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**Teaching English and Mathematics in Tanzanian primary schools and the implications for all subsequent education**

Katy Allen, MBE, Director, Village Education Project Kilimanjaro (VEPK)

Barbara Kerr, Mathematics coordinator, Village Education Project Kilimanjaro (VEPK)

PO Box 737, Marangu, Tanzania

[project@kiliproject.org](mailto:project@kiliproject.org)

Tel: 0754 313243

In Tanzania's government primary schools, particularly in rural areas, the standard of teaching and learning English and Mathematics is low. This means that there is no solid foundation on which pupils can build with the result that pupils do not progress well in their education. Over the years, VEPK has reviewed how the subjects are taught and identified ways that the shortcomings can be addressed. This paper will look at the two subjects separately, identifying the specific issues relevant to each and how they are currently being addressed.

VEPK has investigated how English was taught in Tanzania some years ago and how English is taught in other countries. Using this information and its experience of teaching English in rural primary schools for over twenty years, VEPK believes that for the quality of language teaching and the literacy of teachers to be improved, the current syllabus needs to be overhauled and that a single textbook should be introduced from Standard III upwards. In addition, VEPK believes that a Language Awareness course for Standard I and II could help significantly in the development of skills and provide the motivation for learning English.

Addressing three main areas will enable teachers to improve their own English skills and therefore those of their pupils. These are:

1. The lack of an English course
2. The lack of practice-exercises, pronunciation guides and repetition/revision of topics/items already learned
3. The language of instructions and teachers' guides

This paper does not enter into the English/Kiswahili debate but addresses the situation as it presently stands, namely that the medium of Primary education is Kiswahili and that of Secondary is English.

The problems with mathematics stems from the existing primary school syllabus coupled with the lack of understanding of child development and its effect on the learning ability of young children. VEPK has considered how child development, skills and knowledge, and the relevance of learning impacts on pupils' learning of mathematics. These findings, supported by studies and experience gained in English, Australian and Tanzanian primary schools, are supported by an analysis of data specific to Tanzanian government primary schools. This paper will also consider the steps needed to rectify the primary school teaching of mathematics and the progress VEPK has made in this regard.

Finally, brief mention will be made of the wider requirements needed to ensure the success of implementing the recommendations.