The Campaign for In-Service Training: Making Education Better for 8.3 Million Children

If you could improve only one thing that has direct impact on the quality of education in Tanzania, what would it be? HakiElimu sat down to ask itself this question at the beginning of 2010. With staff who track ongoing education policy developments, monitor what citizens are saying in the media about education, and read hundreds of letters a month from Friends of Education across the country, HakiElimu has its finger on the pulse of education in Tanzania. The answer it came up with to the above question: teacher in-service training.

Educational outcomes in Tanzania have been heading downhill for years. Half of all children who sit through seven years of primary school can’t pass the leaving exam. Success rates in secondary school have become equally low, with half of all Form 4 students failing the national exam in 2010. Several factors have contributed to this situation, including poor working and learning environments in schools and teachers’ low salaries, but none so directly impacts what a student learns as the knowledge a teacher has acquired him– or herself and the skills he or she has to impart it. When teachers aren’t provided additional training after their initial education, how can they teach new curricula? Without further training, how can they teach difficult subjects like math and English? It is for these reasons HakiElimu embarked on a campaign to see that teachers receive in-service training.

The objective of this campaign is to uphold section 5.5.10 of the Education and Training Policy of 1995 which states:

In-service training and re-training shall be compulsory in order to ensure teacher quality and professionalism.

This campaign aims to do this by making certain that the in-service training aspects of the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) are carried out. TDMS is a five-year plan formulated by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training and is to be carried out from 2009-2013. It contains several components which, if implemented, can restore the dignity of the teaching profession and the quality of education in Tanzania. TDMS sets out to provide regular in-service training in teachers’ colleges, zonal college centers, and teachers’ resource centers (TRCs). Despite such policies and plans, the Ministry of Education, along with great support from UNICEF, has not been able to fully translate them into action.

With the above objective, this is a campaign for policy implementation, not policy change. Thus the strategy is to raise awareness of this policy and the importance of its implementation. To do so, the strengths of all branches of HakiElimu need to be coordinated into one unified force. Different actors within HakiElimu deal with different educational stakeholders. Some conduct research and write policy briefs that inform key organizations and members of the government, others facilitate meetings and create popular publications for Friends of Education, while yet others create TV and radio spots and programs for the public at large. In this way, all stakeholders are reached—citizens as a whole, Friends of Education, and the government officials who have the power to provide in-service training.
May 2010

HakiElimu and the Teachers’ Resource Centres Coalition (TRCC) launch a nationwide essay competition on the topic of the importance of in-service training of teachers.

November 2010

HakiElimu and TRCC announce the results of the essay competition. Over 900 people, covering every region in the country, responded to the competition. The call for in-service training of teachers is heard loud and clear.

December 2010

Advocacy efforts continue as HakiElimu publishes and distributes 40,000 cartoon booklets, story books, and Sauti Elimu newsletters to Friends of Education and almost 150,000 2011 calendars to the general public—all with the theme of in-service training.

January 2011

Winning essays of the competition are published in various media outlets.
June 2010

HakiElimu television and radio spots continue to speak out about teacher capacities and now call for the Ministry of Education to allocate Tsh. 60 billion for the implementation of TDMS as specified in its budget.

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February 2011

In-service training in the subjects of math and English for 156,000 (almost all) government primary school teachers is officially launched by the Ministry of Education!
Two major lessons present themselves to be learned from this campaign:

1) **Success is most likely when direct advocacy is complemented by indirect advocacy.** Direct advocacy is working one-on-one with the government, lobbying key officials to implement the change you want to see. Indirect advocacy is getting your message heard by the government through different forms of the media and public outcry. This case study and others show that both forms of advocacy are required to bring about change in Tanzania. UNICEF has been working closely with the Ministry of Education for years on designing and planning in-service training and TDMS, but little has been seen in terms of implementation. It is not until the public is informed of these issues that the government takes action. Relying solely on direct advocacy often fails to achieve results, for it is difficult to hold accountable promises that are made in high-level meetings held behind closed doors out of the public eye. At the same time, media use and citizen mobilization often fall short of success when there is no direct platform with the government to discuss the specifics of what is required to make these changes.

2) **Advocacy efforts are most effective when they are focused, coordinated, and continued until objectives are met.** This sounds obvious, but in the education sector, in which there seems to be a new crisis every month, it is easy to forget. With so much going on, advocacy can quickly become simply an ongoing series of reactions rather than an orchestrated strategy. Specific objectives must be identified and not be left behind when the new monthly burning issue arises. Likewise, all efforts need to be coordinated into a single direction. This case saw the synergy between policy analysis, media work, popular publications, coalition activity, and citizens voices—all calling for in-service training. In the advocacy world, getting your demands met is like putting a hole in a wall—hitting it repeatedly and softly with a blunt object won’t do much, but putting all of your collective energy behind a single nail will.

The announcement by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training launching in-service training does not mark the end of this campaign however.

1) **Monitoring**—The objective is for in-service training to actually be carried out. Thus the work that lies ahead is to monitor the implementation of this program. Will 156,000 teachers really receive further training? Of what quality will it be? HakiElimu will continue to work with *Friends of Education* and coalition partners to monitor that these trainings are not only carried out but are also of a quality that will ensure the better education of primary school students in Tanzania.

2) **TRCs**—The objective for in-service training is that it be regular and continuous. Though in-service training will be provided, it is to be conducted through teachers’ colleges rather than teachers’ resource centers (TRCs). This may be a sign that in-service training is being treated as an occasional initiative rather than a continuous provision. TRCs are meant to be “revived and strengthened,” according to TDMS, so that in-service training is a locally-available, ongoing activity. Advocacy efforts will remain until TRCs are capable of offering viable services.

3) **TDMS**—In-service training is only a part of restoring the quality of teaching. HakiElimu, *Friends of Education*, and partners will continue to advocate for the fuller implementation of other components of TDMS to guarantee the best teachers for the children of Tanzania.