

The Role of School Libraries in Realizing the Achievement of Inclusive and Equitable Quality

Education in Tanzania: SDGs by 2030

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An overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN General Assembly met in New York on September, 2015 and submitted the new global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 17 goals and 169 targets to be achieved by the year 2030. These goals and targets are set forward as a continuum to the improvement of 15 years Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which commenced on the year 2005 and ended on year 2015. The 17 SDGs with 169 integrated targets to be achieved by 2030 as following;

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere;
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture;
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages;
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls;
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all;
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation;
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries;
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable;
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns;
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts;
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development;
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss;
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (General Assembly, 2015).

From the above, 17 SDGs, the author of this paper is interested to focus on Goal 4 that ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030.

An overview of goal 4 and its associated targets

The goal 4 is focuses to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, vulnerable and people with disabilities or migrants. It aimed to provide inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels from early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. There are seven (7) associated targets which are integrated and indivisible in this goal as enumerated below;

- 4.1. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
- 4.2. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education
- 4.3. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including University;
- 4.4. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship;
- 4.5. By 2030 eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education, vocational training for children in vulnerable situation and disability people;
- 4.6. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy;
- 4.7. By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity; and target
- 4.8. ensures substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and Small Island developing States By 2030(ICSU, 2015).

The role of education to sustainable development

The rationale for selecting goal 4 of SDGs is due to the fact that education has been recognized as a critical factor in supporting changes and ensuring sustainability in many years of human well-being. This goal is a cross cutting to the achievements of other SDGs goals since education is a tool for addressing environmental issues, family planning, mortality; bringing social equality, improving economic growth and entrepreneurship; lifting people out of poverty, food security; improving health, social coherence and political stability(ICSU, 2015).

Education is the only tool that can bring about desired development to any nation since; educated citizens have sense of purpose and confidence to their careers that add stability to their nation. Education make people exploit fully the available resources in their respective countries sustainably by decreasing harmful practices; it promotes sustainable development economically, socially, culturally and politically and makes people participate fully in promoting human rights, gender equality, peace and non-violence society as well as appreciating global citizenship and cultural diversity.(Alam, 2008).

since education is a cross cutting to the achievement of other goals of development, all nations in the World particularly the developing ones should strive to achieve goal 4 of SDGs first if they want to achieve the other SDGs by 2030.

Relationship between library and quality education

To achieve quality education, means having all required educational infrastructures. Among the key infrastructure for supporting quality education is the provision of effective library services. Libraries are gateways to knowledge and have a great role in supporting for sustainable development. Education can be acquired from libraries to help people become literate, be able to numerate, become problem solvers and achieve self actualization, economic sufficiency, civic responsibility and satisfactory human relationships. Using libraries people get opportunities to learn and educate themselves in various aspects related to their daily life as well as building knowledge and understanding of the World, making informed decisions and consequently work productively in solving problems(Makotsi, 1999)

It is very important to ensure that a nation should have effective library services at all levels, especially school libraries since, school libraries promote literacy, numeracy and reading culture among young generation(World Bank, 2008).

School library services in pre- primary, primary and secondary schools have a great role to play in developing early literacy, promote reading culture and life-long learning among the young people in society and they have direct impact on students' academic achievements and learning in general. School libraries provide resources in a wider and deeper understanding to students in various subjects in the school; promotes reading habits among young generation; initiating career development among youth and ensure feeding philosophical and social values into the community(Makotsi, 1999)

The role of school libraries for achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education in Tanzania

The origin of School Libraries Services (SLS) in Tanzania can be traced back from 1960 following the Hockey report of 1960.School libraries in Tanzania originates on 1960 and collapsed in 1976 due to financial constrains as the government couldn't provide enough fund to support them. It was revived in 1983 under the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) which is a National Institution under the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. From its revival, her performance wasn't been good until 2000 when efforts to improve School Library Services were made by government through Primary School Education Development Plan (PEDP) and Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP).Despite of these initiatives made, School Library Services performance in Tanzania is still facing many challenges. (Isaac Kigongo Bukenya, 2002).

School libraries in Tanzania have a little role to pay towards the achievement of goal 4 of SDGs and their associated targets since; the education infrastructures such as library services in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools are not well developed. Hence, acquiring equitable and quality primary and secondary education for all girls and boys as highlighted in targets 4.1 and 4.2 of goal 4 will not adequately be achieved since; school library services are still facing

serious inadequate funding, lack of library premises to many primary and secondary schools and lack of trained librarians. For example, the studies on school library services conducted by Magina, Lwehabura, (2011) and Ntulo, and Nawe, (2008).revealed that, 44 secondary schools, only 16(36%) had libraries. While out of 33public secondary schools, only seven (21%) schools had libraries. In terms of staff the study found that, out of 16 schools with libraries, only seven (44%) had trained librarians.

