



## Time to Teach

Teacher attendance and time on task  
in primary schools

**Tanzania Mainland**

Christine Han and Silvia Peirolo

January 2021

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## Foreword

Teachers play a key role in imparting knowledge to pupils or students. More than just conduits of information, they equip children with the tools to analyse, problem solve, and effectively use information – skills necessary to lead healthy and productive lives. However, many education systems in Africa lack the capacity to prepare, support, motivate, and manage their teachers.

Tanzania Mainland has made significant progress in achieving universal primary education and improving the quality of education. Since the free education policy was introduced in 2002, access to primary education has expanded exponentially. Yet, quality of learning outcomes remains a challenge. One of the key factors for the provision of quality education is teacher attendance, which is a prevalent challenge across primary schools in Tanzania Mainland. While many reasons for teachers absenteeism appear to be valid, such as lack of reliable transport and bad climate conditions, other causes are hard to justify, such as when teachers fail to prepare for lessons. Teacher attendance directly affects the time and quality of teachers' interactions with pupils, thus impacting on pupils' learning and their acquisition of foundational skills, including literacy, numeracy, and socio-emotional skills necessary for them to reach their full potential.

Providing quality education is a clear national priority in Tanzania Mainland's Vision 2025, which guides the country's development, leading to a middle-income-country status. Ensuring equitable access to quality education is essential to building adequate and competent human capital. Absenteeism of teachers implies ineffective use of public resources and has a negative effect on the entire school system. Ensuring teachers' attendance could contribute to pupils' learning achievements and eventually lead to broader socio-economic gains. Addressing challenges related to teacher attendance is therefore an indispensable step to achieving inclusive and sustainable national development.

We hope that the findings of the report will feed into future interventions of the Ministry of Education, Science the Technology (MoEST) and the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), to ensure a competent and motivated teaching force for Tanzania Mainland, and also to increase the opportunities for children to learn at school and improve their opportunities in life.

The Research Team  
UNICEF Innocenti

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

ACSEE	Advance Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
CSEE	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
DEO	District Education Officers
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFA	Education for All
EQUIP	Education Quality Improvement Programme
ESDP	Education Sector Development Plan
ESRF	Economic and Social Research Foundation (Tanzania)
ETP	Education and Training Policy
FGDs	Focus group discussions
FYDP	National Five-Year Development Plans
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
HDI	Human Development Index
IDIs	In-depth interviews
LANES	Literacy and Numeracy Education Support
LGAs	Local Government Authorities
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NER	Net enrolment ratio
NSGRP	National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty
OPRAS	Open Performance Review and Appraisal System
PCR	Pupil-classroom ratio
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PORALG	President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
PTR	Pupil-teacher ratio
REO	Regional education office
RGoZ	Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDI	Service Delivery Indicators
TC	Teacher college
TCA	Thematic content analysis
TSC	Teacher Service Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WEO	Ward Education Officer

## Executive summary

### Study overview

Teacher absenteeism represents one of the major challenges for achieving universal learning in many developing countries, where teacher absence rates range from 3 to 27 per cent.<sup>1</sup> In Tanzania Mainland, available data show that teachers' attendance is a persistent challenge. According to the 2011-2015 Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment, 18 per cent of primary school teachers of Tanzania Mainland were absent on the day of the 2012 assessment, with substantial regional differences in teacher absentee rates across the country.<sup>2</sup> The World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey – piloted in Tanzania Mainland in 2010 and officially implemented in 2014 – suggests that on average, 14.4 per cent of teachers are absent from school and 46.7 per cent are absent from classrooms, and that teachers spend on average 47 per cent of scheduled teaching time on teaching.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the 2011 SACMEQ report reveals teacher absence from school, late arrival and absence from the classroom are common phenomena across the country.<sup>4</sup> While the stark numbers are available, the evidence-base on which factors, policies and practices affect teacher attendance in Tanzania Mainland remains scant.

The Time to Teach (TTT) study seeks to address this knowledge gap. The principal objective of the study is to collate and strengthen the evidence base on the various types and factors of primary school teacher attendance and to provide practical recommendations to improve the design and implementation of teacher policies. Specifically, the study looks at four distinct dimensions of teacher attendance: being in school, being punctual (i.e., not arriving late/leaving early), being in the classroom (while in school), and spending sufficient time on task (while in the classroom).

TTT is a mixed-methods project, employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The study draws from national, system-wide, qualitative data collections and school observations, and a quantitative survey of 259 teachers working in 20 purposely selected primary schools.

### Main findings

#### How frequently are teachers absent?

More than 10 per cent of surveyed teachers reported being absent from school at least once a week, while 8 per cent of teachers reported more than once a week. Twelve per cent of surveyed teachers reported arriving to school late or leaving school early once a week, while 9 per cent of teachers reported missing class while being at school. Reduced time spent on task while in the classroom was reported by 8 per cent of surveyed teachers as occurring at least once a week.

#### Why are teachers absent?

The delivery of pay is linked to teacher absenteeism, especially in rural areas, which primarily leads to teacher absence from school, but also lateness to a lesser extent. Not all teachers have benefited from recent salary increases, meaning the challenge of low salary still impacts on teachers' attendance in school, attendance in classroom and time on task while in the classroom. It affects teachers' morale and creates stress for them due to financial difficulties. It has also led some teachers to moonlight as a way to increase their income.

The shortage of teachers and inequitable teacher allocation are directly linked with teachers' heavy workload, leading to teacher absence from the classroom and reduced time on task while in the classroom, and also absence from school and lack of punctuality to a lesser extent.

Teacher training affects teacher attendance in two ways. As most in-service trainings take place during the school year, it contributes to teachers' absence from school and affects teachers' punctuality and attendance in classroom while at school. At the same time, insufficient or low-quality training deprives teachers of critical content knowledge in certain subjects, teaching techniques and language capacities, which affect teachers' attendance in class and teaching time when in class.

Sub-national education actors make visits to the schools and conduct school quality assurance which mainly help discourage absence from school, absence in classroom, reduced time on task while in the classroom and, to a lesser extent, lateness. However, significant capacity constraints hinder subnational monitoring capacity, including long-distance and transport challenges.

The leadership and monitoring capacity of the head teacher has a direct impact on all forms of teacher attendance, namely school attendance, punctuality, classroom attendance and teaching time while in class. In Tanzania Mainland, respondents largely perceive the role of the head teachers as positive. Beyond monitoring, the head teacher's leadership style also affects motivation and absenteeism among teachers.

School committees and community leaders have a direct role in identifying and discouraging teacher absence from school, as well as encouraging punctuality to a lesser extent. This role is especially prominent among public schools. Low parental engagement constitutes a major demotivating factor for teachers in general.

In many communities across the country, teachers are facing challenges related to the availability, reliability and affordability of transport options. Transport challenges represent major causes of teacher absence and lack of punctuality, and are exacerbated by harsh climate conditions and the long distance from teachers' residences to schools. In addition, the availability of quality teacher housing near the school affects teacher attendance and punctuality.

The shortage of quality infrastructure and teaching and learning materials represents a challenge for schools across different regions of the country, especially public schools. The lack of quality school infrastructure and the shortage of teaching and learning materials, mainly affects teachers' attendance in classroom and time on task while in class.

Health issues constitute the single most important determinant of different types of teacher absenteeism, including school absence, punctuality, classroom absence as well as time on task while in the classroom, affecting teachers across different settings. Teachers' health problems include not only physical health challenges but also mental health issues, such as stress and depression. The lack of health facilities in many communities across the country exacerbates the impact of health problems on teacher attendance.

Teachers' family duties and social obligations are major causes of teachers' absence from schools and lack of punctuality. Family duties include taking care of sick family members, attending funerals, maternity leave and breastfeeding. Social obligations include the participation in social events – something expected of all members of society in Tanzania Mainland.

## What are the potential recommendations for policy making?

- **Mitigate the challenge of accessing financial services:** For teachers that are remote from financial services, dedicated “pay days” could be coordinated for teachers to travel to receive salary. In view of the expanding internet coverage across the country and the increasing use of smartphones among teachers, mobile banking could be more actively promoted among teachers so that teachers could both receive and spend money from their phones.
- **Make distribution of teachers across schools more equitable:** This could be achieved by conducting an assessment with the support of district and regional education offices to better understand the real need for teachers, and challenges in recruiting and deploying teachers. Give priority of teacher deployment to schools and classes with extremely high PTRs.
- **Improve the quality standards of pre-service training and increasing the provision of in-service training:** This could be achieved by streamlining entry requirements and quality standards for all teacher-training institutions. Providing more formal and systematic in-service training for teachers should increase the likelihood that teachers are well equipped to perform effectively in the classroom. It is equally important to strengthen work-ethics training in pre-service and provide refresher training to in-service teachers on a regular basis.
- **Strengthening the monitoring capacity of subnational actors and school committees:** This includes strengthening the WEOs’ role in monitoring the quality of teaching and providing detailed quality-assurance guidelines for WEOs. Providing training to school committee members on monitoring, reporting and improving teachers’ attendance is another option.
- **Implement standards and improve the capacity of head teachers to monitor and manage teachers:** Ensuring that monitoring of all types of teachers’ attendance is incorporated into the capacity-building programme for head teachers. Monitoring the implementation of head teacher guidelines for granting permissions for teachers is equally important. For special-needs schools, recruit head teachers with specialized knowledge and expertise in working with disabled children.
- **Boost parental and community engagement as a way of improving teacher attendance:** This includes launching campaigns at the national and subnational level to advocate for more participation of parents and communities in children’s education. Strengthening the role of school committees and community leaders in raising awareness of parents about their responsibilities for children’s education is also important to improve teacher accountability.
- **Strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration:** To address factors beyond the education system that affect teacher attendance, especially in relation to health and infrastructure. Deploying health workers to schools that do not have or are far from health facilities could be an option. It is recommended that MoEST and PORALG continue to coordinate with other line ministries for the provision and improvement of social services in the most deprived communities across the country.

## Section 1: Introduction

### 1.1. Context and study rationale

Teacher absenteeism represents one of the major challenges for achieving universal learning in many developing countries.<sup>5</sup> Studies from across the developing world have found national averages of teacher absence rates ranging from 3 to 27 per cent.<sup>6</sup> These national averages, however, often conceal even higher rates within countries, as well as variations in educational opportunities and outcomes since teachers tend to be more frequently absent in poorer and more remote communities and schools.<sup>7</sup>

Teacher absenteeism is particularly a challenge in certain parts of Africa. A recent study by the World Bank found that between 15 and 45 per cent of all primary school teachers in seven sub-Saharan African countries<sup>i</sup> are absent from school, and between 23 and 57 per cent are absent from class on any given day.<sup>8</sup> Such high rates of school and classroom absence result in a serious waste of public funds. The same study estimates that, on average, the loss of teaching hours due to different types of absences corresponds to a waste of approximately 46 cents in every dollar invested in education, which is equivalent to an annual wastage of between 1 and 3 per cent of GDP.<sup>9</sup> Afrobarometer data, drawn from 36 African countries,<sup>10</sup> also indicate teacher absenteeism contributes to unequal education outcomes and confirm a strong association between high rates of teacher absence and the presence of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

In the United Republic of Tanzania (hereafter Tanzania Mainland) available data shows teacher absenteeism is a prevalent and persistent challenge. For instance, the 2011-2015 Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment results estimated 18 per cent of primary school teachers of Tanzania Mainland were absent from school, with huge regional variations.<sup>11</sup> The World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey, piloted in Tanzania Mainland in 2010 and officially implemented in 2014, distinguishes between three types of teacher absenteeism. The 2014 results suggest that on average, 14.4 per cent of teachers are absent from school and 46.7 per cent are absent from classroom, and that teachers spend on average 47 per cent of scheduled teaching time on teaching.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the 2011 SACMEQ report reveals teacher absence from school, absence from the classroom and late arrival are common phenomena across the country.<sup>13</sup> Other studies and reports point to weak learning outcomes in primary schools in Tanzania Mainland, indicating quality issues in teaching.<sup>14</sup>

These studies, however, do not sufficiently explore the drivers behind different types of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland. Existing research regarding absenteeism of different types points to governance, accountability and management issues. The magnitude and multifaceted nature of the challenge suggest there is a pressing need to identify and address its underlying causes. Failure to do so will not only perpetuate the inefficient use of education resources but, more importantly, affect generations of children in their pursuit of knowledge and skills, and consequently, reduce their life opportunities.

i Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda.

