



Education System Brief:

Tanzania



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Education System Brief: Tanzania

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1. EDUCATION SYSTEM: OVERVIEW

The United Republic of Tanzania is separated into two autonomous regions: Tanzania Mainland and Tanzania Zanzibar. The two regions have separate legislative, executive, and judiciary systems and diverge regarding their education policies. This brief will focus on education in Tanzania Mainland where most programs of Opportunity International are concentrated.

Formal education in the Mainland reaches from pre-primary school to university level. Since 2016, compulsory education includes 1 year of pre-primary education, 7 years of primary education, and 4 years of lower secondary education. Therefore, all children in primary/lower secondary school age (7-16) that are not enrolled or attending formal education are regarded as out-of-school children.

Alternatively, there is a range of non-formal education offerings. Next to adult literacy programs, these also include a pre-vocational stream ([IPPE](#)) for post-primary education aimed at preparing students for vocational training or employment.

1.1. STRUCTURE



Pre-Primary Education

Age: 5-6

Tanzania introduced two years of compulsory and free pre-primary education in 2016 and reached a GER of 86.68% in 2019.

Primary School

Grades: 1-7 Age: 6-12

Primary education is compulsory and free in Tanzania since 2001. Net enrolment is ahead of the national target and reached 95.4% in 2019. Teaching is held in Kiswahili at a primary level.

Despite Tanzania's universal education policies, [hidden costs](#) for uniforms, water, school meals, and transportation persist which pose considerable access barriers to poor families. Funding opportunities are available from the [Tanzania Social Action Fund](#).

Primary School Leaving Examinations

Ordinary Secondary Education

Grades: 8–11 Age: 13–16

Ordinary Secondary School is part of elementary education since 2016 and thus is compulsory and free. Transition rates to Ordinary Secondary have been increasing from 67.1% in 2015 to 73.2% in 2018.

The language of instruction changes to English at this level.

Certificate of Secondary Education Examination

Advanced Secondary School

Grades: 12–13 Age: 17-18

Advanced secondary school is optional and only about a quarter of students opt to continue their formal education after elementary education.

Most schools at the upper secondary level are boarding schools and the language of instruction is English.

TVET

Students can pursue technical and vocational training after their O- or A-levels. The transition rate from basic education to TVET lies at about 6.4% but the government aims to raise the transition rate to 44% by 2025.

Programs are run by vocational training centers or folk development colleges (open-access community colleges). Graduates of technical education training obtain a Certificate in relevant trade (levels 2-4 of [Tanzania qualifications framework](#)) and graduates from vocational training receive a certificate or diploma (Levels 4-7).

Advanced Certificate of Secondary Education Examination

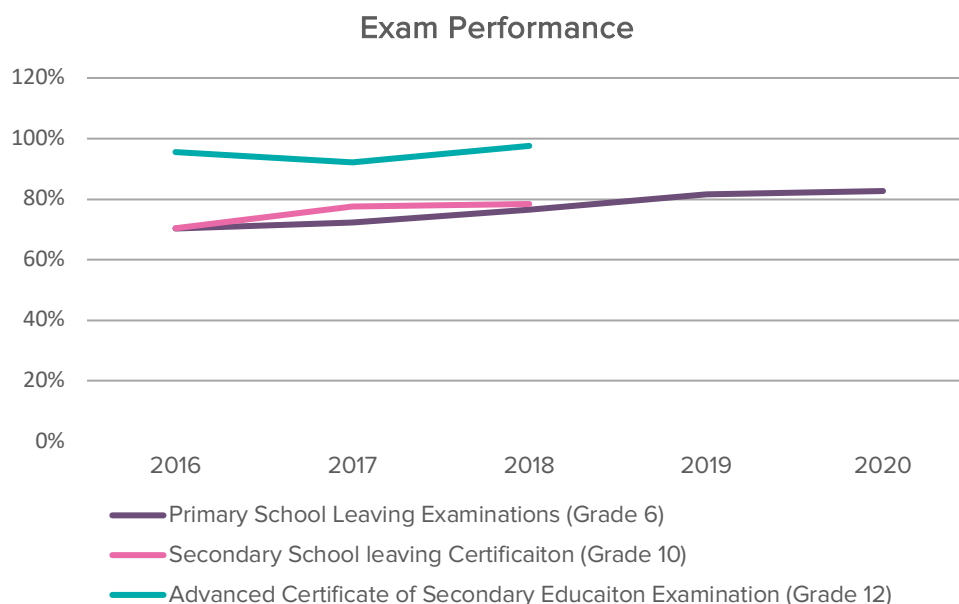
University Education

University education has expanded over recent years: the number of institutions increased from 20 to 50 between 2005 and 2016 and enrolments quadrupled in the same period to reach 13.9% in 2016.

