Prison Education in Tanzania: Policy versus Practice

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Abstract

Scholarly literature is increasingly suggesting that prison education can save society from reoffending costs. As a result of this view, international and local prison education policies are being developed to guide educational activities in prisons. This qualitative study explores prison education policies and practices in five Tanzanian prisons. It addresses the question: Do current practices adequately reflect the intention and substance of the policies? Methodologically, this study employed diverse data collection mechanisms including document analysis from international to local levels. The findings suggest that Tanzania prisons have yet to fully embrace international prison education policies. The main governmental prison education policy of Tanzania – the Prison Education Guide – is not rooted in the laws of the country, suggesting that, in this respect, Tanzania has yet to comply with the 1999 Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice. The Prison Education Guide was interpreted differently in every prison. Educational programmes suffered from a lack of resources, accentuated by the shortage of funds. Thus, many prisoners did not have access to educational programmes. Accordingly, it is concluded that the current practices do not adequately reflect the intention and substance of the policies as there is a big gap between prison education policy and practice in the Tanzanian context. A perspective transformation from prison authorities and more collaborative approaches both internally in prisons but also

externally with various stakeholders to improve prison education in Tanzania is recommended.

Introduction

The majority of prisoners across the world have poor educational backgrounds and no/low work skills (Aparicio & Ortenzi, 2008; UNESCO, 2007) suggesting that crime is principally a *socio-economic* phenomenon. The *low socio-economic* status of individuals has a significant contribution to crime and recidivism (Rivera, 1995; Siegel, 2010, 2012; Weatherburn, 2001). The likelihood of offending is said to be higher when individuals are poor and feel that they have nothing to lose, especially the jobless and lowly educated individuals (Weatherburn, 2001; Webster & Kingston, 2014). Rivera (1995) argues that crime stems from "a combination of poverty, economic underdevelopment, displaced unskilled workers, discrimination, and a host of other factors that cause despair and learned helplessness" (p. 159). It is suggested that imprisonment by itself does not help prisoners as when they return to their original environment they are subjected to the same conditions, for instance, being jobless; consequently, they are more likely to end up reoffending (Cullen, Jonson, & Nagin, 2011; Frederick & Roy, 2003). Research indicates that prison education can help prisoners break the offending cycle (Callan & Gardner, 2007; Msoroka, 2018); it is an effective way to improve an offender's opportunity for post-release employment (Graffam & Hardcastle, 2007). In this regard, prison education can reduce poverty among some prisoners (Preece, 2006; Van der Veen & Preece, 2011) and subsequently it can reduce criminality. It is from this point of view that many prisons (across the world) have been trying to offer prison education, and it is reported to help prisoners' reintegration into society (Callan & Gardner, 2007). In Africa, particularly Tanzania, prison education (as a subset of adult education) is understudied. The government documents suggest that the Tanzanian Prisons Service (TPS) offers prison education, but there

has been little scholarly research in this domain. This article explores the link between prison education policy and practices in the Tanzanian context.

The Tanzanian Prison Context

Formal prisons were not known to Tanzanians (Tanganyikans) until the invasion of the German, and later the British (Bernault, 2003). During the German era (the 1880s to 1919), prisons were under the control of the Police Force. During the British occupation (in 1931), the Prisons Service was established as an independent department (Mboje, 2013; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017a). A 'conservative philosophy' – one which embraces punitve approaches to imprisonment – was dominant during both the German and British colonial eras. The main focus of prisons was on prisoners' incarceration and hard work (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017b; Williams, 1980). Prisons were among the coercive instruments of the Colonial Governments (Nyoka, 2013; Williams, 1980).

After independence (1961), the TPS remained an independent department within the Ministry of Home Affairs. The current government's reports suggest that the TPS has revised the approaches to imprisonment to adopt modern humanistic principles in the treatment of offenders (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017b). The Government, through the TPS, claims to put more focus on the rehabilitation of offenders (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017c). This claim suggests a move for the TPS from a 'conservative philosophy' to a 'liberal philosophy' of imprisonment – one which encourages rehabilitation approaches, including prison education. This move is in line with the United Nations' (UN) emphasis on prisoners' rehabilitation to prepare inmates for their return into society (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). This move from the conservative to liberal philosophies is not well researched in Tanzania. This article contributes to an understanding

