from the educational system [of Tanzania].

### *Teacher education*

Records show that the first charitable organisations, which established special schools in Tanzania, trained their teachers on the job in their respective schools and in a single disability area of specialisation (Tungaraza, 1994). As special education services expanded, Tanzania found it necessary to establish teacher-training programmes tailored for special needs education. In 1976, the Ministry of Education began training teachers for learners with visual disabilities and those with hearing disabilities, at Tabora Teacher Training College (Tungaraza, 1994). This college only admitted sighted teachers. Students with visual disabilities vying to become teachers were enrolled in Mpwapwa Teacher Training College. Also, Tabora Teacher Training College began to prepare teachers for students with intellectual impairments in 1983. Initially, only five student teachers for special education were enrolled in Tabora Teacher Training College in its certificate programme.

In 1996, the Special Education Teacher-Training Programme was moved from Tabora to Patandi Teacher Training College, where teachers are trained to cater for blind and deaf learners as well as those with intellectual disabilities. The college runs both certificate and diploma teacher programmes. Tables 3 and 4 show the number of teachers trained at Patandi from 2004/2005 to 2009/2010 at the certificate and diploma levels, respectively.

**Table 3: Certificate Teachers Trained at Patandi, 2005 - 2010**

Year	Blind		Deaf		Intellectual disability		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2004/2005	25	14	20	20	21	14	114
2005/2006	43	21	42	35	39	27	207
2006/2007	27	15	20	21	21	14	118
2007/2008	38	41	35	41	50	40	245
2008/2009	34	34	29	44	36	33	210
2009/2010	31	35	39	35	37	33	210
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>1104</b>

*Source: Special Education Unit, MoEVT*

**Table 4: Diploma Teachers Trained at Patandi, 2005 - 2010**

Year	Blind		Deaf		Intellectual disability		Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
2004/2005	10	05	10	08	03	11	47
2005/2006	14	12	23	12	09	17	87
2006/2007	16	13	21	05	12	09	76
2007/2008	28	15	21	09	21	07	101
2008/2009	18	15	26	12	15	09	95
2009/2010	25	12	29	11	11	04	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>498</b>

*Source: Special Education Unit, MoEVT*

### **Inclusive Education in Tanzania**

Apart from having ratified the Salamanca Statement—which promotes inclusive education for learners with special needs—in 1994, Tanzania also subscribes to the Dakar Framework for Action that seeks to ensure that all children have access to, and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015 (UNESCO, 2000). Indeed, Tanzania is one of the countries committed to achieving education for all (EFA) goals and targets. Universal basic education requires assured access, permanence, quality learning and full participation and integration of all children and adolescents, including those with disabilities (UNESCO, 2000).

Inclusive education was started in Tanzania in 1998 when an expert was sent by UNESCO to conduct inclusive education training seminars. Thirteen National Resource Teams that included teachers and parents were trained for three weeks in inclusive education.



Subsequently, four such inclusive primary schools—Mgulani, Kibasila, Wailes and Salvation Army Primary schools—in Temeke District were started on a pilot basis. The MoEVT has conducted similar inclusive education seminars in other regions of Tanzania. In fact, nation-wide, the number of inclusive schools increased from four schools in 1998 to 196 schools in 2010.

### **Achievements and Successes Recorded Over the Last 60 Years**

Although very few learners with disabilities attend school, there are noteworthy successes in the provision of special education in Tanzania. A look at these achievements can help readers see what achievements have been made, and what challenges lie ahead.

*The number of schools and learners has increased:* The statistics kept by the MoEVT show that the numbers of schools and learners have increased over time. It should be noted also that the number of secondary schools for disabilities, such as visual impairment, has increased, thus allowing more such learners to join secondary schools, and progress to university. During the interview, one MoEVT official said:

There has been an increase in the number of secondary schools and some learners with different disabilities are now getting secondary education. For example, this year (2010/2011) we have 13 students with mental retardation who are in secondary schools. There are now five secondary schools, three in Dar es Salaam, and two in Arusha, which enrol students with intellectual impairments. This is no mean achievement.

