Challenges and prospects of teaching selected work skills (WSs) in primary schools: Experiences from Iringa Region, Tanzania

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The purpose of this paper is to explain the interpretation of the Work Skills (WSs); assess the WSs teaching context in Teacher Colleges; assess the teaching-learning process in schools; identify challenges of teaching work skills; identify outcomes of skills teaching and determine skill costs for training a pupil. A multiple case study design was adopted. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary review. The study found that interpretations on WSs varied; WSs teaching was superficial and costs for teaching the skills were high. It is recommended that the MoEVT: introduce joint WSs teacher training programmes to retrained and trained teachers.

Key words: Work skills, selected work skills (work skills).

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, there have been complaints that work skills (WSs) as a subject in primary schools in Tanzania is taught by teachers who are not well trained. This may hinder achievement of the learning objectives of a given subject. It is well known that the implementation of a curriculum can not be independent from quality and quantity of teachers (Ndala, 2006). However, in many parts of the world the teachers who teach in schools are under qualified (Korthagen, 2004). Furthermore, The United Republic of Tanzania (URT) (2001) asserts that there is a shortage of teachers and incapacity to prepare teachers to teach Work Skills, Music, Fine Art, Theatre Arts, Physical Education, Agricultural Science, Technical Education, and Home Economics. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) in Tanzania understands the problem of lack of qualified teachers for WSs, nevertheless the subject is still taught in primary schools and Teacher Colleges. This situation casts some doubt on the implementation of the curriculum. The noble curriculum learning objectives, to make a class VII leaver self-reliant, self-employable or even employable and/or develop entrepreneurial traits (see URT, 1995; MoEC, 1996 and MoEVT, 2005) may not be achieved.

Indeed, WSs is not independent from the long-standing philosophy of Education for Self-Reliance that was launched in 1967 in Tanzania. That is to say a well planned education always results in work, production and self-reliance (Ishumi and Nyirenda, 2002). The purpose of education at any level must be to make the graduate secure a job, become a productive and self-reliant member of society. Work Skills have the purpose of molding pupils for outcomes of this kind.

Many studies have been conducted on the status of WSs teaching in primary schools. Most of these studies were more or less unfocused, and thus their conclusions may have been vague (Mwasandube, 1999; Macha, 2007; Moshi, 2006; Kaiza, 2008). The studies have done a good job on identifying the problems of teaching WSs in a general sense, but did not suggest the solutions for the problems. The current study provides a general picture on the teaching of WSs as a subject and then focuses on few selected skills to provide a clear image on the teaching status of the selected skills. Also, it evaluates the learning objectives of the curriculum to determine if they are achieved, and it suggests solutions to challenges facing the teaching of selected skills and the subject...
altogether.

**Research problem**

Most teachers teach WSs without or with inadequate training, which raises a question if the curriculum learning objectives are realized through the teaching of the subject in primary schools in Tanzania.

**Setting**

Tanzania is one of low income countries located in east Africa. The country lies between longitude 29° and 41° east and latitude 1° and 12° south. She is estimated to have a population of about 44.5 million people (Kiishweko, 2012). The largest part of the population, about 80%, it lives in rural areas, with Agriculture as its major economic activity (Mwananchi communications Ltd 2012; Kiishweko, 2012). Most of those engaging in Agriculture are peasants; they engage in subsistence farming.

The education system in Tanzania is 2-7-4-2-3+. This is to say two years for pre-primary education to children of 5-6 years. Pre-primary education takes two years. This level of education is for propagating cultural values and no examinations for promotion i.e. for joining the next level, primary education. Then we have seven years of primary education. This level of education prepares a child for the next levels, secondary education, and primary education. This level of education prepares a child for the next levels, secondary education, and vocational training colleges/centers. A child is also expected to enter the world of work after completing this cycle of education. The next level is a four-year cycle, ordinary secondary education. After this education cycle the graduate is expected to join the next levels, advanced secondary education, Vocational training colleges and/or join professional training. Also the graduate is expected to join the world of work. The next level of education is a two-year cycle. It is for advanced secondary education. Graduates of this level are expected to join tertiary or higher education, training institutions and the world of work. Finally, there are three years or so for university education (see URT (1995).

**METHODS**

The study was guided by six research questions, namely:

(i). How is Work Skills curriculum for primary schools interpreted in Tanzania?

(ii). How do tutors and teachers for Work Skills are prepared in Tanzania?

(iii). How is teaching professionalism applied in teaching Work Skills in primary schools in Tanzania?

(iv). What challenges do Work Skills teachers face in teaching selected skills in primary schools in Tanzania?

