

**LITERACY EDUCATION FOR WOMEN:  
TANZANIA'S EXPERIENCE**

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## PREFACE

Promoting gender equality and improving the status of women has been a constant concern for UNESCO. The Third Medium Term Plan (1990-1995) lays emphasis on women's participation, considered a sine qua non for sustainable development. Attention is first of all given to education for women and girls, key of their participation, on an equal footing, in all aspects of economic, social and cultural life. In other respects, the fight against physical and moral violence practised on women, the contribution of women in the media and in the safeguard of heritage are as many fields of action in which UNESCO has been steadfastly involved during these past years.

These are all the more reasons why UNESCO's Regional Office for Education in Africa (BREDA) is publishing the studies carried out in the course of its execution of this priority field of action.

Most of the Authors are women: African women of different nationalities involved at various levels in the development of their countries. This is already a choice: to give the floor to the academic world, the world of research, the political world in order to make them express an African and "female" point of view. Moreover, these women aim, through their action, at highlighting and enhancing the precious, but all too often unknown role of their sisters: the millions of women and girls committed day after day to the fight to ensure a better life to their families and themselves, to affirm their right to education, to improve through their participation at the grassroots level, the standard of living of their communities.

In publishing this series of studies the Regional Office aims at enhancing the dissemination of knowledge and information on the real situation of African women particularly in the educational sector. The obstacles encountered, the failures endured and the successes achieved are just as many milestones towards real equality and the valorization of difference.

And yet it is not first a matter of knowing and understanding. These publications are intended to be working documents which contain orientations for action.

Even today, women are among those left on the scrap heap, the most important group in the world. The question is how can the world self-develop without its other half ?

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In their study on adult literacy, Lind and Johnston (1986) highlighted a number of problems and constraints which adversely affect women's participation in literacy programmes in most World countries. These include lack of time (due to the heavy work load: domestic chores, child care and agriculture), coupled with lack of self-confidence and relative isolation from more literate surroundings. At the same time, men tend to demonstrate negative attitudes toward women's capacity to learn while husbands and guardians forbid their [*sic!*] women to take part in literacy classes.

Although Tanzania has experienced similar problems and constraints, she has managed to make tremendous achievements in the realm of literacy instruction for women. This study makes a modest attempt to analyse Tanzania's actions and experiences regarding literacy instruction for women by focusing particularly on the factors influencing the achievements, problems and difficulties experienced, and the remedial measures adopted to resolve them.

The principal method of collecting data was documentary review. Both primary and secondary sources were analysed to identify the women's educational phases and programmes as well as the factors behind the achievements, and problems and constraints encountered. In addition, a small field study was conducted in one region (Dar-es-Salaam) where two districts were selected strategically to include an urban district (Ilala) and a rural district (Kinondoni). In the districts, government and party leaders, literacy instructors and literacy women learners in the post literacy classes were randomly selected and subjected to unstructured interviews to gather their views on the appropriateness of the literacy programmes, factors responsible for the achievements, the problems and difficulties encountered, and measures which need to be adopted to resolve them.

The study is divided into seven main sections. In the first section, an attempt is made to define the problem, its context and scope, followed (in the second section) by a detailed discussion of the policy of adult education and related programmes. The third and fourth sections present the major achievements and the contributing factors. The problems and difficulties experienced, as well as the remedial measures adopted, are discussed in the fifth and sixth sections. The last section gives general comments and points out some mistakes to be avoided.

## **THE PROBLEM: ITS CONTEXT AND SCOPE**

The greatest resource for development in any country is the human resource vested in its population (Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi, 1980). In terms of labour input, it is the women who are the primary producers of food needed to feed the entire family, as well as industrial and food cash crops for family (and national) income generation. As if that is not enough, women do most of the work (domestic labour) necessary to maintain the family.

In Tanzania, like anywhere else in the African countries, women are well known for their contribution to development both in the rural and urban areas. In African traditions and in Tanzania's perspective, women are the main producers of food crops as well as cash crops. In addition, they also have many other responsibilities such as housekeeping, food preparation, child care, and provision of water and firewood. A

study carried out in 1985 by the Tanzanian government in collaboration with UNICEF in four villages of Iringa Region, revealed that women spend not less than fourteen hours each day performing various tasks which are considered to belong to them naturally.

Compared to men, women have a tremendously heavy work load. In a village case study on *Women's Mobilization and Integration in Development* (in Tanzania), Madsen (1984: 40-41) has provided an example to illustrate the time budgets of men and women in Peramibo "A" village (see Table 1).

One should also not forget that each of the activities performed by women every day, as can be seen from Table 1, involves a number of related sub-activities which are also laborious. For example, the preparation of maize porridge breakfast may involve husking or grinding of maize, fetching water and firewood, making the fire, cleaning the pots and dishes, etc. Throughout the year, women are busy doing one task after another. Madsen (1984: 42) has, for example, documented the main agricultural tasks carried out by Tanzanian women in a single year (see Table 2).

Their contribution to development, notwithstanding, women have always been discriminated against in formal education as well as in non-formal education (Mascarenhas and Mbilinyi, 1983). Almost throughout the world, illiteracy is higher among women than among men. In 1960, for example, 58 percent of the adult illiterates were women. In 1970, the figure rose to 60 percent and in 1980 to as high as 80 percent (Gillette, 1983: 37). In absolute terms, the situation of illiteracy is worsening more rapidly for women than for men. Gillette (1983: 37) has further provided some figures which illuminate the nature of the illiteracy problem for women. While there were eight million more male illiterates in 1970 than in 1960, the figure for women was 40 million more. Between 1970 and 1980, the respective figures had risen to 15 million for men and up to 48 million for women.

In Tanzania, although educational provisions in the colonial State were minimal for both boys and girls, they were even more limited for the latter, owing to social, cultural and religious factors which dictated that girls should stay at home to help their mothers with domestic chores and farm work (Muro *et al.*, 1981). Moreover, given limited economic resources coupled with the retrogressive traditional and conventional beliefs, both parents and the government tended to give consideration and preference to boys' education (Mbilinyi, 1969; Alele-Williams, 1992).

During German colonial rule, not a single government school was built for girls. Opportunities for formal education, as far as girls were concerned, were only available in mission schools where they received a minimal one or two years of literacy training and catechism. The meagre higher level mission education which existed was only for boys, while the government girls' schools (which were established during the British colonial period) were partly meant "(to provide the educated African with a suitable 'counterpart' " (Mbilinyi, 1975: 192).

**Table 1**  
**Time Budgets of Men and Women of Peramibo "A" Village**

Gender	Time	Activity
Women	6 a.m.	Get up and prepare breakfast.
	7.30 a.m.	Go to work in the field.
	Noon	Return from the field and prepare lunch; return to the field or clean beans for about three hours; collect firewood for about half an hour on the way home from the field.
	6 p.m.	Prepare supper; fetch washing water; talk with household members and pray.
Men	Morning	Get up and wash themselves. After breakfast (in the rainy season) collect "Ulanzi" (wine) from the bamboo trees; go to the field.
	Noon	Return to the house.
	Afternoon	Go wherever they want to after lunch.

Adapted from Madsen, B., *Women's Mobilization and Integration in Development - A Village Case Study from Tanzania*, CDR Research Report n° 3, 1984: 40-41.

**Table 2**

**Time Schedule for Agricultural Tasks Carried out by Women**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Activity</b>
October	Preparation of the paddy field and waiting for the rains
November-end	Cultivation of maize, using the tillage technique: the old plant is cut into pieces which are left on the ridges until the rain starts. Then the soil is hoed and ridged, mixing in the residue from the old ridge as manure.
December-beginning	<i>Crotalaria pallida</i> is planted with the maize for manure. Beans and pumpkins are also planted.
December-end	Work in the paddy field.
January-beginning	Planting of paddy seeds.
January-end	Weeding in the paddy field; harvesting beans, cultivation of maize: the manure plant is removed, the soil hoed and re-ridged, and fertilizer applied.
February	Weeding in the paddy field; harvesting beans.
March	New cassava plants are planted; weeding of maize.
May	Harvesting of paddy.
June-August	Harvesting of maize and other crops.

Adapted from Madsen, *op.cit.*, p. 42



In all their educational planning, the colonialists neglected the adults, while paying very little attention even to the education of children. In its *Memorandum on the Education of African Communities* (1935), the Advisory Committee on Education in the colonies identified colonial educational policy with community education, and stressed that adult education was to be taken in hand together with that of the young. Toward the end of the Second World War (1944), the Advisory Committee on Education in the colonies, in its *Mass Education in African Society*, sought to offer community education primarily "(to contain the growing political pressures for liberation in the African colonies)" (Mbilinyi, 1975:8).

