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The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and Tanzania's Next Generation

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Introduction

Like many other African countries, Tanzania has indulged in heavy monetary borrowing since gaining independence in 1961. When Tanzania could not repay its debt due to higher interest rates, the country underwent Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) under the auspices of the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These SAP policies have included trade liberalization, cost sharing of social services, eliminating consumer and agricultural subsidies, reducing civil service employment, and promoting the privatization of programs in several sectors including education (Vavrus, 2004). This economic reconstruction has resulted in the decrease of governmental expenditures on social services such as health and education. Vavrus (2004) notes that SAPs have failed to alleviate Tanzania's debt burden and argues that the Tanzanian government now spends four times (275 million shillings per year) as much on debt reduction as it does on social services. At the beginning of the new millennium the WB and the IMF, under global pressure from civil society, introduced Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP). They are designed to act as a partnership between the government and civil society, with the aim of reducing the debt that countries owe to international financial agencies and other countries.

The modern, globalized world depends on knowledge production and a skilled workforce (de Waal, 2002).¹ As Tanzania continues to become more developed it is simultaneously becoming more dependent on external aid from international organizations. Samoff (1994) argues that Tanzania's shift to a greater dependence on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international institutions is creating an increased reliance on the development models of Western advisors. It is within this context that Tanzania's PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) was written by the Tanzanian government. The PRSP identifies the government's goals that need urgent attention. The government recognizes that there are three major social problems in the country, "ignorance, disease and poverty," and suggests that the poverty reduction plan will solve these problems over time (p. 3). While the PRSP identifies these problems in its opening paragraph, the rest of the document focuses solely on how the government will combat poverty. The current article will argue that while the Tanzanian government has situated the PRSP in both a local and an international context by citing the importance of poverty reduction for Tanzanians, the Tanzanian government has not adequately involved the local stakeholders that are affected by the PRSP. Moreover, the text of the document is couched in international rhetoric that is non-reflective of the voices of Tanzanians who reside in the rural areas.

One of the main arguments for the formation of the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) was that civil society would play a significant role in the

conceptualization of this document. Moreover, the PRSP is seen as important in combating poverty through education. It is therefore vital to situate the text of the PRSP within the context of education to determine whether or not local stakeholders understand the correlation between poverty alleviation and education. In order to determine the importance of local stakeholder participation, a random site in the Kilimanjaro Region of Tanzania was chosen to find out if residents from the village of Old Moshi knew about the PRSP. In understanding which actors were involved in the formation of educational policies in Tanzania, the research site of Old Moshi was chosen to better comprehend the level of participation that a particular community may have had in the formation of the PRSP. Samoff (1994) argues that educational policy making in Tanzania is not solely a Tanzanian activity. He further contends that most new projects in education are funded externally. Hence, this study was interested in the relationship between poverty reduction and education. The PRSP notes that for the alleviation and subsequent eradication of poverty to take place, drastic changes have to occur in health, education, governance and the environment. However, the government does not specify how these changes will take place.

Literature Review

Like other sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania is caught up in a process by which previous structural adjustment conditionalities have been replaced by the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). In understanding the conceptual framework of the PRSP, it is important to be clear on the definition of poverty in the African context. Poverty and poverty reduction are not confined to Tanzania alone. Ali (2002) argues that a paradigmatic shift should take place in the way that poverty is defined. In examining the historical linkages of poverty, Ali contends that two theories have tried to explain poverty in Africa: *radical theory* and *externalist theory*. The radical theorists contend that the failure of African nations to fight poverty is 'just the way Africa is,' while the externalist theorists argue that slavery and colonialism are responsible for Africa's present problems. Ali, however, argues that it is the *environment-geography theory* – nature has been unkind to Africa because of its geographic location – and the *institutional theory* – which is based on tribalism and the failure of state formation – that are the root causes of Africa's poverty problems. Regardless of which theory one finds solace in, when trying to 'solve' Africa's poverty problems one should bear in mind that it is the local people who are suffering.

