

## RISE in Tanzania: Non-technical research overview

- Between 2006 and 2012, primary school pass rates plummeted from 70 percent to 31 percent. Tanzania has seen a subsequent improvement in primary school leaving exam pass rates, which reached their 2006 levels (70 percent) once again in 2016.
- Secondary school pass rates fell from 89 percent in 2006 to 43 percent in 2012. Since then, the pass rate has partially rebounded, from 57 percent in 2013 to 68 percent in 2016.
- However, learning levels remain low. According to a recently released Uwezo learning assessment, only about 35 percent of Standard 3 students and 70 percent of Standard 7 students can pass a literacy and numeracy test appropriate for Standard 2.

recent and ongoing education policy reforms. The analysis will focus on system-level effects and relationships that underpin change.

The government's reforms are aimed at addressing a crisis in education, evidenced by a rapid decline in student achievement in the country between 2006 and 2012. During this period, the pass rate on leaving exams taken by primary school students declined from 70 percent to 31 percent.

However, since 2012, both primary school and secondary school pass rates have improved. At the primary level, the pass rates improved to 50.6 percent in 2013, 57 percent in 2014, 67.8 percent in 2015, and 70.4 percent in 2016.

While the recent progress in raising pass rates is promising, learning levels remain low. According to the Uwezo Tanzania Learning Assessment Report 2017, only about 35 percent of Standard 3 students and 70 percent of Standard 7 students can pass a literacy and numeracy test appropriate for Standard 2.

The team will address these three key questions:

- Does the pivot to learning-outcome-based incentives for schools and teachers yield improvements in student learning?
- How did incentives for political actors, such as politicians and active members of the civil society, create opportunities for the launch of such a system-wide reform?
- How do elements of the reform itself contribute to sustained momentum?

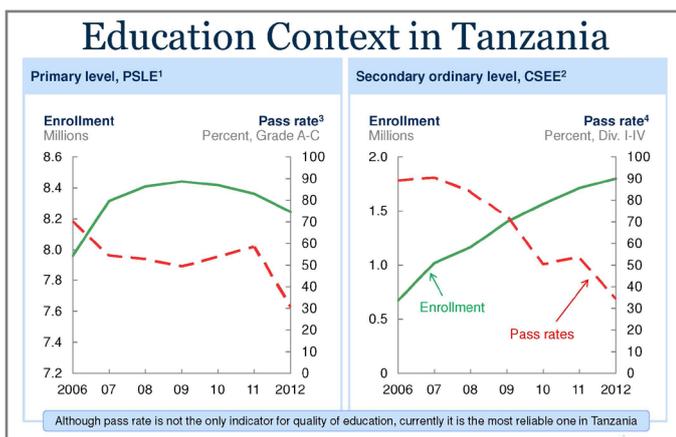
The team's research will focus on five potential levers for change:

### 1. Changing the accountability environment.

The reforms aim to strengthen incentives for all stakeholders – schools, teachers, district and regional administrators – to improve learning

The RISE in Tanzania project aims to understand whether and how policy reforms intended to emphasize learning outcomes work to change education at a national level. The research team will conduct a six-year research project on "what works" to learn about the catalysts that have made a national reform movement possible in Tanzania, to look at what forces sustain or impede reform, and to understand the underlying mechanisms that bring about improved learning that might be transferable to other contexts.

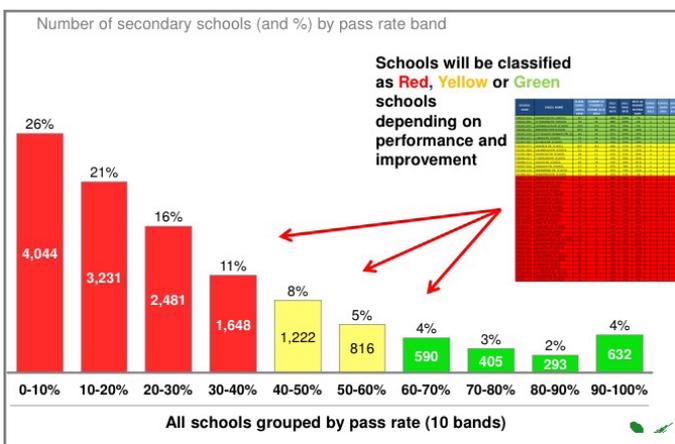
The Tanzania Country Research Team will conduct a multidisciplinary analysis of the Government of Tanzania's



outcomes by publicising national assessment results, which are linked to reputational (and possibly monetary) rewards.

