Global Vision, Local Reality: Transforming Pre-Primary Teacher Training in Tanzania

Bethany Wilinski
Michigan State University

Cuong Huy Nguyen
Michigan State University

Jessica M. Landgraf
Michigan State University

Global attention to early childhood education (ECE) has led to an increased focus on ECE teacher training as a critical component of providing young children with access to high-quality ECE programs. In this paper, we ask how Tanzanian stakeholders at different levels of implementation experienced and responded to efforts to build capacity in pre-primary education (PPE) through the introduction of a new PPE diploma program. We examine how national and local stakeholders' responses to the policy were mediated by perceptions of early years teaching, economic realities, and the availability of human and material resources for PPE teacher training. We employ Weaver-Hightower's (2008) ecological approach to policy analysis to make sense of how these environments and structures intersected with the enactment of the PPE diploma program. Drawing on data from the first year of a longitudinal study that employs qualitative methodology to understand the experiences of PPE diploma students, we demonstrate how perceptions about PPE teaching, economic realities and the availability of human and material resources facilitate and constrain program implementation in ways that have implications for its success.

Introduction

Early childhood education (ECE) has featured prominently in global and national development agendas in recent years as result of evidence that investment in young children leads to multiplier benefits for individuals and societies (Hayden & Lee, 2009; Neuman & Devercelli, 2012; Neuman, Josephson, & Chua, 2015; Soudée, 2009; Thomas & Thomas, 2009). Benefits of participation in ECE programs range from improved educational achievement and attainment to increased workforce productivity (Barnett & Masse, 2007; Gormley & Phillips, 2005; Heckman, 2011; Rolnick & Grunewald, 2003; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Shaeffer, 2015). Now, for the first time, the global development agenda has included an explicit focus on young children (The Consultative Group on

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Early Childhood Care and Development, 2016). Target 4.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 states, "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education" (United Nations, 2015, p. 21). Tanzania, the focal country for this study, has been the site of considerable investment in ECE reform over the past decade (The World Bank, 2012). Most recently, the Tanzanian government has articulated a vision for making one year of pre-primary education compulsory and for expanding PPE access (The World Bank, 2016; United Republic of Tanzania, 2014). As part of this effort, the Tanzanian government has introduced a new diploma training program for PPE teachers, with a goal of building capacity and addressing the current shortage of qualified PPE teachers (The World Bank, 2012).

As a site of ongoing investment in ECE and in which the government has demonstrated political will for ECE reform, Tanzania is an ideal context to understand how an initiative that has been set on a global stage intersects with local realities. In this paper, we ask: As a global vision for ECE reform is enacted locally, how do stakeholders at different levels of implementation make sense of and respond to these efforts? How do environments and structures that intersect with the diploma program mediate its enactment and stakeholders' experiences with the program? Although there is growing demand for PPE and evidence that PPE participation in Tanzania is on the rise (UNICEF, 2016), achieving national ECE goals requires a sustained effort to "recruit, retain, and support qualified personnel" (Neuman et al., 2015, p. 7). As such, there is a critical need to identify the factors that facilitate and constrain PPE teacher recruitment, training, and retention. In this paper we demonstrate how efforts to build capacity in the Tanzanian PPE workforce have great potential to attract candidates and reframe perceptions of early years teaching. At the same time, these efforts may be undermined by the social, cultural, and material realities of PPE teacher training. Understanding the local implications of PPE reform efforts in Tanzania is of particular importance because Tanzania has been identified as a focal country for the World Bank's new Early Learning Partnership (The World Bank, 2016). As such, Tanzania will see considerable investment in its ECE sector in coming years. Results from this study provide important contextual information that can inform this new effort to build stronger ECE systems in Tanzania.

In the sections that follow, we situate this analysis of PPE teacher training within the growing movement to reform ECE teacher training and then describe the specific context of ECE in Tanzania. We then describe how we use Weaver-Hightower's (2008) policy ecologies as a methodological tool and theoretical framework to make sense of what happened when a global vision for ECE reform came into contact with local realities. In the findings section, we demonstrate how perceptions of ECE teaching, economic realities, and the availability of human and material resources shaped how students and policymakers made sense of and experienced the new PPE diploma program. We argue

that a deep understanding of the complex ways policy initiatives intersect with local realities is needed if goals of transforming the ECE workforce are to be achieved.