of how far prison education, as an approach to prisoner rehabilitation, is practical in the Tanzanian context. Currently, Tanzania has 126 prisons (all are public) with about 33,517 inmates, of these 50.5% are remanded (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017a). The current recorded capacity of all Tanzanian prisons is 29,552 prisoners (Msoroka, 2018; The United Republic of Tanzania, 2017a), and they are overcrowded. Currently, Tanzania has no official record of recidivism rates, however, the most quoted one is 47% (Inmate Rehabilitation and Welfare Services Tanzania, 2014; Msoroka, 2018). Also, there is no proper records related with prisoners' educational and occupational/professional backgrounds. In a society that struggles to achieve universal primary education for its population (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2014a), it is obvious that the lack of literacy is expected to be reflected amongst the prison population (Msoroka, 2018). In 2008, for instance, about 75% of inmates in Isanga Prison (Dodoma) were reported to be illiterate (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2014b), as compared to 31% of the general population (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2010). As noted previously, skill deficits, low levels of formal education, and illiteracy are the leading offending risks across countries (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Therefore, this article holds that prison education programmes may help to reduce reoffending risks among the Tanzanian inmates and help them to become productive citizens.

Methodology

This research project adopted a qualitative approach. Five prisons were selected as multiple cases for the study. The prisons included Chinangali, Kikuyu, Lubungo, Kipera, and Uluguru (pseudonyms). The participants included the prisoners, prison staff, ex-prisoners, prison education co-ordinators, teachers, a retired senior prison staff, the Institute of Adult Education representatives, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) representative, the Vocational Education and Training (VET) tutor, and an ex-student who shared an examination

centre with prisoners. It should be noted all the names used in this article are pseudonyms. Apart from ex-prisoners who were located through a snowball procedure, purposive sampling was the main selection mechanism used in choosing participants. Interviews (individual and focus group) and document analysis were the main methods used to gather information. The document analysis was mainly used to gather information related to prison education policy. Because this study included Tanzanians who were Kiswahili speakers, Kiswahili language was dominant in all interviews to allow freedom of expression. Most interviews were conducted in prisons where voice recording was not possible. Hence extensive notes were generated. With their consent, voice recording was used while gathering data from participants outside of the prisons. Transcriptions were then developed from field notes and voice recording, and where feasible, verified by participants. The transcripts were translated into understandable and grammatically correct English. Thematic analysis of data was used to establish the themes and subthemes discussed in this article.

Prison Education Policy Contexts

This section discusses the findings related to policy contexts. The discussion in this section is based on the findings from the document analysis.

The International Context

The analysis of documents suggests that, internationally, prison education is associated with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, commonly known as *the Nelson Mandela Rules*. The Nelson Mandela Rules were first adopted by the UN Congress in 1955 (UN, 1977) and revised in 2016 (UN, 2016). The revised document has a total of 122 rules (UN, 2016), while the former had a total of 95 rules (UN, 1977). Both versions of the rules emphasise prison education as a means to reduce reoffending (UN,

2016). Rule Number 4(2) in the revised document states: "prison administrations and other competent authorities should offer education, vocational training, and work, as well as other forms of assistance that are appropriate" (UN, 2016, p. 8). Rules 104(1) and (2) in the recent document are directly assocoiated with prison education (UN, 2016). In the former version, Rules 77(1) and (2) were addressing the same (UN, 1977). It is argued here that these rules establish the possibility of providing access to education for prisoners. Rule Number 104(1) in the current version states:

> *Provision shall be made for the further education of all prisoners capable of profiting thereby, including religious instruction in the countries where this is possible. The education of illiterate prisoners and of young prisoners shall be compulsory and special attention shall be paid to it by the prison administration. (UN, 2016, p. 30).*

The adoption of this Rule suggests that the international community prioritises education for prisoners. This is consistent with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which advocates for education as one of the fundamental human rights (UN, 1948). Also, it is in line with the proposition that a lack of education has a significant influence on the rates of crime and recidivism (Braggins & Talbot, 2003; The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). Rule Number 104(2) (in the current version) wants the member countries to integrate prison education with national educational systems. It states: "So far as practicable, the education of prisoners shall be integrated with the educational system of the country so that after their release they may continue their education without difficulty" (UN, 2016, p. 30). This article holds that the adoption of Rule Number 104(2) is an indication that the UN wants its member countries to open up doors for lifelong learning for prisoners. The argument is that bridging the gap between the two educational

systems may encourage prisoners to continue studying even after their release.