After the Second World War (1946), social welfare organizations were established by the government to provide social services in towns for ex-army officers in order to rehabilitate them. A total number of about 34 welfare centres were established with the purpose of providing facilities for holding meetings, discussions and debates, indoor games, libraries, dancing halls and drinking places. In 1949, the welfare organizations were reorganized to become a government department known as a Social Welfare Department. The Department extended its activities to include those of the youth clubs, adult education and probation services. By 1951, the activities of the Department further extended to reach the rural areas and, in 1952, the Department was changed into a social department under a commissioner for social development. The programmes of the Department included literacy campaigns, women's groups, youth clubs and self-help activities in selected rural areas, while in urban areas more emphasis was put on general adult education. In 1961, the year in which Tanzania became independent, the Department was re-designated the "Community Development Division" (Rutashobya, 1969).

Under the Ministry of Community Development and National Culture, more community workers were appointed to promote adult education in the countryside. By January 31, 1965, there were already about 7,257 literacy classes with a total enrolment of 541,348 adults out of whom 206,214 were men and 335,336 were women. There were, in addition, 440 follow-up classes, in English and Arithmetic, with a total enrolment of 14,043 adults and 1,914 women's groups (cooking, sewing, child care, etc.) with a total enrolment of 112,739 (Mpogolo, 1980:19).

One interesting point to note at this juncture is the positive response of women as far as enrolling in literacy classes is concerned. Nevertheless, at the time of regaining political independence, the majority of the Tanzanian women (about 80%) were illiterate. That was unacceptable for the new nation interested not only in promoting economic development and national unity, but also in creating an egalitarian society. Various policies, resolutions, circulars and directives were issued to enforce literacy instruction for women. Functional literacy programmes including, *inter alia*, the 3 Rs, health education, housecraft, embroidery, sewing and agriculture were launched. At the same time, it was realized that in order to combat illiteracy, there was a need to make formal education more accessible. This would be fighting illiteracy at its roots. Among the strategies used to create more educational opportunities to girls were universal primary education (UPE) launched in 1977, alteration of the selection criteria for girls' entry into Form I and Form V, increase in the number of co-education schools, and waving party resolution to favour girls so that they could join university immediately after one year of national service.

Within only a period of 16 years (1967-1983), Tanzania made gigantic strides in the provision of literacy instruction for women, compared to many other Third-World

countries. Enrolment figures have been impressive as well as literacy attainment rates. The total number of women who were tested in three national literacy tests (1977, 1981 and 1983) exceeded the total number of male participants. This tremendous achievement needs to be appreciated in the context of Tanzania's meagre resources as well as other limitations such as unfavourable societal attitudes toward women's participation in social activities, lack of adequate supply of basic necessities of life (such as water), lack of day care centres and medical facilities, without overlooking the heavy work load that women carry as a result of the sexual division of labour.

Thus, it is interesting to note the factors which have contributed to Tanzania's success as well as the problems and constraints which need to be resolved in order to consolidate the achievements. In that context, this study might be an "eye-opener" for other countries in the Third World who are interested in offering at least basic education for their citizens, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

## **POLICY CONTEXT AND PROGRAMMES**

### **The State of Tanzania's Adult Education Policy**

In the context of any developing country, if adult education is to play a vital role in promoting social, political and economic development, there must be - in the first instance - a clear national policy. Such was the position held by the participants at the Third International Conference on Adult Education, held in Tokyo in 1972. Among other things, they urged each Member State to draw clear national policies on adult education. Most of the speakers, however, agreed that it was essential to "*go beyond the philosophical formulations and statements of objectives*" given the diverse nature of the problems of planning, administration and financing accruing from the very diversity of the political, economic, social and cultural conditions of each country.

Similar concerns were expressed by the participants of the International Symposium (Conference and Study Tour on the Tanzanian Experiences in Functional Adult Education) held in Dar-es-Salaam/Mwanza in 1974. Recognizing the depressing effect of illiteracy in national construction and individual actualization, they recommended that governments "*formulate clear policies for the eradication of illiteracy in the shortest possible time and make resources available where necessary to achieve this aim*".

The participants were impressed by the efforts being made by Tanzania to attain this objective, noting that "*in Tanzania, the eradication of illiteracy is regarded as a social duty and the target date for the complete victory over illiteracy is 1973*". However, they warned that large-scale functional programmes would present difficult professional as well as administrative problems for which there was not yet a clear solution. Possibly, large-scale functional literacy programmes would be most effective in those countries with a sufficient adult education infrastructure, and whose social and political philosophies encouraged both maximum mobilization of instructional resources and a maximum participation by the adult learners themselves.

Thus, for many adult educators in the world, Tanzania does not exhibit only a clear national policy of adult education, but she demonstrates also a unique commitment to it. A report by a SIDA mission submitted to the Tanzanian government

(January, 1971), for example, showed that Tanzania had no problem at all in the realm of adult education policy. The only problem, perhaps, was at the level of operationalization of the structures already created. A similar observation was made by Osterling (1974:11) who, among other things, noted that, "*as has often been stated, a great asset for the educational planner in Tanzania is its well-defined and consistent taxonomy of goals and objectives*".

### **Adult Education Policy Objectives in Tanzania**

Promotion of literacy activities for men and women may be aimed at achieving interrelated social, political and economic objectives. According to Lind and Johnston (1986), it may first of all seek to legitimize the State in so far as it makes the citizens believe that the government is doing something for them. Second, it may facilitate international approval and funding, if the scale is large enough to attract the attention of international agencies. Third, through literacy programmes, the citizens may become informed about some aspects of the national policy, thereby enabling them to become effective participants in the political system. Fourth, the organizational character of the literacy campaign itself (which is in some cases semi-militaristic) may also attain a number of objectives including general mass mobilization "*to participate in an organized collective act of solidarity with the revolution*" (Lind and Johnston, 1986: 34), as well as to disseminate political education to the "middle-class" teachers through their interaction with the campaign organizers and adult learners. Fifth, the literacy process may lead to attainment of a series of other socio-political objectives such as construction of social infrastructure, consolidation of national unity, as well as raising political consciousness through the use of certain teaching techniques which themselves are of high political value.

Lind and Johnston (1986) further contend that there is always an economic rationale behind all government-sponsored literacy projects. On the one hand, the literacy projects require some investment, hoping to achieve some economic returns. On the other, it is often hypothesized that literacy has the potential to create a different society - a more developed one - where knowledge of the 3 Rs plays an important role in the relations of production. At the level of the individual, the ability to read and write is a necessary prerequisite for any effective participation in the social, political and economic affairs of any society. As Young man (1986:199) put it, "*an illiterate person stands outside politics*". In addition, apart from increasing people's capacity to control their environment, literacy and numeracy are basic tools for use in further intellectual development. In Tanzania, adult education policy has evolved in response to developments taking place in the overall national development strategy.

### **Focus on Rural Development**

On the 9th of December, 1961, colonialism in Tanzania retreated politically, but retained its economic positions. For Tanzania still found herself relying on the inherited financial structures and institutions. Her economy was still externally controlled, based mainly on undiversified export crops, and thus playing the role of a mere raw materials producer in the international economy.

Nevertheless, political independence brought with it new demands to which the new nation had to respond. First, a number of posts had been left vacant by colonial

administrators and were now to be occupied by Africans. Second, linked to the first point, was the urgent need for manpower development in order to have a sufficient level of trained upper- and middle-level personnel. Third, freedom had been won, but the country had remained as poor as before. It became both politically and economically imperative to organize and mobilize the entire nation (women included) in nation-building activities. Fourth and perhaps most crucial, was the need for peace and unity (possible areas of conflict being tribal, religious and regional diversities).

Thus, adult education was stressed in many political messages, particularly those related to self-help and nation-building activities such as the construction of roads, wells, dams and the building of schools and dispensaries. All these activities required people's motivation, mobilization and participation. They were practical activities which satisfied the immediate needs of the people. They were also ideological in character, as they emphasized the meaning and consequences of attaining independence.

