

## **Educational System in Tanzania: Challenges and Prospective.**

Quality education contributes to the development of a strong and competitive economy of a county because education provides the nation with skilled manpower to serve in various sectors in the country's economy. The government of Tanzania understands that quality of education is the basis for national development. Therefore, the government attempts to create necessary conditions to provide children with high-quality education<sup>1</sup>. However, the policy adopted by the government mainly concerns primary education, which is free for all Tanzanian children. Secondary and tertiary education is based on tuition, making education a luxury for most citizens. The preschool and primary school services provision is quite poor. This problem especially concerns children from poor families, disabled children, and orphans. Beyond financial affordability, there are many additional factors that exacerbate the situation in the field of education in Tanzania.

The Formal Education and Training System in Tanzania comprises two years of pre-primary education, seven years of primary education, four years of Junior Secondary, two years of Senior Secondary and three or more years of Tertiary Education. On the whole, the education system can be divided into three levels: Basic, Secondary and Tertiary Levels. The basic level education consists of pre-primary, primary, and non-formal adult education. The secondary education level includes the Ordinary and Advanced levels of schooling, while the tertiary level programs and courses are offered by higher education institutions, including universities and teacher training colleges<sup>2</sup> (Table 1).

Despite the government's effort to provide high-quality education to its citizens, the educational system faces several challenges represented by lack of highly-qualified teaching staff

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<sup>1</sup> Tanzania National Web-site <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/educationf.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tanzania.go.tz/educationf.html>

that are able to provide students with up-to-date knowledge and skills, the lack of classroom facilities and materials, and lack of administrative resources in terms of evaluation of the system efficiency. Also, the language shifting between basic and secondary levels becomes a critical issue. The problem of gender equality worsens the situation. These problems remain unsolved because of Tanzanian government's incapability to allocate sufficient financial resources to overcome existing challenges (Table 2).

The issue of teachers' professional development includes in-service teachers' training, upgrading licensed teachers and non-education professionals to full-time teachers, especially teachers of science, math, and English. Rural schools have relatively less qualified and experienced teachers. They face higher teacher turnover because they give teachers a higher working load, big classes sizes, and bad working conditions. Other professionals in the educational system of Tanzania include principals and inspectors who provide teachers with administrative and pedagogical support. However, the number of sufficiently trained administrators and policymakers in education is limited too. In fact, there are some cases that a single teacher can run a whole school, handling the roles of the principal and teachers simultaneously. This trend can be especially observed in the rural areas.

Public and private teacher training colleges and universities provide teacher education in Tanzania. Although a graduate from a teacher training institution of higher education is considered to be a licensed teacher, because of their lack of experience such graduates are not automatically recognized as trained teachers.

In the pre-service field there are 34 public teacher colleges in the country. Of these, 18 colleges provide certificate courses for teaching at the primary level of education, and 16 offer diplomas for teacher education to teach in lower secondary school. Still because of the lack of

teachers at all levels of education, lower secondary school teachers work in senior secondary schools in spite of lacking certification for that purpose. What is more, university graduates who are trained as qualified teachers are reluctant to work in the educational sphere because teachers are underpaid and there is not sufficient funding for schools from the government.

The current situation in the in-service training sector is more acute. This field is not regulated by any educational policies and all the processes take place in an uncoordinated and inconsistent way. The in-service professional development of teachers has not been reported to be incorporated in the strategic plans of the senior educational authorities. Upgrading teachers' skills is mainly based on individual need and is not stated as a mandatory condition for teachers' professional development. The lack of teachers is especially persistent in rural areas. The reason for this is that they prefer to work in economically advanced regions with more basic facilities to support good living standards<sup>3</sup> (Table 3).

The number of classroom facilities is insufficient, and there is a considerable shortage of teacher housing. All this creates unattractive learning environments for students, where their educational needs are not taken into consideration. In addition, the lack of basic facilities is conducive to the failure of the education system as a whole. Further, standards for sanitation and water supplies, laboratories, library services, and access for students and teachers are inadequate and should be improved. Without a sufficient supply of electricity and water, sanitation and basic hygiene, it is almost impossible to talk about high quality of education; these elementary needs are unmet<sup>4</sup>.

Another set of challenges to the educational environment is the lack of parental involvement in the educational process because parents do not tend to participate in the school

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<sup>3</sup>According to the ICT Report done in 2010 (Dr. Patti Swarts and Ms. Esther Mwiyeria Wachira, [http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis\\_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis_Tanzania.pdf)),

<sup>4</sup><http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/tanzania-education:-failure-of-education-system-20110207583.html>

lives of their children. They see their roles just in paying tuition fees because children at the secondary level are supposed to study at the boarding schools. Thus, by paying for education of their children, parents rely on the school's administrations to ensure their children's education<sup>5</sup>.