Ali (2002) explains that there are several ways to measure poverty. He notes that the dominant approach is the *money metric approach*, which measures the standard of living by identifying thresholds of deprivation in which a person is categorized as being poor. Another method is the *cost of basic needs*, which identifies the typical diet of the poor that is necessary for a healthy lifestyle. A third approach is the *fixed poverty line*, which is comprised as a function of the standard of living. The *head-count ratio* measures poverty by identifying the total population of society and it is used to measure the spread of poverty in any society. Finally, economists contend that because the inequality in distribution of consumption depends on the mean consumption, a relationship exists between poverty and economic growth. Thus, the product elasticity of poverty is calculated by using the mean consumption, which is called the *growth elasticity of poverty* (de Waal, 2002). The way in which poverty is measured in Tanzania is important for the PRSP because that measurement determines whether or not the PRSP is attaining its goals.

While authors, governments, academics and NGOs recognize that poverty is an ongoing issue in Africa, a consensus does not exist on the best way to measure this phenomenon. The people of Tanzania have been trying to eradicate poverty since before independence. Over the last decade, one way of solving the poverty paradox has been to use the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). According to the IMF (2005), "PRSPs are prepared by member countries through a participatory process involving domestic stakeholders as well as external development partners, including the World Bank and IMF" (p. 1). Progress reports on the PRSPs are submitted every three years to the World Bank. These reports are indicators of whether or not a country's targets are being met. The goals of the PRSPs are to adequately describe a country's macroeconomic, structural and social policies and programs over a three-year or longer horizon to "promote broad-based growth and reduce poverty, as well as associated external financing needs and major sources of financing" (p. 1). Interim PRSPs review the existing data, analyze the country's poverty situation, depict the existing poverty reduction strategy, and outline the methods for producing a fully developed PRSP in a participatory manner.

An Interpretative Approach to Policy

While the ways in which poverty is measured are important in determining whether poverty exists, they are inadequate in providing a better understanding of how local stakeholders participate in the PRSP process. Moreover, these measurements do not adequately address the *text* of the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) and the goals of the document. Secondly, the various measurements of poverty do not speak to education as a panacea, which the PRSP puts forward as the way to reduce and subsequently alleviate poverty. It is therefore important to situate the text of the PRSP within the context of education to determine whether or not local stakeholders understand the correlation between these two variables.

Therefore, given the limitations of these measurements, this study focuses on the impact of poverty from different positional perspectives - parents, teachers, and students. Coupled with these positional perspectives, and emphasis has been placed on the difference between *policy as discourse* and *policy as text*. Policy as discourse emphasizes the constraints imposed by discourse and policy as text focuses on how readers interpret the document (Bacchi, 2000). Ball (1990), in describing policy as discourse, concedes that the meaning of the policy can change over time. Citing Codd (1988, p. 339), Ball contends that policy as text is always 'becoming,' or 'never was' and 'not quite' textual discourse (p. 16). Ball further claims that "for any text a plurality of readers must necessarily produce a plurality of readings" (p. 16). He continues to contend that the texts of policies are not clear, closed or completed, but are instead the product of compromises at various stages of the policy making process. Because policies are used at different times to represent different actors, they will have different interpretations at different stages in the process (Rizvi & Kemmis, 1987; Ball, 1990; Yanow, 2002). Yanow argues that policies use a 'spatial design' – the physical experience it engenders – to communicate the desired behavioral response. Rizvi & Kemmis refer to this as an 'interpretation of interpretations' that is used to represent or re-represent a policy sentiment; thus the physical text of a policy is an interpretational and representational history that is done outside of a social and institutional vacuum. The interpretations that may be derived from reading the PRSP by one community of meaning may be different in another community of meaning.

Text as discourse allows meaning to be embodied in the words of the text. Therefore, various stakeholders or 'communities of meaning' can be derived from the text of policies (Yanow, 2002). Communities of meaning - values, beliefs and feelings - bind people together through cognitive, linguistic, and cultural practices that reinforce each other to a point in which a shared sense becomes common through 'interpretative communities' sharing speech practices and their meaning (2002). Ball (1996) argues that policy as discourse may "redistribute voice" while maintaining people's cognitive, linguistic, and cultural practices (p. 22). The redistribution of voice is done without interfering with what people say or think. While it does not obstruct speech and thought patterns, the redistribution of voice does privilege certain voices as being more meaningful and authoritative over others.

In order to understand how the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) may redistribute voice to local stakeholders and the relationship between education and poverty reduction, the text of Tanzania's PRSP was reviewed. This study was interested in understanding how the text of this policy engaged in the "authoritative allocation of values" (Ball, 1990, p. 3). An analysis of the PRSP was done to identify how the PRSP "projected images of an ideal society" (Ball, 1990, p. 3) as it dealt with the alleviation and subsequent eradication of poverty in Tanzania. In situating the PRSP in the broader context of education, the role that institutions - political, social and cultural - played in producing this document was scrutinized. Moreover, emphasis was placed on the official meanings that were provided in the document and how they differ from the unofficial meanings not explicit in the document. With these considerations in mind, the researcher embarked to the Kilimanjaro region in Tanzania to understand how various stakeholders understand the PRSP.