The first clear Statement of the role of adult education in national development was made by Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere in 1964 when he introduced the first five-year social and economic development plan to the Union Parliament. He stressed, among other things:

*First, we must educate adults. Our children will not have an impact on our development for five, ten, or even twenty years. The attitudes of the adults, on the other hand, have an impact.*

However, although this indicated that adult education was to be an integral and vital part of the government's development strategy, there was still no clearly articulated national policy on adult education. The community development workers in rural areas conducted literacy classes in the traditional narrow 3-Rs approach. This had important consequences on adult learners' motivation to enrol and attend literacy classes, particularly the women who had a lot of domestic chores to attend to, in addition to engaging in productive activities. Crone (1978), for example, has argued that in a rural environment, most adults would consider problems of health, nutrition, agriculture and income generation to be more critical in their lives than simply literacy and numeracy. Similar concerns were raised by the Commonwealth Secretariat (1980:13) by pointing out that:

*[...] in non-literate environment and a primitive rural economy with most people engaged in subsistence activities, literacy [per se] is not a practical necessity; and it is extremely difficult to maintain motivation and interest in literacy efforts, even when these efforts form a part of a broader functional education programme.*

### **The Arusha Declaration and After**

In 1967, Tanzania's struggle for decolonization reached a higher level of maturity, with the proclamation of the *Arusha Declaration*, which elaborated on the country's ideological stance: Tanzania was now to follow a socialist policy employing

the strategy of self-reliance. The Declaration stressed, *inter alia*, rural development, taking into consideration the fact that about 95 percent of the Tanzanians live in rural areas, earning their livelihood mainly from subsistence agriculture. In that context, adult education became increasingly important.

The Declaration had two major implications for adult education. First, advocating a socialist policy, it implied equal educational opportunity to all citizens. Second, the policies of self-reliance and rural development required full participation by all the citizens, irrespective of age and sex. To that end, eradication of illiteracy among all the adults became a political as well as an economic imperative.

The aims and objectives of adult education in the Tanzanian context were directly specified in the *Second Five-Year Development Plan (1969-1974)* and in the "Adult Education Year" speech of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (1969). The former underscored the need to gear adult education toward raising the standards of living in the rural areas:

*The main emphasis in adult education in this plan period will be on rural development. It will include simple training in agricultural techniques and craftsmanship, health education, housecraft, simple economics and accounting, and education in politics and the responsibilities of the citizen. (p. 12)*

In order to ensure smooth organization of education activities, it was proposed in the same plan "to place the main organizing responsibility on the primary school" which would "become a community education centre, at which the provision of primary education is only one function" (p. 13).

The Plan also called for cooperation among various government ministries and other organizations offering instruction in different subjects which were relevant to development. Provision was also made for the establishment of a National Correspondence Institute to cater for the educational needs of the literate people throughout the country.

On December 31, 1969, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere (at that time the President), in what has come to be properly known as "Adult Education Year Speech", reminded Tanzanians of the role of adult education in national development. Calling upon the nation to make 1970 a special year for adult education, he said:

*Although there has been a lot of talk about education for adults, and quite a lot of people have been working in this field, we have never yet really organized ourselves for a major attack on our ignorance. The Central Committee of TANU has decided that we must do this in 1970. The coming twelve months must be "Adult Education Year" and we must give this work very high priority.(p.137)*

Elaborating on the aims and objectives of adult education in Tanzania, he underscored the need to gear adult education towards improving the quality of life of the people by enabling them to build better houses, to use better tools in order to raise agricultural

and industrial productivity and, through employing modern methods of hygiene, to help improve their health.

Adult education should also help in changing the attitudes of the people towards themselves, their fellow human being and their own cultural heritage. Every housewife, for example, ought to learn that good food does not necessarily need European cooking and that through proper utilization of available local resources each one can, in collaboration with others, advance himself or herself and his/her community. Indeed, through the functional literacy classes, all should also be able to understand the plans for national economic advance so that they can play their part in making them a success for the benefit of all.

Toward the end of 1970, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere made a second appeal to the nation to make further efforts in adult education by calling upon six districts (Ukerewe, Mafia, Kilimanjaro, Pare, Masasi and Dar-es-Salaam) to wipe out illiteracy by 1971. Two years later, in 1973, the Prime Minister's office issued a directive on workers' education. All government, party and parastatal offices throughout the country were called upon to draw and to conduct education and training programmes for their workers of all levels of education, in order to eradicate illiteracy in the country and to improve their intellectual as well as productive capacities.

Almost simultaneously, the ruling party at that time (TANU) was taking the whole question of adult education very seriously. As a matter of fact, from its inception, TANU called upon all its members to make a promise that they would educate themselves according to their abilities and use that education for the benefit of all. In the context of that spirit, the 15th TANU Biennial Conference (1971) directed that all plans be made to eradicate illiteracy within four years (*Resolution 22*). The same conference urged education to be integrated with work throughout the country (*Resolution 21*). Later on, in 1973, the 16th TANU Biennial Conference called upon all the leaders to be in the forefront in adult education and to ensure that all programmes are implemented as planned (*Resolution 27*).

Table 3 summarises the major adult education policy statements in Tanzania, namely the *Second Five-Year Plan* (1969-1974), President Nyerere's *Adult Education Year Speech* (1969), the 15th and 16th *TANU Biennial Conferences' Resolutions* (1971 and 1973, respectively), and the *Prime Minister's Directive on Workers' Education* (1973). The table shows the general aims, specific objectives, programmes (specified or implied) and the measures which should be taken to implement them.

Table 3

## Analysis of Policy Statements on Adult Education in Tanzania

Policy Document	General Aims	Objectives	Programme Areas	Measures to be taken
Second Five-Year Plan (1969/1974)	To promote rural development	To offer training in agricultural techniques and craftsmanship To improve health standards of the people To enable people to build modern houses To impart basic skills in economics and accounting To impart basic knowledge in politics and the responsibility of the citizen	Agriculture Handicraft Health education Housecraft Simple economics Simple accounting Political Education  Cooperative education	Primary schools to become adult (community) education centres
Adult Education Year Speech (31 December, 1969)	To improve the living conditions of the people To raise the political consciousness of the people	To enable people to build better houses To enable people to use better tools to raise agricultural and industrial productivity To help the people to use modern methods of hygiene To impart basic skills/techniques in preparing a balanced diet To enable the people to understand national economic plans so that they can participate in implementing them To restore people's confidence in their own abilities both potential and actual To enable the people to make simple furniture	Economics Accounting Workers' education Home economics Crafts Cooperative education Political education	All government and party leaders, all institutions and organizations, as well as all literates to participate in the mass drive against illiteracy
15th & 16th TANU Biennial Conferences (1971-1973)	To eradicate illiteracy To integrate education with work	To work out plans for wiping out illiteracy within four years To work out plans for integrating education with work	Literacy Post-literacy Workers' education Political education	All leaders to be fully involved in adult education activities and to ensure that the campaign succeeds
Prime Minister's Directive on Workers' Education (1973)	To offer workers' education to all workers	To eradicate illiteracy among all workers To raise political consciousness of all the workers To improve professional competency of all the workers To offer vocational training to workers To help the workers improve their general education and professional competency through in-service training and other general academic subjects.	Literacy Vocational training Academic subjects In-service training Professional training Political education	All work places to give workers' education to all workers All workplaces to appoint workers education officers All workplaces to set aside special budgets (10% of the total budget) for workers' education All workplaces to conduct workers' education in normal work hours for a period of not less than one hour daily

Apart from these explicit policy statements on adult education, the Party launched other policy documents which have had a close bearing on the whole question of adult education in the country, although they only do so implicitly. Such policy documents include the *Party Guidelines* (1971), *Decentralization of Government* (1972) and the *Party's Policy on Agriculture, "Siasa ni Kilimo"* (1972). A central point that was raised in the *Party Guidelines* and which was linked to adult education, was the need for involving the people in all decision-making processes which affect their lives. A similar concern was further articulated in the party's policy of decentralization whereby the administrative machinery was brought closer to the people to enable them to participate more fully in the decision-making processes. And the policy paper on agriculture also had important implications on the kind of education that the peasants needed in Tanzania: education and training in modern (scientific) methods of farming, animal husbandry and fishing.

In summary, as can be gathered from Table 3 and other related official documents, the policy of adult education in Tanzania seeks to achieve four interrelated objectives: First, to raise the general education of Tanzanians, particularly those who dropped out of the school system before completing the minimum required level; second, to improve professional/vocational skills of the working population so as to raise productivity on the farms, in the factories and in the offices; third, to increase general awareness and political consciousness of the masses so that they can become active participants in the political system at the local, national and international levels; and finally, to gear adult education toward ameliorating the quality of life of all the people, particularly those living in the rural areas.