## 1.2. Objectives

Policy makers and education stakeholders in Tanzania Mainland and other African countries are becoming increasingly aware of the negative consequences of teacher absenteeism. However, the evidence base on how policies and practices – at various levels of the education system – influence different types of absenteeism remains limited. This lack of evidence contributes to difficulties in designing effective teacher-management policies to increase teacher motivation and opportunities to teach and to difficulties in implementing effective school-governance reforms.<sup>15</sup>

The principal objective of the Time to Teach study in Tanzania Mainland is to collate and strengthen the evidence base on the various types and determinants of primary school teachers' absenteeism and provide practical recommendations for improving teacher attendance rates. The study seeks to provide critical insights into the factors at different levels of the education system that influence teacher attendance and assist the policy and programmatic work of the MoEST, PORALG and UNICEF Tanzania Country Office.

More specifically, the objectives of the project are to:

- Understand the various forms of primary school teachers' attendance – namely, attendance in school, punctuality, attendance in classroom, teaching time in classroom – and assess their prevalence in different regions across the country, types of schools (public/private/faith-based/special needs) and settings (rural/urban)
- Approach the issue of teacher absenteeism from a system perspective and identify factors at different levels of the education system (national, subnational, community, school, and teacher level) that affect teacher attendance, as well as teachers' capacity and motivation to teach up to standard
- Identify gaps in teacher policy and policy implementation that are linked to the determinants of teacher absenteeism and barriers to improved teacher attendance
- Provide evidence-based and action-oriented policy recommendations on increasing teacher attendance as a means of improving children's academic performance
- Increase awareness among national education stakeholders and development partners supporting the education sector on the importance of well-designed and implemented teacher policies and the incorporation of teacher attendance into national education strategies, programmes, and policy discussions

### 1.3. Data and methods

TTT is a mixed-methods project that employs qualitative and quantitative research tools. The study takes a systems approach toward explaining teacher absenteeism and examines the relevance of factors at various levels of the education system, including the national, subnational, community, school, and individual teacher levels. The study also evaluates whether factors outside of the education system have an important role to play in determining teacher attendance, and if so, what that role is.

In total, 20 primary schools were purposely selected based on the following three criteria: location (region/county), governance (public or private) and rurality (rural or urban). At each school, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were carried out with the head teacher, three teachers and a member of the school management board. A focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with students, and a teacher survey was administered to all teachers who were present on the day of the (pre-announced) visit. National and subnational education officers, in charge of teacher monitoring, and teacher union representatives were also interviewed. In total, 543 individuals participated in the study.

### 1.4. Report organization

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 provides a short overview of Tanzania Mainland's primary education system and teacher-management policies. It also critically reviews existing literature on teacher absenteeism in the country and highlights their limitations. Section 3 presents the methodology of the study, explores the definition of teacher absenteeism and discusses sampling, instrument development, data collection and data analysis. Findings are presented in sections 4 and 5. Section 6 outlines emerging policy recommendations.

## Section 2: Country context

### 2.1. Overview of country

Tanzania Mainland is located in East Africa, bordering Kenya and Uganda to the north, Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia to the south, the Indian Ocean to the east, and Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo to the west. Formerly known as Tanganyika, Tanzania Mainland became independent from the British administration in 1961 and formed a union with Zanzibar in 1964, later to be renamed as the United Republic of Tanzania. Kiswahili is the national language of Tanzania Mainland while English is the second official language, widely used for official communication.<sup>16</sup> Christianity and Islam are the major religions in Tanzania Mainland.<sup>17</sup> The Mainland is divided into 26 administrative regions, which are further divided into 185 local government authorities (LGAs).<sup>18</sup>

Tanzania Mainland boasts a young and dynamic population. Growing at an average rate of 2.7 per cent, the population of Tanzania Mainland is projected to reach 67 million by 2025.<sup>19</sup> About half of the population is under 18 years of age.<sup>20</sup> A low-income country with per capita income of US\$913,<sup>21</sup> Tanzania Mainland's economy is largely driven by the agriculture and service sector, currently accounting for 29 per cent and 39 per cent of the Mainland's GDP respectively.<sup>22</sup> Industry and construction is the fastest-growing sector, which currently represents 24.3 per cent of the Mainland's GDP and is growing at an increasing rate over the past few years.<sup>23</sup> The Mainland boasts one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, growing at an average rate of 7 per cent.<sup>24</sup> However, the growth rate of GDP per capita has been slower, although it has seen significant increases over the same period.<sup>25</sup> Much progress has been made in poverty reduction since 2007. Available data shows that poverty headcount ratio (basic needs poverty line) declined from 34.4 per cent in 2007 to 26.4 per cent in 2017/2018.<sup>26</sup>

Despite positive overall poverty-reduction achievements, significant challenges remain. Tanzania, currently in 154<sup>th</sup> place in the global Human Development Index (HDI) ranking, is categorized as a low-human-development country. Localized HDI shows Zanzibar is outperforming the Mainland in health and education indicators. For instance, according to 2012 data,<sup>27</sup> the average life expectancy of Zanzibar's population is 65.7 years, significantly higher than that of Tanzania Mainland (61.7 years).<sup>28</sup> Gender disparities persist, with the average life expectancy for women reaching 63.7 years, four years more than the men's average (59.7 years).<sup>29</sup> There are also notable regional disparities across Tanzania Mainland in terms of overall human-development performance. For example, while Kilimanjaro, Dar es Salaam and Arusha are leading the overall human-development performance in the Mainland, regions such as Kigoma, Singida and Kagera have registered much lower human-development indices.<sup>30</sup>

Tanzania remains one of the top 10 recipients of official development assistance (ODA) in sub-Saharan Africa, although total ODA volume to the country has halved since 2008/2009.<sup>31</sup> Available data suggest Tanzania's ODA/GNI ratio has declined from more than 10 per cent up until 2010 to less than 10 per cent in recent years, showing reduced aid dependence.<sup>32</sup> In the 2017/2018 financial year, 30 per cent of the Mainland's development funds came from development partners, down from 44 per cent for the previous year.<sup>33</sup>

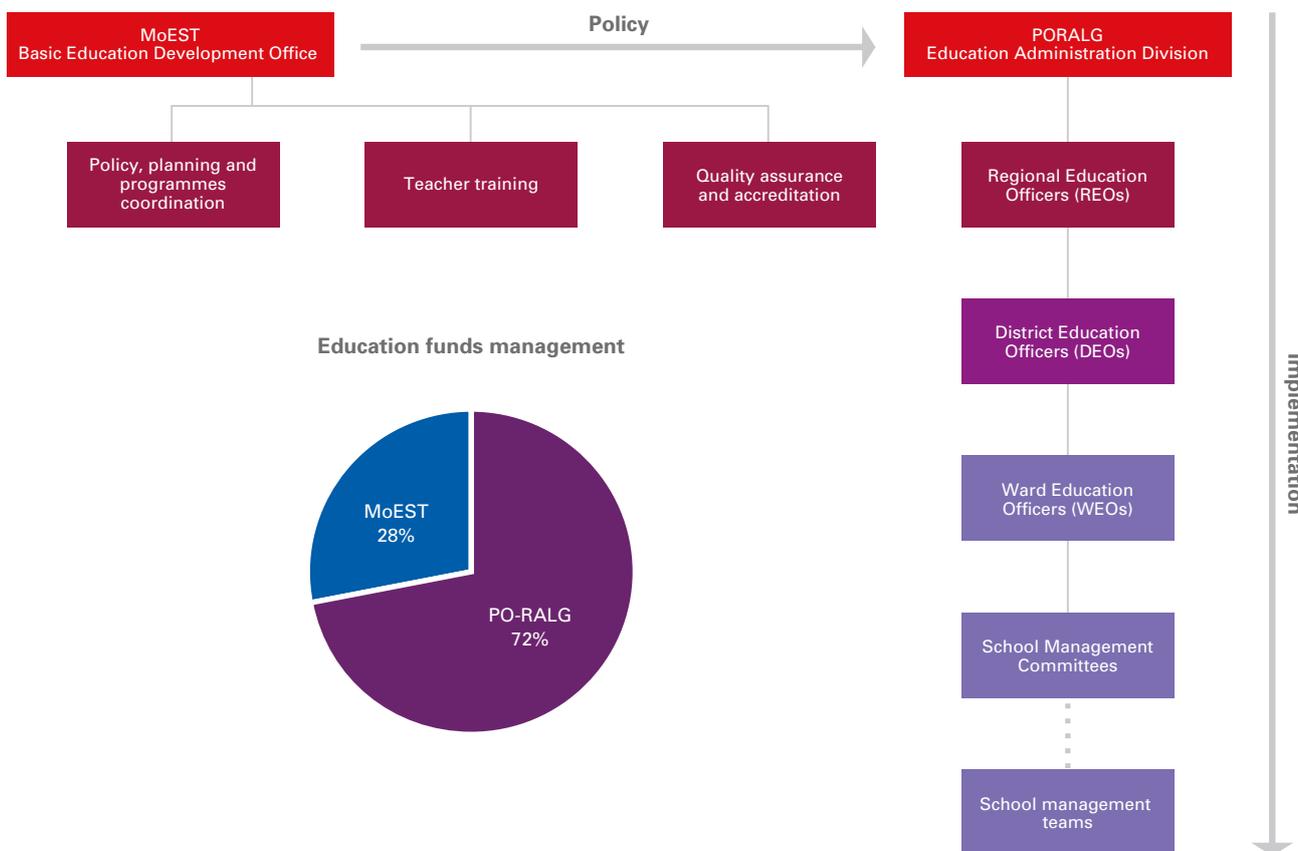
## 2.2. Overview of Tanzania Mainland’s primary education system

### 2.2.1. Governance structure

Education affairs of Tanzania Mainland fall under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and the President’s Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), while the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGoZ) is responsible for developing and administering education policy and programmes for Zanzibar.

