

# A Small Island in a Global Arena

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## **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on Zanzibar a small island state in the Indian Ocean and an educational programme to support sustainable change across the islands. It focuses initially on Zanzibar and its complex socio political history highlighting the features that distinguish it from other SIDS. It presents an overview of the education system and the challenges faced before introducing an innovative educational programme that utilizes North South links and the Northern construct of Global Learning to improve the competence and capabilities of the education system through development of a professional learning community (PLC) and the 'adaptive capability' of participants in this PLC to negotiate the global forces and pressures that threaten the islands very existence.

The educational programme discussed has been developed and delivered by Sazani Associates (Sazani), a UK and Zanzibar based NGO.

# Zanzibar

## Socio-political Context

Situated in the Indian Ocean, about 35 miles off the coast of mainland Tanzania, lies the Zanzibar archipelago. It is a semi-autonomous, small island state, with a combination of rural and urban poverty within a relatively small geographical area<sup>1</sup> characteristic of much of the global South. Zanzibar, although not acknowledged by the UN as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) because of its semi-autonomous nature, faces many of the challenges and opportunities common to SIDS in other parts of the world.

These common opportunities and challenges include; geographical isolation, a concentrated biodiversity and the presence of many endemic species, remoteness, restricted availability of resources, economic dependence on fishing and/or tourism, increasing population density and unemployment, environmental degradation and susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to global developments and a dependence on international trade (Adger 2006).

The climate of all SIDS is influenced by oceanic-atmospheric interactions, which, combined with their particular socio-economic situation, make them extremely vulnerable to global pressures such as climate change and climate variability. Consequently, the sensitivity to those pressures represents a major constraint to the achievement of sustainable development (Tompkins 2005).

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<sup>1</sup> total land area of approximately 2,000miles<sup>2</sup>

Lacking economies of scale, SIDS incur proportionately higher transportation and communication costs than larger non-island states, as well as more expensive public administration and infrastructure. This is accentuated by the declining value of traditional exports, reduced access to land for domestic food production and increase in cost of imported food and petroleum fuels.

This results in SIDS having greater exposure, than larger states to internal and external shocks and extreme events, which in turn drive social conflict. Ultimately states like Zanzibar present a microcosm of many of the major challenges facing the world today and especially the global South. This is further illustrated by the contrasting complexities of urban and rural existence, of uplands and lowlands, of coastal and inland areas and their respective vulnerability to local and global threats and the rapid degradation and destruction of fragile ecosystems.

What sets Zanzibar apart from other SIDS is its socio-political history. It's demise from being an independent, prosperous small islands state to becoming a protectorate under the British, regaining independence and ending up as a semi-autonomous appendix to a poor African nation allied to the Soviet Bloc. Following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and African and European responses to neoliberalism, Zanzibar emerged from a "single party democracy" to a multi party democracy with two parties, contested elections and eventually coalition government.

This contrasts with the colonial history of many other Small Island Developing States (SIDS), pre-independence Zanzibar is widely regarded, by Zanzibaris' at least, as the 'Golden Age' (MacCallum 2014). Zanzibar was at the centre of a great East

African Muslim tradition and the trading capital of the Indian Ocean. A time when people were 'learned' and tolerant, embodied by a flourishing Islamic scholarly debate with various schools of thought.

This post-independence period of scholarly and economic decline resulted in a paradoxical position in relation to Islam. Zanzibar, with its 90% Muslim population became a secular, semi-autonomous state in line with socialist ideals. This resulted in "Islam being reduced to an artefact, a signifier without meaning" (Turner 2008:6). The only permitted sect of Islam during this period was Sufism, with its mystical 'other worldly' reputation and focus on being able to recite rather than learn the Qur'an, reducing its threat to the secular domain (Turner 2008).

The perceived combined assault by State Socialism on cosmopolitanism, knowledge and Islamic plurality resulted in a demise of Zanzibar's national identity as a Swahili, mercantile culture of travel, trade and intellectual exchange. The result was that a once thriving, outward-looking island state was reframed as a poor semi-autonomous developmental state oppressed by mainland Tanzania (Middleton 1994).

Zanzibar, as the only semi-autonomous and statistically one of the most densely populated states in Africa, with its complex historical and political backdrop of post-colonialism and devolution with tribalism replaced by a complex and covert class structures based on perceived ethnicity, has a secular Government.