Background: A Global Focus on ECE Teacher Training

Advocacy for improved ECE quality and access has come with growing attention to teachers and the quality of their pre- and in-service education (Shaeffer, 2015). The 2015 Education for all Global Monitoring Report focused specifically on the ECE workforce as a critical component of ECE quality:

> *The quality of childcare for very young children remains a serious issue. The knowledge, skills, status, and pay for early childhood teachers must be addressed…It is agreed that ECCE professionals are more effective in supporting children's development if they have at least some specialized education and training (UNESCO, 2015, pp. 45, 55).*

Similarly, a recent report from the International Labour Organization pointed to the need to focus on improving the quality of ECE teacher preparation in order to ensure ECE program quality: "High-quality ECE provision is dependent on adequate investments in initial ECE personnel education and training that ensure preparation for all ECE personnel comparable to that of primary school teachers with equivalent professional status and responsibilities" (International Labour Organization, 2014, p. 10).

Calls to improve ECE teacher training respond to the reality that many ECE teachers receive very little training, if any, and the fact that education requirements for ECE teachers in many places are relatively low compared to primary and secondary school teachers (Shaeffer, 2015). The situation in Tanzania reflects this trend. In 2013, only 40% of pre-primary teachers were trained to national standards, whereas almost 100% of primary school teachers had received adequate training. In addition to this, the qualification requirements for PPE teaching were lower than primary school teaching (Neuman et al., 2015). In light of growing recognition that that ECE teaching requires specialized knowledge and training, many national reform efforts, including Tanzania's, include a requirement that ECE professionals participate in a formal training program leading to a higher credential than previously required (International Labour Organization, 2012; Shaeffer, 2015). While there is evidence that teacher preparation matters for program quality (Behrman, Fernald, & Engle, 2014; Engle et al., 2011; Rao et al., 2012) and a growing body of evidence that ECE teachers' practice and professional experiences ultimately affect learning and other outcomes associated with ECE participation (Mtahabwa, 2009; Neuman et al., 2015; OECD, 2012; Shaeffer, 2015), much less is known about how reforms that aim to build capacity in the ECE teaching force intersect with local realities and perceptions of ECE teaching. An understanding of how

policy intersects with local realities is particularly important because, as Neuman and Devercelli (2012) point out:

> *National ECD policies are often comprehensive and ambitious documents. While the content may be informed by community-level consultations, technical support and awareness activities may be needed to translate policy into action on the ground and to ensure relevance to local realities (p. 32).*

This analysis of Tanzania's PPE diploma program demonstrates that the implementation of an ambitious policy requires not only technical support but also a deep understanding of the environments and structures it insects with as it is implemented. This study contributes to an identified need for "information…on [ECE] teachers, including their training and professional development, classroom practices, and working conditions in low- and middle-income countries" (Neuman et al., 2015, p. 12). Existing empirical evidence on ECE reform in developing countries focuses primarily on how training, professional development, status, and working conditions contribute to program quality. This study moves beyond a focus on program quality to investigate the conditions that facilitate and constrain a national goal to build capacity in the PPE teaching workforce. As such, it contributes to an understanding of what is needed to recruit and retain PPE teachers (Neuman et al., 2015). In the next section, we provide an overview of the Tanzanian ECE context and the new PPE diploma program.

The Tanzanian Context

ECE was first included in Tanzania's national education policy in 1995, when the Education and Training Policy (ETP) required that a PPE classroom be established in every primary school in the country (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1995). This mandate led to the expansion of PPE throughout the country. Currently, about 34% of age-eligible children attend PPE, though large disparities between urban and rural areas exist (UNICEF, 2016). Because the 1995 ETP included a mandate but not funding for PPE, classes were financed in large part by family contributions. In addition to a lack of funding and a formal mechanism for regulation and oversight, the government did not systematically assign teachers to PPE classes. As a result, some PPE classes were taught by veteran primary school teachers who had received a 10-day ECE training course and others were staffed by paraprofessionals with limited or no formal ECE training. This situation is likely to change under the 2014 ETP, which makes one year of PPE compulsory and establishes a formal mechanism for the funding and oversight of PPE (United Republic of Tanzania, 2014). Making PPE compulsory requires what the Minister of Education and Vocational Training in 2013 described as "a massive employment exercise" ("Tanzania: Qualified pre-primary teachers urged to submit applications," 2013). A key initiative in this "massive employment exercise" is the new PPE diploma program, designed to provide specialized training to future PPE teachers. The first cohort of PPE

