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Moving towards inclusion: how Zanzibar succeeds in transforming its education system?

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ABSTRACT
Ever since the proclamation of the *Salamanca Statement* (1994) and the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2000), several countries across the globe have been improving their education systems making remarkable efforts towards inclusion. Furthermore, the *Muscat Agreement* (2014) proposes a global goal and targets for education post-2015. The goal envisages equitable inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030. This article inquires how Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous part of Tanzania along the East African coast, started to transform its education system in an attempt to make it inclusive. First, the commitment to and process towards Inclusive Education (IE) is described in the time frame of changes in education. Second, thematic analysis is conducted to examine the contextualisation and definition of the concept of IE, the introduction of relevant legislation, introduction of *Inclusive and Learner Friendly Education Policy*, and the support provided for teachers to implement IE practices in the classrooms. Finally, the IE development in Zanzibar is compared to similar processes in sub-Saharan Africa.

Introduction

Inclusive Education (IE), according to Mariga, McConkey, and Myezwa (2014), is perceived as being practically challenging in low-income countries like those in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In 2011, nearly 30 million children in SSA were not attending school at all and over half of those children who attended primary school did not learn the basic reading and writing skills by grade four (UNESCO 2013, 2014). Some of those countries which have succeeded in improving both access and participation in primary education have introduced national laws , policies, and strategies for IE in order to enhance the quality of their education systems (Bines and Lei 2011; Rieser 2012; Kiuppis and Hausstätter 2014). This study inquires how Zanzibar in East Africa became committed to and started to transform its education system to be inclusive. First, theoretical grounding, the commitment to and process towards IE, definitions and legislation are described in a time frame. Secondly, content analysis is applied to examine official documents and reports to show how the concept of IE was contextualised and defined, and how key national and international actors contributed to the process. Finally, the IE development in Zanzibar is compared to similar processes in SSA.

Theoretical grounding of IE in Zanzibar

IE is a relatively new concept in the education system of Zanzibar. The premise of IE in Zanzibar is based on the principle that all children regardless of their differences have equal right to free

education. After the revolution of Zanzibar in 1964, education was proclaimed 'free'. Since then, there have been attempts to improve issues of access, equity, and quality (MoEVT 2006). The 1991 Zanzibar education policy was reformed in 2006 to incorporate international conventions and declarations such as the 1990 Jomtien Declaration, Education for All (EFA), and the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education, Access, and Quality (MoEVT 2006).

In line with the EFA goals, the *Salamanca Statement* and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education call for the promotion of IE, Zanzibar introduced IE in its education system whereby all children are expected to attend a school closer to their home. In addition, the 2006 education policy reforms included a new structure of formal education system. The structure of formal education system consists of five levels, namely: (1) Two years of pre-primary education, (2) Six years of primary education, (3) four years of ordinary level secondary education (4) Two years of advanced secondary education, and (5) A minimum of three years of higher education (MoEVT 2006).

The starting point for this inquiry on changes in education in Zanzibar is the period after the Zanzibar Revolution in 1964, when education was declared free of charge to all Zanzibaris, irrespective of their races, religions, tribes, socio-economic status, disabilities, or gender (MoEVT 2006; Legal and Human Rights Centre 2013). In 1988, the Ministry of Education formed a Special Education Unit within the Ministry to offer educational services to children with disabilities in an endeavour to make sure that no child in Zanzibar was denied their right to education. In some schools, special units were introduced and became operational from 1991. By 2014, there were nine special units: six for children with developmental disabilities, two for children with hearing impairments and one for children with visual impairments (MoEVT 2013).

The origin of IE in Zanzibar can be traced back to the early 2000s as a result of a visit to Lesotho made by the Ministry of Education and Culture officials. During the visit, the Zanzibar delegation was inspired by the implementation of inclusion in Lesotho schools. In 2004, an IE project, funded by the Norwegian Association for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (in Norwegian: *Norsk Forbund for Utviklingshemmede*, NFU) and Operation Day's Work (ODW), was introduced. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) and the Zanzibar Association for People with Developmental Disabilities (ZAPDD) have been collaborating with national and international partners such as Ministry of Health, Department of Disability Affairs in the First vice-President's Office, NFU, and Sight Savers International to run the project. The aim of this project was to ensure that learners with special educational needs had access to education. The project began with 20 schools and by 2014, it had reached 119 schools (MoEVT 2013/2013/2014).

