COMMUNITY-DRIVEN EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT IN TANZANIA

Putting communities at the heart of school performance

Key Findings

Increased participation by local communities in schools’ development will help to improve the quality of education in Tanzania, and achieve better learning outcomes for students, especially for girls.

Involving communities in school development planning, and the creation of school committees and Parent Teacher Partnerships (PTPs), has been effective in increasing engagement by communities. The EQUIP-T programme will continue to work on strengthening these initiatives, and on providing better information and methods for communities to assess and influence school performance.

Progress achieved to date

Parents and communities now support their schools

EQUIP-T has established more than 4,000 PTPs to support schools’ basic needs for items such as furniture and classroom materials. These have been provided with over 3,000 grants. At the same time, over 35,000 school committee members have been trained on their roles and responsibilities in providing a governance function to schools. 97% of schools have committee meetings quarterly or more regularly.

Community facilitators are enabling greater community input to school development

EQUIP-T has trained almost 4,000 community facilitators, who have conducted around 1,700 community education needs assessments and action plans. A broader set of issues have been raised in school development planning because of this input, and in many locations, the consultation has increased community support for school development.

Schools are using public noticeboards

Over 4,000 noticeboards have been distributed to schools by EQUIP-T, and in 2016, 73% were using these to provide information to parents and communities. 20% of schools were using their boards to display their School Development Plans, and 33% to display financial statements.

Over 4,000 noticeboards distributed to schools

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<th>Information to parents and communities</th>
<th>School Development Plans Financial statements</th>
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Improved gender responsiveness in schools aims to achieve better outcomes for female students

Efforts to improve gender responsiveness in schools is being addressed both in and out of the classroom. 160 school clubs have been established in a pilot in Mara, but more girls need to be included in the clubs to meet targets for an equal balance of girls and boys. Almost 50% of schools are facilitating a gender responsive environment through their school plans and activities. This ties in with the percentage of observed teachers implementing at least two strategies of gender responsive pedagogy to a satisfactory level (44%). Encouragingly, targets for at least 40% of PTP representatives to be women have been met in 95% of schools.
Gender and social inclusion issues in the community are also starting to be addressed

Almost 20% of schools have arranged a school activity in the community focusing on gender, and almost 10% have arranged one on social inclusion.

Policy recommendations

- Provision of additional noticeboards to schools to achieve 100% coverage.
- Implementation of the programme’s gender strategic plan, including training approximately 10,000 primary school teachers in gender responsive pedagogy.

Focus for the next phase of the programme

Reinforcing and strengthening existing community-owned structures

There is a need to consolidate existing community-owned structures so that they can help provide solutions to local issues at school level on topics ranging from child welfare and early marriage, to teacher/pupil attendance and climate change.

Providing better information and methods for communities to hold schools accountable

The level of community participation has increased and communities are now more involved in their local schools’ planning. There is an opportunity to provide communities with better information and ways of holding their schools accountable for education performance issues.

Planned activities

The following activities are confirmed or underway:

- A school committee training course on school vision and values, communication, and institutionalising community planning processes.
- The roll-out of training and start-up grants for school income generating activities.
- The scale-up of school clubs to all schools (around 4,500 school clubs in total).
- Community education needs assessments in Mara, Lindi and four municipal districts.
- Community based performance monitoring linked to the programme’s School Information System (SIS) data tool.
- The roll-out of child protection system strengthening activities to schools, wards and districts.
- Implementation of a national programme communications plan and district communications support.

EQUIP-Tanzania

The Education Quality Improvement Programme in Tanzania (EQUIP-T) is a comprehensive government programme working to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the target regions of Dodoma, Tabora, Shinyanga, Simyu, Kigoma, Mara and Lindi. EQUIP-T aims to enable existing government systems to improve the quality and relevance of education, especially for girls, and develop an approach ready for national scale-up.

Funded by UK Aid, EQUIP-T is focused on improving the professional capacity and performance of teachers; strengthening school leadership and management; improving district and regional management of education; strengthening community participation and demand for accountability in education; and improving learning and the dissemination of results.