[Government student loans](#) are available on a need base and currently support 115, 000 students where priority is given to students in STEM subjects. The average size of loans is 4.0 million TSh.

1.1. EXAMINATIONS

Centralized high-stake examinations are held at the end of primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education. These examinations are conducted by the National Examinations Council of Zambia (NECTA) which was founded when Tanzania pulled out of the East African examination council in 1970. Examinations fulfill two purposes: firstly, they select the students who can progress to the next level of education. Secondly, they document the completion of a given education level.



Exam pass rates vary greatly by region: In 2018, PSLE council-level pass rates reached 36.4% in Chemba (Dodoma) to 96.8 in Arusha CC.

1.2. CURRICULUM

Tanzania has a standardized curriculum that is developed by the parastatal [institute of higher education](#) which operates under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST). The Tanzanian curriculum is focused on building 21st-century employability skills in three categories: learning, literacy, and life skills. The emphasis lies on competence development, entrepreneurship, reflective learning, and self-assessment.

Pre-primary and Primary Grades 1-2

Competencies:

- Reading: oracy, print awareness, phonological awareness.
- Writing: letters and symbols, writing skills.
- Numeracy: numeric recognition, number operations, and relationship.

Learning areas:

- reading, writing, and arithmetic.
- communication.
- health care.
- environmental awareness.
- art and music.
- play and social relations.
- personal, social, and emotional development.
- information and communication technology.

Primary Grades 3-7

Competencies:

- literacy, numeracy, and oracy.
- relationship, communication, healthcare, and environmental education.
- performing art.
- problem-solving.

Subjects: Mathematics, English, Kiswahili, Science and Technology, Vocational Studies, Social Studies, Civic and Moral Education, Foreign Languages (e.g., French and Chinese), Religious studies

Ordinary Secondary Education

Competencies:

- critical and creative thinking, problem solving
- decision making, leadership
- communication, oracy
- literacy, numeracy
- personal and social value, personal well-being
- independent learning
- digital literacy, online safety

Subjects: Kiswahili, History, Geography, English, Civics, Religion, French, Commerce, Book-Keeping, Arabic, Fine Arts, Theatre Arts, Chinese, Physical Education, Music, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Maths, Engineering, Information and Computer Studies, Agricultural Science, Home Economics

Upper Secondary Curriculum (A-Level curriculum)

Competencies:

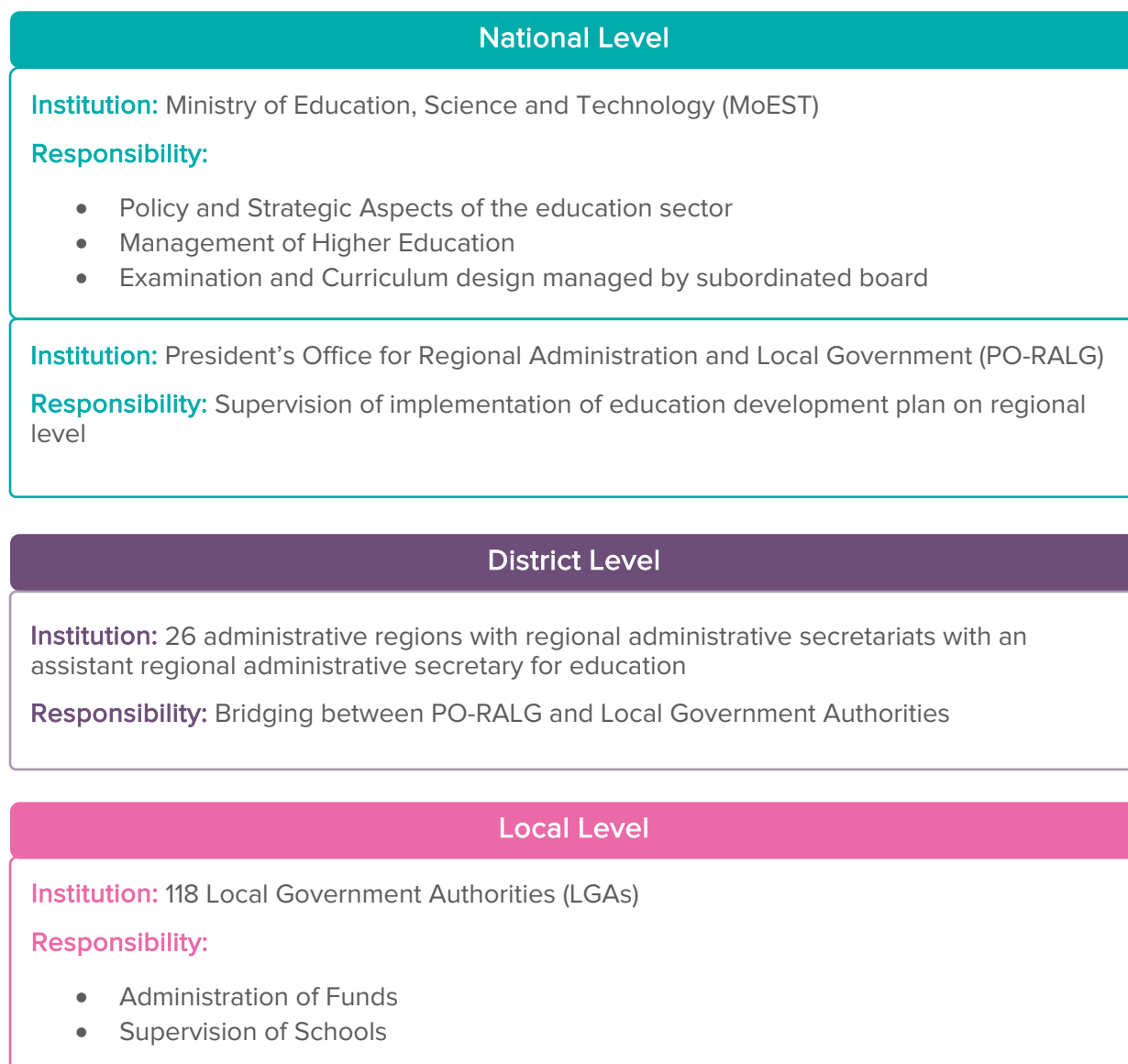
- communication
- numeracy
- personal and social values
- technology
- creative and critical thinking
- problem solving
- independent learning

Subjects: Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Advanced Maths, Computer Science, Food and Human Nutrition, Agriculture, History, Geography, Kiswahili, English, French, General Studies, Arabic, Textile Technology and Clothing, Home management, Accountancy, Commerce, Economics, Music, Fine Art, Physical Education, Theatre Arts, Divinity, Islamic Knowledge, Basic Applied Maths, Information and Computer Science

