

- SPEECH -

Schooling with Little Learning: The Tanzanian Case

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Panel: Who Are the Drivers of Prosperity?

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1. Introduction

National Development depends on the quality of human capital it possess. Human capital has two key components, health and education. Health is important at all levels. Children who are healthy learn better than children who have health problems varying from malnutrition, hearing vision problems etc. Similarly a healthy person is more effective and more productive than a person with health problems. The second component that is important is the capabilities (skills, knowledge, values, attitudes) a person has acquired. A person with the desired skills and knowledge will produce more than a person who lacks these skills and knowledge.

I will focus on education, a process through which human beings gain the required knowledge and skills to become productive in society. Researchers claim that:

1. The lowest level of education that is required for a person to be employable is secondary education.
2. The quality of education (the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values) that education inculcates is more important than the number of children who access education. Access is important, but what is more important is the learning outcomes of the education system.

In this presentation, I will focus on two aspects of education in Tanzania:

1. The stock of education in the population and how this is distributed in the country, and two
2. The quality of education that the Tanzanian schools deliver.

2. Stock of Education in Tanzania

Tanzania became independent in 1960, more than 50 years ago. Since independence provision of education to the population has been at the centre of the government policies. A large portion of the national wealth is spent on education. What has been the result?

Data from the Household Budget Survey make an interesting reading. HBS are carried out every 4 or 5 years and use basically the same methodology to collect data. HBS therefore has timeline data that shows changes that are happening in the country. HBS 2014 shows that:

- **Significant number of people had no education or are illiterate:** People with no education decreased from 25.2% in 2000/01 to 18.6% in 2011/12. There are more people with no education in urban areas than in rural areas. In 2011/12, only 4.4% of the population in Dar es Salaam had no education compared to 24.2% in rural areas. Gender differences are stark. In rural areas 17.1% of the men had no education compared to 30.9% of the education. In rural areas, almost one third of the women had no education. These differences are reflected in literacy rates. In rural areas, 21.7% of the men and 36.9% of the women were illiterate compared to 2.6% of the men and 6.9% of the women in Dar es Salaam.
- **Majority of the population have primary education:** In 2011/12, more than half of the population had some level of primary education. Differences between men and women and between rural and urban areas were not large reflecting Tanzania's commitment to provide primary education to all its children (1977 - 84 period) and post 2001 period.
- **Few people have secondary education:** Only 15.7% of the population had some level of lower secondary education. This number has increased significantly since 2000/01 when only 4.6% of the population had some level of lower primary education. Number of people with advanced secondary education (Forms 5 and 6) was low, only 0.7% of the population had higher secondary education in 2011/12 compared to 0.4% in 2000/01. Differences between rural and urban areas and between men and women were significant. Only 10.9% of the population in rural areas had some secondary education compare to 27.2% in Dar es Salaam.
- **Increased enrolment in secondary education:** HBS data shows that the net and gross enrolment ratios are on increase both in urban and rural areas. In 2011/22 NER and GER were 30.5% and 53.1% compared to 15.2% and 27.8% in 2007, a significant increase in four intervening years.

- **Declining enrolment in primary education:** NER and GER declined between 2007 and 2011/12. NER declined from 83.7% in 2007 to 77.4% in 2011/12. The decline occurred both for boys and girls and urban and rural areas. In Dar es Salaam the NER declined from 90.8% in 2007 to 89.5% in 2011/12. In rural areas the NER declined from 81.5% in 2007 to 74.0% in 2011/12. This is significant. In rural areas in 2011/12, 26 out of every 100 children between the ages of 7 and 14 were not in school, compared to 18 children in 2007.

What does this mean?

The number of people who are employable in the formal sector, those with secondary and post-secondary education is small, especially in rural areas. The good news is that there is a significant increase in the number of children who attend secondary school. The bad news is that the enrolment rates in primary schools are falling, perhaps leading to increased illiteracy rates in the country.

3. Quality of Education:

For school graduates to be employable, they need to have skills and knowledge for them to be productive in the formal sector. Data shows that the learning outcomes are poor. Several studies have consistently shown that learning outcomes are poor. Many children finishing primary schools do not achieve literacy and numeracy skills.

The largest ever assessment of learning outcomes in the country was carried out by Uwezo Tanzania in 2011 and their findings are depressing. Around hundred and forty thousand children were assessed in all the 133 districts in the country. Uwezo assessed children's reading ability in Kiswahili and English and their numeracy competencies. The tests used by Uwezo were based on standard two syllabi in the three subject areas of Kiswahili, English and Maths (Uwezo: 2011). A primary school syllabus stipulates that children by end of class two should be able to read simple texts in English and Kiswahili and be able to do simple additions, subtractions and multiplications. The findings were particularly surprising for Kiswahili literacy as it is the national language and is used widely in all forms of communication.