The African Context

This study suggests that in the African context, prison education is mainly associated with the 1996 Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa and the 1999 Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice (Penal Reform International, 2008). The three recommendations from the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa are considered by this study to have a link with prison education. One of those recommendations states that "the human rights of prisoners should be safeguarded at all times, and that non-governmental agencies should have a special role in this respect" (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006, p. 43). This recommendation is considered to be relevant to prison education because education is understood to be a human right (UN, 1948). In addition, the recommendation allows the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to get involved in the protection of the rights of prisoners, including the right to education.

Arguably, if this recommendation is adopted by African countries, NGOs can participate fully in the provision of prison education. The second recommendation openly calls for the provision of prison education to enable prisoners' smooth transition into society. It states that "prisoners should be given access to education and skills training to make it easier for them to reintegrate into society after their release" (Penal Reform International, 2008, p. 13). The third recommendation insists that "all the norms of the United Nations and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Treatment of Prisoners be incorporated into national legislation to protect the human rights of prisoners" (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006, p. 44). It is argued here that the implementation of this recommendation would enable the incorporation of prison education

into the national laws of the African countries, including Tanzania, hence, creating the path to improving educational practices within the prison context. The Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice was a follow up to the 1996 Kampala declaration. Two of the agreed principles from the Arusha Declaration had a more explicit link with prison education. One of the agreed principles is to promote good prison practice to conform with the international standards, and to adjust domestic laws to follow those standards (Penal Reform International, 2008). This study considers this principle relevant to prison education because education for offenders is one of the international standards advocated by the Nelson Mandela Rules and the Kampala Declaration (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006). Also, this paper holds that amending national laws to follow international standards for good prison practice would ensure the incorporation of prison education into the national laws as proposed by the Kampala Declaration. It is argued here that the implementation of such recommendation may have a positive outcome on prison education in Africa, and Tanzania in particular. Another key principle is "to respect and protect the rights and dignity of prisoners as well as to ensure compliance with national and international standards" (Penal Reform International, 2008, p. 30). This principle seems to be relevant to prison education because guarding prisoners' rights includes ensuring their right to education – one of the basic human rights recommended by the United Nations (UN, 1948). Arguably, the Kampala and Arusha Declaration on Good Prison Practice are relevant policy documents for prison education in Africa, and Tanzania in particular.

The Tanzanian Context

The analysis of documents suggests that the 1967 Prisons Act No. 34 guides all prison activities in Tanzania, (The United Republic of Tanzania, 1967). Despite the fact that the Kampala and Arusha

declarations recommend that countries include the standards of the UN and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the treatment of prisoners in their laws (Penal Reform International, 2008), no part of this Act specifies the rights of prisoners. The Act does not consider the option for rehabilitation; it has no clear focus on prison education. This Act suggests that the TPS is mainly following the conservative (punitive) philosophy on imprisonment (Kemp & Johnson, 2003; Pollock, 2014). As a result, prisoners have limited access to education as will be discussed in the following sections. The Prison Education Guide was found to be the only policy document that offers a possibility for prison education (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). It recommends that prisons be learning centres to allow prisoners to undertake prison education.

The Prison Education Guide addresses the following main issues: coordination of prison education, teacher recruitment, the learning environment, collaboration with other stakeholders, and assessment of learners (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). On the issue of coordination, the Guide wants prison officers with teacher qualifications to be appointed to manage prison education at regional and prison levels (The United Republic of Tanzania, 1967). However, at the time this project was carried out, the Regional Prisons Offices did not have prison education co-ordinators; the researcher did not find them in the two Regional Offices he visited, suggesting a mismatch between policy and practice. With regard to teacher recruitment, the Guide recommends the appointment of volunteer prisoners with higher qualifications and good behaviour to teach their fellow inmates (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). This study observed that inmate-teacher recruitment was common in most prisons with educational programmes. In this context, one would argue that the Prison Education Guide advocates for peer teaching (Jarvis, 2004). It is noted here that given the Tanzanian economic situation, peer teaching was found to be a relevant and cheaper

option as it might be difficult to pay outsourced prison teachers. In relation to the learning environment, the Guide addresses the curriculum, classrooms, learning schedule, and library. Regarding the learning schedule, prisons are advised to allocate specific learning time. On the part of curriculum, it is recommended that prisons should offer curriculum-based (systematic) education (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). However, the Guide does not specify the curriculum to be followed. The findings suggest that because of this silence, some heads of prisons did not bother to implement relevant curricula (This was observed in most of the prisons in this study).