Although IE was formally introduced as a pilot project in 2004, previous work and the role of the civil society organisations and some disability activists cannot be undermined. The formation of the Zanzibar Association of the Disabled (ZAD) in 1981 in particular, and other disability-based organisations in general, contributed much to the genesis of IE practices in Zanzibar. ZAD, which was officially registered in 1985, was led by an influential and long-serving schoolteacher and disability activist, *Maalim* Khalfan H. Khalfan, who played a considerable role in advocating for the rights of people with disabilities in Zanzibar. Being physically disabled and educated, *Maalim* Khalfan significantly contributed to convincing parents to send children with disabilities to school. He was also active in influencing national policies related to disability, community outreach programmes, and advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities, including the children's right to education (Non-governmental Organisation Resource Centre and Tanzania Association of Non-governmental Organisations 2008).

In 2014, a decade after the first project, the MoEVT further showed its commitment to IE by adapting UNESCO's recommendations in the *Salamanca Statement* to the context of Zanzibar:

> … schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic, or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups. (UNESCO 1994, 6)

In the following sections, we discuss the education system's transformation, starting from IE policy definition. The justifications and terms used are analysed with references to literature and research on IE. The relevant documents such as *The Zanzibar Education Policy* (2006), *Inclusive and Learner Friendly Education Policy* (ILFEP) (2013 draft), were obtained from the MoEVT's office. A search for relevant literature was done via several electronic databases such as ERIC and PsychINF. Also, Google and Google Scholar search engines were used to find publications and reports related to IE development, especially in SSA. Key words used during the search included 'inclusive education', 'inclusion' and 'inclusive education policy'. The initial round of the selection included 90 documents. To suit the purpose of this study, the documents that did not address the IE development were excluded. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) was applied to analyse contents of the documents. The units of analysis were key themes representing the phenomenon under study. The themes included: 'rationale behind IE', 'policies and legislations for IE', and 'historical development of IE'. Only sections related to the study were used as context units. The main issues were identified from the sections. By using a set of themes, each document was classified according to the sub-categories such as definition of IE, policies supporting IE, key actors for the development of IE, and teacher training for IE. After coding the materials, themes were developed and finally the information was interpreted.

Defining IE in the context of Zanzibar

MoEVT (2013/2014) defines IE in its ILFEP draft as 'education where all learners study together with other learners of their age in their community, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities, socio-economic background, ethnic background, language, cultural background, religion or gender'. IE is described in the policy as based on the right of all learners to receive a quality education that meets basic learning needs and enriches the learners' lives. This policy definition encompasses a wide range of learners who might be excluded from or within education due to factors other than impairment. These learners include, among others, those who are involved in child labour, those affected by HIV or AIDS, learners who are gifted or talented and learners who have dropped out of school for various reasons. The definition denotes a social and rights-based approach which encompasses a wide range of learners at an increased risk of being excluded; for instance, schoolgirls who become pregnant and children with disabilities. The rights-based approach is founded on the three key principles of access, quality, and equality (see also Tomaševski 2004; UNESCO 2005).

Such a wider policy-level definition is crucial in guiding the implementation of IE. Previous studies (D'Allesio and Watkins 2009; Ainscow and Sandill 2010; Rix et al. 2013; Kiuppis and Hausstätter 2014) have shown that in some countries, IE is still thought of as an approach for serving learners with disabilities within the general education system. To perceive IE as merely focusing on disability, Booth (2011) argues, is an exclusionary process. IE is rather, a never-ending process to eradicate all exclusionary sources within education and society at large.

The formulation of ILFEP signposts the commitment of the Zanzibar government towards creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment which supports, fosters, and educates all children, regardless of their gender, physical, intellectual, social, religious, racial, linguistic, or other characteristics. The development of the policy also marks the beginning of a long road towards viewing education through an inclusive lens, which infers a move from seeing the child as a problem to seeing the education system and all other systems that may impede learning as a problem (UNESCO 2005).