2. EDUCATION SYSTEM: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK & PROVISION

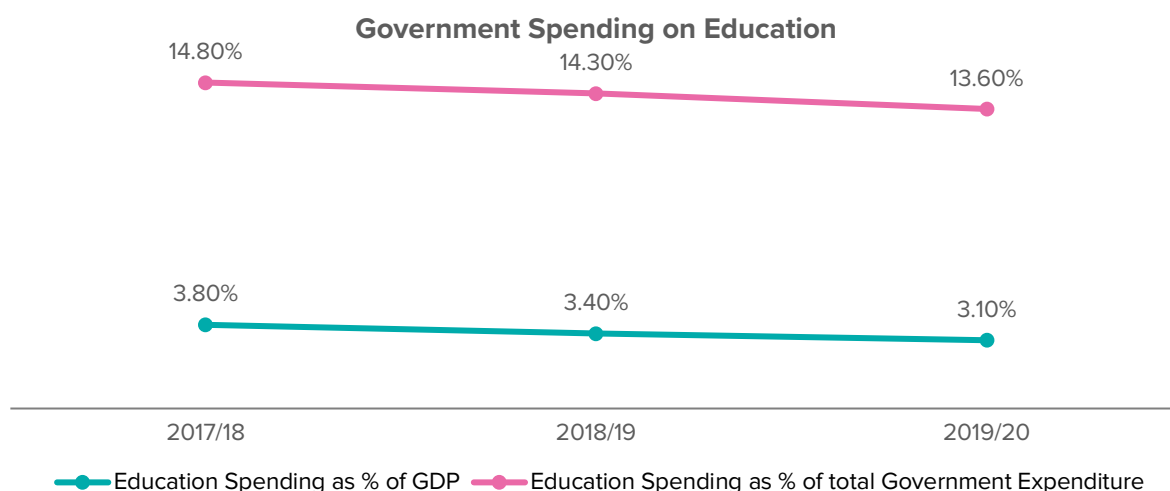
2.1. GOVERNANCE

The Tanzanian Education sector has seen a series of [decentralization reforms](#) over the past decades. Education management involves nationwide, district-wide, and local authorities with close to [70%](#) of education funds being channelled through local and regional governments.



In the financial year 2019/2020, [government spending](#) on education made up 3.1% of Tanzania's GDP and 13.6% of public expenditure. This leaves Tanzania below the benchmark for education spending set out in the [Incheon Declaration](#).

The allocation of government spending has changed drastically since the 2015 Fee-Free Basic Education policy which pushed up enrolment in basic education and with it the bill for primary and lower secondary education. Above 70% of the total budget is used for recurrent costs, predominantly teacher salaries.



Most of the expenditure is channelled through LGAs. However, allocation is based on outdated and oversimplified formulas resulting in drastic underfinancing of regions that face higher costs due to poor social infrastructure and existing resources.

2.2. QUALITY ASSURANCE

MoEST put in place school [inspections](#) that are supposed to take place every two years and evaluate the quality of instruction, organization, and management as well as the overall school environment. Inspections are organized by the Central Inspectorate - a wing of the MoEST - that has specialized primary, secondary, teacher training, and adult education inspectors.

[Pre-Service Teacher training](#) includes Grade A, Diploma, or degree programs. Grade A programs take 2 years and are run by teacher training colleges. They equip students with the pedagogical skills and knowledge needed to teach in primary schools. To teach at secondary schools, teachers must take a 2-years diploma program or a 3-year university degree. However, due to teacher shortages, many schools especially in rural areas are forced to employ Grade A teachers at a secondary level.

Tanzania has an ambitious in-service teacher training plan set out in the National Framework for [continuous professional development for practicing teachers](#). Higher salary and chances for promotion work as incentives to attend in-service training. However, the government fails to meet the full [costs](#) of training leaving teachers to pay for their professional development.

2.3. PRIVATE SECTOR

The non-government school sector in Tanzania is relatively small, largely due to the public provision of free education at a pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary level. While the sector has seen slight growth over the past years, enrolment in private lower secondary schools has decreased substantially after the 2015 abolition of tuition fees.