Also, the number of learners in primary schools, secondary schools and colleges and universities continues to grow, an indication that parents and members of the communities in general are increasingly becoming aware of the educational needs of children with disabilities. However, one cannot really celebrate because not all children with and without special needs are being provided with quality education. It should be remembered that children are sent to school to learn, and not just to be registered in schools. Indeed, children are not, and cannot be mere statistics.

*The number of tutors and special education teachers:* The number of tutors has increased at Patandi Teacher Training College and their academic level has risen. As reported by one respondent,

Now we have some tutors who are degree holders and some even have Master's degrees in special needs education. Besides teachers being trained at Patandi, some teachers have been trained abroad.

In Tanzania, Sebastian Kolowa University College, an affiliate college of Tumaini University, University of Dodoma and the Open University of Tanzania, currently offer

special education training to teachers at degree level. The University of Dar es Salaam, despite being the oldest university in the country, does not have a degree programme in special education; it only provides introductory courses in special education.

***The Tanzania Institute of Education:*** The Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) prepares curricula and teaching and learning materials for primary schools, secondary schools and teacher training colleges. In 1981, the Department of Special Education was established at the TIE to develop curricula and teaching and learning materials for learners with disabilities (Tungaraza, 1994). Although there were a few special needs education topics in the teacher training curricula “they do not give teacher trainees enough knowledge and skills to use when they start work in school”, one respondent contended during an interview.

***The Disability Policy and Disability Act:*** For many years, Tanzania neither had a disability policy nor legislation specifically to cater for persons with disabilities. It was in 2004 that the National Policy on Disability was promulgated. This policy is aimed at “providing [a] conducive environment for people with disabilities to engage in productive work for their development, and utilization of available resources for improved service delivery” (p.10). Another important development was the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010, whose basic tenets are:

- Respect for human dignity;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life in society;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women with disabilities and recognition of their rights and needs; and
- Provision of basic standard of living and social protection.

Both the policy and the legislation are seen as a positive step towards fighting for the rights of persons with disabilities. Indeed, this belated change is a welcome development. In fact, issues concerning inclusive education have also been emphasised in this Act. Part V11 section 27 (1) states:

Persons with disabilities of all ages and gender shall have exactly the same rights to education, and training, in inclusive settings, and the benefits of research, as other citizens (p. 23).

Besides the *National Policy on Disability* and the *Persons with Disabilities Act*, some issues concerning persons with disabilities are now being discussed openly in Parliament, a manifestation of the country’s political will. In addition, the government has now

included issues of disability in the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) II and Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) II, which were missing in PEDP I and SEDP I. To ensure that what is stipulated in *The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010* and other policies and regulations does not just remain on paper, good implementation strategies are needed that would translate them into positive changes in the lives of persons with special needs.

**Research interest:** Some individuals have developed an interest in the field of special education, and, therefore, some research activities are going on in this area. Such research is important because it generates information that can help raise awareness of the issues pertaining to the provision of special education in addition to providing the knowledge that is crucial in this area. However, as one participant commented, “despite much research being conducted in this field, the results do not reach most would-be consumers, such as parents and even school teachers.”

### **Challenges Facing Special Education in Tanzania**

The question then becomes, as we celebrate 60 years since the first special education school was established in Tanzania, what challenges is the country still facing? The nation is still beleaguered by a plethora of serious challenges despite having made notable progress in the provision of special education. Here are some of the most serious challenges:

**Killing of persons with albinism:** If anything has tarnished the image of Tanzania, it is the killing of people with albinism. The number of people killed is not exactly known, but many people have been killed and this behaviour has, sadly, not stopped. If Tanzania is to implement *The Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010* successfully, efforts must be made to ensure that basic principles, such as respecting human dignity, and the provision of a basic standard of living and social protection, are given priority. Mwalongo (2010) reports that besides being killed, people with albinism have continued to be stigmatised, discriminated against and denied their inalienable human rights. As one respondent put it:

If our country cares about human rights and human dignity, then the killing of albinos should be stopped immediately and those who have killed them should be severely punished so as to send a stern message to others. It is sad that this behaviour has been going on for years now and no serious steps have been taken to stamp it out.