The Zanzibar Education Policy (2006) statements regarding IE are: (1) IE shall be promoted to ensure that children with special needs get equal opportunities, barriers to learning are addressed and the diverse range of learning needs are accommodated; (2) Slow learners and highly gifted children shall be identified and be given opportunities to learn at their own pace; and (3) Children with disabilities and others with special needs shall, to the greatest extent possible, be able to attend a local school where they will receive quality education alongside their peers without disabilities/special needs.

To put the above statements in practice, the policy outlines a number of strategies for implementation of IE: early identification and intervention for children with special needs; mainstreaming IE in teacher professional development programmes; creating mechanisms for facilitating involvement and participation of people with disabilities in matters affecting their lives; and establishing teachers' resource centres.

Legislations and policies supporting IE

Several policies and pieces of legislation related to the rights of people with disabilities and other marginalised groups have been enacted in Zanzibar. These policies and legislations (summarised in Table 1) make an important step towards the realisation of EFA. Although such policies which address the rights of people with disabilities have been formulated, Bines and Lei (2011) contend that disability still remains a challenge towards inclusion in many countries because of stigmatisation and a negative attitude to people with disabilities.

How IE is organised in Zanzibar schools?

In practice, Zanzibar's model of IE can be described as 'inclusive special education', which, according to Hornby (2012), involves having most learners in mainstream classrooms and a few special classes integrated in schools. According to ILFEP, special units will continue to exist within some schools and enrol students with special needs if necessary, including those with severe and complex disabilities:

> All learners shall be enrolled in the pre-primary and primary schools closest to their homes. Under unavoidable circumstances, some learners shall be enrolled in neighbouring schools with Special units rather than schools without special units … learners with severe and complex disabilities shall, for the time being, attend classes in special units. (MoEVT 2013/2014, 44)

The students enrolled in the special units will also spend some time in the regular class activities and interact with other students. The policy describes a special unit as:

> … a classroom or a set of facilities in a regular school set aside for use in the provision of special education services. Within these special units learners with severe disabilities or challenges can receive support and teaching within a smaller group with a specially trained teacher who is able to adapt activities to learners' individual needs. (MoEVT 2013/2014s, vi)

Table 1. Legislations and policies supporting IE development in Zanzibar.

Year	Legislation	Focus	Responsible authority (duty-bearer)
1997	Zanzibar Labour Act (No. 3)	Fundamental rights concerning the employment of people with disabilities	Government, employers
2000	Zanzibar Vision 2020	Equal opportunities for orphans, people with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups in every aspect of social, economic, and cultural life in Zanzibar	MoEVT, community
2004	Zanzibar Disability Development Policy	Protection of the rights of people with disabilities, including the right to education	MoEVT, education providers
2005	Labour Relations Act (No. 1)	Protection of discrimination based on disability in the context of Trade Unions' constitutions or activities	Trade unions, employers
2006	The Persons with Disabilities (Rights and Privileges) Act (No. 9)	Rights and privileges for people with disabilities, Established Zanzibar National Council for Persons with Disabilities	Government, employers
2006–2010	The Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty	Equal access to EFA, encouraging enrolment in schools and CBR for children with disabilities	MoEVT, schools, community
2006	The Zanzibar Education Policy	Provision of framework for full realisation of educational potential of all children, including those with special educational needs	MoEVT, community

Table 2. Key actors in the development of IE in Zanzibar.

Key actors	Contribution
NFU, ODW, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), Aga Khan Foundation, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Funding of IE project, conducting evaluation and provision of technical support for improvement of the project
ZAPDD	Running of IE project with MoEVT, advocacy, sensitisation meetings, awareness seminars and running youth activities related to inclusion
MoEVT	Recognition of IE in its 2006 *Education Policy*, coordination of IE through its *IELS Unit*
Local NGOs, Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs)	Advocacy, support to respective target groups, and influence of government policy on disability issues including education
Department of Social Welfare	Mainstreaming disability issues in various sectors including education
Zanzibar Muslim Academy	Establishment of *Certificate in Inclusive Education* programme for in-service teacher trainees
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Sight Savers International	Provision of health specialists to join early intervention and assessment committee
State University of Zanzibar	Establishment of *Diploma in Inclusive and Special Needs Education* programme for pre- and in-service teacher trainees

The policy shows a clear indication of changing the focus from the naïve view that IE is only focusing on children with disabilities to a wider perspective as an approach towards overall quality education and removal of barriers to educational attainment (UNESCO 2003; Rieser 2012). Slee (2011) adds to this point by arguing that IE is 'not just about educating disabled children and adults, it is *everybody's business*'.