Other challenges facing school library services in Tanzania include; lack of reading space and furniture, deterioration of materials due to lack of regular maintenance, existence of old and irrelevant materials to meet the existing school curriculum, stock wear, tear, theft, loss and damage, and poor school library management.(Ntulo, and Nawe, 2008).

Furthermore, the role of school libraries in Tanzania in achieving target 4.3 aimed to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality education by 2030, is a challenge since school libraries in Tanzania especially in rural areas are still providing library services manually despite of ICT development with abundant relevant educational materials which can be accessed by many library users at a time, remotely in 24/7. as quoted bellow; "*current set-up of modern libraries are becoming more wall-less, creatively designed and run a business like, its collections are found in multiple formats accessed in 24/7 and modern users are well informed preferring to digital resources*"(Abels, Jones, Latham, Magnoni, & Marshall, 2003).

Again, ICTs in school libraries in Tanzania are facing a lot of obstacles to bridge the information gap between urban and rural areas. Such obstacles include lack of fund, hardware, software, internet, power and lack of Information Literacy (IL) as well as lack of trained IT staff. the lack of ICT use in school libraries is hindering the provision of information available in electronic format and through the Internet that could serve the remote, vulnerable and disabilities personnel in affordable and immediate access to national and international information to empower relevant vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship among children, girls, boys, and youth, in the country (Makotsi,1999 and Dulle & Minishi-Majanja, 2010).

Conclusion

Quality education is an instrument to achieve sustainable development in any society since, education enables people to think critically and make informed decisions. Literacy is central for acquiring quality education. School library is a place where sustaining literacy, self education and lifelong learning is inculcated and nurtured to children, pupils and students. School library offers unique and cost effective means of access to information to all. A pupil who cannot afford to buy a book or computer, he/she can access them in a school library. Scarce resources are easily shared in school library. Hence the government should ensure that, they establish a well equipped school libraries in all levels from pre- primary, primary and secondary schools if it to achieve equitable and quality education as well as for social and economic development in the country.

Recommendation

In making School library services support for achievement for inclusive and equitable quality education in Tanzania by 2030 the following measures should be taken into account;

- The government should ensure that the all school libraries in the country should be funded adequately to enable them function effectively. .(Ntulo, and Nawe, 2008).
- Relevant legislations and policies such as education and training policy section 5.4.6 that ensures school libraries in the country are adequately stocked with books and managed by trained and competent library personnel should be enforced.
- Information professionals should continue providing advocacy and sensitization to government officials, educational planners, educational stake holders and the general public on the importance of school library in supporting learning and teaching process for quality education.
- The government should ensures all school libraries in the country have all important requirements which such as adequate information resources, qualified library personnel and good library building, enough reading space, furniture, lighting and the like for supporting equitable and quality education to children, pupils and students.(Mnyero, 2007)
- The Ministry of education and Vocational Training should establish and independent directorate which will be responsible for monitoring Schools library services as it was in previous time when school libraries were monitored by School Library Services (SLS). In this regard, the Tanzania Library Services Board (TLSB) should be responsible for monitoring Public and community Libraries only so as to provide close and effective monitoring and developing school libraries in the country. Unlike Higher Learning Institutions, where effective and efficient Library services are enforced by the Consortium of Tanzania Universities and Research Libraries (COTUL), School libraries are like orphans with no voice to speak for them. (Alemna, 1993 Magna and Lwehabura, 2011).
- All school libraries should invest and utilize the potentials of ICT developments to enable them to provide library services that will impact large audience beyond the limits library wall. (Makotsi,1999 and IFLA, 2012).
- All Libraries should continue to provide Information Literacy (IL) to library users from time to time so as empower them with enough skills in locating, searching, retrieving, evaluating and using relevant information to acquire quality education (Magna and Lwehabura, 2011).
- Information professional should formulate convincing proposals for solicit fund from government and non- government organs in order to establish and develop effective school library service provisions.
- Tanzania Library Association (TLA) should continue with advocacy role of convincing the government to support school libraries in the country for effective contribution for equitable and quality education in Tanzania.

- The government should establish community libraries in rural areas to support school library services by using mobile library as well introducing reading tents in order to inculcate reading habits, literacy, numeracy and lifelong learning to children, pupils and students in country.

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