

Post-Basic Education and Training: Education and Poverty - Beyond the Basics

Beyond Primary Education in Tanzania: Establishing an environment for the benefits of education to be realised

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Since 2000, millions of extra children have enrolled in primary schools in Tanzania due to the dropping of school fees and improvements brought through the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP). Tanzania has nearly reached the goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and the first PEDP cohorts will be graduating over the next few years. For UPE to be sustainable it needs to benefit both individuals and the nation. For it to be beneficial it needs to be of good quality. And the quality of primary schooling depends on the quality and quantity of post-primary formal education. In any case, education alone will not lift people out of poverty. School leavers need to enter an environment where they are able to develop and to apply the basic competences that they have gained in school.

Lessons from the past

Tanzania's past experience with expansion of primary education in the interests of equity has shown that primary schooling does not necessarily lead to poverty reduction in the long run. Near universal primary schooling in the early eighties does not appear to have yielded benefits such as reduced fertility, greater agricultural productivity and overall economic growth in the Tanzanian case. It was also not sustainable, and enrolment ratios fell throughout the 90s. One reason why the potential benefits of primary education have not been realised in Tanzania is that the quality of education fell to critically low levels. The primary school system was expanded faster than the rate at which secondary schools could produce potential teachers. Many were teachers who were trained through 'crash' programmes

and they entered the profession with little post-primary education. Schools lacked sufficient classrooms, toilets and furniture. Dropout rates were high, and the children who did complete often had little to show for it in terms of acquired skills and knowledge.

The recent rapid expansion of the primary sector has led to some aspects of quality being compromised but strong donor support has enabled the government to mitigate these problems and generally the quality of education has started to improve. One constraint has been the very limited pool of secondary graduates from which to draw teachers. Tanzania is currently working on expanding access to secondary education through the Secondary Education Development Plan (SEDP).

The Potential Benefits of Education

Econometric studies imply that the greatest 'social rates of return' are at primary level. Some smaller scale and more qualitative studies suggest that for some potential benefits of education, including reduced fertility and improved livelihoods, the effects at the primary level are limited and it is only at the secondary levels that the benefits are fully realised. Employment outcomes of the different levels of education imply that the labour market for those with good post-primary education and training is far from saturated, and that rising unemployment is as much an outcome of low quality education as one of the number of school leavers exceeding the labour market demands.

Outcomes of education	What the research says in Tanzania
Improved Agriculture	Very few studies have been conducted but there is some evidence that education improves farmer productivity.
Employment	Wages of primary graduates are higher than those without schooling but the wages of secondary graduates are much higher than wages of primary leavers. Most secondary graduates end up in employment, although there can be a long lag time.
Enterprise	Some studies indicate that more profitable enterprises tend to be started by those with post-primary education. Few large scale studies have been carried out
Reduced Fertility	Primary education appears to have a small effect in reducing the number of children that women have. Secondary education has a much larger effect.
Reduced HIV/AIDS	Evidence from Zambia and Uganda shows that higher levels of education reduce risk of infection with HIV. There are no recent studies for Tanzania

What prevents the poor from benefiting from education?

1) Low quality of primary education

By 2000, most primary schools were in poor condition and little real education was taking place. The problems of quality

tend to be more acute in the rural areas where most of the poor live. Some parents supplement their children's education with private tuition but this option is not available to the poor. As a result, few children from poorer families qualify for places in secondary schools. PEDP has improved the situation but rural areas still need to be targeted for improvements. Incentives such as good housing are needed to attract teachers to work in rural schools.

2) Lack of further education and training opportunities

Tanzania has one of the lowest secondary enrolment ratios in the world. The chances of a child from a poor rural family of studying at secondary school are very low indeed. SEDP will expand the number of places available to all levels of society. The rapid expansion of secondary schools will increase equity in the short run but there is a risk that rural schools will not be able to retain teachers and the quality of education will fall. As in the 80s, crash teacher training programmes have been employed to supply the demand for teachers in rural schools. Retention of pupils in rural schools is already problematic and could become worse.

Fees and other costs incurred by secondary education constitute a major barrier to poorer households. School fees have been halved and the number of government scholarships has doubled under SEDP. There are also other scholarships available but identifying the most deserving pupils can be a challenge. A further barrier is the lack of physical access. Most rural households are out of reach of secondary schools. The plans under SEDP to build more schools will alleviate this but there is still a very long way to go before every child lives within reach of a secondary school. Boarding schools are expensive and can only be provided for a minority, but schools need to provide accommodation if children from remote areas are to have access. Many students rent low quality accommodation near day schools but their studies inevitably suffer. One strategy has been to build hostels. Another possible strategy would be to reserve places at boarding schools for children from areas without schools.

Vocational training is available in some rural communities but support for this sector has waned in recent years. Faith based organisations are one of the main providers in rural areas but they lack support from donors or from the government. Provision by the Vocational Education Training Authority (VETA) and for-profit providers tends to be focused in urban areas and the trainees tend to come from wealthier backgrounds. Increasingly, primary leavers are losing out to secondary graduates in the competition for places.

3) The wider environment beyond schools

The realisation of the benefits of education depends on the social, political and economic environment that school leavers enter. Poor roads and services in rural areas remain inhibiting factors in the relationship between education and poverty reduction. Farmers lack access to credit and markets. Families lack access to health facilities and clean water. The environment in Tanzania has recently become much more supportive of enterprise and small businesses, enabling some individuals to capitalise on their education.

Further information sources

This briefing note draws upon a fuller country study on Post Basic Education and Poverty in Tanzania, as part of a 6-country study coordinated by the Centre of African Studies at the University of Edinburgh and funded by the Department for International Development (DFID). The Policy Brief does not, of course, represent the views of DFID. The full paper 'Post-Basic Education and Poverty in Tanzania' by Ruth Wedgwood is available in electronic format from www.cas.ed.ac.uk/research/projects.html. More information on the full project, as well as country studies for Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and India can also be obtained from this address.

Lessons from Tanzania's experience:

Prioritising quality

If expansion is too rapid it can have adverse effects on the quality of education. Poverty reduction and improved equality are more likely to be achieved if expansion takes place at a rate at which quality can be maintained. The rate of expansion should be limited by the rate at which quality teachers can be trained and employed. Crash programmes to train teachers are unlikely to be successful unless the trainees can be given extensive professional support.

An integrated approach to expanding access

The different education sub-sectors should not be treated separately. Attempts to expand access to primary schooling should take into account the quality and quantity of secondary education available. Development in the education sector should also be coordinated with development in other sectors. If the current school age generation are to benefit from their education they need to graduate into an environment where they can have access to clean water, health facilities, credit, markets, farm inputs and opportunities for skills development.

Questions raised for further research

This review of current research and thinking on education and poverty reduction in Tanzania has raised several important questions for further research. Key questions include the following:

- What is the link between education and agricultural productivity in rural Tanzania? What systems (such as access to credit, farm inputs and markets) have to be in place to enable farmers to capitalise on their education?
- Is the government scholarship system working? What other scholarship schemes are available? Who benefits from them?
- How many students at secondary day schools are living away from home and how does this influence their studies? Are hostels an efficient option for providing accommodation for students who live far from schools?
- Where do students in boarding schools come from? Is the government unnecessarily subsidising the living costs of the children of the middle classes who could be educated at day schools? How can places in boarding schools be allocated to those that most need them?
- Does the education and training provided by faith based organisations help to reduce poverty? How can the government support and encourage these organisations to do so?