As part of a long-term local government reform process, the responsibility of implementing basic education policy and programmes has been fully transferred from the MoEST to the PORALG since 2011.<sup>34</sup> As a result, the role of the MoEST focuses on policy and planning, monitoring and evaluation as well as quality assurance, whereas PORALG is responsible for overseeing the implementation of education-development plans at the regional level. Latest data shows the MoEST manages around 30 per cent of all education funds while nearly 70 per cent are allocated to LGAs through PORALG, most of which are used to pay for recurrent expenditures.<sup>35</sup> It is suggested that currently, despite the responsibilities devolved to them, the LGAs have not gone beyond the role of administering recurrent expenditures – most of which are salaries – and they have not been able to shape the education sector in a more substantive way.<sup>36</sup>

Figure 1: Tanzania Mainland’s education administration structure



Source: author’s own illustration based on PMO-RALG (2015), ESDP II (2016), MoEST website, UNICEF (2018)

With regard to school quality assurance in Tanzania Mainland, it is suggested the current system is “nationally controlled, locally delivered”.<sup>37</sup> The School Quality Assurance Division of the MoEST is mainly responsible for overseeing school quality assurance, and the actual school quality assurance is carried out by district offices, involving ward education officers as well as community- and school-level stakeholders. It is suggested that each district education office is equipped with a team of quality assurers tasked with inspecting all schools in the district.<sup>38</sup> School quality assurance is conducted at both public and private schools. There are generally three types of quality assurance, namely, special inspection, ordinary inspection and follow-up-inspection.<sup>39</sup> The ESDP II shows the Tanzania Mainland has adopted a whole-school-evaluation system and recently revised its school-quality-assurance system, which now provides a framework and evaluation standards for school quality assurance and requires the participation of stakeholders at all levels.<sup>40</sup> At the central level, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) has been entrusted by the Government to monitor and sanction teachers. The TSC does so by collecting reports from DEOs and using the information to take disciplinary actions against teachers in cases of misconduct.

### 2.2.2. Education structure, policy and strategy

Tanzania Mainland has made tremendous efforts and achievements in implementing the global development agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), through national development planning and programming. The Tanzania Development Vision 2025, adopted in 2000, has been the strategic guiding document for Tanzania Mainland’s national development for the past two decades. In Vision 2025, the country aims to achieve five main goals leading to a middle-income country with a high level of human development by 2025: 1) high quality livelihood; 2) peace, stability and unity; 3) good governance; 4) a well-educated and learning society; and 5) a competitive economy capable of producing sustainable growth and shared benefits.<sup>41</sup> Vision 2025 is operationalized through two main frameworks, namely, the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP),<sup>ii</sup> and the national five-year development plans (FYDP), which have been merged into the current FYDP II (2016/17-2020/21). All these strategic documents clearly identify the provision of quality education as a major challenge hindering human development for Tanzania Mainland and therefore a national priority for the Government. More specifically, achieving a 100 per cent net enrolment ratio (NER) and ensuring equitable access, quality and good governance are major goals for the primary education sector of Tanzania Mainland.

Strongly committed to the Education for All (EFA) agenda, Tanzania Mainland’s education strategy is articulated in the 1995 and 2014 Education and Training Policy (ETP) and three education sector development plans (ESDPs).<sup>iii</sup> These are supported by a series of sub-sector education plans, including three phases of Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP),<sup>iv</sup> focusing on access, equity, quality and system strengthening.<sup>42</sup>

Following the adoption of the first PEDP in 2002, the Government of Tanzania Mainland removed all school fees and mandatory parental contributions, making primary education in Tanzania Mainland free.<sup>43</sup> Prior to 2016, Tanzania Mainland was operating on a 2-7-4-2-3+ education structure which consisted of: two years of non-compulsory pre-primary; seven years of compulsory primary; four years of lower secondary (Ordinary Level) that are compulsory but not free; two years of upper secondary (Advanced Level) that is not free and not compulsory; as well as three or more years of higher education.<sup>44</sup> The 2014 ETP introduced a number of changes to the education structure, which have been operationalized through the 2016 ESDP II. First of all, pre-primary education would be reduced from two years to one year and become free and compulsory. Secondly, the duration of primary education would be cut down from seven to six years. However, the Government subsequently decided to overturn this policy decision and maintain seven-year primary education.<sup>45</sup> This, as can be seen in later sections, has created some confusion among community- and school-level stakeholders. Thirdly, fees for lower secondary education would be removed.<sup>46</sup> Last but not least, in view of the different languages of instruction for primary and secondary level and the language

ii Previously known as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs).

iii Previously known as Education Sector Development Programme.

iv Including PEDP I 2002-2006, PEDP II 2007-2011 and PEDP III 2012-2017.

gap this has created for students, the 2014 ETP stipulated the use of Kiswahili alongside English for the secondary level.<sup>47</sup> The current ESDP II suggests the implementation of the new education structure is still ongoing and will be completed following the end of the ESDP II in 2021.<sup>48</sup>

Table 1: New education structure, Tanzania Mainland<sup>v</sup>

Education level	Age	Number of years	Compulsory	Free	Language of instruction
Pre-primary	4-5	1	Yes	Yes	Kiswahili
Primary	6-13	7	Yes	Yes	Kiswahili
Lower secondary (Ordinary Level)	14-17	4	Yes	Yes	English and Kiswahili
Upper secondary (Advanced Level)	17-18	2	No	No	English and Kiswahili
Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)	17+	Various	No	No	English
Tertiary education	19+	3+	No	No	English

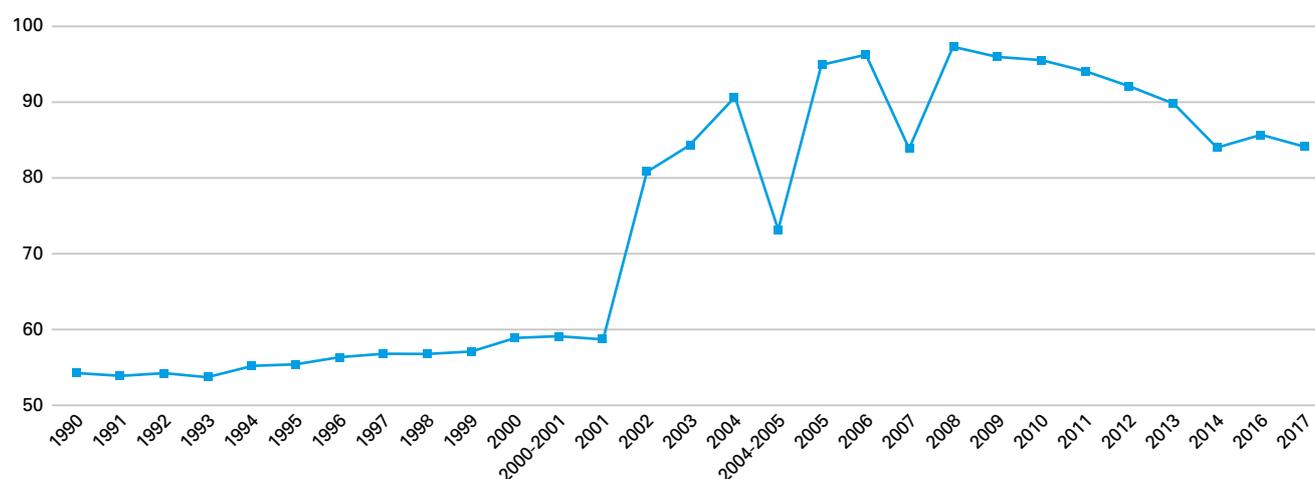
Source: compiled by author based on World Bank (2015), MoEST (2016), HDR (2017) and UNICEF (2018).

### 2.2.3. Progress and challenges

Over the past two decades, Tanzania Mainland has made important progress in achieving universal primary education and improving the quality of the teaching force and pupils' learning outcomes. Access to primary education has expanded exponentially, especially since the introduction of free education in 2002. NER jumped from 54.2 per cent in 1990 to 84 per cent in 2017, peaking at 97.2 per cent in 2008 (*see Figure 2*). Gross enrolment ratio (GER) over the same period also saw significant increases, from 73.5 per cent in 1990 to 96.9 per cent in 2017, hovering above 100 per cent during 2003-2011.<sup>49</sup> Available data shows primary completion rates also improved considerably since 2000, now standing at 80.4 per cent.<sup>50</sup> In the context of growing demand, the Government has made significant progress in meeting pupils' learning needs by providing textbooks for core subjects. Available data suggests that in 2015, the average pupil-textbook ratio reached 3:1, a significant improvement from 8:1 in 2013.<sup>51</sup> Since the beginning of free primary education in 2002 and to respond to the growing enrolment, the total number of primary teachers has also doubled,<sup>52</sup> and the number of primary schools has steadily increased.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>v</sup> Updated from World Bank's 2015 SABER country report for Tanzania based on second Education Sector Development Plan 2016/17-2020/21, Human Development Report 2017, and the Education budget brief 2018 Tanzania.

Figure 2: Primary school net enrolment ratio, Tanzania Mainland, 1990-2017



Source: Tanzania socio-economic database

Primary education of Tanzania Mainland is facing a number of challenges. First of all, available data suggests that since 2014/2015, the education-sector budget has represented a shrinking share in the total government budget, from 19.8 per cent in 2014/2015 to 14.8 per cent in 2017/2018, falling below the internationally recommended target of 20 per cent.<sup>54</sup>

Secondly, in terms of equitable access, Tanzania Mainland fell short of meeting the MDG target of achieving universal primary education by 2015. For the past decade, there has actually been an overall downward trend in both GER and NER, especially for children in rural areas, raising concerns.<sup>55</sup> Official data also suggests both GER and NER of girls have been consistently higher than those of boys for the past decade, suggesting there might be persistent barriers impeding boys' access to primary education.<sup>56</sup> However, dropout rate at the primary level – rising between 2009 and 2016 –<sup>57</sup> is especially affecting girls due to early marriage and pregnancy.<sup>58</sup> Data further shows that in 2016, among all enrolled pupils, almost 8 per cent of them were either too young or too old, outside the primary school age group.<sup>59</sup> Regional disparities in terms of access to education are also significant. While some regions such as Mara, Pwani and Geita have reached nearly perfect NER, others remain far behind, such as Dar es Salaam, Kagera and Kigoma.<sup>60</sup>

Thirdly, in terms of education infrastructure and materials available, the 2017 Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment report for Tanzania Mainland found that, on average, less than a quarter of all public primary schools across the country had access to electricity, and less than half of them had access to clean water.<sup>61</sup> Pupil-classroom ratio (PCR) also represents a challenge for many regions and districts across the country. 2016 data suggests that while the average PCR of all schools across Tanzania Mainland was 73:1, public schools have an average PCR of 77:1,<sup>62</sup> almost twice as high as the government target of 40:1, and steadily increasing since 2013.<sup>63</sup> Regions such as Geita, Kigoma and Katavi have all reached average PCRs of over 100:1.<sup>64</sup> According to official projections, by 2025, an additional 80,000 classrooms need to be built in order to accommodate the growing enrolment.<sup>65</sup>

Fourthly, there is significant shortage of teachers at the primary level, especially for public schools. Official data suggests that since 2008, there has been declining pupil-teacher ratio (PTR), now standing at 47:1,<sup>66</sup> which is still higher than the government target of 45:1.<sup>67</sup> Despite progress in lowering the average PTR, there remain huge disparities between different types of schools. Latest official statistics show that, in 2016, 375 public schools across the 26 regions in the Mainland had PTRs of over 100:1. A few of them have even reached over 200:1 PTR.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless, when it comes to private schools, the average PTR is about 18:1.<sup>69</sup> The use of PTR as the basis for teacher recruitment and deployment has been critically reviewed due to the fact it does not reflect the actual class sizes of different grades.<sup>70</sup>