### **The Creation of a Decision-making Machinery for Adult Education**

Since 1969, the Ministry of Education has been given the official responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and administering adult education in the whole country. There were a number of reasons for doing that. First, the Ministry of Education had the requisite expertise and experience in matters pertaining to education. Second, the Ministry has a network of schools and colleges spread out across the whole country, in both urban and rural areas, which could be used in facilitating adult education work. Third, there was a need to integrate non-formal education with formal education because the two modes of learning are interrelated anyway, apart from the fact that if illiteracy is to be eradicated it must be attacked right from its source - children and adolescents (Fordham, 1985).

Consequently, a directorate of adult education was created at the Ministry of Education to cater for planning, finance, research, evaluation, radio programmes, curriculum development, book production and distribution, and all other policy matters in the realm of adult education. In the regions, the regional education officers were given charge of developing and administering adult education programmes in their respective regions. They were required to send monthly progress reports to the national headquarters. In their daily activities, they were to be assisted by adult education officer coordinators who were appointed and attached to the regional education officers.

At the district level, a district education officer (adult education) was appointed to assist the district education officer in all matters pertaining to adult education throughout the district. At the ward level, a head teacher of one of the primary



schools within the area was made a coordinator of adult education activities. In addition, the heads of educational institutions (secondary schools, teacher colleges, rural training centres, etc.), were entrusted with the design of adult education programmes for the workers and peasants around the country.

To render support to the adult education personnel, there were established respective adult education committees, comprising students' representatives, party leaders, government officials, heads of parastatal organizations, and leaders of religious institutions. Figure 1 shows the hierarchy of adult education officers under the Ministry of Education and the corresponding adult education committees.

Like in the case of adult education policy, Tanzania has also been considered exemplary in the area of administration and organization of adult education programmes. For example, the participants of the International Symposium on Adult Education (1974:10) made the following observations to that regard:

*[...] the Tanzanian arrangement of committees with adult education sub-committees at all levels (ward, division, district, region and nation) with decision and executive powers are very suitable instruments for coordination, flow of information and ensuring participation of the adult learners concerned.*

**Figure 1**

**The Administrative and Organizational Structure of Adult Education in Tanzania**

Ministry of Education	Adult Education Sub-committee
Director of Adult Education	National Central Inspectorate
	Adult Education Inspectors
Regional Education Officer	Regional AE Committee
Regional AE Coordinator	Permanent Trainers' Team
	Institute of AE Resident Tutor
	Workshop for AE Follow-up Materials
District Education Officer	District AE Committee
District AE Coordinator	District Permanent Trainers' Team
	District Inspectorate AE Inspector
Ward AE Coordinator	Ward AE Committee
	Permanent Trainers' Team
	Rural and Urban Ward Libraries
Centre AE Coordinator	Government Department
	Institutions and Workplaces
	Folk Development Colleges

Adapted from Johnsson, A & K. Nystrom, *Adult education in Tanzania*, Education Division Documents n° 9, SIDA, 1983.

## **MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Strategies and Approaches Adopted**

In Tanzania, during the 1970s, UNESCO's selective-intensive approach to functional literacy was transformed into a mass campaign; this has received considerable support from the party, government and the people themselves. The central direction to the campaign has been provided by the Ministry of Education headquarters, while the National Literacy Centre located in the Lake region (Mwanza) was (particularly up to the mid-1970s) responsible for providing technical assistance in training, designing instructional materials, field organization and evaluation. The regions, districts, divisions and wards have been dealing with the day-to-day activities including the choice of classrooms, recruitment of volunteer teachers, distribution of materials, as well as the establishment of coordination and advisory committees.

Literacy classes were conducted in all possible locations including schools, colleges, health centres, cooperative buildings, party, government and parastatal offices, factories, church buildings and even under the trees in the open. Here it is important to emphasize at least two points. First, the role played by primary schools throughout the country. Apart from the fact that they have played an invaluable role in providing facilities for teaching and learning, the primary school teachers have been very instrumental in organizing functional literacy classes as well as in actual teaching. Second, the 10-cell leaders spread out throughout the villages, towns and workplaces all over the country have rendered considerable support to adult education activities, particularly in mobilizing adult learners to enrol in literacy classes and also in encouraging regular attendance. Indeed, there have been cases of illiterate 10-cell leaders who accommodated literacy classes in their own homes and performed an excellent job in supervising literacy classes in the ten houses under their leadership.

In the functional literacy classes, men and women were treated equally: with the exception of post-literacy classes, no single-sex functional literacy classes were organized for men or women alone. Even where the reading materials were "feminized" (with a focus on home economics), there was no discrimination in the sense that the men received the same instruction. Twelve different primers, utilizing the eclectic method of language instruction, were written through writers' workshops. The primers are based on the major crops grown in different parts of the country, namely cotton, tobacco, banana, rice, maize, cashewnuts, coconut and wheat. There were also primers on home economics, fishing, cattle, and on political education. All these teaching/learning materials, including teachers' and demonstration guides, were provided free of charge.

Adult education teachers were recruited from all possible sources, including party and government officials. Table 4 shows the "army" of adult education teachers created between 1970 and 1975.

**Table 4**  
**Adult Literacy Teachers, 1970-1975**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Professional Teachers</b>	<b>School Students</b>	<b>Party Officials</b>	<b>Government Workers</b>	<b>Volunteers</b>	<b>Religious Denominations</b>	<b>Others</b>	<b>Total</b>
1970	7,643	1,639	399	1,865	663	368	360	12,937
1971	13,135	2,394	825	2,053	487	487	9,960	29,341
1972	33,903	4,031	634	1,864	46,865	325	484	88,106
1973	20,672	2,893	3,310	4,699	59,590	644	2,454	94,262
1974	13,289	4,469	2,466	4,889	79,643	679	2,233	107,673
1975	14,917	9,409	3,477	6,777	94,607	946	3,752	133,885

Source: Bwatwa, Y.D.M. and S. Smura, *A comparative study of adult education in Tanzania, Mexico and Canada*. Workshop Paper, Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1987, p. 74

The heaviest burden of teaching, it would appear, was shouldered by the primary school teachers, in collaboration with the young voluntary adult education teachers, most of whom had just completed primary education. Although most of them did not have the requisite training and experience in adult education work, both categories of teachers did a commendable job to the extent that one would even say that much of the success achieved would not have been realized without their contribution.

### Enrolment in Literacy Classes

During the national campaign, Tanzania was able to mobilize millions of people for enrolling in literacy classes. With the exception of Dar-es-Salaam, which achieved only 28.3 percent enrolment, the other five districts which were called upon to eradicate illiteracy in 1971 did fairly well: Mafia and Pare achieved 100 percent enrolment, while Ukerewe and Kilimanjaro enrolled 99.6 and 97 percent, respectively. Masasi achieved 89 percent enrolment. Table 5 shows enrolment figures for the whole country in the period 1970 to 1977.

**Table 5**  
**Enrolment of Illiterates, 1970-1977**

Year	Enrolment
1970	261,369
1971	908,351
1972	1,508,204
1973	2,989,910
1974	3,303,103
1975	5,184,982
1976	5,255,560
1977	5,891,612

Source: Ministry of Education. Workshop on planning and administration of national literacy programmes, 22nd November - 2nd December, 1980, *Tanzania Case Study Mimeo*, p.2.

Thus, within a period of only seven years, Tanzania was able to enrol more than five million illiterates in adult literacy classes. We would like to make two major observations here. First, reaching such impressive enrolment figures was in itself a great achievement, particularly when one bears in mind the limited resources available in the country. As Lind and Johnston (1968) have agreed, this capacity to mobilize the masses for literacy instruction could be used to achieve other development goals as well. Second, the enrolment figures are for both men and women. Unfortunately,

enrolment figures for women alone were not available. However, there is evidence to show that, as a whole, more women have been attending literacy classes and sitting for the national literacy tests than men. In 1975, for example, the proportion of women who sat for the test was 54.3 percent, rising up to 62.4 percent in 1986 (Bwatwa and Sumra, 1987:58). It can be concluded, by proxy, that millions of women have been enrolled in literacy classes.

### **Attainment of Literacy Skills and their Impact**

Even more spectacular, perhaps, was the rate of attainment of literacy skills both for men and women. Table 6 shows the detailed results of the national literacy tests conducted in the country in the period 1975 to 1983.