## Socio-economic Context

The onset of tourism as a global force simultaneously raised expectations amongst the political, mercantile and rural people as an alternative source of financial capital. In practice those driving tourism have engaged in an over exploitation of natural capital assets such as water, land, forests and marine resources and an under exploitation of human capital, with less than 20% of all employment going to Zanzibar nationals (ZRG 2010).

Rural people in Zanzibar remain in extreme poverty despite extensive growth in tourism. Instead of benefitting rural economies, the growth of this single sector global tourism industry competes with local subsistence activity drawing on many assets of the poor - knowledge, natural resources and rural space, while impacting negatively upon their livelihoods and resilience in this vulnerable small island state. Unequal resource allocation and restricted access to credit, renders vulnerable groups poorly equipped for self-employment or enterprise development. The wide range of negative effects on culture and traditional way of life is as Peak suggests. "A final form of oppression is the modern tourist trade, in which once again outsiders exploit the Swahili" (1989:124).

Tourism Concern (2012) identified Zanzibar as the most socially unjust location on the planet with regard to access to drinking water, with only 10% of the population having access to electricity in their homes and 55% dependent on drawing water from wells. Some villages carry water 5 miles passing tourists swimming in fresh water infinity pools overlooking the beach.

Research undertaken by Sazani Associates over a 10 year period acknowledges that the local population insist that tourism has increased poverty and has introduced a range of new socioeconomic problems that the communities are not equipped to manage. These include environmental degradation, prostitution, and alcoholism to name a few. The current Zanzibar Government policy acknowledges the need to understand and respect rural coastal community views, for integrative thinking and to involve them in decision-making processes. In the 2010 coastal strategy document, it states “Communities especially those living in coastal areas need to be made aware of the importance of coastal resources to their livelihood and thus their wise use of the resources is so crucial” (ZRG 2010:33).

Extremely high unemployment, 90% of all school leavers are without gainful employment, is fostering wide spread disengagement of rural communities and young people. Unless rural communities are equipped to challenge global pressures such as tourism, climate change and extremism, an undesirable situation will continue to grow that if left unattended could see a return to major social unrest. With close historical, social and trade links to Arabia and nearby Somalia, Zanzibar has seen an emergence of Salafist fundamentalist Islam which is moving the culture from one espousing plural traditions to one of a singular social religious perspective articulated by well resources foreign educated Islamic scholars.

As such, Zanzibar provides a ‘development interface’ where the traditional endogenous knowledge of rural, community actors contrasts, and often conflicts

with, the external scientific and 'expert' knowledge of development professionals, educators and government representatives.

As a small island state it's vulnerability to these global pressures and forces, necessitates the populations to be able to adapt to and or mitigate against change. To engage in either of these without an understanding of the drivers of these global pressures and forces is at best reactionary and ineffective.

### **Education in Zanzibar**

Education in Zanzibar is compulsory and free until the age of 16. The current education system involves staying at school until an individual has completed at least seven years of primary and four years of secondary education. Gross enrolment rates and attendance figures vary according to the season. There are certain times of the year when there is a noticeably higher number of girls than boys in school despite the under twenty population being 49% male and 51% female (Ministry of Education, ZRG 2009). Teacher retention is poor, especially in rural areas, and the quality of provision largely depends on teachers with few formal qualifications and inadequate training. Teacher salaries are low with very few incentives being offered and many of the well-qualified teachers migrate either to private schools or to the mainland. In common with many cultures, education is still seen as a means to have choices, but not to increase knowledge regarding traditional activities. The UNESCO(2000) EFA Progress report identified various problems and issues within education sector. It revealed that the goal to achieve universal education was far from being reached. In the 2014 EFA report it

illustrated that Primary school completion rate had improved by less than 1%, from 77.2% to 78.4%. The trend of large school infrastructure projects has undoubtedly contributed to the achievement of this goal as the population of children aged 13 had increased by 6500, but it can also be argued that building of schools and ITC equipment does not improve the quality or effectiveness of education within these improved facilities. It is generally regarded that despite improved and or maintained enrolment and completion there has been a decline in the quality of education in Zanzibar. According to a VSO study in 2011

*“Teacher competence and motivation were the most commonly cited problem areas for the quality of education in Zanzibar. Yet teachers often work in difficult and demanding conditions, with large classes and insufficient resources. They have many training needs that are not currently being adequately met, so their levels of competence in many areas remain low. This combination of factors often results in low motivation and morale. In addition, teachers are poorly paid and many research participants feel that a salary increase would have the single most significant effect on motivation “ (VSO 2011:5)*

Sazani’s research and work within the education sector has also found that the current education system is not helping to improve the quality of education in terms of basic skills or cognitive skills (MacCallum and Salam 2013). Further more that there is little recognition or consideration of the community’s role of schools,



catchment dynamics or the pressures degrading the overall standard of rural teachers.

