

EDUCATION FINANCING OBSERVATORY TANZANIA



Introduction

The Education Financing Observatory (EFO), an initiative coordinated by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), supports the GCE movement with generating evidence and knowledge to inform policy on education financing, therefore strengthening public education systems and the implementation of Education 2030 Agenda/SDG4.

Drawing on the 4s framework (GCE, 2022), it examines the proportion of the national budget spent on education, the size of the budget, the sensitivity of public expenditure on education, and the education budget's scrutiny. The changes and trends that compound the complexity of public education financing are also considered, including tax justice, debt alleviation and increased privatization in education.

This Policy Brief presents the highlights of the study on Tanzania and aims to understand whether and how the government is investing the maximum of resources available to respect, protect and fulfill everyone's right to education. Data sources were mainly the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the Ministry of Finance and Planning (MoFP).

The data needed for sensitivity education analysis was scarcely available. For example, data on education financing allocations across gender groups, to people with disability and minority ethnic groups (i.e. the Hadzabe, Mang'ati and Masaai) was unavailable. The study also faced a data limitation for financing allocations from national debt relief.

Economic national context



The largest country in East Africa, Tanzania has an expanding economy and a rapidly growing population. It reached an important milestone in July 2020, when it formally graduated from low-income country (LIC) to lower-middle-income country (LMIC) status (World Bank, 2021). Tanzania's GDP is projected to grow 5,6% in 2024 (idem).

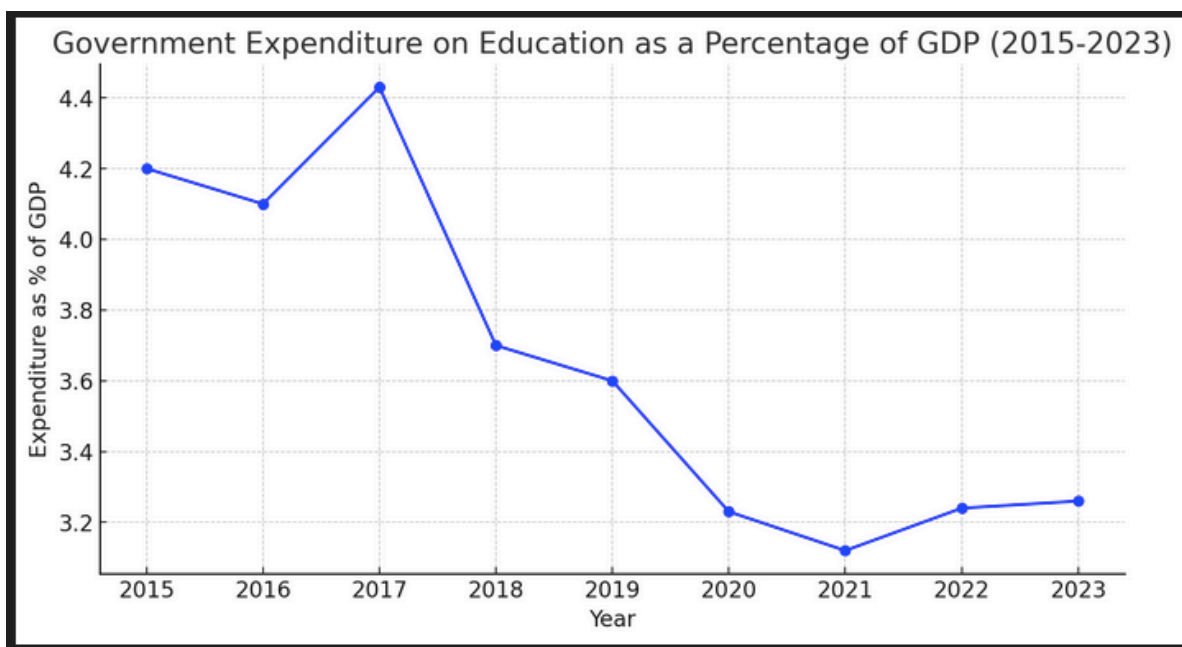
The growth in population, urbanization and the associated expansion in the demand for education, implies the need for increased quality education availability. This entails, particularly for the government part – through public education offering, the need for enhancing education financing.