**Table 6**  
**Results of National Literacy Tests**  
**1975 - 1983**

Year	Stage	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL	ILLITERACY REDUCTION
1975 August	Below Level AT				
	I	162,489 (40%)	244,175 (60%)	406,664 (100%)	39%
	I	273,485 (42%)	372,368 (58%)	645,793 (100%)	
	II	579,485 (61%)	769,341 (37%)	1,348,826 (100%)	
	III	416,403 (50%)	412,706 (50%)	829,109 (100%)	
IV	306,544 (53%)	268,332 (47%)	574,876 (100%)		
1977 August	Below Level AT				
	I	81,767 (39%)	129,827 (61%)	211,504 (100%)	27%
	I	200,325 (38%)	327,541 (62%)	527,866 (100%)	
	II	300,716 (39%)	469,557 (61%)	770,273 (100%)	
	III	254,102 (54%)	216,906 (46%)	471,008 (100%)	
IV	199,849 (60%)	135,564 (40%)	335,413 (100%)		
1981 August	Below Level AT				
	I	273,972 (30%)	644,445 (70%)	918,417 (100%)	21%
	I	260,373 (33%)	519,592 (67%)	779,965 (100%)	
	II	205,147 (14%)	291,401 (59%)	496,548 (100%)	
	III	288,777 (50%)	228,363 (50%)	457,140 (100%)	
IV	262,563 (58%)	192,873 (42%)	455,436 (100%)		
1983 September	Below Level AT				
	I	180,440 (31%)	410,562 (69%)	591,002 (100%)	15%
	I	172,869 (34%)	332,160 (66%)	505,029 (100%)	
	II	148,294 (38%)	238,280 (62%)	386,574 (100%)	
	III	164,626 (44%)	213,089 (46%)	377,715 (100%)	
IV	144,468 (48%)	157,325 (52%)	301,793 (100%)		

- Sources:
- 1) Mpogolo, Z.J. *Functional Literacy in Tanzania* Dar-es-Salaam: Swala Publication, 1980.
  - 2) Nindi, J. "The functional literacy campaign in Tanzania". A paper presented at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, Oct.11, 1984.
  - 3) Ministry of Education. *Literacy evaluation reports 1975, 1977, 1981 and 1983*

As can be seen from Table 6, illiteracy rates in Tanzania were reduced from 39 percent (1975) to 15 percent (1983) and the more recent literacy survey results have shown that the illiteracy rate now stands at only 9.04 percent (Bwatwa and Sumra, 1987). It is also noticeable from Table 6 that more women have been turning up for the national literacy tests than men. This has been the case virtually in all the tests and at almost every level of literacy. Although there is evidence to show that the proportion of men graduating from the literacy classes (achieving Stages 3 and 4) has always been higher than for women (Bwatwa and Sumra, 1987), the fact that more women have been attending literacy classes and doing the literacy tests than men is in itself an achievement, particularly bearing in mind the heavy work load that they have as compared to men: Women have less time to devote to studying than men, while at the same time they have more interferences in their studies.

In order to assist the neo-literates to continue practicing their literacy skills, a post-literacy curriculum was launched in 1975, including both general (academic) subjects and more practice-oriented courses. A broad conceptualization of post-literacy was adopted, namely measures taken to enable the neo-literates to put into practice the skills acquired and to increase the knowledge obtained during the previous stages, thereby going beyond what they have learned to take an active part in the continuing process of developing and mastery of their environment.

Apart from the tremendous achievements in enrolment and illiteracy eradication, the functional literacy programme launched in the early 1970s has made a significant contribution to development, particularly at a macro level. Table 7 shows adult learners' perceived benefits of adult education in Tanzania.

As a whole, adult learners consider adult education to have benefitted them educationally, economically and politically. According to the Ministry of Education (1985), the functional literacy programme has contributed to the development of Kiswahili as a medium of communication, elimination of certain undesirable cultural beliefs, and participation in various political activities such as voting, as well as in utilization of modern agricultural methods.

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the functional literacy programme has helped in promoting more equality between women and men. This was revealed in the responses by leaders who were interviewed by the Ministry of Education research team (1985). Twenty four percent indicated that the adult learners were demanding that women be given status and responsibilities like men, that women should be fully involved in various productive activities (18%), and that many adult learners had begun to appreciate the notion of equality between men and women (15%).



**Table 7****Adult Learners' Perceived Benefits of Adult Education in Tanzania**

Category of Response	Educational	Economic	Political
Adult education has helped me	1362 (67%)	1011 (50%)	825 (41%)
Adult education has not helped me	85 (4%)	-	45 (2%)
Uncertain	114 (6%)	111 (5%)	116 (6%)
Irrelevant answers	198 (10%)	484 (24%)	388 (19%)
No response	270 (13%)	420 (21%)	651 (32%)

Compiled from a Table in Ministry of Education (translated), *Report on the impact of adult education in Tanzania*, March/April 1985.

**The Case of Two Districts in the Dar-es-Salaam Region**

In order to appreciate the factors behind Tanzania's success in literacy instruction for women, as well as some of the problems and difficulties experienced, some unstructured interviews were conducted with randomly selected female adult literacy learners in two districts of Dar-es-Salaam Region, namely Kinondoni and Ilala. Dar-es-Salaam Region was selected for a number of reasons, including the following: First, it has the biggest number of literate workers in the country who can help in teaching literacy classes. Second, there are many facilities in the region, like libraries, which can be utilized to enrich teaching and learning. Third, during the 1971 six districts literacy campaign, Dar-es-Salaam achieved the minimum enrolment rate (28.3 percent), but by 1983 the region had managed to achieve the best results in the country. Only 34,064, 3% (out of the region's 1,270,471) were still illiterate (Ministry of Education, 1985: 5).

The variables which were investigated included the reasons for and techniques of enrolment in literacy classes, availability and type of primers used, motivation for literacy, usefulness and application of literacy skills, and problems and constraints adversely affecting literacy instruction for women in the region. The composition of the sample was as illustrated in Table 8.

**Table 8**  
**Composition of the Sample**

	<u>Literacy</u>			<u>Post-Literacy</u>			<u>Total</u>
Level of Literacy	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Respondents	14	23	1	2	12	2	54

## Reasons for Enrolment

The respondents were asked to give reasons why they had enrolled in literacy classes. The results are shown in Table 9.

According to the responses in Table 9, the most important reasons for students' enrolment in literacy classes (including post-literacy) are completion of the previous level or stage of literacy and interest in knowing how to read and write. It is surprising to note that the adult learners, even those in the post-literacy stages, do not appear to be preoccupied with the broader notion of literacy instruction, such as gaining practical skills in areas such as Home Economics, Agriculture and Handcraft. When asked to indicate the techniques which were used to enrol them, the responses were shown in Table 10.

It is noticeable from Table 10 that the role of 10-cell leaders has been very important in mobilizing the women to enrol in literacy classes. Due to the small number of homesteads under the charge of a 10-cell leader, it is quite easy to know and to visit all the adult illiterates living in the area. Hence the indication by the respondents (38.8%) that the 10-cell leaders were going from house to house to urge those who were illiterate to enrol themselves in literacy classes.

Another variable which was investigated was the usefulness and application of literacy skills. This variable was presumed to be correlated with the students' motivation for literacy. Table 11 shows the results.

According to the results in Table 11, a greater number of adult learners (48.1%) were of the opinion that literacy instruction for them was useful to the extent that it enabled them to read and write simple passages, stories, newspapers, as well as different signs and instructions particularly while travelling. Thus, although the students were using primers on agriculture (cashewnuts and coconuts) as well as on political education and family care, the majority still appeared to conceptualize the benefits of literacy in the narrow sense of the 3 Rs. However, it should be noted that, in the context of a developing country like Tanzania, the ability to read and write *per se* is a remarkable achievement toward liberation, particularly for the disadvantaged social classes including women.

With respect to problems and constraints encountered, the students pointed out those recorded in Table 12 as the main ones.

As far as the students are concerned, therefore, the most important problems adversely affecting literacy instruction for women are family problems (33.3%), lack of time (18.1%), engagement in other productive activities (14.8%) and scarcity of instructional materials (11.1%). The first three problems are well linked to the sexual division of labour, reflecting the heavy workload that the women shoulder in society.