In this regard, concerted efforts to raise awareness of the rights of especially marginalised groups such as people with special needs must begin promptly and be maintained. Tanzania has the power to stop such heinous and irresponsible acts and protect all citizens, regardless of their physical status.

**Negative attitudes:** Negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities have been reduced to some extent. However, as Tungaraza (2010) cogently points out, “Negative attitudes persist to-date, although there is some positive societal awareness of disabilities and of persons with disabilities” (p. 145). There are, for example, some children with disabilities in Tanzania who are hidden away in their homes and are not given the opportunity to attend school or enjoy social activities with other children. Such negative attitudes are evident even at institutions of higher learning. For example, one time a university student with disability lamented:

One morning I went to my professor’s office because I had an academic problem. I knocked at the door and he told me to enter. When he saw me crawling, his face changed, and he said, ‘sorry I have nothing to give you today. Can you get out because I am busy, please?’ It took some time to let him know that I was one of his students and that all I needed was academic help and was not there to beg for alms. Only after that did the professor listen to me (Tungaraza, 2010, p.145).

**Physical accessibility barriers:** A person with a disability may become handicapped due to physical barriers. Many buildings in Tanzania are not disability-friendly; they have stairs leading up to doorways or rooms with no alternative access for people with disabilities. As a result, people in wheelchairs are denied easy access to these buildings. The government should make it imperative that all new and old buildings be accessible to persons with disability.

**Barriers to accessing information:** Access to information is another major challenge some people with disabilities face. As pointed out elsewhere (Tungaraza, 2010), our libraries, at all levels of education, have no books written in Braille. As a result, persons with visual impairments have to depend on others for information. In addition, other information posted or disseminated in our communities is written in normal print, thus inaccessible to those with visual impairments. Students in wheelchairs many also not benefit from information posted high on the walls. Persons with hearing impairment also fail to access information due to the language barrier. Communication barriers adversely affect both learning and social interaction.

**Lack of screening tests to detect children with disability:** Inextricably associated with the provision of education for exceptional learners is the concept of assessment. It is important that screening is done to identify eligible candidates (Safford, 1989). One major weakness of the Tanzanian education system is that the country does not have a well-established mechanism for screening children to identify their learning capabilities when they start school or during their schooling. Regrettably, many children with special needs are only detected when their problems are both severe and obvious. Tungaraza and

Mkumbo (2008) conducted a study in ten inclusive schools in three districts of Tanzania, where 565 students classified as “abled” were screened for visual problems. It was shocking to discover that only 37 percent of those children had normal vision. The majority, 44 percent, had hyperopia, four percent had myopia, another four percent had astigmatism, and 11 percent had other problems, including eye diseases. This finding demonstrates that screening of all children is needed to identify their problems and provide the necessary help early in their education. Indeed, early identification of a learner’s special needs is important for early intervention because “delayed intervention can result in adverse and persistent consequences for academic skills acquisition” (Lange & Thompson, 2006, p.108). In fact, inclusive education that is presently being promoted in earnest can only succeed if the needs of all learners are known.

***Lack of reliable statistics:*** One of the main problems facing Tanzania is that the exact number of persons with disabilities is not known. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that about 10 percent of every population has a disability. Thus, if we take that statistic, when the population of Tanzania was 34.5 million in 2002, the number of persons with disabilities would have been 3,450,000. If only one percent of these children with disabilities go to school, the number of those not getting access to education would be alarming. However, this cannot be ascertained in the absence of reliable statistics. Nevertheless, the truth remains; the overwhelming majority of children with disabilities and other barriers to learning in the country are excluded from benefiting from the country’s educational system. It is evident that without proper and reliable statistics, planning for education and other services for all children, including learners with disabilities, will neither be meaningful nor effective. Indeed, if after 60 years only one percent of children with disabilities are in school, one wonders when all children with disabilities will ever obtain their inalienable right to education. Therefore, there is an urgent need for genuine efforts to be exerted, if Tanzania is in earnest about meeting the EFA goals.