The Prison Education Guide recommends prisons have appropriate learning spaces. It insists that these learning spaces (classrooms) should be properly designed to avoid direct sunlight (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). In this aspect, the Guide seems to consider the importance of a comfortable learning environment, which is highly recommended in adult education, because uncomfortable learning environment may disrupt adult learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Also, through the Prison Education Guide, prisons are advised to have library spaces (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). It is argued here that this recommendation is in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules which require prisoners to have access to books (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006).

However, the findings of this study (data from the field) suggests that the actual learning environment in prisons is not of the standard suggested by the Guide. This issue will be discussed in the following sections. On the issue of collaboration, the Prison Education Guide recommends that other institutions (public, religious, and NGOs) and the general public should be involved in the provision of prison education (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). This is consistent with the view that involvement of the wider society is vital for

prisoner rehabilitation (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2012). However, it is noted here that the Guide does not specify the responsibilities of the stated stakeholders. Consequently, as will be discussed in the following sections, the findings of this study suggests poor community involvement in prison education. The Guide recommends formative and summative evaluation for prison education programmes. It is suggested that the formative evaluation can be managed by prisons while summative evaluation be conducted by the nationally recognised boards such as the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). If possible, national examinations may be organised in prisons; if not, the candidates have to be escorted to the nearby (appropriate) centre. This notional flexibility may allow prisoners to take nationally recognised examinations. It is argued here that an implementation of this recommendation can be one of the ways that would create links between prison education and the conventional education systems suggested by the Nelson Mandela Rules (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006).

However, the Prison Education Guide is silent on who would fund prisoners' costs related to taking these examinations. This silence may be limiting prisoners' opportunities to take recognised examinations. This study notes that the Prison Education Guide seems to be a relevant document for prison education activities in Tanzania. However, its main weakness is that it is not a legally binding document. There is no instrument that could force heads of prisons to implement it, suggesting that education is not a requirement in the Tanzanian prisons. There is no room for anyone to question its implementation. One of its statement says: "This Guide is an initial document; it may be implemented based on the prison context" (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011, p. 5). This statement may be providing a loophole which might be used by prison management to ignore the Guide. Arguably, the implementation of this Guide

depends on the orientation of the head of a particular prison. If the heads of prisons believe in punishment, it is more than likely that their prisons will have no prison education programmes. Those who believe that education is necessary for prisoner rehabilitation may embrace the policy, and therefore, educational programmes may be found.

Prison Education Practices

This section discusses the findings related to education practices in the Tanzanian prison context. The discussion in this section is based on the findings from the field.

Only a Few Prisons offer Prison Education

Although the Prison Education Guide recommends that all prisons offer education (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011), this study suggests that many prisons did not offer educational programmes. In this study, four prisons were offering some educational programmes, while one had no any kind of educational programme. It should be noted that the ratio of 4:1, as experienced in this study, is not signifying that the majority of prisons in Tanzania offer educational opportunities to prisoners. This ratio is an outcome of the focus of the study; the study focused on prisons with educational programmes. Hence, Uluguru Prison, which had no educational programmes, was selected to explore participants' views from a prison with no such programmes in order to enrich an understanding of the phenomenon of non-participation. While the researcher of this study was at the TPS headquarters, one prison officer suggested that there were only a few specific prisons offering educational programmes which could be studied. He cautioned that not many Tanzanian prisons offered educational programmes. Similar views were gathered from other prison officers. One prison officer commented:

> *No, we don't have any educational programme in this prison. My friend, you need to know that many Tanzanian prisons don't offer educational programmes. But I know a few prisons that offer some educational programmes. These are Kipera, Iwambi, Tabora, Kajiungeni, and Moshi prisons. (Tamimu; Prison Officer; Int.)*

One co-ordinator said:

> *It [having prison education] only depends on how understanding the head of a particular prison is. If you find a leader whose focus is only on punishment enforcement, you can't have these educational programmes. (Mwakalinga; Co-ordinator; Int.)*

Mwakalinga's statement suggests that heads of prisons who did not support educational programmes believed in a punitive perspective of imprisonment (Pollock, 2014). This finding suggests that the majority of Tanzanian prisons did not offer prison education, indicating an existing sizeable gap between policy and practice. The lack of educational programmes in many Tanzanian prisons is a reflection of 'weak' prison education policy which cannot enforce prison education.