Tanzania's economy and population are growing.

Increased financing is needed for quality education.

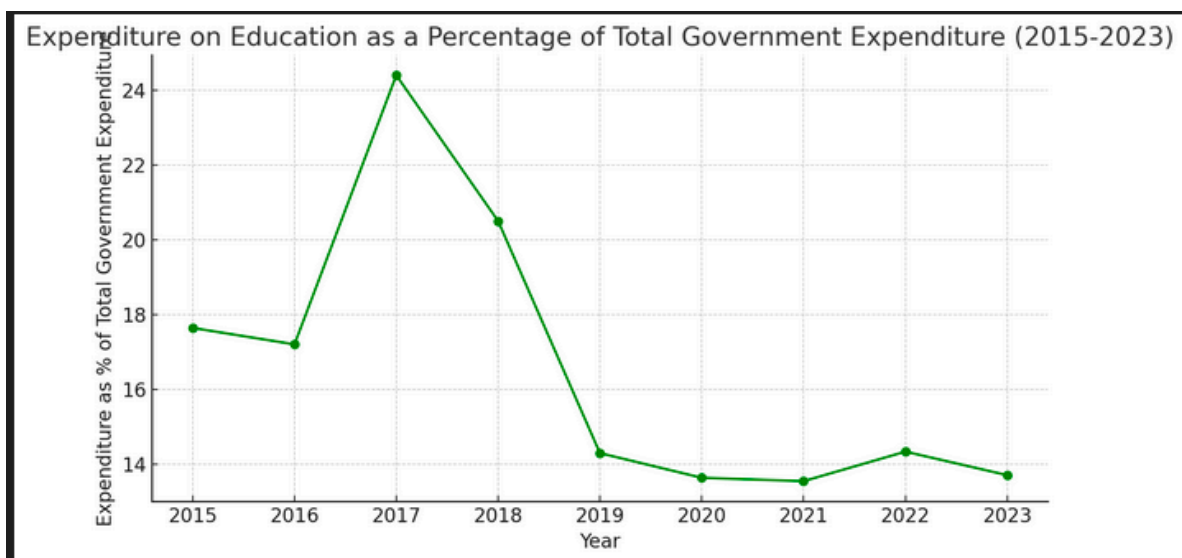
Educational financing overview

Government expenditure on education was reported as 3,26% of its GDP in 2023, according to the Unesco Institute of Statistics (UIS database). This is below the international commitment benchmark (Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2015), that recommends allocating between 4 to 6% of national GDP to education. However, such a benchmark was achieved by Tanzania in 2015, 2016 and reached a peak in 2017, followed by a consistent decrease until 2021, with a modest recovery in the last two years of the observed period.



Data: UIS UNESCO (2023)

In terms of the expenditure on Education as a percentage of total government budget, another important international benchmark (Education 2030 Framework for Action, 2015), the data available to 2023 shows the government allocated 13,70% of its total budget. This figure is slightly below the recommended 15-20%. The overall trend observed since 2015 also suggests a notable peak in 2017 and a general decrease in subsequent years. The general downward trend lasted until 2021, additionally expressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A minor recovery occurred in 2022.



Data: UIS UNESCO (2023)

Primary education financing has generally recorded the largest share of total education budget over the entire period of observation. In 2021, over 60% of the education budget went to primary education. Next to it is tertiary education (17.5%), secondary education (13.22%), pre primary (7.57%) and lastly adult education (0.74%). The early childhood and adult education levels are taking the least share of the total education budget.

The percentage of the total foreign funds allocated to the education sector has been less than 6 percent over the last few years. Foreign inflows in the education sector, across all levels, have recorded a sharp decrease in 2018 and 2019, when some donors withdrew from supporting the government as a consequence of the 2017 decision to ban pregnant school girls from access to education. The World Bank, for instance, withheld a \$300 million loan intended for girls' education. Other donors, such as Sweden, also cut their funding, citing concerns over shrinking freedoms and human rights violations.