A low level of education is one of the factors, which limits the extent to which individuals and communities are able to provide a decent standard of living. A disproportionately high number of poorer and vulnerable children are left out of secondary schools, 40% of the urban population are illiterate, rising to 60% in the rural areas. Inability of the formal education sector to lower illiteracy levels is having a substantial impact on children and young people's abilities to secure sustainable livelihoods, increase their income and achieve full and productive employment. The divide between urban-rural knowledge, education and training is a major barrier to eradicating poverty (DFID 2012). The Government of Zanzibar (ZRG) policy, 'Zanzibar Development Vision 2020' (ZRG 2009), recognises that poverty reduction begins with today's children, and by giving more attention to the quality and scope of education to ensure that young people are equipped with the skills in demand in the labour market, the long-term impact of this project will be to enable them to secure sustainable livelihoods; this will enable them to break out of the poverty cycle.

Being a predominantly Muslim island, Islamic Studies is part of the curriculum within Primary schools with an option to sit out of the classes for the minority of students who are not Muslim. In Secondary Schools students are taught about both Islam and Christianity but again the non-Muslims have an option to sit out of the classes teaching about Islam and vice versa. This option to sit out means that most

students do not attend classes to learn about their fellow students' religious beliefs and there is very little knowledge about other less prominent religions here.

## **Sazani Associates in Zanzibar.**

### **Educating Rural People**

Sazani Associates (Sazani), a UK and Zanzibar based NGO has been working in the archipelago for more than 10 years. During this time they have piloted and expanded a reflexive and critical approach to supporting the development of sustainable livelihoods through education and training. This has involved working along side the Ministry of Education in Zanzibar to contextualize learning in schools in TVET and in basic skills development. This has been combined with building the capacity, capability and competencies of the education system to foster sustainable change.

This process started in 2004 Sazani, as an implementing partner to the FAO: UNESCO Flagship project 'Education for Rural People', carried out a detailed review of the education system in Zanzibar. The review identified the priorities, achievements, challenges and constraints of the education system. Through this review it became apparent in addition to being under resourced with limited access to basic services such as water and electricity, that unless learning and education was relevant to local realities then it would achieve no more than what Freire would consider to be 'information banking' (Freire 1970).

Understanding the limitations of the current education system in Zanzibar, Sazani has focussed on the enablers, the deliverers, the teachers and the trainers of teachers. This was grounded in the acknowledgment of the restricted capacity of Sazani Associates as an NGO, without the resources or the will to focus on equipping schools and ministerial offices with artefacts. Across the islands, State Teachers Centres (TCs) exist to administer training for teachers and these became the initial focus of the approach of formal education development. Sazani identified these TC's as the vehicle to provide support in an effective way targeting the main objective of up-skilling teachers in Zanzibar. The beneficiaries from each district/TC were identified through previous work, as those who are dedicated and enthusiastic teachers but who lacked the knowledge or incentives to improve the quality of their teaching. This tactile, historically informed approach to targeting effort further enabled relationships to develop with schools, teachers and government and makes the targeted approach more effective and embedded.

Further more in acknowledgement of the complex tapestry of Zanzibar, its history and the external global forces and pressures it was exposed to, it was evident that for learning to be relevant it also needed to consider not only local realities but also the global context in which they exist. (Sazani Associates 2006) In the UK and much of the Global North, such a construct is referred to as Global Learning.

*"...simply increasing basic literacy, as it is currently taught in Zanzibar and other countries will not advance a sustainable society. If communities and nations such as Zanzibar hope to identify sustainability goals and work*

*toward them, they must focus on skills, values, and perspectives that encourage and support public participation and community decision making.*

*To achieve this, basic education needs to be reoriented to address sustainability and expanded to include critical-thinking skills, skills to organize and interpret data and information, skills to formulate questions, and the ability to analyse issues that confront communities.” (Al Kanaan 2007:12)*

### **Global Learning and consideration of the other**

Global Learning is a process of realised critical thinking, a reflective consideration of social, cultural, economic, political and environmental issues from a variety of perspectives and contexts (MacCallum 2014). It sits alongside and overlaps with what Bourn (2011:257) refers to as the ‘adjectival educations’ and ‘just pedagogies’. These include Development Education, Peace Education, Rights-based Education, Education for Sustainable Development, Global Citizenship Education and Global Education. As a construct it has evolved from and is increasingly associated with an interchangeable concept with many of these pedagogies. It challenges parochial and provincial, single-order attitudes and encourages exploring issues from a range of perspectives to support informed decision-making. (Bourn 2008, 2010 and Scheunpflug 2011).