(v). What are outcomes of teaching selected skills in Work Skills subject in primary schools in Tanzania?

(vi). How much funds are required to cover the costs of training a pupil annually in selected works skills in the curriculum?

**Sample**

This study adopted a multiple case study design. Six primary schools and a teacher college were selected at random. Two schools were from a rural environment whereas four were urban schools. The total number of respondents was 240. Twelve categories of respondents were involved in this study. These included: 15 teachers who taught WSs, 54 Class VII leavers- 2000 – 2009, 3 district education officials, 2 primary schools inspectors, 5 Ward Education Coordinators, 149 pupils, 1 Ministry of Education and Vocational Training official from the teacher education department, 5 head teachers, 5 academic masters, 1 principal, 1 tutor and 1 Teacher College academic officer. The respondents were purposively selected. This technique was used because the study used a multiple case study design.

**Instruments**

This study used questionnaires, interviews, observation and documentary review to collect data. Questionnaires were used to collect data from teachers and tutors who were teaching WSs at the time of this study. The questionnaire comprised of 26 items, of which 13 were close-ended items, of these, four items were likert scales of attitude whereas 9 were normal multiple choice questions. The questionnaire had 9 open-ended items, which required the respondents to write down their answers. Interviews, specifically, one-to-one interview was used to gather information from teachers, pupils, tutors, ministry officials, district education officials, primary school inspectors, Ward Education Coordinators, academic masters, academic officers, principals and head teachers. The number of items varied depending on the category of respondents and type of information that was sought. Interview for teachers and tutors comprised of 14 items. Interview for pupils had 7 items. Interview for a ministry official comprised of six items. Interview for district education officials had six items. Interview for primary schools inspectors, principals, Ward Education Coordinators, head teachers and academic masters had 7 items. One-to-many interview was used to collect information from teachers who taught WSs in primary schools at the time of this study. It comprised of five items. Both questionnaires and interviews were conducted in Kiswahili, the national language and the language of instruction in primary schools. This approach helped to make communication between a researcher and the
respondents more effective.

**Data collection**

In the schools and the Teacher College, questionnaires were administered first. Then one-to-one interview was conducted. After that, group-to-one interview was conducted. Finally documentary review was conducted. Observation was used to collect data during the entire process of data collection. For the rest of the respondents (not in schools or teacher college), face-to-face interview was conducted, except for very few respondents who were not readily available, telephone interview was used to collect information from them.

**Data analysis**

Then data from questionnaires were analysed using SPSS programme version 11.5. Data from interviews and open-ended questions were put into themes and coded, the coding was done through numbering the themes from each item from the interview and then the frequencies of each coded theme were determined. Lastly the data were analysed using SPSS programme version 11.5.

**FINDINGS**

The findings are based on the research questions. The findings include general information on WSs; however, the focus is on poultry production, tailoring and photography. General information gives a hint on the teaching status of the subject in general to help to give affirmative conclusions on the teaching of the subject.

**Interpretation of Work Skills curriculum among teachers and schools in Tanzania**

To understand the interpretation of WSs curriculum, the researcher asked the respondents to say what WSs were as a subject. Thirty four respondents out of thirty four said that the subject was about vocational skills, which helped them become self-reliant after completing the education cycle. Nine out of thirty four said that it was a subject that helped pupils to learn various things. Four out of thirty four said that it was a subject that needed practical and theory in teaching. Two out of thirty four said that it was a subject that inculcated creativity among pupils. One out of thirty four said that he new nothing about Work Skills as a subject.

**Assessment of the context in which WSs teachers are prepared for selected skills in Teacher Colleges (TCs)**

One teacher college (TC) was studied. It was found that there was only one tutor who was teaching the subject. The tutor was not trained to teach WSs. And, it was found that there was no teaching equipment for the selected skills; the tutor used her own equipment to teach the students, particularly for poultry production and photography. There was one sewing machine that was used to teach Tailoring. There were a large number of students, more than five hundred first year students, and therefore, it was difficult for one tutor to teach them effectively. These findings concur with opinions from eight WSs-trained teacher respondents of this study, who were trained in eight different TCs, which were not part of this study. Five out eight WSs-trained teachers said that they were not satisfied with the quality of training they got from TCs. Moreover, the findings indicate that WSs-trained teachers had no content and theoretical competence, though they had good pedagogical competence.

