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## Study Brief

# Access to Quality Education for Children Living in Low-Income Urban Neighborhoods in Tanzania

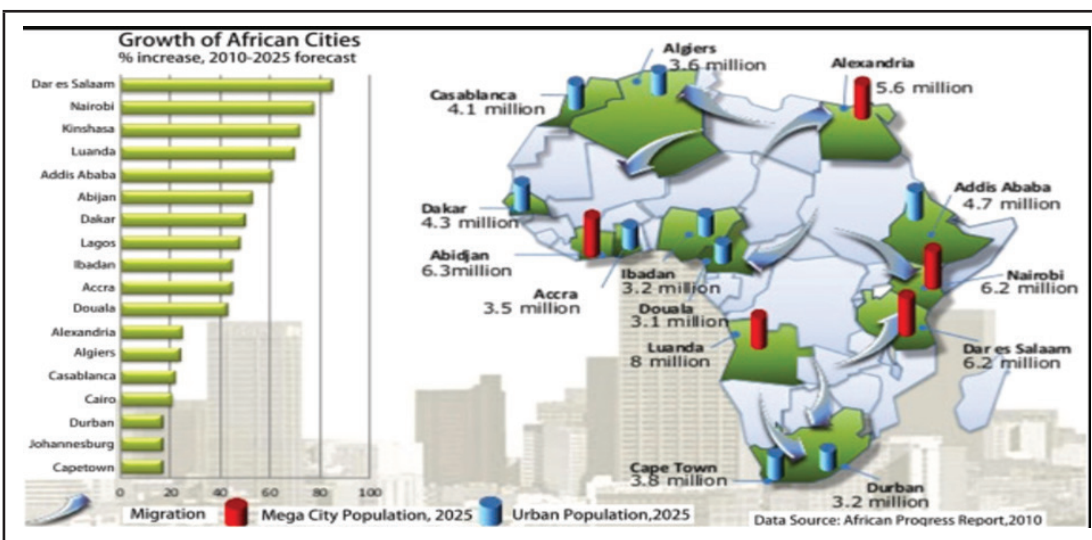
Urban Education Research Report - Tanzania

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# Introduction

Urban education is emerging as a significant topic of discussion in Tanzania and other Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, particularly focusing on the challenges faced by the population residing in impoverished urban areas. Learners from low-income households in urban settings encounter more difficulties in their educational journey compared to their more privileged counterparts. Tanzania, like many SSA nations, is undergoing substantial urbanization, marked by a notable rise in rural-to-urban migration, globally, Tanzania is the sixth country with the highest rate of urban population growth (Worrall et al., 2017). This trend is expected to continue, and it is estimated that by 2050, 55% of the Tanzanian population will be urban (World Bank, 2016), with Dar es Salaam leading in urban population growth in Africa (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Growth of African cities. Source: Africa Progress Group**

Understanding the current state of urban education is crucial for developing plans to address the escalating demands of urban education in the future. This brief presents the summary of the main findings of the urban education study, sought to investigate the schooling patterns of children living in urban poor populations in urbanizing Tanzania.

## Research Objectives

The study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the schooling patterns among children living in urban poor households in Tanzania – including those with special needs?
2. How do urban poor communities perceive and understand education as a right in the context of urbanization in Tanzania? and,
3. What available education opportunities exist for children with special needs and living in poor urban households?

## Methodology and study sites

This was a cross-sectional study utilizing a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative approaches). The study targeted households with school going children aged 3 to 19 years in selected urban informal settlements in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. The sites were selected based on two main criteria. First, High population of urban poor residents and secondly a site is considered a low-income area. Quantitative data were gathered from 1,200 randomly selected low-income households, along with input from 98 educational institutional heads from schools enrolling learners from the sampled households. Qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions with caregivers/parents, in-depth interviews, and key informant interviews involving opinion leaders and policymakers. Data analysis focused on 2,150 children aged 5-17, reflecting the basic education schooling age in Tanzania. A wealth score, derived from household belongings, was categorized into three equal tertiles for analysis purposes. Table 1 shows the distribution of the households within the study areas and Table 2 characteristics.