***Inadequate trained teachers:*** Patandi Teacher College is the only institution that trains teachers for learners with special needs. With 15,816 government and non-government primary schools in Tanzania in 2010 (URT, 2010), as Tables 3 and 4 illustrate, Patandi cannot singly produce the required number of teachers, and even then only at the certificate and diploma levels. These teachers are also trained only in one category of disability, and not necessarily in inclusive education courses. Also, some of the trained teachers do not report to the special schools or units after graduation, which further curtails the already minute number of teachers for learners with disabilities.

To solve this problem, all teacher training colleges should prepare teachers to meet the needs of all children, particularly in inclusive schools where children of different

disabilities co-exist. Therefore, teachers should have knowledge of Braille reading and Braille writing, sign language and other skills, so as to be able to teach and help all children in their classes. At present, Tanzania has 34 government and 58 non-government teacher training colleges. In 2010, the number of enrolled student teachers was 36,648 (URT, 2010, p. 87). If all these had knowledge relating to special education, then the goal of meeting the needs of all children could be realised to some extent. After all, teachers would work effectively to support inclusive education policies if they were well-trained and had positive attitudes towards inclusion. Hayes and Gunn (1988) cited by Chazan (1994) point out that “the positive attitude of teachers towards the mainstreaming of children with special needs is a prerequisite for successful integration” (p.262).

***Curriculum and evaluation procedures:*** Except in the institutions of higher learning, Tanzania has a national curriculum that requires all learners to learn the same content and pass national examinations before progressing to the next level. Evaluation procedures are also similar, albeit with some modifications, particularly for those who have a visual impairment. Globally, it has been recognised that inclusive education efforts cannot succeed with such rigid and exclusive curricula, which fail to meet the diverse needs of individual learners. Thus, curricular modification and adaptation to meet individual needs is crucial for ensuring that there is effective provision of inclusive education.

***Inadequate teaching and learning materials:*** As the number of schools is increasing, one of the obvious challenges is to ensure that teaching and learning materials are available. However, the reality is that these materials are either lacking or inadequate in almost all the schools, although the availability of adequate teaching and learning materials is *a sine qua non* for learning whether one has a disability or not. Kisanji (1995) found that most of the integrated schools had inadequate learning materials, such as Perkins Braille typewriters, Braille papers, frames, styles, talking computers and hearing aids. Without learning materials and equipment, learning will not take place successfully. This shortage is counter-productive because students learn better when they have well-trained teachers and adequate teaching and learning resources. It should be remembered that access and quality are linked. Thus, Tanzania should not only celebrate access, but also make sure that funds are dispensed wisely and equitably to meet the needs of all learners. Quality education can only be attained when serious efforts are made to make good choices, as well as effectively implementing and monitoring what has been planned to achieve the set goals.

***Inadequate budgetary allocation:*** Generally, quality education is not cheap, but education for persons with disabilities is more expensive due to the equipment and materials required to support their learning. In fact, budgetary constraints and the lack

of political support appear to undermine inclusive education efforts in most African countries, including Tanzania. In the face of budgetary constraints, adequate political support is essential to ensure that special education needs get the attention they deserve as the country doubles its efforts to strengthen inclusive education. Tanzania estimates that every child, including those with special needs, require \$10 a year for teaching and learning materials. One teacher found this estimate derisory:

Ten dollars a year per child is nothing even for those without disabilities. This amount is inadequate especially when equipment and materials are not budgeted for. Blind students, for example, need Braille machines and tape-recorders, which cost a lot of money. Clearly, the money given does not take into consideration the individual needs of learners.

As every child has his/her own individual needs, the monetary allocation should reflect those individual needs so that those with special needs get the kind of support that would facilitate their learning.

