1. Pragmatic: To explore obstacles to providing quality Early Childhood education and development opportunities to all children in Tanzania;

2. Theoretical: To contribute to the anthropological theorization of policy;

**Today I will focus on the first purpose.**
RESEARCH DESIGN

- This pilot research consisted of
  - Visits to two schools;
  - Policy document analysis
  - Individual and focus group interviews with representatives of major foreign ECD donors, NGOs involved in ECD work, the Tanzanian ECD civil society network, ECD scholars in Tanzanian universities, teacher trainers, Parents, and teachers;

- informed by long-term ethnographic research on educational development and in rural Tanzania by Phillips
1. What do ECD donors, scholars, government officials, and NGO leaders (both Tanzanian and foreign) identify as the main challenges for Early Childhood Education policy and practice?

2. How are government policy structures and practices supporting and/or hindering the implementation and improvement of Early Childhood Education initiatives in Tanzania?
THE CONTEXT
Tanganyika experienced colonialism both by the Germans and later the British.
Achieved independence in 1961.
Postcolonial period of Tanzanian Socialism and nation-building under President Julius Nyerere into the 1980s.
1980s and 1990s: Structural Adjustment, liberalization and shift to multipartyism.
Since 2000, poverty alleviation and economic development have been the primary mandate of the government.
Though Swahili is the national language, more than 126 languages are spoken.
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: FACTS AND FIGURES

- 42% of children are entering primary school underdeveloped (stunted).
- 65% of children have no access to preprimary education.
Pre-Primary very peripheral to policy

- 1995 Education and Training Policy
- 2001 - Present: Primary Education Development Policy I and II - limited mention, funded through primary education budget, no dedicated budget line
- 2009 Law of the Child - addresses ECD in relation to child rights and child abuse

Substantive Implications for Pre-Primary

- Draft Policy: The Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy
  - The ECD Forum: February 2011
- PEDP III: Primary Education Development Plan (2012-2016) - substantively addresses Early Childhood Education, will now have dedicated budget line
PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN TANZANIA: THE POLICY CONTEXT

- Various aspects of Early Childhood Education and Development fall under no less than 5 ministries:
  - Ministry of Community Development, Gender & Family (Lead Ministry)
  - Ministry of Education and Vocational Training,
  - Ministry of Finance
  - Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the
  - Prime Minister’s Office for Regional and Local Governments.
POLICY SHIFTS

- No government policy (until now) has substantively addressed pre-primary education unto itself.
- Most ECE initiatives and teacher training have been community-based or through NGOs (Aga Khan Foundation, Aga Khan University, etc).
- New Draft Policy: The Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy
  - Initiative coming out of a group of concerned NGOs, donors, and civil society advocates and developed during a highly successful ECD Forum in February 2011.
  - The policy has gone to Parliament twice now and has been sent back with comments;
Preliminary Findings

1. Pre-primary comes into strict competition for resources with primary and secondary education;

2. While early childhood development and education are donor priorities, they are not currently an explicit priority for most government officials, parents, or communities;

3. There are concerns about the educational paradigms in which existing initiatives are being carried out.
COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES

- Primary and pre-primary share one budget line; there has been no dedicated budget for pre-primary.
- The effectiveness of pre-primary education is not measured in any way (by examinations or retention); primary education is measured by national examinations which directly inform the evaluation and promotion of students, teachers and administrators.
- “Pre-primary has gotten the scraps“
- Staffing & structures
Early Childhood Not Currently a Priority in the Hierarchy of Government Concerns

- High priority for donors, low for the majority of elected and ministry officials
- A close 2015 election is anticipated: ECD is not a vote-getter;
  - What gets votes is primary & secondary education, agriculture, and health
  - “There are no quick wins in ECD” - evidence for impact of investment in ECD cannot be demonstrated (and proclaimed in election campaigns) within 5 year terms of elected and appointed leaders
- The government complains there is no evidence in Tanzanian context; wants evidence that ECD initiatives will contribute to economic development
- Hierarchy of ministries and hierarchy within ministries shapes policy and budget prioritization of ECD
Perceived power structure of government ministries involved in ECD

- Ministry of Finance
- Prime Minister’s Office for Regional and Local Governments
- Ministry of Education & Vocational Training
- Ministry of Health & Social Welfare
- Ministry of Community Development, Gender, & Family

The lead ministry for ECD - the Ministry of Community Development, Gender & Family is perceived to be weak with respect to the other ministries.
PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES ARE ALSO NOT CONVINCED

““This new thinking has been pushed down by donors, not the government””

““If you go to the villages and ask people what they need - they will say a number of things. But you will always hear primary and secondary education. That’s what parents want. They will not say pre-primary, but if they had more information, they would say it””
“Pre-primary classrooms right now are just primary classrooms in disguise.”
  - Focus on academic skills: reading, writing, and arithmetic
  - “Parents want the basic skills.”

Lack of understanding of play-based education
  - “Children should come into contact with nature. Right now - all-learning is in doors. Children rarely go outside, and when they do, it’s a reward for doing academic learning, it’s not understood as children’s work”
Most current practices and paradigms of pre-primary education in Tanzania ignore learning that already happens at home

“We need more attention to what happens at home. There is a lot of early childhood education going on at home. What amazes me is children’s ability to move from one environment to another. Children are so active at home. They are always moving around. Then, when they enter school, they are expected to just sit there, in their desks or on the floor. No movement at all. And they are silent. This transition really amazes me. How do they suddenly go from a place where they are learning from their environment, using their creativity, doing things that are of interest to them, to putting them into a situation where they just sit and listen. We are taking away the childhood from children by putting them in schools.” (Prof. Suleiman Sumra)
IMPLICATIONS & DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
Resource competition will continue; need evidence that research findings produced elsewhere hold true in Tanzania:

1. That investment in early childhood education improves economic productivity later on (Hackeman, *Lancet Review*) - i.e. longitudinal research
2. That small investments in poor communities make a big difference (Carson) and that returns increase with the poverty level of the community - i.e. feasible and replicable initiatives that are shown to be effective. “If you focus on poor people, you harvest much.

More use of media and community-based organizations to raise awareness

- “Rural people’s resistance to change depends on its approach. Tanzanians are not conservative. But it matters how the message is delivered” (Prof. Lyabwene Mtahabwa, interview)
INTEGRATION

- Need to pass the IECD policy, which puts ECD at its center
- Need to fund IECD policy
- To make ECD services feasible and cost-effective, they need to be integrated with existing services and monitoring
MORE UNDERSTANDING OF THE
SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT
IN WHICH ECD POLICY IS PURSUED

- More understanding of what childhood looks like in rural and urban areas and more thought about how to build on existing practices and strengths
- More understanding of the political and social context of policymaking and implementation
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