students began this three year course of study at six teacher training colleges (TTCs) around the country in October 2014. The new PPE diploma program, which replaces the former two-year certificate program, is the context for this study.

Importantly, the government's goal to train a large number of PPE teachers (approximately 16,000, according to a government official) intersects with an economic climate characterized by relatively high rates of unemployment. According to Tanzania's National Bureau of Statistics the unemployment rate on the mainland in 2015 for persons age 15 and up was 10.3% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Within this overall rate, considerable variation exists, with rates as high as 21.5% in the nation's largest city, Dar es Salaam. Unemployment in other urban areas is 9.9% and 8.4% in rural parts of the country (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). A different report put the unemployment rate for 15-24 year olds at 13.4% (Katebalirwe, 2014). A 2014 report provided insight into the relationship between education level and unemployment, noting: "In general unemployment is relatively high the less educated a person is. For instance, unemployment rate for secondary graduates stands at 11% compared to 3.7% for the university degree holders" (Economic and Social Research Foundation, 2015, p. 63). A recent study of higher education and joblessness in Tanzania also pointed to the reality that unemployment in Tanzania may not be explained solely by a lack of jobs. Instead, Ndyali (2016) noted: "The higher youth unemployment rate in the country does not always mean the absence of jobs but the ability of youth to acquire the available jobs" (p. 117). Ndyali referred to studies indicating a mismatch between what students learn in school and the demands of the labor market. In light of the current employment situation in Tanzania, PPE is a promising reform that holds the promise of creating new public sector jobs. As such, Tanzanian youth may see PPE teaching as an attractive option, even though "teaching in Tanzania is largely perceived as employment of last resort," (Bennell & Mukyanuzi, 2005, p. 14). This tension between perceptions of teaching and the reality that the PPE diploma created a new pathway to secure employment in a context of high unemployment is one of the themes explored in this paper.

Policy Ecologies

This study is framed by Weaver-Hightower's (2008) ecological approach to policy analysis. Policy ecologies is an analytic tool and theoretical framework focused on uncovering the complexity of policymaking and implementation. It is a way to "theorize and account for the many interconnections that create, sustain, hold off, or destroy policy formation and implementation" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 154). Policy ecologies is a mechanism for understanding why policies are taken up in particular ways and how actors, relationships, environments and structures, and processes shape policymaking and implementation. A policy ecology, according to Weaver-Hightower (2008) is comprised of "every contextual factor and person contributing to or influenced by a policy in any capacity, both before and after its creation and implementation" (p. 155). This framework assumes that policy

is political and calls for a situated understanding of policy creation and enactment. Policies are created and implemented in particular social, political, cultural, and historical contexts comprised of actors, relationships, environments and structures, and processes. The task of the policy analyst is to examine the complexity of this situation: "[Policy ecology] encourages analysts to look more deeply into policy processes, beyond the 'big players' in the foreground. It also encourages a broader look at the effects of policy and policy processes because it suggests that the ripples of a single policy or process can be felt widely" (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p. 157)

In this paper, we focus on the environments and structures that comprise the context in which Tanzania's PPE diploma program is implemented. Specifically, we examine how perceptions about PPE teaching, economic realities, and the availability of human and material resources intersected with the implementation of the new PPE diploma program, and how this shaped the ways global ideas about ECE teacher training were taken up locally.

