Leadership Skills Training for Administration and Parent Support Training for Caregivers

by

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the process and implementation of the planned activities for accomplishing the goal and objective of strengthening leadership skills in order to sustain ECCD program activities already started in Mtwara Rural district.

The project was planned to train teachers, school inspectors, communities and village leaders in matters related to children's participation and inclusion in the process of governing schools, and to support them in contributing fully to community development activities to bring about change in their communities.

Activities were divided into two parts. The first part was intended to strengthen the sustainability of ECD program activities that were started two years ago. It was a continuation of activities that I had started a year ago.

The second part was a completely new activity, highly driven by the demands of the communities due to a high incidence of abuse of children's and young people's rights in most of our project areas at both family and school levels. Ever since colonial times there has been very little involvement of children in any of the processes designed to bring about change at the community level. The increased involvement of children and young people needed to be addressed and discussed by communities seeking positive change in this area.

The project focused on exploring the possibilities of involving children as active players in the development process in village, school, ward, district, and national programs; enhancing leadership capabilities of the ward and village level officials and parents regarding children's rights issues; and supporting children's participation and inclusion in the governance of community and school programs. These possibilities were focused via three specific activities:

1. Identification of communities and schools with extreme cases of excluding children in any form of participation in the decision-making processes affecting development programs.

2. Orientation of district education inspectors and other district education officers to three parts of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and introduction to Convention Concepts of Right Holders (Children) and Duty Bearers (Adults).

3. Discussion of the rationale for children's participation as underpinned by articles of the CRC (especially Articles 12, 13, 15, 28, and 29) and
how the CRC should form an integral part of education project activities in Mtwara District.

The project was intended to promote exploration and understanding of the key problems inhibiting children’s participation and to provide opportunities to acquire improved knowledge and skills regarding how to involve children as active players in the development process in order to achieve greater involvement of children in the management of household, community, and school development projects.

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The dedicated consultancy work of Professor Michael and the creative work of district school inspectors, communities and teachers contributed to the ideas expressed in this report on how to work better with children and young people in the process of bringing development to families, schools and communities where these children and young people live.

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BACKGROUND TO CHILD PARTICIPATION IN TANZANIA

Definition:

“Participation, in its truest sense, means active involvement with others in the process. This involves more than simply consulting with various groups; it includes sharing responsibility for decisions with these groups. Participation involves the contribution of each individual to a common endeavor – a contribution of time, or labor, or money, or knowledge, or of several of these.” Judith. L. Evans with Robert Myers and Ellen M. Ilfeld, Early Childhood Counts, Vol. 2, p. 35.

The goals of active inclusion of and participation by children and young people in the process of decision making for their own development and development of the entire society have proven to be challenging the world over, whether the focus is on family, school, or community development issues. Involvement of children and young people tends to be limited by both physical and moral constraints.

The time required for ensuring participation of excluded groups (women, children, disabled, and extremely poor people) is considerable, and often is in conflict with pressure to scale up, replicate through government, or with output and target driven thinking from donors (Save the Children UK, A paper for discussion presented at the mid year meeting, 1998).

Many people believe that if they try to involve children and young people they will end up not accomplishing the desired goals because children have so many demands that will not fit into their plans. Moreover some believe that representation of parents in the meetings during discussions and decision-making is enough to make children and young people comfortable, but that is a very wrong concept.

During consultation meetings with young people, one boy of about 17 years old had this to say:
I don’t think society as a whole actually listens to young people, because they can’t affect anything that happens around them. For instance selecting leaders at various levels, both village and national; because we don’t have a vote, it means we are not part of society (young person quoted during discussions, Ahamd Suleiman Namgogoli village).

When asked “Who do you think should be asked for their views about the area where you live (e.g., views about school or community)?” here are examples drawn from the list that was given by the children of Naumbu village in Naumbu ward:

- everyone
- all age groups
- not just the girls
- it should not matter where you live
- parents and brothers and sisters
- not just the same people
- it should not matter how much money you have
- all the people that live here (children of Naumbu village)

**A definition of active participation:**

“Active participation means to take part in decision-making and or in implementing the program. Active participation requires and results in the community making decisions and managing the program” (Evans et al., Early Childhood Counts, 2000, p. 35).

This definition does not specify or limit active participation to a certain age, sex or group, and thus children should be included as community members. The question we must ask ourselves is: Do our children get the opportunity to actively participate in the decisions shaping daily life, whether they grow up in Africa or elsewhere?

In Africa this is still an issue due to the fact that there have been very few countries that have managed to involve children in a meaningful way in the process of making decisions regarding how to plan and design activities to resolve the many family, school, and community-based problems that affect their lives. How can we ensure that children are not only consulted, but also that their views are incorporated into decision making, and finally they can then access the services or activities provided to resolve these problems?

Exclusion of children is the order of the day -- not only at school, but also at the household level, where exclusion is not seen as a problem in African cultures.
Our ancestors, who segregated children by age, gender and household status, practiced it. For example, in tribal cultures, if a family had a good history of getting enough food every year, the head of that family had a great chance of being selected to become the chief (a very strong traditional leader) who could make decisions for the whole clan. Children from this family would also acquire the same status and could be considered leaders before they grew up. Yet, despite the fact that as leaders these children had the right to be listened to and the opportunity to make the most of decisions, history tells us that decision-making was still controlled by the elders. It was not until the child had grown up and married that he was allowed to make decisions as a leader.

Historically there was also gender segregation as far as leadership was concerned. According to chiefdom procedures, if the first born was a boy, he would definitely be prepared to become a chief in the absence of the father, but if the first born was a girl, she would never ever be considered to become a chief simply because of her gender. Girls suffered a double stigma -- first for being a girl, and second for being a child. They were excluded in almost all leadership and decision-making activities and left just waiting to be married.

When it came to marriage, a girl’s parents decided the choice of the marriage partner. She was not involved in making this decision, and was forced to accept her parent’s choice whether she loved the man or not. The criteria for the parents’ decision were wealth, leadership standing in the community and, in times of war, whether the man could serve as a strong and able fighter. If the man came from a poor family, he was judged as not fit to marry a girl from the chief’s family, but if the man’s family was rich and famous there was no question that he would be one who would manage to get married to the chief’s family, even if the girl did not wish to marry him.

So discrimination has been there everywhere, based on gender, age and personal status coupled with the family’s economic and social status.

Involving children directly in implementation of projects is an area that has been little discussed in many African meetings and may not be appropriate in all projects; however, in some projects, particularly those where communities are directly involved in implementation, there may be potential for more active involvement. For example:

... in the 1996 Evaluation of Water projects in Jijiga, children in some communities wanted to be involved in discussion concerning the implementation of water projects, and felt that they should be more involved in general community meetings, and should have representatives on the water committees. However this was not the case in all communities, and what structures might be appropriate
for greater involvement of children has been addressed (a paper for
discussion, Save the Children East and Central Africa Region, 1996
pp. 3-4).

From this experience we find evidence to support the idea that where children
have been fully involved in community decision-making processes they can have
considerable impact; we can also begin to collect some clear indicators of the
areas where children can contribute and make a positive impact on their
community.

In Tanzania attitudes regarding the right of children and young people to
participate in community development are challenging to work with. The
prevailing belief in many communities is that children can not get closer to the
parents, because doing so means violation of tradition values and taboos and is
likely to diminish parents’ ability to discipline their children. This makes the
situation of children and young people in Tanzania very difficult, because they
have nowhere to speak about their rights.

Recently there has been a movement and very strong campaigns by different
organizations such as Save the Children UK through its project in Mtwarra, Action
Aid of Tanzania, the Ministry of Community Development itself, UNICEF and
Haki Elimu (Right to Education) to ensure the ratified Convention on the Rights of
Children is put into action by forming children’s forums at district, regional and
national levels. However, we discovered that there are times when children have
been selected to represent their fellows (by a school committee, for example),
then failed to contribute during the discussion because adults refused to allow
the children to speak, assuming that they had nothing to contribute. In addition,
most of the discussion forums are not yet strong enough to change the attitude of
the elderly society. In fact there is no genuine participation by children and young
people in the true sense of the term; rather there is the so-called “facipulation” (a
hybrid term connoting both facilitation and manipulation) where some people
merely pretend to facilitate the participation of children, but do so with great
manipulation, thus making the whole process vague and suspicious for other
participants.

There was a National Education forum held in Dar September 2003 whereby
children were invited from different regions to participate and speak to the
Minister of Education about their needs and rights. During the discussion,
children from different regions education projects are being implemented by
communities, presented their speeches to the panel for their perusal and
retention and come up with a deliberated Plan of Action on how to involve
children in matters related to their development both physical and mentally
including in the process of making decisions. Their presentation was real a
surprise to the Minister and other government officials from the Ministry of
Education who thought that children had already got special training in what to
speak and how to speak in front of the panel. That was not true; children themselves without any training by NGOs had genuinely prepared the presentation.

That opened the eyes of education officials to understanding that children were fed up with what was happening to them and that they really wanted to be involved in all matters relating to their needs and rights. Although the NGOs were initially blamed for being the catalyst because they had paid the traveling costs of the children to attend the forum, eventually the message from the children to the bureaucrats reached its mark. The children had planned and delivered an effective campaign to open the eyes of the decision makers and to start them thinking of the best means that could be used to make children raise their voices and be heard by elders and leaders.

Still, at the community level things are slow to change in this area because of entrenched traditional and cultural values that deny or infringe upon the rights of children to participate in decision-making regarding issues that impact their lives.

For example, school development projects: Parents and teachers initiate most of the projects without prior consultation with children and parents on what kind of project is suitable for them and how they would like to implement the project. As a result, in some schools children have refused to allocate time to participate in those activities planned by parents. Children in one school went far beyond the expectations of parents, because a certain group of children went to the police station to give statements of bad things that were being done by teachers. From that day forward the teachers have been very aware and careful of what they do, fearing that if they do bad things children will report again to the police station. In many places it is reaching the point where children say, “Enough is enough! We need our rights to be honored by parents and teachers.”

There have been incidents of very great humiliation of children and young people in different forms in the process of trying to consult with them, and in their physical participation in different activities at school. There is abuse of dignity, especially in mining areas where children do most of the high-risk activities. Those in charge claim that they are trying to involve children by allowing them to participate fully, but what is happening is not genuine participation – rather it is exploitation and abuse of children’s rights to survival and protection. This type of exploitation of children can also take place at the family level. For example, here in Mtawara during cashew nut season children are taken out of school to work full-time with their parents in their cashew nut [shambas] farms till the harvest season is over, yet the children are never asked or involved in how to use the money collected from selling the cashew nuts. This is a very unfair deal.

In many projects, children are not involved at the outset of the project. This is a lack of baseline information at the planning stage regarding children’s role in the
relevant project sector (education, health and so on), and no clear idea as to the likely impact the project will have on the well-being of children.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This report describes the process and implementation of the planned activities for accomplishing the goal and objective of strengthening leadership skills in order to sustain ECCD program activities already started in Mtwara Rural District.

The project was planned to train teachers, school inspectors, communities and village leaders in matters related to children’s participation and inclusion in the process of governing schools, and to support them in contributing fully to community development activities to bring about change in their communities.

Activities were divided into two parts. The first part was intended to strengthen the sustainability of ECD program activities that were started two years ago. It was a continuation of activities that I had started a year ago.

The second part was a completely new activity, highly driven by the demands of the communities due to a high incidence of abuse of children’s and young people’s rights in most of our project areas at both family and school levels. Ever since colonial times there has been very little involvement of children in any of the processes designed to bring about change at the community level. The increased involvement of children and young people needed to be addressed and discussed by communities seeking positive change in this area.

This process of exploring the issues and potentials of greater involvement of children, with the goal of identifying what is both possible and appropriate for development of community and school programs, makes an essential contribution to the ongoing effort to enable children to get involved in different matters related to their needs.

1:1 Rationale of the Project

“Children in the UK have no formal rights to take part in making school policy or helping to run schools.” (My Right to Education, Save the Children UK Magazine, 1999, Summer, p. 10).

Throughout Tanzania there have been alarming situations of violation of children’s rights by teachers, parents and community leaders. The lack of basic necessities both at school and at home has led to many children being kept out of school altogether, as well as many drop outs in many primary schools of Mtwara rural district.

Experience has shown that community, school and household development programs have failed in most cases to involve children in decision-making processes. Most programs are initiated without involving children in the process
of identifying what is to be done, when and how to do it, and by whom it is to be done. In most, if not all, development projects at household, school and community levels, children are treated as informants rather than active participants in the project development process. This has affected children negatively because when children are denied opportunities to participate, they may not develop the confidence required to actively participate later in life. Indeed, the lack of participation by children in meaningful decision-making appropriate to their age and understanding impacts negatively on the development of leadership skills later in life and contributes to the lack of confidence most of our leaders have regarding their role as decision makers in our society.

On the other hand, the right of appropriate child participation as promoted by the CRC is often (deliberately) misinterpreted as an endorsement of the exploitation of children through child labor. In many areas children are seen as a source of cheap labor. This is true at the household level as well as at the institutional level such as at school where children are doing most of the maintenance activities while the benefits from these activities goes to teachers and school leaders.

Thus, there was a crucial need to educate parents, teachers, education inspectors, ward development committees, school development committees and village development committees about the rights of children. It was important to train this group of leaders in order to enhance their capacities to understand the importance of participation by children. The objectives of the training were to enable those leaders to give children support on the basis of their own premises and needs; to increase children's opportunities for creative development and to promote their own culture; to give children opportunities to take responsibilities and carry out tasks; to increase knowledge about children and their culture; and to improve the environment in which children grow up.

The following is the list of key stakeholders who were trained both at the district and grassroots levels:

District education inspection team ............................................................. 9 adults
Save the Children staff ............................................................................... 4 adults
Non Save the Children staff hired to assist training ................................... 4 adults
Ward Education Coordinators .................................................................... 3 adults

3 Wards comprised of:
41 Ward Development Committee members per ward .......................... 480 adults

8 Villages participants were as follows:
15 male elders per village ...................................................................... 120 adults
15 female elders per village ................................................................... 120 adults
21 children attending school per village ............................................... 168 children
14 children not attending school per village ........................................ 112 children
25 Village Development Committee members per village .................. 200 adults
15 School Committee members per village ......................................... 120 adults
Teachers from all schools per village....................................................... 90 adults

It should be noted that the groups of people trained included some special interest groups, including out-of-school children, elders and people with special needs. Training of representatives of these groups was deemed necessary because the training reflects the perspective that communities are the duty bearers of the children’s rights, including the right to participate. Training enhances the capacities of the duty bearers to act wisely and to ensure that the rights of children are honored and their needs met.

The following key points/activities formed the basis for the field exercise focused on working effectively with children in the context of basic education.

1. An overview and discussion around contemporary issues in education (especially UPE, globalization and impact on quality, other aspects of quality, and child-centered pedagogy).
2. Discussions about the rationale for children’s participation as underpinned by the articles of the CRC, especially Articles 12, 13, 15, 28 and 29, with a primary focus on how the CRC should form an integral part of our project activities especially in teacher development programs.
3. Training to understand the key problems inhibiting effective participation by children and to learn how to support the development of children’s representation and negotiation skills.
4. Discussions about the critical importance of the selection process in working with children: Selecting participants as genuine representatives of a wider grouping of young people who are in a similar situation to themselves and clarifying the purpose of the selection and what is to be done are essential aspects of procedures and processes that empower young people.
5. Relating project activities to the National Plan of Action.

1:2 Selection Process

Selection of villages to be covered in the training exercise was influenced by meetings held between Education Field Officers and Ward Development Coordinators. Villages were selected on the basis of information obtained from the baseline survey results indicating that the villages had a long history of many cases of abuse and violation of children’s rights.

When the selection process was completed, letters were sent to all village leaders to confirm the dates and times for the training-related meetings and workshop for that village. One full day was allocated for community meetings, and two additional days were allocated for the training workshop.
The selection of meeting and workshop participants focused on including members of those groups of villagers that normally were being excluded by the village authorities and bureaucrats from the ongoing planning and implementation of village development projects. Representatives from the normally excluded groups were comprised of widows, children, persons with one or more disabilities, persons experiencing extreme poverty and very old men and women. Gender representation was observed to make sure that men and women were equally represented in all groups.

1:3 Specific Project Objectives

The project focused on exploring the possibilities of involving children as active players in the development process in village, school, ward, district, and national programs; enhancing leadership capabilities of the ward and village level officials and parents regarding children’s rights issues; and supporting children’s participation and inclusion in the governance of community and school programs. The specific project objectives were:

1. Identification of communities and schools with extreme cases of excluding children from participating in the decision-making processes of their development programs.

2. Orientation of district education inspectors and other district education officers to three parts of the CRC, and introduction to Convention Concepts of Right Holders (children) and Duty Bearers (adults).

3. Discussion of the rationale for children’s participation as underpinned by the CRC, especially Articles 12, 13, 15, 28, and 29, with a focus on how the CRC should form an integral part of education project activities in Mtwara District.

4. Understanding key problems in children’s participation and supporting development of children’s representation skills, organization skills, and negotiation skills accordingly.
1:4 Project Outcomes

1. Greater involvement of children in management of household, community, and school development projects through improved exploration knowledge and skills on how to involve children as active players in the development process.

2. Training of teachers, school inspectors, Village Development Committees, tutors from Mtwara Teachers Colleges and ward leaders on key areas meant to enhance their understanding of children’s participation in the processes of planning, development and management of school programs.

1:5 Project Methods and Processes

Different methods were employed during the course of implementation of the project activities including focus group discussion, consultation meetings, plenary sessions and learner-centred approaches, all of which were used purposively to allow participants to participate fully throughout the workshop. The process started by identifying schools and villages that were not doing well in issues of participation and inclusion of children. These were revealed through a baseline survey that was conducted in three wards.

From there I prepared a guide document that contained things to be discussed by different groups in the field to enable participants to go deep into issues of participation of children in school governance.

The document was discussed by education officials to see if it captured the information that would help to initiate discussion on inclusion of children in the process of governing schools and to come up with plan of action on key issues deemed necessary to be adopted.

I formed a group of facilitators from different levels, such as school inspectors, teachers, tutors and field officers, who would meet with different groups of people in the field and start focused group discussions.

I made sure that all members of the facilitation group were well trained in issues of child participation by an expert from the well-recognized field of social studies, with special expertise in children issues. They received training for seven days before they went to the field to practice what they learned. The lengthy training
time provided facilitators with the opportunity to be clear about the intent of activities and the ways in which they were to be carried out.

Group discussions in each village focused on five groups of participants of different ages, as follows:

- 15 female elders
- 15 male elders
- 15 male youths currently enrolled in school
- 15 female youths currently enrolled in school
- 15 out-of-school male youths (less than 20 years of age)
- 15 out-of-school female youths (less than 20 years of age)
- 15 members of village government
- 41 Ward Development Committee members
- 15 School Committee members

The same group composition was followed in eight villages in three wards. Two people facilitated in each group separately and documented the process to make sure children spoke their own opinions, expressed their feelings, asked questions and clarified their doubts. During the discussion, children participated with elderly people to provide them with an experience of participating in decision-making with adults.

Adults were asked to provide sufficient opportunities for the children to speak and contribute their ideas about issues relating to their needs and interests.

After the meetings were concluded, the methods used and the transcripts of documented experiences were shared with district officials so that they could adapt the meeting format for implementation in other areas throughout the district.

Different participatory techniques (including PRA) were largely used to assess the level of children’s involvement in different activities at family, school and village levels. Group discussions were facilitated to encourage children to speak about their concerns to their parents and leaders. Documentation of stories and experiences was carefully done to enable the participating villages and schools as well as the Save the Children project staff to have complete records and reference materials regarding all matters discussed. Minutes for implementation were jointly approved, providing a plan to ensure that in future children and youth are fully involved in the process of bringing development to their villages.

The Plans of Action from all villages were presented to the Ward Development Committee. These Plans of Action are to serve as a tool of the Ward, to enable them to prepare a schedule for implementation and follow-up by Ward executive officers and other district officials.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Tanzania is a country where children are seen but not heard. Being a child in Tanzania means you not only have to live with a lot of hardships, but also that there is no room for your participation and inclusion in the development process, whether it be at home or at school, till the time you reach 18 years of age. This is similar to the situation of children in many developing countries today.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that we have the Tanzania Child Development Policy (TEMP and ZEMAP) where good and remarkable efforts have been made to identify roles and responsibilities, nowhere in the document are specific provisions made for children to participate in different aspects of development for their nation. Children are not seen as potential actors in and contributors to effective development processes.

According to Tanzanian cultural traditions, children are seen as treasures for both their parents and the community at large. Parents desire that their children will grow to reach adulthood so that during their parents' old age their adult children can in turn care for them. However, they make no provision to involve their children in family decision making from the earliest stages so that they may serve as valued contributors to the development of their families, their community and their nation.

This chapter therefore examines the literature regarding the participation and inclusion of children, as perceived by Tanzania and other nations in the world, by referring to different documents including UNCRC, Tanzania Plan of Action and other references that address child participation issues. Above all the chapter will illustrate different situations as far as the status of children's involvement in different aspects of bringing about social change in their life and the life of their families and communities is concerned, in accordance with research and implementation work carried with children in different programs in various parts of the world.

2:1 Status of Children's Participation

Tanzania, being one of the countries that ratified the UNCRC, has been trying to ensure that departments and ministries that deal with children’s affairs understand the Convention.

Article 12 of the UNCRC requires that the national ministry with primary responsibility for children’s well-being be pro-active in promoting understanding of how to adopt and implement the Convention based on our Tanzanian cultural
context. It is from this stand that the Ministry for Community Development, Children and Gender came up with guidelines on how to implement the ratified Convention in different departments in the country. The government of Tanzania sponsors and runs seminars on the UNCRC and also produces brochures, posters and T-shirts that promote children’s rights and needs. NGOs and CBOs have been formed to fight for children’s rights to fight against any form of exploitation of children and youth.

Tanzania has passed a law that prohibits employers in goldmines and other places from employing children less than 18 years of age. Tanzania abolished school fees in primary schools to enable all children to access primary education free as per the Dakar Declaration. Currently every child eligible for primary school education can go to school without any restrictions.

Tanzania has also established a system that requires all schools to have active student councils at all levels. According to Article 12, girls and boys have equal rights to be involved in decisions affecting them. In compliance with this principle, all student councils in primary schools have equal representation of girls and boys.

Article 12 places an obligation on government to ensure that the views of both boys and girls are sought and considered in all matters that affect their lives. Children of any age, and especially between the ages of 3 and 18 years, should be allowed to express their views in ways with which they are comfortable. Decision-making bodies, other institutions, and families must listen to children and take their views into account.

In accordance with Tanzanian cultural tradition, the time between the ages of 6 and 18 years is a period during which a child is expected to attend an initiation ceremony and from there is considered to be a grown-up. In practice, however, most communities do not give enough room to children to participate in most community-based decision-making processes.

Boys and girls should also be encouraged to participate in decision-making within their families as well as in all aspects of school life. In order to be able to make decisions, children have the right to relevant information provided in a form they can understand. Experience has shown that school, community and household development programs have in most cases failed to involve children in decision-making processes.

For example; the Ministries formulate most of the school guidelines and rules without consulting children on issues regarding their needs and rights. Parents and teachers have in most cases been afraid to involve children, thinking that by so doing adults will lose power over children. Some have a very negative thinking about this, considering it an imposition of Western culture that is not appropriate within their own.
It is well known that in most of the societies in which SCF works, children grow up in situations far removed from those described in the Convention, and it may be difficult even to refer to ideals without seeming to be out of touch with reality. But governments all over the world have pledged themselves to try to achieve these rights as far as possible, and this commitment on paper provides an opportunity for organizations such as SCF to help translate policy to practice.... This is because it is adults who are responsible for creating or changing the situations in which children grow up (Molteno, p. 5).

It is my belief that most children know what is good for them and would like the opportunity to contribute their talents and gifts to their families, schools and communities. We should care that children’s voices are heard, because they know what they need better than we do. They know how best their needs can be met and in most cases they become confident in what they do if given opportunities to express their ideas and if their views are heard with respect by parents, teachers and community leaders. It is good practice for preparing leaders for the future, and the rewards are great when children are encouraged to grow in that way.

As programmers we should understand that most of the programs we implement in communities are meant to positively impact and hopefully benefit the well-being of children. Indicators of these positive impacts and benefits must be identified by the children themselves in order for the project to have actual benefit to children. For example:

Children, who are members of the families benefiting from restocking programs, or women’s credit and savings programs, have been able to identify actual or expected benefits of these interventions. This has helped project staff to draw up child-specific indicators. Primary school children were able to identify changes that had occurred in teachers’ behavior and methods as a result of training programs (p. 3)(Involving Children in the Project Cycle: Lessons Learnt from Save the Children UK/Ethiopia, May 1998.)
This example illustrates why it is worthwhile for children's voices to be heard by adults – not only to be in compliance with the UNCRC but, more importantly, because of the resulting benefits for children themselves and for the planners and implementers of different development programs that target children’s well-being.