Global learning, as an emerging pedagogy, seeks to “provide learners with the knowledge and skills needed to live in a globalised world” (Scheunpflug 2008:18)

and is “about enabling people to understand the links between their lives and those of people throughout the world” (Bourn 2008:3). It seeks to develop learners’ ability to enquire from a critical perspective, assisting them in “...learning to unlearn, learning to listen, learning to learn and learning to reach out” (Andreotti 2008:29).

Sazani’s work recognises that educators of children and young people need to acknowledge the ‘other’ and the interactions between identity and difference. Educators need to understand the multiple ways in which they negotiate everyday lived realities and through which they experience their identity in order to understand and value the environment and their living heritage. There is a need for educators to explore and acquire language and concepts to unpack the challenges they and their students face before they can be in a position to lead educational discourse with students.

Understanding how one’s own life is framed and interactions between self and other is important, as Spivak (2013) concurs, understanding how identities are constructed, not only within the communities to which they belong but also between different communities. The centrality and importance of identity in securing confidence to consider another’s perspective or situation resonates with the global learning emphasis on the consideration of ‘the other’. Andreotti (2008), Bourn (2010) and Scheunpflug (2011) all include local voices and perspectives in their writings, and concur that there are often multiple perspectives to consider. A global learning space can, as Bourn (2010: 255) suggests, provide "opportunities for intercultural research and learning based on equality of partnership ... [it] supports

international understanding, but also investigation of indigenous cultures and provides a voice for minority and marginalized groups in any society”.

Global learning, in this guise, becomes a globally relevant construct and one with the potential to liberate education in Zanzibar from trying to pay lip service to PISA and other neoliberal ideals and can support it to become an effective mechanism to challenging the social exclusion of rural communities and young people. Learners who actively engage in education, enter into a process of socialisation that is influenced by larger economic, social and political forces. It has been widely accepted that those most likely to succeed are those who align themselves with, and participate in, other mainstream communities of practice that are congruent with the dominant culture and elites. Those least likely to succeed and most likely to experience difficulties are those who are different and socially excluded, people on the margins, women, ethnic minorities and those who are poor.

Global Learning provides a means to actively challenge these exclusions. Through gaining a range of perspectives and engaging in a critical reflection in a classroom or social-learning setting this in turn provides opportunities to cross borders of dominance. Vibrant self-criticism should be coupled with social criticism in order to reject “the seductive persuasions of certainty” (Hussein 2003:297) and to foster critical positions without becoming intractable or dominant: “...the role of engaged intellectuals was not to consolidate authority but to understand, interpret and question it” (Said 1994:9).

## From School Links to a Global- Professional- Learning Communities

At the start of the Education for Rural People project, Sazani Associates was working with three schools in Wales (UK) and three schools in Zanzibar, coordinating and facilitating a school linking initiative focussing on curriculum development and global learning. This project sought to develop educators' competences in using critical literacy and to foster peer exchanges between Wales and Zanzibar.

From this initial link involving six schools, a network grew with membership of more than 20 schools in Zanzibar and 20 schools in Wales, linked to each other through global schools partnerships and committed to promoting and supporting peer and skill share opportunities for curriculum and teacher development in their locality as well as between their international sister schools. The link, by focussing primarily on schools with a rural catchment has also proven to be an innovative and effective means of retaining teachers in rural schools in Zanzibar. From this school linking network, a Global-professional-Learning Community has evolved.

A PLC can be defined by eight key characteristics:

1. Shared values and vision;
2. Collective responsibility for pupils' learning;
3. Collaboration focused on learning;
4. Group as well as individual professional learning;
5. Reflective professional enquiry;
6. Openness, networks and partnerships;
7. Inclusive membership; and

8. Mutual trust, respect and support (Stoll *et al.* 2005: 1–2).

Each of these characteristics is clearly compatible with a global learning approach, and together they are noticeably different from the piecemeal approaches to embedding global learning; moreover, their focus on collaborative working should enable a coherent and sustainable global learning strategy, where all are involved and answers come from within, rather than being imposed from the outside.