Resources

Funding

This study found two main themes associated with funding: tuition fees and budgets for prison education. Regarding tuition fees, prisoners in the selected prisons perceived that they were provided with free education. Some of them said:

> *Education in this prison doesn't cost me. We don't pay fees, and we also don't sit for registered examinations. Therefore we don't have to pay for exams. Thus, no one pays for my education here. (Paul; Inmate-learner; FGI.)*

> *Our learning costs are covered by the prison department itself. We never pay for anything here. I'm satisfied with the situation because I wouldn't study if I had to pay for it. (Shabani; Inmate-learner; FGI.)*

One ex-inmate (Bakari) undertook tertiary education while in prison, and he was supposed to pay tuition fees for his studies offered by an accredited tertiary institution (OUT). He said:

> *Tuition fee was the first obstacle in my studies. Prison management told me that they couldn't allow me to take up studies if I didn't have a sponsor. (Bakari; Ex-inmate; Int.)*

When asked how he managed it, he revealed:

> *I was lucky enough to get a sponsor. He paid for my first and second years of study. He was just a Good Samaritan [a white man] from Nairobi. He volunteered to pay for two consecutive years. My final year's tuition fee was paid by one of the OUT leaders (Bakari; Ex-inmate; Int.)*

Bakari's case may imply that Tanzania had no financial mechanisms to support prisoners who have the ability to pursue tertiary education. The Prison Education Guide is silent regarding funding of education for prisoners (in general) and tertiary education in particular (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). Regarding a budget, although the four case studies – Lubungo, Chinangali, Kipera, and Kikuyu – reported providing education for free, these prisons did not have funds budgeted for prison education. Prison staff complained about the shortage of funds to run educational programmes. Some of them said:

> *Our prison doesn't have a budget for prison education purposes. We can't afford to buy chalk, notebooks, pens, and textbooks. Sometimes, we are completely out of chalk to run our classes. (Yahaya; Co-ordinator; Int.)*

> *Our main challenge is financial constraints. We need funds to buy books and other teaching and learning materials, including tools for workshops. The problem is that the government usually sets funds for prisoners' meals and medication; it doesn't focus on prisoners' education. I think they forget that the prisoners need education for their rehabilitation, which is the main purpose of this prison. (Kapange; Co-ordinator; Int.)*

This finding strongly suggests that prison education is not a priority to the TPS, and the Tanzanian Government in general. The problem of budget constraint is reported to affect conventional adult education as well (Msoroka, 2011; Mushi, 2010); however, its impacts seem to be more severe in the prison education programmes than it is in the conventional programmes outside of prison. This may be due to poor involvement of volunteers from outside of prisons as will be discussed in the following sections. This study holds that poor involvement of stakeholders from outside of prison can be associated with prisons being "total institutions" (Amundsen, Msoroka, & Findsen, 2017; Goffman, 1962; Scott, 2010). Such institutions are heavily restrictive on outsiders' engagement, thus having minimal interactions with other organisations and individuals.

Material Resources

The findings of this study indicate that of all the five prisons, only Kipera had proper classrooms with desks. Uluguru prison had neither books nor learning spaces. Lubungo, Chinangali, and Kikuyu prisons had chalkboards fixed on walls outside of prison cells. These places were used as (classes) learning spaces. The outside learning spaces had no roofs. Learners did not have chairs; some sat on the ground and others on plastic buckets. These learning environments, and the situation at Uluguru prison – where there were no learning spaces – contradicted the Prison Education Guide which recommended conducive learning spaces in prisons (The United

Republic of Tanzania, 2011). The situation in these four prisons is a clear indication of poor implementation of the Prison Education Guide, hence suggesting a mismatch between policy and practice. This finding also contradicts Knowles's (1980) proposition that classrooms should provide physical comfort for adult learners. This study found that Chinangali and Kipera prisons had small libraries with a few books. It is noted here that by having library spaces, Chinangali and Kipera prisons were consistent with the Prison Education Guide and the Nelson Mandela Rules, which recommend prisons have rooms for library service (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). Other prisons – Kikuyu, Lubungo, and Uluguru – did not have library spaces, indicating a gap between policy and practice. In more advanced societies e-learning and e-libraries in prisons would be a consideration (Hammerschick, 2010), but in the current Tanzanian context, they are barely relevant. Computers and internet services are not allowed in prisons.

