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

Urban Education Research Report - Tanzania

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## Executive summary

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, projected to reach approximately 55% of the country's population by 2050. Understanding the current state of urban education is crucial for developing plans to address the escalating demands of urban education in the future. The study aimed to address these issues through 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?

In collaboration with HakiElimu and technical support from the National Bureau of Statistics, APHRC conducted a cross-sectional concurrent mixed-methods study. Quantitative data were gathered from 1,200 randomly selected low-income households in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, 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.

The study received ethical and administrative approvals from relevant authorities. 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. The key results highlights have been presented below and thereafter a set of key study recommendations.

### Schooling Patterns:

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).

This underscores significant government control over enrollment spaces for learners from low-income urban households. The primary factor influencing school choice was the cost, suggesting the success of Tanzania's free primary and secondary education initiatives. However, 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.

## Perceptions of the Right to Education (RTE):

The right to education is categorized into 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, illustrating the government's efforts to ensure universal access to education.
2. Law Enforcement: Local government authorities (LGAs) actively encourage parents to send their children to school. Those who fail to comply are presented to legal enforcement agencies, emphasizing the commitment to ensuring children's attendance. However, implementation varies from one LGA to the other.
3. School Feeding Program (SFP): The government's dedication to protecting the RTE is evident through the implementation of school feeding programs (SFPs).



### Some key recommendations have been highlighted below:

1. In order to increase participation rate, 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.
2. To promote equity and inclusivity in integrated schools, the ministry of education and private developers need to provide extra support for learners with disabilities. There is a need to map out learners with disabilities and have them enrolled in integrated and inclusive schools, provide adapted equipment and devices for use by the learners with disabilities who have been integrated/included in normal schools.
3. The study established that latent expenses, also known as hidden or indirect costs, hinder access, and participation in education, especially for informal settlement residents. The government should eliminate or regulate additional levies, contributions, and other indirect education costs to improve educational access and equity for all socioeconomic groups.
4. The government needs to train more special education teachers and also more female teachers for higher qualifications in primary. The government should also not ban use of untrained persons as teachers at all levels. In order to effectively handle learners from low-income households, an in-service training programme can be devised.
5. The study established that there is a high pupil teacher ratio (PTR), large classes and undesirable pupil-to-textbook ratio and large class sizes across grades. To improve quality, 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.
6. The government should allocate more resources and develop strategies to enable schools to equip themselves with essential facilities and programs. A significant number of schools lack provisions for sanitary towels for girls, ICT services for learners, playgrounds, WASH facilities, and school feeding programs. Providing these facilities and programs is crucial for improving the quality of learning and school attendance. Additionally, some schools are located in uncondusive learning environments, surrounded by illicit brew dens, weed-smoking areas, and uncollected garbage. Addressing these issues is vital for creating a safe and supportive educational environment.
7. Quality Assurance and Health officers should make unannounced, regular visits to the schools to ensure maintenance of high academic and health standards. Governance, Management and Quality Assurance: Most schools reported the existence of a comprehensive governance and management structure. However, there was little school inspection going on. 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 system.



## Introduction

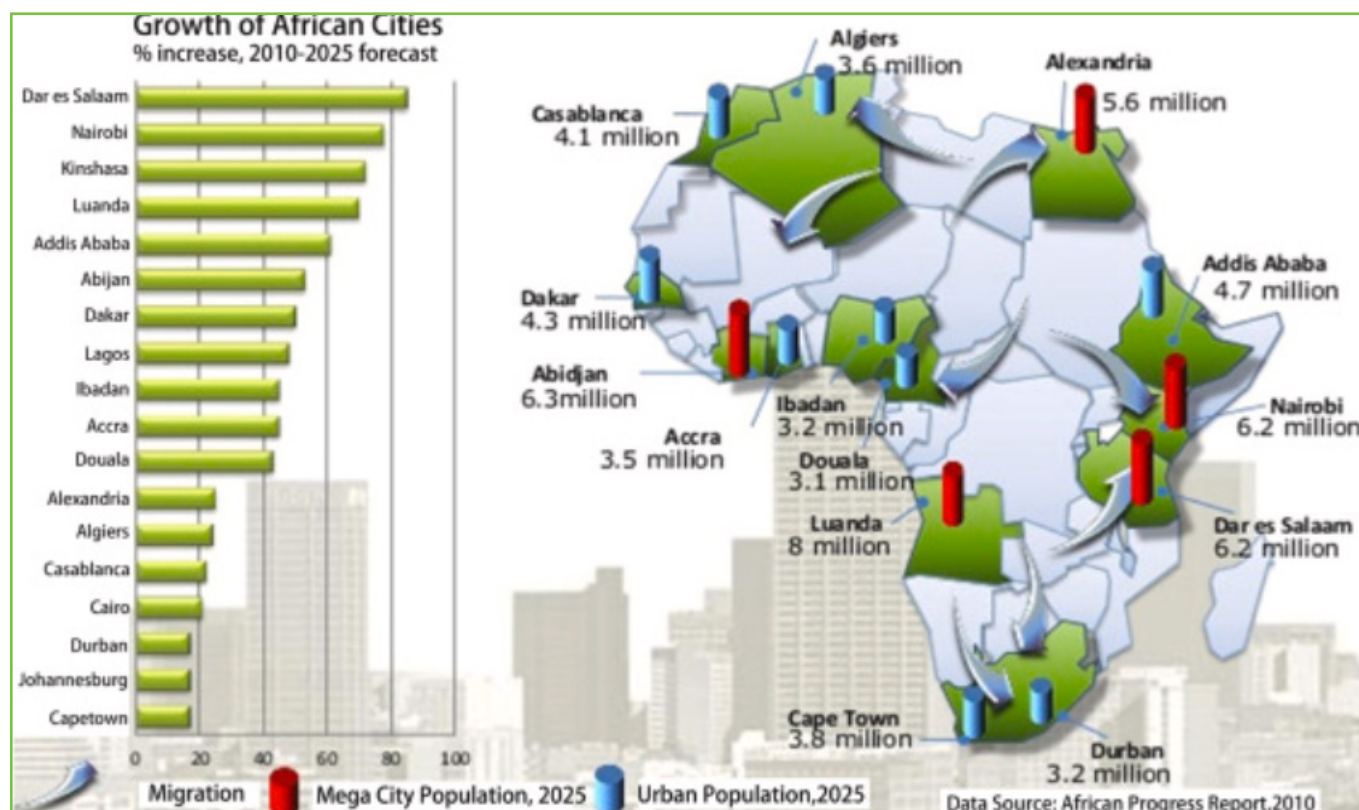
Globally, Tanzania is the sixth country with the highest rate of urban population growth (Worrall et al., 2017). This trend is expected to continue, and it is estimated that by 2050, 55% of the Tanzanian population will be urban (World Bank, 2016), with Dar es Salaam leading in urban population growth in Africa (Figure 1).

Urban education is growing as a new area of discussion in Tanzania and other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) with a particular focus on the population living in poor urban areas. Studies show that in several countries in SSA, the learning performance of rural students is much lower than that of urban students (Sumida & Kawata, 2021). Several factors can be attributed to this gap. Urban students seem to have an access advantage (Echazarra & Radinger, 2019).

However, it seems that children from the low-income households do not benefit from this urban education advantage (In Dar es Salaam, over 70% of the population live in urban low-income neighborhoods that lack basic infrastructure posing great challenges to the government in its urban planning (Woodcraft et al., 2020). African countries must prepare for the education and training of the large number of youth and children in the urban areas.

The rapid urbanization has led to expansion of low-income households with a majority of urban population living in low-income areas not accessing basic social services such as quality education. According to the UN-Habitat estimated projections, many SSA countries are at risk of not achieving SDG 11 on sustainable cities.

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





## Education in the context of urbanization

The Continental Educational Strategy for Africa (CESA) 2016-2025 encourages governments to provide equitable and inclusive quality education to all children. In many SSA countries, the constitution guarantees the right to quality education for every child. In response to this, a number of SSA countries initiated universal primary education (UPE) policies aimed at increasing access to education for all children. Tanzania, over the last five years with nearly 2.3 million additional learners in primary schools, rising from 8.64 million in 2016 to 10.9 million in 2020. Gross Enrolment Ratio in primary education rose from 96.9% (2016/17) to 109.7% (2020/21) which is an impressive improvement of about 13 percent over the period Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST 2022). The primary school-aged population (7-13 years) is projected to reach 12.3 million by 2026, corresponding to 18.6 percent of the total population.

The Ordinary -Level secondary school-aged population (14-17 years) is projected to reach 5.6 million by 2026, corresponding to 8.1 percent of the total population. The A- Level secondary school-aged population (18-19 years) is projected to reach 2.8 million by 2026, corresponding to 4.1 percent of the total population. Tertiary education-aged population (20-24 years) is projected to reach 6.0 million by 2026, corresponding to 9.3 percent of the total population. According to the MoEST (2022) between 2020 and 2026, there will be a constant growth of children of all school ages, making the total school-age population to stay at an average of 40.2 percent by 2026. This means that between 2020 and 2026, students' population will be approximately 28.6 million thus imposing higher demand for schooling resources from pre-primary to higher education.