Indeed, one of the most common reasons that education professionals do not integrate the global into the school environment is lack of understanding, or fear of broaching potentially controversial subjects (Blum, 2012: 148). This can result from a lack of learning on this subject in the initial teacher training stage, as well as from development education resources that encourage simple reproduction (Hopkins, 2007: 60). A GPLC, on the other hand, can counter this tension between knowledge and learning by enabling shared learning and promoting capacity-building and critical thinking skills, through a mixture of continuous professional learning and reflective professional enquiry. This should in turn enable the individual to feel confident to tackle global issues sensitively and in a non-biased way by gaining skills in strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity, and problem solving (Bourn, 2012: 11). This approach thus retains the transformative and potent nature of global learning that other approaches eliminate by their very nature.

Indeed, Jackson and Temperley argue that cross-school collaborative learning, underpinned by moral purpose, can be energizing, since it entails four distinct learning processes (2006: 4):



1. Learning *from* one another: where groups capitalize on their individual differences and diversity through sharing their knowledge, experience, expertise, practices, and know-how;
2. Learning *with* one another: where individuals are doing the learning together, experiencing the learning together, co-constructing the learning, making meaning together. Collaborative practitioner enquiry and collaboratively learning about recent research are good examples of this activity;
3. Learning *on behalf of*: where the learning between individuals from different schools is also done on behalf of other individuals within their school and network – or the wider system;
4. *Meta*-learning: where individuals are additionally learning about the processes of their own learning

(Jackson and Temperley, 2006: 6-7; emphases added).

By encouraging systems thinking across schools in Zanzibar and between schools in Wales and Zanzibar, teachers and student understanding of the global forces and pressures that affect lives and livelihoods in both localities is strengthened generating a higher level of thinking.

The community ensures there are shared learning opportunities for everyone involved which directly feeds into a culture of a shared vision and values as members are able to learn individually, as well as with and from each other, which in turn enables members to take collective responsibility for promoting and

supporting each other's learning. This idea of Peer Learning is an essential component of the global learning community which ensures a collective responsibility focused on global learning. It also is a movement away from paternalistic North South aid approaches to education, which are still markedly present.

Through Peer Learning we have also been developing partnerships with individuals or organizations to deliver CPD sessions to teachers, which have given teachers the opportunity to learn from a variety of different sources. For example a CPD session on Environmental Awareness and Climate Change, delivered in partnership with a Conservation and Environmental Education team, provided teachers with new skills and opened up a range of new opportunities for their respective schools.

One of the core elements that we are instilling through our Global Citizenship work in Zanzibar is the importance for teachers to develop a global-minded approach to their classroom delivery and general work ethic. Not only ensuring that global issues are an integral part of school life but also that local knowledge and skills are valued and built on. This means that there needs to be acknowledgement of the assets and strengths of individuals and the communities they belong to which can be built upon.

As an organization Sazani does this by making use of existing assets or practices set up by the Ministry of Education & Vocational Training (MoEVT) or the community. For example Environmental Clubs already existed in schools as a Ministry initiative and we have utilized this concept to help ensure that these environmental clubs are

more active in schools as well as interactive to fuel reflective enquiry and learning for the young people and to increase their involvement in all aspects of livelihood development at a community level. Building on strengths and existing institutional initiatives has been a useful way of embedding change.

The skills Sazani are promoting through the learning community are the subject specific, interdisciplinary and whole school approaches to teaching and the ability to link learning to lives and livelihoods. It is important to link learning to the need for action and the concepts of risk-taking, creativity and innovative thinking. A key aspect of each CPD sessions is to make learning and education more relevant and contextualised to local livelihood issues through curriculum enrichment. This is done in tandem to delivering critical thinking activities that enable teachers to feel confident about delivering sessions on global issues. School visits, sharing curricular topics, and the mutual exploration of global issues such as climate change, tourism and poverty has fuelled critical and creative thinking. It has also challenged their perspectives and perceptions resulting from exchange visits. Experience and exposure have helped develop educators thinking around notion of economic, political, social, cultural and environmental issues and how individuals contribute to these issues.

Through Sazani's education project a learning community has been created which includes not just teachers and students but also School Management Committee members, parents and the wider community. 'A whole school approach' has a strong base for inclusive membership, as it includes a mix of individuals who are all valued,

contributing members of the learning community, with everyone agreeing that they are part of one large community. Community ownership is crucial for collective action and social change and this has developed a sense of trust between members. This is of the utmost importance when looking at the sustainability of our work with communities and schools.