Additionally, the most significant challenge in this field is the language barrier. The language of instruction in primary school is Swahili, whereas all the classes in secondary school are taught in English (and all examinations are in English as well). Thus, there are no connections and common standards concerning the language policy in the educational system of Tanzania. Children feel confused because they do not know enough English to take classes in secondary school, and in many cases they do not understand their teachers who speak English and deliver the information in this language. As a result, all this leads to the deterioration of the quality of education.

The problem of gender equality can be observed in Tanzania's education as well. The survey of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) in education in Africa<sup>6</sup> demonstrates that 16 to 20 percent of educators in Tanzanian universities and teacher colleges are female and this tendency has been quite steady during the 2000 – 2005 period. On the other hand, the number of female educators is a little higher than that of male educators in private high education institutions in comparison to public ones. Similarly, the problem of gender equality is relevant in the attraction of equal numbers of male and female students, because nowadays the majority of students in Tanzanian institutions of higher education remain male. The government tries to provide appropriate educational policies to address the issue of gender inequality. The

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<sup>5</sup> <http://EzineArticles.com/5766132>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cet.uct.ac.za/files/file/tanzania.pdf>

Education and Training Policy developed in 1995 stated that the main goal in this particular field is to achieve high education quality and equity in the whole system of education<sup>7</sup>.

Overall, the quality of education in Tanzania greatly suffers. The poor quality leads to low student performance at school and results in a small number of educated people. A lack of educated people in the county leads to economic stagnation and apathetic civil society. Therefore, the best investment that Tanzanian government may make is to invest in education as a way to ensure development, prosperity and a better nation.

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<sup>7</sup> Tanzania: ICT in Education. Situational Analysis  
([http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis\\_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis_Tanzania.pdf))

## APPENDIX

**Table 1. Educational System in Tanzania**

Level	Education	Age	Duration years	Language	Subjects	Annual costs for governmental schools	Required for next level
Basic	Pre-primary	2 - 4	2	Swahili	-		-
	Primary school	4 - 10	7	Swahili	-	Tuition free, expenses for uniforms, testing fees, school supplies	-
Secondary	Secondary school Ordinary level (0-level) Form IV	10 - 14	4	English	9	TSH 20,000 (≈\$13) Fees for: testing, watchman, academic furniture, identity and emblem, lunches	5 subjects with grades of A-C
	Advanced level (A-level) Form VI	14 - 16	2	English	9, including general studies	Tuition	Form IV and National Exam score
Tertiary	Bachelor's degree, Associate degree, Teacher training college	16 - 19	3	English	open	Tuition	Form VI and Entrance Exam score
	Graduate degree		2+	English	Open	Tuition	Entrance Exam score

Source: MamboViewPoint.org

URL: [http://www.mambosteunpunt.org/Projects/ScholarShips/tanzanian\\_educational\\_system.htm](http://www.mambosteunpunt.org/Projects/ScholarShips/tanzanian_educational_system.htm)

**Table 2. Educational Challenges**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Gaps/Challenges</b>
<b>Primary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overcrowded classrooms</li> <li>• High ratio of students to teaching and learning materials</li> <li>• Poor quality of teaching and learning especially in the sciences</li> <li>• High student to teacher ratio</li> <li>• Inability of teachers to teach some topics in the new curriculum especially after it was reviewed</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High student to teacher ratios</li> <li>• Trained teachers do not want to go to rural areas</li> <li>• Shortage of teaching and learning materials</li> <li>• Competing priorities when allocating funds as most funds are directed to infrastructure instead of operations</li> <li>• Few schools have computers installed</li> <li>• No coordination mechanism in the deployment of ICTs</li> <li>• Shortage of science teachers as most of those trained migrate professionally to other non-teaching professions</li> <li>• In-service training not coordinated</li> <li>• Insufficient science laboratories hampering quality in the teaching of sciences</li> </ul>
<b>Higher Education Institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited financing and affordability of tuition by students</li> <li>• Low participation rates (1.3%) 15 – one of the lowest in Sub Saharan Africa</li> <li>• Gender equity</li> <li>• Quality Assurance and relevance</li> <li>• Few applicants for science, engineering and technology fields</li> <li>• Inadequate funding for research in science and technology</li> </ul>

Source: Tanzania: ICT In Education, Situational Analysis

URL: [http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis\\_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis_Tanzania.pdf)

**Table 3 - Key statistics in the education and training sector**

Level	No. of Institutions		Number of Students ('000)	Number of Teachers			Student/Teacher Ratio
	Public	Private		Trained	Untrained	Total	
Pre Primary			896,146	4,489	12,687	4,489	55:1
Primary	15,727		8,441,553			157,185	54:1
Secondary	3,283	819	1,466,402			33,954	43:1
TTCs – Primary/Diploma	34	43	35,371			1,678	21:1
Universities						95,525	
Adult and Non-formal Education			957,289			45,879	21:1

Source (BEST), TCRA and Ministry of Science and Technology, 2009

[http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis\\_Tanzania.pdf](http://www.gesci.org/assets/files/Knowledge%20Centre/Situational%20Analysis_Tanzania.pdf)