Methodology

Findings discussed in this paper come from the first year of a longitudinal qualitative study that examines Tanzanian pre-service pre-primary teachers' (PPE diploma students) experiences over five years, from 2015 to 2020. The study follows the first cohort of Tanzanian PPE diploma students through the diploma program and into their first post-graduation teaching placements. We focus on PPE diploma students' experiences as situated within a broader social, cultural, and political context that informs the ways the PPE diploma is taken up and experienced locally. As such, we employ vertical case study methodology (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2014; Vavrus & Bartlett, 2009). Vertical case study is characterized by a "concomitant commitment to micro-level understanding and to macro-level analysis" (Vavrus & Bartlett, 2006, p. 96). In this study we pair data from national-level interviews and documents with an analysis of on-the-ground realities in three TTCs where the PPE diploma program is being implemented.

For this paper, we draw on data from the first year of fieldwork, conducted from June to August 2015 by the first author. Fieldwork consisted of individual interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with national policymakers (4 total) and NGO representatives (4 total), and focus group discussions were conducted with tutors and PPE diploma students in three government TTCs, which we call Rehema, Tumaini, and Amani. A total of 12 tutors and 45 diploma students in their first year of the program participated in focus group discussions. Of students who participated, 62% were male and 38% were female. A questionnaire was also administered to all first year PPE diploma students in all three TTCs (250 respondents total). Interviews with policymakers, NGO officials, and tutors were conducted in English, while focus groups with diploma students were conducted in Swahili with assistance from a local translator. All interviews

were audio-recorded, transcribed, and translated into English by a native Swahili speaker. Table 1 provides an overview of data sources analyzed in this paper.

Table 1. Data Sources

Activity	No. of Participants
Interviews – National policymakers	4
Interviews – NGO officials	4
Focus Group Discussions – Tutors	12
Focus Group Discussions – PPE diploma students	45
Questionnaires	250

All three authors contributed to data analysis. We worked collaboratively, using the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA to facilitate analysis. The research team engaged in several cycles of coding, beginning with open coding, where we read transcripts and developed an initial set of inductive codes (Saldana, 2016). We then looked for patterns in the data and condensed our initial codes into codes that captured larger themes related to students' and tutors' experiences. During this second cycle, we developed analytic memos to begin drawing out assertions about the data (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011). Finally, we applied Weaver-Hightower's (2008) ecological metaphor to the data by developing a set of a priori codes derived from the policy ecologies approach. We used these to recode the data, with a particular focus on codes related to environments and structures because our initial analysis pointed to the critical ways context mediated policy enactment and students' experiences with the policy. In the sections that follow, we describe how perceptions of early years teaching, economic realities, and the availability of human and material resources shaped how stakeholders made sense of and experienced the PPE diploma program.

Findings

Tanzania's PPE diploma program was developed in response to a nationwide lack of trained PPE teachers. When the 2014 ETP made a year of PPE compulsory, the government recognized that it would also need to ensure that existing and newly-developed PPE classes were staffed by qualified teachers. As a policy solution, the PPE diploma program was relatively straightforward—more teachers would be trained and deployed to PPE classrooms across the country, ensuring access to high-quality PPE for all Tanzanian children. Yet, even in the first year that the PPE diploma was enacted, it became clear that response to the program would be far more complex. In this section we describe how the PPE diploma program intersected with particular environments and structures in Tanzania (Weaver-Hightower, 2008), and how this shaped stakeholders' experiences with and responses to the initiative.

Perceptions of Early Years Teaching Although part of the goal of the PPE diploma was to increase the number of trained PPE teachers, the PPE diploma program also signaled a broader stance that teaching ECE required specialized training. This directly contradicted public perception that ECE teaching was something anyone could do. NGO official Steven Tatu explained:

> *The challenge we have [is that many places lack] qualified teachers. And in most cases teachers who are teaching pre-primary are what we call paraprofessional. They are not trained at all. And yet someone is just appointed from the community, whether Standard Seven or Form Four dropout. Just appointed to go to teach. So the challenge is they lack some skills to teach.*

Similarly, Neema Victor, an ECE specialist at the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), stated:

> *I think pre-primary teachers in Tanzania, the number are very few. They are very few…We don't have enough teachers for these schools. And most of those teachers are not qualified to be teachers. As we said before, they just take [a primary school teacher]. So they teach the child in preschool as they are teaching in primary school because most of them don't know about children's development, stages of development, how they can support them. So, we are still working on that. We are still behind on that.*

