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Changing Farm-related Issues and Priorities Through Educational Outreach in Tanzania

The Tanzanian government needs to regulate public policy and provide good health care and education, and provide women access to land. This would provide hope to rural, farming families, which in turn would increase food security and the livelihood of Tanzanians. Not only the rural areas of the country but also the urban areas would benefit. By the increasing food production, the poor living in highly populated areas would also gain from the new education system, as well as the health care system. Some of the people would return from urban areas to their rural families with the support of the improved farming practices.

Every 2.9 seconds another child dies from hunger or a disease connected with hunger. That is 20 children per minute, 1,200 per hour, and 28,000 per day. This indicates that there is currently a major hunger epidemic in the world (NetAid). There are 2,016,000 children dying every week! This is a massive tragedy in countries such as Tanzania where 40-percent of the population lives below the poverty line (Clean Development Mechanism). This poverty is due to governmental instability, increasing population, urbanization, and gender inequality, which is all undermining food security in East Africa. Public policy in Tanzania must be altered to bring positive change to these problems. An extension outreach, educational service modeled after those in the United States and Iowa could help to address the social, moral, and economical inequities which keep Eastern African countries from prospering. Everyday practices can change over time. The ways in which families are raised and crops are produced and marketed can be developed. Education helps with that evolution. This paper seeks to address changing farm-related issues and priorities through educational outreach with Tanzania as a focus.

Tanganyika and Zanzibar gained independence in the early 1960's and soon formed the country of Tanzania, but it has not been until recently that one-party rule came to an end in the country. This newfound hope has distinguished Tanzania as a role model for other countries in East Africa. Like those other countries, Tanzania is still struggling with guaranteeing food security for those most in need. Food security is defined as, "access by all people at all times to enough nutritionally adequate and safe food (quality, quantity, and variety) for an active and healthy life" (Why Are People Hungry). In parts of the country where food security is not an immediate problem, it still is not sustainable. Governmental resources are stretched. Poverty is widespread throughout the country, and 85-percent of the country's poor live in rural areas and use insufficient farming techniques, like a method called "slash and burn," to produce food as their main source of income (Rural Poverty in Tanzania). This farming practice is one of the many that leaves farmland near useless. It is one of the most common practices, along with cultivation. In the past, it has been common to leave long waiting periods between farming periods, but as the demand for food has increased in the last few years, a new practice has been adopted. Small family farmers now continue long periods of farming and short periods of fallow (CDM). This does not allow a sufficient amount of time for re-vegetation to grow, or it does not allow recovery of nutrients in the soil. This causes less yield production and results in less food production. Over time this renders farmland more and more unproductive, which will eventually hurt Tanzania's economy and ultimately the livelihood of farmers and their families in the Eastern African country. It is another reason why Tanzanians who were farmers are leaving the farms and moving to highly populated areas with more opportunities. People have to live in cities where they can make a living for themselves and their families.

The lack of food security in Tanzania could also be linked to the country's increasing population. In 2003, Tanzania's population was at 37-million and then in 2007, the population grew to 39.4-million. In 2015, it is said that the population will be over 57.8-million people (Encyclopedia of Nations). The

increase in births has not yet affected food security in the country, but it could and will in the next few years. Also, it can be gathered that one of the reasons a lot of these babies are being born into poverty stricken families is because of the increased need for labor in the rural areas. Farming families need family members to work the land. This means that the newborns may grow up in poverty and not get the sufficient care they need to be active members of society—people who can make a self-satisfactory living for themselves and their families. Without some intervention, they will continue to use the same unsuccessful farming techniques and will continue to struggle with disease. This does not help the struggling country or its economy. If something is not done about the increasing population, more disease will consume the country, and more people will die hungry.

Because of the lack of food and income in rural Tanzania, many farming families are moving to bigger cities causing mass urbanization. Some of the government's policies about land tenures have caused this migration. Land tenures are customary in Tanzania and continue to support the livelihood in the developing areas of the country (Odhiambo). Land tenures are political, economical, social, and legal systems that allow access to land only to certain individuals (Brennan). This legal framework is not orderly or systematic. Land is awarded to tenants based on happenstance, high bidding, or tradition. The government has always supported private land tenures based on Western society and since independence this has not changed. The new government has paid little attention to customary land tenures, which has left this practice undeveloped though it is the basis for much of the rural population. With this and farming techniques that leave land unusable, most of the population is making the move towards urban cities. This move is decreasing the farming population and though the economy has not yet suffered from a loss in agriculture, it soon will. At the very least, the government may be inclined to focus fewer resources where there are fewer people.