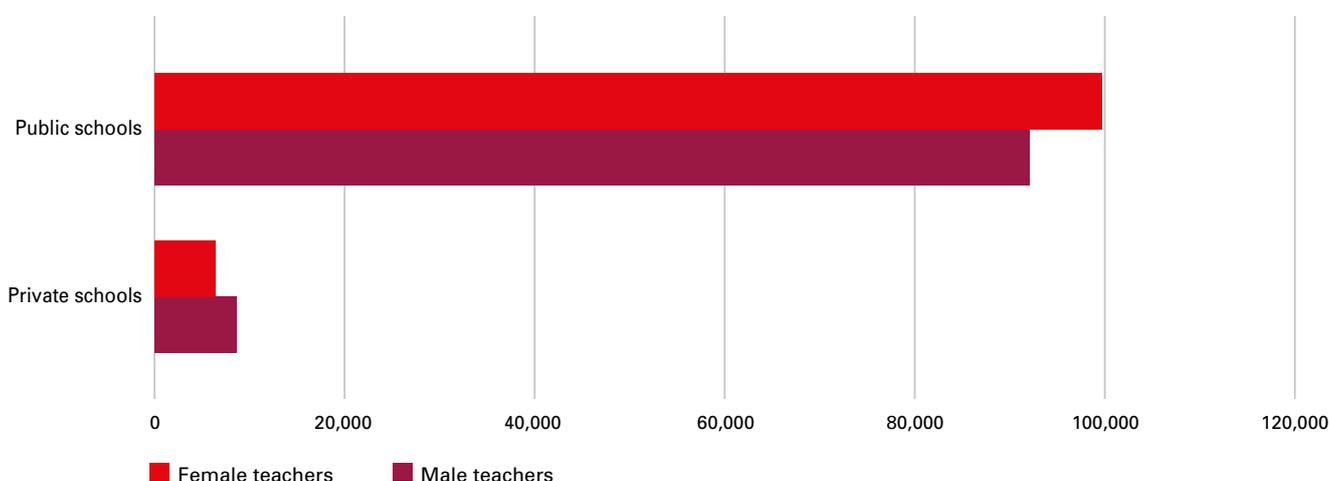
Last but not least, in terms of learning outcomes, according to the 2017 Uwezo report, towards the end of the primary cycle, 28 per cent of Standard Seven pupils still did not master basic knowledge and skills taught at Standards Two level; more than half of them could not read a story in English and almost one out of four were still not able to multiply.<sup>71</sup> The report also reveals huge regional disparities in learning outcomes: pupils in Dar es Salaam registered 64 per cent average pass rate in Kiswahili, English and numeracy, as opposed to 23 per cent for Katavi.<sup>72</sup> 2008-2016 data shows that boys' pass rate of the Tanzanian national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) was consistently higher than that of girls, signalling persistent challenges in girls' learning achievements.<sup>73</sup>

## 2.3. Primary school teachers in Tanzania Mainland

### 2.3.1. Teacher management and remuneration

As aforementioned, official data shows that, since 2002, the primary teaching force in Tanzania Mainland has consistently grown and has doubled in number. Among all existing primary school teachers, close to 93 per cent work in public schools with the rest in private schools.<sup>74</sup> Among all public school teachers, the number of female teachers is slightly higher than that of male teachers, while for private schools, the situation is reversed.

Figure 3: The total number of male and female teachers in public and private schools in Tanzania Mainland



Source: BEST 2012-2016

In Tanzania Mainland, primary school teacher recruitment is centrally coordinated by PORALG in liaison with Regional Education Offices (REOs). It is suggested that the need for teachers is collected by District Education Officers (DEOs) from schools and submitted to REOs.<sup>75</sup> PORALG is also responsible for deploying teachers. However, there are major challenges related to teacher recruitment and deployment. First of all, there is still a shortage of teachers, resulting in high PTRs in many parts of the country. Some studies find this is mainly due to the distribution of teachers that are not needs based.<sup>76</sup> Secondly, low salary and incentives for teachers have been identified as a challenge in various policy documents, which is a major demotivating factor for teachers.<sup>77</sup> Some research has found low salary has contributed to the prevalence of moonlighting (i.e., teachers having additional jobs to meet their financial needs).<sup>78</sup> Last but not least, it

is mentioned that there are centrally recruited teachers that are unwilling to relocate to areas that have unfavourable living conditions, and that it has been challenging to retain teachers in rural areas given the lack of social services in rural parts of the country.<sup>79</sup>

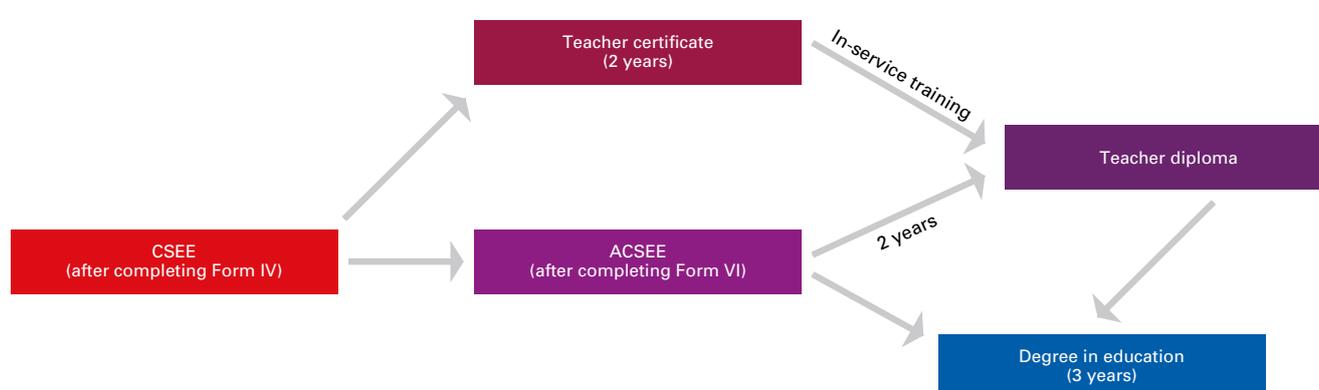
### 2.3.2. Teacher education and training

#### Pre-service training

The Basic Education Teacher Training Unit at the MoEST is responsible for overseeing and facilitating teacher training. Teachers' pre-service education and training is provided by teacher colleges (TCs) and higher institutions. Available data shows there is an increasing number of teacher training institutions emerging in the country, especially private providers, in response to the growing need for teachers in the context of growing enrolment.<sup>80</sup> According to the 2017 Joint Education Sector Review report, there are currently 35 government TCs and 124 private TCs.<sup>81</sup> In view of the predominance of private institutions in providing teacher education, a teachers' professional board was to be established in 2018, with a view to coordinating and streamlining professional teacher-education programmes, and ensuring regulation of standards.<sup>82</sup> It was suggested, however, this board had not been fully established by the time of writing this report.<sup>vi</sup>

The ESDP II suggests the Government has separate strategies for 1) pre-primary and standard 1-2 primary teachers, and 2) standard 3-7 primary teachers. Teacher specialization will only begin for standard 3-7 teachers, who will only receive specialist training in a few broadly categorized subjects, such as maths/science and arts.<sup>83</sup> In Tanzania Mainland, there exist three types of teacher pre-service programmes, provided by TCs and higher institutions, beginning with a two-year Grade A Teacher Certificate programme, which can be pursued after obtaining the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) following Form IV. In principle, the Grade A certificate is the minimum qualification for teaching at the pre-primary and primary level. The second one is a two-year Diploma in Education programme for candidates that have completed Form VI and obtained an Advance Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (ACSEE). In-service teachers who hold a certificate also have the opportunity to upgrade to a diploma through in-service training.<sup>84</sup> The final type of teacher-education programme is a university degree in education, which usually lasts for three years.

Figure 4: Different pathways of teacher education in Tanzania Mainland



Source: Author's own illustration based on various sources

vi This was indicated by the study's steering committee during the validation meeting of the research findings in December 2019.

It is important to note that the language of instruction of the certificate programme is Kiswahili, while that of the diploma programme is English. This is because the diploma programme mainly targets prospective teachers at the secondary level where the language of instruction is English.<sup>85</sup> However, it is suggested that, increasingly, diploma holders who have been trained to use English as the language of instruction are increasingly being deployed to the primary level where the language of instruction is Kiswahili, creating quality concerns, as discussed in later sections.

### Pre-service training

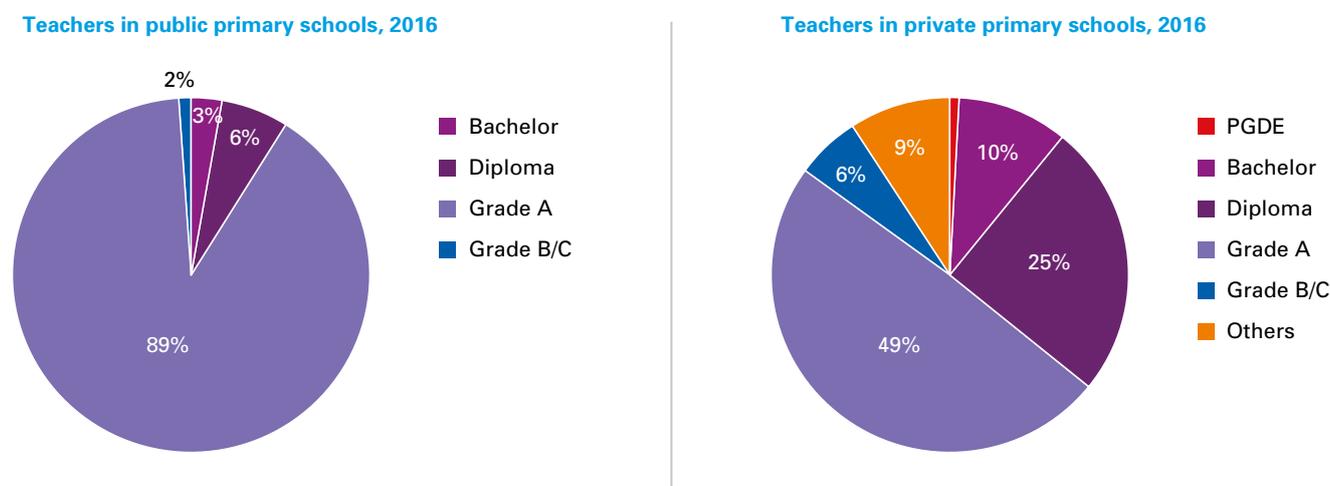
Apart from pre-service training, in-service training – “continuous professional development” in official terms – also plays an important role in strengthening teachers’ capacities. The MoEST has developed a National Framework for Continuous Professional Development for Practicing Teachers, where it specifies three models of in-service training, including:

1. A teacher-driven, school-based Communities of Learning (CoL) approach, relying primarily on collaboration and learning among teachers
2. Direct professional development in the form of workshops and seminars, lasting for 1-5 days, at least three times a year, provided by DEOs and District Academic Officers (DAOs). It is suggested development partners and NGOs also provide short-term workshops and seminars to enhance teacher knowledge and skills
3. Ward cluster-level professional-development sessions, which should take place at least twice a year, facilitated by teachers themselves, school heads, education administrators or teacher colleges’ tutors.<sup>86</sup>

It is suggested the Open University of Tanzania also provides a qualification upgrade programme to certificate holders who wish to reach diploma level.<sup>87</sup> In-service training is also being used to upgrade teachers with certificate Grade B and C to Grade A.<sup>88</sup> A 2014 report reveals that, currently, Tanzania Mainland depends largely on development partners’ support to provide in-service training to teachers, which is not a sustainable approach.<sup>89</sup> It also argues that in-service training is not being implemented consistently by either government or private TCs, and the impact of in-service training on teachers’ work is very limited.<sup>90</sup>

Currently, among all primary school teachers in Tanzania Mainland, the majority, or 86.5 per cent, hold a Grade A certificate.<sup>91</sup> However, the latest statistics show significant variations between public and private schools. While nearly 90 per cent of teachers in public schools hold a Grade A certificate, this per centage is much lower for private schools (49 per cent) as the proportion of teachers with qualifications above certificate is much higher than that of public schools. Among private school teachers, 36.5 per cent hold either a diploma, a bachelor degree, a masters degree, a PGDE or a PhD degree, compared to less than 10 per cent for public school teachers (*see Figure 5*). However, it is also worth noting that the per centage of unqualified teachers (below Grade A) is greater in private schools (14.5 per cent) than in public schools (1.6 per cent), which could indicate lack of regulation and uniform application of minimum entry standards in private schools.

