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Developing Fashion/Textile Design Education in Dar es Salaam. Report to outline a framework to develop design education within Tanzania

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Tuesday April 23, 2013

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## Feature

### VETA introduces diploma in textile, fashion designing

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By Correspondent Judicate Shoo, 11th May 2011 @ 12:00, Total Comments: 0, Hits: 2696

SINCE its inception early in the 1970s, vocational training was regarded simply as the hide-out for primary school-dropouts', but the myth is proving a failure as Chang'ombe Vocational Training Centre, has become the mother of all trades, thanks for hosting – at diploma level - the first and the only Textile and Fashion Designing Training facility in the country.

The achievement is a result of an agreement reached in 2007, when a Cotton and Textile Development Programme (CTDP) was initiated from discussions between Lord David Sainsbury; a settler from the United Kingdom's Gatsby Charitable Foundation (GCF) and the Government. This was during Lord Sainsbury's visit to Tanzania Gatsby Trust (TGT) early in the year.

The training is funded by the TGT as an expression of the willingness of Lord Sainsbury to further provide support to Tanzania in a sector that would reduce poverty at the same time set a foundation for industrial production and manufacturing. According to the agreement, the cotton and textile sub-sector was upheld due to its potential in reducing poverty and the experience on the sector by the supporting partners.

Director General of VETA, Engineer Zebadiah Moshi (left) talks to journalists.

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in Tanzania, cotton contributes to the livelihood of about 40 per cent of the population and was the largest export earner in 2005/2006. Presently, between 70 and 80 per cent of cotton production is exported as lint while the remainder is processed by the local textiles industry producing a variety of products at different stages along the value chain for textiles and garments.

Activities carried out in the agreement are including Research system, Extension and Demonstration for cotton production and quality improvement and Textile production (Training at University of Dar es salaam, University of Manchester and Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA)).

On the implementation of the project, various achievements have been recorded among which are, Cotton Sub sector Study; with a focus on the long-term potential for a major increase in the output of Tanzania's cotton and textile sector with a view to maximizing its potential contribution to the generation of increased gross domestic product (GDP), exports, farmer incomes, manufacturing and employment.

A development strategy for cotton and textile programme with ambitious objectives which are achievable including increase of cotton production from 700,000 bales to 1,500,000 bales per annum. Raise yields from 750 kilos per hectare to 1,500 kilos by 2010 and 2,500 kilos come year 2015. Increasing the proportion of lint consumed in the domestic textile industry from 30 per cent to 90 per cent by 2015.

Other initiatives are including conservation agriculture (CA) in cotton growing aims at increasing the productivity/yield at the farm level based on the well developed crop management practices for both cotton and food production.

The CA is a unique agriculture practice that involves simultaneously sustained use of four principles that are; minimum soil disturbance (ideally no tilling and direct seeding); permanent soil cover (ideally 100 per cent + using crop residuals and/or green manure cover crops); Multi-cropping (ideal crop rotation); and integration of crop and livestock production.

Strategy for textile that envisages increased value addition of the domestic consumption of cotton lint. This requires subsequent increase in investment both locally and foreign direct investment. The potential is mainly on continued products (e.g. towels, bed sheets) and production of African based design themes for the export market.

For this to be achieved, the report narrates, there is a need to support the development of skills that will be able to support these productions in terms of textile engineering and designs from the university to vocational college levels.

Textiles and garments have potentially an important role to play in Tanzania's economy as has been the case in many developing countries. The establishment of a garment manufacturing sector does not require massive capital investment by firms or particularly large investments in infrastructure by governments, relative to other sectors such as machinery or chemicals.

So in adherence to the mentioned strategy and application of the Conservation Agriculture, will not only add to cotton value chain but also the food security of the cotton growers' family thus improving the quality of life of millions and thus

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bringing meaningful contribution to the economy.

The two-year training in this Chang'ombe Road based Centre in Dar es Salaam, under the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) – that started last year with an intake of 13 and now another 19 students on their first year intake, falls squarely under the implementation of the CDTP; says Hashim A. Nakanoga, the Coordinator of the school adding the maximum intake is 20 students, but due to unaffordable circumstances coupled with teething shortcomings' the goal was not met in the initial period.

And the gap is almost covered during the present time. On gender balance during recruitment, Nakanoga says majority of applicants are females and the recruitment likewise is translated evenly. Out of 13 second years' nine are females, while in the first year females are 15 against four males. And this is translated from the traditional norms when tailoring was a feminine profession hence domestic science subject – needle-work - the female students' domain in secondary schools.

And the authorities, right from independence, seemed to have blessed the impression that tailoring is a feminine domain hence discarded resultant to the country's failure to establish this very most important training facility for almost 50 years of our independence irrespective of the fact that during the 1970s and 80s the country was proud of owning the vast numbers of textile industries incomparable to none in the East and Central Africa region---led by Urafiki Textile Mills - the largest in the area.