Since 2004, various international and national organisations have been working with the Zanzibar MoEVT and ZAPDD towards the development of IE. Based on data from the Inclusive Education and Life Skills Unit (IELS Unit), Table 2 summarises the key actors on IE development in Zanzibar. The Norwegian Association of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (NFU) has been one of the key international development partners to give significant contributions. It financially supported the introduction of the IE pilot project from 2004 to 2006. Then, a long-term plan was signed (2010–2014) between the NFU, MoEVT, and ZAPDD. The focus of the plan was to introduce IE to all schools in Zanzibar and ensure access to quality education for learners with special educational needs (NFU 2014).

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2008), the percentage of people with disabilities (aged seven and above) in the Zanzibari population was 9.3%. Out of this percentage, data from

Table 3. Number of students with disabilities enrolled in government primary and secondary schools, 2010–2013.

	2010	2011	2012	2013
Primary schools				
Visual impairment	887	881	796	911
Physical impairment	512	550	545	527
Hearing impairment	979	1085	806	865
Speech impairment	332	593	434	408
Intellectual impairment	533	378	382	360
Multiple disabilities	157	194	263	199
Total	3400	3681	3226	3270
Secondary schools				
Visual impairment	685	711	1097	665
Physical impairment	170	160	151	173
Hearing impairment	215	191	208	186
Speech impairment	100	122	138	86
Intellectual impairment	44	27	30	36
Multiple disabilities	38	149	225	80
Total	1252	1360	1849	1226

Source: Zanzibar MoEVT Budget Speech (2013/2014).

Table 4. Number and percentage of government schools reported as implementing IE in Zanzibar by district.

District	Number of schools	Number of inclusive schools	% of inclusive schools
Urban	39	13	33.3
West	62	20	32.3
North A	47	6	12.8
North B	29	10	34.5
Central	48	6	12.5
South	28	12	42.9
Micheweni	36	6	16.7
Wete	48	19	39.6
Chake Chake ke	44	14	31.8
Mkoani	45	13	28.9
Total	426	119	27.9

Source: Zanzibar MoEVT *Budget Speech* (2013/2014).

the MoEVT *Budget Speech* (2013/2014) indicate that learners with (physical, intellectual, visual, and hearing) disabilities constitute 1.8% of the total enrolment in public pre-primary schools, 1.3% of the total enrolment in public primary schools and 1.7% of the total enrolment in public secondary schools. For private schools, most of which were introduced after the 2000s, learners with disabilities comprised 1.3% of the total enrolment in pre-primary schools, 0.5% of the total enrolment in primary schools and 2.9% of secondary school enrolment. Data in Table 3 indicate the number of students with disabilities that were enrolled in primary and secondary schools from 2010 to 2013.

In terms of the percentage of schools implementing IE, a closer look at the data in Table 4 indicates that nearly 28% of the government schools are in the IE project. With limited funding and resources, it is rational to start with a smaller number of schools and then strategically include more schools, rather than trying to reach all schools at once with a superficial focus on IE practices (NFU 2014).

Implementation of IE in Zanzibar

For effective implementation of the IE, two committees were created in 2004, drawing members from various sectors such as education, health, and local government. Each school implementing the IE project formed an IE committee. These committees have significantly contributed to IE development in Zanzibar. They contribute to raise awareness among the community members on the right to education for all children including the most vulnerable ones such as those with disabilities. More outstandingly, the school committees have been bridging the schools with the community through encouraging a wider support network for inclusion (McConkey and Mariga 2011). For example, the school IE committees convince community members to donate materials and to volunteer labour power in the construction of new classrooms and improve school infrastructure to become more learner-friendly (McConkey and Mariga 2011). Table 5 summarises the membership and core functions of the committees.

Table 5. Formation of IE committees according to IELS Unit Zanzibar.