**Table 9****Students' Reasons for Enrolling in Literacy Classes**

Reason	Response	Percentage
Completed previous stage of literacy	26	48.1
To know how to read and write	15	27.7
Teacher told me	4	7.4
To be more informed	3	5.5
To know how to read instructions	2	3.7
To get a foundation for further learning	1	1.8
To learn how to sew clothes	1	1.8
To learn how to clean and maintain a house	1	1.8
To know mathematics	1	1.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>99.6</b>

**Table 10****Techniques of Enrolling Students**

Technique	Response	Percentage
House-to-house checking by 10-cell leader	21	38.8
Adult education coordinator/teacher told me	8	14.8
Literacy test to determine next level of literacy	7	12.4
Meetings organized by 10-cell leader	6	11.1
UWT (Women's organization) mobilization	4	7.4
By-laws initiated to enforce enrolment	4	7.4
Do not know	4	7.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>99.6</b>

**Table 11**  
**Applications of Literacy Skills**

Application	Response	Percentage
Ability to read and write simple passages	26	48.1
Reading a story, newspaper	9	16.6
Reading signs, instructions while travelling	5	9.2
Acquisition of knowledge/information	3	5.5
Improving child care and health practices	3	5.5
Knowing the country's policy	3	5.5
Improving home care	2	3.7
Ability to continue learning	2	3.7
Do not know	1	1.8
TOTAL	54	99.6

**Table 12**  
**Students' Perceived Problems Adversely Affecting  
Literacy Instruction for Women**

Problem	Response	Percentage
Family problems	18	33.3
Lack of time	10	18.5
Engagement in other (productive) activities	8	14.8
Scarcity of instructional materials	6	11.1
Irrelevant curriculum	3	5.5
Work shifts	3	5.5
Change in residence	2	3.7
Delay in provision of certificates	1	1.8
Feeling shy to learn together with men	1	1.8
Old age	1	1.8
No desks	1	1.8
TOTAL	54	99.6

## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

### Social and Political Philosophy

Adult literacy is, in the final analysis, a political issue (Lind and Johnston, 1986). In order to realize any substantial achievements in literacy work, there must first of all be a "political will": The State has to play a decisive role not only in issuing policy declarations on fighting illiteracy but also in integrating literacy activities in the overall national development plan (Lind and Johnston, 1986). As Bhola (1982:240) argued, it is "*necessary that the various actors within a society come together to develop a national consensus for the eradication of literacy and that they forge this [...] into the nation's political will*".

As has already been noted, Tanzania's social and political philosophy is guided by the principle of human equality and dignity, which in turn presupposes concrete measures for the provision of equal educational opportunities, irrespective of age or gender. After only one year of independence, for example, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere (1962) called up Tanzanians to fight against poverty, ignorance and disease by saying in *United Republic of Tanzania and UNICEF*:

*We are determined to build a country in which all the citizens are equal - where there is no division into rulers and ruled, rich and poor, educated and illiterate, those in distress and those in comfort. (emphasis mine). (1985).*

The drive towards equality and justice was more clearly articulated in the *Arusha Declaration* (1967) which elaborated on the country's policy of socialism and self-reliance. We would like to argue at this juncture that this national commitment to equality and justice accounts for the successful mobilization of human, material and financial resources to provide education to the women who, in too many Third World societies, remain a disadvantaged lot.

### State Intervention

In the context of a developing country like Tanzania, if the literacy endeavour is to materialize, "*the State has to be the prime mover in promoting and organizing such literacy activities*" (Lind and Johnston, 1986: 84). Individuals, non-governmental organizations and other voluntary agencies do have an important role to play, but without supportive State engagement their effort will not be fully rewarded.

The Tanzanian "Adult Education Revolution" has achieved such encouraging results partly because of the direct State intervention not only in formulating policies but also in mobilizing and organizing the literacy activities throughout the country (Kassam, 1978). Participation of the top government and party cadre in adult education activities in Tanzania has been described as an important factor by many other writers, including Hall and Dodds (1974), Hall (1975), Johnsson and Nystrom (1983), Lind and Johnston (1986), and Unsicker (1987).

Interviews with adult learners, government and party leaders in Ilala and Kinondoni districts (Dar-es-Salaam Region) have further illuminated the reasons behind Tanzania's success in offering literacy instruction for women: participation of the party and government officials in the districts' adult education committees (as active members) at all levels; appointment of government and party officials as patrons for every ward; visits by the government and party officials, of all ranks, to literacy classes to encourage regular attendance; and organization of seminars and workshops for the literacy workers in the districts.

### **Administrative and Organizational Set-up**

One interesting feature of the administrative and organizational structure of adult education in Tanzania is its dual character: provision for central direction (top-down structure) as well as people's participation from the grassroots to the national level (bottom-up structure). Given the wide scope of the campaign and the strong desire to wipe out illiteracy in as short a period as possible, a centralized approach to planning, administration and actual teaching was essential. And in that aspect, Tanzania was not an exception: Virtually all countries in the world which have attempted to use the mass literacy campaign approach, including the more developed socialist countries such as the former Soviet Union and Cuba, utilized a centralized approach in their national literacy campaigns (La Belle, 1986).

In this regard, special mention must be made about the contribution of Tanzania's unique ten-cell administrative structure. Administratively, the whole country is divided into regions, districts, divisions, wards, villages and ten-cells. The ten-cell leader is elected by all the residents in the ten homesteads and he or she is usually a person who not only knows all the residents but also has respect, credibility and authority in the area. He or she will know who is illiterate, who is attending literacy classes and who has dropped out. Some of the ten-cell leaders are women. In any case, they have made invaluable contributions to the success achieved in literacy instruction to both men and women. Interviews with adult literacy workers in Kihondoni district, for example, have revealed that the district has managed to enrol all adult illiterates in the district through the cooperation of the ten-cell leaders. And all this has to be seen in the context of the country's villagization policy: The villages have enabled women to live closer together, thereby improving communication among them and developing a high cooperative spirit, as well as facilitating the provision of social services, including education (Madsen, 1984). The village governments in many areas of the country passed by-laws, suitable in their own local contexts, to enforce enrolment and attendance in literacy classes.

### **Supporting Institutions and Organizations**

Virtually all institutions and organizations contributed in one way or another to the success of literacy instruction for women in Tanzania. Only three examples will be given here. First, it is the Institute of Adult Education which, in addition to providing a variety of adult education programmes to various clients, has established a special section to deal solely with women's education. The section, in collaboration with

Norwegian Aid Agency (NORAD) and other relevant organizations, initiates and supports women's projects as well as reading materials for the newly literate women. Some of the pamphlets produced are *Sewing Techniques*, *Rights of Women*, *Women's Voice*, and a manual for milling machines. The Institute also has a correspondence department which offers courses to clients (including women) throughout the country in four main areas, namely, mass education, secondary education, professional studies (including teacher training, management and administration), and a special programme for the disabled. Mass education courses (primary education level) are open to those who have achieved literacy skills at the fourth level and can be enrolled into the post-literacy classes. Table 13 shows enrolment (men and women) in correspondence courses, 1972 to 1986.

**Table 13**

**Enrolment in Correspondence Education, 1972 - 1986**

Year	Male	Female	Total
1972	334	40	374
1973	4,593	347	4,940
1974	5,511	487	5,998
1975	5,421	574	5,995
1976	5,477	937	6,416
1977	5,751	1,291	7,042
1978	5,066	1,313	6,379
1979	3,009	767	3,776
1980	1,647	243	1,890
1981	2,534	647	3,181
1982	2,741	716	3,457
1983	3,042	752	3,794
1984	2,580	750	3,330
1985	1,401	369	1,770
1986	2,034	428	2,462
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,141</b>	<b>9,661</b>	<b>50,802</b>

Source: Bwatwa and Sumra (1987: 64)

Another institution which needs to be mentioned for its efforts in promoting literacy instruction for women in Tanzania is the Folk Development College (FDC), operating under the Ministry of Education. Based on the Swedish Folk High Schools Folkskoleseminariums, the FDCs offer both long and short courses to village leaders, leaders of women's organizations: the courses deal also with household activities and small-scale industries. Table 14 shows the number of participants in courses offered by the FDCs in the year 1980/81.

Table 14

**Participants in FDC Courses Sponsored by the  
Ministry of Education, 1980/81**

Subject	Long Courses			Short Courses		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Domestic Science	-	510	510	7	274	281
Craft	549	2	551	136	-	136
Agriculture	524	32	556	338	47	385
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,073</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>802</b>

Source: Johnsson *et al.* (1983: 30)

It is noticeable from Table 14 that women's enrolment in the FDCs is not at all negligible. In the 1980//81 year, for example, out of all the participants (2,419), about 35 percent were women.