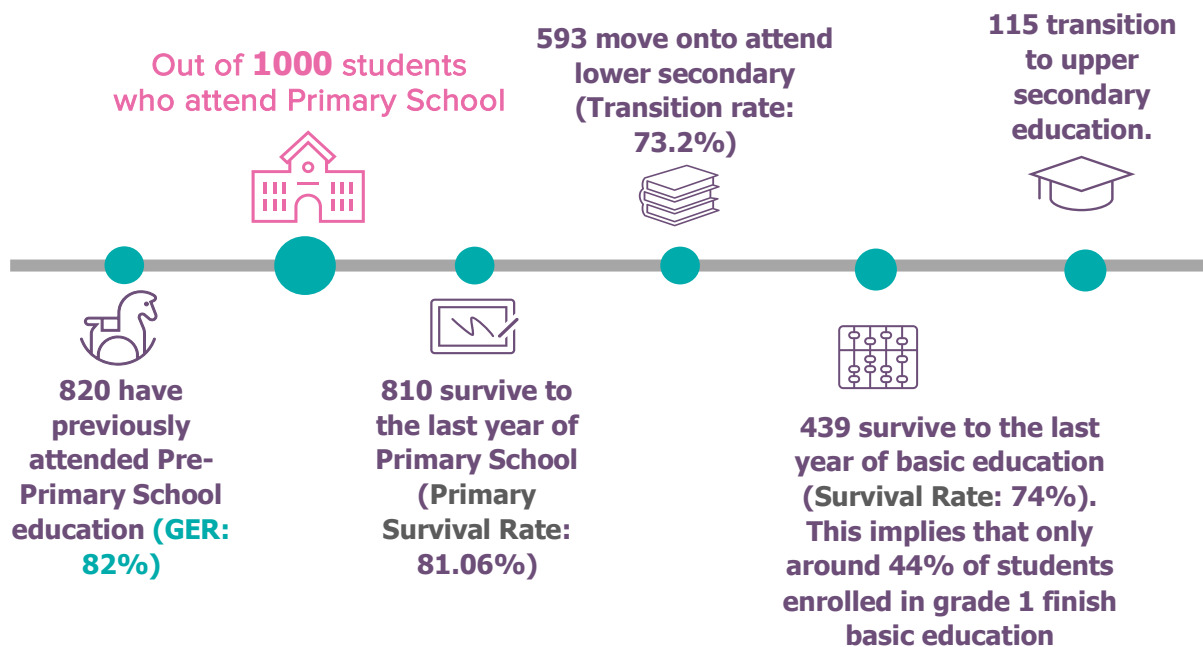
Private school [fees](#) vary between \$ 300-1000 for primary schools and \$ 300-2000 for secondary schools. Most private schools are boarding schools.

Private schools are obliged to [register](#) with the ministry of education – a process that takes around 12-36 months and costs around 12m-58m TZS – as well as to undergo regular inspections.

[Academic outcomes](#) in non-government schools are significantly better than in public schools: 78% of students between grades 3-7 students reveal basic numeric and reading skills in non-government schools whereas only 62% do in public schools. This is also connected to the significantly better teacher-pupil ratios in private schools.

3. EDUCATION SYSTEM: PERFORMANCE AND CHALLENGES

3.1. EFFICIENCY



3.2. TEACHING AND RESOURCES

Teaching

Student-teacher ratio (average)

Public Schools

Private Schools

18 **58**

18 **20**

Pre-Primary School

Primary School

Pre-Primary School

Primary School

Teacher Qualification

Teacher Absenteeism



Only **21%** of Teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach their subject. Shortage of qualified teachers is particularly acute in rural areas and STEM subjects.



23-57% of teachers are absent from class on a given day. Only **47%** of scheduled teaching time is spent with teaching.

Material and Infrastructure

Student-classroom ratio (average)

Public Schools

69 **29**

Primary School

Secondary School

Student-textbook ratio (average)

Access to Electricity (average)



On average, **3** students have to share a textbook.



34% of primary schools and **86%** of secondary schools have access to electricity.

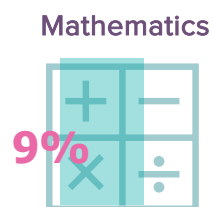
3.3. LEARNING OUTCOMES

Tanzania has never participated in Pisa-D evaluations. However, Early Grade Assessments, SEAMEQ Assessments, and Uwezo surveys can help to benchmark learning outcomes.

Early Grade Reading / Mathematics Assessment (EGMA/EGRA) - 2015



Only **1%** of Grade 2 students reach the least minimum proficiency level in reading set out by the SDGs.



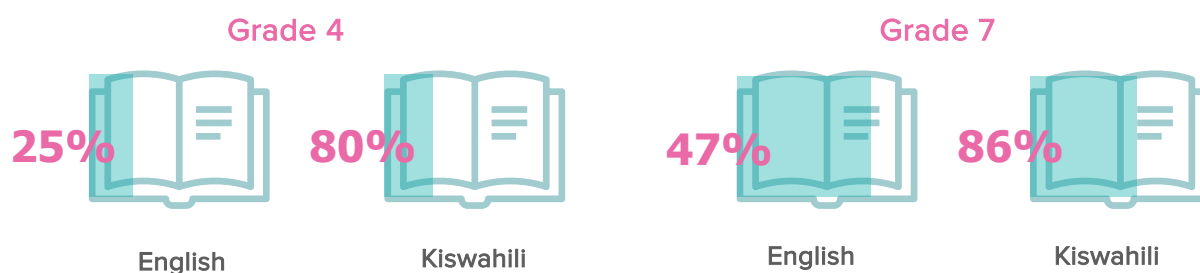
Only **9%** of Grade 2 students reach the least minimum proficiency level in Mathematics set out by the SDGs.