The shortcoming is also translated in the entire textile manufacturing and fashion designing industry which is completely denied of the locally qualified experts forcing the new facility at Chang'ombe to be run by almost the entire retired force of teaching staff. Out of five qualified staff, only one is not in the retired lot. And the going is unabatedly onslaught as no area where any hope is pegged.

The uniqueness of the new school in Tanzania and perhaps in the region, is the combination of four main areas of textile industry including, textile manufacturing, designing, fashioning and weaving.

Meanwhile, the Dar es Salaam Regional Vocational Training and Services Centre (DSMRVTSC) says the textile training facility for the time being is operating under the textile and clothing sector of the Centre's manufacturing industry.

Andrew J. Kitumbo is VETA's Dar es Salaam Regional Director who says the new facility deals in two branches of knowledge and skills, which are Textile and Fashion Design. Textile Design is an occupation essentially dealing with the art of creating and applying motifs on fabric by means of printing and weaving or knitting. Fashion Design deals with the art of creating original garment outfits.

The courses, according to him, aim at providing students with knowledge, attitudes and practical skills which will enable them to access gainful employment in the formal and informal sectors of the economy and give a foundation for skills progression and opportunity towards higher education and training.

Training takes two years in modularized form. The course has four semesters (two semesters each academic year). At the end of the programme, trainees should be able to: Observe health and safety requirements at the workplace, make patterns, make garments, make designs for textile printing, weaving and knitting, print textiles (khangas, kitenge, dress prints and curtains) weave, knit, decorate fabrics and garments and marketing of the same products.

The modules offered are: maintenance of workshop/studio safety, machinery, equipment and tools developing conceptual and practical skills. Designing, advanced sewing, garment making, textile dyeing, textile printing, yarn production, weaving, knitting, decoration, performing marketing, life skills, textile technology, communication skills, English, computer aided designing and field attachments.

Theresia Masinga is a second-year student in the Chang'ombe facility; "I have worked as a tailoring instructor at Amani vocational training centre in Manyoni, in Singida region, for two years before attending a two-year vocational instructors' course at VETA teachers training college in Morogoro, but today, I am very fascinated by the present training as everyday becomes a new day to me since what you learnt yesterday is different from today's lessons."

She praised the instructors saying given their advanced ages, they make sure all trainees catch up with everything that is taught during the day before moving on to another stage. Masinga is a form four leaver who completed her secondary school education at Amani Girls' in 2002. Her training is sponsored by her employers – VETA. Adds her "I am working tirelessly in order to score high marks with the intention of joining engineering course at the Hill."

Further implementing the CTD, with the aim of ensuring that value is added to the cotton produced in the country, the government through the financial assistance from (TGS) has set up the faculty of textile engineering at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), with the enrollment of about 30 students beginning this September.

Establishment of the Faculty, according to the CTD, is an enhancement to the VETA output which will occupy the middle level of the country's industry requirement of top, middle and junior class of experts to ensure smooth implementation of the Programme.

Given the country's absolute state of qualified textile programme teaching staff at university levels, the Foundation has fully sponsored eight members of the UDSM College of Engineering and Technology (Coet) to train in Master's and Doctorate degree levels at Manchester University, UK, to spearhead the establishment of the Faculty.

Professor Leonard Mwaikambo is the Coordinator of the Faculty, at Coet, who says the Senate endorsed two undergraduate programmes last June, including Bachelor of Science in Textile Engineering and Bachelor of Science in Textile Design and Technologies, altogether 30 students - 15 for each course are to be enrolled. The Faculty would be manned by 11 staff, including three who were recruited in July last year.

Now that Nakanoga who also doubles as the backbone staff at Coet's new Faculty of Textile Engineering says, while the diploma teaching at Chang'ombe is practical oriented disciplines under which a student can be self-employed or suitable for formal or informal employment market, chances are available to pursue degree courses at Coet, but only for those who will have made exemplary performance.

According to available statistics of cotton industry in the country, only 30 per cent of cotton produced is processed into clothes and other textile materials, while the remaining 70 per cent is exported as raw materials, denying the country a substantial income and limiting its population to wearing second-hand clothes.

Successful performance of the two higher learning institutions at diploma and degree levels, under the support of TGT, comes at a time when the cotton industry is supposed to play a significant role in the implementation of the country's poverty alleviation strategy, and also augurs well with the recently adopted agriculture strategy known as KILIMO KWA NZA .

And this will also help to cut down annual importation of millions of tons of second-hand clothes from all over the world, a tendency built among most Tanzanians that only used garment materials are suitable for them and the new ready-made clothes were for special groups of the haves only.

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