

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE CHILD:
SYMPOSIUM ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION.

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The above mentioned symposium was held at the University of Dar es Salaam main campus, from 17th to 22nd December 1979.

1. Objectives: The broad objectives of the symposium were;
 - a) To review and assess the situation of children in the country.
 - b) To stimulate discussion among senior policy makers, planners and implementors at regional and national levels on the need to fully integrate children's programmes into national economic and social development plans.
 - c) To discuss trends in planning, programme preparation and resource allocation (human and financial) in expanded programmes for children.
 - d) To suggest guidelines to governmental and non-governmental organisations in the promotion and expansion of effective national policies and programmes for children.

2. Participants:

The symposium drew together participants from various organisations and institutions concerned with the welfare of children. These includes among others, The Party (CCM), The Party's mass organisations (Youth, UWT, Washirika, Wazazi) the regions, government ministries and institutions, non-governmental organisations, the British Council, SIDA, DANIDA, and the mass media.

The Symposium was jointly sponsored by UNICEF and SIDA.

3. The Proceedings of the Symposium:

The Symposium involved the presentation of twelve research reports on different aspects of child welfare. These were as follows:

- a) Legal Provisions relating to the Protection of Children: Law and Social reality - Kikopa, J. (Ms)
- b) Incidence of handicapped children in ordinary primary schools - Kisanji, T.A.M.

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- c) Juvenile delinquency in Tanzania; Towards an anatomy of its genesis - Bakengesa.
- d) Medical and health facilities for the Child's development in Tanzania - Kimati V. (Prof.)
- e) The Nutritional status of the child in Tanzania - Mosha, A.C. (Dr.) and Ljungqvist, B.
- f) The mass media and culture relevant to the child - Mlama, P.O. (Mrs)
- g) Adult education and the Child - Bwatwa, Y. (Dr.)
- h) Comparative IYC Programme - IYC in Kenya - Ootala, (Dr,) of Nairobi University.
- i) Family structures and the Child - Omari, C.K. (Prof.)
- j) Play facilities in early childhood education - Mahenge, S.T.
- k) Educational provisions in early childhood in Tanzania - Omari, I. (Prof.)
- l) The state of Child mental health and services in Tanzania - Rugeiyamu, F.K. (Dr.)

There were also reports from the regions explaining what the regions had done as a contribution to the International Year of the Child.

These research reports were presented in plenary sessions and then four committees were formed to draw up recommendations for future policy making, planning and implementation of the welfare of the child.

4. Recommendations:

About twenty major recommendations were drawn up dealing with various aspects such as the education, health, nutrition, legal protection and the upbringing of the child. The following are some of the recommendations:

- a) On the observation that child day care centres and nursery schools have a great role to play on child development, and further observation that these centres are heterogeneous because the Party and government have not taken full responsibility for pre-primary education it is recommended that;
 - With immediate effect the government intervenes and takes over the care and education of the pre-primary school child;
 - An autonomous institute for early childhood development and education be created.

- b) It has been noted that the law operates heavily to the disadvantage of the child and its mother for example (a) certain laws of succession neglect the consequences of depriving a mother the right of ownership and inheritance after the death of a husband; (b) Under the law of marriage Act in matters of property and custody, the mother might be deprived of the right to property and custody of children.

It is recommended therefore that these laws be scrutinised and reviewed.

- c) It has been observed that young children of working mothers can emotionally and/or nutritionally disturbed after the mother's three months maternity leave when they are abruptly separated from their mothers; It is recommended that the Ministry of Social Welfare formulate a system of establishing infant nurseries in places where the breastfeeding mothers can take care of their children without undue inconvenience to either the mother or the child.
- d) Observed that present marriage disharmony affect the children and that divorce which also affect children adversely is on the increase. It is recommended therefore that the Party ensures that marriage counselling is taken up and encouraged at grass-root level. Also that the mass media introduce counselling programmes aimed at strengthening familyhood for the development of the children.
- e) It has been observed that there are problems of book production which make it difficult to publish books for children. It is noted that books are very important to the development of the child. It is recommended therefore that the Party and government must view the issue of children's books industry as a service rather than a commercial enterprise. The book industry should receive government subsidies so that children's books are produced and sold at nominal prices to citizens.

5. Conclusion.

On the whole the symposium was a great success and all the participants were agreed on the point that a lot needs to be done to better the welfare of the child in Tanzania and that child-welfare ought to be given priority if the country is to bank any hopes on its future development.