Kikuyu and Chinangali prisons had special rooms with TV sets which were used to teach literacy skills through a special programme (*Yes I Can*). Kikuyu, Lubungo, Chinangali, and Kipera prisons had workshops for VET activities: mechanics (Lubungo and Kipera prisons); tailoring (Kipera and Kikuyu); carpentry, architecture, painting, and electricity (Kipera); ceramics (Chinangali); weaving (Chinangali and Kikuyu); and metalwork (Lubungo). In most of prisons these workshops could not accommodate all prisoners. Only a few prisoners accessed VET opportunities, except for Kipera prison. The findings suggest that a shortage of learning material resources was one of the major challenges that restricted prison education activities. The quotes below provide an idea of how extensive this problem was:

> *Our main challenge is the shortage of resources to run the programmes. Our prison doesn't have a budget for prison educational purpose. We can't afford even buying boxes of chalk,*

> *notebooks, pens, and textbooks. Sometimes, we completely run out of chalk. At times we turn into beggars; we walk around to seek assistance from people. We sometimes visit the Adult Education officer to ask for chalk. I don't like begging; sometimes I feel embarrassed. (Yahaya; Co-ordinator; Int.).Apart from a TV set, we don't have anything else that I can be proud of. We don't even have books. Our classes don't have chairs; learners sit on the floor as you have observed. Sometimes I don't have chalk to use in my class. My learners don't have enough notebooks and pens. It is really a problem. (Kidawa; Inmate-teacher; Int.)*

This study holds that the scarcity of resources negatively influenced the quality of prison education in the selected prisons. Also, it resulted in the closure of some classes at Chinangali prison. Although the Prison Education Guide (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011) suggests the running of educational activities in the prisons, it does not address how the TPS would fund education activities. Thus, the shortage of resources in this context could be attributed to unclear governmental fiscal policies on prison education.

Teachers

This study found that the majority of prisons recruited volunteer inmates to teach their fellow prisoners. One inmate-teacher said:

> *To be a teacher in this prison, you need to have one of the two criteria: you need to be either a professional teacher or have higher qualifications than the learners. It depends on the situation; it may be a form four or form six qualification. (Moses; Inmate-teacher; FGI.)*

Only Kipera prison recruited qualified prison officer-teachers to teach. Prison staff with teaching certificates, diplomas, or degrees taught in the literacy and primary school curriculum; those with VET qualifications taught VET courses. It is argued here that recruitment of volunteer prisoners was in accordance with the Prison Education Guide which allowed prisoners with higher qualifications to teach

their fellow inmates (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). However, the main concern is that the volunteer prisoners did not have opportunities to improve their knowledge through professional development.

Access to Learning Opportunities

The findings of this study suggest that only a few inmates had access to educational programmes. Out of 1298 total prisoners recorded at the time of this study in the selected prisons, only 419 (32%) attended educational programmes. Attending educational programme at Kipera prison – a youth prison – was mandatory. Illiterate prisoners were allocated to literacy education programmes, primary school dropouts were allocated to primary school curriculum classes (starting at standard five), and secondary school drop-outs and literate primary school leavers were allocated to VET courses. This policy influenced prisoners' participation rates as all 67 inmates (at the time of this study) were allocated to various programmes. Allowing all inmates access to educational programmes, as observed at Kipera prison, is in line with the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN, 2016) and the Prison Education Guide (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011).

In Chinangali, Kikuyu, and Lubungo prisons, attending education programmes was not mandatory. In the literacy and general education programmes, inmates had a choice whether to attend or not. In VET, the criteria and procedures were different as there were some restrictions on joining the programmes; an inmate's sentence length and behaviour impacted on the possibility of participating in VET. A chance to attend VET was also dependent on the available spaces in a particular workshop. This suggests that access to VET in those three prisons was discretionary. Consequently, a few inmates had a chance to undertake VET courses. The failure to allow inmates' engagement in VET programmes contradicts the Kampala

Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa. The declaration insists on the provision of VET to inmates, who arguably lack work skills, in order to reduce recidivism rates (The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2006, 2012).