### **Healthy and Sustainable Schools Framework**

Zanzibari teachers, when visiting Wales (UK), were impressed by the Health Promoting Schools Initiative and its success in engaging the whole school, so much so that they asked Sazani to support the design and implementation of a similar scheme in Zanzibar: Sazani facilitated this, by securing support and arranging a skills share from the Health Promoting Schools team at the Wales Government Public Health Office. Utilising this support, Sazani worked with district health and education administrators in Zanzibar to adapt and pilot the Healthy and Sustainable Schools framework in their own area. The inspiration and structure they have drawn from the Wales scheme has also strengthened the links with their partner schools, through a focussing on shared topics and developing shared curriculum materials. Through the Healthy and Sustainable Schools GPLC project Sazani are increasing the understanding and awareness of global sustainability issues through education for the whole school. The overall goal of the GPLC is to ensure that children completing secondary education have life skills that link critical thinking and learning to livelihoods with global awareness, enterprise skills, active citizenship, health awareness, and environmental literacy. Children who complete

secondary education with these skills are better equipped for their involvement in all aspects of sustainable livelihood development.

Peer-to-peer learning, as facilitated through the Healthy and Sustainable Schools framework, also enables teachers and students to share ideas and methods on best practice and to discuss how certain issues can be tackled. During monitoring visits to schools Sazani have been able to garner an understanding of the challenges and successes that various schools have encountered as a result of the pilot projects. Sazani has then initiated peer workshops, allowing the schools involved to discuss these issues and to find solutions together.

Sazani packed the programme into a “Framework” which gives processes, clarity and flexibility for School Management Committees. Understanding culturally appropriate mechanisms for social action and the importance of flexibility has drawn on Sazani’s considerable skill in Community Development. The Healthy and Sustainable Schools framework focuses on supporting sustainable life and enterprise skills through curriculum enrichment. The framework has a three-pronged approach, driven through the School Management Committees (SMC), to develop a whole-school approach to healthy and sustainable living, providing professional development support to teachers through a targeted CPD programme, focussing on 9 topical areas, and supporting student action groups to engage in healthy and sustainable extracurricular activities linked to these topics. There is an Award scheme to acknowledge a schools commitment to the learning community, to ensure learning takes place and to monitor the level of learning. Schools are

encouraged to set up environmental projects in schools and such mini projects are in essence the schools 'award'. For schools to be entitled to a Healthy and Sustainable Schools Award they need to be actively embedding topics learnt into lesson plans, making cross-curricular links between topics and achieving a whole school approach where topics learnt are embedded into the school ethos and into every aspect of school life.

The framework ensures that there are shared learning opportunities for teachers and students and in turns supports the on-going school-linking programme, between Zanzibari and Welsh schools. Like all sustainable systems the process is cyclical.

Through being engaged to such activities, it is clear that students are extremely enthusiastic about participating in activities that relate to their realities (MacCallum, 2014). They are pupil- centred and pupil-led, and are clearly effective in terms of student learning.

Participating schools in Zanzibar involved in this journey, understanding and awareness of sustainable development and informed choice and decision making, has underpinned a continually evolving CPD programme utilizing a whole school approach and range of active student engagement initiatives. This approach to learning is being increasingly acknowledged by the Zanzibar Government and the wider international community as an effective means to challenging youth marginalization.

## Lessons for a Global Arena, from a small island

### A Question of Criticality

An island state like Zanzibar provides a microcosmic view on the complexities of livelihoods and the challenges for education. Understanding local realities, how resilient or vulnerable rural communities are and where is the edge of their dissonance or comfort zone, proved to be an essential component of the GPLC.

The rural areas where Sazani's educational programmes have been focussed have also been the areas most exposed to tourism and the rise of the 'Mwamsho' (awakening) movement, a form of Salafism. The consequences of these two juxtapose global forces have presented additional challenges to Zanzibar's education system and from Sazani's perspective, increased the need for knowledge and understanding to be both critical and reflexive.

For young school leavers looking for gainful employment they are literally caught between the 'devil and the deep blue sea' without the skills to interrogate tourism and compel it to be more responsible towards its host communities or challenge Salafism forcing its exponents to acknowledge and value the rich and varied culture of Islam in Zanzibar.

Addressing societal concerns about tourism and challenging the emerging religious response, the GPLC has engaged in what Said (1993) refers to as Secular Criticism and worldliness. Global learning, in this context has presented an extremely relevant

response to challenging the 'alterity' and uncriticisably intense "Manichean theologizing of 'the Other' ." (Said 1983:291).

