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### **Tanzania: A Need for Education**

Most Americans have fresh running water, air conditioning, heating and electricity. Many Americans also have healthy crops surrounding their homes, a full plate of food at every meal, an opportunity for a free, quality education and clean clothes. Many Americans also take these things for granted daily. Research shows that engaging in a quality education and having access to basic amenities is beneficial to the success of a human. However, half a world away, there is a small country called Tanzania. In Tanzania, life isn't nearly as easy. Nearly two-thirds of the people of Tanzania live off the land. It is their life; and their wealth is measured by how much land they own. On their land they raise everything they eat and use. This includes growing crops, raising scrawny chickens, maintaining a compost pile and using a bucket to retrieve water. The homes are small and nothing goes to waste. The "wealthier" own up to 30 acres on which they can farm. When comparing the experience of United States citizens to that of Tanzanian citizens, the observation is clear that in most cases, individuals living in the United States are much more likely to have and be able to use basic life needs than the people of Tanzania.

Interviews with travelers to Tanzania make visualization of everyday life in Tanzania very vivid. Research demonstrates the various ways education affects such a stricken country, and how an increase in education might affect other issues, especially education around the topic of agriculture. From the available research, there are clear recommendations for how to build the food security of Tanzania and how other organizations and countries can put these recommendations to use.

Life is hard for a rural family in Tanzania. On average, there are about five members per family in a rural area. Family is a big part of Tanzanian culture. Because of this, married couples are expected to provide their parents and parents-in-law with a place to stay. Most of the time, this means opening a room in their own house. Homes become crowded quickly.

While many Tanzanian families work in agriculture, parents often times encourage children to assume wage-earning jobs off the farm. "With the permission of a parent, a child as young as 12 years old may work on a day-to-day basis. Employment of a long-term contractual nature cannot begin until a minor is at least 15 years of age. Enforcement of these provisions is inadequate and has actually declined in recent years with increased privatization. The standard workweek is 40 hours for government workers, while most private employers retain a 44–48 hour workweek. A minimum wage is fixed by law; as of 2002, it was about \$38 per month." (nationencyclopedia.com, Tanzania- Labor)

Along with family being a big part of the rural Tanzanian culture, agriculture is just as important to every rural family. Every family is given one acre of farm land from the government, and after that, it is the family's choice as to whether they buy more land or not. On their land, they have the ability to raise and harvest a multitude of crops, especially when compared to the small area.. In a productive year, cash crops of Tanzania include coffee, tea, cotton, sisal and cloves. Families also raise foods they consume for themselves for the year or sell at a local market. These crops are corn, beans and perhaps pumpkins, sweet potatoes and leafy greens. (everyculture.com, Tanzania) If there is a low harvest quantity or quality due to insects or storms destroying the crop, the family has a difficult time the remainder of the year.

Current farming practices in Tanzania heavily rely on the natural contents of the earth and what is given to them from nature. In a study done by the Environment for Development (EfD) initiative, when 1,539

farm plots were tested, only a mere four percent of the plots used a form of fertilizer. (rff.org, Plot and Household...Agriculture Practices in Tanzania) With so much farmland going unfertilized, the land must be left fallow for longer periods of time. (Plot and Household... rff.org pg 2) Leaving land unused is becoming more and more difficult however. This has resulted in a vicious cycle of poor agricultural productivity, low investment capacity, continued soil degradation, and further pressure on available lands to generate necessary food supplies. (Arellanes and Lee 2003; Ruben and Pender 2004, Pender, Place, and Ehui 2006; Misiko and Ramisch 2007 Plot and Household... rff.org) In addition, according to uea.ac.uk, while women are allowed to work in the fields, they have very many restrictions on what they can do and their income is also limited by what they do. (uea.ac.uk, Gender and Rural Poverty in Tanzania: Case of Selected Villages in Morogoro Rural and Kilosa Districts, pdf file)

According to the U.S. State Department, infrastructure in Tanzania is extremely poor. (nationsencyclopedia.com, Tanzania – Infrastructure, power, communications) Roads are very poor which makes travel, trade, and even communication between towns and villages difficult. Other barriers to improving agriculture productivity are the many limitations put on women. With so many constraints to what women can do and say, such as working on the farm, attending school, or even making enough money to survive, it becomes very difficult for a small farm to survive.

Drinking water is collected from streams or local wells if communities and villages have wells available. Techniques to clean and purify water are simple, such as straining through a cloth, and yet these techniques definitely don't provide crystal clear, high quality water.