**Table 1: Distribution of the households within the study sites**

Level	Site	Number of households	Percent
Region	Dar es Salaam	814	67.8
	Dodoma	386	32.2
District	Dodoma Municipal	386	32.2
	Ilala	236	19.7
	Kinondoni	266	22.2
	Temeke	312	26.0
Ward	Chang'ombe	386	32.2
	Hananasifu	266	22.2
	Kiburugwa	312	26.0
	Kipawa	236	19.7
Street/village	Hamvu	149	12.4
	Hananasifu	140	11.7
	Juhudi	107	8.9
	Karakata	95	7.9
	Kawawa	126	10.5
	Kiburugwa kwa Nyoka	123	10.3
	Kiburugwa namba tatu	82	6.8
	Kishoka	105	8.8
	Mazengo	132	11.0
	Mji Mpya	141	11.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>1200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2: Household characteristics**

	<b>Overall (% of 1,200 households)</b>	<b>Lowest Tertile (% of 396 households)</b>	<b>Middle Tertile (% of 398 households)</b>	<b>Highest Tertile (% of 406 households)</b>
<b>Household size</b>				
2-3 members	20.6%	22.8%	20.6%	18.4%
4-5 members	44.8%	45.5%	44.9%	44.1%
6-7 members	21.8%	19.7%	21.8%	24.0%
8-21 members	12.7%	12.0%	12.6%	13.5%
<b>Household head education</b>				
No education/others	5.9%	10.3%	6.0%	1.4%
Primary	69.8%	73.6%	76.1%	59.7%
Secondary	20.2%	14.2%	16.9%	29.5%
Tertiary	4.1%	1.9%	1.0%	9.5%
<b>Household head gender</b>				
Female	35.9%	49.8%	34.8%	23.3%
Male	64.1%	50.2%	65.2%	76.7%
<b>Household head age in years</b>				
Below 40 years	40.8%	43.0%	42.2%	37.3%
40-49 years	29.6%	28.6%	30.0%	30.3%
50-59 years	14.0%	11.8%	14.0%	16.2%
60 years and above	15.6%	16.6%	13.8%	16.2%
<b>Household head marital status</b>				
<b>Married, polygamous or monogamous</b>	71.2%	59.2%	73.8%	80.6%
Widowed	13.3%	18.5%	12.4%	8.9%
Separated or Divorced	8.5%	12.1%	9.3%	4.1%
Never married	7.0%	10.2%	4.5%	6.3%

**Notes: \* The youngest was 22 years old.**

About 7 in 10 (70%) household heads had primary school education as the highest level of education obtained. Overall, the majority of the households were headed by males (64%). Over two-thirds of the household (70.4%) were headed by household heads aged below 50 years. Of these, majority (58%) were below 40 years

From Table 3, a majority (50%) of children between ages 5-17 in the study sites were of primary school-going age of 7-13 years, followed by 14-17 years (25%) and 5-6 years (14.6%) as. Overall, there were slightly more girls than boys.

**Table 3: Child Characteristics for ages 5 - 17 years**

Overall (% of 2,150)		Wealth score tertile for the child's household		
		Poorest (% of 723)	Middle tertile (% 730)	Wealthiest (% of 697)
<b>Child age in years</b>				
5-6 years	14.6%	13.6%	15.8%	14.4%
7-13 years	60.4%	62.3%	58.0%	61.1%
14-17 years	25.0%	24.2%	26.3%	24.4%
Mean age in years (continuous)	10.5	10.6	10.5	10.5
<b>Child's gender</b>				
Female	50.5%	50.7%	49.8%	50.8%
Male	49.5%	49.3%	50.2%	49.2%
<b>Orphanhood status of the child</b>				
Both parents alive	86.3%	85.8%	85.1%	88.2%
Both parents dead	1.9%	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%
One living parent	11.7%	12.6%	12.8%	9.7%
Child has disability/special needs	2.5%	2.0%	3.0%	2.5%

The total sample of the schools in the survey comprised 98 schools with a total of 79 in Dar es Salaam and a total of **19** in Dodoma. The study had 68% of the schools from public, and 32% private. Of the 32% private schools, 81% are in the pre-primary level.



