Youth Voices in Development - Assignment II Kelly Ramsauer

<u>Topic 2: Goal Four: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.</u>

1. What do you think are the entry points for achieving this goal in your host country?

Similarly to goal 5 of achieving gender equality, the entry point for achieving goal 4 is to target the sections of society who are disadvantaged in terms of access; that is to say, access to even the most basic elementary education. In the case of Tanzania, I found these to be especially girls and young women who live in the rural northern parts of Tanzania. Achieving this goal is thus also to provide alternative forms of income for girls, which in turn can provide self-development & learning opportunities that in turn can elevate their value in the eyes of the family & society as a whole.

Projects & programs such as the ones that my host organization provides in conjunction with community centers & schools, target young women and girls, providing entrepreneurship skills, business skills & other alternative income generating skills allowing girls to create something for themselves, empowers them, and increases their value to the community, allowing them in turn be viewed as more than just a means to receiving a high dowry.

Another entry point would be the lack of resources many education facilities are facing, especially in rural villages, where usually only one or two schools exists. Many teachers are faced with teaching up to 70 or 80 children, all different ages & levels of education, and can thus not provide any support or challenge for individual children. Additional financial resources in turn are connected to the political affairs of each respective district, and money is allocated according to the decisions of the District Commissioners; most of whom are men, and most of whom grew in the same villages with the same cultural & traditional beliefs of what women & men's roles are in society. Elevating women into leadership roles is thus also a factor that has to be considered.

2. What recommendations would you make for achieving this goal in your host country?

If we want to address the issue of education in the host country we have to first look at the

inclusive & equitable factor of education for Tanzania; critically analyzing the worth society, culture & traditions set upon girls and boys, as well as what the role of the dowry & other forms of financial aspects play a part in determining who goes to school. Beyond the fact that many – boys & girls – do not even have access to education, especially in rural areas where the sheer distance to the closest school prevents them from regularly attending, the sons' education is prioritized over a girls'. Many families simply cannot afford to send all their children to school, and thus prefer to send their sons, as they in turn are seen as more important members. Gender equality is thus a large part of education and who gets priority within a single family; a daughter is married off as early as possible, so the family can receive the dowry, which in turn pays for the sons' educational fees. This decreases both the chance for the daughter to get any education at all – since many girls in Tanzania are married off between the ages of 10-16 – as well as the chance of any poverty alleviation for the family as a whole – since the dowry payment, often in the form of cattle or other animals, is used right away again for the son.

When addressing the issue of a *quality* education however, I have found there to be a more equal lack of access to good & superior learning opportunities. For me, that seems to be more of an infrastructur problem, rather than a societal or cultural one. There is no or very little infrastructure that can effectively combat the lack of quality educational facilities; many teachers that I have talked to in rural areas where my host organization works, have themselves only completed secondary education or have not completed their

facilities; many teachers that I have talked to in rural areas where my host organization works, have themselves only completed secondary education or have not completed their teachers training at all. Often times, teachers have 70 or 80 children in their classes, many of them sit on the floors in school buildings that are falling apart, and many of the teachers have not been paid in months and are thus 'volunteering'. Students complained that even if they finished their secondary education, there are simply no options for them in terms of jobs or further learning opportunities in their area; alternative forms of income, besides the traditional economic means of survival such as farming, tailoring or selling vegetables at markets, do not exist. And thus boys & girls do what their parents did & their grandparents before them.

Both in terms of *how* society values boys vs. girls, as well as *what type* of basic education & future alternative means of making a living are a societal, cultural but also economic issue in Tanzania, and are thus enormous issues for the country, when addressing education.

3. How do you believe that goal four relates to goal five, "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"?

I think both SDG goals – all of the SDG in general – are connected in terms of influencing each other substantially and thus can only be solved sustainably & comprehensively in conjunction with one another; without inclusive & equitable quality education, girls and young women can never achieve gender inequality and be empowered, and without gender equality & empowerment, girls and women can never achieve access to inclusive & equitable quality education. Gender inequality is both a result & cause of lack of education for women and girls, and lack of education is in turn a cause & result of gender inequality. Access to better education for girls and young women can lift them and their families out of poverty, can reduce dependence on & importance of male family members, and can increase women in leadership roles that can ultimately advocate for gender equality & investment into education for girls in their communities and throughout Tanzania.