**Employment:** Some students with disabilities have successfully graduated from different universities and colleges. However, many of these graduates need some guidance on how to successfully transiting to the world of work. In addition, they need support to get gainful employment. Many employers look at their disabilities instead of their abilities, hence denying them the jobs they could effectively and efficiently execute. One university graduate student with a visual disability explained:

I stayed for nearly two years with my Master's degree struggling to get a teaching position at the university. I was called for interview several times, but after that there was no communication. One of the employers dared to ask me, 'How can you teach and who will grade your papers?' I explained to him that I was a teacher before I joined the University and did well, but still he had some doubts.

The nation has to transcend such unjust treatment of these graduates. The *Disabled Persons (employment) Act No. 2 of 1982* requires all employers to employ two percent of persons with disability for every 50 employees in an establishment. However, this provision has not been enforced as expected. As a result, many graduates with disabilities are being discriminated against when it comes to employment.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

**Conclusion:** Anyone familiar with the history of persons with disabilities worldwide will agree that persons with disabilities have travelled through a dreadful, uncertain and hurtful journey in this world. In Tanzania, persons with disabilities have suffered in like manner and are still suffering, mainly due to the pernicious negative attitudes prevalent

in society, resulting in either the lack of or inadequate provision for people with disabilities. On the whole, the journey that Tanzania has travelled from 1950 to the present provides hope and encouragement; however, the destination is still a long way off. Thus, marking 60 years since the first special school was established in Tanzania entails taking stock of what must be done to ensure the rights of persons with disabilities to education are secured. The government of Tanzania has the ability to make sure that persons with disabilities are protected, valued and accorded their dignity and human rights, such as the right to be respected, and to live and get an education. It is the author's strong belief that with good plans and political will to make positive changes in all people's lives, the journey that the country has embarked on will lead to the intended destination. To this end the following recommendations are made:

**Recommendations:** There are several recommendations that could help address the concerns raised in this paper. Clearly, some of the issues raised in this paper do not lend themselves to immediate resolution. However, where there is a will there is a way:

- **Human rights:** Every human being has the right to live. Therefore, Tanzania should ensure that each one of her citizens is protected, valued, and given all of his/her rights. To this end, human rights laws and regulations must be implemented effectively so that no one individual is left at will to discriminate against, harm or kill others, regardless of human differences.
- **Public awareness:** It is strongly recommended that human right activists, the government, disability organisations, lawyers, persons with disabilities and the community in general be urged to start educating all community members, from the grassroots, on issues concerning disabilities.
- **Budgetary allocation:** Children go to school to learn. The government is, thus, asked to study the educational needs of all children, including those with disabilities, and then budget accordingly so as to meet their individual needs.
- **Make the environment accessible:** The government has the power to make environmental changes, so as to make the physical facilities and information accessible to all people, including those with disabilities. It is thus urged that in keeping with the dictates of Universal Design (UD) and Universal Design for Learners (UDL) there is a need to promulgate regulations and laws that ensure that all old and new buildings are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- **Establish a Special Needs Department at the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training:** At present there is a Special Education Unit in the MoEVT, which, however, is not free to plan, make financial decisions, or budget for its activities. In fact, the establishment of the long overdue Department of Special Needs Education is also strongly recommended.
- **Teacher Training:** It is recommended that the curricula of all teacher training colleges in Tanzania carry a topic on inclusive education to equip graduates with



some basic knowledge on how to meet the diverse needs of children in inclusive classrooms.

- **Employment opportunities:** As many educated persons with disabilities with different professional qualifications find it difficult to get employment, it is recommended that all employers be required by the government to implement what the *Disabled Persons (Employment) Act No. 2 of 1982* has decreed.
- **Screening tests for detection of children with disability:** It is recommended further that the government of Tanzania establish screening regulations and mechanisms to ensure that children can be screened soon after birth, before starting school and while in school, so as to discover those with special needs. That requirement could facilitate the handling of children with special needs and ensure that they get the support they need or even corrective measures early in their lives.
- **Lack of reliable statistics:** It is recommended that during the census exercise due care be taken to get the correct number of people with disabilities. Accurate statistics are, of course, vital not only for educational planning, but also for economic planning.

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