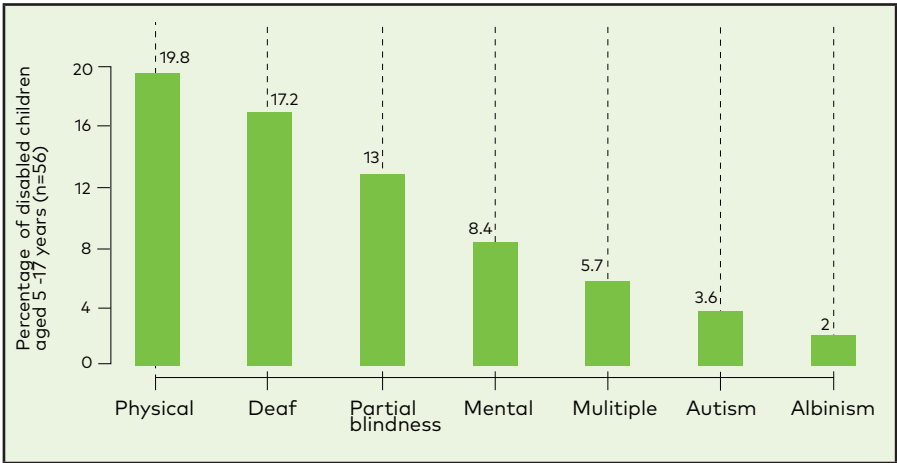




# Findings

## School participation

The results show that overall, 98.1% of the children have ever been to school. By gender, more girls had ever been to school compared to the boys - a gender parity index of 1.02. Similarly, the results indicate that all girls (100%) attended pre-schools as opposed to boys 95.5%. The trend is observed in primary and secondary where girls dominate participation. However, it's worth noting that there was a decrease in school participation (for both boys and girls) as the years progressed with notable decline at secondary school age. The focus was on children with visible disabilities, the study established that from a population of 2,150, 2.3% (56) were learners with disabilities. Of the 56 children who were reported to have disabilities (19.3%) had physical disabilities, 17.2% were deaf, 13% were partial blindness while 8.4% had mental disabilities. Among children with disabilities, more boys (10.2%) than girls (9.2%) were enrolled in school.



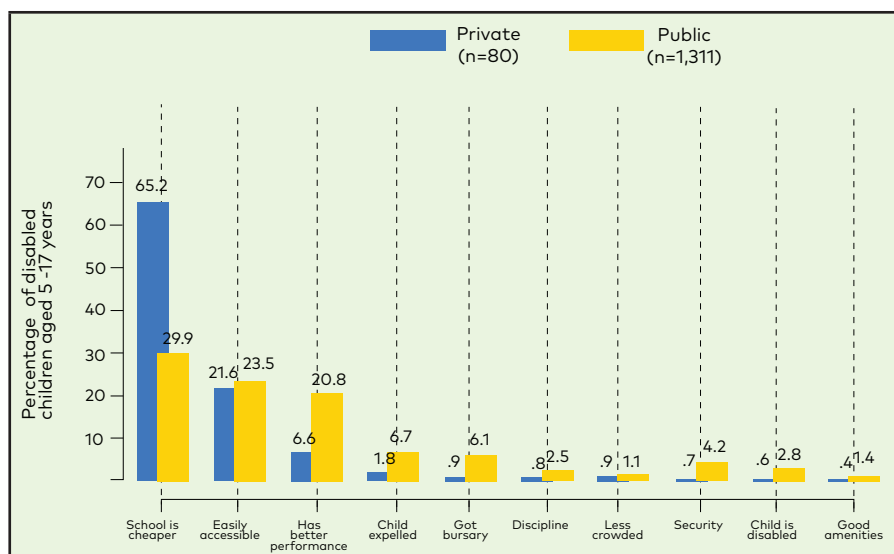
**Figure 2: Types of special needs/disabilities among children aged 5-17 years (N=57)**