Figure 5: Teacher qualifications in public and private primary schools, 2016



Source: Based on official data from BEST 2012-2016

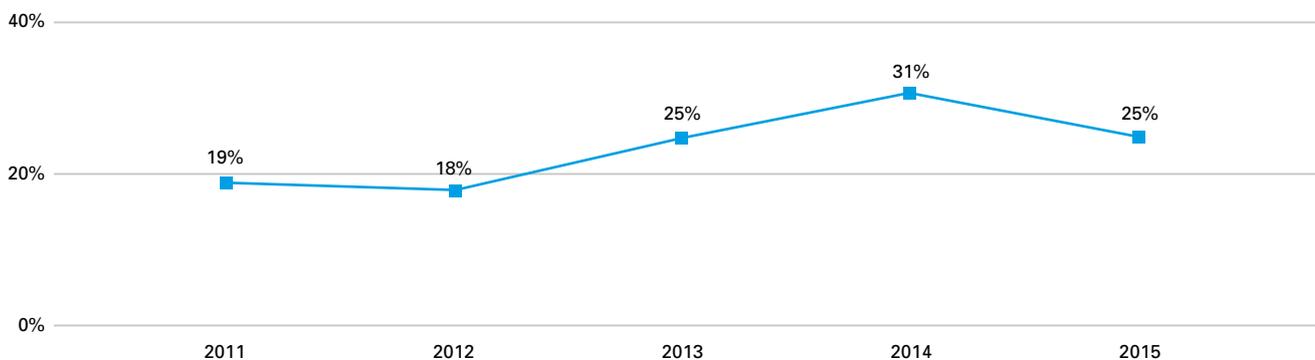
Among all public schools, there are important variations across different regions. Official data reveals there is a disproportionately large number of teachers with higher qualifications concentrated in Dar es Salaam: 20 per cent of all public school teachers in Dar es Salaam hold a diploma qualification or above, compared with the national average of 9 per cent.<sup>92</sup> This could reflect the relatively preferential access to education and training opportunities of teachers that reside in Dar es Salaam, the major commercial hub of the country.

## 2.4. Existing literature on teacher attendance in Tanzania Mainland

The issue of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland has been raised in various policy documents. For instance, in the ESDP II, improving teacher attendance and motivation has been set as one of the expected outcomes of achieving quality basic education.<sup>93</sup> Existing studies have also demonstrated the prevalence of teacher absenteeism across the country.

The 2011-2015 data from the Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment conducted in Tanzania Mainland shows teacher absenteeism is a serious and persistent challenge for the country. According to 2011 data, 19 per cent of primary school teachers involved in the survey were absent from school on the day of the visit.<sup>94</sup> It also found only 10 per cent of all schools had perfect teacher attendance on the day of the visit. The teacher absence rate remained largely intact according to the 2012 assessment results, where 18 per cent of teachers were found to be absent on the day of the survey.<sup>95</sup> The 2012 assessment also identified important regional variations in teacher absence rates. It was highest in Rukwa (28 per cent), Dar es Salaam (24 per cent) and Pwani (22 per cent). Rates were much lower in regions such as Ruvuma (13 per cent) and Kilimanjaro (11 per cent). The 2013 data does not point to any progress either. On the contrary, teachers' absence rate increased to 25 per cent nationwide, increasing for all the regions involved in the survey.<sup>96</sup> The 2014 assessment registered an even higher teacher absence rate: 31 per cent.<sup>97</sup> It also revealed a staggering 58 per cent absence rate for Singida and 53 per cent for Mbeya, and further identified the issue of teacher absence from the classroom to be of serious concern. The latest assessment in 2015 pointed to a 25 per cent nationwide absence rate.<sup>98</sup>

Figure 6: Teacher absence rates in Tanzania Mainland, Uwezo assessment data 2011-2015



Source: illustration by author based on data from 2011-2015 Uwezo Annual Learning Assessment reports

While revealing the prevalence and magnitude of the phenomenon, the Uwezo assessments mainly focussed on teacher absence from school and did not explore the causes of such high rates of absence. In addition, little is reflected in the assessments about the measures taken by the Government to address accountability issues among public servants.

The World Bank's Service Delivery Indicators (SDI) survey, implemented twice in Tanzania Mainland, distinguishes between three types of teacher absenteeism in primary schools: absence from school, absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time. The 2010 pilot test shows that, on average, 23 per cent of teachers were absent from the school on a given school day, and 53 per cent were absent from classroom. On average, the actual teaching time per day was 124 minutes, or about 40 per cent of the scheduled teaching time. The 2014 survey results suggest a school absence rate of 14.4 per cent and classroom absence rate of 46.7 per cent. And 47 per cent of scheduled teaching time was spent on teaching. Compared with other countries in the survey, Tanzania has some of the highest rates of both classroom absence and school absence, and some of the least efficient use of teaching time.

Table 2: SDI data on teacher absence rates for surveyed countries

	Kenya (2012)	Mozam- bique (2014)	Senegal (2010)	Togo (2013)	Mada- gascar (2016)	Nigeria (2013)	Tanzania (2010)	Tanzania (2014)	Uganda (2013)
Absence from school (%)	15.5	45	18	18.4	30.7	14.2	23	14.4	23.8
Absence from classroom (%)	42.2	56	29	33.6	37.9	21.7	53	46.7	52.5
Scheduled teaching time (per day)	5h41m	4h17m	4h36m	5h29m	5h12m	4h53m	5h12m	5h56m	7h19m
Time spent teaching (per day)	2h40m	1h41m	3h15m	2h39m	3h10m	3h44m	2h4m	2h46m	3h17m
Actual teaching time/scheduled teaching time	47%	39%	71%	48%	61%	76%	40%	47%	45%

Source: SDI database

The SDI study also illustrates important urban-rural disparities in teacher absence rates. Contrary to the results of most other SDI countries – where absence rates in rural areas tend to be higher than those in urban areas – in Tanzania Mainland, 2010 data shows much higher rates of school absence and classroom absence in urban areas than in rural areas. However, the 2014 results show similar absence rates between rural and urban (see Table 3). This could reflect the various challenges faced by teachers in both rural and urban areas in the country.

Table 3: SDI data on teacher absence rates for Tanzania Mainland, urban-rural variations

	Tanzania (2010)	Tanzania (2014)
<b>Percentage of teachers absent from school</b>		
National	23	14.4
Rural	20	14.3
Urban	36	14.6
<b>Percentage of teachers absent from the classroom</b>		
National	53	46.7
Rural	50	47
Urban	68	45.8

Source: SDI database

While illustrating the magnitude of the problem, the SDI survey which is quantitative in nature, does not aim to investigate the causes and determinants of different types of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland. It also does not highlight the efforts made by the Government to address this challenge.

The 2011 SACMEQ report based on 2007 data shows that when head teachers were asked to provide their views on a series of teacher behaviours, 19.2 per cent of head teachers suggested teachers' late arrivals never occurred; 37.1 per cent suggested teacher absence (most likely referring to absence from school) never occurred; and 53.8 per cent suggested teachers had never skipped classes.<sup>99</sup> These results suggest that teachers' late arrival, school absence and classroom absence were prevalent issues across primary schools in Tanzania. The study suggests that health problems may be the main reason causing teacher absences. Here again, while indicating the prevalence of the issue, the SACMEQ report does not sufficiently identify all factors contributing to the various types of teacher absenteeism.

Table 4: Percentage of responses of teachers' behavioural problems by head teachers

Behavioural problems of teachers	Never occurs (%)
Arriving late to school	19.2
Absenteeism	37.1
Skipping classes	52.8
Intimidation or bullying of pupils	68.0
Sexual harassment of teachers	83.2
Sexual harassment of pupils	81.1
Use of abusive language	69.2
Drug abuse	85.3
Alcohol abuse	68.2
Health problems	12.0

Source: SACMEQ 2011

A 2014 MoEST and UNESCO joint needs assessment, rather than estimating teacher absence rates, identifies shortage of teachers, low salary, poor working environment, lack of incentive and job satisfaction, and health problems to be the main causes of teacher absence and attrition. However, the study does not distinguish between different types of teacher absenteeism or identify causes pertaining to each type. Since the study does not focus specifically on teacher absenteeism, it also falls short of exploring the causes of teachers' absenteeism in a more comprehensive way.

## Section 3: Research design and methodology

### 3.1. Teacher absenteeism: A multidimensional concept

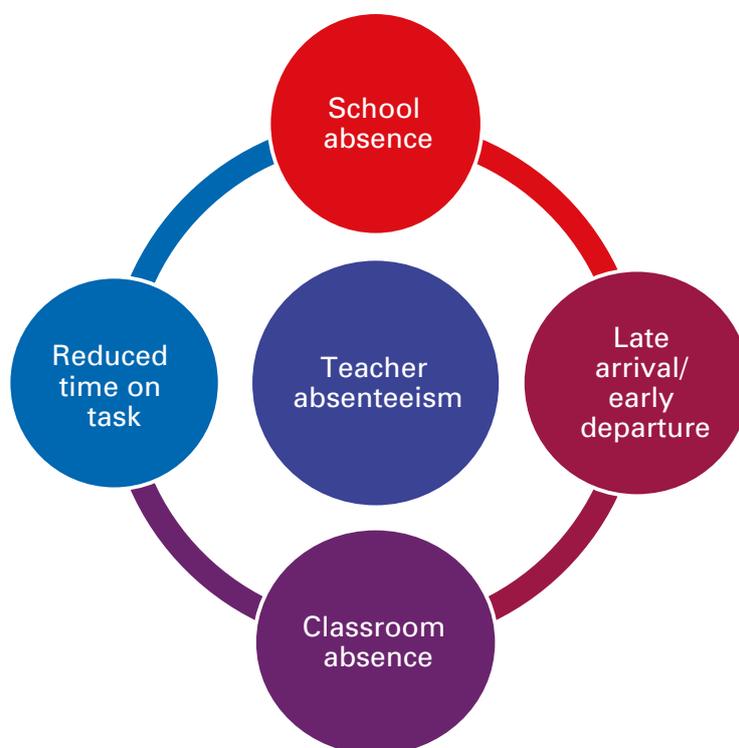
Policy makers and researchers have traditionally recognized one form of teacher absenteeism: absence of the teacher from school. Accordingly, in the past two decades, numerous programs have been implemented globally to increase teacher school attendance as a means of improving student learning.<sup>100</sup>

Several interventions aimed at improving teacher school attendance have been found to be successful (especially when they couple monitoring systems with rewards).<sup>101</sup> However, few studies have so far established an association between increased teacher school attendance and student achievements.<sup>102</sup> This is due to the fact that teacher attendance in school does not necessarily mean teachers are actually in the classroom teaching or, when they are teaching, that they spend the required time on task.<sup>103</sup> Consequently, the relationship between teacher school attendance, motivation to teach, and time on task needs to be further unpacked in order to better understand learning mechanisms and outcomes.