As one of the parents from the Nepal ECCD program noted: “They find themselves listening at the end of every day to all new things their children are learning, and sharing songs and stories with them.... Parents find their children a source of interest rather than irritation, and children respond positively to the extra attention” (from a study of the effects for children, their families and communities that was done in Nepal).

The study shows initial stages of involving children in family matters starts early when parents have learned to hear the voices of their children after being trained by ECCD facilitators. This is not the typical situation of our families and children here in Tanzania – as I have said earlier, in most cases the voices of Tanzanian children are not heard by their families, nor by other community members including leaders. There is also a problem in that many development project planners see children purely as informants, instead of seeing them as active players in the development process.

Thus, we had identified the need to train parents, teachers, education inspectors, ward development committees, school development committees and village development committees. Our training mandate also included special categories of people including out-of-school children, elders and people with special needs. Moreover, much emphasis was put on the attitudes required for genuinely participatory programs to capture children’s opinions. This is an important point, for, as one of the writers notes in an article outlining tools for working with children: “Kids’ opinions aren’t taken notice of, yet they can have important things to say – not just on things that affect them, but on other things as well. They are a lot smarter than most adults give them credit for” (My Right to Education, Save the Children’s Magazine, 1999, Summer, p. 12).

These attitudes include open-mindedness, sensitivity, flexibility, curiosity and the willingness to experiment. Above all, Save the Children and other education stakeholders need to be prepared to listen and learn from children whenever they implement development programs for children, because this approach will yield real benefits for the children, their families and their communities. Clearly, development programs can better address the needs of children if children themselves are involved right from the beginning to an end.

Articles 12 though 17 of the UNCRC demand children’s participation in a number of areas that directly affect them. According to the UN, the issue of children’s meaningful participation has been highlighted in this way to show the importance and value of implementing this instrument of law. Almost every country in the
world has ratified the UNCRC, and many are working hard to make sure that the Convention is implemented accordingly.

What are the implications for our work in the field? When we have spoken of working with children in the past, we may really have meant community work that usually examined and delivered services through adult agents but seldom included direct contact with children. That has changed. We are now obliged to do exactly what we say. Recent reports by Action Aid (Johnson, Hill & Ivan-Smith, 1995) and Save the Children (p. 40, in PLA Notes) have clearly stated the case for children’s participation in development programs. Whilst Action-Aid briefly but very carefully shows the importance of the inclusion of children in PRA, and Save the Children examines socioeconomic factors that directly affect children, neither agency includes extensive use of children’s contributions in its overall work. This is not because of a reversion to the exclusion of children, but because the nature of inclusion is itself changing.

Most importantly, many adults still have to learn how to work with children. We have to convince communities that children must be included in development planning processes. Communities are accustomed to the notion of children as recipients of program benefits through adult agents. Children were usually invisible clients, with adult caretakers serving as conduits for benefits intended to support the children themselves. Because of this it is often difficult to measure exactly how successful programs really were. Now we have to meet the needs of children much more directly and incorporate their views on quality and success into evaluations.

The right to express opinions

Article 12 of the CRC is the most significant article in support of children’s participation. It gives children the right to express their ideas and to contribute towards decision-making processes that determine activities to be accomplished in areas affecting their well-being. This helps to ensure that the problems that affect children are well addressed and included in the whole plan, in conjunction with adult views for implementation. Children’s views are fundamental to the participatory process, since the five other articles in this block either supplement or reinforce the inclusion of their views and opinions.

Save the Children UK Tanzania as an organization sees children’s participation both as a means and an end in itself. Different outcome documents have emerged from Article 12 such as that from Save the Children Alliance Task Group on Participation (ATGP) and Tanzania National Plan of Action.

National Plan of Action for Tanzania

The Ministry of Community Development, Children and Gender together with other actors like UNICEF have shown in this Plan of Action (POA) how the basic
needs of children can be met to support them to grow into healthy adult human beings. In the document, the Ministry explains important aspects essential for meeting children’s needs and fostering development, such as care, stimulation, and ensuring that the child interacts in a healthy manner with people and surroundings.

Issues of safety, protection and freedom have been well explained in the POA, showing clearly the role of duty bearer in fulfilling these aspects for children.

The document considered the findings of researchers who suggest that most of the development of intelligence in children occurs before the age of seven, that the first three years of life are the most crucial in terms of a child’s mental and physical growth, and that children who fail to get proper attention and required care by caregivers, family and community at large during this period run the risk of delayed or impaired mental development. Leading experts in this field of child development have got strong and remarkable findings that the most rapid period of brain development takes place in the first two years of life, laying the pathways for significant intellectual, emotional, physical immunological and social functions. Research also shows that experiences for children from two through to five years of age provide the child with the foundations for later learning and for formal education, as well as with baseline social skills (Evans et al., 2000).

According to researchers, “young people’s ability to contribute to decision making is often underestimated and the process can bolster confidence and self esteem in some young individuals” (IIED, 1996, p. 80).

There are key issues that are critical in helping a child deal with disaster and avoiding the psychological trauma produced by catastrophic events that negatively impact child development:

- Children’s reactions will vary according to their stage of cognitive, affective, and socio-behavioral development.
- The reactive phenomena observed after catastrophic events represent bio-psychosocial systems reactions and early efforts to cope with the disorganization of these systems.

It is high time for caregivers and parents to understand that family and societal behavior toward a child are powerful influences that can enhance or impede the trauma resolution process. The child’s reliance on the family for cognitive guidance and socio-emotional support is influenced by the child’s stage of psychological development and pre-existent psychopathology.

These landmark findings underline that we cannot wait until age 7 to intervene. They also mean that a child’s development cannot be compartmentalized into health, nutrition, education, social emotional and spiritual variables; instead, development is holistic, consisting of interdependent dimensions, as the Tanzania Plan of Action has tried to capture. The POA is presented in a way that
clearly shows that all variables of child development are interwoven in a child’s life and are developing simultaneously. Progress in one area affects progress in others.

The POA was strategically designed to address all issues affecting Tanzanian children in a way that makes a positive impact on the future life of the children. Having this document in hand, the next challenge facing the Government of Tanzania is creating the appropriate policy environment and developing an institutional framework which will ensure that all key/relevant government ministries, civil society organizations, corporate sector and local communities work in concert to bring about quality early childhood care and development (ECCD). For the government, it also means mobilizing the necessary financial, technical and material resources which will support the efforts of parents, communities and relevant institutions in developing sound ECCD programs in the country.

Many countries now are concerned about the systems and practices of their government that adversely affect the lives of those who are most excluded, including children. For civil society organizations, this entails working with government and communities to develop creative strategies and solutions towards the improvement of children’s education and care. The ongoing collaborative efforts being made to effectively implement the Tanzania Plan of Action must be noted, because they vividly illustrated that there are deliberated actions taking place to make sure that progress is being made.

Various evaluations of young people's own views of their participation in decision making express the collective need for an enabling environment for their participation at all levels within each of their countries. They recognize that adult commitment and action are necessary to create this enabling environment. Experience has shown that young people will find their own way of surviving under adverse conditions. However, they do not like to see this enabling environment created around adult agendas only without including them in the process, whether this is the particular agenda of an NGO, or a corporate branding agenda, or a special political or religious agenda.

In setting up opportunities for meaningful child participation, the environment and communication interaction must be as comfortable as possible for the child in terms of cultural and social familiarity. Children can be easily daunted, or deflected, by the trappings of adulthood: suits, formal environments, official bureaucratic processes and communication styles. An overly formal environment and/or tightly structured process will inhibit most children from offering their opinions and creative contributions, thus effectively marginalizing them.

Another danger is that we as adults may promote unrealistic expectations of what children will contribute when given the opportunity. There are times when we should encourage both kids and adults to enter into dialogue without specific
expectations, thus reducing pressure on children to “instantly perform” in a situation and environment that is likely both new and intimidating. By entering into dialogue that invites participation from children without the undue pressure of high expectations, we may be more open to seeing as positive the sometimes small steps forward that will eventually lead to children’s full and meaningful participation.

It is important to remember that the whole process of involving children in development activities that provide ample opportunity for them to participate fully requires that adults honor the ways in which children express themselves. Adults should provide a genuine support and respect throughout the empowerment process. Furthermore, adults should always show openness and communicate clearly to children to enable these inter-generational partnerships to work effectively.
CHAPTER 3: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The following section describes what was done during the two-day training sessions of local leaders.

The project focused on exploring the possibilities of involving children as active players in the development process in village, school, ward, district, and national programs; enhancing leadership capabilities of the ward and village level officials and parents regarding children’s rights issues; and supporting children’s participation and inclusion in the governance of community and school programs.

The following project objectives were submitted before implementation of the project:

- Identification of communities and schools with extreme cases of excluding children from participating in the decision-making process of their development programs.
- Orientation of district education inspectors and other district education officers to three parts of the CRC, and introduction to Convention Concepts of Right Holders (children) and Duty Bearers (adults).
- Discussion of the rationale for children’s participation as underpinned by articles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.(CRC) especially Articles 12, 13, 15, 28, and 29; discussion of how CRC should form an integral part of education project activities in Mtwara District.
- Understanding key problems in children’s participation and supporting development of children’s representation skills, organization skills and negotiation skills accordingly.

The overarching purpose was to equip leaders with leadership skills necessary for administering and supervising the program in their
respective areas. This was important to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Leaders were trained how to become a good leader who can inspire positive change and who is able to sustain the good things that happen from day to day. Leaders were encouraged to take personal responsibility to make sure that the application of the knowledge in leadership skills they acquired would be put to use to positively support the active participation of those children who need to be empowered, in order to create partnership with adults in the process of bringing about community development.

### 3:1 Leadership Concept

#### Defining Leadership:

It was very important for participants to define the term “leadership” and to understand the differences between leadership and management to enable them to apply different leadership skills in their daily activities. It was also important for leaders to understand the nature of leadership and to explore why it has been defined in so many different ways.

While there are indeed many different concepts of leadership, the following description reflects widespread and generally accepted images of leadership: “The term connotes images of powerful, dynamic individuals who command victorious armies, direct corporate empires from atop gleaming skyscrapers, or shape the course of nations” (Yukl, 2002, p. 1).

Participants were able to discuss and familiarize themselves with some important questions about these common images, such as: “Why did certain leaders – for example, Gandhi, Mohamed, Mao Tse Tung – inspire such intense fervor and dedication? How did certain leaders – for example, Julius Caesar, Charlemagne and Alexander the Great – build great empires” (Yukl, 2002, p. 1)?

Participants discussed different definitions, and participants reached consensus on the definition that seemed appropriate to apply to themselves as local leaders at ward and village levels. The definition chosen by participants as best reflecting their own role was: “Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives” (Yukl, 2002, p. 7).

One participant made the following comment regarding the chosen definition:
We have been taking various steps before we introduce anything in our villages. We summon a village assembly in order to explain new ideas to people and ask them to contribute towards the idea, so that we can make decisions based on what has been agreed by the community. When we finish discussing the matter with the community, we inform different authorities including government at the district and ward levels, INGOs, and relevant others about what has been agreed upon during village assembly and other committee sittings (Village Chairperson from Mnyija village).

Finally they listed key required elements that should appear in any leadership definition for it to be effective, practical and able to bear fruit in their areas of operation. The elements are:

- “A process to influence others” implies that any leader must move from one step to another during the application of leadership techniques.
- When a leader wants to introduce a new idea or change he or she must be ready to call a meeting and discuss the idea with people, be ready to share roles in order to implement change, and sometimes be prepared to delegate powers and responsibilities to others in order for change to occur. One ward executive officer had this to contribute:

  In order to get things done quickly by people in our areas we normally delegate powers and responsibilities to village executive officers and chairpersons because they know their people much better by name, location, and by character than I do. They know how to deal with culprits one by one because the area is small compared to a ward – with six to seven villages it is not easy to know all people in the villages except those with distinguished characters (Ward executive officer from Kitere Ward).
• Regardless of whether objectives are departmental or organizational, there must be collective efforts from all individuals within the organization, and all members, not just a few, must share objectives.

The Save the Children project promotes construction of an ECCD building in each village as one key goal; a second key goal is the provision of parental education. In order to accomplish these goals, a leader will require the collective efforts of all community members in order to make sure things are getting done on time as per the agreed-upon plan of action. People will need to understand what is required of them in order to accomplish the goal and participate effectively in the entire process of accomplishing the goal.

Participants also discussed the significant difference between leadership and management: As Yukl (2002) points out: “Managers are the people who do things right and leaders are the people who do the right thing” (p. 5).