**Assessment of teaching-learning process of WSs in primary schools in Tanzania**

In this study, it was found that two types of teachers were teaching WSs trained and non-trained teachers. Trained teachers were 53.3% whereas non-trained teachers were 46.7%. It was also found that the teaching of the subject was mainly theoretical because teachers lacked expertise and equipment for practical work. Most teachers said that they used participatory methods and lecture method to teach the subject. Sixty percent of the teachers were not easily teaching the subject. Interestingly, the subject was not taught consistently. It was taught only in some classes and rarely, in seven years of primary education cycle. As some of 2011 class VII leavers pointed out:

*We were taught WSs in class VI and VII. It was taught once per week (interview, 4th January, 2012)*

*We were taught WSs only in class VI (interview, 4th January, 2012)*

*We were taught WSs only in class (interview, 4th January, 2012)*

Additionally, practical work was only conducted in some topics. Most teachers liked teaching Cookery, Tailoring and Agriculture. In contrast, teachers disliked teaching Agriculture, Tailoring and Music. Most teachers considered themselves competent in practical work in Agriculture, Cookery, Tailoring and Sports. It was found that the practical work was conducted mainly in open
spaces and in class rooms. Eight percent of teachers taught some of the skills, but few taught all the skills. Similarly, 93.7% said that the curriculum should be retained in primary schools. Finally, most of pupil respondents had a positive attitude towards the teaching and learning processes, except the 2011 class VII leavers who had a very negative attitude towards the same.

Challenges of teaching selected skills in WSs in primary schools in Tanzania

The challenges of teaching the selected skills, namely poultry production, Tailoring and Photography were more or less the same. Tables 1, 2 and 3 indicate challenges of teaching the skills.

Table 1 shows that lack of equipment and teacher expertise were equally perceived as the biggest challenges which faced the teaching of poultry production. Also from the table shows that poor school economy, lack of school poultry production projects and poor security were big challenges. This suggests that lack of teacher expertise and equipment were utterly big challenges.

Table 2 shows that lack of equipment and teacher expertise as the greatest challenges; however, unlike in poultry production skill, in this skill, it appears that lack of equipment as a more critical problem than the lack of teacher expertise on the skill. This suggests that the teachers were more knowledgeable in Tailoring than in Poultry production, compare Tables 1 and 2 in the two challenges, lack of expertise and equipment.

Table 1. Challenges of teaching poultry production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No equipment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No facilities</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
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<td>No school project</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No security</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidisciplinary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No market</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry names</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>47.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No consumables</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teacher expertise</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No national exam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>78.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>80.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor training in TCs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor school economy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teacher creativity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small school area</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>97.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcrowded classes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: research field data, 2012

Table 2. Challenges of teaching tailoring.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No equipment</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>39.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No teacher expertise</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor school economy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>86.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No market</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No community support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>96.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No consumables</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: research field data, 2012
Table 3. Challenges of teaching photography.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No teacher expertise</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No equipment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>89.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No commitment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor sch. economy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>94.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor market</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: research field data, 2012

Table 3 shows that lack of teacher expertise and equipment were the main challenges in teaching photography. The difference in intensity of the challenges was almost insignificant. Nevertheless, it stands to be true that teachers faced the two greatest challenges in teaching the skill.

Similar challenges were mentioned for other skills that were selected by respondents, such as drawing and weaving. Two major challenges were observed, lack of teacher expertise and teaching equipment, and materials. It was found that in order to get rid of these challenges concerted efforts among institutions and other educational stakeholders were a must. With regards to lack of teacher expertise, Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) and other colleges would teach content whereas Teacher Colleges (TCS) would teach teaching methods and, learning and teaching theories. Concerning the issue of lack of equipment the government needed to introduce special budgets for the subject. Most importantly school contributions may have to be re-introduced in primary schools to resolve financial constraints that schools were facing, particularly, for newly established day government schools.

Furthermore, it was found that responses greatly varied on the most difficult skill to learn at the age of the pupils. The preferences on key skills to be taught in primary schools greatly varied across schools, except in rural schools; there was some kind of similarity on the same. More that 90% of the pupils said that they liked to learn the subject. Those pupils felt that the subject was taught well, except 2011 class VII leavers who had a different opinion. In most schools, most of the pupil respondents said that gained competence in various skills; in contrast, most 2011 class VII leavers said that they gained no competence in WSs. Surprisingly, 85.2% of class VII leavers (2000-2009) said that they gained no competence in WSs. Indeed, 81.5% of class VII leaver respondents said that they could not employ themselves through selected skills. And that 96.6% of class VII leavers could not generate their income through knowledge they got from WSs. Most of them were employed in business and/or doing petty business. Agriculture was mentioned as the most important and most liked skill, and that it should be taught in primary schools.