The critical consciousness realised through global learning actively challenges exclusion of that which is "other" and the notion that "what is fitting for us and what is fitting for them" (Said 1983: 15-16). The former are designated as superior, the latter, are designated as inferior. The importance of such social differentiation of communication and engagement should start with an understanding of people's perceptions and knowledge of the global pressures and forces that impact on them, if they are to be engaged with in a meaningful way.

Through development of the global professional learning community, global social learning has occurred that has in turn influenced the formation and social construction of values. This has involved creation of a safe space for teachers, as participants, to interrogate their social attitudes and the general cultural orientation, which underpins their livelihoods and approach to learning, opening "people's minds to the realities of the world "(Bourn 2008:8). These collaborative interactions provided a starting point for a 'critical pluralism' (Said 2003). They have initiated an integration of different perspectives resulting in an appreciation of vulnerability, interdependence and dissonance.



## Participation and Empowerment

All of the CPD training delivered through the GPLC has been underpinned by participation and participatory methods. They have drawn extensively on Freire's (1970) approach to generating reflection and critical thinking as a foundation for building and strengthening social change towards informed choice and change. There is a stark contrast with the functional neoliberal notion of participation where engaging with civil society is a valid replacement for consulting with the 'poor' or where learning is purely about basic skills development in exclusion of the cognitive skills required to effectively apply learning to a situation.

Power can be defined as having visible, hidden and invisible faces that operate in spaces from household to international levels (Gaventa 2004). For participation to be meaningful and productive in transforming a situation power should be expanded and this requires a combination of trust, reciprocity, reflexivity and self-scrutiny. Participation and voice are receiving increased scrutiny in donor literature with an unspoken assumption that promotion of voice will ensure better lives for the marginalized (Pettit 2012, Al Kanaan and Proctor 2008).

A key consideration in terms of how the GPLC approached participation was to ensure that it was not just the 'users and choosers' who were involved and that throughout the Healthy and Sustainable School topics there were opportunities to strengthen the critical understanding of power and its ability to influence change (MacCallum 2014, Kabeer 2005).

Without genuine empowerment, participation is reduced to a tokenistic exercise or a way of maintaining power relations. Likewise, without meaningful participation, empowerment can remain an empty, unfulfilled promise (Cornwall and Brock 2005, Pettit 2012). To this end, through working simultaneously with the School Management Teams, the teachers and students, to foster whole school approaches the Healthy and Sustainable Schools Awards created opportunities for learning to influence the school the teachers and for students to actively engage in actions to address their concerns and priorities gained from their learning about certain topics. An example was a topic on avian biodiversity in which teachers were supported to deliver contextualised curriculum topics. Students learnt about biodiversity, birds and their habitats, engaged in critical enquiries as to what had changed within their locality and why and how this had effected the bird population, counted and plotted different varieties. They established student action groups to improve the situation and received support from their School Management Committee (SMC) in designation of certain areas within the school grounds to create bird friendly habitats. This vertical integration of local social action planning provides valuable learning experiences for young people in terms of understanding solution orientated behaviours and social practices.

The GPLC involved teachers and SMC members who worked together across disciplines and subject areas to develop cross-curricular whole school approaches to health and sustainable life skills. These were defined as learning how to engage in livelihood activities that were healthy, sustainable and linked to enterprise. One senior SMC member, during one of these meetings, provided the following analogy:

“So if our project is the mango tree providing shade and shelter for us to sit and share our ideas, then we the SMC are the roots and our teachers the branches and our learning the leaves. That makes our pupils the mangos, so we must work with you to nurture and fertilize our soil so that we grow strong and can survive if the rains come or not.” (SMC member: 2013)

This process empowered everyone involved through the expansion of understanding and choice and ultimately the values that were determined by critical scrutiny and reflection on the situation at hand from a range of perspectives.

This is what Sen(1997) refers to as freedoms and choice to be and do what you value.

This has implications for wider development practice, in terms of the power of identity, sense of place and belonging. As Pettit (2012) suggests, empowering participatory practice should be power conscious and involve engagement in reflective, experiential and embodied learning to complement analytical insights and processes. If this example is related back to local realities and a critical understanding of global pressures such as tourism and Salafism, developing the capability to make informed social & political choices encourages development of cognitive skills and key competences, fostering the individual freedoms associated with participation and empowerment to consider rather than to ‘not question’.

## Learning for Sustainable Change

Education in the 21st century requires not just a few 'add on skills' but attention to the development of competencies, within which certain skills, values, attitudes, knowledge and understanding is required.