## Integration or inclusion of Learners with special needs/ disabilities

At least 6 out of 10 schools had made provisions for learners with disabilities. Schools that reported they did not make provisions for learners with special needs had inadequate facilities to cater for children with special needs. Further the study sought to understand how the schools that made provisions for learners with special needs were doing it. About 94.7% of the schools had integrated learners with special needs into normal schools.

## Enrolment by school type and levels

Overall, 87% of the children were enrolled in public schools. It is also important to note that those who were enrolled in private schools were more in the pre-primary level (20%) compared to the primary (13%) and secondary levels (9.4%). The main reasons for choice of school by the parents were the cost (preferring cheapest ones), accessibility, and perceived better performance of the school.



**Figure 3: Reasons why parents chose to enroll children in private or public schools.**

## Gross and net enrolment rates

The primary school Net Enrolment Rate (NER) was at 83.7% suggesting that 16.3% of primary school-age children from the participating households were out of school. For secondary school, both GER and NER for the participating households were below 100% at 89.8% and 71.6%, respectively. This implies that there is wastage in primary and secondary schools in urban low-income neighborhoods in Tanzania.

## Gender parity index (GPI)

Overall, there was gender parity in primary school level (1.00) in the study region. However, there was a disparity at the secondary school level in favor of girls (1.06). This trend agrees with a report by UNESCO (2021) that Tanzania has made significant progress in Gender Parity Index for gross secondary school enrolment from 0.96 in 2014 to 1.10 in 2020.

## Grade repetition.

The main reasons for grade repetition for children between 5-13 years were: not meeting the cut-off points to progress (54.8%), relocation to another area (9.9%), and transferring to another school (4.8%); for those aged 14-17 years the reasons were- not meeting the cut-off points to progress (85.8 %), too young to join the next grade (9.5%) and transferred to another school (4.8%). The results on progression rates indicate that on average, more boys than girls repeated a grade. The transition (from one level of school to the next), rate for boys and girls was above 98% implying that the wastage rate is low among learner's low-income urban neighborhood.

## Teacher qualifications

At the primary school level, more female teachers held a certificate (57.8%) while a considerable proportion of males had a certificate (36.5%). At diploma qualification level, slightly more males (24.6%) than females (18.3%) had this qualification. On the other hand, at the secondary level, a majority of teachers held a degree, with a slightly higher proportion of female teachers (71.5%) compared to male teachers (65.6%). The number of teachers trained in Special Needs (SNE) at both primary and secondary levels was negligible, with below 1% at all levels. While it is commendable that most teachers, of both genders, have adequate qualifications, the study points to need for interventions in getting more teachers trained in SNE.

## Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

The study indicated a generally higher PTR than these recommendations at all levels, ranging from Pre-primary to secondary school, with the highest being seen at the primary level (about 53 pupils per teacher). This suggests low internal inefficiency, hence affecting the quality of education. It also increases the workload of teachers when marking assignments and assessment tests.

**Table 4: Pupil-Teacher Ratio by school levels**

School level	Average pupil-teacher ratio	Number of schools
Pre-primary	43.2	14
Primary	52.6	32
Secondary	47.6	34

## Average class Size

This study found relatively small class sizes in the first two years- the Baby and Middle classes (with a range of 5-21 pupils per class), with a sharp rise in Top class (67) – during to direct entry to this grade. The class sizes continued to rise in Std 1 (136), Std 2 (highest at 144) and Std 3 (134). In an interesting turn of events, the class sizes started falling in Std 4 (119) and the downward trend continued up to Std 7 (104). At the secondary school, the class sizes were very high in secondary form 1 (111) and 2 (103) but a sharp drop was observed in secondary form 3 (76) and 4 (78).