While the Time to Teach study does not focus explicitly on learning outcomes, in defining teacher absenteeism, the research team relied on the assumption that in order for learning to occur, a number of minimal conditions, relating to the role of teachers in the learning process, need to be fulfilled. Specifically, teachers have to be in school, in the classroom, and actively teaching. This led to the development of a multi-dimensional concept for teacher absenteeism (*see Figure 8*). The concept is in line with contemporary understandings of absenteeism that look beyond school absence,<sup>104</sup> and recognizes four distinct forms of teacher absence: (1) absence from school; (2) absence of punctuality (late arrival and/or early departure from school); (3) absence from the classroom (while in school); and (4) reduced time on task (while in the classroom).

A multi-dimensional definition of teacher absenteeism has not been widely used in education-sector analysis where teacher-pupil ratio and share of qualified teachers have conventionally been used to represent educational inputs and human resources available for children, under the implicit assumption that employed teachers will be in school spending time on educational activities with students. A multi-dimensional definition of absenteeism can therefore help to classify and further unpack the various obstacles to effective learning and establish causal links between these obstacles and specific types of teacher absence. Factors that hinder teachers from achieving any form of attendance can have direct effects on quality learning time for students. It is therefore imperative that the drivers of each type of absenteeism are identified and corresponding policies to address the adverse effects of teacher absenteeism on learning are designed.

Figure 7 The multi-dimensional concept of teacher absenteeism



### 3.2. Understanding teacher absenteeism from a system's perspective

The determinants of multi-dimensional teacher absenteeism are likely to be situated at various levels of the education system. Consequently, developing a systemic analytical framework is a pre-requisite for understanding first, how factors within the education system combine to lead teachers to being absent in various ways, and secondly, which policies can holistically address teacher absenteeism.

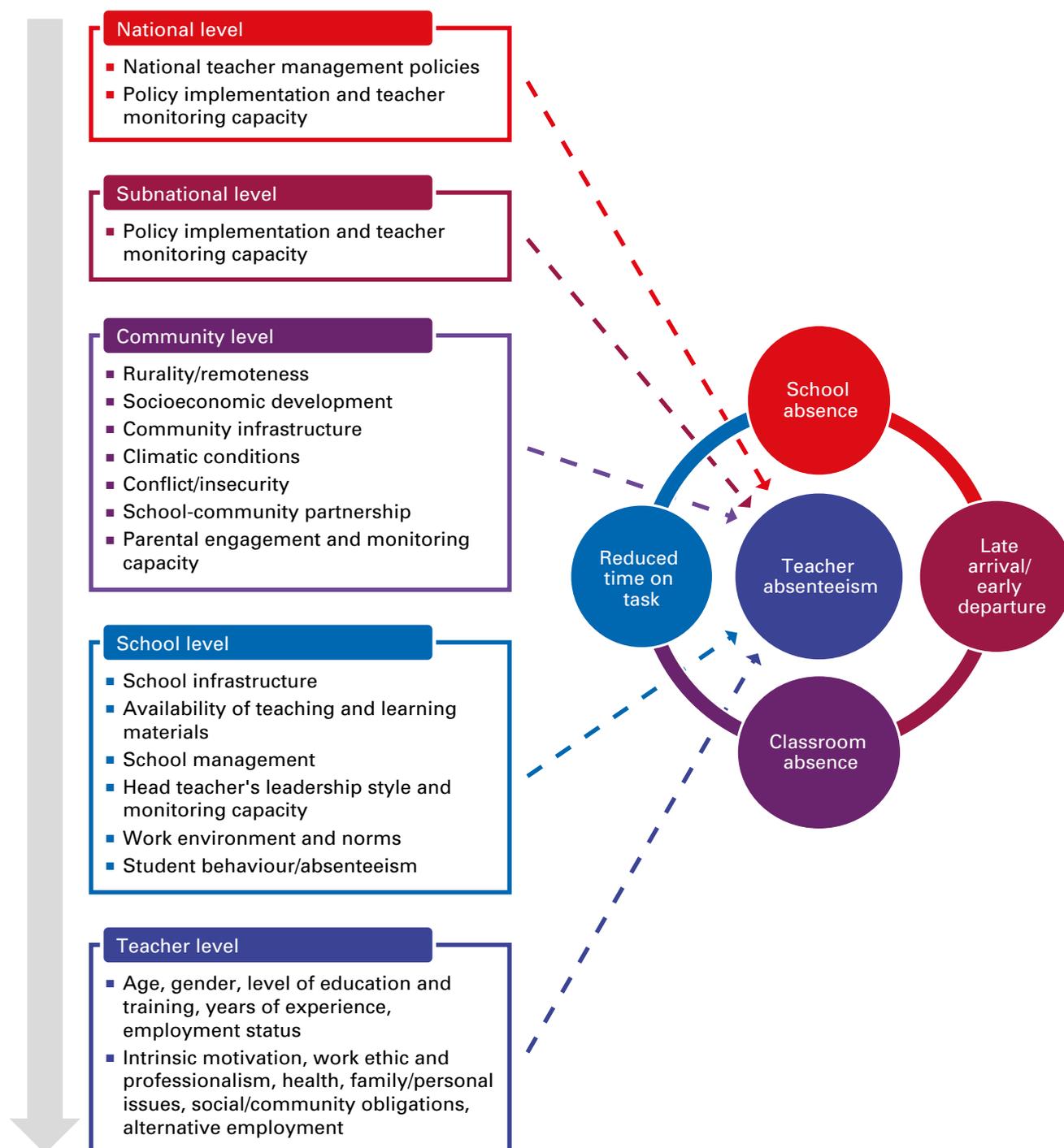
Based on a review of existing conceptual models of employee absenteeism in general and the literature on teacher absenteeism in particular, Guerrero et al. (2012, 2013)<sup>105</sup> suggests there are three sets of factors that could affect teachers' attendance: teacher-level variables, school-level variables, and community-level variables. Two groups of teacher-level variables are considered: teachers' demographic variables – such as age, gender and level of education – and teachers' school-related variables – such as job satisfaction, opportunities for professional development, and work environment. School-level variables include organizational factors within the school such, as work norms, the head teacher's leadership style, but also a teacher's administrative workload. Finally, community-level variables include factors such as remoteness, level of prosperity, and school-community partnerships.

The Time to Teach project adopts the Guerrero et al. 2012/2013 explanatory model with an important modification. The modification is to add two additional groups of variables that correspond to two distinct levels of the education system: the 'national' and the 'subnational'. This is in order to test the impact of variables such as national and subnational teacher policy and policy-implementation capacity on the various types of teacher attendance (see Figure 8).

A systemic view of the extent and effectiveness of teacher-management policies and practices, or their relationship with the various forms of absenteeism and educational outcomes in developing countries, is not well understood. This model is expected to facilitate untangling the relationship between policy

provisions at the national/subnational level, policy and practice at the community and school level, and the role of other system stakeholders at various levels (e.g. teachers' unions) on teacher attendance, and help us understand what kind of policy-implementation gaps exist, what kind of policies should be developed, and what kind of teacher-management reforms are needed.

Figure 8: The TTT explanatory model



Source: Adaptation of the work of Guerrero et al. (2012): Guerrero, G., Leon, J., Zapata, M., Sugimaru, C., & Cueto, S. (2012). What works to improve teacher attendance in developing countries?: A systematic review.

### 3.3. Study implementation

In Tanzania Mainland, the Time to Teach study was implemented in consultation with the MoEST and UNICEF Tanzania and involved three complementary but separate processes (see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Stages of implementation in Tanzania Mainland



#### 3.3.1. Sampling and instrument development

Following a series of consultation meetings with national partners, including MoEST representatives, in July 2018, the research team developed a sampling strategy and designed the instruments for primary data collection.

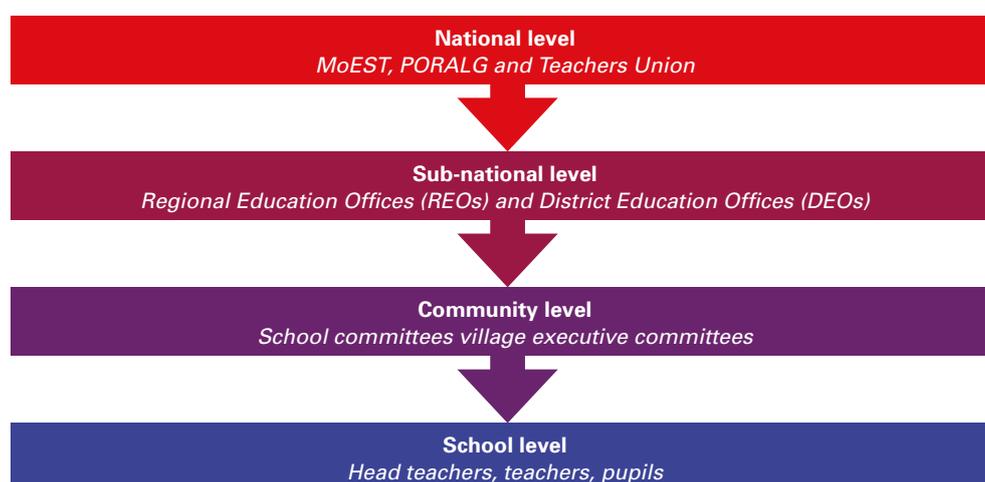
School and respondent selection involved a combination of purposive and quota-sampling techniques. School selection was assisted by the MoEST and was based on three main criteria: location, rurality and governance. In the end, 20 schools were selected across nine regions in Tanzania Mainland. The school sample included a mix of rural and urban schools; a mix of government (public) and non-government (private and faith-based) schools. One special-needs school was also included in the sample (see Table 5). As the selected schools were assured complete confidentiality, their names are not mentioned in this report.

Table 5: School sample in Tanzania Mainland

Region	Geographic location	Public	Private	Total
Arusha	Rural	2		3
	Urban	1		
Dodoma	Rural	1	1 (faith-based)	3
	Urban		1 (faith-based)	
Dar es Salaam	Rural			2
	Urban	1	1	
Geita	Rural	1		2
	Urban	1		
Kigoma	Rural	1		1
	Urban			
Mbeya	Rural	1		2
	Urban		1	
Njombe	Rural	3 (incl. 1 special-needs school)		3
	Urban			
Songwe	Rural	1		2
	Urban	1		
Tanga	Rural	1		2
	Urban	1		
		16	4	20

In selecting respondents, the research team employed a number of criteria, including the respondents' unique position within the education system, expert knowledge, and personal characteristics.

Figure 10: Participants of the Time to Teach study by level



At the national level, the study targeted representatives from the MoEST, PORALG and Teachers Union, whose portfolio was relevant to primary education and teacher management and monitoring. Respondents at the subnational level included district and regional education officers, who were familiar with school governance and teacher-evaluation processes. Community respondents had an intimate knowledge of the selected schools and school staff, and in most cases served on school committees or village executive committees. In each selected school, the study targeted the head teacher (or in his/her absence the deputy head teacher), three teachers, and seven pupils. Teachers were selected on the basis of their individual characteristics, including age, gender and years of experience. The goal of diversifying the teacher sample was to capture a wide range of unique teacher experiences related to teacher absenteeism, shaped not only by the teachers' contextual circumstances, but also by their individual traits. Pupil selection was based on age and gender. In each school, seven pupils from the last two years of primary school (Standard 5 and 6, typically aged 10-13) participated in focus group discussions (FGD), in a balanced gender mix. To rule out selection bias and convenience sampling, children respondents were identified via lottery, based on gender balance and age considerations.