Research Setting and Questions

If a community in rural Tanzania is chosen at random, will its citizenry know what the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) is and what it says about education? Interviews and school observations were conducted at the KSS secondary school and MPH and SMP primary schools to determine whether communities of meaning – parents, teachers and students – know that the PRSP exists. Additionally, the following two sub questions were put forward: a) does the PRSP adequately address the challenges of schooling? And: b) is poverty linked to a lack of schooling within a specific community? These questions were asked to assess the implications of this document on the rural population since its conception. This is of particular interest because the Tanzanian government ties the PRSP to several other developmental policy documents. From a policy discourse perspective, inquiries were made as to how definitions are attached to meanings and what voices, if any, are enshrined in the policy making process. From an ethnographic perspective, inquiries were made about the PRSP in order to understand stakeholders' attitudes towards the content of the PRSP. Finally, how do students define poverty and what are the pedagogical approaches used in educating them about the PRSP? In other words, do teachers teach about poverty in rural communities?

Methods

Data collection took place in the Kilimanjaro region of Old Moshi in Tanzania over a four week period in June 2005. Before going to Tanzania to collect data, a document analysis was conducted on the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). Documental analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of texts, which

views written and spoken “language as a form of social practice” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 20) and attempts “to unpack the ideological underpinnings of discourse that have become so naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common, acceptable and natural features of discourses” (Teo, 2000, p.1). There are several broad categories that are defined in the PRSP. Yanno’s (2000) notion of a category analysis – creating categories that entail and reflect ideas about the subject matter – was used to decipher the data from the document analysis. The categories of Urban and Rural, and Income and Non-income were created and then subjected to a document analysis in order to understand how the PRSP was presented to public, whether or not the PRSP adequately address the challenges of schooling, and whether poverty is linked to a lack of schooling within a specific community.

In Tanzania other methods included participant observations, interviews, follow-up interviews, interaction-based analysis, and journaling. During the first two weeks, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 (7 males and 3 female) fifth and six form students at the KSS secondary school, 4 (2 male and 2 female) KSS teachers, and 2 (1 male and 1 female) freshman students who attend the University of Dar es Salaam and were in Old Moshi for their summer break. The purpose of these interviews was to understand whether or not communities of meaning knew about the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) and the role it plays in Tanzanian society. While the official language of Tanzania is Swahili, all 5th and 6th form students are taught in English and therefore all interviews were conducted in English. Also, all teachers (primary and secondary school) are fluent in English.

Participants in the focus group interviews included 35 (20 male and 15 female) 5th and 6th form students. Fifth and sixth form students were selected at random and placed into the focus group. Focus groups were held with 5 (1 male and 4 female) primary school teachers at the MHP primary school and the 5 (2 male and 3 female) SHP primary school teachers. Primary school teachers had an average of six years teaching and were fluent in English. All teachers who work at the MPH and SHP primary schools were included in the focus group. Also 4 (1 Geography, 1 Math, 1 Science and 1 Economics) classroom-based observations of sixth form students was done at the KSS secondary school and 2 (1 Social Studies and 1 English) classroom-based observations were conducted at the MHP primary and SHP primary schools, respectively.

During the third week interviews were conducted with a male community elder. He was chosen because he is highly respected within the community and several teachers had mentioned that he is very influential when it comes to making decisions about the community. The community elder has gained prominence because he is able to trace his heritage back to the indigenous Chagga tribes of the Kilimanjaro Region.² In the fourth week, interviews were conducted with the director of an International Nongovernmental Organization (INGO) and the director of a local NGO. A focus group was held with 15 (10 male and 5 female) faculty members of the University of Dar es Salaam. Notes of interviews were made and then they were transcribed for memory.