The notion that PPE teachers needed formal training specific to early childhood contexts was a response to the commonly-held assumption that anyone could teach PPE, because teaching PPE simply involved playing with children. In addition to this, officials of TIE articulated a recognition that PPE teaching was different even from primary school teaching. The previous model of taking primary school teachers, providing them with a short training course, and putting them in PPE classrooms was no longer viable. Providing PPE teachers with specialized training would also serve another purpose: raising the status of teaching young children. Evance Mwita, an official from the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE), the body that oversaw the PPE diploma program, explained:

> *[T]he reason [for creating the pre-primary teacher training curriculum] is that there have been teacher training schools, especially for early childhood education, that take…Form Four failures. They say "Okay, you have failed to get any other course. Can't you even study this early childhood education?" Thinking that providing early childhood education requires a person who is not knowledgeable. So we want to change that kind of thinking.*

Mwita and others expressed a need to raise awareness about ECE, so that the public would come to recognize it as a profession that required training and expertise. We explore how public perceptions of ECE teaching intersected with diploma students' motivation and rationale for joining the diploma program later in this section.

The reality that most current PPE teachers lacked the proper qualifications was what led some students to join the PPE diploma program. They envisioned themselves as the first cohort of PPE teachers who would be properly trained for the work. Victor Mbuguni, a student at Tumaini TTC, explained:

> *The big thing that led me to take this PPE diploma is lack of teachers who have this kind of education…It's a challenge because we don't have well trained PPE teachers. So I thought it was important for me to join, that way I can teach these kids because I will have the knowledge to know a child from birth to when they are starting school.*

Other students expressed a similar understanding of the current state of PPE teaching. For example, Frida Mwiteni said, "In Tanzania we don't have PPE teachers. The teachers who are teaching now don't have qualifications to be [PPE] teachers." For these students, the PPE diploma presented an opportunity to change this situation—they would play a critical role in ensuring that young children were taught by qualified PPE teachers.

These ideas about teacher qualifications were linked to students' belief that PPE would play an important role in transforming Tanzania's education system. They described PPE as an important foundation that would lead to improved learning, which required a capable and trained teaching force. Rehema TTC student Neema John explained:

> *The main purpose is to strengthen that foundation so that the child will grow as they were raised. If you taught him well, even if they go to University they will be able to express themselves. If they have a bad foundation, even if you go to University, they will say what kind of University student is this? They cannot express themselves or solve problems. So if you build that good foundation, later on a child will be able to help himself and the environment that is surrounding him.*

While the PPE diploma was evidence of a national commitment to ensuring that PPE teachers would receive specialized training, and while policymakers and diploma students alike saw the need for a specialized course of training, the notion of PPE teaching as a profession ran counter to widespread public perceptions of early years teaching. Because of this, diploma students faced the challenge of justifying their decision to become a PPE teacher to their families and communities.

Participants at the national and local level described a general perception among Tanzanians that people only went into teaching because they were otherwise unsuccessful—they had not done well in school and thus had no other option but to become a teacher. This perception of teaching was reinforced by the fact that the requirements for entry into teacher training college were lower than other more respected professions. TTC tutor Audax Tibu explained, "The teaching profession is considered to be a low rank profession…Teaching is for people who maybe haven't performed well in the examinations." If teachers in general were afforded little respect, the situation was even worse for ECE teachers, for several reasons. First, as Tibu explained, there was a societal perception that teaching ECE was not a skilled profession:

> *Talking of playing with children. Now a person who has gone to school playing with children. See? It's the mentality. That's very negative. See? So, they think that teaching young children is so easy. To the extent that it doesn't need the person who has to go through a diploma program. That's the mentality.*

The perspective that teaching young children did not require formal training was reinforced by the reality that most PPE teachers did not possess formal training. Diploma students spoke of these teachers as "grandmas" from the community—women who would come to sit with the young children.

The low status of PPE teaching was exacerbated by the fact that the Tanzanian government did not regulate pre-primary classes or provide funding for PPE classrooms or PPE teacher salaries. PPE teachers were poorly paid in comparison to primary school teachers, and participants noted that PPE classes were under-resourced, exemplified by the fact that they were often conducted under a tree instead of in a classroom.