To facilitate data collection, the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti team designed a range of qualitative and quantitative tools in consultation with the Tanzania country team, including five in-depth interview (IDI) guides, one FGD guide, and a pen-and-paper survey. These tools were used for each respondent group to reflect the participants' expert knowledge and unique perspective, and some were also adapted to each type of school. The pen-and-paper survey was administered to all teachers serving in the selected primary schools who were present on the day of the visit, including those that participated in IDIs, to supplement and triangulate with teacher interview data.<sup>vii</sup> Finally, an observation tool was designed to record enumerators' field observations on school and classroom infrastructure, teacher-student interaction, and teacher working relations during their visit to the selected schools.

The data-collection tools were then translated from English to Kiswahili and back-translated into English to ensure accuracy and consistency. The Innocenti team sought and received research ethics approval for the Time to Teach instruments and fieldwork protocols by the Health Media Lab (HML) and the Institutional Review Board of the Office for Human Research Protections in the US Department of Health and Human Services Research.<sup>106</sup> Prior to field work, the national research team from the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) also obtained a research permit from the National Bureau of Statistics, the Commission for Science and Technology, and regional administrative secretaries, which enabled the researchers to conduct data collection in the selected enumeration areas. Below is a summary of the number of study participants in Tanzania Mainland, and the data-collection tool administered to each respondent group (*see Table 6*).

Table 6: Number of participants in Tanzania Mainland

Respondent type and data-collection method	Number of respondents
National officials (IDIs)	4
Regional Education Offices (IDIs)	6
District Education Offices (IDIs)	15
Community representatives (IDs)	19
Head teachers (IDIs)	20
Teachers (IDIs)	60
Pupils (FGDs)	140
Teachers (pen-and-paper survey)	259 (including teachers that received IDIs)
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>543</b>

vii The teacher survey was self-administered. The profile of surveyed teachers can be found in the Appendix.

### 3.3.2. Fieldwork preparation and data collection

A training of trainers took place at the UNICEF ESARO offices in Nairobi, Kenya, on 26-27 June, 2018. The training was provided by UNICEF Innocenti and involved a representative of MoEST and the team leader of the data-collection team from the ESRF. The training provided a comprehensive overview of the Time to Teach study, as well as its objectives, conceptual framework, methodology, sampling criteria, fieldwork protocols, as well as potential risks. Following the training of trainers, the team leader provided training to enumerators during 14-24 August, 2018. The training of enumerators was meant to familiarize the data-collection team with interview guides, the survey, as well as fieldwork protocols.

After the trainings, the data-collection team proceeded to pre-test the data-collection tools on 16 October, 2018 at one school in the Pwani region in Tanzania Mainland, which is not part of the final sample. The objectives of the pre-testing were to assess the duration and flow of instrument administration, and the respondents' cognitive understanding of questions and key concepts. After the pilot, details on the findings of the pilot and suggested changes to the data-collection tools were shared with UNICEF Innocenti before the start of the main fieldwork. A debrief meeting followed, whereby the research team familiarized themselves with the final data-collection tools as approved by UNICEF. During the debrief meeting, the data-collection team was issued with all the necessary study materials. The data collection was undertaken between October and December 2018. The entire data-collection team was divided into groups of enumerators, each of which was led by one supervisor. All interviews with government officials were conducted by team leaders.

### 3.3.3. Data analysis

#### Qualitative data

The multi-faceted data-generation strategy employed in the Tanzania Mainland study facilitated the collection of a large amount of rich qualitative evidence, which ensured saturation and triangulation. The 144 IDIs and FGDs that were conducted with seven different education-system actors were typically one hour in duration and were transcribed word for word. In case Kiswahili was used as the language of intermediary, translation and back-translation were conducted. To systematically analyse and interpret the data, the research team employed the thematic content analysis (TCA) method, with the use of a codebook that comes from the deductive reading of existing literature and the inductive reading of the transcripts.<sup>107</sup> Coding was done manually and assisted the organization of data into themes, and thereafter, the analysis of the data with the use of frequency measurement and interpretive methods. The codebook and the resulting coded dataset can be accessed on the Time to Teach website.

#### Quantitative data

The 259 pen-to-paper teacher surveys from the 20 schools were cleaned and compiled. Information that could identify participants was removed. Tests were run in order to correlate teachers' responses with qualitative findings, to compare responses and to identify diversions or similarities. The main aim of the quantitative data analysis was to enrich the IDI and FGD data and to provide further insights across the 20 selected schools, while highlighting variations between regions and school types.

## 3.4. Limitations and challenges

Like all studies relying on self-reported data and conducted under time and budget constraints, the Time to Teach study in Tanzania Mainland is not free of methodological limitations. The three most significant challenges likely to have emerged during data collection are presented below, along with mitigation strategies employed to ensure accurate data interpretation and minimize impact on findings and conclusions.

### 3.4.1. Response bias

Enumerators were trained to communicate the objectives of the study in a non-threatening manner and clarify any misconceptions regarding the implications of voluntary participation. Enumerators also highlighted the principles of anonymity and confidentiality underpinning data collection and usage, stressing the right of participants to revoke consent and demand their testimonies be disregarded and destroyed. And yet, response bias may have been a significant challenge, because teacher absenteeism is a sensitive subject and, in some contexts, participants may have perceived the study as inquisitive or potentially threatening to their employment status. Under these conditions, three types of response bias seem especially likely: selective memory, (i.e., remembering or not remembering experiences or events), telescoping (i.e., recalling events that occurred at one time as if they occurred at another time), and downplaying (i.e., representing outcomes or events as less significant than is actually suggested from other data). These potential limitations have been taken into consideration when interpreting data. Systematic data triangulation was also undertaken across multiple sources to ensure the relevance and reliability of findings.

### 3.4.2. Selection bias

Selection bias may have also been an issue. The selection of interviewed teachers was based on a set of pre-determined criteria and was performed randomly among teachers sharing the same characteristics. However, it was limited to the teachers who were in school on the day of the visit. Additionally, the teacher survey was administered only to present teachers. This means that some of the frequently absent teachers may not have been interviewed or surveyed. To pre-empt this problem, all of the school visits were pre-announced and teachers were informed about them well in advance. However, this does not exclude the possibility of built-in bias among those who eventually participated in the study.

### 3.4.3. Representativeness of survey data

Finally, the research team recognizes that due to the small size of the TTT survey sample (N=259) it is difficult to draw statistically significant conclusions, make generalizable claims, and ensure the internal and external validity of quantitative findings. The TTT survey data can only provide a snapshot of issues surrounding teacher absenteeism in selected schools rather than a comprehensive view of the situation across all schools in Tanzania Mainland. For this reason, the majority of findings reported in subsequent sections depend on the systematic analysis of qualitative data for which saturation has been achieved.

## Section 4: Factors affecting teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland

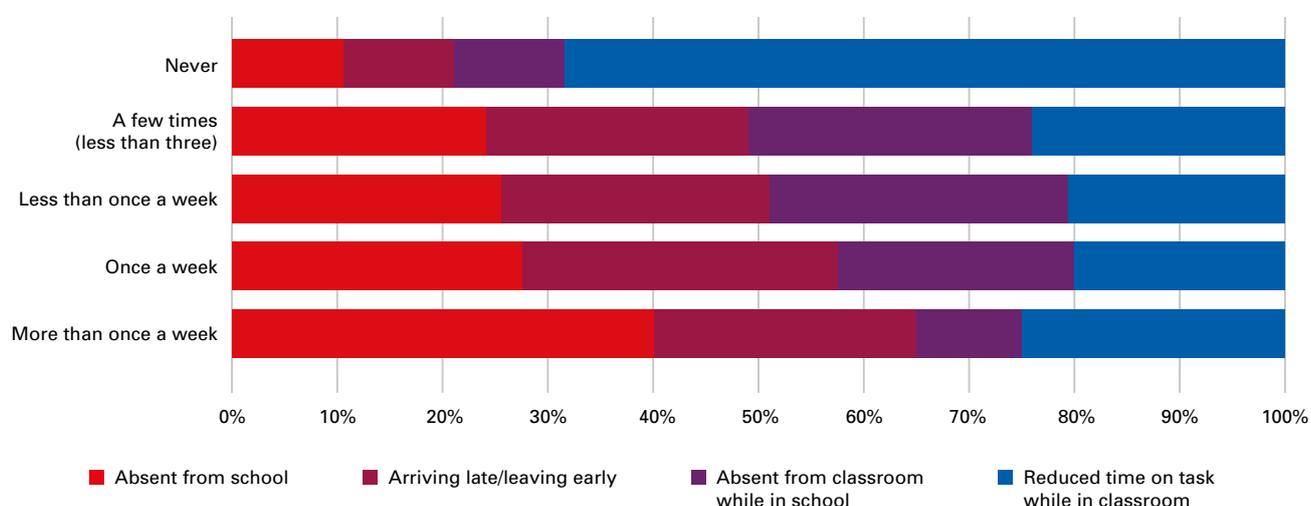
### 4.1. Prevalence of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland

Although the Time to Teach study does not aim to systematically assess the magnitude of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania Mainland, the study does reveal that absenteeism is a prevalent issue in the country, based on survey results from over 400 valid, self-reported responses from teachers serving in 20 schools across the country. However, it is important to note that since the teacher sample is drawn from purposely selected schools, it does not represent the entire primary teaching force in Tanzania Mainland and therefore, the findings in this section cannot be generalized beyond the sample itself.

When asked to identify main reasons for the absences, 2 per cent of the teachers who provided valid responses indicated they had never been away from school, they had never arrived late or left early and they had never been absent from the classroom, while 13 per cent had always spent the planned time on teaching. This shows that the majority of teachers that responded to the questions have experienced various forms of absenteeism. There were no evident rural-urban variations. These different types of absenteeism are also almost equally prevalent among public school teachers and private school teachers, especially absence from school, lack of punctuality and absence from the classroom. However, instances of reduced teaching time in class tend to be lower in private schools than public schools.

When asked about the frequency of different types of absenteeism, the graph below shows that among all valid responses, more than half of the respondents reported they had experienced school absence, late arrival/early departure, classroom absence and reduced teaching time in class at least "a few times" since the start of the school year. As much as 8 per cent of the surveyed teachers reported they had been absent from school "more than once a week", and 5 per cent had frequently lacked punctuality since the beginning of the school year.

Figure 11: Percentages of responses to survey question: "Since the start of the school year how often has this happened to you?" Self-reported frequency of four types of teacher absenteeism



Survey data also suggests teachers in rural areas tend to show equal or slightly higher frequencies of teacher absenteeism in all forms than their counterparts in urban areas. For instance, 12 per cent of surveyed teachers in urban areas indicated they were absent from school since the beginning of the school year either "once a week" or "more than once a week", compared to 26 per cent of teachers from rural areas. Private school teachers tend to be less frequently absent than public school teachers in almost all forms of teacher absenteeism. For instance, 9 per cent of private school teachers indicated they had not been punctual since the start of the school year at high frequency, either "once a week" or "more than once a week", compared with 19 per cent of public-school respondents.