At every meal, Tanzanians try to consume some type of staple carbohydrate such as rice, corn, or plantains. This food is usually accompanied with a type of meat that is plentiful in the area such as fish, goat, chicken, or mutton. Along with these foods, there is usually a type of vegetable included in the meal. Most of these foods can either be bought in the urban areas of Tanzania or grown and raised on a family's own land in the country. If crops fail, it becomes increasingly more difficult for families to survive and grow- especially those families in the rural areas. (everyculture.com, Tanzania) Most families are barely able to have two meals per day, and morning breakfast is a luxury at different times in the year.

With a lack of food availability, the physical bodies of Tanzanians are weaker than those who consistently consume an adequate amount of nutritional food. This physical weakness prolongs healing from injury and disease. Tanzania is a country stricken with disease, hunger and sadness because of the constant and numerous health problems. Some examples of these health problems include parasitic diseases such as malaria, nutritional problems such as starvation and sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS. According to 'www.usaid.gov' (Tanzania) Tanzania relies on assistance from other countries extensively. The life expectancy for the average person in Tanzania is only 48 years. This is thought to be because of the impact of AIDS and HIV on the country.

Tanzania urgently needs a focus on education for their youth and also their adults and elders. The world today relies on media for communication. Today's media requires electricity and/or a means of producing and delivering tangible media. Because of this, it is difficult to reach the rural, remote areas of Tanzania. These communities lack communication infrastructure such as newspapers, telephones, and radios. (fao.org, 'Knowledge and information about food security in Africa, The role of communication technologies) The people of Tanzania are not educated about current world issues, nor are the best practices of the world available to them because of their lack of access to media. While much of the world learns from other parts of the world, Tanzania residents are restricted to their own knowledge. Currently, the methods taught in schools do not provide students the adequate amount of knowledge they need to live and function in a widely agricultural country. (farmafrica.org, Agricultural and Environmental Education Project) Additionally, students are only able to go to school if the family can afford it. If the

family doesn't have enough for all the children, the boys are usually favored before the girls. (everyculture.com, Education)

Most farmers in Tanzania own small farms and have little or no education in the areas of business management and marketing. This makes selling at local markets, nationally, and even internationally very challenging. Many studies have also found that without an adequate diet, it becomes very difficult to sit in a classroom and learn all day. Because of this, more and more children, youth, and adults are dropping out of school every day. Students miss out on the opportunities to learn how to possibly improve practices. Farms cannot advance technologically when the operators are not educated on the possibilities.

Limited education prohibits a family from reaching their full potential in raising sufficient crops, earning the greatest amount of profit achievable and maximizing the variety of crops they can grow on their land. According to tenmet.org, Tanzania youth often don't realize the importance education can have on the rest of their lives. In addition, many youth and children live too far away from school and end up dropping out at an earlier age for various reasons. These reasons include a lack of money to pay for boarding, uniforms and school fees, diseases such as HIV and AIDS, and even early marriages and pregnancies. Since more and more children aren't getting sufficient schooling, it becomes very difficult for Tanzania to keep up with the current, modern, and more technologically advanced farming practices. This in part causes the inability to produce enough income to support a family and provide adequate nutrition for all family members.

“Tanzania had one of the lowest net enrollment ratios for secondary school education; fewer than 20% of the children enrolled in primary education proceed to secondary schools, according to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF). Moreover, by 2000 only 55% of seven-year-olds were enrolling in primary education. In 2002, the government decided to eliminate school fees for primary schooling education which resulted in the net enrollment for primary school rising from 58.8% in 2000 to 95% in 2005. This has, however, caused a shortage of teachers, with classes of more than 100 pupils common, according to UNICEF. The public education system in Tanzania suffers from a lack of funds which severely constrains the quality of learning, according to Save the Children UK.” (africaglobalsistercities.org, Tanzania Background) With only primary education being free, it becomes very difficult to continue schooling for the poor families. In addition, it is very hard for women to obtain schooling, resulting in many women resorting to prostitution in order to survive. (newint.org, Teenaged Prostitutes at the Port)

Currently the government and foreign aid are very much trying to aid Tanzania in the area of education. The government understands the positive influence a quality education can have on its economy. According to worldbank.org “Good progress has been made in achieving both access and quality as indicated in different Government reports, including the Basic Education Statistics of the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (moe.go.tz/statistics)”. (worldbank.org, Supporting Education in Tanzania.