Due to this lack of funding and regulation of PPE, even primary school principals often failed to see the value of PPE. Steven Tatu relayed an example from a meeting with primary school principals, in which they explained that they did not feel a sense of responsibility for PPE classes located at their schools. Tatu explained that the principals said: "Because we are not answerable even to the district level for pre-primary…Even if [the district team] comes to visit, they don't [look at] pre-primary. If we say that we have pre-primary, they say 'Okay, but let us go to other classes'." Although this situation is likely to change now that the government has promised to pay PPE teachers' salaries and the 2014 ETP delegates oversight of PPE classes to district education officers, this example illustrates the low status of PPE teaching, even within the education system.

The low status of PPE teaching was felt acutely in the TTCs when it came to recruiting students to the PPE diploma program. TTC tutors described negative perceptions about

PPE teaching as a barrier to reaching enrollment goals in the PPE diploma program. Jenson Lawrence, a tutor at Amani TTC, explained that the school had seen a significant decline in enrollment from the first to the second cohort of diploma students. He explained that students in the PPE program may feel inferior to primary level diploma students:

> *I think there is a bad perception or negative perception of this course. Most of the students are not willing to take this course of early childhood education because they think that they are inferior to take this course were others are taking the primary diplomas.*

Indeed, many diploma students described the low status of PPE teaching as a barrier to their participation in the diploma program. Some had stories of families and communities actively discouraging them from pursuing the PPE diploma:

> *[T]he truth is, [my parents] advised me not to go [study PPE] because of the negativity in the community about early childhood education. It's not respected in the community. So when I got this opportunity to come here, people said "Do not go there. You are not going to be respected. We will not respect you anymore and your ability, too, will go down because of that course you are going to take." (Khalid Athuman)*

While Khalid's example was very specific, others described negative perceptions of PPE teaching in more general terms:

> *The challenge facing me from the society I come from is that people underestimate the value of pre-primary education and think of it negatively. (Aloyce David)*

> *My dad thinks that the one who is going to teacher training college is the one who has nowhere to go, they have failed everywhere, that's their last option. (Upendo Nkya)*

> *At times I sort of regret being here because of the lack of respect pre-primary teachers get as a part of the society. (Francis Boniface)*

PPE diploma students like these three received mixed messages about the value of PPE and the importance of PPE teaching. On the one hand, their families or communities might discourage them from pursuing the diploma—we even heard of students who told their communities they were studying to teach primary school, in order to avoid having to admit to studying PPE. At the same time, TTC tutors actively worked to convince students of the importance of ECE and the value of the PPE diploma. This awareness-raising

campaign appeared to be working—many diploma students explained that they envisioned a role for themselves in educating their communities about the importance of ECE.

Economic Realities Although PPE teaching was a career path that required constant justification, it remained an attractive one for many. The promise of secure employment after graduation drew students that initially had no interest in teaching young children to the program. NGO official Steven Tatu explained:

> *[Others] do want to be pre-primary teachers. And this is because [teachers are] among the professionals which are directly employed by the government. So those students who feel that there is a challenge of employment, they're just showing up because they're sure after that they would be directly employed by the government. Because [in other professions], if you graduate, you have to find a job by yourself. And it can take you even maybe five years without employment [before you find a job].*

The PPE diploma, though perhaps not the first choice for many students, was considered a good option because it held the prospect of secure public sector employment. Diploma student Samuel Morice explained:

> *My parents advised that I come study PPE. They encouraged me that the best part about it is that there is certainty of getting employed and that I would still get a chance to do a degree and masters later on.*

Another student, Hilda Jerome, said she came to Rehema to study PPE because "that's what's in the market right now." Although she had not planned to study PPE, she was aware of the new demand for PPE teachers created under the mandate for compulsory PPE. TTC tutor Audax Tibu explained the situation in this way:

> *You have completed your Form Four but you have nowhere to go. What do you do? You have to go for what is available for you…Some [students here] don't feel like [being PPE teachers]. But because they're being forced by the situation, they apply…because of the chances that they can get.*