Findings

Using the multiple methods outlined earlier, findings illustrate that different interpretive communities – parents, guardians, teachers and students – assess the challenges of schooling in light of the persistence of poverty differently. Findings

show that interpretative communities recognize that Tanzania's children need to be prepared for the new world economy. One interviewee argues that because there is a "lack of social resources in their community, children are disadvantaged." They further contend "that larger cities get most resources and this causes their children to be marginalized and therefore their children are more likely to migrate to urban centers." In an interview with a secondary principal he notes that the resources that students need to provide them the skills for the twenty-first century are absent due to lack of funding and government corruption. Moreover, teachers also note that textbooks are so obsolete that they do not reflect the current economic paradigms. One educator argues that "unless a teacher is widely read, students may not have current and timely information outside of textbooks."

Participants note that it is the Tanzanian government's responsibility to prepare children for the new world economy. Students argue that because of infrastructural problems in rural areas they are being further stratified by the digital divide. A student cautioned, however, that the "digital divide is not so digital in that in Tanzania there is a digital divide between the urban and rural areas."

Findings show that more than four-fifths of the 35 interviewees in the structured interviews did not know about the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002); the resounding answer from the students was "no, we have never heard of the PRSP. What is that?" This is surprising given that the government states that they held Zonal workshops and met with various local stakeholders. Also, 98% of the teachers in the focus groups have never heard about the PRSP. Of those who know that the PRSP exists, they know only the acronym and "do not teach about it because it is not part of the curriculum." What is surprising is that none of the primary school teachers who were interviewed know of the PRSP or its purpose. While it was not expected that everyone would have knowledge about the PRSP, results show that only one sixth form teacher out of 10 knew about the document. This study found that interviewees did not know what the aims of the PRSP were, how poverty is defined by the government, how the Tanzanian government plans to solve this dilemma or the role of Tanzania's children in this paradox.

While these responses illustrate the disconnection between students, teachers, and the government about the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002), they are troubling in that they show that the Zonal workshops did not reach every community. The PRSP argues that Zonal workshops were held and that a number of representatives from poor communities participated. In other words, the 'voices of the poor' were supposedly heard and taken into consideration when the PRSP was conceptualized. The point is that it was surprising to find out that Zonal workshops were not held in this region and that teachers, who are considered the most educated people in a village, did not know about such an important document. Moreover, this disconnection further reiterates the fact that disparities exist in the allocation of resources in poor rural and urban areas. In stark contrast, the two directors of NGOs in Dar es Salaam who were interviewed and academics at the University of Dar es Salaam knew about the document.

Interviews and focus groups with children in Old Moshi indicate that they define poverty based on their present situation. Definitions used by children are often broad and vary from that of the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). The PRSP says that "for the purposes of the PRSP, poverty is defined to include 'income' and 'non-income' human development attributes" (p. 6). Interviews reveal that children often describe poverty as a "state of being...I am in poverty when I know

that I cannot provide for my family member." Another student defines poverty as "not having a job to make ends meet." A third student notes that "poverty was caused by government corruption, misallocation of resources, ignorance, prejudice, and our forefathers." Thus, their definition goes far beyond that of the PRSP.

Discussion and Analysis

Document Analysis

In doing a cursory glance at the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) using document analysis, terms such as 'cost sharing' and 'stakeholders' are common. In understanding what is meant in the PRSP by concepts such as *local stakeholders*, *poverty* and *education*, a document analysis was conducted. There are several broad categories that are defined in the PRSP, however, for the purpose of this study the categories of Rural and Urban, and Income and Non-Income, were used. These categories were replicated from broader categories that exist in the PRSP. In understanding what is meant in the PRSP by local stakeholder participation, poverty and education, the categories of Rural and Urban, and Income and Non Income were subjected to a textual analysis.

In examining the Rural and Urban categorization, rural is always followed by keywords – sector, population and areas – to make the distinction that urban areas do not experience the same challenges as rural communities. In highlighting the lack of resources and the importance of poverty alleviation in rural areas, the term rural is cited 78 times in the document whereas the term urban is used 18 times. Similarly, income is cited 32 times and non-income 4 times. The relationship between rural, urban, income and non-income is a close one. Rural is often cited in the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) to denote areas in which poverty is thought to be rampant; it is also strongly associated with the term non-income. Therefore, if a community has non-income, then that community is likely to be rural and in poverty. The PRSP argues that poverty is a rural phenomenon that is less widespread in urban centers because incomes are often lower in rural areas. The PRSP notes that "according to the 1991/92 Health Service Board (HBS), basic needs rural poverty incidence is estimated at 57 percent, and the food poverty incidence is about 32%" (p. 53). It further speculates that tentative estimates from the year 2000 suggest that the incidence of poverty in the rural areas may increase.

The distinction between rural and urban is evident in the differing tones that are used throughout the document. Rural is used to denote traditional practices and the lack of access to modern possessions. Moreover, the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) recognizes this gap and argues that the government will elaborate on sound policies that will support the rural sector. Conversely, the category of urban is used to infer that poverty is lower in the developed or urban areas as compared to the underdeveloped or rural areas. However, the PRSP does not address the disparities that exist between rural and urban schools. In making references to schooling the PRSP states that the gross enrollment has declined and that awareness needs to increase with regards to HIV/AIDS. According to the PRSP the decline in gross enrollment is more prevalent among rural or "poor children aged 7-9, and there was a decreased from 82 percent in 1983 to 80 percent in 1993" (p. 8). The PRSP does not mention that the costs and benefits of schooling differ in rural and urban areas and therefore the experiences in these two areas will not be the same.

If one looks at the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) they will find that schooling is nonexistent in the categories of Income and Non-Income, which are used to discuss the status of poverty in Tanzania. For the purpose of the PRSP, poverty is defined to include 'income' and 'non-income' human development attributes (p. 6). As mentioned before, income is cited 32 times and non-income 4 times. The PRSP notes that the more recent deterioration in the poverty situation warrants immediate attention since it can be "attributable to worsening income inequality and relatively low rate of economic growth, particularly in the rural areas" (p. 8). The document further contends that the agricultural sector, which is located in rural areas, has the largest prevalence of income poverty. In distinguishing between income and non-income disparities the PRSP notes that as much as 50 percent of cash incomes in some areas are derived from the sale of forest products. Moreover, it is the poorest households that are the most dependent on woodland resources.

The PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) purports that since incomes are lower in rural areas, poverty is more extensive. However, in discussing income, the PRSP draws attention to income disparities by noting that "farmers who grow cash crops [in urban areas] have a higher income" (p. 6). It also contends that the worsening income inequality in Tanzania is due to poverty. On the contrary, non-income poverty is identified in the subcategories of education, survival, nutrition, clean and safe drinking water, social well-being and vulnerability. The government's strategy to combat non-income poverty is to rehabilitate the existing infrastructure, such as schools and hospitals. Deeply hidden in the categories of income and non-income is the widening disparity in income levels between men and women, and which gender is chosen to be educated.

Interview Analyses

In interviews that were conducted, respondents were asked to comment on whether not they cogitated that the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) adequately addresses the challenges of schooling and if they thought that poverty is linked to a lack of schooling within their community. As discussed above, a document analysis of the categories of rural and urban, and income and non-income shows that the PRSP recognizes that a gap exists between these two variables. In addressing the challenges of schooling, findings from interviews and focuses groups reveal that girls are usually the people who suffer. In the interview with a community elder, he argues that "although investment in girl's education is warranted...this investment is determined based on the whether or not the girl can be more productive at home or at school." He further contends that "if girl children are seen as having more value at home they are kept home." Vavrus (2003) argues that while poor girls desire schooling, it comes at a financial cost to the parents. She contends that there is a decline in the access that girls have to schooling in Tanzania, especially in rural areas. Results from interviews illustrate that this is evident; as one parent expressed, "it is more financially sound to invest in the education of a male child than that of female child since male children are more likely to get a job prior to completing their formal education." The community elder interviewed argues that "since poverty is intergenerational...then girls' education is vital...and any education that involves girls has to be expanded beyond primary school." Findings show that some parents may be hesitant about educating female children because, as one parent said, "in most instances in rural areas the mother did not acquire a formal education and therefore she does not know the benefits of it." One interview with a teacher reveals that while "mothers are willing to educate their daughters they are

faced with many other obstacles.” Teachers also argue that once girls in rural areas are given a chance to have a formal education they usually do better than boys in school, especially at the primary level. Observations show that in both primary schools that were observed, there are more girls in attendance than boys. However, as girls continue on to secondary schooling, especially upper secondary school – 5th and 6th form – their numbers decline steadily.

If children are the future, the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) makes little mention of them. Thus questions were posed to determine whether or not the language of the PRSP is a reflection of the voice of Tanzania’s next generation. Given that the informants were 5th and 6th form students with an age range of 18 to 21 years old, the assumption was made that if the Zonal workshops had taken place in their community then at least one of these children would have attended. This assumption was made because in interviews with 5th and 6th form students they note that anything organized by the government in the town of Old Moshi is significant. Moreover, sixth form boys disclosed that all large public events are seen as ways to meet girls.

