

GENDER DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

BASIC EDUCATION

MoEVT

INTRODUCTION

- ▶ Gender equity in education is a strategic priority for Zanzibar's social and economic transformation;
 - ▶ Recognizes importance of ensuring girls and boys enrol, attend, learn, and complete schooling on equity terms being critical to human capital development and intergenerational poverty reduction
- ▶ Over the past decade, Zanzibar has expanded access to basic education, with enrolment at pre-primary and primary levels approaching parity between girls and boys.
- ▶ However, **enrolment gains have not translated into equitable outcomes across attendance, participation, learning, safety, and completion particularly during adolescence and in rural, island, and peri-urban contexts.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

- ▶ Study is Commissioned to move beyond enrolment figures and provide a system-level understanding.
- ▶ Primary Objective:
 - ▶ **To examine the current state of gender equity in the Zanzibar education system and identify gaps in access, participation, learning outcomes and policy implementation.**
 - ▶ **Serves the purpose to inform the planned development of Education Gender Mainstreaming guidelines in sector policy, planning and monitoring.**

METHODOLOGY

- ▶ The study adopted a **mixed-methods approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative evidence to ensure a comprehensive and contextualised analysis.
- ▶ EMIS 2023/24 data and structured survey of 1,093 participants, together with qualitative evidence from 30 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and 22 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were triangulated together to provide comprehensive picture.
- ▶ Respondents included learners, teachers, head teachers, parents, community and religious leaders, district and national officials, civil society organisations, and development partners. Data were collected across all 11 districts across Pemba and Unguja.
- ▶ Policy and budget reviews assessed the extent to which gender commitments are operationalised through planning, financing, supervision, and monitoring systems.
- ▶ Findings were synthesised across domains aligned with the Zanzibar Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit (Z-GTK).

KEY FINDINGS

1. Gender inequality is cumulative and pathway-driven rather than an entry level barrier

- ▶ **The TREND:** while enrolment parity is achieved in early grades, disparities emerge in upper primary and widen through secondary
- ▶ **Boys' Pathway: Early disengagement**
 - ▶ **DROPOUT** – at 3 times the rate of girls (2.4% vs.0.8%) in primary level due mainly to early labour market pull (fishing, petty trade); disciplinary exclusion and perceived low economic value of schooling;
 - ▶ **Survival gap:** Only 70% of boys reach Standard V11 compared to 84.4% of girls
 - ▶ **Repetition rates** – at nearly double the rate of girls (3.3%vs 1.9%)
- ▶ **Girls' Pathway: Adolescent Vulnerability – HIGH ATTRITION at Secondary level**
 - ▶ **Secondary Dropout** – exceeds 20% for girls driven by safety, health issues
 - ▶ **Specific barriers** – pregnancy, early marriage, heavy domestic work care giving burdens
 - ▶ **Infrastructure:** Inadequate WASH & Menstrual hygiene facilities as direct drivers of absenteeism

KEY FINDINGS continued....

2. A weak link between schooling and livelihoods, combined with gendered household pressures, drives both boys and girls to disengage from schooling

- ▶ Socio-economic, cultural, and structural factors i.e. household poverty, gendered norms, and weak links between education and the labour market significantly affect boys' and girls' school attendance and progression.
- ▶ Home-environment pressures act as primary drivers of absenteeism, early dropout, and weak transition, (example of boys early engagement in labour market demands to contribute financially to their households)
- ▶ Girls - face pressures from domestic duties, caregiving, safety concerns, and expectations of early marriage, which hinder their education.
- ▶ A disconnect between school curricula and local livelihood opportunities leads to gendered dropout patterns, hence the need to better connect education with real-world skills and address household challenges.

KEY FINDINGS continued....