Leadership Styles
Participants broke into small groups to identify and describe different types of leadership styles known to them. The following list is a description of different leadership styles identified by participants:

• Democratic leadership: whereby the majority have the chance to contribute and influence decisions of the leaders.
• Authoritative or dictatorship: whereby leaders command people to do what the leader wants, whether the people like it or not. In this style of leadership, decisions are typically made by the leader without first consulting or discussing with others.
• Laissez-faire leadership: whereby people make decisions to do things on their own.

Participation
Participation is one of the core elements that make leaders in wards, villages and household levels succeed or fail to reach their objectives. Failure is usually due to lack of community participation. As leaders, it was crucial for all of us to spend time engaged in group discussion in order to understand various types, objectives and benefits of participation. Varieties of participation included:

• Autocratic Decision: whereby a manager makes a decision alone without asking for the opinions or suggestions of other people. People have no direct influence on the decision.
• Consultation: whereby the manager asks other people for their opinions and ideas, then makes the decision alone after seriously considering their suggestions and concerns.
• Joint Decision: whereby a manager discusses the problem together with people and they jointly make the decision together; the manager has no more influence over the final decision than any other participant.
• Delegation: whereby a manager gives an individual or groups the authority and responsibility for making the decision.

Consensus
Having experienced and reviewed these various types of participation, participants agreed that all types of participation have been applicable by them at different times, depending upon different situations in hand. Some prefer to combine several approaches, while others prefer to apply specific decision-making processes separately in order to judge their effectiveness.

Benefits of Participation
In my opinion, inviting wider participation in decision-making has many potential benefits, depending upon the type of participants, how much influence they have, and other aspects of the decision situation. Potential benefits include higher quality decisions, higher level of acceptance of decisions by participants, and greater development of decision-making skills by leaders.

As a leader I had to plan a quality and manageable training with a focus on producing training outputs. My purpose was to first influence participants to understand and agree about what was to be accomplished, second to accomplish the training agenda in the allotted time, and third to model effective leadership as I facilitated the training.

I took my responsibilities as the leader of these training sessions seriously, recognizing the opportunity to serve as a role model for the principles we were exploring and learning about together. I made sure that I arrived on time according to the schedule and I ensured that I followed the agreed-upon timetable, so that participants could learn the importance of abiding by set timelines, as this in turn is an important lesson for leaders of ECCD to practice the effective utilization of time for the benefit of young children. Throughout the training, initial exercises focused on helping the participants understand and agree about what was to be accomplished. Throughout the delivery of the training I did all I could to demonstrate personal integrity to participants, in order to enable them to have a positive experience of participatory leadership and to copy my example if they so chose.

Personal reflections on this process
As an emerging leader of ECCD programs in Tanzania I make sure there is good network with other emerging ECCD leaders and programs in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. I have the obligation of ensuring that all ECCD programs that will be established in my area are cost effective, manageable and well understood by the beneficiaries themselves. I can realize these obligations through effective psychological empowerment of local ECCD leaders at ward and village levels. In order for these initial efforts to bear the required fruits over time, the process of empowerment should be carefully followed up. As Yukl (2002) suggests in his book of leadership in organizations, “a study by Spreitzer (1995) found support
for the proposition that psychological empowerment includes four defining elements:

- **Meaning:** The contents and the consequences of the work are consistent with a person’s values and ideals.
- **Self-determination:** The person has a high capacity to determine how and when the work is to be done.
- **Self-efficiency:** The person has high confidence about being able to do it effectively.
- **Impact:** The person believes to have a significant impact on the job and work environment” (p. 106).

Empowerment, in this context, means the growth of self-confidence of communities, women, children and other groups to solve their problems, to take their own initiatives, and to give voice and authority to those who were not heard before. How does Save the Children build on the process already initiated in some communities? It will be important to determine the level to which these first initiatives have been applied in other sectors that have a strong impact on ECCD and general community well being, such as health and agriculture.

**Review of Specific Training Session Activities**

**A. Introductions**
This was one of the activities included in the training plan. The process of introducing each other was done in such a way that everybody had a partner with whom to share the information; thereafter, one had to report back about the information given by the colleague. The information that the participants were requested to report back to the group included the name of the colleague, where he or she came from, job title, marital status, number of children, and his or her interests.

**Purpose**
This exercise was included in order to teach the participant leaders about the importance of sharing information with the communities they work with. Information sharing has proven to be one the strong tools during the community entry stage. It fosters transparency and cements mutual understanding between communities and the ECCD leaders through which the implementation of the program becomes smooth. If people know exactly who you are, your job, the purpose of your visit to the area and where you come from, it tends to build confidence in you and hence reflects on your work. From that basis people feel more comfortable to talk with you, to share their views, and to listen to information that you want them to know.

**Significance**
Accurate and effective information sharing is very significant process, because as a leader you need to encourage people to be as open as possible during the meeting to enable you to get the required information at the right time in the right
place. As a leader it is of paramount importance to understand people with whom you work in order to bring about change. Yukl (2002) describes the difficulties of the process of persuading people to support change; he says that it requires a collaborative effort between a leader and other people to work together as a team:

The task of persuading people to support major change is not easy, and it is too big a job for a single leader to do alone. Successful change in an organization requires cooperative effort by people who have the power to facilitate or block change (p. 289).

It is important for any ECCD leader to introduce himself or herself to people in the community, in order for him or her to gain mass support of the idea he or she wants to promote to the community regarding including early childhood care and development issues in development programming.

Yukl (2002) offers guidelines for people-oriented action that can foster positive change when followed and applied carefully. He reports that the steps are to:

- Create a sense of urgency about the need for change.
- Prepare people to adjust to change.
- Help people deal with the pain of change.
- Provide opportunities for early success.
- Keep people informed about the progress of change.
- Demonstrate continued commitment to change.
- Empower people to implement change (p. 289).

B. Eliciting workshop expectations from participants

This was another introductory activity that was conducted before we went further to the main body of the training. The eliciting of group expectations was done in order to provide a very important lesson to participants regarding community expectations.

Purpose

The purpose of this activity was to identify the expectations of the workshop participants, to determine the level of prior coverage of the material prepared for the workshop, and to provide a reference point for understanding the need to clearly identify and address community expectations in all development processes. At the end of the workshop we conducted an evaluation to see if we managed to cover all or part of the identified expectations. Above all we wanted participants to understand that when working with communities there would be some expectations from the community, and it would be necessary to address those expectations clearly before, during and after the process. As ECCD leaders we need to plan carefully how best we can utilize locally available resources, skills, knowledge and time to cooperate with and facilitate people to address the issues they have identified as their priorities.
Significance (As a Leader)
A decision maker needs to select the best course of action from among the available alternatives. It is crucial for a leader to make enough time to listen to what people have to say or suggest about development strategies, as well as allowing sufficient time to analyze problems together and suggest solutions that are workable within the limited resources available.

At the end of the workshop people discovered that they had met most of their own expectations. We can anticipate a similar outcome when we engage in meaningful dialogue with the communities we serve; if, as ECCD facilitators, the facilitation process is carefully handled, people will usually discover that they have identified strategies and solutions to deal with most of their problems, and will be proud to say, “We have done it ourselves!”

3:2 Early Childhood Care for Development Defined

In order to effectively train community leaders to accomplish the objectives of the program, it is crucial that they understand key concepts of early childhood care and development; in-depth understanding of the relevant issues is essential if leaders are to promote and advocate for early childhood care and development programs in their areas of responsibility. Thus it was necessary to orient them to ECCD matters so as to enable them, as leaders of ECCD within their communities, to understand the importance of investing in early childhood and to provide a solid basis on which to monitor programs and strategies that support children’s well-being.

The purpose of group discussion to define the concept of “early childhood” was to determine and decide appropriate years of ECCD program intervention. According to the participants, the appropriate years for ECCD intervention are from birth to 6 years of age.

Reasons

Participants identified the following reasons why they thought that the period from birth to 6 years of age is appropriate for intervention:

- Children aged 0-6 years are highly vulnerable to different risk factors such as diseases, hunger, war, and extreme poverty situations.
- Eco-cultural circumstances such as unstable marriages, parental ignorance and unhealthy societal values (for example, polygamous marriages) can threaten their right to survival.
- Geographical factors such as remoteness of place of their residence and unfavorable climatic conditions make the situation even worse as far as provision of good services to children is concerned.
According to participants, all three of the factors listed above contribute to children being denied the opportunity to grow to healthy maturity and to realize their potential within the society.

Strategies to remedy the situation require the coordinated efforts of many different people, organizations, government sectors, and both international and local development agencies. There should be a joint national and global effort to overcome these negative factors.

**What does this mean to a leader?**
As ECCD leaders it is crucial to understand the importance of children’s early years. Leaders must play a prominent role in establishing and promoting programs for young children in their areas of responsibility that will positively impact and benefit both children and mothers. They must work tirelessly to ensure that resources are in place and make every structure work effectively for the benefit of young children.

Buvinic and Lynatte (1994, in Evans et al., 2000):
Argue convincingly that there is a need to incorporate in any successful poverty reduction strategy policies and projects that reinforce the vicious circle between women’s and children’s well being that can occur in poor families when women have increased income or control of income . . . therefore it is important to avoid those polices and projects that, by increasing women’s time burdens, can trigger a vicious circle of deprivation between mothers and children (p. 382).

**The Concept of Development**
Participants defined the concept of development as a process of change from poor to better conditions, from “down step to upper step,” from small to something bigger. As far as children are concerned, participants related development to different growth stages of a child from infancy through toddler and pre-school stages to becoming a primary school child.

When defining development, Evans et al. had this to add to the participants’ definition: “Development is a process of change in which a child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling, and interacting with people and objects in the environment” (p. 3).
According to Mwamwenda (1995), development is “gradual or evolutionary change in the shape and integration of body parts” (p. 514).

During the training sessions we devoted time to examining what is involved in the physical, mental and emotional growth of young children, and included these factors as critical indicators to consider when analyzing the overall development of children (Myers, 1995).

As far as physical growth is concerned, participants were oriented to things like changes of body size, changes in body proportions, changes in proportional muscle-to-fat make-up, early skeletal growth and appearance of teeth. They learned about brain development, including the development of neurons and the cerebral cortex.

Participants were made aware that “the child’s current developmental status either facilitates or inhibits both present and future learning” (Levinger, 1992, in Evans et al., 2000, p. 4).

We looked into different theories about the relationship between biology and environment with regard to child development both physically and mentally. From the discussion with the participants, everyone came to understand and accept that “we are not used to thinking of affection and stimulation as necessary for healthy physical growth, but they are as vital to infants as food” (Heffner & Kelly, 1994, in Berk, 1999 p. 320).

Participants reflected on the situation of the children of the African continent, and expressed their concern about the existing differences between the support for optimal development available to African and European children. However, during our discussion of developmental theory, they came to understand that:

“cognitive development during infancy follows the same pattern in African children as in European or American children and most likely, as children all over the world. The mechanisms of human cognition are truly universal” (Ohuche & Otaala, 1981, in Mwamwenda, 1995, p. 61).

In Mtwara we have a widespread problem of stunted growth of children throughout the region. Discussions were held with participants regarding key factors affecting growth during early childhood, such as heredity, the influence of hormones, emotional well-being, sleep habit problems, nutrition, infectious diseases, and physical injury among others. We came to learn that sleep habits and problems could affect growth of a child, as White and Shaefer (1993, in Berk, 1999) point out:

Sleep contributes to body growth, since GH is released during the child’s sleeping hours. A well-rested child is better able to play,
learn, and contribute positively to family functioning. By disrupting parental sleep, a child who sleeps poorly can cause significant family stress – a major reason that sleep difficulties are among the most common concerns parents raise about their pre-scholars (p.303) (Sleep Habits and Problems.)

Participants shared common experiences of the African rural child who does not get sufficient and regular sleep required for optimal development due to ignorance of the parents. This type of ignorance negatively impacts both the physical and mental growth of children.

Leadership side
As ECCD leaders who wish to support a bright future for our children, it is crucial to understand early childhood development theories and to relate them to the realities and challenges facing the African child compared to children in other continents. We need to plan nutrition programs, family life and education programs and the like for the sake of imparting knowledge to parents, so that they come to understand the enormous significance of optimal early care and development.

As leaders we are responsible to allocate enough resources to early childhood programs and to influence policy makers to devise practically implemental policies and guidelines supporting early childhood care for development programs, based on the realities of direct field experience. This kind of practical and effective programming will bring about positive changes in the lives of children and youth, especially at the grassroots level.