Committee	Members	Function/focus
Steering Committee	MoEVT, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Employment, Women and Children's Development, Disabled People's Organisations	Planning and collaboration
Technical Committee	MoEVT, ZAPDD, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Employment, Women and Children's Development, Teachers' Union, Zanzibar Madrasa Resource Centre, Labour Commission	Carrying out assessment of children for proper placement and rehabilitation of school environment
School Inclusive Education Committee	Parents, members from school committees, head teachers, learners with and without disabilities	Implementation of IE at school level

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McConkey and Mariga ([2011](#)) have identified four main themes which have been fundamental in the early development of IE in Zanzibar: parents, community, school, and Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR). Some parents, especially of children with disabilities, have been active members of the committees formed in schools. They have played a great role of awareness and sensitisation in the community (McConkey and Mariga [2011](#)). At the community level, local government leaders, called *shehas*, have been influential in liaising between the central government programmes and the community. They are involved in influencing community sensitisation and awareness towards building an inclusive society through the provision of the right to EFA. Health specialists have also been playing a key role in providing CBR and health services. CBR can be an essential initiative in pushing for social inclusion and instilling positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, especially children, by encouraging participation of the family and the community. Through CBR and IE, people with disabilities (including children) can be empowered to have equal access to social services such as education, health and employment. For example, CBR workers may collaborate with parents and community leaders to identify children with disabilities (who are not in schools) and send them to school. Likewise, teachers can refer learners with disabilities to CBR workers for vocational placements and other community services (Hartley et al. [2005](#)).

The IELS Unit has begun extending IE training to private and pre-schools schools, which were not included in the IE project (NFU [2014](#)). This article posits that although it is axiomatic that a majority of the students in private schools are those from relatively middle-income and higher socio-economic status families, it does not necessarily imply that there are no students who are excluded in one way or another. The teaching staff in these schools also need orientation to IE pedagogies, particularly related to what kind of changes are needed in order to be inclusive schools. Such changes require the capacity development for teachers and other school staff to positively respond to learner diversity. Diversities among learners must not be perceived as problems but should be considered as rich learning opportunities to stimulate thinking and learning within the classroom community (Kiuppis and Hausstätter [2014](#)). It is not enough to be satisfied with the fact that learners with disabilities or any others with special educational needs are enrolled in schools. What matters most is what happens to these learners when they are at school. Are the teachers aware of the inclusive practices that ensure the meaningful presence, participation, and achievement of all learners in the classroom? There is a pressing need to go beyond enrolment and sensitisation now.

Another crucial issue for the immediate need to extend IE training to private schools is the fact that a majority of these schools claim that they are English-medium. This poses another threat to inclusion. The use of English as the language of instruction (LoI), which is hardly used by 5% of Zanzibari residents (Babaci-Wilhite [2013](#)), leaves much to be desired. Despite a plethora of scientific evidence showing that teaching students in a language they understand better, especially when it is the mother tongue, improves the quality of knowledge acquisition and education in general (Babaci-Wilhite [2013](#); Rea-Dickins and Yu [2013](#)), the 2006 Zanzibar Education Policy reforms replaced Kiswahili (the mother tongue of the overwhelming majority in Zanzibar) with English as the LoI in mathematics and science subjects in Standard V and VI, which are the last two years of primary school (MoEVT [2006](#)). We are contending that using English in Zanzibar as the LoI may exacerbate the quality of education rather than being a *magic bullet* as the educational authorities might have thought. This policy reform may have serious implications to active participation and achievement of learners in classroom learning, and thereby affect inclusion.

Training teachers for IE

Pre- and in-service teacher training programmes for IE are crucial. With limited resources but strong determination, the IELS Unit, in collaboration with international development partners such as NFU, began with in-service teacher training to respond to the immediate need to start to implement IE practices. For convenience, two teachers from each of the 20 IE project pilot schools were appointed for short training (between one and three weeks) on the theory, concepts, and

international perspectives on IE, in Tanzania and other neighbouring countries, including Uganda and South Africa (McConckey and Mariga 2011). After the training, these teachers worked together with the IELS Unit and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to run in-service training workshops for other teachers and schools, which lasted between one and three weeks. The content in the workshops included the concept of IE, Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, the Salamanca Statement of Action, Braille, sign language, early identification and assessment, behaviour modification, development of Individualised Education Plans, and improvisation of teaching and learning materials from locally available resources. The teachers who attended the workshops were then expected to convey the knowledge and experiences to their colleagues in their respective schools. Notably, however, the topics covered within one to three weeks were too many. It was practically difficult for the workshop participants to pass on all the information gained at the training to other teachers (NFU 2014). Due to the limitations of this cascade model, the whole-school approach was then adopted to provide training to all the teachers present in the school, rather than training only a few. A school-based approach can help to make all teachers available in the school responsible for all learners and avoid the tendency of leaving the responsibility of supporting learners who need additional support only to the few teachers who received IE training. In addition, certificate and diploma courses on IE have been introduced at the Zanzibar Muslim Academy (since 2006) and the State University of Zanzibar (since 2013), respectively. However, for more sustainable implementation of IE, there is a need to rethink the IE training model in Zanzibar. Advocacy for IE to be embedded or permeated in the pre-service teacher training is now strongly needed instead of relying solely on one-off basic training on IE through workshops and short training (Rieser 2012; NFU 2014).

IE practices in Zanzibar in the context of SSA

Zanzibar is on par with other SSA countries towards implementation of the UN *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) and the *Convention of the Rights of Children* (CRC) by introducing a re-entry policy for schoolgirls who become pregnant (MoEVT 2006). Other African countries with similar policies include Kenya, Malawi, Zambia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe (Chilisa 2002). The re-entry policy will provide invaluable support towards access and participation for female students. Unterhalter (2013) and Chilisa (2002) conducted studies on the expulsion, re-entry, and continuation policies regarding girls who fall pregnant while at school. Both these studies contend that even those countries with re-entry policies are violating the children's rights to education through the temporary exclusion of pregnant girls from school once the pregnancy is discovered. Girls' education and gender equality have been on the policy agenda in both Zanzibar and Tanzania (MoEVT 2006).

Our stance is in favour of the re-entry policy, which denotes a change towards a more inclusive attitude, as it gives opportunity for pregnant schoolgirls to resume studies after delivery. While permanent expulsion of pregnant schoolgirls is too castigatory, continuation is too lenient and does not reflect the sociocultural context of Zanzibar where pre-marital and out-of-marriage-bond pregnancies are vehemently perceived as immoral, disgraceful, and sacrilegious. Continuation policies, which allow the pregnant schoolgirls to continue attending school during the pregnancy period, may represent an oversight regarding the psychological comfort, care, and support needed during pregnancy for the best interests of the expecting mother, especially in this context where the girl faces social stigma and isolation from the family, and even rejection from the man responsible for pregnancy (Legal and Human Rights Centre 2013).

The 1967 Arusha Declaration, which was followed by nationalisation of private investments and promulgation of socialism and self-reliance philosophies-cum-policy, can be viewed as one of the initial steps towards EFA in Tanzania. The 1978 Education Act made primary education compulsory, yet not free. In 1998, an IE pilot project was introduced. The project was carried out by the MoEVT in collaboration with UNESCO and Salvation Army. The project began with four schools

in the Temeke District, Dar es Salaam, and the number of schools increased up to 196 by 2010 (Thomas 2013). A major step towards expansion of access and participation in basic education was the elimination of primary school fees in 2001. The formulation of the National Policy on Disability in 2004 helped to ensure the right to education for people with disabilities.

According to the survey conducted by Lehtomäki, Tuomi, and Matonya (2014), the concept and principles of IE in Tanzania are still unclear to the majority of teachers and parents, as well as to educational administrators and other educational stakeholders. In 2009, a National Strategy on IE 2009–2017 was introduced to enhance the implementation of IE. This strategy aims at achieving that: (1) education policies and programmes are informed by inclusive values and practices; (2) teaching and learning respond to the diverse needs of learners; (3) education support is available to all learners; and (4) community ownership of and participation in IE is enhanced.

Another strategy towards enhancing quality EFA in Tanzania is the Big Results Now (BRN), inaugurated in 2013. To implement BRN, the Tanzania MoEVT has interestingly decided to focus on increasing the pass rates in schools by officially introducing league tabling of school performance and competition as one of the initiatives to achieve improved quality of basic education. Thus, schools are ranked as high, medium, and low based on their performance in the annual nationwide examinations. However, ranking of schools and competition leave much for speculation with regard to quality of education (Slee 2011; Rogers 2012; Kuusilehto-Awale and Lahtero 2014). Parents may be in a dilemma as to which schools they should send their children. They may change schools year by year when 'shopping' for schools that are ranked high. This tendency may affect inclusion as some schools can reject children with disabilities, and those who are not academically good enough to enable the schools to get good performance in the national examinations.