Uwezo Tanzania Learning Assessment Report 2019

A household survey with children between 6 and 16

Reading

Proportion of school-aged children that can read and comprehend standard 2 level short stories:



Mathematics

Proportion of school-aged children that can conduct simple numerical tasks up to the level of subtraction:



3.4. EQUITY

Gender



8.44



8.36

Mean years of schooling

Performance – **Uwezo** Tanzania Learning Assessment Report 2019:

No significant differences in Learning outcomes between genders at all education levels.

Rural vs Urban



7.5



9.98

Mean years of schooling

Performance – **Uwezo** Tanzania Learning Assessment Report 2019:

Children in urban areas outperformed their counterparts in rural areas in the Uwezo report: **70%** of urban school-aged children have basic reading and numerical skills compared to only **59%** of rural children.

The assessment also revealed a strong East-West divide: pass rates in Eastern regions (Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, and Iringa) were double the pass rate in Western regions (Katavi, Tabora, Rukwa).

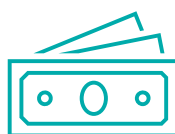
Socio-economic

Poorest



5.13

Richest



10.05

Mean years of schooling

Performance – **Uwezo** Tanzania Learning Assessment Report 2019:

The Uwezo report classifies family wealth status depending on access to basic services (water and electricity) as well as ownership of selected goods (phone, radio, TV, means of transport, etc.) into three categories:

- ultra-poor: **60%** of students between grades 3-7 reveal basic reading and numerical skills
- poor: **61%** of students between grades 3-7 reveal basic reading and numerical skills
- non-poor: **67%** of students between grades 3-7 reveal basic reading and numerical skills

4. EDUCATION SYSTEM: TRENDS AND DIRECTION

4.1. PAST TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Over the past decades, Tanzania has seen increased participation in primary education since the [abolition of primary school fees in 2001](#). The implementation of [the Education and Training Policy](#) in 2015 then expanded compulsory education to also include 1 year of pre-primary education and 4 years of lower-secondary education. The policy shift resulted in a 38% increase in pre-primary enrolment and a 55.6% increase in lower secondary enrollment.

4.2. POLICY DIRECTION

In 1999, Tanzania has launched its [Development Vision](#) which aims to turn Tanzania into a prosperous middle-income country with a high level of human development by 2025. 5-year development plans are used to define medium-run policy goals. The most recent development plan ([FYDP II](#)) covers the period between 2016/17-2020/2021 and has the theme “Nurturing Industrialization for Economic Transformation and Human Development”. FYDP III has been announced to be released in July 2021.

The education sector development plan covers the specific analysis and goals regarding education policy. The Tanzanian government recognizes the premium that is associated with investments in education considering that 2/3 of the Tanzanian population are under 25.

Key policy objectives include:

Policy Focus: TVET and STEM

Expand TVET and STEM subjects in higher education to meet industry needs. The upskilling of the Tanzanian population should reach the benchmark of middle-income countries: 12.1% of the working population high level skilled (currently: 3.6%) and 33.7% medium-level skilled (currently: 16.6%).

Interventions

- improve access to TVET for primary and secondary education leavers
- Expand TVET and higher education infrastructure
- Ensure higher education financing encourages social mobility e.g., student loans

Objective: Participation

Increase the accessibility and participation in basic education.

Interventions

- Expand basic education infrastructure
- Increase availability of trained teachers
- Reduce costs of education for households by ½
- Support vulnerable groups in accessing and staying in education

Objective: Quality

Ensure quality of Education and Learning

Interventions

- Put in place updated competency-based curricula and ensure availability of updated textbooks and teacher guides
- Ensure all newly recruited teachers obtain required qualifications
- Develop education quality standards and put in place whole school evaluations

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