The UPE policies in East African countries, Tanzania included, have been implemented in the context of a rapidly growing population, with an unprecedented increase of urban population driven by migration and natural growth. Inadequate resources and capacity deficits have contributed to ineffective urban planning and insufficient infrastructure investment, which in turn have led to urban sprawl and the growth of informal

settlements. Low-income urban households in Tanzania accommodate about 75% of the urban population (Magina, Kyessi & Kombe, 2020), while in Kenya, around 56 per cent of urban families live in informal settlements (UNICEF, 2021). This has posed a new challenge in the provision of education and lack of proper investments to match the growing demand in the urban areas. For example, Tanzania mainland has high rural-urban migration whereby young people migrate to towns resulting in schools in rural areas becoming under populated while those in towns become overcrowded (MoEST, 2022). The trend has led to an increased poor urban population. According to the Household Budget Survey (National Bureau of Statistics (2019), 2017/18 findings, 15.8% of the poor population (living below the basic needs poverty line) in Tanzania Mainland are found in Urban areas. Maliti (2018) discloses that, while inequalities in wealth and education between the rich and poor decreased over time in Tanzania, inequalities in urban spaces continue to increase.

While countries implement tuition-free basic education policies, Lindsjö (2018) found that in Tanzania, households continue to utilize a large proportion of their income to educate their children both in urban and rural areas. Further, urban spaces, particularly the low-income contexts, have limited facilities for children with special needs; and generally, there is limited evidence on special needs education in these poor urban settings (Lupala, 2014). This means that children with disabilities from such contexts have little opportunities for formal education. In addition, the learning environment is not conducive, schools are not considered to be safe due to the problem of interference from neighboring settlements that regularly come to play football and/or conduct other recreational activities (Roy, Shemdoe, Hulme, et al, 2018).

## 1.1 Rationale and research questions

The focus on urban education as a concept in Tanzania has majorly been on rural-urban differences (MoEST, 2022, OKetch & Ngware, 2012). However, there is growing evidence of the inequalities in schooling for the urban poor populations. Understanding of these patterns especially in Tanzania where the urban population is expected to grow exponentially will inform the implementation of education policies, and therefore calls for a data-driven agenda to ensure that all children have access to quality education in urbanizing Tanzania. In an attempt to address the problem, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) conducted population and education projections for three East Africa countries in 2020. The population projections paint a grim picture of urban education given the current investments but also provided an opportunity to engage policymakers to initiate action.

Following this background and our interactions with policy actors, this study sought to investigate the schooling patterns of children living in urban poor populations in urbanizing Tanzania. The study

was conducted in Dar es Salaam, the biggest city and business hub, and Dodoma, the capital and administrative hub. The choice of the two urban areas was informed by the need to understand the schooling in a city that is very highly urbanized (Dar) compared to one (Dodoma) that has the potential to urbanize to similar capacities.

In this regard, the APHRC in partnership with HakiElimu and with technical support from the National Bureau of Statistics conducted a study in selected urban low-income households in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma. The study was guided by 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

### 2.1 Study sites

The following criteria was followed in selecting the study sites within Dar es Salaam and Dodoma:

1. High population of urban poor residents
2. Study site is considered a low-income area.

Selection of the study site was also guided by a review of existing literature, deliberations with senior officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, the President's Office at Regional Administration and Local Government levels, the National Bureau of

Statistics, and the local government at the ward level. Table 1 shows the distribution of the households within the study areas. Overall, of the 1200 visited households, two in every three were in Dar es Salaam.

This follows population trends with 2022 estimates showing Dar es Salaam has 5,383,728 while Dodoma has 3,085,625 inhabitants according to the [National Bureau of Statistics](#).

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
	Illala	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>

## 2.2 Study design and sampling procedures

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. Four sequential stages were undertaken in conducting the study:

- i) **Listing of eligible households:** The initial stage involved the listing of eligible households in the selected informal settlements. The listing exercise adopted a systematic approach: The target household had to have at least one individual who was aged 3-19 years.

Starting from the furthest point of the enumeration areas, research assistants identified and listed the first eligible household. They would then skip to the fifth household. If the fifth household was not eligible, they would move to the next until they identified an eligible one. As a result, 3,567 households with 7,742 individuals aged 3-19 years were reached.

- ii) **Sampling for the main study:** Using the data obtained from listing as a sampling frame, a sample of 1,200 households with 2,593 individuals aged 3 to 19 years was drawn. The household sample size was designed to allow estimation of key schooling indicators.

The household sample size was estimated using the following key considerations: a primary school level net enrollment rate of 81.33% (Desai, S. (2018). which provided an indicator of schooling access, a 5% level of significance corresponding to a value of 1.96 from normal distribution curve (or in other words representing the 95% confidence intervals), a margin of error of 5% to ensure that our sample generates precise estimates, a power ( $1-\beta$ ) to reduce the probability of committing type II error, a design effect of 2.4 and a non-response rate of 5%.

Further, we assumed that each household on average had two individuals of school-going age (i.e. 3 to 19 years). Based on the above considerations, the household sample was computed using the

formula recommended by Wang and Chow (2007). The sample was randomly drawn by considering stratified proportions with respect to the two study sites (Dar and Dodoma), ward, street, household head sex, and household head age category.

**School survey:** We used the household level data to identify schools (pre-schools, primary and secondary) located within the study sites as well as those in the neighborhood enrolling at least three learners from the sampled households and later administered a detailed school survey tool. Given the inclusion criteria, only 98 (67 public and 31 private) were sampled for the school survey. The analysis in this report was restricted to the responses based on the public schools only.

The school survey assessed the quality of education received by the learners and the opportunities available for learners with special needs and refugees. A selected group of parents participated in Focus Group Discussions (FGD). We also conducted key in-depth interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with division, City and MoEST education officials to shed light on access to quality education, as well as local administrators on opportunities and efforts by the policy actors in realizing equitable and quality education for all children.

The qualitative sample included 22 IDIs with chiefs, and village elders, 15 (KIIs) with the ministry of education officials at the national and local level and 10 (FGDs) with parents (4 male and 6 female) including parents with children with special needs.



### 2.3 Survey instruments

The study utilized four quantitative tools for data collection namely:

- household schedule and amenities questionnaire;
- Individual schooling history questionnaire;
- parental/guardian involvement questionnaire that incorporated perception questions and an institutional tool .

The qualitative tools included a protocol on:

- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with parents
- An in-depth interview (IDI) questionnaire with local leaders and teachers and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with policymakers.

The development of quantitative and qualitative study instruments was through a consultative process with partners and key actors including the Ministry of Education, Sports and Technology (MoEST), National Bureau of Statistics, and HakiElimu. The process involved bringing together the research team, MoEST, and other partners to agree on indicators of interest and the potential items and tools.

The tools' description, including targeted participants and study indicators in each tool, are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Description of survey instruments

Tool	Target participant	Description and indicators
A household schedule and amenities (HHSA) tool	Household Head	Collected data/information about household membership and their characteristics, social-economic characteristics, including food security, household shocks, household poverty well-being, and household schedule. The household head or someone living in that household and with enough information on the household responded to this tool.
Individual Schooling History (ISH) tool	Parents or caregivers and children aged 12-19	This tool collected detailed schooling information about individuals aged between 3 and 19 years (adjusted age as at 2022). It collected schooling information (enrolment, type of school enrolled, participation in preschool among others) for the year (2022), and 5 years retrospectively based on the age of the child. Caregivers responded for children aged below 12 years. Attempts were made to interview individuals aged between 12 and 19 years themselves. Where not possible, their parents were interviewed.
Parental/guardian involvement (PGI) and perception tool	Caregivers/parents	The tool sought information on parental involvement in their children's schooling including homework support, details of last schooling year(s), parental perception of student schooling experience, feeding and costs of schooling. The perception tool gathered information on parents' perception of the quality of education in the era of universal education policies, their understanding of education as a right and their support to schools to improve access and quality. This was responded to by the parents of the child or children living in the household.
Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	Caregivers/parents	The guide explored parents' understanding of the right to education and the role they play in ensuring that all learners are accorded or enjoy this right, and challenges faced. The guide equally explored aspects captured in the quantitative tools to help in the triangulation of findings as well as potential solutions to identified challenges.
In-depth interviews and Key Informant Interviews	Opinion leaders and policy makers	The guide collected information to understand existing programs and initiatives that promote access to quality education. The guide also sought information on efforts put in place to ensure every child including those with special needs enjoy the right to education and challenges faced in implementation.

Other processes that took place to ensure effective data collection included recruitment of qualified research assistants, training and pretesting of tools. Ethical approvals to conduct this study was obtained internally from the APHRC research ethics committee, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH), Ministry of Education, Science and Technology as well as the President's Office at Regional Administration and Local Government levels. Clearance was also sought from Dar-Es-Salaam and Dodoma regional, district and local government authorities.

## 2.4 Household and school data collection

Empirical data for this study were collected in September and October 2022 in 1200 sampled households and 98 schools. In both study sites, leaders were familiarized with the study through inception meetings which took place prior to field data collection.

The street and cell leaders accompanied field interviewers to the households. At the school level, permission to enter schools was granted by the district and ward education officials and heads of schools were informed through official letters and phone calls prior to the visit.

## 2.5 Data management and analysis

Data was collected through tablets and uploaded to APHRC servers. Quantitative data was extracted from the servers for data management and analysis and rigorously checked for consistency and outliers.

Data cleaning was carried out using Stata v.17.0. Descriptive and inferential analysis were carried out. Analysis outputs were presented in terms of graphs and tables. Internal consistency of survey items was carried out using the Cronbach alpha and dimension reduction procedures were applied by use of the principal component analysis.