In Uganda, the Danish International Development Agency has supported the government in the development of education for learners with disabilities since 1990. This was followed by the introduction of the Universal Primary Education Policy in 1997. However, the basic compulsory EFA in Uganda was provided under the Compulsory Education Act of 2008 (Rieser 2012). According to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Uganda launched its Special Needs and IE policy in 2011. The policy, among other objectives, aimed to increase enrolment, participation, and completion of schooling by persons with special learning needs. Furthermore, the MoES has grouped all the schools into clusters of 12 to 15 schools. Each cluster is managed by a special needs education coordinator who has also been trained on IE (Lynch et al. 2011). In Zanzibar, an almost similar structure was introduced in 2014. By using Teacher Centres (TCs), which were introduced in 1994 in all the 10 districts of Zanzibar, one IELS adviser has been recruited in all the TCs. These advisers who are assisted by Resource Teachers (RTs) are responsible to visit schools and give practical support to teachers on IE practices. Nevertheless, the TC advisers and RTs, who were recruited in 2014, need to be empowered through further training on IE because they are not adequately equipped with IE.

In South Africa, the adoption of the new constitution in 1996 paved the way for guaranteed EFA without racial or other forms of discrimination (Engelbrecht et al. 2013). The appointment of the National Committee on Special Education Needs and Training and of the National Committee on Education Support Service in 1996 was an indication of the government of South Africa towards inclusion of all learners, including those with disabilities. In 2001, the South African Department of Education released the Education White Paper 6, *Special Education, Building an IE and Training System*, which serves as a policy document guiding the provision of EFA learners. Since the release of the policy, several strategies have been put in place, including establishment of school-based and district-based support teams, as well as using the special schools as resource centres and the development of Strategy for Identification, Screening and Support in 2008. (Tshifura 2013).

Although each country has its own socio-economic, cultural and political context, Zanzibar and other SSA countries can still learn from each other in their efforts to transform their education systems towards inclusion. Thus, it is imperative for policy-makers in these countries to consider their own contexts and reality when developing IE policies and strategies. A wealth of research has indicated a wide variation of policies and practices regarding IE in both developed and developing

countries (Hornby 2012; Rix et al. 2013). Hornby (2012, 59) provides a caveat: 'It is important for developing countries not to attempt to adopt models for IE used in developed countries as these cannot be directly transferred because of political, social and economic differences …'

Conclusion: fundamental steps forward

In this article, we have discussed the steps taken by the Zanzibar government to transform its education system moving towards inclusion. Apart from those efforts, we maintain that it is equally crucial to include private and non-formal educational sectors in the IE development in Zanzibar in terms of training and other processes. For a realistic inclusion, there is a need to take a holistic approach towards inclusion by including formal and non-formal education as well as the public and the private educational sectors. UNESCO (2005, 16) accentuates the need to incorporate both private and public sectors: 'It is imperative, therefore, that education planners consider both the public and the private system in planning in order to effectively address the needs of *all* learners and combat exclusion.'

For a successful implementation of IE in Zanzibar, the policy objectives and strategies must be communicated to all stakeholders such as teachers, parents, educational officers and curriculum developers. In addition, a national strategy for the implementation of ILFEP needs to be put in place. Such a national strategy is needed to stipulate the role of each stakeholder in the implementation of ILFEP. It should also include monitoring and evaluation strategy in order to measure the results and impact of the policy. The government and its institutions, in collaboration with the community, must ensure that the principles of human rights related to education are enforced. Without concerted and adamant efforts, IE will remain a far-fetched dream. IE necessitates long-term, gradual reforms in all policies such as Youth development policy, Environment policy, and Social protection policy (not just those related to education), infrastructures and a change of attitudes (Du Plessis 2013). Also, the community's attitude towards education for girls, children with disabilities, children living with HIV/AIDS must be improved. Such a task requires a holistic approach which involves cross-sectoral planning involving all stakeholders for education, reforms and innovations towards improvement of the quality of teaching and learning (UNESCO 2009; Booth 2011). IE development is an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary, process. It is indeed 'everybody's business' (Slee 2011; Rogers 2012) to minimise inequalities and exclusionary practices in education.

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