**Official school rankings:** The schools' performance will be listed under a "stop light" system, with billboards and publications highlighting the best schools as "green," the borderline-acceptable schools as "yellow," and failing schools as "red." The rankings – distributed to parents and the general public – will make the schools' relative standing clear. Key questions:

- What is the effect of providing official rankings of primary and secondary schools to the public?
- Does information dissemination help increase accountability of stakeholders?



**School Incentive Scheme:** The best-improving schools, based on pass rates, receive a grant, to be used as they see fit, in high-profile regional and national events. Key questions:

- Does providing monetary incentives help improve student outcomes?
- Do schools use their funds effectively for improvements?

## 2. Building a coalition to enact and sustain reform.

The success of the reform programme will depend on the ability of political leaders to maintain a coalition of various stakeholders. Given Tanzania's decentralised education system, local government leaders and other large groups of local stakeholders (such as teachers), need to have aligned incentives with those at the national level to push forward reform rather than block it. The key question:

- Does the reform programme's accountability system help build a coalition and to align local and national stakeholder interests to sustain reform?

## 3. Motivating teachers.

Teachers are one of the most crucial inputs into the education system, and understanding what works to motivate them is imperative. The initial iteration of the reform programme allowed for a large influx of income to teachers by clearing a backlog of unpaid wages, along with promises to improve accountability in this regard. The key questions:

- Do teacher salaries impact teacher motivation and change indicators such as absenteeism, increased time-on-task and willingness to master their teaching material?
- Do teacher salaries impact teacher accountability and involvement in change?

## 4. Re-orienting the education system to focus on basic skills and remedial education.

Education systems in developing countries often fail to provide foundational competencies and numeracy to many students in early grades, which prevents students from accumulating knowledge in later years. Two key initiatives from the initial reform programme package address this problem:

**National reading, writing, arithmetic (3R) assessment and training:** Launched in late 2013, the initiative sampled a set of primary school students for skills measurement and also trained 12,300 teachers on 3R teaching skills.

**Student Teacher Enrichment Program (STEP):** The STEP initiative provides teacher training for remedial education, which focuses teachers' attention on the poorest performing students to give them the basic tools that are prerequisites to learning at higher levels. The key question:

- Can investments in basic skills teaching and assessments improve outcomes?

## 5. Improving school financing and management practices.

Management and funding have been identified as important issues. This reform programme includes two initiatives that specifically address bottlenecks:

**School management toolkit:** This initiative provides management tips and strategies for headteachers. Key questions:

- Does information on improving management with a “light touch approach” help head-teachers manage their schools better?
- Does this better management have an effect on teacher motivation and student learning?

**Capitation (per-pupil) Grants:** Per-pupil funding grants were introduced to provide school management with resources to buy books, learning aides, and school supplies, but have been marred by problems such as non-delivery and waste. The reform programme aims to ensure timely and equitable disbursement of the funds, and to implement a monitoring system. Research so far has suggested that solely increasing inputs is not an effective lever for change. The key question:

- Does increasing funds for inputs, such as textbooks, have a complementary effect when introduced with other interventions?

In a second phase, researchers will use the evidence collected in the first phase to analyse bottlenecks to the efficacy of the government’s reform efforts. For example, this could include any issues related to dissemination of the schools’ ranking information, implementation of better management practices, or delivery of teacher training.

In this phase, the team will work alongside the government and implementation agencies to provide experimental evidence on a second generation of interventions aimed at improving student learning outcomes.

Please contact [information@riseprogramme.org](mailto:information@riseprogramme.org) for additional information, or visit [www.riseprogramme.org](http://www.riseprogramme.org)

RISE is supported by:

