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Education is life – Elimu ni uhai

Overall Report on Whole School Development Programme

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**Village Education
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ABBREVIATIONS

WSDP	Whole School Development Programme
TRC	Teachers' Resource Centre
DEO	District Education Officer
VEPK	Village Education Project Kilimanjaro
WEO	Ward Education Officer

Background and introduction to the work in 2011

VEPK has worked in the Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania since 1994. All its projects are concerned with basic education for village children and young people. The Whole School Development Programme (WSDP) is now its main project. The aims of the WSDP are: to improve teaching and learning; to raise the level of teachers' understanding and knowledge in relation to their subjects and generic teaching skills; to assist headteachers with management and administration; to build closer links between schools and the community; to work closely with the district education authorities in all parts of the programme and to work with education officials at all levels with the aim of influencing policies of the Ministry of Education & Vocational Training.

The current WSDP was approved by the District Education Officer and implemented in 2006. The programmes in 2007-2010 laid foundations and developed work with in-service training in specific primary schools, seminars for teachers, training for headteachers and school committee members, and workshops to provide a forum for the DEOs and Chief Inspectors of the Kilimanjaro region to improve their work and skills and to suggest relevant changes that would help their work. A formal partnership and collaboration was established with Singa Chini Teacher Training College.

George Kasenga continued as the Programme Manager. George was working closely with the Teacher Resource Centre co-ordinators of Mshiri and Mengeni TRCs for the in-service training in the primary schools which were chosen in the Marangu area. All TRC co-ordinators are government employees. There was another change of TRC co-ordinator for the Mengeni schools and regrettably this appointment has not been successful with the incumbent hardly ever present at work. The Ward Education Officer (WEO) for Marangu East retired and the post was unfilled for many months at the end of 2011. There was also a change in the District Education Officer (DEO) for Moshi Rural district. Mama Njau transferred to Same district, and Mr Sheshe moved from Hai district to Moshi Rural district. This change took place at the end of 2011.

Good relations with Singa Chini Teacher Training College and the District Inspectorate continue and have formed the basis of some very productive work in the year.

The only foreign in-put in the WSDP is from specialist volunteers who come on assignments to work with the teachers or in the schools. All their work is with someone who can translate into Swahili so that the teachers and others can understand fully. Dr Anne Samson an educationalist and teacher-trainer from London (although born and brought up in South Africa) researches for, plans for and oversees the WSDP and visits Tanzania at least twice each year. Katy Allen is the director of VEPK and is in Tanzania for several months each year, and is mainly involved on administrative aspects of the programme.

At the end of 2010 plans were made to introduce the WSDP to a new ward, Mabogini, in order to implement the model which had evolved from working in Marangu. In 2011 work in the 11 schools in Mabogini ward proved to be most encouraging and successful.

Summary of work done in the primary education sector in 2011

The programme in 2011 has undertaken the following:

Workshop for District Education Offices and their Chief Inspectors of Schools

In March Drs Ndoloi and Khalidi from the Business School of the University of Dar es Salaam facilitated a workshop for the second time for all the District Education Officers and the District Chief Inspectors of Schools from the seven districts of Kilimanjaro region. Some officers and inspectors were new to the region and so had not attended previous workshops. Sessions explored managerial communication, team-building, decision making and performance management. The participants enjoyed the three days and requested more of these workshops. However, the initial aim for the workshops to be a forum for discussions on how to improve the primary education sector has yet to be fulfilled. The officers need to gain more skills to help to improve the work of their offices, and discussions for changes within the sector as a whole will be introduced slowly.

A report of the workshop is attached at Appendix 1.

Support for headteachers

In previous years headteachers in Marangu had training to assist them in the management of their schools. This was a priority for our work in the new Mabogini ward, as good leadership is crucial for the teachers to perform well.

In April Mr Evans Lushakuzi, who has worked with us before, gave a three-day training course to headteachers and their deputies from 11 local primary schools. This comprised management and administration, teams and teambuilding, styles of leadership as well as helping the teachers to develop individual action-plans. A report by Mr Lushakuzi of the training seminar is attached at Appendix 2.

A few months after this a team visited each school to see how the headteachers were working. The team was led by one of the District Inspectors of schools, and he was supported by the Programme Manager and the Project Co-ordinator from VEPK and also by the ward education officer for Mabogini ward. They were very encouraged by what they saw. Many of the headteachers had completed the actions they had planned to do. They had variously held staff meetings, written job descriptions, written schedules for delegated duties, organised a school council for pupils, started pre-primary classes.

A report of this follow-up is attached at Appendix 3.

The headteachers in Mabogini ward under the guidance of their WEO, Mr Msuya, have started to arrange their own monthly meetings to share experiences, and organised an educational tour to Zanzibar. VEPK helped them to prepare a tour of the historic buildings in Stone Town and made a contribution to their trip. VEPK also assisted Sumaye primary school to lay a floor in two of its classrooms.

Support for teachers

The schools in Marangu have continued to receive support for in-service training sessions and follow-up visits from Jane Firth and the Teacher Resource Co-ordinator for Mshiri cluster of schools.

The main focus in Mabogini was to start addressing the teaching of mathematics in the first three years of primary school; pre-primary, Standard I and Standard II. Jane Firth, a very experienced teacher of early-

years' pupils and a teacher-trainer, visited three times in the year and on each visit gave a seminar. The first seminar was for teachers of pre-primary pupils, the second seminar for teachers of Standard I pupils and the third seminar for teachers of Standard II pupils.

The first day of each seminar was for headteachers in order to make them aware of what their teachers were learning. This enabled the headteachers to support their teachers back in their classrooms. As in the past, a member of the district inspectorate team attends each seminar. The WEO for Mabogini and the TRC co-ordinator there implemented the follow-up visits to help the teachers.

Reports of Jane's seminars are attached at Appendix 4.

Support for the inspectors and trainers

A one-day seminar was held in July for the tutors of Singa Chini Teacher Training College with which Village Education Project works closely, and the Moshi rural district inspectors. The aim was three-fold: to introduce those involved in the training and support of teachers with an overview of the methodology Jane Firth uses; to ascertain the approach of the teacher trainers and inspectors towards teaching and what the potential issues are; and to obtain agreement over participatory teaching with a view to bringing about changes in the approach to assessment methods. The seminar was conducted by Dr Anne Samson and included a session by Jane. The outcome of the day was that there was agreement between all parties on what 'participatory teaching' is, and that Jane's methodologies are the right way to teach. However, there was lack of agreement over the methods to be used to assess pupils' work. There was a clear divide between the teacher-trainer tutors and the inspectors which could not be resolved without further investigation. The group requested that a follow-up seminar be held before the start of the new academic year in order to resolve the issue.

In October, Anne conducted the follow-up seminar having made enquiries in both Tanzania and the UK regarding best practice in assessment. The outcome of the October seminar was an accepted approach to recording on the lesson plan the method of assessment used, and reporting evidence in order to satisfy the inspectors that the lesson had actually taken place in the absence of pupils' written work. A request was made by the inspectors for the methodology and approach to be shown to the Ministry and this will take place in 2012. The significance of the July and October seminars is that Village Education Project can now confidently introduce and develop Jane Firth's methodologies in mathematics, and other subjects, for Standards III to VII. The importance of the seminars is that teachers might be relieved of the burden of marking endless pupils' exercise books, if other forms of assessment of pupils' ability are acceptable. A report of these seminars is attached as Appendix 5.

Meetings

In Tanzania there have been many meetings with the ward education officer of Mabogini ward, and with the DEO, the Inspectorate, and tutors at Singa Chini Teacher Training College. There were meetings with the Business School of the University of Dar es Salaam, and, concerning the reintroduction of the old English language course, with the Ministry of Education & Vocational Training both in Dar es Salaam and in Dodoma.

In Tanzania Anne Samson had planning meetings with George Kasenga on each of her visits. In the UK, Anne started a Network group to bring together people working on education projects. The first two meetings, held in London, were a success and the experience of VEPK was drawn on by those present. There is open sharing of experience between VEPK and the Touchstone Trust which operates in Monduli district in Tanzania. Julia Bengough has been in contact concerning her teacher-training with teachers of English in primary schools in Mvumi district.

National level – materials for teaching English

The project proposed by VEPK to reintroduce an old, tried and tested, English course for the teaching of English as a foreign language in primary schools progressed considerably in the year. The books known by the acronym NOEC were in use as the only textbook in all primary schools in the 1960s, and pupils learned enough English in the first two years of the course to be able to pursue all their lessons in English from then onwards. By the time those pupils entered secondary school they were fully competent in English. There has been recent research which has confirmed that the majority of pupils now in the final year of primary school (year 7) cannot do work based on the syllabus topics for year 2 pupils in English and mathematics. This reflects the great decline that has taken place in teaching and learning. The teachers' ability, particularly in English, is very low. There are over 40,000 teachers of English in Tanzania's primary schools, and on-the-job support is the only feasible solution to start to redress the decline in standards.

Samples of the amended and up-dated books and posters were printed, and with those Katy Allen and Dilly Mtui were able to meet the new Minister for Education & Vocational Training, the Hon. Dr Kawambwa. They met the Hon. Minister in January and again in April. In April a question was asked in the House by an MP for Singida about the progress of the NOEC books. Katy Allen tracked the Hansard records and contacted that MP, the Hon. Mr Missanga. In August Katy and Dilly went to Dodoma, the political capital, to meet Mr Missanga, and also the ex-Minister for Education, the Hon. Professor Maghembe. With Professor Maghembe they went to see the Hon. Prime Minister, Mr Pinda. All parties agree that the books offer the detail and thoroughness that is needed not only to interest the pupils and guide them to learn the language in a comprehensive way, but more so for the teachers to have a very detailed guide with explanations and instructions in Swahili so that they can easily understand what they are to do. In November Katy and Dilly had the honour to go the State House to meet His Excellency the President, Dr Jakaya Kikwete. Their meeting lasted about an hour and all the details of the books were discussed. The President had seven advisers present. He agreed the books should be used once more in primary schools, and the day after the meeting it was announced on TBC radio and in The Daily News that the NOEC books would be brought back.

An outline of the books is attached as Appendix 6.

Overall Findings

The work in Mabogini ward has been most encouraging. Mr Msuya, the ward education officer, is conscientious and reliable and he has undoubtedly added to the success of our work in his 11 schools. Mr Msuya has, by his example, engendered a work-ethos and our programme has met with enthusiasm and willingness to take part and try new things by the headteachers and teachers.

It is also encouraging that our programme seems to be staged well, with the headteacher-training acting as a necessary basis for our other work. Also the focus on the teaching of the first three years of primary classes is beneficial. It sets the foundation and assists the teachers to examine how children learn and, therefore, that different activities are necessary, that pair and group-work is useful, and that good teaching in those early years is difficult but absolutely essential. Involving the headteachers in the content of the seminars has been important.

In the Mabogini schools small changes have taken place. The headteachers have a new outlook on their management and administrative duties and share tasks with their staff, so that a management team is in place. The teachers of mathematics have been introduced to new methods, and have quickly seen the purpose and benefit of using 'concrete' items to help their pupils understand numbers and number work.

The work of Dr Anne Samson with the inspectors and teacher-trainers which has highlighted discrepancies in what methods they permit for assessing pupils' work is of great importance. The development of 'participatory teaching' or 'class-centred' teaching is being undermined by continued insistence on pupils' written work and the marking of that work. Our intervention in this could help to bring about change which could relieve teachers of the very time-consuming task of marking pupils' work every day.

From our work to date in primary schools it is clear that without good teaching guides for their subjects and their lessons the teachers in post at present are not reaching their full potential. Their own education and training, arguably, has not equipped them adequately for their job, and with no government programme of continuing professional development they are being left to fend for themselves. The textbooks in use do not give the support to the teachers which is needed. With good, detailed teaching guides, and pupils' book with interesting and fun work for the children the primary education in Tanzania could start to improve dramatically. We are committed to introduce the course books for teaching English, but also we are in the process of preparing materials for the teaching of mathematics.

Meetings in the Ministry of Education, with the Prime Minister and with the President have helped to further the reputation of VEPK's work considerably, and are testament to the value of our long-term approach to education reform.

Future Plans

We are committed to continuing and extending our work in Mabogini ward. Jane Firth will continue to give seminars and support teachers in the teaching of mathematics to pre-primary, Standard I and Standard II classes. We will make plans for supporting the teaching of mathematics to Standard III up to Standard VII classes with an experienced teacher-trainer who can work with Jane.

Support for headteachers will continue. A further workshop for DEOs and Inspectors will be held but possibly with a new facilitator as the Business School of the University of Dar es Salaam may have contributed all they can.

We will run a training seminar for school committee members of three schools in the Mabogini ward, using the tutors from Singa Chini Teacher Training College who have so ably trained school committee members of schools in the Marangu area.

Dr Anne Samson will pursue her work with the Inspectors and teacher-trainer tutors to reach agreement on acceptable methods of assessment of primary school pupils' ability.

We will start to consider involving the school communities by holding a seminar on how and why parents should talk to their babies and young children. Research shows that babies and young children whose parents make an effort to engage in conversation develop much faster than 'neglected' children. Research also shows that many babies and young children in Tanzania are not so engaged. Jane Firth, with her background in child psychology, is preparing to give such a seminar.

Work on books for the teaching and understanding of mathematics will continue, and we hope to publish these for distribution and 'pilot' runs in the Mabogini schools.