**Qualitative:** Audio recordings from the interviews were stored in google space, immediately after the interview was done. The data was then transcribed verbatim and the analysis adopted a deductive and inductive approach.

## 2.6 Limitations of the study

During the period of data collection, a number of other surveys had been concluded and others were ongoing. For example, the National Census 2022 had just been completed, polio vaccine outreach campaign and research being conducted by the mobile network providers nationally. Therefore, causing some fatigue to the respondents. To avert this, the field interviewers explained to the respondents the difference in the study and also explained to the participants that they were free to choose whether to participate in the research.

## Household and School Characteristics

The analysis included 2,150 children aged 5-17 years spread across 1200 households. The restriction in the analysis was informed by the basic education schooling age in Tanzania.

A considerable proportion (44.8%) of the households in the study had 4-5 members. 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. This is an indication that the urban informal settlements in Tanzania are harboring young families and by extension school going children. Majority of the household heads (55.3%) obtained their income through self-income generating activities.

Table 3: Household characteristics

	Overall (% of 1,200 households)	Lowest Tertile (% of 396 households)	Middle Tertile (% of 398 households)	Highest Tertile (% of 406 households)
<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>				
Married, polygamous or monogamous	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.

From Table 4, a majority (60%) 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 shown in Table 4. Overall, there were slightly more girls than boys.

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. This means that there is a high market for private schools in the pre-primary section, but this slows down as one moves to the primary and secondary level. As described in the background characteristics, 70.4% of the household heads were aged 49 years and below, thereby this

pattern is as a result of the demand for parents who mostly rely on self-income generating activities to have a place where their children could attend school as they focus on generating income. The highlights of this is shown in annex 1, 2 and 3. On average, a majority of the schools attended by learners sampled in the study, that is 41 percent, were located less than a Kilometer away from their homes. On average, 10 percent of learners resided more than a kilometer away from school.

The study also explored the financial support offered to schools. The findings revealed that a high proportion of the schools received their financial support from the local and central government. However, 8 out of 10 schools indicated that these finances do not fully meet their needs as a school as shown in Table 5.

Table 4: 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%



Table 5: Sources of financial support to schools

	Responses	Percent of cases (n=67)
<b>Sources of financial support to schools</b>		
	Central Government	95.5%
	Local Government	14.9%
	Schools' charges (e.g. Fees)	13.4%
	Non-Government bodies	9.0%
	Individuals or private companies	9.0%
	Own sources of income (School economic activities)	7.5%
<b>Does the finance offered fully meet school needs</b>		
	Yes	19.4%
	No	80.6%

Notes: Schools received support from multiple sources.



# Schooling Among Children Living in Urban Poor Households in Tanzania

## 4.1 School participation

The study sought to establish schooling by children living in the urban informal settlements of Tanzania. 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. There was no higher chance of the children in the wealthiest tertile to attend school compared to those in the other tertiles (middle and lowest). An indication that wealth was not a determining factor of whether a child ever attended school in the low-income urban neighborhood of Tanzania.

When disaggregated by level of schooling and gender, 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. This could be attributed to the cost of education as indicated by parents during the Focus Group Discussions.

"Every parent desire to educate their child and my responsibility is to ensure that my child has everything that is needed in school like books, pencils, school bags, and uniform but from the income you can just do a little and the government has said education is free, but it is not free every day" **(Female Parent- FGD)**

Table 6: Child schooling characteristics by household wealth

	Overall	Household wealth tertile			Sex	
		Poorest	Middle	Wealthiest	Female	Male
<b>Child age categorized by school age (N)</b>	<b>2,150</b>	<b>723</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>697</b>	<b>1,084</b>	<b>1,066</b>
Pre-primary school age: 5-6 years	14.5%	13.4%	15.6%	14.4%	13.0%	16.1%
Primary school age: 7-13 years	60.5%	62.4%	58.1%	61.1%	61.8%	59.2%
Lower secondary age: 14-17 years	25.0%	24.2%	26.3%	24.4%	25.2%	24.7%
Child ever been to school?	98.1%	97.8%	97.7%	98.7%	98.5%	97.6%
<b>Reasons for not attending school (N)</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>
Lack of school fees (e.g. fees for uniform)	13.2%	20.8%	13.1%	0.0%	6.8%	17.2%
Illness	7.9%	6.9%	6.5%	12.4%	0.0%	12.9%
Has never joined school	68.8%	66.8%	67.3%	75.2%	87.8%	57.0%
Other reasons	10.0%	5.4%	13.1%	12.3%	5.4%	12.9%
<b>Child's current school level (N)</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>686</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>980</b>
Pre-primary	11.6%	10.2%	12.8%	11.6%	10.2%	13.0%
Primary	67.2%	70.8%	65.2%	65.7%	67.7%	66.8%
Lower secondary	20.7%	18.6%	21.8%	21.6%	21.5%	19.8%
Upper secondary and above	0.5%	0.3%	0.1%	1.1%	0.6%	0.4%

\* The reasons highlighted are the main reasons regarding children who have never attended school.

Inability to afford school contributions (michango in Kiswahili) including school feeding, infrastructure, stationery, extra tuition, examinations, and school uniforms was the top-most reason why some children had never been to school. Some of these contributions are passed during parent forums (Jukwaa la Wazazi) and enforced by parents committee.

Those in the lowest wealth tertile were more likely to mention lack of school contribution as the main reason why their children had never been to school compared to those in the wealthiest tertile meaning that they remain disadvantaged.

On the reasons for children not attending school (though they are enrolled), the study established three main reasons, school closed/completed current level (52.8%), school contributions (13.5%) among others like child refusing to go to school, lack of parental guidance, and child has not started school (11.4%) despite them being of school age (5-17 years). It's also key to note that children's failure to attain marks to proceed to the next level as well as teenage pregnancy was among the reasons for not attending school, but at <2%

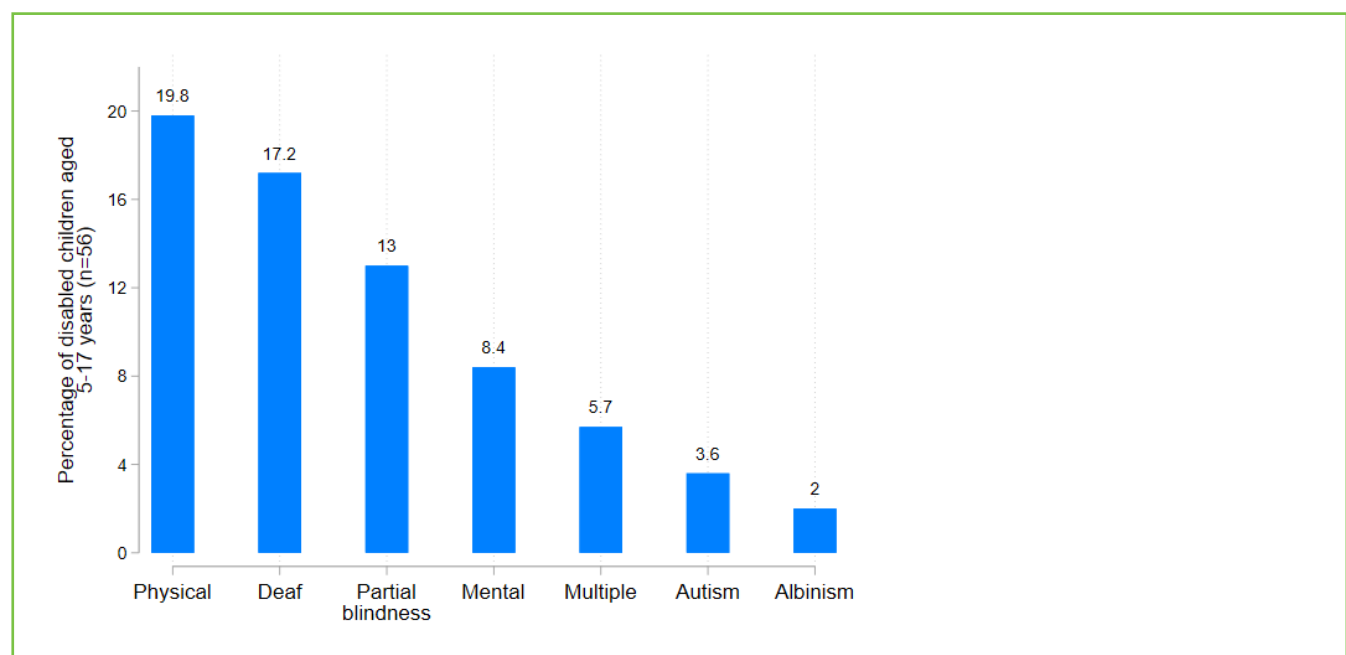
Among the children in the study, and across wealth tertiles, over 97% had ever been to a pre-school. This may explain why the average age for primary school

entry is very close to the expected of 7 years - it ranged between 7.2 years for girls in the highest wealth tertile to 7.7 years for boys in the lowest tertile.

In special needs, we focused on children with visible disabilities and the results in this report relate to these, and therefore we have used the two terms interchangeably. Regarding participation of learners with special needs, the study established that from a population of 2,150, 2.3% (56) were learners with special needs disability. Of the 56 children who were reported to have disabilities (19.3%) had physical disabilities, 17.2% were deaf, 13% had partial blindness while 8.4% had mental disabilities (see Figure 2). The results concur with the findings of UNICEF (2021) on situational analysis on the children and young people with disabilities which established that the prevalence rate of disability in Tanzania for both females and male was around 2% to 3%.

Among children with disabilities, more boys (10.2%) than girls (9.2%) were enrolled in school. In all the tertiles (lowest, middle and highest), we found that at least 8 out of 10 children with disabilities had never been to school. However, the chances of being enrolled in school for children with disabilities were higher for girls, and for children from the wealthiest tertile.

Figure 2: Types of special needs/disabilities among children aged 5-17 years (N=56)





## 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 (Annex 5). 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 (Annex 5).

Integrating learners into the mainstream school is a practice commonly utilized by many schools across sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania included (Braun, 2022). Inclusion of learners with special needs in education ensures all children are part of all the social and educational opportunities offered at a school.

In the qualitative interviews the participants confirmed these findings. Below is one of the excerpts to indicate how schools accommodate learners with special needs and how lack of facilities in schools may limit access to education for children with disabilities.

'They have mixed them like the low vision will just sit in the front that is what we do so that they can see. I don't have any equipment for deaf or the blind'

**(Education officer- KII)**

However, integration of learners with disabilities into normal classes is still a challenge due to unavailability of adequate support.

'Students with visual impairment are learning in regular classrooms alongside peers without disabilities. However, they are not provided with any extra support such as learning devices and it seems teachers are not trained on how to teach an integrated classroom'.

**(Education Officer -KII)**

Table 7: Children with special needs/disability attendance to school (aged 5 - 17 years)

Variable	Category	Ever been to school	Children with special needs (n=57)
All children with disability		No	90%
		Yes	10%
Wealth index group	Lowest tertile	No	92%
		Yes	8%
	Middle tertile	No	95%
		Yes	5%
	Highest tertile	No	82%
		Yes	18%
Child's gender	Boy	No	90%
		Yes	10%
	Girl	No	91%
		Yes	9%



Another parent had this to point out:

'Frankly on the side of children with special needs the government has put a lot of effort for example there are classes with the slopes for their use, but the children have different needs because we have different categories of special needs, we have the physically disabled who use the wheel chairs.

**(Education Officer-KII)**

From the findings, it is observed that, though integration of learners was a common practice, some parents expressed discrimination and stigmatization of these learners.

'Let me say that in our schools, the children with special needs have been discriminated by their fellow students based on the disabilities that they possess and therefore when it enters that state, it affects the child psychologically and the concentration of being there at school diminishes and even for this infrastructure that they are saying they are installing, it is not helping because it would be better if there were schools that are putting them under special care and needs and that would have helped a lot. The special children don't get proper education, they don't study like other children, like there is one who wants to write but there they are not given books to write.' **(Male Parents- FGD)**

Incidentally, children with disabilities at the level of primary education had an opportunity to join special units found in primary schools. According to one education officer, parents are free to take their children to special or ordinary schools:

'The children with special needs are considered for instance in our department we have schools that cater for the special needs children they are in the special units and the facilities are there, when they are in the special units, we have the teachers there who are trained on dealing with the special need's children. But even when they are in the normal schools because you may find others who have disabilities, but they are not much or others they may have those disabilities, but parents are not ready to take them to the special schools, so you find they take them to the school that is nearest' **(Education Officer -KII)**

Integration of learners with special needs enhances the quality of their lives and provides them with satisfaction. And as Khusheim (2022) opines, implementation of the inclusive school as a general policy should be considered an effective teacher training curriculum with special needs being given an extra support.

## 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%). This is contrary to (Crawford, Hares, & Todd, 2023) who indicated that half of primary school children in many urban centers in Africa and Asia are enrolled in private schools. The study shows that majority of children 79.6% enroll in public schools while 20.4% enroll in private schools. However, this could be attributed to affordability where children from wealthy households enroll in private institutions. Children in

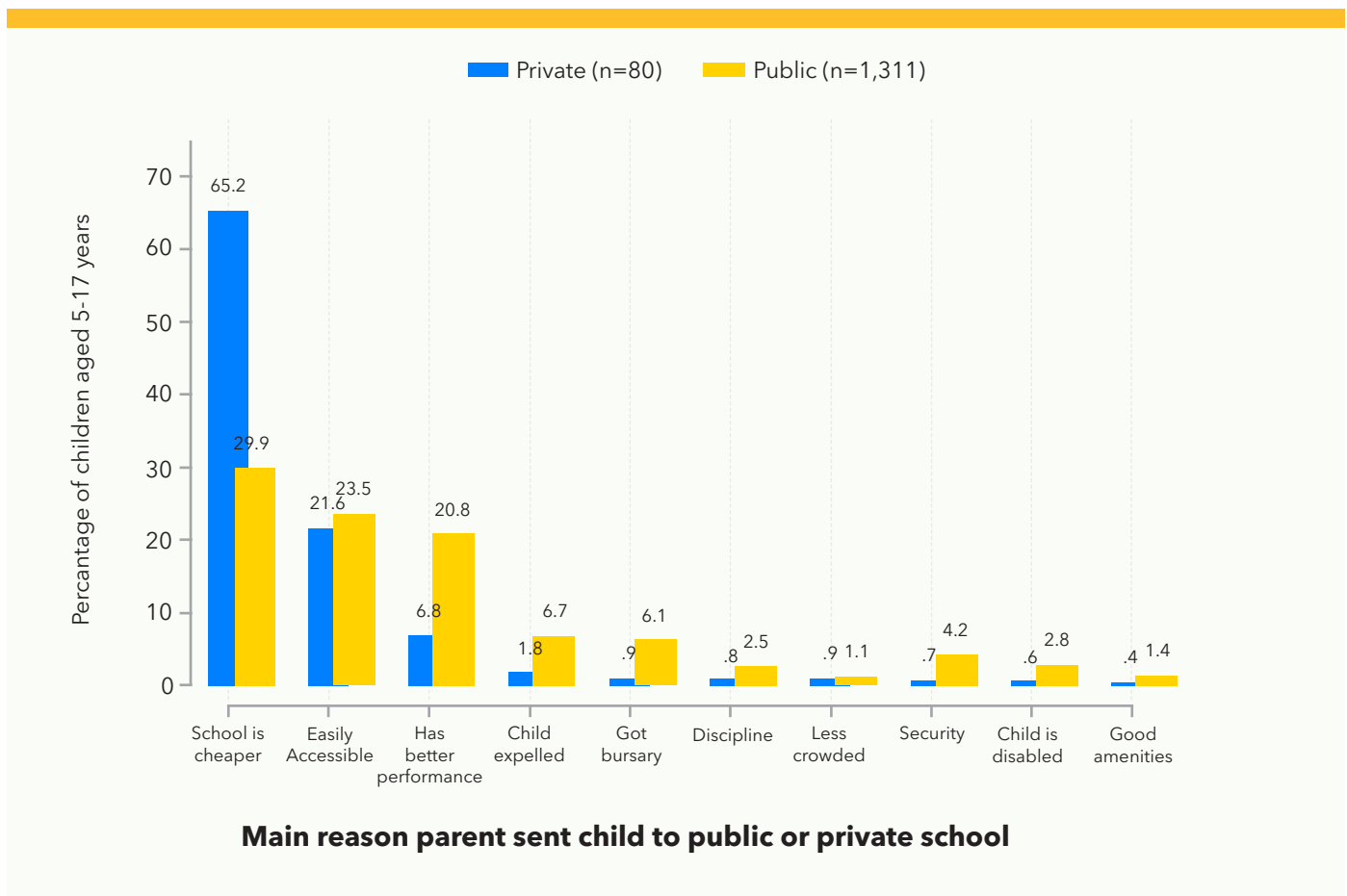
the lowest and middle tertile were more likely to be enrolled in public schools across the three levels as shown in Table 8 compared to those in the wealthiest tertile, an indication that the poor are more likely to utilize the public schools.

Further, the study sought to understand the reasons why parents chose a particular type of school (public or private). The main reasons for choice of school by the parents were the cost (preferring cheapest ones), accessibility, and perceived better performance of the school.

Table 8: 2022 School enrolment by levels and type of school cross-tabulated by wealth index

	All children	Lowest tertile	Middle tertile	Highest tertile
Pre-Primary level (N)	228	66	87	75
Public	79.6%	79.8%	80.9%	77.8%
Private	20.4%	20.2%	19.1%	22.2%
Primary level (N)	1339	467	447	425
Public	87.3%	88.5%	92.0%	81.0%
Private	12.7%	11.5%	8.0%	19.0%
Ordinary Secondary level (N)	420	124	151	145
Public	90.6%	89.7%	92.6%	89.1%
Private	9.4%	10.3%	7.4%	10.9%

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



## Enrolment trends 2017-2021

The study sought to establish the enrolment trends for the period 2017-2021 by type of school. The results indicate that over the five-year period, more learners attended public schools compared to the private schools. The study also shows that enrolment in public schools increased by about 5 percentage points between 2017 and 2021, while that of private schools decreased by a similar proportion (Table 9).