The foreign funding to secondary education declined by 89% in 2017/18 and down to zero in 2018/19 and 2019/2020. After the regime changed and the new one lifted the ban against pregnant school girls, foreign education contributions to the total education budget increased again at all levels.

Key highlights

- Overall, findings indicated that the government of Tanzania does not allocate enough funds to the education sector, as its current figures are below the international benchmark set by the Education 2030 Framework for Action. In 2017, the government met the international benchmarks, dedicating 4,4% of the GDP to education and 24,40% of the total budget. However, it has diminished gradually over time and sharply between 2019/20 and 2020/21 due to Covid 19 impact and lack of foreign funding due to the country's disconformity with international development policy agreements, as the one mentioned above.
- Although there has been important progress in primary education, more resources are needed to guarantee quality education for all educational levels. The report shows the allocation of 7,57% of the 2021 national education budget for pre-primary education, however the rate of out-of-school children for this level was 39,89% in 2022 (UIS UNESCO). Likewise, the allocation of 0,74% to adult education is insufficient to face the challenges related to adult literacy and learning.

Key highlights contd...

- Financial barriers severely impact school infrastructure, resulting in inadequate facilities and an unfavourable environment for students, particularly students with disabilities. Poor school infrastructures discourage some parents to take their children to schools: there is lack of desks and chairs, forcing students to sit on the floor, lack of blackboards, computers for computer subjects, laboratories for science subjects, insufficient latrines. In 2022, the proportion of schools with access to electricity was only 56% (UIS UNESCO). Schools in rural areas are particularly affected by the lack of sufficient financing. The small number of schools in rural areas and transportation issues force children to travel long distances to get education, hence affecting their academic performance.
- The full gratuity of education, a principle of international law, is still an obstacle. In 2015, the Tanzanian government issued Circular 5, which implemented the Education and Training Policy including the removal of all forms of fees and contributions. As it was stated in the document, provision of free education means students will not pay any fee or other contributions that were being provided by parents or guardians before the release of the new circular. However, in practice, the report found that families still need to supplement funds, particularly for maintenance of the schools and purchase of teaching materials, which impact mostly the poorest.
- The education budget share allocated to people with disabilities is minimal as it only takes around 1% of the total education budget. This limited allocation can result from a small number of students with disabilities in schools caused by the attitudinal (traditional and cultural) and institutional barriers. The latter was found particularly pronounced: lack of teachers and learning facilities, as well as government provision of favourable physical and accommodating environments.



Recommendations

Based on the findings and particularly on the international commitments ratified by the country, the points below are highly recommended:

Increase the prioritization of education at the national level, aiming to reach the international benchmark of allocating at least 4-6% of GDP and at least 15-20% of the public budget to education. There needs to be sufficient public resources available to guarantee free, quality and inclusive education for all, from early childhood to adult education.

Increase the availability of domestic resources for education through a wide range of financing mechanisms, social cooperation amongst different actors and fairer taxation. By ensuring fair and equitable tax systems, the country can mobilize the public resources needed to invest in public education and other essential public services.

Remove all financial barriers in order to guarantee the full implementation of free education. As stated in the report, despite the formal guarantee of free education, meaning that students will not pay any fee or other contributions, families still need to supplement, which impacts mostly the poorest families. Government must guarantee the resources are sufficient to cover all school related costs, including maintenance of schools and educational materials.

Build stronger and accurate education financing accountability. Avail transparent information on plans, resource allocation and expenditures. Data must be fully available, in a transparent and accessible manner, including disaggregated statistics on gender and students with disabilities. Further, the government needs to set financial resources to develop and operate a special data unit to ensure accurate, consistent and reliable development data is gathered, recorded to support policy decisions and for public use.

National budget documents need to be presented in a uniform format over time to facilitate easy access to data. This can be improved by the government's decision to open source the figures used to create the budget, in aggregate and at a ministerial level. The Tanzanian government is advised to offer public education on national budget analysis to support citizen's efforts to track the progress in a particular development indicator by reading the budget.