However, in addition to such institutions, women need to have a separate organization given the role they play in national development and in maintaining their families (Madsen, 1984). In Tanzania, women have their own organization, Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania, popularly known simple as UWT. The organization provides a viable forum for all the women, at the various levels, to come together to think, speak and act collectively in pursuit of their rights and in fulfillment of their obligations. Madsen (1984) observed that women's participation in the UWT structure had also led to their participation in various village development activities, including education.

### **The Drive towards Women's Liberation**

Another important factor, although not peculiar to Tanzania, is the women's motivation for literacy. One hand, both men and women are increasingly becoming aware of the fact that women's literacy and education "*are closely correlated with a reduction in child mortality, and lead to improved family nutrition and income*" (Mandl, 1983: 9). On the other hand, this increasing motivation for literacy is linked to the changing social role of men and women, whereby the latter in many Third World countries are more and more being involved in areas which the former monopolized before. Currently, women are seeking economic advancement, more self-reliance and liberation from total submission to received authority (Lind and Johnston, 1986). In Tanzania, the drive toward women's liberation is even more accentuated by the social and political philosophy of egalitarianism and the dynamic general mass mobilization to engage everyone in the process of development, hence the decision to reserve



special seats for women in the Parliament as well as in the country's various structures of the ruling party (CCM).

## PROBLEMS AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

### Persistence of Illiteracy

Although encouraging achievements have been made in the realm of literacy instruction for women in Tanzania, it must not be concluded that the struggle is over. In fact, illiteracy continues to be higher among women than among men. Table 15, for example, shows the ratio of illiterate women to illiterate men per region (Tanzania Mainland) by the year 1985.

**Table 15**

### The Ratio of Illiterate Women to Illiterate Men - 1985

Region	Men	Women	Percentage of Illiterate women
Arusha	80,497	99,048	123%
Dar-es-Salaam	12,247	21,817	178%
Dodoma	53,541	99,997	187%
Iringa	31,076	85,318	275%
Kagera	44,043	74,976	170%
Kigoma	41,989	79,523	190%
Kilimanjaro	17,671	38,956	220%
Lindi	24,304	48,983	202%
Mara	29,575	69,434	235%
Mbeya	43,522	113,221	260%
Morogoro	37,119	69,889	188%
Mtwara	28,970	61,533	212%
Mwanza	74,751	138,348	185%
Coast	32,324	49,759	154%
Rukwa	18,568	47,351	251%
Ruvuma	24,007	142,382	197%
Shinyanga	84,568	68,345	168%
Singida	44,114	88,254	155%
Tabora	63,975	88,254	138%
Tanga	30,113	55,809	185%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>817,157</b>	<b>1,495,284</b>	<b>183%</b>

Source: Ministry of Education, *Mpango wa Awumu ya Pili ya Kampeni ya Kufuta Ujinga Tanzania Bara 1985-1987* p. 6.

It can be seen from Table 15 that the total number of women who were still illiterate up to 1985 was about twice the number of illiterate men. In seven regions, the number was more than twice, while in ten regions it was more than one and a half. Thus in Tanzania, like in most countries of the Third World, many more women than men enrol and participate in literacy classes, but it takes longer for women to become literate (Lind and Johnston, 1986). This is due to a number of factors, including those which follow.

### ***Men's Attitude toward Women***

In some areas of the country, there is still a tendency among men (including the male teacher) to look down upon women as people who cannot learn as effectively as men. Since, in Tanzania, men and women attend literacy classes together, the authority relations in the homes have tended to be reflected in the classroom, to the extent that women get discouraged and drop out of the literacy classes. There have also been instances whereby some husbands have prevented their wives from enrolling and/or attending literacy classes owing to jealousy.

### ***Women's Perception of Themselves***

There have also been cases whereby women themselves harbour feelings of inferiority. Mbilinyi (1975), for example, has reported on an attitudinal study done in Tanzania in which girls were asked to rank reasons why parents preferred to send boys to school; one third ranked that "boys are more intelligent" as the most important reason. Given such self-perceptions among women, it was not easy to convince them of the importance of literacy instruction for their own lives, particularly those who still thought that a woman's place is in the home, or even worse, in the kitchen. However, such attitudes of inferiority complex are increasingly changing as more and more women are assuming positions of responsibility in the party, government and parastatal organizations.

### ***Sexual Division of Labour***

As has already been noted, women as a whole have had unequal educational opportunities at all levels of the educational system. Those who manage to receive some education tend to choose areas of study which reflect the breakdown of occupations into male and female sectors (Mbilinyi, 1975). A similar trend is reflected in non-formal educational programmes. The Christian Council of Tanzania, for example, has reported that girls in general have less access to vocational education: Out of 12,261 students pursuing vocational education in December of 1975, only 3,917 (31.9%) were girls. And out of a total of 38 vocational training institutions, 17 were for males only, 16 admitted both, and only 5 were for females. In addition, the kinds of programmes open to girls tended to be related to women's work in domestic labour: cooking, sewing and child care as reflected in domestic science courses.

With respect to the married women, they have so many responsibilities in the home that they are left with very little time for study. Literacy classes are, in most cases, conducted in the afternoon, when women are either coming from the fields (cultivation or harvesting) or at which time they have to prepare meals for husbands and children returning from work or visit and from school, respectively.

### ***Economic Hardships***

Owing to the high rate of inflation, accompanied with scarcity of basic commodities, particularly after 1980, a number of women adult literacy learners became obligated to spend a lot more time either looking for food or running small projects (gardening, poultry, sewing, cooking and selling food, etc.) to eke out family income. This has had adverse effects on women's (and men's also) attendance and performance in literacy classes. In the final analysis, in a rural environment (particularly), most adults consider problems of health, nutrition, agriculture, income generation, etc., to be more critical in their lives than simply literacy and numeracy (Crone, 1978).

### ***Pedagogical Factors***

The teaching-learning process, if not well designed, can have adverse effects on adult learners' motivation. In all teaching situations, there are usually three elements, namely, the educator, the learners and the material (or the subject to be learned). Effective teaching and learning occur when these three elements interact in an appropriate combination. In a transmittal model, the learners do not engage directly with the material; they have access to it only through the teacher's words. In a non-transmittal model of interaction, the teacher is less an instructor, a director, but more a facilitator of learning. The latter, however, requires adequate availability of the materials and well trained adult education teachers.

In Tanzania, the teacher-learning materials, particularly for the demonstration and post-literacy classes, were not always available. This is perhaps understandable given the vast numbers of adult learners involved in the literacy campaign and the relative poverty of the country. Similarly, those who shouldered the heaviest load in teaching - the primary school teachers and the young volunteers - had several pedagogical shortcomings. The former were mainly conversant with child methods and not with adult education methods, while the latter were in many cases too young to be accepted as teachers by the adult learners, in addition to the fact that they also were not adequately trained and experienced.

## **REMEDIAL MEASURES ADOPTED**

### **Revision of Literacy Programmes**

When functional literacy was introduced in Tanzania, in the late 1960s, it marked a fundamental departure from the traditional approach whereby literacy was being taught as an end in itself. However, in its initial stages, the functional literacy approach tended to overemphasize economic activities at the expense of the broader social, political and cultural dimensions. In the *Second Five-Year Development Plan* (1969-1974) functional literacy was conceived mainly in terms of raising and improving crop production, thus lagging behind the much enlarged and broader concept of development which began to be rigorously articulated in the 1960s and 1970s.

During the 1970s, the selective-intensive approach to functional literacy was transformed into a mass campaign in Tanzania. Thereafter the social, cultural and political issues were given further consideration to match with not only the broadening conception of development but also with Tanzania's political philosophy itself. Increase in GNP was still considered to be important, but it had to be accompanied with a "*fair distribution of the fruits of development*" (Coombs, 1985:19). Hence the inclusion in the literacy campaign of primers such as *Political Education* and *Better Family Care*, dealing with broader issues of development.

With respect to the post-literacy curriculum launched in 1975, follow-up studies revealed two major shortcomings. First, the curriculum was too academic and theoretical. As such, secondly, it attracted only a few of the literacy graduates. The 1983 post-literacy test results, for example, showed that only 1,435,690 out of the 3,122,983 graduates of 1975, 1977 and 1981 national literacy tests had enrolled in post-literacy classes (Kirega, 1986). This is only 45.9 percent of the total adult population which had become literate.