**Intended and unintended outcomes of teaching WSs in primary schools in Tanzania**

As noted earlier, the purpose of teaching WSs was to help the pupils to get self-reliant and/or develop entrepreneurial traits. In this study it was found that the pupils developed neither of the two. This is to say the intended outcomes were not achieved. Some of respondents had this to say:

*Pupils cannot get knowledge because teachers have no knowledge (interview, Ward Education Coordinator, ward I, January, 2012).*

*Pupils cannot develop competences because no practical, if there is a pupil who knows how to keep poultry, for instance, s/he has acquired that knowledge from home. During WSs period it is time for resting because it is perceived as a less important subject. It is a subject that was introduced in the curriculum without preparation, but it is an important subject; it can make one self-reliant (interview, Ward Education Coordinator, ward K, February, 2012)*

It was further found that there was a danger of killing the pupils’ talents because the teachers who taught the subject lacked expertise in respective skills. The pupils were being confused instead of being assisted to understand. These were unintended outcomes of teaching WSs. As some of respondents said:

*The subject needs to be reviewed on its teaching. Teachers should be updated through training or to teach it without making improvements it is killing the pupils’ talents. If improving its teaching is not possible then it should be abolished (interview, head teacher school V, January, 2012)*

*The pupils have drawing talents, but, we, teachers*
excitingly, the pupils spend other subjects’ periods to do WSs activities. This suggests that the pupils liked the subject. As one teacher respondent said this as an unintended outcome, she said:

I usually see pupils spending other subjects’ periods to do WSs activities (interview, school SD, January 2012)

Estimates of the cost of training a pupil in selected skills

Levin method was used to estimate the costs in selected skills. It was found that it was very difficult to determine the cost in the skills because of complexity of how the subject was delivered. For example, some facilities used in other subject were used for WSs as well e.g. desks, such costs were hard to include. So it should be noted that the method provides estimates and not precise costs. For poultry production, it was found that approximately each pupil needed Tanzanian shillings (Tsh.) 18, 044.40 or $11.33 for broilers project in a class of 45 pupils, and Tsh 26, 166.70 or $16.43 for layers in the same class size. With regards to Tailoring each pupil needed about Tsh 613, 481.10 or $385.11 per annum. Likewise, a pupil needed Tsh 663, 511.30 or $ 416.52 per annum to train a pupil in Photography.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Work Skills curriculum among teachers and schools in Tanzania

It was found that there is varied interpretation of WSs across individual teachers, inspectors, Ward Education Coordinators, head teachers and academic masters. Most interviewees consider WSs as a subject that helped pupils learn vocational skills and develop self-reliance attitude. Some think the subject is about creativity. Some think the subject needs practical and theory for pupils to master. This varied interpretation reflects standards and approaches of teaching the subject across teachers. A teacher who perceives that subject is concerned with creativity is likely to let the pupils make things without a theoretical support from a teacher. Similarly, a teacher whose mental model has concepts of theory and practical on the subject is likely to teach both theory and practical work. These findings show that there is no common understanding of WSs as a subject among key education stakeholders. This may result in lack of common standards in the teaching of the subject. Probably, this is so because there was no proper orientation held during introducing the subject in primary schools curriculum. That being the case, it is important for the MoEVT in Tanzania to provide enough training to teachers and other key stakeholders, for example, education supervisors.

Assessment of the context in which WSs teachers are prepared for selected skills in TCs

In TCs, it was found that one out of one tutor was teaching WSs. The tutor was not trained to teach WSs. This suggests that TCs cannot produce competent WSs teachers because the tutors do not qualify to teach the work skills, thus producing poorly trained teachers who today need further training on the skills because they have received poor training from TCs. Also, there was no teaching equipment in TCs; therefore, teaching was theoretical, which resulted in half-baked WSs teachers to teach in primary schools. The findings are in consistent with those of URT (2001) assertion that the teachers who teach WSs are few and the government is not able to train them. In any event, the MoEVT needs to find alternatives to train WSs teachers; TCs cannot produce competent WSs teachers in such a context.

Assessment of teaching-learning process of WSs in primary schools in Tanzania

It was found that 53.3% of teachers who taught WSs in primary schools were trained to teach the subject while 46.7% were non-trained teachers. We cannot hesitate to say that the teachers who are trained to teach WSs are nominally trained teachers because they are taught by very few, unqualified tutors and there is no teaching equipment in TCs. The findings agree with those of Korthagen (2004) who asserts that the problem in most parts of the world is schools being taught by ill-prepared teachers. This suggests that there are no good WSs teachers in primary schools because five out of eight WSs-trained teachers say that they are not satisfied with the training they got from TCs because it was poor. Given this fact, the MoEVT needs to intervene through re-training and training WSs teachers in primary schools. Moreover, WSs are not consistently taught in schools, they are taught in one class, but not in another. This suggests that the subject is not given priority in schools, like academic subjects. Probably, this is so because teachers lack expertise on work skills and thus find that there is no point of teaching the skills they are not competent in.