The idea that learning can lead to profound change in individuals, and communities is an important link between cognitive and basic skills competencies because both the notion of competence as we have described it, and the notion of personal and social change, are historical, contextualized, and value dependent: they imply a sense of direction leading towards a 'desired end'.

All of Sazani's work in Zanzibar has adopted an approach that is learner centred and the programme has shown that learner-centred guidance, group work and inquiry projects result in better skills and competencies. It demonstrates that interactive forms of discussion and inquiry can lead to a more reflective, deeper and participative learning experience. Learning-by doing, inquiry learning, problem solving, creativity, e.t.c all play a role as competencies for innovation and can be enriched and improved. The project has nurtured new and innovative learning approaches and ensured educators are aware of their potential and to support them in delivering learning, particularly to marginalized groups.

Teachers and students through active engagement in activities that were pupil centred, displayed enthusiasm to learn and participate. Building on existing assets and strengths, such as Ministry-sponsored but often defunct Environmental Clubs, young people have reinvigorated them as interactive student initiatives, linking

learning to livelihoods, global awareness and active engagement. The student-led nature of the activities, ensuring gender equity in relation to positions of responsibility, has also proven successful in linking young people with their wider community on issues related to nutrition, biodiversity, health and sanitation

Relating learning to local realities has focused on the learning process, supported critical thinking, self-reflection and the independent choices of the learner. It is evident that learning can lead to a profound change in individuals and communities, it can increase active citizenship and cultural awareness and expression.

Building upon knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that lead to effective personal and civil society relationships. It has supported development of an understanding of humanity, global social justice and responsibility. This is similar to Delor's four pillars of learning developed for UNESCO, which focuses on, 'learning to live together, learning to know, learning to do and learning to be' (Delor, 1996).

Teachers believe that it is difficult to separate individual from collective thought, as due to peer pressure it can be difficult to find out what individuals really think and how their thinking changes. Working to encourage Global Learning on a small island in the Indian Ocean which has a unique cultural diversity but which has also seen a huge influx of tourists, it is important to promote cultural values and identity in schools. There is a need to ensure that there is opportunity for the interaction of ideas across cultures to further enrich the island's culture rather than eroding local cultural identity, traditions and livelihoods. Education needs to develop learners capacity to engage in this type of thinking.

In a global arena how can the people of a small island with a complex colonial history and socio-political context reclaim their identity and history? How can they challenge the prevailing conflicting and emerging global order to legitimize pluralism and secular criticism?

In order to understand these challenges it is important to understand the interplay between education and sustainable change. In Zanzibar there were five key considerations:

- “Realisation of what you have was deemed an incredibly powerful tool, while before they would cooperate, participants now referred to collective action and support for their work;
- Critical understanding and learning to consider other perspectives and reflect on these in decision making processes;
- Attitudinal change in relation to how they approached issues in their own lives but also in their collective responses to change and challenges;
- The importance of confidence in sharing and discussing ideas and assessing what changes would like to see and what were able to do;
- Collaborative exposure to others ability to challenge collective barriers to practical opportunities.” (Al Kanaan, 2007:39)

What was clear in Zanzibar was for action to be collective then there needs to be a flow of information between individuals and groups. There needed to be creation of a safe space for critical reflection. This enhanced GPLC participants’ capability to collaborate and participate in a transformative process. Building on strengths and

existing assets, fostered a 'can do' approach that in part countered the 'shalt not' restrictions on culture. Ultimately, understanding of 'the other' as a two way process realised the potential of enabling border crossings (Giroux, 2012). There was an acknowledgement of the importance of learning from others and sharing experiences, together with collaboration and collective action leading to social change. Furthermore that through a deliberative space, participants from different social, political and cultural contexts achieved a shared understanding of their individual and collective strengths and how they could utilise this to inform and influence decision-making. This 'Adaptive Capability' (MacCallum2014) altered the perception of external forces and pressures to something people had the ability to influence, be it climate change, tourism or resist the influence of Salafism. Adaptive capabilities are determined by the willingness for collaboration within and between different sectors of society that build on existing assets and strengths.

This chapter has focussed on a small island state, impacted on by all of the global influences and pressures of much larger state. This suggests replicability and viability for expansion and adoption. Taking the Northern construct of global learning out of the Northern classroom and redefining it as a learning process in the Global South, it has contributed to the global challenges of plurality and sustainability, to stop making assumptions and develop adaptive capabilities to be 'not quite right' (Said, 2003)

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