### **Supporting Programmes**

Tanzania did not only utilize the "campaign series" strategy (Lind and Johnston, 1986), but she also developed supporting programmes for the literacy campaign, so that more learning opportunities could be made available to people throughout the country. The supporting programmes include rural libraries, rural newspapers, radio education programmes, film education, correspondence studies, folk development colleges and vocational training centres. All have made a valuable contribution to literacy instruction for women. But we would like to mention particularly the vocational training centres where women were enrolled particularly in the home economics courses. By the year 1985, there were as many as 1,145 of these centres.

### **Use of Extension Workers in Literacy Programmes**

As can be seen from Table 4, literacy teachers in Tanzania have been recruited from various sources. Virtually all types of institutions and organizations were directed to organize courses for their own workers, to make available teaching and learning facilities, as well as to participate in teaching literacy classes in the surrounding areas. In some areas, the young volunteers lacked not only the requisite teaching methodology, but also the experience in fields such as agriculture, health, animal husbandry and domestic science. In this case, the relevant extension workers in the community were recruited to assist in teaching, thereby making their expertise in their areas of specialization accessible.

## **GENERAL COMMENTS AND MISTAKES TO BE AVOIDED**

### **Relevant Curriculum**

One of the basic characteristics of the functional literacy approach, which Tanzania adopted, is its integration with not only work but also the overall national development strategy, thereby changing the learner's whole approach to living and to the world. The assumption is that the learner will make rapid progress, by immediately making use of his newly acquired skills, and will ipso facto be motivated to continue learning. In Tanzania, the selective-intensive approach to literacy started in the Lake Zone regions under the UNESCO/UNDP pilot project from 1968 to 1972 (Kirega, 1986). It was extended to six districts which were urged to eradicate illiteracy by 1972 (Kassam, 1978) and it proliferated in all regions between 1972 and 1975 (Mpogolo, 1980).

In all the different, but interrelated, phases of the literacy campaign, primers based on the economic preoccupations of the adult learners were used together with two other primers on better family care and political education. For the women, the primer on better family care was a very important one, given the context of Tanzania where nutritional standards have yet to be improved to sustain a healthy population. However, in a number of cases, the content which was taught was neither linked to the local cultural patterns nor to what was actually available. In some areas, for example, there was a belief that pregnant women should not eat eggs because they would then give birth to children without hair. In spite of that kind of beliefs, both the primer and the literacy instructor kept on urging the pregnant women to eat eggs without first of all eradicating the retrogressive attitudes and beliefs. Nor was adequate effort made to educate the learners on how to initiate at least a small poultry unit that would make the eggs available in the first place.

### **The Use of Primary Schools as Adult Education Centres**

As per the *Second Five-Year Development Plan* (1969-1974), the main organizing responsibility in adult education was placed on the primary schools, which then became community education centres. The choice of primary schools in a sense was a logical one, given their distribution throughout the country and also the teaching-learning facilities that they have compared to other institutions in the community. However, the location of adult literacy classes within the premises of the primary schools had its own (unintended) consequences, some of which may have adversely affected both the quality of primary education and adult education. Psychologically, for example, some adult learners began to associate adult education with formal (primary) education, believing that they were too old to learn. On the other hand, the teaching-learning facilities in the primary schools were in fact suitable for children and not for adult learners. And it should not be forgotten that the primary school teachers now had an extra load to shoulder: In addition to their already too big teaching load in the primary education classes, they had also to organize and to teach literacy classes. Indeed, one useful area of research would be to find out Tanzania's actions and experience regarding the implementation of both universal primary education and universal adult literacy education.

## **The Need to Have a Permanent Literacy Teaching Staff**

As has already been pointed out, the young volunteers have contributed a lot to the success of the "adult education revolution" in Tanzania. However, apart from the fact that they are not adequately trained in adult education methodology, they are at the same time not well paid for the good job they are doing. They only receive an honorarium of sixty Tanzanian shillings. In the post-literacy stage, if the achievements already scored are to be even more consolidated, there is a need to have a well trained staff employed on a permanent basis, supported by more regular in-service courses.

## **Literacy Instruction for Women's Liberation**

Functional literacy is a method which is aimed at teaching adult literacy that is linked to the development of man, and which should ultimately enable him to liberate himself from poverty, ignorance and disease. It was in light of this expanded concept of literacy that UNESCO (Fordham, 1983) defined a literate person as one who is able *"to engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the country's development"*.

This notion of functionality correlates with the Tanzanian approach to development. Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere (1978: 316), for example, pointed out that *"the purpose of all social, economic and political activity must be man"* and that, however, *"people cannot be developed; they can only develop themselves"* (Nyerere, 1973: 60). Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and *Cultural Action for Freedom* (1972) strengthened this expanded concept of development. Freire has argued that people were poor and illiterate not because of their own individual weaknesses, but because they were subjected to exploitation and paternalism of the society. Education, therefore, should seek to liberate people through "dialogue" and "conscientization" helping adults to "name the world" and to acquire a critical awareness of their oppressive environment so that they can take a necessary action to transform it.

As far as women are concerned, the need to utilize liberating techniques of teaching becomes even more urgent, bearing in mind the relative oppression and exploitation they have been subjected to for so long. In that context, there is need to go beyond what could be called *"human-capital non-formal education"* (LaBelle, 1986) to adult education for transformation. Here both the content and the instructional techniques would need to be transformed first so that the former includes certain topics which are specifically geared toward helping women to realize the factors which perpetuate their disadvantaged position in society, while the latter involve them in a genuine dialogue to discover concrete strategies for their eventual liberation.

## CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to describe, as well as to analyse, Tanzania's actions and experience regarding literacy instruction for women. First, an attempt has been made to explain the context and scope of the problem, followed by an analysis of the policy of adult education in the country. The latter has been linked to the overall development strategy which is in turn correlated with the general organization of adult education, as well as the strategies and approaches adopted in the implementation process.

Then the major achievements are discussed namely, the high enrolment rates throughout the country as well as the rates of obtaining literacy skills. It is pointed out in both cases that, through the literacy campaign, Tanzania has managed to mobilize millions of men and women not only for literacy but also for other development-related activities. The views and opinions of female participants themselves selected from two districts of Dar-es-Salaam Region have also been incorporated to enrich particularly the analysis of the major achievements, contributing factors and the difficulties experienced.

Many factors contributed to Tanzania's success in mobilizing women for literacy instruction. The study has highlighted particularly four factors, viz.: the existence of a clear national policy, coupled with an elaborate administrative and organizational structure (allowing for both centralization and decentralization), the active role played by various institutions and organizations, especially the Women's Organization (UWT), the Institute of Adult Education and the Folk Development Colleges, and the direct involvement of the top party and government leadership.

However, it has been pointed out that the task of mobilizing women for literacy instruction was not easy. Nor was it a hundred percent successful. For there are still a substantial number of women who do not know how to read and write, or who only have rudimentary literacy skills. The problems which have adversely affected literacy progress for women include men's negative attitudes toward women, women's perception of themselves (lack of self-confidence), and sexual division of labour and pedagogical shortcomings due to the use of inadequately trained literacy instructors. A number of remedial measures have been adopted. These include: the revision of the literacy programmes to increasingly suit the needs and interests of the adult learners, the use of extension workers to enrich teaching and the launching of literacy supporting programmes.

In order to further consolidate the achievements made, several measures are recommended in the study, viz: in-service training for the literacy instructors (particularly the young volunteers), the creation of a permanent teaching staff for literacy classes, the need to gear the content toward not only the needs of the adult learners but also the cultural pattern sustained in the area. At the same time, the content of the primers need to reflect issues relating to women's liberation. That is to say, it must not be simply "human-capital non-formal education", but non-formal education for social transformation".

## APPENDIX

### INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR ADULT LITERACY LEARNERS

1. At which level of literacy are you now?
2. Why did you enroll in literacy classes?
3. How are you making use of literacy skills in your daily life activities?
4. Do you think that mastery of literacy skills has helped you to transform your life? If yes, how?
5. Which primers are you using in literacy classes? Are they adequately available for each one?
6. What other materials are you using in literacy classes? Are they adequately available?
7. Are there any students who have dropped out from classes? If yes, what reasons do they give for dropping out?
8. Are there any party and government leaders who have participated in teaching literacy in some of your literacy classes? How often have they been visiting your literacy classes?
9. Are there any women who have enrolled in post-literacy classes? If yes, who enrolled them in the post-literacy classes: Were they party leaders, government officials, or religious leaders? What techniques were used for enrolling them?
10. Are there any problems which adversely affect literacy progress for women? If yes, mention them. How do you think the problems can be solved?



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