Research findings, however, illustrate that the voices of youth are almost nonexistent in this document. The PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) notes the importance of primary education and pledges that the government will fund it. However, it does not recognize the importance of children and their future contribution to Tanzania’s development. When the PRSP makes reference to children, it is usually within the context of human capabilities of survival and well-being: education, health, social well-being, vulnerability and the environment. Because health and survival are linked together with describing children, the PRSP argues that malaria, HIV/AIDS, anemia, and pneumonia are the leading killers of children in Tanzania. In discussing poverty indicators the PRSP notes that “malnutrition among children is a good indicator of poverty levels or social well-being” (p. 8). The PRSP does not direct attention to the rural and urban disparities, gender gaps and income disparities – all of which can inhibit a child’s growth and may hinder their access to educational opportunities.

Poverty can have many effects upon a child. In conducting school observations inquiries were made as to whether communities of meaning – students and teachers – know that the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) exists. Although the people interviewed do not for the most part know about the formal document, they are able to define whether or not they are in poverty or if they consider themselves to be poor. Regardless of which approach we use to measure poverty internationally, findings confirm that parents and guardians in the Kilimanjaro region of Old Moshi determine whether or not they are in a state of poverty based upon the number of times per day they can provide a meal for their children. This is particularly interesting since the PRSP notes that “one half of all Tanzanians today are considered to be basically poor, and approximately one-third live in abject poverty” (p. 3). However, while poverty is defined differently by various stakeholders, all interviewees state that quality education is the only way out of poverty. This shows that it does not take an official document to determine what is best for the people. While both stakeholders and the government are stressing education as a panacea for poverty, the PRSP contradicts itself by arguing that educational provision is not a government service but instead is a cost-sharing endeavor.

In 2002, the PRSP was written with the aid of various stakeholders - ministers, researchers, grassroots organizations, parliamentarians, and donor organizations – “to address the country’s economic and social problems” (p. 1). The goals of the PRSP are to address the dilemma that over half of all Tanzanians are considered to be basically poor, and roughly one-third live in abject poverty. The PRSP notes that for the successful implementation of this policy it has to be done in conjunction with other developmental policies - Vision 2025, National Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES) and Tanzania Assistant Strategy (TAS). In addressing the issue of how the PRSP will be financed, the document pays homage to its international partners – the WB and the IMF - who provide financial support for this project.

In addition to determining the familiarity of local stakeholders with the PRSP, interviewees were asked what they thought the purpose of education is since the PRSP identifies that lack of access to education is a major problem that most Tanzanians face. It was noted to teachers and students that the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) further contends that “broadly based primary school education plays a major role in strengthening human capabilities and reducing poverty” (p. 7). Findings illustrate that while students agree that primary education strengthens human capabilities, during the course of the interviews students shifted from describing human capabilities to talking about the problems facing their primary and secondary educational systems. The first response given by students was that “the hindrance to broad primary education is poverty.” One student argues that “if my basic needs – food, clothing and shelter – are not satisfied then why should [I] even worry about getting an education?” Another student notes that “Tanzania is filled with resources and that it is due to corruption that we [the country] have poverty...as globalization continues it will be a deterrent to Tanzania since the government is allowing foreign companies to take our resources away...especially South African companies...Tanzanians should own and manage their own resources.” These responses by students illustrate that they agree that there is a correlation between education (or lack thereof) and poverty.

The link between poverty and the misallocation of resources was intertwined in every conversation with interviewees. In the interview with an elder in the community he cautions that “because of governmental corruption and kickbacks there is a misallocation of Tanzanian resources.” He continues to note that this misallocation has created Tanzania’s poor - “that’s why we are poor.” The PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) recognizes that corruption exists and argues that the government needs to accelerate the adoption of anti-corruption reforms. However, the government has been slow in adopting the necessary reforms that are needed to combat corruption.

Another point reiterated by interviewees with regards to education and poverty speaks to the internal misallocation of teaching resources. Students that were interviewed argue “that teachers only teach them to pass their examination” and they are not taught how to react to social problems. One interviewee notes that “had we [children] been given the proper resources we would have known about this document...we would not have known what it contained but at least we would have known the name.” The question of the (mis)allocation of school resources also raises questions regarding the quality of the education provided. While students at the KSS secondary school are paying for their education, they note that “some teachers were more knowledgeable and better prepared than others.” Students say that it is important for a teacher to be well read on current affairs so that they can

incorporate that knowledge into their lesson plans. Interviewees at NGOs argue that whether a school is public or private, if it is in a rural area then it will lack good teachers, resources, and the quality of teaching and education will be lower than schools in the urban areas.