Being a leader in Africa is a great challenge due the fact that you are working in an environment that is already devastated by many serious problems. However, participants accepted the fact that their roles differ according to the different positions they hold, and that in turn significantly impacts what people expect of them. Those with district positions might have the specific role of implementing policies and programs, while those at ward and village levels might be concerned with coordinating and facilitating work activities. Those whose responsibilities and objectives are limited to specific goals can often bring greater focus to a less complex range of issues. Yukl (2002) had this to contribute regarding job responsibilities:

- Job responsibilities differ somewhat for managers at different levels in the authority hierarchy of the organization. Higher level managers are usually more concerned with the exercise of broad authority in making long-range plans, formulating policies,
modifying the organization’s structure and initiating new ways of doing things . . . . Low-level managers are primarily concerned with structuring, coordinating, and facilitating work activities (p. 34).

Furthermore, participants accepted the fact that sometimes it is necessary to perform managerial work in order to enable childhood programs to run smoothly and finally reach the goals of providing quality care and development of children in their areas. From the discussion therefore they reached consensus to refer to the following guidelines for performing managerial tasks:
- Understand the reasons for demands and constraints.
- Determine the range of your choices.
- Analyze how you use your time.
- Plan daily and weekly activities.
- Make time for reflective planning.
- Identify important, solvable problems.
- Look for connections among problems.
- Experiment with innovative solutions.
- Take decisive action to deal with crisis (Yukl, 2002, p. 41).

3:3 Why Invest in Early Childhood Programs?

Group discussions were held with participants regarding the perspective of needs and rights. Participants identified a few examples from the needs perspective indicating that needs could be met at least temporarily without addressing the issue of sustainability. For example, WFP programs have been able to respond to different needs of supply from different countries; most of these programs were not sustainable, although they helped people to get food and to temporarily solve the problems of widespread hunger. However, after a period of time, people once again went back to struggling with hunger problems because there were no sustainability strategies for solving these problems, and the need for food persisted for a long period of time. Regarding children’s rights, participants agreed that rights must be promoted via a sustainable strategy.

In Mtwara most ECCD programs have got farms where parents will get food to feed their young ones. In other areas people have accepted to donate Tsh 5 from every kilogram of cashew nuts every year in order to sustain ECCD program operational costs such as paying remuneration to the caregivers.

Initiation of nutrition programs, parental education programs and the like are the sustainability strategies required to ensure that children continue to receive proper and adequate food not only at the ECCD centre but also at home.
Meeting needs depends on the political will while realizing rights depends on the political choice. A need can be met through charity, while from the perspective of rights, charity is not applicable because it is not a favor but rather based on rights. The government and all NGOs are supposed to implement different program activities that will benefit children, not because of charity, but because it is the right of children to benefit from such programs, as has been stated in UN charter of 1989.

These and other prevalent perspectives were precisely explained to participants, to enable them to understand the underlying differences between these perspectives.

**Leadership aspect:**
As leaders in different localities it is important to understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Declaration on Education for All, and documents like the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education. These documents hold leaders responsible to implement them because they are framed within the perspective of rights.

As one of the emergent ECCD leaders of the Africa continent, it is my duty to make sure that the government, NGOs, individuals and villages initiate ECCD programs in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, instead of treating those programs as charitable. Everybody should respond to implementing the rights of children, because all children must be served. Programs should consider and treat children as active participants rather than passive recipients.

**Benefits of Early Childhood Programs**

**Where does change occur and the nature of change**

**For Children**
- Improved psychosocial development
- Improved cognitive development
- Children become capable of reasoning and thinking as active participants

**Development:**
Through health programs: Immunization against five preventable diseases increases chances of children’s survival and reduces morbidity.

**Nutrition:**
Adequate supply of balanced diet to children improves hygiene and weight of children; for age 0-3 helps development of brain.

**Progress and performance:**
- Higher chance of entering primary school
- Less chance of repetition
- Fewer dropouts
• Better performance at school

For Adults
Attitudes and practices:
• ECCD programs enhance leadership skills

Health and hygiene:
• ECCD programs promote preventive medical practices; opportune treatment; nutrition; improved diet

General knowledge and practice:
• Health and hygiene (related to both children and adults own nutritional status)

Relationships:
• Improved self-esteem
• Better husband-wife, parent-child, peer and child-to-child relationships

Employment:
• Caregivers freed to seek or improve employment
• New employment opportunities created by program
• Increased market for program-related goods

Community physical environment:
• Improved sanitation
• Creation of spaces for play, multi-purpose facilities

Social participation:
• Improved solidarity
• Increased participation of women
• Community projects benefiting all

For Institutions
• Improved efficiency
• Better health services through integration of services or changed user practices
• Reduced repetition and drop-out rates in schools

Effectiveness:
• Greater coverage

Capacity:
• Greater ability, confidence and or/change in organization
• Improved methods and curriculum content
For Society:
- Improved quality of life
- A healthier population
- Reduced days lost to sickness
- A more literate, educated population
- Greater social participation
- Reduced delinquency
- Reduced fertility and early births
- An improved labor force
- Reduced social inequalities

3:4 Children are the Future; They Perpetuate the Values of the Culture

Through children it is easy to transmit values of the society from generation to generation. For example in Tanzania, the Kiswahili language and the value of living together harmoniously are strengths which are being transmitted from one generation to another. The Kiswahili language has played a great role in uniting different tribes to become one nation of brothers and sisters.

While you are in Tanzania you can move from South to North; no one will ask about your tribe or the place where you were born. People are intermingled and intermarriage is common throughout the country. This sense of togetherness and brotherhood can be transmitted and strengthened through early childhood programs.

Early childhood programs promote equity.

If there is a good and fair start to the lives of children in any community and nation at large, it will be easy to deal with elements of socio-economic and gender-related inequalities. There is big difference between a child from a poor family and that of from a well-to-do family in terms of learning opportunities, physical growth, and social well-being. The government should always aim at not only providing minimum inputs so that we can point to equality of opportunity, but also at providing additional inputs where needed to level the playing field socially and economically.

ECCD is a vehicle for social participation.

Every person, whether as an individual or as part of a group (community), is concerned about the future of their children and it becomes easy to unify them through focusing on programs that will be of practical benefit to their children. Different leaders from the government or NGOs share concerns about the problems of children, and thus it becomes easy for two or more ministries to come together with a common focus on how to help children.
For example, the ECCD Network is uniting different organizations – both governmental and non-governmental, local NGOs and other interested partners – with the common goal of serving the young children of Tanzania.

Implementers of different programs such as child survival programs, parent education programs, and family life and population programs can come together and plan how to respond to the different problems facing young children. All the programs described above can be improved when the component of early childhood programming is added.

**Child Development Principles**

Participants had the opportunity to discuss child development principles. However, as the facilitator I drew their attention to some specific principles which I explained. I then invited participants to cite some examples related to those principles.

**Development is holistic: It consists of interdependent dimensions.**

When we talk of child development we always refer to various components of development, all of which are essential for development process of a child: interventions should include “attention to physical development (through health and nutrition), mental development (through education and stimulation), social emotional development (providing affection and opportunity for social participation), and spiritual development” (as defined within the child’s culture)” (Evans et al., 2000, p. 16).

**Different Ministries should come together to discuss the problems of children.**

For example, in Tanzania the ECCD network has played great role to coordinate different ECCD actors from the grassroots level up to national level to implement holistic ECD programs in their organizations and ministries. The Ministries of Education, Health, Community Development, Social Welfare and Agriculture all should work together as a team to improve children’s health.

**Development begins prenatal and learning begins at birth.**

Both biological and environmental effects occur in the body of the child during pregnancy that affects the brain, the physical body and the mental capacity of a child. One important thing here is for ECCD programs to ensure that girls and pregnant women receive adequate physical, nutritional and psychological care as well as protection.

The moment a child enters the world he or she should get adequate and nutritionally balanced milk, preferably breast milk, and a healthy and appropriately stimulating environment.
The first eight years of a child's life form the foundation for all later development; early attention to the child’s needs is critical.

Different theorists have tried to show the importance of the early years of a child’s life, during which time the child develops all the basic brain and psychological structures upon which later growth and learning are dependent. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of providing appropriate support during the early childhood years. As Evans et al. (2000) suggest, “attention to young children from conception onwards can help to prevent later difficulties. Good care (health, nutritious food, active feeding, mental stimulation and interaction) for infants is the best preventive measure to avoid disabilities and development delays” (p. 16).

Children’s needs differ across the early children’s years.

Prenatal and birth
Maternal and child health programs are focused upon and implemented through parental support and education.

Infancy
Health and nutrition programs are highly significant at this stage of development. Attachment of children with their mothers should be emphasized.

Toddler and post toddler
Nutrition continues to be important because this is a stage during which the child’s coordination, language, ability to think and social skills advance rapidly.

Pre-school (approximately ages four and five and sometimes six)
In the pre-school years, socialization and preparation for schooling take a place of greater importance, and the circle of peers and caregivers widens.

Early primary school
This is a period of transition into school and the world at large. This is a period in which a child is supposed to expand his or her environment from home to include much time spent in school. At this stage the transition can be relatively easy or extremely difficult.

3:5 Financing ECCD Programs

Participants were asked to explain who would be involved in supporting the ECCD programs in their areas. All villagers, families and ward development committees are responsible for supporting the costs of the project through:

- Contribution, both in kind and financial
- Contribution in terms of materials, for example, a kilogram of corn flour from every household
All leaders agreed to use the cashew nut harvest as a strategy to collecting cash Tsh. 5 from every kilogram of cashew nuts. They also agreed that contribution would change over the life of the project depending upon the economic status of the villagers.

### 3:6 The Role of International Agency

**Raising awareness about the importance of ECCD**

Save the Children is supporting the process of improving basic education in Mtwara rural district. Through this larger project, an ECCD project was born as an attempt to pursue an alternative way to support the care and development of young children who are considered important by parents, villages and the organization. Save the Children contributed to committees some amount of funds to support the ECCD initiative through training of leaders and caregivers in their different areas of weakness that need to be improved, such as parenting, leadership, and finance and management skills.

Save the Children supports the improvement of a few infrastructures for young children by providing roofing materials and play materials. We conduct community meetings through which people become aware of their roles and contributions towards the development of the ECCD project.

**Providing investment funding and funds for expansion of ECCD project**

Stimulate local commitment to the financing of the project by funding the development of pilot and small-scale experiences.

Because of the example set in the few pilot areas that we have been able to serve by giving support in terms of cash and materials, other areas have started to replicate and start their own initiatives without any donor support. They have been able to use their local capacities and available resources to develop and improve service provision at the center.

**Providing technical support**

The Save the Children project technician worked hand in hand with communities to enable them to make burnt bricks for use in the ECCD center building.

### The Role of Families and Communities

Cost recovery as a way of financing ECD projects: It is reasonable for a society to contribute to the cost of ECCD programs. A good example is that of the eight ECCD centers of the Mtwara rural area, where communities contribute food, money to pay caregivers, and manpower during construction activities for their centers.
All participants agreed to continue serving their centers through community initiatives.

**Not every one can contribute at the same level**
Participants were reminded of the fact that communities differ in terms of their ability to contribute towards their own development. Some are well off, while others are not. As leaders they should not expect that every person would contribute equally, though that would be fair if it were possible.

Some communities can contribute up to 80% to their center including: building a hut where children will seek shelter during the rainy season; supporting registration of children; and contributing to other operational and administrative costs. Some opt to contribute materials such as coconuts, chicken, cashew nuts and simsim to enable centers to feed the children porridge.

It is a fact that community activities need support from the government, and if government fails to support these programs, some programs fail. For example, some programs in Zanzibar failed to continue due to a lack of government support.

### 3:7 Methods and Skills for Working with Children and Young People

#### Children’s and Young People’s Participation

**The importance of play and expression**
In *Starting Young: Principles and Practice in ECD*, Marion Molteno (1996) states that “the idea that every child is capable of learning is not always accepted.” She goes further to explain:

> It is common for adults in all communities to think of young children’s needs primarily in terms of physical care. The idea of very young children learning is often new to people who are used to thinking of learning mainly as something that happens in schools (p. 4).

During the training sessions, it was important to explain the significance of play and expression in depth to all participants, and to conceptualize the idea of providing adequate opportunities for children to express themselves through various methods that will make children comfortable to talk. Children, like adults, learn most successfully by actually doing, rather than by being told. Everything children do in their early years involves learning. Playing on a riverbank involves experimenting with water and sand, introducing basic concepts of science. Children use repeated experimentation and imitation, trial and error, to make sense of their experiences and build knowledge. By playing with other children,
children learn to interact, negotiate and deal with feelings and conflicts. Play also helps children to develop their imagination and creativity.

