School Leadership and Management in Tanzania

Giving school leaders the tools to improve their schools

Key Findings

Performance-based school leadership and management is key to improving education quality in Tanzania, and achieving better learning outcomes for students, especially for girls.

EQUIP-T has so far supported the Government to:
• improve the management of schools through training for head teachers and other education staff, in areas such as performance management and planning, and
• create a School Information System (SIS) that enables better data management.

The programme has achieved improvements in School Development Planning (SDP) and in head teacher performance, based on parent and teacher surveys. There is still a significant opportunity however for more performance-focused leadership, and for schools to improve their use of data for informed decision-making and justification of actions.

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Three training modules have been developed and delivered by EQUIP-T to almost 10,000 head teachers, deputies, and Ward Education Coordinators (WECs). These modules have covered:
• Education quality standards and leadership competencies
• Using the SIS part I, Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP) management, School Readiness Programme (SRP), and noticeboards
• School Development Planning (SDP).

Progress achieved to date

Use of the new SIS information tool is enabling better data management in schools

The EQUIP-T SIS tool is assisting better data management by head teachers and district officials, and helping to keep wards and districts more informed about what is happening in schools. The use of the SIS could be improved and this is being addressed through formal training and greater support for head teachers in the next phase of the programme.

School development planning has improved, resulting in more effective management practices

92% of EQUIP-T schools had a SDP in place in 2016, compared to 17% in 2014, and there is a similar increase in reporting reviews of plan implementation progress. This is a significant step towards better planning in schools, however head teachers require further skills development in this area.

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Head teachers are more supportive of staff professional development, demonstrating increased awareness of the importance of well-trained teachers. In 2016, an average of 45% of schools had at least one teacher who completed 12 or more In-Service Education and Training (INSET) modules, and at least one teacher at 100% of schools reported that INSET was supported by the head teacher. This is a large improvement on previous years and shows the increased value being placed on upskilling teachers.

Perceptions of head teachers’ performance has improved, reflecting improved teacher management as well as greater community engagement. The rating of head teachers’ performance by staff, parents and school committee members increased on average from 63% to 71% from 2015 to 2016, across all regions, genders and years of experience. This can be attributed to an increased emphasis on encouraging and supporting teachers and engaging with the community, through initiatives such as community consultation on SDP, and the establishment of Parent Teacher Partnerships (PTPs).

Focus for the next phase of the programme

Embedding inclusive School Development Planning

Providing continued support for inclusive SDP (for example to cater for children with special needs), as well as the development of three to five-year school plans explaining schools’ vision for their development.

Creating school leadership communities of learning to support the development of leadership and management skills

A collaborative, peer-to-peer or community of learning-based approach for school leadership continuing professional development will be established, supported by relevant materials and training. This will be complemented with WEC capacity building in mentoring and coaching, to support head teachers in applying their newly acquired skills and capabilities to the best of their ability.

Supporting head teachers to use SIS data to drive improvement activities

Through new training modules on school performance management and the use of SIS data, WECs will provide mentoring and coaching to head teachers on using SIS as a tool for school management and reporting on school performance.

Better communication and information sharing between schools and their stakeholders

There is an opportunity to put formal structures in place to facilitate better dialogue and information sharing between schools, the community, and the ward/district. This will help to generate creative solutions, ideas and additional support for schools.

Supporting the adaptation of national, regional and local government directives and policies

There is a need to ensure that national, regional and local government directives and policies issued to schools reflect the changes that are being made at school level. This is necessary for the sustainability of the programme initiatives.

Policy recommendations

- Working collaboratively with the Agency for the Development of Education Management (ADEM) on School Leadership and Management (SLM) approaches, materials, and tools is essential for sustaining SLM achievements.
- The national guidance, templates and training on SDP need to be revised to make them more practical, broader and more inclusive.
- It is recommended that the SIS should be adopted at a national level across mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

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.

This Policy Brief has been based on analysis and external evaluation of the EQUIP-T programme. For further information, please email info@equip-t.org