Conclusion

What is the key to alleviating poverty in Tanzania? From a positional perspective, different communities of meaning – children, teachers, adults, NGOs, and academics – have given the same answer to this question. They all express that *education* is the way out of poverty and the way forward for Tanzania. Children argue that for poverty to be alleviated the government has to reinvest in social services, especially education. Anyone who wants an education should have access to that education. As one student asserts, education should not confer a price tag – “not because I am educated that means that I am better than anyone else and therefore my marketability is higher.” More importantly, education should not be a preparation for passing examinations but it should be preparation for life itself. Teachers note that while access to good education is still a problem, education is the only way to empower the masses and get them out of poverty. They further contend that people remain in poverty because they “lack knowledge” to overcome this “social disease.” It is this lack of knowledge that makes poverty cyclical and intergenerational. Adults interviewed point to education as a way out of poverty and argue that an uneducated population is an ignorant one who will be exploited by those in power. They further argue that the effective reduction of poverty will stem from proper investment in physical and human resources and also from the government clamping down on corruption and kickbacks.

Experts at NGOs caution that without proper research, government spending will be misappropriated on projects that are intended to alleviate poverty. They agree that educating the children of Tanzania can correct the ills of the country but warn that any investment should stem from the government and should not be stimulated by international pressure. Therefore, educational investment should not be a cost-sharing mechanism, but rather the sole responsibility of the government to provide the service of education to the masses in both the rural and urban centers equally. In assessing the validity of the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002), NGOs state that without this document Tanzania would still have a positive economic growth rate and that the document itself has done nothing to improve the state of poverty in Tanzania. Finally, academics from the University of Dar es Salaam argue that poverty is everywhere and is not confined to the rural setting alone. They contend that education is warranted, but they caution that Tanzania has to put its affairs in order before it can effectively address poverty.

The foregoing communities of meaning are not saying anything different from what the PRSP (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002) has enshrined in its conceptual framework. Some of the communities of meaning know that the PRSP exist and others do not, but regardless of the document they all arrived at the same conclusions about the necessity of education for development. Their analysis is similar to that of the PRSP, which states that “broadly based primary school education plays a major role in strengthening human capabilities and reducing poverty” (p. 7). While both the PRSP and communities of meaning note that there are limitations to the present educational system, they both emphasize that lack of access is the biggest hindrance to a good education.

This study shows that although Zonal workshops did not reach the villages in Old Moshi, communities of meaning see the PRSP as a utopian document that does not address their immediate concerns (United Republic of Tanzania, 2002). Moreover, interviewees, although ignorant about its existence, do not feel that the PRSP adequately addresses the challenges that children in rural communities face. Interviewees contend that if this document addressed these challenges then the government would not have cut spending in their community and that the notion of “cost-sharing” would be removed from the official government rhetoric on education. Secondly, interviewees contend that there is a correlation between poverty and schooling. They argue that if a person is poor than that person cannot lift themselves out of poverty unless they are given the necessary resources. Furthermore, they note that poverty is intergenerational; education is the only way out and more government spending is needed in rural areas rather than ‘utopist policies’ that are simply ‘band-aid’ solutions for the problem. The question remains, four years later on the eve of a new PRSP, why have the children of Tanzania not seen the benefits of the PRSP in the form of an improved educational system, gender parity and better access for rural children? More importantly, is the PRSP rhetoric or reality?

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End Notes

1. The International Monetary Fund defines globalization as “the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through increasing volume and variety of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows, and more rapid and widespread diffusion of technology” (Köhle, H., 2002). On the other hand, the International Forum on Globalization defines globalization as “the present worldwide drive toward a globalized economic system dominated by supranational corporate trade and banking institutions that are not accountable to democratic processes or national governments” (International Forum on Globalization, n.d.)
2. The Chaga (also referred to as Wachaga, Chagga, Jagga, Dschagga, Waschagga, Wachagga) are a Bantu speaking indigenous African tribe and the third largest ethnic group in Tanzania. They live on the southern and eastern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru, as well as in the Moshi area.

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