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If the quality of education in Tanzania improves, a domino effect will occur. In other words, a “chain reaction” As education quality and quantity increases, use of technology and new farming practices will be used. Better practices and equipment will lead to a rise in crop production, leading to an abundance of food for families and communities. Food availability will decrease the hunger struggles of children and adults, making learning and education even better, because children will focus on learning, and not on where their next meal will come from. On top of all this, family farms will increase in size and farming income will increase from improved crop quality and marketing. As farm sizes increase, citizens may choose to become educated in other careers, fostering economic growth for the entire country as more workers are available for more skilled careers. Women will have the ability to gain an education and survive independently, and all of these effects foster a drop in poverty.

With better education farmers will learn how to deal with the changing climate of Tanzania by implementing different practices to use in an area that is becoming dryer and dryer. Such practices include different irrigation techniques, fertilization and seed choice.

The many levels of needed education must be identified and established, with the understanding that Tanzanian issues influence the process. A balance of education and tradition; new technology and the comfort of the way things have always been done must be delicately addressed to incorporate necessary change.

Just like the rest of the world, Tanzania must come to understand the importance of education in meeting the demands of a growing population, the future urbanization of its lands, and pollution and energy demands these result in. As more and more Tanzanians move from the rural life to the growing mass of the urban life, it will become more important to those whom rely on their farms as their means of living to develop and learn new strategies to increase production, enhance land management and to expand the opportunities for women and youth. Education must range from the very young to the elders, whom people look to for advice, in order to lift the production of each small farmstead from consisting of self-preservation to one of surplus and supply.

Changes in society must also be made, especially those regarding women. The roles of women in management and financial decision making must be encouraged, thus leading to a boost in agriculture production and better management. A combined effort by men and women in rural Tanzanian society will reshape the responsibilities and rewards must be encouraged if the country is to successfully move through this next decade. Education alone, above all other issues, addresses the wants and needs of the people.

Tanzania is in a state of change right now. A growing population, urbanization, the effects of global warming, and a rising need to own farmland will make education of all levels of Tanzania residents very important to meet their food and health needs in the years to come.

A structured and specialized education will meet the needs of all the Millennium Development Goals. Increased efforts to make agricultural education available to even the most remote farms will help those farms make better use of the resources that are available to them. Education in farm practices such as crop rotation, fertilizer, irrigation, and better genetically enhanced food crops can relieve hunger for a family.

Better nutrition can ease the health strains that affect so many families and surplus produce can be marketed for extra income, which will result in lower poverty levels.

Once a basic education is achieved, the citizens of Tanzania will soon come to realize that by allowing women to play a more significant role in decision making and owning businesses, they will only increase the opportunities for greater income, health, and better mobility. Gender equality can be realized, overcoming past tribal and cultural restraints. Gender equality is necessary to this nation to move above and beyond the restraints and barriers that are holding it back. I believe better agriculture practices, leading to gender equality, can only lead then to a marked increase in the health statuses in children and parents. As wealth increases, it leads to healthier lifestyles, and to an increase in free time which parents can spend with their children. I only see benefits arising from an increase in education. Once stable at home, a broad approach to HIV/AIDS education and medical opportunities will hopefully make differences in a country wrecked with poor health.

Tanzania can continue to improve with the financial, corporate, and educational aid provided by local and international organizations. “The development of agriculture has been an important objective of the Government. The focus has been producing more food to enhance food security and alleviate poverty, with the ultimate goal of becoming self-sufficient in basic food requirements.” (tanzania.go.tz, Food Security.)

“The human resource is certainly the most important factor of production because it is capable of transforming all the other factors for the betterment of human life and human welfare.” (Tanzania.go.tz, Human Resources)

A more organized approach through the Tanzanian government to coordinate the education efforts of outside agencies can make the biggest difference in the areas that are most in need. If corporations already involved in agriculture and education can focus on an increase in the quality of the educated and trained labor force with a strategy providing for expanded and rehabilitated existing schools, provide and expand technological training practices, and encourage information, technology, and other modern advancements in communications, the standards of the rural family and the possibilities of the women and youth of Tanzania will improve. (Tanzania.go.tz. Human resources)

Tanzania will benefit from further cooperation with international and regional groupings including the East African Community (EAC), The Southern African Development Community (SADC), and with their commitments with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and African, Caribbean Pacific (ACP), and the European Union (EU). (tanzania.go.tz, Foreign Affairs)

Tanzania currently has agreements with fourteen other countries outside of Africa. Tanzania benefits from financial aid and often aid from religious organizations and affiliations. If these entities can direct their efforts at the grass roots of rural and agricultural families, all of Tanzania will improve and prosper in the future.

In conclusion, better education will help the country of Tanzania. As Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” (quotations.about.com) With education, the society and life of Tanzania will change for the better and no longer be thought as one of the poorest countries in the world. Tanzania needs an increase in quality education!

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