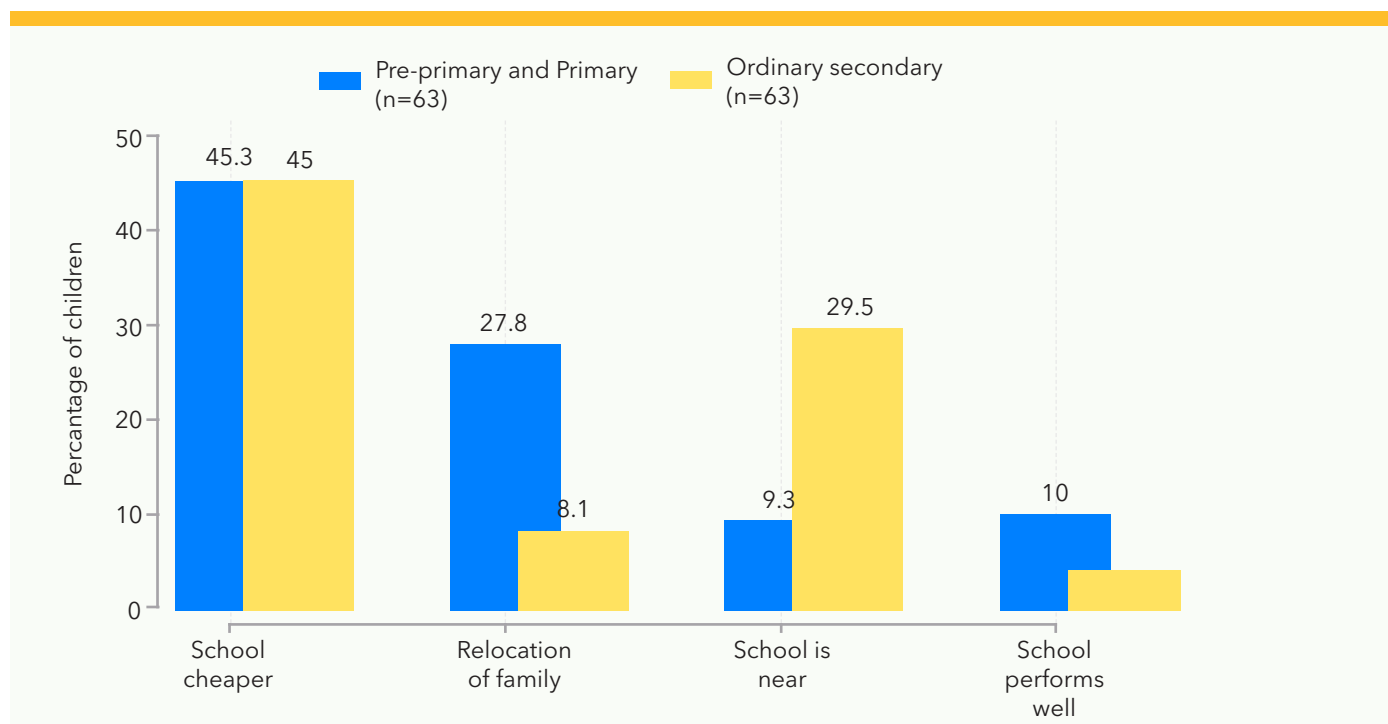
Other factors that influenced shifts from one school type to another included relocation of the family and better performance (See figure 4). For secondary schools, the main reasons were cost (moving to cheaper schools), distance to schools among others again as shown in figure 4.

Table 9: Primary level school enrolment by type, for academic years 2017-2021

	All children	Lowest tertile	Middle tertile	Highest tertile
Year 2021 (N)	1283	442	426	415
Public	87.7%	88.4%	92.0%	82.5%
Private	12.3%	11.6%	8.0%	17.5%
Year 2020 (N)	1206	411	403	392
Public	87.2%	87.6%	91.9%	82.0%
Private	12.8%	12.4%	8.1%	18.0%
Year 2019 (N)	1074	358	363	353
Public	86.2%	87.4%	90.4%	80.6%
Private	13.8%	12.6%	9.6%	19.4%
Year 2018 (N)	882	296	292	294
Public	85.9%	86.9%	89.9%	80.8%
Private	14.1%	13.1%	10.1%	19.2%
Year 2017 (N)	678	213	233	232
Public	83.2%	83.1%	88.2%	78.4%
Private	16.8%	16.9%	11.8%	21.6%



Figure 4: Reasons for school transfer in year 2022



### Grade repetition.

The results on progression rates indicate that on average, more boys than girls repeated a grade.

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 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 learners f low-income urban neighborhood.

### Gross and net enrolment rates

The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) is the total enrolment (for a given level of schooling, e.g. primary education), expressed as a percentage of the eligible official primary school-age population in a given school-year. For our study, the GER could only be computed for the participating households and not for the entire population. These ratios should therefore be interpreted with caution. The GER for primary was 103% suggesting that there were underage or overage learners enrolled

in primary schools and belonging to the participating households. 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. Similarly, a study by Msafiri(2023a), showed that Tanzania was ranked as one of the best performing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa in efforts towards attainment of Gender Parity Index.

## 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 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.

Table 10: Primary and secondary teachers' qualifications by gender

Level		Primary				Secondary			
		Male		Female		Male		Female	
		%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Untrained</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>1</b>
	Certificate	36.5%	74	57.8%	538	0.4%	2	0.1%	1
	Diploma	24.6%	50	18.3%	170	23.0%	124	22.1%	218
	Degree	31.5%	64	17.6%	164	65.6%	354	71.5%	706
	Masters	3.9%	8	2.8%	26	8.9%	48	5.4%	53
	SNE	0.5%	1	0.6%	6	0.7%	4	0.8%	987
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.0%</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>930</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1966</b>

## Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR)

While there is an internationally recommended PTR of about 25 (UNESCO) to ensure maximum interaction between teacher and their learners, this varies greatly across nations. The government of Tanzania recommends a PTR of 40 (The Citizen, April 12, 2021). However, this 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). 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 11: 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

Class size closely relates to the PTR as discussed above, meaning that the smaller the class size, the better/lower the PTR, which ideally translates to more teacher-pupil interactions during instructions that could lead to better learning.

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 grades 1 (111) and 2 (103) but a sharp drop was observed in secondary grades 3 (76) and 4 (78).

Based on these findings. These trends can be explained by grade repetition and/or school dropout as students' progress from lower grades to higher grades as documented by Deogratias (2024) and pressure to pass examinations and/or meet grade progression cut-of marks may be the underlying causes of the repetition.

Table 12: Average class size by schooling levels

		All schools	
Level	Grade	Class size	Number of schools
Pre-Primary	Baby class	5	12
	Middle class	21	12
	Top class	67	16
Primary	Std 1	136	33
	Std 2	144	33
	Std 3	134	33
	Std 4	119	33
	Std 5	120	33
	Std 6	108	33
	Std 7	104	27
Secondary	F1	111	34
	F2	103	34
	F3	76	34
	F4	78	32

## Pupil Textbook Ratio

The results indicated below focus 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, probably due to the class being a major examination class and therefore being equipped with teaching and learning materials. The low pupil textbook ratio could also be due to the reduced class size in grade 7 as highlighted in the average class size in Table 12.

At the secondary level, the pupil textbook ratio remained high and rather inconsistent for all the three subjects, including that of the examination class, secondary grade 4. For instance, a pupil textbook ratio of about 7:1 was recorded for secondary grade 3 Mathematics. On the other hand, the pupil textbook ratio for English was 25:1 in grade 2.

One teacher observed: "In this school the books for class work and homework are available for certain subjects but there are other subjects where the books are not enough:"

## Parental/guardian support with homework and school activities

Research shows that parental involvement and support of their children's learning and homework activities is important in enhancing quality of learning and learner performance (Hife & Pañares (2023).

Overall, there was little support from parents/guardians towards their children's schoolwork. In terms of the support for homework that children living in urban low-income neighborhoods areas received, this study found that learners in lowest grades (pre-primary) received the highest support while those in secondary schools received the least.

This could be due to expectations that the government does not support pre-primary children while there are heavy public subsidies in secondary education. Another explanation could be intergenerational differences in education attainment - majority (about 70%) of household heads had attained a primary level education. This implies most of them may not have been well equipped with knowledge to support secondary school level children. Gender did not seem to have a significant effect in terms of receiving support from home (see Figure 5).