Some students asserted that the promise of employment outweighed their concern over the low status of PPE teaching. Amani TTC student Kelvin Frank said: "My parents really encouraged me although they knew this education level is really low. But, they were sure I would get employed after completing college." Students heard this trope not only from their families, but from the tutors and principals at the TTCs, who spoke of "counseling"

and motivating students to stick with the PPE diploma. Amani TTC Tutor Ephraim Rugambwa provided this example:

> *Something which…motivated [the students]…was a speech given by the principal of this college, where he…assured them that employment would be available after graduating this course.*

For many diploma students, teaching PPE was not a first career choice, but it was one that could lead to secure employment. This provided significant incentive in a landscape of high youth unemployment (Katebalirwe, 2014).

Human and Material Resources Student experiences in the PPE diploma program were also mediated by the availability of human and material resources to support the program. Stakeholders at the national and local level were concerned that many instructors teaching in the PPE diploma program did not possess formal training in ECE. For example, of 34 tutors at Rehema TTC, only four had a bachelor's degree in ECE. Tutors at all three TTCs expressed their desire for training in ECE, but said they were unaware of any impending government efforts to do so. Amani TTC tutor Joyce Samuel explained:

> *The government has forgotten to prepare the tutors who are going to teach the teachers of pre-primary education. For example, here at our college you have only the one whose professionalism [sic] is about pre-primary education, but you have been told to teach teachers who are going to teach pre-primary education. [We have had] no seminars, no in-service training.*

Government officials were aware of this situation. In fact, when asked what to look for at the TTCs, an official told the first author to pay attention to how many tutors were trained in ECE. Although there were no immediate plans to address the issue, it could be argued that the government was taking the long view—today's PPE diploma students would go on to higher levels of education and eventually become the next generation of ECE leaders in Tanzania. Joseph Makela, the head of early learning TIE, described such a vision:

> *We need also to think about our own context and our own reality, and see how we can imagine things, how we can combine things, and whatever. We're using a lot of international theories; of course, I am not saying that they are bad, but I think we need to do research and to see how we can develop things from our own context.*

By creating a pathway to higher education, the PPE diploma could contribute to the realization of this vision, and to the production of new knowledge and practices specific to the Tanzanian context.

Teaching and learning in the PPE diploma program was also affected by a lack of material resources. Tutors explained that their libraries lacked books about ECE and said they struggled to find materials to support their teaching:

> *I think the challenge we have is that our library does not have the books which relate to this course…And another challenge is that we haven't any internet access, therefore we use our phones [to try to find materials]…[That is a] big challenge for us…We are trying to search materials from any corner…We are given syllabus, but no material. This is a big challenge. (Ephraim Rugambwa, Tutor)*

Tutors at all three TTCs spoke of this reality—that they had been given a copy of the PPE diploma syllabus, but little else to support their work training new PPE teachers. They also described the need for model classrooms in TTCs—spaces where diploma students could practice teaching in a setting that mirrored a PPE classroom—and supplies that could be used by diploma students to make their own teaching materials. Although the government had devoted resources to developing the PPE diploma program, there remained a significant need for human and material resources to ensure its success.

Implications

The Tanzanian government has a vision for the future of early childhood education in the country. The steps it has taken to achieve its ECE goals includes the development of the PPE diploma program, which addresses the fact that many current PPE teachers do not possess specialized ECE training. When the PPE diploma was introduced, however, it came into contact with environments and structures that mediated its implementation and the ways stakeholders made sense of and experienced the program (Weaver-Hightower, 2008). We have demonstrated in this paper that political will to train PPE teachers exists, and that the promise of stable employment makes PPE teaching an attractive option for many young Tanzanians. At the same time, political will has not yet translated into an infusion of resources for TTCs, and negative perceptions of ECE professionals pose a challenge to recruiting and retaining PPE diploma students.

The inherent tension of the PPE diploma program raises questions about how it will affect the ECE landscape in Tanzania. Because the PPE diploma is being positioned as a pathway to secure employment, it has attracted many students. Yet, given the negative perceptions of PPE teaching that exist in Tanzania, we question whether this reform effort will be sustained. If PPE teachers are continually faced with the need to defend their career choice, will they persist in the diploma program and in their work as classroom teachers? Or, will they ultimately be discouraged from PPE teaching as a result of societal perceptions? These questions can only be answered once the first cohort of PPE diploma students graduates and enters the teaching force. It will be critical to trace PPE diploma graduates'

post-graduation career paths in order to determine whether the PPE diploma program achieves the goal of providing PPE classrooms with trained teachers.