## Pupil Textbook Ratio

The study focused on three main subjects: English, Kiswahili and Mathematics which are core to literacy and numeracy development. The study found a generally high pupil textbook ratio at both primary and secondary schools. For instance, a pupil textbook ratio of about 30:1 was noted for Std 3 Mathematics. A lower, but not sufficient, pupil textbook ratio of about 7:1 and 6:1 was observed across subjects for primary grades 4 and 6, respectively. Primary grade 7 had the lowest average pupil textbook ratio of about 2:1 for all the three subjects.

## Parental/guardian support with homework and school activities

Learners in lowest grades (pre-primary) received the highest support while those in secondary schools received the least. Most parents were also not able to engage in other school activities like meeting with the teachers to discuss their children's school progress. On the other hand, some parents expressed their dissatisfaction with teachers' behavior that affected the quality of learning including high emphasis on tuition.



## **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities**

The study found that about 20% of school lacked functional hand washing facilities. Also, of the 67 schools, 65.7 % (44) had a flush toilet with 98.5% of the toilet facilities being located within the school compound. Moreover, 98.5% (66) of the schools reported that these toilets were also separated, as would be expected, for boys and girls. The majority of schools had toilets exclusively for teachers and staff (97%), a few (3%) reported that their toilet facilities were shared between teachers and learners. Regarding the Pupil-Toilet ratio, the study found an average of 50:1. Regarding toilet facilities appropriate for learners with special needs, only 26.9% (18) of schools reported that they had appropriate and functional separate toilets for this category of learners.

## **Governance, Management and Quality Assurance**

A majority of schools reported receiving an inspector/ quality assurance officer only once a year (44.8%) or termly (29.9%). About 14.9% of the schools, reported never having been visited. The findings imply the need for the government to increase and regularize visits by quality assurance and health officers to the schools in order to maintain the expected standards in learning, safety and health.

## **Stakeholders' Perceptions of Government Commitment in Protecting the Right to Education (RTE)**

The Tanzania Government has made significant efforts to ensure that all citizens access education. This is supported by three sub-themes that emerged during the discussions - policy and strategies, law enforcement, and the school feeding program.

**Policies and Strategies Supporting Implementation of RTE:** The stakeholders cited the fee-free primary and secondary education policies as examples of the Government efforts to ensure all children access school.

**Law Enforcement:** According to policy makers, parents who fail to take their children to school face severe consequences including legal action.

**School Feeding Program (SFP):** The government has demonstrated its commitment to the protection of RTE by implementing school feeding programs (SFPs).

## **Parental Knowledge of Reporting Mechanisms for Right to Education (RTE) Violations**

Parents were aware of the types of RTE violations that can occur in the school's precinct, such as rape, corporal punishment, and children being sent home for failing to pay school levies. However, the findings paint a mixed picture on awareness of reporting mechanisms. Overall, parents seemed not aware of the reporting mechanisms.

## **Parental Monitoring of Children Daily Life**

On average over 80% and over 78% of the parents, across wealth tertiles, knew where their children spent time after school and whom they spent time with after school, respectively. There was no difference in parental monitoring based on socioeconomic status. However, during interviews, teachers and community leaders differed with parents' opinions. Teachers opined that parental involvement at secondary school education was less compared to pre-primary and primary levels.

## **Parental Provision of Basic Needs to Facilitate Children Education**

In the African context, fathers are generally responsible (or expected to be) for educating their children. However, it was revealed that some fathers were not fulfilling their responsibilities leaving the burden of school responsibilities to mothers. Despite their low income, mothers were more motivated and prepared to ensure their children receive an education.