3. Geography and school environment shape access and attendance

- ▶ **Distance/Location defines opportunity/ compounds gendered exclusion:**
- ▶ **Regional/District disparities:**
 - ▶ In Kaskazini A, enrolment drops from 1,754 girls (<3km) to 100 girls (9-10km)
 - ▶ Rural/island districts (e.g Micheweni) suffer from long distances, lack of boarding facilities and transport gaps, disproportionately affecting girls' attendance
 - ▶ Peri- urban districts (Magharibi A & Magharibi B) rapid enrolment growth - overcrowding and double shifting – undermining quality learning
- ▶ **Attendance patterns are strongly gendered.**
 - ▶ Boys in rural and islands districts frequently miss school due to fishing and casual labour
 - ▶ Girls in rural and island areas miss school due to domestic work, caregiving responsibilities, and menstruation-related challenges.
 - ▶ Seasonal agricultural cycles disrupt attendance in districts such as Kati and Kaskazini B, affecting both girls and boys but in different ways.

Key Findings continued....

4. Learning Gaps Reflect Structural Constraints

- ▶ **Performance vs Representation: Achievement is consistent but specialization is skewed**
 - ▶ Mathematics (Form 4) Low pass rate of 13.4% overall, 17.5% (boys) 8.5% (girls)
 - ▶ Performance resilience: Girls demonstrate higher consistency, outperforming boys in DIVISION 11 results (67.9% vs 65.2%)
 - ▶ STEM SUBJECTS: Despite high resilience, girls remain under represented in DIVISION 1 and advance SCIENCE/TECH pathways
 - ▶ ROOT Cause: not ability, but pedagogy, confidence, and limited access to practical resources

Key Findings continued...

5. Schools function as gendered spaces

- ▶ **Infrastructure compound gendered exclusion:**
- ▶ **Sanitation gap:**
 - ▶ Pupil-to-toilet ratios exceed 120:1 (boys) and 113:1 (girls) – far below global standards, undermining health and dignity
- ▶ **Girls are particularly affected by inadequate WASH facilities, lack of privacy, and safety concerns during adolescence.**
- ▶ **Boys are more frequently affected by punitive disciplinary practices, including suspension and exclusion, which accelerate disengagement and dropout.**
- ▶ **School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) though underreported undermines attendance, participation, and confidence, especially for girls, with weak reporting and referral systems further eroding trust.**

Key Findings continued...

6. Vulnerability is intersectional but weakly addressed

Leaving the Furthest Behind:

- ▶ **Vulnerability** in Zanzibar's education system is **intersectional**, shaped by **gender, poverty, disability, geography, and household circumstances**.
- ▶ **Disability**: Despite higher Enrolment of learners with disabilities over time, most schools have limited assistive devices, specialised teaching capacity, accessible infrastructure, and learning support services required for meaningful inclusion.
- ▶ **Compound Risk**: Girls with disabilities face double exclusion due to stigma, safety risks, and gender norms.
- ▶ **Support mechanisms** for vulnerable learners such as school feeding, bursaries, counselling, catch-up learning, and re-entry support for school-aged mothers remain fragmented and unevenly distributed, with limited coverage in rural and island districts.
- ▶ **Policy gap** support mechanisms designed to protect the most marginalised learners (school feeding, bursaries, re-entry for young mothers) remain symbolic and fragmented especially in rural area, leaving those with overlapping vulnerabilities furthest behind

Key Findings continued...

7. Workforce composition, capacity, and deployment constrain gender-responsive implementation

- ▶ **Workforce Skew:** Women constitute **73% of the teaching workforce BUT leadership and deployment remain uneven by level, location, and role**
- ▶ **Female teachers** more concentrated in **urban and peri-urban areas and in lower grades**, while **rural and island districts rely more heavily on male teachers**, particularly at secondary level.
- ▶ In several rural districts, **women constitute less than one-third of the secondary teaching workforce, limiting girls' access to role models** during adolescence and reducing parental confidence in schools where safety, menstruation, and pregnancy concerns are prominent.
- ▶ **School leadership remains male-dominated**, especially at secondary level and in remote districts, constraining gender-responsive decision-making.
- ▶ **Capacity gaps** compound these challenges:
 - ▶ Training in gender-responsive pedagogy, inclusive education, safeguarding, and adolescent support remains limited and largely project-based.
 - ▶ High pupil–teacher ratios especially in peri-urban districts further reduce teachers' ability to support at-risk learners,
 - ▶ Gender-responsive practices are not embedded in appraisal, inspection, or promotion systems.

Key Findings Continued.....