Challenges of teaching selected skills in WSs in primary schools in Tanzania

The challenges that face the teaching of poultry
production, Tailoring and Photographing are more or less the same. Two major challenges are identified, namely lack of teacher expertise and teaching equipment. This suggests that the teachers cannot teach the skills properly because they lack knowledge and that the teachers cannot provide practical work because they have no teaching equipment. This may result in total de-motivation of teaching the subject however important it may be. These findings agree with those of studies by Mwasandube (1999), Macha (2007), Kaiza (2008) and Moshi (2006) who found that there were no teaching equipment, teachers were not trained and there were no syllabus and books for WSs. Also, the skills was given less time to teach.

The intended and unintended outcomes of teaching WSs in primary schools in Tanzania

The possible implications of letting unqualified teachers to teach WSs are: first, the curriculum and/or policy objectives cannot be achieved. Also, it is found that the pupils are confused and their talents are likely to die due to teacher incapacity to teach the skills. To avoid these unpopular outcomes, the MoEVT needs to recruit qualified teachers/individuals or re-train and train WSs teachers. Most importantly the curriculum intended objectives (intended curriculum) are/is not realized. There is need to design and mount an in-service training programme for this.

Estimates of costs for training a pupil in selected skills

Training the pupils in selected skills is very expensive given the economic status of most Tanzanians. It is thus obvious that the government cannot afford to provide free quality education for the selected skills to each pupil in Tanzania. It is therefore suggested that concerted efforts between central and local government are needed through setting a special budget specifically for the WSs. Most importantly re-introducing community school contributions to provide equipment for WSs is an alternative to solve the problem of costs. Beginning through piloting, it might be the best way to make the curriculum realistic. These findings agree with those of Psacharopoulos (1991), cited in Bray (2002), which indicate that technical and/or vocational schools are normally more costly than general education schools.

Conclusions

First, there is no common understanding of WSs as a subject across different education stakeholders. Thus, there are no common standards in the teaching-learning process. Second, the context in which WSs teachers are prepared is very poor, this is so because one out one of tutors who teach in TCs are not well trained to teach the subject. Third, the WSs teaching-learning process in primary schools is not professional and effective (superficial) because five out eight of WSs-trained teachers say that the teaching they received in TCs was poor, and that 46.7% of teachers who teach the subject are non-trained. Additionally, 81.5% of class VII leavers said that could not employ themselves through WSs knowledge. Furthermore, 96.6% of class VII leavers did not generate income through WSs knowledge they got from primary school. Fourth, lack of teacher expertise and teaching equipment are two major challenges in teaching the selected skills. Fifth, unqualified WSs teachers result in confusion and death pupils’ talents. As one teacher respondent commented:

The pupils have a drawing talent, but, we, teachers kill the pupils’ the talent because we are not experts in respective areas that is my observation (Interview, school M, January, 2012)

Sixth, training a pupil in selected work skills is costly, this is because Tsh. 613,481.10 or $385.11 is needed per year for Tailoring, Tsh. 663, 511.30 or $ 416.52 for Photography and about Tsh. 26, 166.70 or $16.43 for poultry production.

Recommendations

The MoEVT should introduce joint diploma and degree programmes between VETA and TCs or Agriculture colleges to prepare WSs teachers. VETA tutors should teach the content and practical work and tutors from TCs should teach teaching methods and, teaching and learning theories.

The MoEVT should set special budget to support the buying of teaching equipment in schools for WSs. Also, it should re-introduce community contributions to support the buying of equipment.

The MoEVT should suspend the teaching of all other skills, and focus on Agriculture and Small business because Agriculture is the greatest employer of Tanzanians and Small business is the greatest employer of class VII leavers.

The MoEVT may consider setting a long term strategy to introduce WSs in other levels of education, secondary and university levels due to the fast diminishing formal employment in most countries, including Tanzania.

Areas for further research

(i) A study is needed to determine why teachers dislike teaching Agriculture despite having competence in it.
(ii) A study is needed to identify skills to be re-introduced in the primary school curriculum after Agriculture and Small business are well established.

(iii) A study is needed to find out why most class VII leavers engage more in petty business than in agriculture, despite the fact that Agriculture is the backbone of the Tanzania’s economy.

REFERENCES