## **The Role of Community Leaders and Community in Promoting Right to Education (RTE)**

The role of community leaders and community in promoting RTE was discussed under three sub-themes, leadership and parental education, community responsibility in child rearing, and children and youth behavior.

**Leadership and Awareness Raising among Parents:** Community leaders reported that some members, especially parents, showed little concern on education matters.

**Community Responsibility in Raising Children:** Leaders were worried about the increasing disengagement of community members in caring for children. Gradually, raising a child has become an individual family responsibility

**Children behaviors:** There are some efforts to involve more members of the community to ensure children attend school and learn.

## **Impassable road and long distance to and from school-access**

The unplanned nature of urban low-income neighborhoods has led to poor road infrastructure. This situation has become a barrier for children to attend school especially during raining seasons. Also, study findings show that girls are more vulnerable to sexual harassment when they have to cover long distance to and from school, and this can lead to early pregnancies and drop out.

## **Parental normalization of sexual abuse to girls**

Some parents in urban informal settlements tend to consider sexual abuse a common practice despite the fact that it has negative effect to girl education. Findings from this study, reveal that Parents hardly took any actions to worst sexual violence committed against school girls such as rape. Also, some teachers noted that, they lack support from the parents when following up on Violence against Children cases.

# Conclusion

The findings indicate that 98.1% of children have attended school, with a slightly higher percentage among girls. Among learners with special needs (2.3% of the total), only 10% have received schooling, revealing an access gap for these vulnerable children. Six out of ten (60%) schools have provisions for learners with special needs, while those without reported inadequate facilities. In the academic year 2022, the majority of learners in pre-primary, primary, and ordinary level secondary education were enrolled in government schools (79.9%, 87.3%, and 90.6%, respectively). Among the surveyed schools, the pupil-teacher ratio exceeded the government's recommended number (40) across all levels. Additionally, the average class size surpassed 100 learners per class in primary school signaling quality issues. Finally, the right to education is discussed in terms of three sub-themes: policy and strategies, law enforcement, and the school feeding program:

1. Policy and Strategies: Stakeholders acknowledged the state's obligation to protect and promote the RTE. Examples cited included the Tanzania Education and Training Policy of 2014 (2023 edition) which cites the successes in the provision of the fee-free primary and secondary education.
2. Law Enforcement: Local government authorities (LGAs) actively encourage parents to send their children to school.
3. School Feeding Program (SFP): The government's dedication to protecting the RTE is evident through the implementation of proposed school feeding programs (SFPs).



## Key recommendations

- i. The government and NGOs operating in informal settlement in Tanzania need to establish more targeted pro-poor programs such as scholarships, equity funding models and dignity kits for girls.
- ii. Promote equity in integrated and inclusive schools, there is a need to map out learners with disabilities and have them enrolled in integrated and inclusive schools.
- iii. The government should eliminate or regulate additional levies, contributions, and other indirect education costs to improve educational access and equity for all socioeconomic groups.
- iv. The government needs to train more special education teachers and also more female teachers for higher qualifications in primary education.
- v. The government needs to put more resources to enable schools equip themselves with WASH and other Learning Facilities.
- vi. There is a need to address uncondusive living environment: Learners often lived in unsafe environments surrounded by clubs for illegal brews and uncollected garbage.
- vii. The government needs to employ more teachers to lessen the PTR and build more classes to reduce the class sizes and provide more textbooks for learners.

- viii. Schools should organize educational forums for parents to create an awareness for parental involvement in their children's learning with an emphasis on male parents/guardians getting involved.
- ix. Quality Assurance and Health officers should make unannounced, regular visits to the schools to ensure maintenance of high academic and health standards.
- x. There is a need to provide civic education to local leaders, and the members of the community so that they can jointly address some of the problems or barriers to effective learning. Educators' actors to consider providing lifelong learning opportunities within the education systems.

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