8. The core constraint is policy–practice misalignment

- ▶ Less constrained by the absence of gender-equitable policies than by the **limited operational mechanisms to translate commitments into measurable results.**
- ▶ Limited use of **gender-responsive indicators and targets** within planning, budgeting, supervision, and performance management frameworks
 - ▶ Sex-disaggregated data routinely produced through EMIS and the Education Statistical Abstract, primarily used for reporting rather than for diagnosis, targeting, or accountability;
 - ▶ Sector plans and performance frameworks prioritise aggregated indicators i.e enrolment and completion without specifying expected reductions in gender gaps or improvements for vulnerable groups, including adolescent girls, boys at risk of dropout, learners with disabilities, or school-aged mothers.
 - ▶ Gender outcomes not systematically monitored or assessed at school and district levels,
 - ▶ Supervision tools and head teacher performance agreements rarely track indicators related to girls' attendance during adolescence, pregnancy-related dropout, equitable classroom participation, school safety, or re-entry support.
 - ▶ Where progress occurs such as mentoring or safeguarding, it is often driven by externally funded projects rather than embedded government systems, leaving gender equality aspirational rather than enforceable.

CONCLUSIONS

- ▶ Gender disparities in Zanzibar's basic education system is systemic, affecting girls and boys in different but interlinked ways.
- ▶ While girls face heightened risks during adolescence related to safety, pregnancy, and care responsibilities, boys exhibit higher early disengagement and dropout, driven largely by household economic pressure and a widespread perception that continued schooling offers limited returns in the context of a narrow formal labour market.
- ▶ The overall gender inequities are produced through the interaction of socio-cultural norms, school environments, inclusion gaps, institutional capacity constraints, and weaknesses in planning, financing, and accountability. Progress in access has not translated into equitable participation, learning, and completion particularly for adolescent learners and those facing multiple forms of vulnerability.
- ▶ Achieving gender equity therefore requires moving beyond policy articulation toward system alignment, where gender and inclusion are embedded in core education functions and education pathways are made more relevant to real labour market and self-employment opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The study calls for a phased, system-wide reform agenda:
- ▶ **Short-term actions:**
 - ▶ Address immediate barriers to access and attendance by strengthening attendance monitoring and early warning system,
 - ▶ improving WASH and menstrual hygiene facilities,
 - ▶ expanding gender-sensitive transport options,
 - ▶ strengthen re-entry for pregnant and parenting learners, and
 - ▶ launching targeted retention initiatives for boys at risk of early dropout.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued.....

▶ **Medium-term actions:**

- ▶ Build on early gains by investing in safe boarding and classrooms in underserved districts,
- ▶ improving inclusive infrastructure and teacher capacity,
- ▶ scaling up girls' STEM mentoring,
- ▶ expanding counselling and safeguarding.

RECOMMENDATIONS continued.....

- ▶ **Long-term reforms:**
 - ▶ Institutionalise sustainability by embedding gender-responsive budgeting;
 - ▶ embed gender and inclusion targets in head teacher and district performance frameworks;
 - ▶ strengthen EMIS for gender-responsive and inclusion-sensitive analysis;
 - ▶ strengthening links between schooling, practical skills, entrepreneurship, and labour-market transitions; and
 - ▶ deepening engagement with community and CSOs to shift social norms
- ▶ Overall, the study demonstrates that Zanzibar has the **key foundations for gender equity in basic education**. **Aligning policies, funding, and accountability** will ensure all learners enrol, attend, and complete school timely. Thereby, all girls and boys engage in making a significant contribution to Zanzibar's wider development goals.

WAY FORWARD.....

THE FOLLOWING ARE PROPOSED FOR FOLLOW UP

- ▶ **Print Hard Copies of the Report for easy Distribution to Key Education Stakeholders;**
- ▶ **Plan for a Dissemination process of the Research Findings to schools, Education Officials (District and Central level); Community/Parents;**
- ▶ **Prepare Policy Briefs for sharing with Policy, Planning and Decisions makers.**
- ▶ **Develop a Costed Action Plan targeting the Short, Medium and long-term Recommendations to ensure implementation and follow up of Recommendation**

▶ THANK YOU