Some 20-percent of the farming poor are considered to be in extreme poverty and about 39-percent are thought to be poor. These rural poor mainly consist of small farming families who only produce enough food on which to live and support their families. Few of these families have access to health care, safe drinking water, and/or primary education. Even though primary education is free in Tanzania, less than half of all children attend school (Bates 335). Much of this could be the result of the lack of school buildings and teachers in the country. Most students in Tanzania are male and most do not continue with their education past primary school because they stay at home working for their families. Tanzania is also stricken with the disease HIV/AIDS. In Tanzania, 8.8-percent of adults have the disease and in 2003 there were 1.6-million people living with HIV/AIDS. That same year, 160,000 people died from that disease (CIA World Factbook). That was more than 438 people every day. The degree of risk of contracting a major disease is considered very high with the presence of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis A, Malaria, and Typhoid Fever. These are some of the most commonly transmitted diseases in the country (CIA World Factbook). Many of these diseases are food or waterborne. One disease, called "trachoma" by those who treat it, has led to the lynching of older women who were thought to be witches in Northern Tanzania. This disease is one of the main causes for blindness in the country and causes eyes to become bloodshot. In some areas of Tanzania, bloodshot eyes are a sign of witchcraft. Because of living conditions being poor, trachoma thrives and affects older women who lack sleep. This results in their community accusing them of witchcraft and leads to their deaths (Achieng). This disease is related to hygiene and consumption and is mostly contracted by the rural poor who do not have access to clean water. The concerns of cleanliness in water are related to both bathing and drinking. For example, in the United States, people take advantage of clean water. In the United States, people take numerous showers and baths. People wash their clothes everyday. They leave the water running while they brush their teeth. People can drink safe water from the faucets in their sinks. Rural citizens of Tanzania do not have these privileges and luxuries and suffer because of the scarcity of safe water.

Traditionally, women of Tanzania marry land owners and continue to work their families' land if their male relatives die, but as of late, women can no longer be guaranteed land after the death of their

husbands, fathers, and brothers because women cannot own land themselves (Odhiambo). When this happens males of the country can no longer provide basic needs for their wives and daughters through family inheritances because the men are not producing enough food on which to live and are dying from disease. The place for women in Tanzania has become less secure over the last few years and every year it will get worse. Women cannot access land for themselves, and the government stands strong in denying them this right. In recent years, some of Tanzania's women have either lived outside wedlock or lost their husbands to the major HIV/AIDS epidemic. These women are left to fend for themselves and care for their father-less children. Since most women on average give birth to about five children, this can be a monumental task. In rural areas, these women need access to land to survive and support their children--land which they do not have.

All of these things are related to public policy in Tanzania. Most, if not all, of Tanzania's poverty is linked to agricultural practices and governmental policy. The policies that prevent women from owning land are one of the main reasons for poverty and are linked directly to Tanzania's other problems like mass urbanization, increasing population, and the presence of disease. A solution to these problems is needed. By changing the government's policy on land tenures and securing women's rights to own land a big change could be made. This would allow women to grow food for themselves and their children. The economy would prosper and in turn would contribute toward food security for the growing population. Also, by educating these women and other rural farmers on good farming techniques, more food would be produced which would allow these women and poor farmers to make the step forward out of poverty by marketing excess products they do not need for their families. In addition, sufficient health care for those rural poor would lead to a decrease in the risk of disease, and more people would be alive to farm the land and take care of their families.

This new public policy should target the rural poor. The focus should concentrate on single mother families because they are the most in need. Women do not have access to land on their own which makes providing food for their families difficult. An extension service of some kind should be available to these people. This extension service should provide education and be open to all struggling, middle class, farming families and poverty-stricken farming families. The extension service could be patterned after extension outreach services from land grant universities in the early part of the last century in the United States. Iowa State University, Ames, IA, had and continues to have such services today. These extension services have been present in the United States since the creation of the country and during World War I such extension services helped increase agricultural production and marketing and helped the United States Department of Agriculture teach canning, drying, and preservation of farm products (USDA). The United States Farm Extension Service has a tradition of promoting gender equity issues. For example, also during World War I, the United States Farm Extension Service helped address labor shortages caused by war through the organization of the Women's Land Army (USDA). This consulting service should either be run by the Tanzanian government or by international influence. Consultants, with expertise in education, health, agricultural and women services, should be available to people in the hopes of teaching new farming techniques and encouraging women to fight for their rights and attend school. The extension services could also include family planning and healthy living.

On-site educators could deliver the extension services through radio frequencies with periodic visits. For example, educators could travel to the rural areas and deliver radios, batteries, and educational materials. Initially these materials will be very basic and graphic in nature. The materials will contain many illustrations showing farming practices through step-by-step instructions. The radio programming will supplement the materials. It is of vital importance that the materials be written in such a way that they are acceptable and appealing to the rural populations and their cultural traditions.

In addition, one of the main goals of this whole solution is to encourage children, focusing on females, to attend school so they can get the education they deserve. This is a necessary first step in

helping the female population benefit from the educational services an extension outreach can offer. Through this extension service, some of the consultants should focus on what is best for these children since they are the future of Tanzania. This service should also teach these children and their families good farming methods so the agricultural economy in Tanzania no longer suffers and food productivity increases. This encouragement could also lead to children learning more about their rights and their government which could, in turn, lead to the change in Tanzania's land tenure policy and the land ownership rights for women. Women in the country would learn about the importance of their role in the country. It would also teach women how to stand up for their rights as citizens. This would stabilize the government, control population, discourage urbanization, and bring gender balance to the country. These combined efforts would lead to the increase in food security across the country of Tanzania.

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