2010Uwezo found:

- In standard 3, one-third of children were able to read a standard 2 text.
- In standard 7, the last year of the primary cycle, 21% of the children were unable to read a standard 2 text, basically finishing primary education as illiterate.

Performance in English literacy was even poorer. Nearly 50% of the children who were in standard 7 were unable to read a simple standard 2 English text. Uwezo assessment conducted in 2012 had similar results.

Numeracy:

- Only 15 percent of children in standard two were able to solve Standard two multiplication problems.
- Nationally 65 percent of children in standard seven were able to solve a Standard two multiplication problem.

The national assessment of learning outcomes among Tanzanian children was conducted between October 21 and November 1 in 2013 using the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) tools to assess children's reading ability in Kiswahili and English and in mathematics. Data were collected from 200 primary schools in 20 districts. In all 2,226 standard 2 pupils were assessed (USAID: 2014). Preliminary findings of EGRA showed:

1. Pupils perform much better on the Kiswahili assessment than they do on their English assessment.
2. In general pupils perform reasonably well on Kiswahili pre-reading skills (syllable, sounds, familiar words, and invented words) although even there are too many pupils unable to respond correctly to a single item.
3. Reading comprehension was significantly better for Kiswahili than English. Although 40% of the pupils were reading with some comprehension, very few pupils were reading with full comprehension. 40% of the pupils scored zero on comprehension sub-task.
4. Hardly any pupil was able to read English with any level of confidence and none were able to read with confidence.

EGMA findings showed:

- Pupils in standard 2 did reasonably well on more procedural tasks. On addition level 1 and subtraction level 1 pupils scored on average 60% or more on these sub-tasks.
- Pupils did better on addition than on subtraction. 22% of the pupils were unable to answer even a single subtraction level 1 question.
- 58% of the pupils were unable to answer subtraction level 2 item correctly such as $18 - 4 =$
- Assessed pupils did better on addition than on subtraction. 22% of the pupils were unable to answer a single level 1 subtraction item, the easiest of the item being $4 - \square$

4. Poor quality leads to un-employability:

Tanzanian employers are concerned about the quality of education in the country. They argue that poorly qualified labour force is one of the factors making Tanzania unattractive for business. Tanzanian employers are concerned about the English proficiency, communication skills, problem solving ability, innovativeness, creativity and often negative attitudes towards other workers and unwillingness to learn among those school graduates who joined the labour force. ATE also argued that there was a mismatch between the supplies of skills and the demand, educational institutions supply graduates whose skills often do not match with the skills needed by employers. It is obvious that schools will have to change in order to produce youths who have employable skills, and this needs to be done soon.

The mismatch between the education system and the skills required by labour markets is partly responsible for the employment crisis in Tanzania. In 2013, only 7.8% of the workforce was employed in the formal sector. Of these 66% were employed in the private sector and 34% in the public sector. Youths, adults aged 15 to 24 were 24,710, only 1.5% of the total employees (URT: 2014). Unemployment is particularly serious for youths, those between the ages of 15 to 29.

Gallup survey data shows low employment of Tanzanians between the ages of 15 to 29 in 2013 compared to Kenya and Uganda. In Tanzania 10% of the population between the ages of 15 - 29 were employed compared to 25% in Kenya and 11% in Uganda. The two sectors which employed most people were manufacturing, which employed 19.0% and education which employed 17 % of the total employees in the formal sector.

Our youth enter the labour market ill prepared for it. For employment youth need to have “hard” and “soft” skills. Hard skills are provided by tertiary, technical and vocational training institutions. There is no place where students get the “soft” skills needed to adjust well to the world of work. As stated earlier, employers complain that youths lack the English proficiency, communication skills, problem solving ability, innovativeness, creativity and often negative attitudes towards other workers and unwillingness to learn. Some of these skills are the prerogative of the formal schooling to develop, while others need to be developed somewhere else. There are a number of government, NGO, and private sector training organizations already offering some sort of hard skills training opportunities but that the critical, complementary domain of *workplace-oriented soft-skills*, was not being addressed. We need to teach our students values that we all admire and that are particularly important at work place, values such as punctuality, honesty, respect for others, tolerance. If children do not learn these values at schools, where would they?

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