During our field visit we spent time with children who were already collected together in groups by adults. We found these children doing different activities that we thought stimulated children to learn and develop; we were very concerned about the possibility of depriving children of opportunities for natural learning if programs were inappropriately conceived.

What we did at the training session was to emphasize, in fact to insist, that adults leave plenty of space for children to explore and develop their own activities. We discussed the various ways in which children play, relating each to the learning experiences that each kind of play stimulates, and tried to link each type of play to the ways in which it contributes to domains of child development.

Adults, teachers and children were taught that all types of play contribute to cooperative development. They also had an opportunity to learn that children’s thinking normally differs from that of adults. Common characteristics of children’s thinking include egocentric perspective, thinking about one thing at a time, judging by appearance, holding concrete definitions, focusing on the here and now, and lively curiosity.

The importance of adults creating room for children to talk by encouraging them during informal discussions and in the meetings was emphasized. When meeting with children to encourage their active participation, adults should not talk too much in front of children; instead, as much as possible, they should try to listen to children and not be judgmental.

Children will only want to confide in you after you have created a climate of trust. This is especially true for children who have at some time in their life been involved in crime or violence. Adults should also try to create a climate of trust that will encourage a child to talk without being ashamed of what he or she talks about. It is of paramount importance that adults be patient enough and use gentle and reassuring physical contact and attention to show their concern.

**Mirror improvisation**

During this exercise all students were seated together with their teachers and school inspectors, and soon one after another was very busy trying to improvise as if he or she were an adult in front of the mirror looking at him or herself while preparing for departure to the office. The exercise illustrated to the adults how observant children are and how much they learn from watching the behavior of the adults around them. It also provided a crucial lesson for adults to make sure that they check their own behavior and the example they have set before they confront children for mistakes they have done. In Tanzanian culture children are usually very hesitant to describe the mistakes of parents or to provoke their
parents in other ways, and so may often be unfairly criticized or punished for simply imitating behaviors learned from observing the conduct of their parents and other adults.

**Make-believe play**
Teachers, children, school inspectors and communities learned about the importance of make-believe play to children, and how it provides opportunities for them to be able to express their feelings. Either on his own or with others, a child may decide to play out distressing experiences. This spontaneous play should not be discouraged; it helps the child deal with his emotions and memories. Naomi Richman (1993) had this to say about children's play:

> Children all over the world, particularly boys, like 'war games.' War games are more common in time of conflict, and are played more intensely by children after direct experience of violence. It is usual for children to play out things that have happened to them or that they are concerned about. Acting these frightening experiences is a way of getting control of frightening or confusing feelings; children who have been beaten may beat toys, or other children in play (p. 33)

Possible behavioral outcomes for children who are unable to express frightening or confusing feelings and experiences through play are tendencies to become very irritable or to become upset very easily.

**Making up stories**
While discussing the importance of children’s play with the elderly village men, we asked them to describe traditional ways that village elders helped children to build confidence in themselves. The elders answered:

> Our ancestors used to tell stories about giant characters who overcome difficulties in their lives, and so children were encouraged to believe that if they become strong they can overcome troubles, and that any problem on front of them was solvable.

Stories about characters who overcome difficulties in their lives help children to imagine themselves overcoming their own difficulties. For example, stories about small animals who trick elephants and lions, or stories about people who do clever or magical deeds, need to be communicated to children to help them understand that even the apparently weak can succeed, and to encourage children's confidence in themselves.
**Drawing pictures**
We invited the children participating in the meeting to make drawings of the problems they encountered on their daily walks to and from school and home. During the process we insisted that adult participants made sure that they did not influence what the children drew, even though children who are new to this activity may lack confidence at first and ask what to draw, or copy what someone else has done or what they see in a book.

It was a very revealing exercise. Both boys and girls found ways to illustrate all the risky areas they faced in their daily life. For example, girl children drew pictures such as one of hooligan boys gathered together under a tree, smoking marijuana while discussing how to trap a schoolgirl child who was passing nearby them. Boy children were also able to draw and describe pictures of all risky areas affecting them in daily life, including the issues described by girls. For example, they drew a picture of a teacher who frequently used to cane them when drunk.

The children, working in four groups of five children each, depicted scenes of beating by teachers, drunken teachers, pregnant girls, overcrowded classrooms and long distances to school, amongst a host of other problems. It is instructive that recurring themes in all four groups were the extensive use of corporal punishment during school time and pregnant schoolgirls.

After the children were finishing drawing, they were invited to tell visitors what their drawings meant; the invitation was gently and carefully communicated so that the children would not feel any pressure to participate if they did not wish to. The children agreed and all pictures were posted on the walls. The adult participants were asked to visit every picture and listen to the children’s explanations of what situations the pictures depicted. It surprised the District Education Officer to see that children had a lot to tell about the evil things that were being done by teachers in schools. Students felt free to explain everything to the education authorities without fear.

**Using puppets and masks**
Another method of involving children and youth to talk or participate in a discussion is by using puppets and masks. Pretending to be someone else allows children to communicate ideas or feelings that otherwise would be too difficult to say. They can hide behind a mask or a puppet and talk to the puppet or mask of the helper, without feeling as exposed as if they were talking directly. School inspectors, communities and teachers could barely believe that they were seeing students whom they thought were not able to express themselves in the classroom now able to express their feelings freely through the use of puppets and masks.

**Music and dance**
Music, dancing and singing are very powerful means for helping those who are emotionally distressed, especially if the songs and tunes are familiar and evoke happy memories. The movement and rhythm help to release tension and produce a feeling of well-being. The group activity makes the child feel safe and able to express himself without having to use words and without feeling self-conscious. During the training sessions, students were given time to choose their favorite song, and soon they started to sing without feeling shy.

**Games**
The training sessions included an opportunity for children to play popular children’s games such as “Zip, Zap, Boing,” “My Dear Hunter” and “Streets and Alleys,” and to take part in improvisations and body sculptures, which they enjoyed very much. Games like these provide opportunities for children to play cooperatively and to develop motor skills.

**Theatre and hot seat exercise**
Another session involved dramatizing anything of interest to the children, with the intent of trying to communicate or deliver a certain message to the audience. Each group of students, teachers and school inspectors prepared its own drama to communicate messages of interest and importance to their group.

**Writing about experiences**
Children and youth can express their feelings and contribute to the discussion through writing. We learned how valuable it is for those who know how to present their stories in this way to be given the chance to write an account of their experiences about different things at home, at school and at the village.

The groups of children were told to go and write any story that was interesting to them and then to share it with the audience. Every group was given time to present the documented story and hear the comments of others. (See the findings in Chapter 4.)

A central theme in all of these self-expression activities is the importance of letting the children be free to express themselves as they wish. Adult participants were requested not to criticize the children’s productions or laugh at them, because doing so inhibits free expression.

**“Looking back” exercise**
In the “looking back” exercise, children successfully listed the useful skills gained in their time out of school and indicated what life skills they would like to get out of the present school.

However, reflections by both children and adults highlighted that the exercise in which the children drew the problems facing them in their daily lives was probably the turning point of the day. It revealed not only the children’s awareness and ability to express their experiences, but also all the hidden
tensions and anxieties experienced by children both in and out of school. Their depictions of scenes of beatings by teachers, drunken teachers, pregnant girls, overcrowded classrooms, long distances to school and many other problems were indeed revelatory. The two recurring themes in all four groups – extensive use of corporal punishment at school and pregnant schoolgirls – highlighted the pervasive nature of these problems within the school system. It is quite telling that there appeared to be more danger or threats to children inside the school than outside.

The drawing exercise led to an interesting discussion about children's rights, both in general terms and within the context of basic education. When asked for feedback on the whole exercise, one child succinctly summarized in a few words: “These exercises have given us the opportunity to vent our frustrations, tensions and anxieties which have been holed up in us for a long time. It has been a healing process for us” (Class Five student from Swahili at Mbawala school). All the children were categorical in urging that Save the Children keep all their drawings and their other work, as these would be destroyed by teachers if found.

Finally, when asked whether they would like a continued relationship with Save the Children in this regard, the overwhelming positive response by the children immediately told us the children had indeed found a new friend and ally in Save the Children.

This response was taken as a yardstick for us to decide whether we should continue with these exercises when conducting training sessions in other villages. The positive feedback from adult and children participants in the initial training session encouraged us to continue on to the other seven villages, and to conduct the same workshop to the same groups of participants.

I am happy to inform ECDVU that, despite the fact that I subsequently resigned from Save the Children, nonetheless the program described in this document of consultation meetings, children’s workshops and village promotion of the inclusion model is continuing to be introduced and practiced in the rest of the wards. My government counterparts and district inspectors are taking the lead in this. I was also informed that the project review team commended the model and approach of involving children and asked why it was not applied to other villages. Because of this positive feedback and lobbying effort, Save the Children and district officials resumed the exercise for the rest of wards.

3:8 Children’s Participation and Inclusion in School Governance
All groups were taken through the guide to enable them to understand the process and acquire the skills to be able to effectively involve everybody who attended the meeting.

The first step during the exercise was to meet with teachers from the selected schools and wards of Mtwara rural district to discuss and agree about the importance of involving children in the process of making decisions on different matters pertaining to their own development and that of their school.

Under inclusion, two important aspects to be observed were highlighted:

1. Participation of children in the school system – the purpose here was to understand which types of children were out of school and the reasons for being out of the school system. It was also important to know what material support was required at that time for those children to enter into the school system.

2. The mechanism through which children would participate in the process of making decisions for their own issues; for instance, formation of student class committees for the purpose of forming student councils or clubs. Students gave their experiences on these matters and their suggestions to teachers and school committee, one of which was to honor the opinion that was being given by students through their student council.

All groups gave different definitions according to the thoughts and views of members of their group, without any influence by the facilitator. However, at the end of every session, all group members agreed to have one operational definition of participation that was accepted by all group members.

- Children were able to demonstrate the meaning by showing the ways they should be included in different settings.
- Women were able to show what can be done by them for their children while at home to enable children to contribute towards meeting their felt needs.
- Village leaders did the same thing by writing what the village government to support children to express their views and participate fully in decision-making processes can do.

At the end of the meeting, all groups sat together and reached an agreement to have one operational definition of the term “participation”: 
“Participation is about people sharing ideas, thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, planning, prioritizing and being involved in the decision-making process to create change” (Re-action, 1992 p. 13). As it has been illustrated by Hart 1992 by using examples of participation ladders that include eight steps from first step where children and young people do or say what adults suggest they do, to eight step where Children and young people have the ideas set up, and invite adults to join with them in making decisions.

The UNCRC emphasizes the need to listen the views of the children, and that their right to participate must move beyond a limited “shopping list” vision of rights towards a more open and uncertain agenda in which children and young people can shape their future and make new demands of adult society (Roche & Tucker, 1997, in Re:action, p. 5).

Opportunities to participate in collective decision-making and scope for independent initiatives by children are very restricted. This is due partly to an unwillingness to change social relationships and partly to the fact that the perspectives and interests of adults dominate policymaking. It is absolutely essential to involve children and young people if the alienation of young adults is to be avoided and opportunities to build a dynamic society for the future are to be created (Save the Children, 1995).

The Re-action consultation toolkit goes farther to explain about the rights of the children. It states that we always emphasize to participants that to allow children to participate in decision-making is not a favor; rather, it is one of the essential rights of children according to the UN.

Children and young people have the right to participate in decisions that affect their lives, their community and the larger society in which they live. Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of
the Child states that children have the right to be heard in decisions that affect them. It is important that children and young people have ample opportunity to voice their opinions when decision are being made that affect them because they have varied experiences, insightful ideas and plenty of enthusiasm (Save the Children, 2001, p. 5).

Exclusion of children and youth in the process of bringing about development is a common error in the development arena. “Errors in development lie on the continuum between two poles: at one pole, embraced errors which lead to learning; at the other, embedded errors which sustain mistakes” (Chambers, 1997, p. 15)

It helps to initiate the process of change. We still, however, think about how to sustain the process of change and how to draw children into the planning process bearing in mind that for child representatives involved in the adult planning process it can be threatening and non-productive (IIED, 1996, p 34).

It is therefore high time for professionals to accept the challenge and allow changes to happen that better the life of not only children and young people but also the whole society at large. The cost of excluding children in the process of bringing about development is felt everywhere, in all programs, whether they be government programs or those initiated by NGOs.