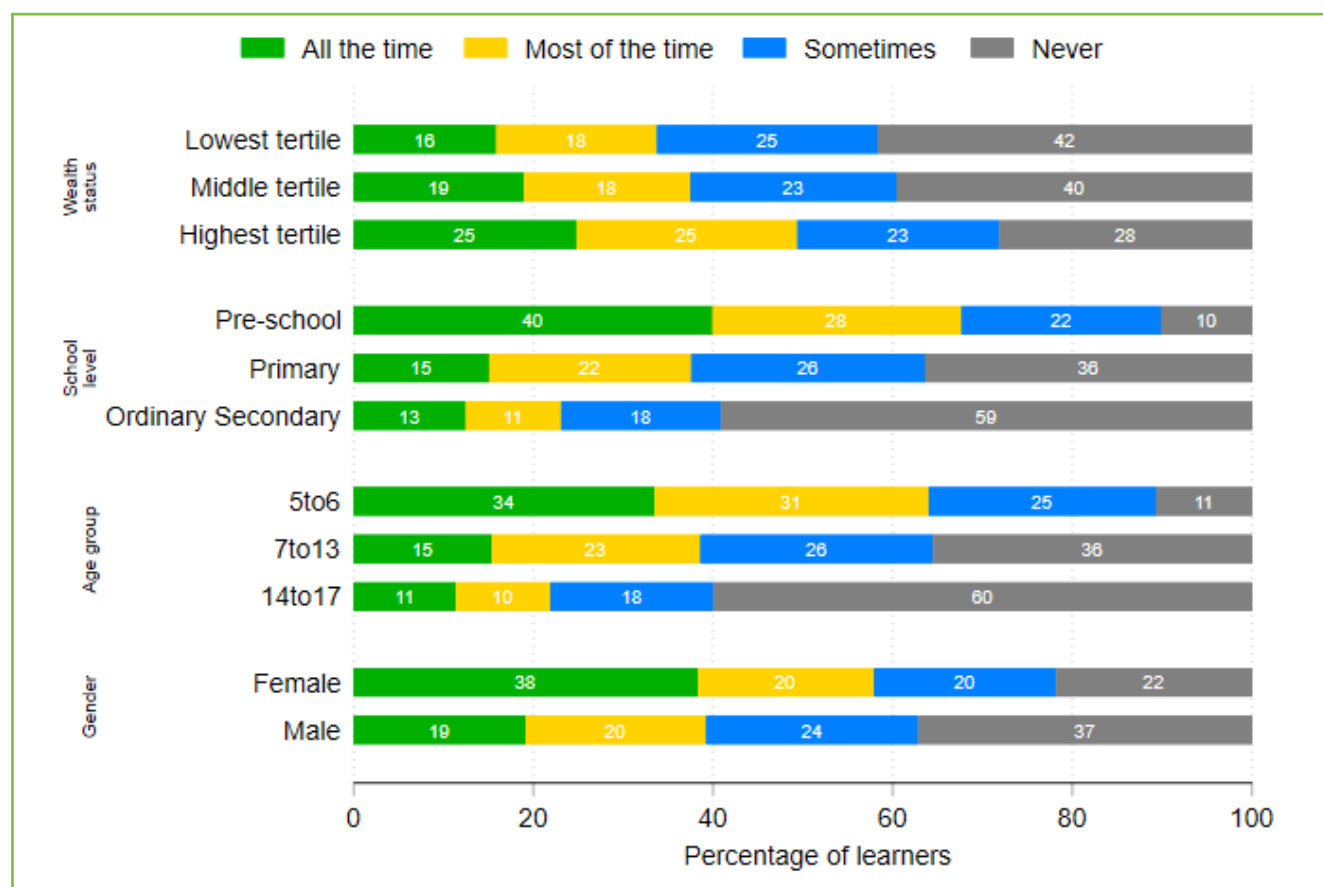
Most parents were also not able to engage in other school activities like meeting with the teachers to discuss their children's school progress. Several reasons were cited for the poor parental engagement in their children's school work, including work schedules and challenging economic conditions, poor education background of parents/guardians as well as unprepared and absentee parents who left the children under the care of overburdened grandmothers. One parent, for instance stated:

"The environment where we stay is hard so when you tell me that there is a meeting in school this means all my activities are at a standstill, so I don't go to school because if I go to school then when the children come back home there is no food.... life is hard some of us are single so when you say you go to school other things will be affected at home, I have three children who are going to school, and they all need money in the morning so if I don't do my income generating activities then this will mean my children will not get food that day. So, I don't go to the school meetings"

**(Female Parent-FGD)**



Figure 5: How often learners received homework support



Some teachers felt that the parents did not take the responsibility of providing the needed support to their children. One teacher expressed her frustration as follows:

"So, you find that a child has gone home and come back to school the following morning that is when they do the homework. So, when I see this I chase them away and I ask them to bring the parents because I want to question them since we agreed that I will do this and you will do your part....why should I call the parent so that I can give them the responsibility of when I give home work they should ensure that the child has done the homework it does not matter whether they know how to read....they should ensure that the homework is done and it is better they do the wrong thing rather than not doing it at all"

**(Secondary School teacher - IDI)**

Some parents however expressed their dissatisfaction with teachers' behavior that affected the quality of learning as seen in the next comment.

'The school where my child goes to, the teachers said that if you have money there is tuition in a month it is 10,000 so if you have 10,000 shillings the child goes for tuition but if you don't have they just get the normal education, they go to school and come back at 6pm since they have exams, so they get the general education but the others who have paid that money even the topic that they have not read they are taught in advance. **(Female parent -FGD)**

These concerns on paid tuition were expressed by other parents as well, calling for the government to intervene in order to curb the vice, e.g. through more school inspections. Some parents in these urban low-income neighborhoods expressed a sense of despondency regarding the fate of their children's learning.

This concurs with Mlawi & Mtitu (2022) who established that school stakeholders held a positive perception toward the shadow education as compared to the mainstream education as the shadow education system boosted the academic performance of the students.

'We have 'elimu bora and bora elimu' here we have 'bora elimu' you will find our children like my child is in class 4 (primary) and does not know how to read so I am collaborating with the parents in educating, the teachers are not doing their part in educating our children.....So the children nowadays you ask them why they are not in school they can answer you very rudely you just listen to the response but you don't do anything there is 'bora elimu not elimu bora' so I don't know how the government will help us to get better education **(Female Parent-FGD)**

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Facilities

Water, sanitation and hygiene are a critical component to a healthy learning environment, while this is the case, about 20% of them 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.

While a 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. The ratio was in favour of

girls compared to boys. The ratio exceeds the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation of 25:1 for girls and 1 toilet/urinal per 50 boys (Adams, Bartram, Chartier, & Sims, 2009). Studies have shown that when the toilet students ration is high, the learners participation rates are affected (Shao et al., 2021). 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. This affects equity and inclusivity in access to education.

About 82.1% of the schools provided emergency sanitary wear for the girls. Only 35.8% of the schools had a school-feeding program as shown in Table 14.

Table 13: Availability of WASH facilities in the sampled primary schools

	Response	Percentage of schools	Number of schools responding
Learners' toilet facility type	Flush toilet	65.7%	67
	Traditional pit latrine	34.3%	67
Learners' toilet facilities are located within the school compound		98.5%	67
There are separate toilet facilities for boys and girls		98.5%	67
Are there toilet facilities used by teachers and staff only/exclusively?	Yes	97.0%	67
	SHARED WITH learners	3.0%	67
Has appropriate and functional separate toilets for learners with special needs		26.9%	67
Are there any handwashing facilities in the school?	Yes functional	80.6%	67
For schools without handwashing facilities, where do learners wash their hands?	In the school kitchen	7.7%	13
	In a borehole within the school	38.5%	13
	Never wash	30.8%	13
	Other	23.1%	13

Table 14: Other facilities provided in the sampled primary schools

	Percentage of schools	Number of schools responding
School provides emergency sanitary wear for girls	82.1%	67
School has a first aid kit	97.0%	67
School has feeding programme	35.8%	67
School feeding programme feeds all learners	54.2%	24
School has ICT room	31.3%	67
School has a playground exclusively for learners	53.7%	67

## Governance, Management and Quality Assurance

In terms of governance and management, almost all schools reported having proper structures in place, including School Committees (SCs). About 95.5% of the schools stated that they had functional School Committees (SC), Center Management Committee (CMC) or School Boards (SBs). This is an important finding as School Committees hold central responsibility in the management of teaching and learning and thus provision of quality education (Tieng'o, 2020).

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

The right to education (RTE) is enshrined in a number of international standard-setting instruments, including conventions, declarations, recommendations, frameworks for action, and charters, as well as regional standards (UNESCO 2020). The instruments establish a normative framework for the right to education, which governments must implement through national legislation. This section presents qualitative findings based on data gathered through focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and In-depth Interviews. The right to education was evaluated based on four themes: stakeholders' perceptions of the government's commitment to protecting the RTE, parental responsibilities in upholding RTE, the role of community leaders and the community in protecting RTE, and the available mechanisms for reporting violations of the RTE.

The Tanzania Government has made significant efforts to ensure that all citizens access education. Throughout the analysis, it was clear that stakeholders understood the state's obligation to protect and promote the RTE. 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: Policies and strategies provide guidelines for action. The stakeholders cited the fee-free primary and secondary education policies as examples of the Government efforts to ensure all children access school. The fee free policy has promoted access to basic education for children from poor families and those with special needs. Similar findings on increased enrollment at basic education in Tanzania were recorded by UNESCO (2020) and the community leaders succinctly stated:

... the government ensures that all the children are able to go to school. Removing the fees is a major thing and I really congratulate the government for that and most importantly our president Samia Suluhu Hassan for continuing with this from the late president Magufuli. That is a major thing they are doing  
(Community Leader -IDI)

...The moment they [government] announced that education is free, even the children from poor homes get education. So that is one of the things the government is doing to ensure that every child gets education. (Community Leader -IDI)

In regard to access to education for children with special needs, the Inclusive Education Strategy was the most cited.

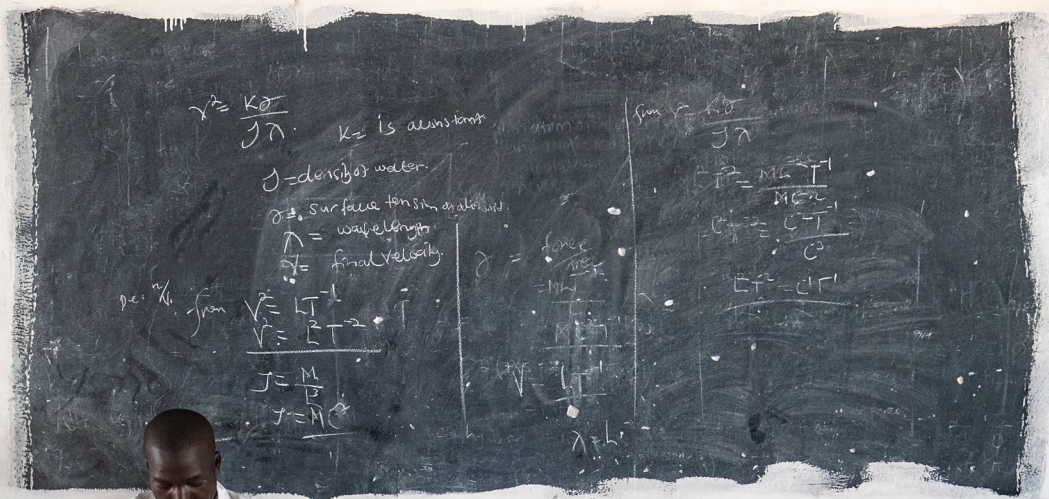
... the national inclusive education strategy 2021 to 2025/6, is a five-year strategy. So, if you look at that, we have explained what we will do on infrastructure, we have explained on building the capacity of teachers, we have explained different strategies to ensure the policy of education and learning talks about education, to ensure curriculum for inclusive education is there, to ensure books [are available]. (Policy Maker-KII)

One Education Officer elaborated on how policies are implemented to ensure every child access education. This is captured in the following excerpt.

They [government] protect the right to education by providing policies and policy guidelines on any child of school going age, either nursery or primary should go to school. So, the government has put in place mechanisms whereby the children who are born are given birth notification in Wards so when they become of age, the actors in this place know that these particular children should be in school ... if they are not found in school, it is the responsibility of the Ward representatives and local government to go from house to house in homesteads where they have children who should be in school to find out why they are not in school. To make sure this is happening, there is a policy, "door opening" to ensure that children get the required classrooms and proper equipment. So, any person who will prevent the education of any child action must be taken against them, either a fine or a jail term. So, all these mechanisms aim to protect the children's right to education.' (Education Officer -KII)

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





to make schools safe and enjoyable places for learning by providing porridge and co-curricular activities. The following statement from a regional education leader exemplifies this.

... we have law enforcement, so when a parent goes against the law they are arrested and the law takes its cause, but the school in itself has motivating factors, the school is a safe place, we have provided porridge in school, they also have different games in school which they can play **(Community Leader-KII)**

**School Feeding Program:** The government has demonstrated its commitment to the protection of RTE by implementing school feeding programs (SFPs). These findings echo f Lukindo (2018) who also established that school feeding program enhances pupils' schooling through increased enrolment and retention. The following statement by one teacher encapsulates the FPE benefits:

'I don't know what to say. Currently it [government] has introduced a school feeding program and this helps in reducing school dropouts. Also, pupils are able to learn well without worry because when one is hungry, they can't listen to the teacher, so that was the first idea to keep the children in school and many students are not running away from school. A big percentage, even if they don't want to study, have to come to school because there is food and they like that food' **(Secondary School Teacher-IDI)**

One of the Key Informant Interviewees confirmed that school meals is one of the government top priorities and the government is committed to continued provision.

'When we come to the issues of making the child enjoy, we have given a guideline for food. And we have already signed, I don't know what it is called, of which they [donors] will recognize that we want to give food to children so [that] we can continue receiving aid. Recently the President made an agreement with regional heads' **(Policy Maker-KII)**

Some parents still felt that the SFP was insufficient. They argued that besides lunch, children required porridge in the morning. They claimed that due to financial constraints, most children left for school without breakfast. Other parents agreed that the government may not be in a position to provide all meals, therefore, parents should pay for porridge. However, during interviews, there was an indication that some schools provided porridge to learners. One parent added:

... children in my area, I would request that at least they be given porridge in school because that is what is deteriorating the children. If you walk around the bins, you find children there because they have not gotten breakfast in the morning. Therefore, it should be the way we were educated by Mwalimu Nyerere ... We used to get porridge, we would stay at school, we weren't many, but the spaces were few **(Male Parent -FGD)**

There exist human rights mechanisms at the international, regional, and national levels that monitor the implementation of the right to education and can be used to report RTE violations. At the national level, there are human rights bodies such as national human rights institutions or ombudspersons, while at the school level, there may be School Boards or School Committees (Right to Education Initiative, 2023).

## Parental Knowledge of Reporting Mechanisms for Right to Education 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. A female parent had this to say about reporting on violence against children:

'If a child is raped, we don't know where to report, also maybe a child has been beaten and the parent has also become angry we don't know where to report. So, you let it just end there; one is angry on this side and the other one on the other side.' **(Female Parent-FGD)**

It is the responsibility of the parents to ensure their children attend compulsory education. It is also parents' responsibility to monitor their children and provide necessities to facilitate learning.

## Parental Monitoring of Children Daily Life

Parents, as primary educators, should monitor their children's academic progress as well as their activities outside of school. The study sought to examine the interplay of socioeconomic status with parental monitoring in predicting access to education. Our results show that 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. One other possible explanation is that parents treat secondary school students as adults. It is also common for adolescents to break away from parents' close supervision. Additionally, community leaders exposed that some parents did not monitor the whereabouts of their children and were less bothered about their children's education. This had led to truancy and school dropout. One community leader lamented:

Mostly, when we hear children reporting that so and so doesn't reach school and so on, we meet and then we follow up. If we follow up and catch them, we bring them to the office here and we warn them and most of the time we even threaten to beat them before taking the report to their parents ... The parents are the source of the problem because there are some parents if you tell them about the child, they don't understand you. For sure, they don't understand you, you see, so if we see the child does not want to go to school, summon him/he together with his parents and we take the report to the school. That is the procedure we use.

**(Community Leader -IDI)**

As seen above, despite the availability of fee-free education, some parents in the urban low-income households had given up on their children's education.

## 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. A female parent decried:

I want to add the challenge that is there. The real situation for us women, we really struggle with the children ourselves, see the way we struggle with the business. And due to the low economy, for us to ensure the child gets education, we decide to take them to public schools so that they can get education and don't miss out on the right to education. But the biggest challenge is that we female parents are the ones who are struggling and the income is low. Food is a problem but we have to struggle with that so that they can get education through the public school.

**(Female Parent -FGD)**

One Ward Education Officer explained that some parents were unable to provide for their children due to hardships prevalent in informal settlements. Some young adults get into unplanned family lives. Children of such parents were likely to drop out of school or attend school irregularly.

We have parents who accidentally became parents, they are not prepared ... so there we have a challenge. Then the other problem is that many are faced with economic challenges **(Policy Maker -KII)**

Parents recognize that it is their duty to provide basic needs to their children that would enhance access, but economic struggles hinder their full participation.

## The Role of Community Leaders and Community in Promoting Right to Education

Community participation has been identified as a highly effective strategy for promoting education (Ginsburg, et al 2017). The community's role is that of a watchdog over the efficiency and effectiveness of educational inputs, outcomes, and outputs. However, participation can only be successful where there is effective community leadership. Community leaders hold respected positions in the community therefore, they have the capacity to raise awareness on RTE.

They are well acquainted with most aspects in the community, can analyze situations in the community, and mobilize members in taking appropriate actions to promote RTE. In this section, 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

Although the community should be fully involved in the running of schools, community leaders reported that some members, especially parents, showed little concern on education matters. This emanated from little or lack of knowledge over their roles as community members. This finding concurred with an earlier one where parents were failing in taking their parental responsibilities of ensuring that their children attend school regularly (Ref. 5.2). The community leaders took it upon themselves to educate members about their responsibilities. This is exemplified by a statement of one leader:

"... In the community some [parents] don't need to be told by anyone to do these responsibilities [parental]. Others are lazy, so you find that some parents don't go to school, some their children are just there. So, when I confirm this, I talk to the parents and tell them the

responsibilities of parents should be like this; a child should get food, go to school. And I ask them "for some time your child has not been to school, what is the problem?" So, I talk to parents well so that children can go to school. " **(Community Leader-IDI)**

However, other community leaders were of the opinion that the community was taking up its role effectively. Community leaders, teachers, and parents collaboratively ensured regular school attendance. Where a student failed to report to school, follow-up was made. The joint efforts have been beneficial.

"We collaborate with the parents and teachers to ensure that the children go to school every day and in case they drop out we use the joint security teams to bring the children back to school." **(Community leader-IDI)**

## 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. This led to unnoticed school dropouts since families mind their affairs. However, community leaders still insisted that raising a child should be a shared responsibility. The statement explains this:

But currently if we tell you that we are raising the children as a community we will be lying. Every person is looking after their own, each parent is raising their child in their own way, that is why the dropouts are many and are not known because in most households the mother is the one taking care of the children or the father alone. Those who are single are also taking care of their own as single parents. So, on that we don't know, maybe you could also educate us so that we can also gain something that can help us to even teach our other parents then we will change  
**(Female Parent -FGD)**



## Children behaviors

Despite increasing individuals for child care, there are some efforts to involve more members of the community to ensure children attend school and learn. According to leaders, they have formed a group of people to trace truant children. This is clear in the following statement:

The community in ..... is putting a lot of effort in following up on the children who roam around so that they can get to school and they get to tell the parent whether the child gets to school or not. There was ... a year or 2 years ago, there were people who were going around looking for the children who were not going to school. So that is what the community of ..... is putting effort in **(Female Parent, FGD)**

From the findings, it was deduced that community leaders, unlike the other community members, were playing their roles in promoting RTE.