This study also points to a contradiction between realities on the ground and the introduction of the PPE diploma. In many places, the work of PPE teaching is currently being done, though not by teachers with a diploma in PPE. The way policymakers and students made sense of the PPE diploma program and the need for qualified PPE teachers did not address an obvious question: What would become of the teachers and paraprofessionals currently doing the work of PPE teaching when this new cohort of trained PPE teachers was deployed? The government's PPE reform efforts focused primarily on training new PPE teachers and not on building capacity within the current PPE teaching force. Some capacity-building efforts were being undertaken by NGOs, but absent from our discussions about the PPE diploma was any recognition of what would happen to current PPE teachers if they were replaced by PPE diploma graduates. In future research it will be important to explore the effects of the PPE diploma program for the existing PPE teaching force.

The material realities of TTCs and the education system, writ large, also pose a challenge to the success of the PPE diploma program. Diploma students are being told by TTC tutors that PPE is a viable and respected career choice. At the same time, students are receiving implicit messages about the value ascribed to PPE by the government—many of their instructors lack formal ECE training and TTCs lack books and other resources that would facilitate their preparation for PPE teaching. Such challenges will not disappear as students enter the teaching force. PPE teaching is marked by: large class sizes, limited books and teaching aids, lack of classroom space, and classrooms that are not conducive to teaching young children (Mligo, 2016; Mtahabwa, 2009). Will this new cadre of teachers, armed with knowledge of child development and an enthusiasm to lay a strong foundation in young children, persist in the face of this reality?

What is promising is that, in spite of all of these constraints and limitations, diploma students at all three TTCs appeared committed to the diploma program and voiced their belief in the importance of ECE. Whether they were students who arrived at college committed to working with young children, or among those who had been convinced of the value of ECE and PPE teaching by their tutors and principals, students spoke of the importance of PPE as the foundation of future learning and the need for increased respect for ECE professionals. Even among those who were initially skeptical of PPE teaching, or for whom teaching PPE was a career of last resort, we sensed enthusiasm for being part of this reform effort.

As awareness of issues related to the ECE workforce heightens, and as ECE teacher training receives increased attention in the push to achieve global ECE goals, an

understanding of the complex ways policies intersect with local realities is paramount. This example of Tanzania's PPE diploma program points to the critical role existing structures and environments play in determining how a policy will be received and implemented in a given context. This study also raises several important questions for future research, including: What is the reality of PPE teaching in Tanzania? Do PPE diploma graduates actually teach PPE classes? What causes teachers to stay or leave the PPE teaching profession? These are among the questions we plan to address in future years of the study, and which must be addressed in order to develop ECE teacher training reform that acknowledges and responds to local realities.

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About the Authors:

Bethany Wilinski is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University and the coordinator of education sector activities for MSU's Tanzania Partnership Program. Dr. Wilinski is a former teacher who taught primary school in Northwest Tanzania for two years and has been involved in teacher professional development and curriculum development in Tanzania for nearly a decade. Dr. Wilinski's international and domestic work is focused on how teachers, families, and children experience early childhood education policy.

Cuong Nguyen is a PhD candidate in the Department of Teacher Education at Michigan State University. He is interested in philosophy of education, comparative education, and second language education. Cuong has presented at AERA, CIES, Bergamo Conference, Asian Studies Development Program Conference, and Engaging with Vietnam Conference.

Jessica Landgraf, a former infant/toddler and preschool teacher, is an Educational Policy PhD student at Michigan State University. Internationally, she is focused on early childhood education policy development and implementation in the context of developing countries. Domestically, Jessica is interested in the politics of early childhood education policy enactment.

Contact: Bethany Wilinski at *bethanyw@msu.edu*, Cuong Huy Nguyen at *nguye308@msu.edu,* and Jessica M. Landgraf at *landgr16@msu.edu*

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