Changes brought about by external interventions often lead to increased responsibilities and sometimes-heavier workloads for children. Instead, changes should be allowed to happen that are identified and initiated from within children’s own ideas and decisions should be encouraged and supported – yet it is often difficult to accept and support this type of change. Yukl (2002) describes some of the difficulties of the process of persuading people to support change. He says that it requires a collaborative effort between a leader and other people working as a team. “The task of persuading people to support major change is not easy, and it is too big a job for a single leader to do alone. Successful change in an organization requires cooperative effort by people who have the power to facilitate or block change” (p. 289).
Yukl (2002) identifies some guidelines for people-oriented action through which a change becomes obvious if followed carefully. He identifies the following steps:

- Create a sense of urgency about the need for change.
- Prepare people to adjust to change.
- Help people deal with the pain of change.
- Provide opportunities for early success.
- Keep people informed about the progress of change.
- Demonstrate continued commitment to change.
- Empower people to implement change (p. 289).

It is clear that more work needs to be done to look at how children can participate in the community-level decisions affecting their lives and what structures can ensure that their voices are heard. Where other marginalized groups have gained places on committees, this has contributed to a stronger sense of self-respect, self-confidence and acceptance by others. The evidence has shown that where work has been done to ensure representation of women within the community, this has led to some degree of empowerment of women. It is likely that involving children in the same way would have the same impact. Participants were advised to use the techniques of including different groups of children in an informal atmosphere (Narayanasamy et al.; Sellers & Westernby, as quoted in PLA Notes, p 32, 1996). There remains a need to be transparent with parents, children and other community members about the aims and process of children’s participation in community development issues. It is important that there is awareness amongst staff and field workers that children are capable of analyzing their situations and can make viable suggestions for change.

To be able to take action for change one needs to understand some participatory techniques that will help to produce the essential child-specific information upon which a more general case can be built. Without such techniques, it is not possible to demonstrate that children’s participation produces positive results, or that their non-participation produces negative results, either for the children themselves or for the families, communities and societies they live in. The absence of such information is one of the problems, which reinforce the conventional, non-participatory model of childhood that lies at the root of the problem in the first place.

3:9 How to Communicate with Children

Among other topics taught to teachers, school inspectors and Save the Children staff was communication, with a special focus on how to communicate better with children.

So far we have seen that participation “is about people sharing ideas, thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, planning, prioritizing and being
involved in the decision-making process to create change” (Save the Children, 2001, p. 13).

Therefore, in order for a person to communicate better with children, some skills are required which will enable him or her to do the job better. Some of the important things to consider in communication are as follows:

**Communication without words (non-verbal communication)**

Teachers were taught the use of non-verbal communication, including the insight that the level of understandability of non-verbal communication depends upon the particular culture. For example, in some groups lifting up the shoulder means “I refuse” while in other groups it means “I do not know.”

It is therefore important that a teacher or any person who is communicating with children makes sure that his or her non-verbal communication is helping a child to feel comfortable. Adults can learn to modify their usual behavior when talking with children in order to help the children to understand and feel relaxed.

**Tone of voice**

Sometimes people speak in a loud or harsh voice without being aware of it. This makes a child think that the person is angry with her or him. This might hinder communication, because the misconception may cause a child not to continue sharing ideas or making contributions to the group.

In some communities, adults use a special tone of voice for speaking to children, more high pitched or quieter or more singsong than with another adult. This can be a sign of sympathy, helping the child to feel safe.

**Facial expression**

It is common for some people to look bored, worried or annoyed while the child talks to him or her; doing so may soon stop a child from communicating. The opposite of this is speaking to a child with an encouraging voice, nodding and smiling frequently. This will encourage the child to go on telling stories or otherwise communicating, because it shows that you are interested. Make sure that your expression changes according to what she or he is expressing. For example, it is not appropriate to continue to smile when a child is communicating something that is sad or frightening for the child to express. Instead, it may be more appropriate to show focused attention, gentle concern, and/or comforting gestures that do not interrupt the child’s flow of communication.

**Jokes and laughter**

Participants were taught about the importance of smiles and laughter when working with children so as to enable the participatory discussion to take place. However, sometimes people smile and laugh when they are embarrassed or do not know what to say. It is important for a facilitator to recognize what makes you
uncomfortable or embarrassed, so that you can avoid reactions that will seem unsympathetic.

**Eye contact**

Different societies vary in the amount of eye contact that is usual when an adult and a child are talking together. In Tanzanian cultures, for example, children are not supposed to look at the adult directly because that will be translated as being rude and arrogant, not ready to listen. With children who are very timid, it is best to allow time for them to gain confidence and not to get too close to them or look at them much at first. These subtle signals can greatly influence whether children will be willing to talk to an adult or perhaps not talk at all.

**Open questions and comments**

Another technique of making children comfortable to participate fully is to prepare open questions that require them to contribute more than a “yes” or “no” to answer. Open questions encourage the child to express her ideas and to talk about her feelings. They do not suggest any right or wrong answer. Occasional comments during your conversation that accurately reflect back the information or the feelings that the child is telling you will also show that you are listening and trying to understand her.

**Using simple language**

Adult participants were encouraged to use simple language that can be understood better by children. Adults often talk to children without stopping to think whether they are being understood. Long or difficult words, complicated sentences or ideas leave the child confused. Adults were advised to try to explain things to children in a way that links in with the children’s experiences.

**Use the child’s mother tongue**

Conversations with children in their mother tongue enables them to participate in a wide variety of different discussions and activities, providing that other key elements that contribute to children feeling free to communicate are also observed: establishing trust, creating a comfortable and non-intimidating environment, listening with empathy, interest and patience, and assessing and adjusting your personal behaviours in support of children’s full participation. When discussions take place in the child’s mother tongue under these positive conditions, children can make remarkable contributions at the family, school, village, district and national levels.

**Blocks in communication**
Participants were also helped to identify what may be hindering a child from talking to them. Why won't he or she talk? In most cases the reasons that a child is unwilling to talk are caused by the adult; thus it is very important to consider the following questions:

- Are you encouraging the child to talk, not only with words, but also with the encouraging strategies previously identified (tone of voice, body language, appropriately reassuring gestures, simple language, etc.)?
- Does the child have one or more language-related problems (for example, deafness, speech problems, delay in language development, etc.)?
- Are strong emotional reactions, either on the part of the child or your own, inhibiting effective communication?

**How you communicate**

Adult participants were cautioned to be aware of how they communicate and to make appropriate adjustments, because their own communication style will influence whether or not a child feels relaxed and accepted. An adult may block communication by:

- Talking too much.
- Being critical or judgmental.
- Laughing at or humiliating a child.
- Being aggressive or bullying.
- Getting upset or emotional.
- Contradicting or arguing.
- Being uncomfortable or embarrassed when a child is upset.
- Not respecting a child's beliefs or way of life.
- Not creating a situation of trust.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This was a very challenging exercise. We could not know in advance what would happen in the field due to the strong cultural belief about children not having a voice in front of parents.

Children are seen as inherently non-productive. Despite the reality that they participate all the time in economic development, family and culture (especially in non-Western societies), they are routinely excluded from official definitions and measurement of work. Children are treated as by-product of other units of study such as the household, family or parent. The need to collect information that is specific to children’s lives is not perceived. (IIED, PLA Notes 1996, p. 48)

Through their presentations in plenary sessions, the adult groups targeted for involvement in these training sessions remarked that non-involvement of children in development activities was neither perceived as an issue nor as a serious problem in their communities because it has been thus for many generations. No one bothers to consult his or her child on any family matters until the child is grown up and married.

This is the problem not only for village communities but also for planners, who in most cases use a standard model of childhood that has its roots in 19th century Western thinking. This model treats children as immature and irrational. According to this model, people are qualified to participate in decisions only when adulthood has been reached, that is, somewhere between 16 and 20 years of age, depending on the prevailing cultural and legal definition. Children’s views are considered “childish” and their opinions are not sought.

Through focus group discussions and consultation meetings with parents, children were very open to tell how they were being excluded in the process of school governance. In projects, children were not involved at the outset of the project. For the most part, teachers expressed a willingness to examine the assumptions and wrong perceptions they had about children.

Through discussions with groups of men, women, government and school professionals and children themselves, groups came up with the following factors that hinder the process of genuine involvement of children:
• Insufficient time allocated in the process of involving children (and indeed, in engaging in a process of community involvement), which often conflicts with the need to work at scale.
• A tendency towards tokenism in involving children.
• Lack of recognition or opportunities for children to participate within donor programs.
• Lack of understanding of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and what it means in practice for programs in education and ECCD.
• Cultural attitudes towards children’s participation in public spheres, for instance, public meetings, health committees and other activities of that nature.
• Lack of skills and understanding of children issues amongst partners.
• Donor pressure to work at scale to meet targets and deadlines.

However, it is felt that the issue of workload is often used as a pretext or an excuse for not involving children and youth in the process of community participation. Articles 13 and 15 of the UNCRC expressly stipulates:

the child’s right to obtain and make known information, and to express his or her views, unless this violates the rights of others.

(13). . . . Article 15: the right of children to meet with others and to join or set up the associations, unless the fact of doing so violates the rights of others.

The Re-action consultation toolkit (Save the Children, 2001) is a useful resource for promoting understanding and implementation of children’s right to participate. It includes a practical toolkit for consulting with children and young people on policy issues.

Writing about experiences

Children did a very good job by writing about the problems they faced at school. One such problem that came to light was that some teachers were ordering students to go to their homes to cook some tea during class hours, and still others constantly asked for bites and snacks from the food students brought from home for their own nourishment. Students who were unable or unwilling to provide those things were treated badly, and sometime the teacher failed the student in school courses.

From those presentations the District Education Officers requested that students go back to their schools and write the names of all teachers who were practicing such bad habits and abusing their profession. They requested that this exercise be done in all schools of Mtwara rural district. Before the workshop it was not easy for district officials to listen to students or to ask students about their experiences at school.
Theatre and hot seat exercise

Students excelled at this exercise. Each group of students chose three students to act out the role as teachers as follows:

- One demonstrated the character, teaching style, and negative behaviors of bad teachers.
- Another gave a demonstration of the character, teaching style, and positive behaviors of good teachers that use child-friendly methods to teach students.
- The third enacted the character, teaching style, and negative behaviors of lazy teachers who have no real interest in teaching their students, and the ensuing problems: students cannot finish the syllabus, have no opportunity to meet with a teacher to discuss difficult topics, etc.

The students acted out these demonstrations without feeling too shy or fearful to participate effectively. At the end of drama one teacher felt it was important to comment. He stood up and said:

Today is very important day to all of us because everybody was able to see what was happening during the drama by students. We could think that our students would not be able to show how they feel when we cane them or use frivolous language, threats, and tricks to influence them to do what we thought was right. Today they have been able to tell us for the first time that what we were doing was very wrong and unpleasant for them.

This is a better way of making children participate fully and contribute towards remolding behaviors of evil characters. I recommend these exercises to be done at all schools in Mtwara District (Suleiman Namoh).

Students were able to demonstrate the good characters of parents who take trouble to make follow-up to the development recommendations of their student’s council at school by caning a head teacher till his seat becomes hot.

While developing understanding of the concept of and opportunities for children’s participation, adult participants examined their weak communication skills and experience in talking to children, and learned strategies to improve these important skills.
The area coverage was too vast for the few staff involved in this training project to manage to complete the work at the scheduled time. Since there was only one vehicle available, everything was depending upon obtaining use of the same car. Thank God the manager decided to hire another car to remedy the situation, otherwise the project would not have moved forward.

Through discussion about the needs of children and the importance of incorporating strategies to address them into the overall plan of the village, it was revealed that it is difficult for the planners to accept that the children’s needs are largely invisible in development planning. Involved representatives of CBOs, government staff, NGO staff and the villagers themselves all admitted that prior to the training they did not believe that children can be important development actors in their own right. There were a very few people participating who accepted at the outset that children and young people can contribute meaningfully during planning processes.

Groups in the workshop acknowledged that a problem exists at senior levels within government institutions, CBOs and NGOs. There was a tendency to treat children’s roles in development as relatively unimportant, except for the more visible issues relating to education, street children, sexual exploitation and labor in factories or mining. “By definition children’s views are considered “childish” and their opinions are not sought” (IIED, 1996. p. 48).

Many people believe they know what children want, and even the most well meaning will need to change their attitudes to listen to children when it comes to planning for change (Edwards, 1996, p. 34).

There is therefore a need for reorientation of training of village extension officers and Ward Development Committee members in organizations and government structures towards age and gender. Edwards (1996) states that it was really “disturbing to realize that within many different institutions children are seen as objects of development interventions rather than important development actors in their own right” (p. 35).

**Why listen to children?**

Through discussion with different groups including children and teachers themselves we discovered that all had good reasons as to why we should listen to children.

Elucidated hereunder are some of the reasons given by communities in plenary discussions.