## 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. This is exemplified in the following statement from parents:

We have a challenge here at ..... division of ..... We get many problems when it rains, especially the roads and so when it rains because we don't have a good road. When it rains it fills up the canyons especially, we who stay in downhill, our houses have been broken and some people don't have houses, the houses have fallen and we don't have money to rebuild and remain like that. **(Female Parent - FGD)**

Girls are vulnerable to sexual harassment when they have to cover long distance to and from schools.

Parents disappointed is seen below:

The obstacles that they face like if you look at the female children they have a lot of challenges you will find like the mother does not have an income so the child goes to school without eating, other children go to schools that are far and they don't have fare then we have the boda boda riders so the girl can be lured by being told "come I take you to school, come I buy you chips or come I take you or come and collect this" we say that the girl child we don't know how to persevere like the boy child. So, the girl once they don't get money for food or for their needs they are easily swayed then they get early pregnancies, drop out of school, disease and other girls can persevere but they are few.

**(Female Parent -FGD)**



## 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. Unfortunately, parents hardly took any actions to worst sexual violence committed against school girls such as rape. One teacher explained how their effort of supporting girls in their education is valued by some parents:

Following up not just in class, you should follow up a child even where they stay, is it safe, this community has a lot of traditions and some children have undergone many abuses for instance sexual abuse, rape, in class there is a child who has experienced this predicament, they were raped, ... I followed up with the child and the parent. What shocked me was that after the act, the parent decided that the child has to get used instead of the parent getting that child out of that situation they oppress the child, and say that the child will find out on their own since they have gone on their own, so I warn the parent and tell them that the affected child faces a difficult time so they should be helped to overcome it  
**(Primary School Teacher-IDI)**



## Recommendations

Based on the findings, we recommend the following :

1. In order to increase participation rate, 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.
2. To promote equity and inclusivity in integrated schools, the ministry of education and private developers need to provide extra support for learners with disabilities. There is a need to map out learners with disabilities and have them enrolled in integrated and inclusive schools, provide adapted equipment and devices for use by the learners with disabilities who have been integrated/included in normal schools.
3. The study established that latent expenses, also known as hidden or indirect costs, hinder access, and participation in education, especially for informal settlement residents. The government should eliminate or regulate additional levies, contributions, and other indirect education costs to improve educational access and equity for all socioeconomic groups.
4. The government needs to train more special education teachers and also more female teachers for higher qualifications in primary. The government should also not ban use of untrained persons as teachers at all levels. In order to effectively handle learners from low-income households, an in-service training programme can be devised.
5. The study established that there is a high TPR, large classes and high PTR. and large class sizes across classes. To improve quality, the government needs to employ more teachers to lessen the TPR and class sizes and provide more textbooks for learners.
6. The government should allocate more resources and develop strategies to enable schools to equip themselves with essential facilities and programs. A significant number of schools lack provisions for sanitary towels for girls, ICT services for learners, playgrounds, WASH facilities, and school feeding programs. Providing these facilities and programs is crucial for improving the quality of learning and school attendance. Additionally, some schools are located in unconducive learning environments, surrounded by illicit brew dens, weed-smoking areas, and uncollected garbage. Addressing these issues is vital for creating a safe and supportive educational environment.
7. Quality Assurance and Health officers should make unannounced, regular visits to the schools to ensure maintenance of high academic and health standards. Governance, Management and Quality Assurance: Most schools reported the existence of a comprehensive governance and management structure. However, there was little school inspection going on. 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 system.

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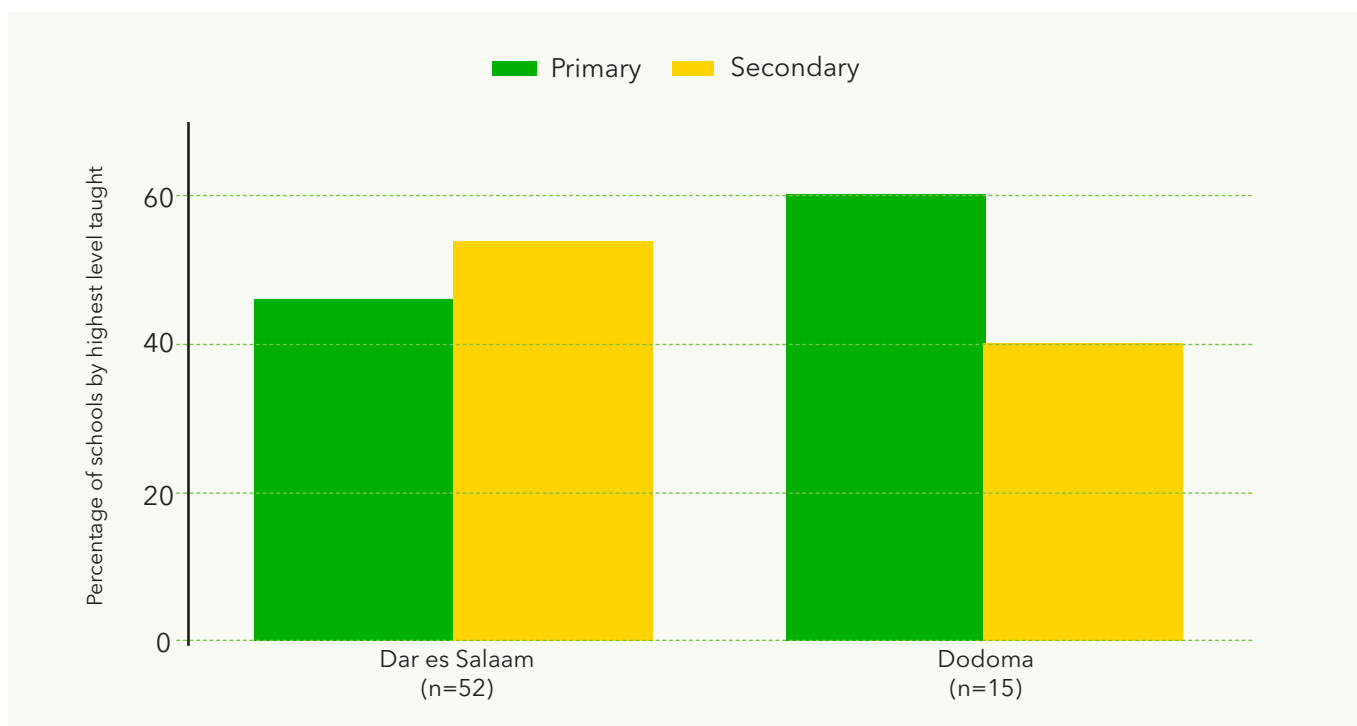
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## Annexes

Annex 1: Percentage of schools by highest level taught



Annex 2: School background characteristics

	Categories	All schools		Dar es Salaam		Dodoma	
		Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Sample of schools		67	31	52	27	15	4
School level	Pre-primary only	0	26	0	22	0	4
	Primary only	17	1	15	1	2	0
	Pre-primary and Primary	16	3	9	3	7	0
	Secondary	34	1	28	1	6	0
Years in existence	Mean	28.1	9.4	27.1	9.0	31.3	12.5
	Std deviation	20.4	6.9	20.8	6.6	19.3	9.5



## Annex 3: School Heads characteristics

	Response	Percentage (n=67)
Respondent's gender	Male	53.7%
	Female	46.3%
Respondent's title in the school	Head Teacher	53.7%
	Deputy Head Teacher	37.3%
	Academic Teacher	9.0%
	Private Teacher	0.0%
Respondent's years of service as a teacher	0-1 years	1.5%
	2-3 years	3.0%
	4-5 years	6.0%
	6-7 years	3.0%
	Over 7 years	86.6%
Respondent's highest level of education	0- to A-level	6.0%
	College certificate to diploma	25.4%
	Bachelor's degree	53.7%
	Master's degree	14.9%

## Annex 4: Types of disabilities

Variable	Overall (n=57) %	Dar es Salaam %	Dodoma %
Types of child disability/special needs			
Physical disability	19.5%	19.3%	20.0%
Partial blindness	12.7%	7.5%	27.8%
Deaf	16.9%	20.8%	6.1%
Learning disability	10.3%	11.8%	6.1%
Autism	3.6%	4.8%	0.0%
Mental disability	8.3%	9.0%	6.1%
Multiple disabilities	5.6%	2.7%	13.9%
Albinism	2.0%	2.7%	0.0%

## Annexes

Annex 5: Inclusivity of Learners with Special Needs

Question	Response	Percentage of schools	Number of schools responding
School caters for special needs	Yes	56.7%	67
	No	43.3%	67
How does the school cater for learners with special needs	Mainstreaming/ integrated	94.7%	38
	Purely special school	5.3%	38
Why doesn't the school cater for special needs	No learners with special needs	48.3%	29
	Lack of adequate finances to offer facilities for special needs	10.3%	29
	No facilities for learners with special needs	58.6%	29
	Don't know	0.0%	29
	Other	6.9%	29



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