Partnership with other Institutions

The Prison Education Guide (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011) and the Kampala Declaration (Penal Reform International, 2008) are clear on the importance of wider community participation in the process of prisoner rehabilitation. The argument is that community participation has a positive impact on offender's reintegration into society. In this study, some prisons had some partnerships with some institutions while others did not. Chinangali and Kikuyu prisons had a link with the District Adult Education Office. As a result, the two prisons benefitted in various forms. One prison staff member commented:

> *We have got a TV set and some books with assistance from the Municipal Education Office. Apart from the office of education, there is no other institution from which we receive sustainable assistance. (Yahaya; Co-ordinator; Int.)*

The TV set mentioned here helped the prison in running literacy education through the *Yes I Can* project. Kipera prisoners used Mlali Primary School as their centre for the National Primary School Examinations (PSLE). Also, Kipera prison had a connection with a VETA college where its prisoners were sent to take VET examinations and successful inmates were awarded VETA certificates. The kind of partnerships observed in these prisons is in connection with the Prison Education Guide recommendations (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011). Also, it is noted here that the partnerships that existed at Kipera prison enabled a link between the education provided by the prison and that provided by the VETA and the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE). Consequently, Kipera prison

put into practice the Rule 104(2) of the Nelson Mandela Rules (UN, 2016). Apart from the partnerships discussed above, this study suggests that the Tanzanian prisons are 'total institutions' and they are not easily accessed by outsiders. They were found to be highly closed. Participants from outside of the prison system complained that they faced some difficulties working with prisons. One participant commented:

> *Working with Tanzanian prisons is very hard; it is nearly impossible to secure permission to work with them. Our NGO assists ex-prisoners. To find these people [ex-prisoners] we need their information from the prisons. It is now difficult for us to find them because we don't have their information. We are not allowed into prisons where we can find prisoners who are about to be released; we work very hard to find them in the society [outside of prison]. (Mnyalu; NGO representative; Int.)*

Mbogo, a retired senior prison officer, also agreed that it was difficult for outsiders to work with Tanzanian prisons because the TPS is closed and rigid; he called it *the old fashioned prison system*. This is an indication that Tanzanian prisons did not fully involve stakeholders who were willing to participate in prisoners' rehabilitation. Limiting stakeholders' involvement is contrary to the Kampala Declaration (Penal Reform International, 2008) and the Prison Education Guide (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2011), suggesting inconsistency between policy and practice.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper has discussed prison education policies and practices with Tanzania being its main focus. It is clear that prison education is given more priority in international policy documents and less in local (Tanzanian) documents. The establishment of the Prison Education Guide, the participation of some prisoners in prison educational programmes, and the partnership elements found in some prisons show that Tanzania is attempting to adjust and follow

international prison education policies. However, it is argued here that there is a huge gap between prison education policies and practices in Tanzania. This study showed that most prisons did not adhere to the Tanzanian Prison Education Guide, suggesting a low priority given to prison education. One would also argue that the gap between prison education policies and practices in the Tanzanian context is largely contributed by the 'total institution' culture that Tanzanian prisons are said to be associated with (Amundsen, Msoroka & Findsen, 2017; Msoroka, 2018). It is probable that issues related to a shortage of resources could be reduced if prisons move away from being complete 'total institutions' to allow more collaborative approaches to prison education. Perhaps more institutions and individuals could contribute to prison education to improve quality and access.

It is also acknowledged that senior prison staff have a greater contribution to the mismatch between the Prison Education Guide and actual practices; the availability of educational programmes (in prisons) depends on the ideological perspectives of the head of a particular prison. This study suggests that some senior staff have a punitive view of prisons. At this point, advocacy for prison education to change people's perspectives on prisons and prisoners in general is proposed (Mezirow, 1991, 1997). This approach may improve the situation of prison education in Tanzania. Insisting on the use of volunteer prisoners as teachers could arguably be associated with valuing of peer teaching; however, in this study, this situation is interpreted as being forced by a shortage of funds. The TPS may have decided to use volunteer prisoners in place of professional teachers who cannot be afforded due to lack of funds.

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