- As with other human being young children have opinions on all aspects of their lives. They have a right to express these views and have them into account.
- When children let adults know what they think, services , even for the youngest children, can be improved.
By being heard young children develop confidence in their own judgments and opinions. By hearing and respecting the views of others, children also develop empathy and negotiation skills. It is true that there are benefits for all when young children have greater say in their settings and in other areas of their lives. Miller had this to say about this aspect “Parents who involve their children asking for their opinion, listening to what they say and taking their views into account their relationship with children become much easier……. There is far less conflict and much more co-operation between them and their children. Children respond positively to being treated with respect and, in turn, treat their parents with more respect” (Miller, 1997, as quoted by International Children’s Rights Monitor, Volume 15, No. 3, September 2002).

4:1 Problems Encountered

A number of problems were encountered in the course of the training project, including:

- Lack of transport facility for some time prevented me from finishing the job on time.
- Distance of some areas from town was an issue because people were not ready to go and sleep in rural areas, due to the nature of our rural areas that do not encourage an educated person to stay there and sleep. So we had to go to the village and come back the same day.
- Our roads are so bad that whenever we went to the village everybody came back very tired and complaining of backbone ache.
- Changing employment consumed a lot of my energy and time and made it more difficult to ensure I finished work on this training project before starting a new office.
- Resources were meager to support my project so I had to use my own funds to accomplish some of the activities.
- The number of people who were involved in the exercise was also increased compared to the first delivery. When we started we were only four people involved in organizing and facilitating the training.

The overriding problem and question, however, is: “Why is there such a widespread lack of belief in the value of children’s active participation and
contribution to development?” Edwards (1996) believes that the following factors contribute to the problem we have in accepting and valuing children’s participation and the active role it is their right to play in development process:

- The first thing is, lack of appreciation of children’s contribution among many adults who see children as non-productive entities. “Despite the reality that they participate all the time in economic development, family and culture (especially in non-Western societies), they are routinely excluded from official definitions and measurements of work. (p. 48) This undermines the efforts that have in most cases shown by children in encountering poverty situations at home.

- Worse still, “Children are treated as by-products of other units of study, such as the household, family or parent. The need to collect information that is specific to children’s lives is not perceived.”(p. 48, bullet 2). This makes the whole idea of children participation and inclusion in household development processes futile. However, there is slight and significant remarkable changes that have started to happen to development partner organizations which try to push children’s participation agenda to all people and act accordingly as a way of demonstrating what they believe in.

- When it comes to adult-child interaction (which is important in trying to capture views of children), “Adults may feel that, as they have once been children, they understand the needs of children without having to ask them; finding out children’s own views is seen as unnecessary” (p. 48 bullet 3). This results into wrong action and inadequate attention paid to children matters by many adults that consequently widen the gap between them.

- “By treating children as passive and dependent, adults reinforce their monopoly of power in the world over and above that required to nurture children towards adulthood” (p. 48) For so doing children have ended up in acquiring values and norms that in their future time will become very bad adults and hence to perpetuate the virtuous circle.
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an analysis of the current reality of child participation in Tanzania in relation to different theories and relevant references cited in previous chapters. It examines what other people have tried to talk about regarding child participation, leadership and childcare and development in the African context, particularly in Tanzania.

Discrimination against children happens not only in Tanzania but also in other parts of the world. The difference is how it occurs and manifests in communities, as has been illustrated by the ActionAid research report *Listening to Smaller Voices: Children in an Environment of Change* (1995). Robert Dodd, the Director of Policy and Research, ActionAid, states:

> Listening to voices does not therefore mean advocating for 'child power,' but for the greater empowerment of children. Listening to smaller voices, by which children are brought into the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of endeavors undertaken in the interests of the whole community, means embracing the interlinked concepts of gender and generation (foreword page).

This supports statements in the different literature cited in Chapters 2 and 4 that describe the roles played by children in household survival and in the process of bringing about change in the ongoing development cycle of social groups, despite the fact that adults often abuse the true intent of child participation rights and have, in most cases, not discovered its significance in community development. Dodd is very much concerned about participation and inclusion of children as active actors in development rather than just recipients.

The Nepal experience, as described by Action Aid (Johnson et al., 1995) leaves a lot to be desired. It is an example of what is happening at the household level:

> This study brings us closer to an understanding of how children fit into the larger picture. It explores the work of children at the household level and also the linkages between their roles and domestic management of marriage patterns and entitlement to land. . . . It positions children and community development within the framework of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (foreword page).
Most of the programs that have been initiated either by the government or NGOs have based their work on generalization and simplistic solutions, instead of focusing on being practical and specific during planning and policy formulation processes. Their plans do not show how development programming should build on the capacities and strengths of girls and boys, rather than merely focusing on their weaknesses. Children should not just be treated as recipients of health and education.

Judith Ennew (in Johnson et al., 1995) of the Department of Anthropology at Goldsmith College, University of London, states:

Children are a unique reminder of the past and signals of the future. In all societies, children represent the possibility of continuing all that is yearned for. This is as it should be. However, all too often children are treated as human beings on probation. Innovative participation on their part is discouraged in favor of socialization into facsimiles of the adults around them. They thus become bearers of all mistakes of both past and present (p. 6).

Previous chapters of this report touched upon the prevalent problem of child labor and the way in which many adult employers misinterpret and manipulate children’s right to participate in order to exploit children as a cheap labor force. In addition, the money that children earn is not normally considered as a contribution to the family, despite the fact that it adds significantly to the household income. It is not considered significant simply because it done by a child.

When it comes to children’s involvement in decision making for different development programs aimed to solve the needs of the entire community, researchers report that “young people’s ability to contribute to decision making is often underestimated, and the process can bolster confidence and self esteem in some young individuals” (IIED, 1996, p. 80).

I think the main challenge for adults is to find a range of ways of communicating with children to enable them to express their views and opinions. In most cases especially for African societies do not have a culture of listening to children that is wrong.

According to Clarke (2001) as cited by Tina Hyder in International Children’s Rights Monitor states that, “traditional methods of consultation with user group require imaginative rethinking if the views and experiences of young children are to be listened to and responded to by adults.” (p. 23) Clarke goes on to describe
the successful Mosaic approach to listening to young children where children are viewed as “co-constructors of meaning.”

- “Be clear why listening to very young children is important
- Agree some basic principles to underpin what you are doing.
- Train and support those involved
- Plan carefully
- Make enough time
- Agree who will be accountable to the children and what this means in practice.” (p. 23)

There is a very important question that we should ask ourselves: How can we improve the lives of children? The ActionAid report (Johnson et al, 1995) suggests six steps for agencies to improve the lives of children. The steps are:

1. Improve internal agency policies.
2. Create alternatives and opportunities for poor people.
3. Raise awareness and increase involvement.
5. Ensure better employment conditions.
6. Advocate at all levels (p. 4).

**Improve internal agency policies**

Tanzania has in place two key documents, the Plan of Action and the Policy for Children, but neither document specifically addresses how to involve children in development issues. The Policy considers children as significant contributors only from the age of 16-18. So there is a need to improve our policies to specifically reflect children’s needs and to show practically how these children will be involved in the process of bringing about desired change.

**Create alternatives and opportunities for poor people**

Poor people are the most disadvantaged group, and within poor families children are the most disadvantaged family members, especially girl children. So if we look into alternatives we should consider discrimination within the household first before we move broadly. This will help to address the specific problem to the specific group, rather than generalizing the case in a manner that does not address the realities of discrimination in family life.

**Raise awareness and increase involvement**
Awareness about the need to involve children in planning and implementing community development strategies is still very low among duty bearers. At the household level things are not well; for example, in our training session’s village elders were not able to identify the significant contributions that children make to community survival seasonally or in times of difficulty, when children engage in different productive activities to support the entire community.

Once adults come to recognize the contributions that children make on an ongoing basis, it may be easier for them to see children as active participants in village life rather than passive recipients, and to accept the value of involving children in ongoing decision-making processes at the community level. The current situation calls for awareness campaigns to support adults to change their attitudes towards their children.

**Provide education options for children**

This step is vital to enable children to understand their obligations and their rights in the process of bringing change in the community. Children who have attended school have a greater chance of getting their needs met and their rights honored than children who have not been at school.

**Ensure better employment conditions**

Advocacy is not an end in itself; rather it is a means to an end. It helps the policy makers to pay attention to burning issues and consider the need for change when formulating policies affecting children. Their minds must reflect the picture of children in the extremely poor family and seek alternatives to enable these children to reach their full potential as contributing members to the society at all levels, including the nation level.

**Ensure better employment conditions**

Last though not least is the issue of employment conditions. Most children in Tanzania do engage in production like other groups of producers. The conditions of employment for these children needs to be improved, their rights must be respected, and they must receive adequate support to enable them to survive and thrive in often very difficult circumstances. In most cases, employers expose children to high-risk situations with no provisions for their safety or education. As a result, far too many children are neglected, uneducated and injured as child laborers. And, if they survive to adulthood, they face lives of poverty and ignorance.

Conditions of employment should consider the importance of children’s safety, and the need for children to receive adequate nutrition, nurturing and education
while working. Work assignments should take their age and gender into consideration, and should be conducted in such a way as to enable children to attain their goals and grow in a manner that is accepted by the community in which they live.

In conclusion, emphasis should be placed to ensure that there is coherence between policies, the type of education that children ought to receive, and the level of awareness among people. This coherence will serve to enable people to provide opportunities for children to participate fully in decision-making processes, to bring about change in their communities at different periods of time.

Education that is relevant and that provides skills and answers to meet the challenges of daily life is very important to enable children to defend their rights and know their obligations. If we take up the challenge to educate our children in this way and to open our systems to their active participation in the development process, we will prepare for a nation that will be able to break through poverty cycles to a brighter future for all.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

As the prime stakeholders in the education process, children and young people ought to be consulted about the type and quality of education they require. It is not feasible to talk to every child in the country; reasonable samples (including parents) can be used, drawing representation from poor and rich districts, rural and urban settings, girls and boys, and children with special needs.

Children and young people need to be included as active participants in the development process, and not just as informants.

Talking to different groups of children in the community (including variations of age, gender, economic status, ability, and ethnicity) is a simple and effective tool for deepening understanding of the impact of this development project. This initiative needs to continue to grow, by including training for children that provides them with greater awareness of their rights and tools to bridge the existing gender gap, and by gradually building staff skills to work with different groups of children.

The time required for ensuring participation of excluded groups (women, children, disabled, poor people) is considerable, and often is in conflict with pressure to scale up, replicate through the government, or with output- and target-driven thinking by donors. Nevertheless, for the purpose of achieving full participation of all groups in the community, we have to involve all groups no matter how long it may take us to reach the targets.

Leaders have got a very crucial role to play in organizing, planning, and controlling resources to make sure that the developmental change desired by the community is realized within the planned time and at the least cost. Community leaders and project planners need to provide adequate room for children and young people to participate; even though it will likely take longer to achieve the goal. It is essential to ensure that children’s voices are heard and that they are actively involved from the initial stages of project planning through the processes of appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

There are currently some policies, regulations and guidelines that are not child and community friendly or mutually supportive to inclusion and participation of all groups in community development processes. It is an opportune time for Tanzanian leaders, communities, and all NGOs to officially recognize that human resource development is built on the foundation of the early years, including the ability of children to express their views and contribute fully to poverty alleviation strategies.
CHAPTER 7: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is necessary for adults and especially for the Save the Children project in Mtwara to increase the opportunities for children’s participation in all key areas that profoundly affect their life.

2. More time must be provided in planning teamwork with children out of school; it is generally not easy to work with out-of-school children mainly due to a set of expectations and problems that must be managed carefully.

3. I strongly recommend that the Save the Children UK program pursue funding for a similar activity in other places that were not covered by this project.

4. It is always important to incorporate all stakeholders, including children, into the consultation process.

5. It may be possible to develop an extension of the present project into a Child Rights Education program, together with government and another donor.

6. Different levels of participation will be appropriate at different ages, and depending on the intervention. Efforts must be made to identify means of involving very young children.

7. In all of our programs, there is a need to clarify what level of children’s participation is most appropriate and effective, and what structure can ensure this participation on an ongoing basis.


Save the Children. (2001). *Re-action consultation toolkit: A practical toolkit for consulting with children and young people on policy issues as part of Scottish Executive’s Action Program for Youth (September 1999).*


Save the Children UK/Ethiopia. (1998, May). *Lessons learnt from the field on inclusion and participation of children in project circle*.


APPENDIX

Acronyms

CBO  Community Based Organization
IIED  International Institute for Environmental Development
NGO  Non Governmental Organization
POA  Plan of Action
SCF  Save the Children Foundation
TRC  Teachers Resource Center
UNCRC  UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
WDC  Ward Development Committee
WFP  World Food Program