## 4.2. National-level factors affecting teacher absenteeism

### Summary

Qualitative data revealed a number of national-policy-related challenges facing the primary education sector of Tanzania Mainland. First of all, while the Government's free education policy has effectively increased enrolment and lessened the financial burden on parents, it has created "moral hazard" on the part of some parents. It was frequently mentioned by respondents that the Government's strong message of promoting free education had led to misinterpretation by some parents as the Government assuming full responsibility of children's education. As a result, some parents have become disengaged from children's education and withdrawn from supporting the school. For example, it was suggested that some parents have become reluctant to provide any financial or material support to schools because they believe it is the Government's responsibility.

Secondly, while the free education policy does require that the Government provide infrastructure and material support to public schools, it was raised by many, especially national and subnational respondents, that the Government was facing financial constraints and was therefore unable to meet all the infrastructural and material needs to cover all schools. Interview results clearly show that while a few of the selected schools have benefited from such support from the Government, including some private schools, it remains a major challenge facing other schools. It is clear that the Government relies more on development partners to provide such support to Tanzania Mainland's primary education sector, including the construction of classrooms, toilets and water supply facilities.

Thirdly, data clearly shows that a shortage of teachers is a challenge for many schools across the country, which is mainly due to limited assessment of the need for teachers, resulting in an excess of teachers in some schools and shortage in others. Especially, it was mentioned that for many schools, the rate of hiring new teachers was slower than the rate of retirement, widening the teacher gap. It was argued by respondents that the centrally coordinated approach of teacher recruitment and deployment was not responsive to the actual needs of schools.

Last, but not least, according to some respondents, the frequent changes to the education system have created barriers for teachers' work. For instance, the Government's previous decision about shortening primary education from seven years to six years has led some schools to adopting a revised syllabus. However, since the Government reversed the decision at a later stage, it has created confusion among community- and school-level stakeholders and disruption for teachers' work.

More specifically, three main themes related to national policy measures and policy-implementation gaps have emerged from field data, with direct impact on specific types of teacher absenteeism, including:

- Timely remuneration and implementation of promotion policy, which affect teachers' attendance in school, attendance in classroom and teaching time while in the classroom, as it affects teachers' morale and creates stress for them due to financial difficulties.
- Programmes that support teachers' skills development and upgrade, including in-service, trainings improve teachers' time-management skills. On the flipside, participating in trainings leads to absence from school and affects teachers' punctuality and attendance in classroom while at school.
- National initiatives to enhance monitoring capacity at all levels, including allowance and training programmes provided to head teachers, ward education officers and school quality assurers, affects teachers' attendance, especially school attendance, classroom attendance, teaching time while in the classroom.

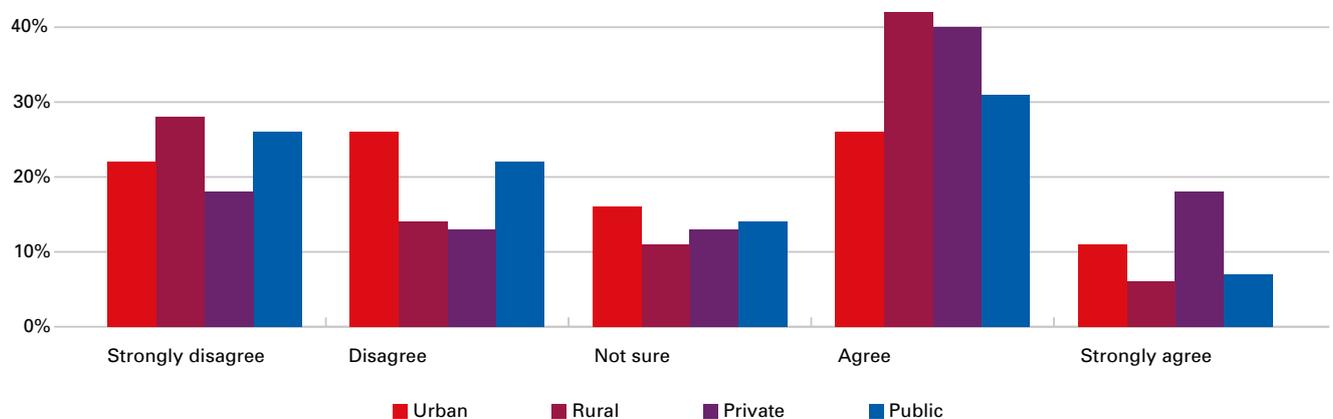
### 4.2.1. Timely remuneration and implementation of promotion policy

The challenge of salary and promotion has a direct impact on specific types of teacher absenteeism. According to respondents, especially some subnational respondents, teachers become discouraged when they do not receive timely payment or if they are not promoted according to their qualifications. This results in teachers not coming to school, not being in the classroom while in school, as well as reduced teaching time while in the classroom, as it creates financial difficulties and stress for teachers, making it difficult for them to fully commit to their job. For instance, a DEO pointed out when discussing the demoralizing effect of lack of promotion and the consequence of absence from the classroom: “Most of the time, teachers are at school but do not enter class, only because they are not satisfied with the working environment. In recent years, many teachers in this district have not upgraded their salary scales while those in other districts have been upgraded. This has demoralized many teachers when they see other teachers in their neighbouring districts have higher salaries despite that they were employed in the same year and have the same level of education. Something to note is that teachers do not stop attending school at all, because they know work principles will affect them, instead they come to school but do not enter the class.”

A teacher at an urban public school in Kigoma also provided an example of how low salaries can affect teachers’ morale and contribute to reduced teaching time while in class: “When teachers used all their salary and they are left with nothing, they start to think how they are going to survive until the end of the month. There are teachers who live in such situations. So, they are not valuing the work, again because what they are getting is not fulfilling their needs and this is affecting those who have high expenditure than what they are getting. When teachers are in that situation, believe me, they will not concentrate on their work as they will be thinking a lot about things.”

Teacher survey results show that variations exist in current teacher salaries, with almost half of the selected teachers indicating they are receiving less than 600,000 TZS (US\$258) per month, while the remaining teachers receive above this amount. Among teachers in rural areas, 48 per cent were happy with their salary, compared with 37 per cent of those in urban areas. In terms of public-private variations, 58 per cent of teachers from private schools were satisfied with their salary level, compared with 38 per cent of their public-school counterparts. When asked whether their monthly salary was sufficient to cover their monthly household expenditures, less than 10 per cent of all respondents responded “yes”, and the rate remains low irrespective of school type or geographic location.

Figure 12: Percentages of responses to survey statement: “I am happy with my salary as a teacher.” Rural-urban and public-private variations



It was suggested that many teachers had benefited from a recent salary increase provided in 2016, which had allowed teachers at different qualification levels to move up one step in the salary scale. It is clear, however, that these initiatives have benefited only public schools in the sample, as private schools are not subject to government remuneration policies. From a national and subnational official perspective, the Government has also made progress on timely payment of teachers' claims in recent years, making sure salary payments are made on the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month, for instance. And instances of payment delays have been reduced. This is supported by teacher survey results, where only 11 per cent of respondents suggested they experienced delays in salary payment. But it appears to be a major challenge, particularly for teachers in private schools, according to interview results.

Despite these positive moves, according to most respondents, low salary and lack of promotion remain major challenges hindering teacher motivation, encompassing teachers in all types of schools and geographic locations across the country. More particularly, three major issues emerged related to the challenge of salaries and promotion.

First of all, according to interview results, one major complaint has to do with the stagnation in promotion and salary increments for a prolonged period of time. It is suggested that in principle, teachers' salaries should be upgraded on a yearly basis according to their contract, and many suggested that the Government announced the salary upgrade some years ago, but it has not yet been fully implemented. Therefore, it was found that many teachers had been promoted on paper but their salary had not increased.

Secondly, related to the issue of lack of promotion, it was mentioned that there was lack of clarity on the criteria for salary upgrade. Interview data clearly shows some teachers have been promoted while others have not. This applies to both public and private schools. Some suggested there was a teacher-performance system in place called "OPRAS" (Open Performance Review and Appraisal System). It evaluates teachers' performance, which serves as evidence for teachers' upgrade every three years. However, few schools have used it for upgrading teachers. As a result, it is common to find teachers with different levels of qualification being paid at the same salary level. This, according to teachers and head teachers, represents a demotivating factor for them, especially for those that hold higher qualifications. For instance, a head teacher at a rural public school in Njombe suggested: "For example, you will find a teacher who was employed in the year 1984. You will find now the salary of somebody is similar with students whom he/she taught five years ago. For someone that joins the career for the first time, he/she will lose courage. Previously, they had discrepancy because of increment but recently there is no difference. This makes teachers lose courage to work and we have tried to complain in our meeting."

The third issue concerning salary is the salary ceiling imposed by the government policy, which states that teachers' salaries cannot surpass a certain level, even with accumulated experience. Although it was suggested that this ceiling had recently been removed, it has long been a demotivating factor for teachers. For example, a head teacher at an urban public school in Arusha provided an explanation: "There are teachers who stayed a very long time and with experiences but not upgraded. For instance, the teacher who taught me by then his salary equals to mine just because they reached the 'bar' stage in the salary scale upgrading. There is a rule that, the teacher with certain level of education when [he] reaches 'E' in the salary scale cannot be further upgraded, like when I started working I found experienced teachers but as I have advanced academically, we are in the same level right now so this discourages them. They were restricted to step to 'F' grade in the scale, but good enough, that restriction has been removed and they are now stepped to 'F' grade. Although, that has been removed but teachers might not stop lamenting but it has been an obstacle for long time."

The last challenge emerging from interview data is related to the general salary level of teachers compared with their peers in other sectors. It is suggested by some that teachers are generally paid less than workers with the same levels of qualification in other fields.

The inadequacy of teachers' salaries to cover life expenses has led some teachers to moonlight. This is especially the case for teachers that have heavy loan burdens. Qualitative data shows that due to low salary levels, many teachers borrow from banks and individuals with high interest rates, and are thus forced to engage in side jobs in order to pay back the loan money. Survey data shows that 18 per cent of all private school teachers and 11 per cent of public school teachers in the sample are engaged in other income-generating activities. Such rates are higher in rural areas (17 per cent) than urban areas (8 per cent) according to survey results among selected teachers. According to interview respondents, moonlighting is resorted to by teachers in both rural and urban areas. Teachers in rural areas usually engage in farming activities, small retail businesses or transport and they are usually found to be absent from school on market days.

#### **4.2.2. Programmes that support teachers' skills development and upgrade**

Teacher survey results reveal that in terms of education levels, 75 per cent of all teachers that provided valid responses have completed secondary-level education, and 22 per cent possess a university degree. Very few teachers have only completed primary education. In terms of teaching qualifications, the vast majority (65 per cent) of all teachers possess Grade III A Certificate, the minimum requirement for teaching primary level. Another 34 per cent possess either a diploma or a university degree, while only 1 per cent are under-qualified. This reflects the Tanzania Mainland Government's efforts to bring teacher qualifications up to standard over the years and is in line with the global statistics of teacher qualification of Tanzania Mainland, where the majority of the primary teaching force possess certificate-level qualification.

According to DEOs and REOs, the Government has been providing in-service training to teachers, as one of the major ways to motivate teachers. However, attending various trainings has become the major cause for reduced school attendance, punctuality and classroom attendance. According to interview results, trainings outside the school compound can last from one day to two weeks, and this appears to affect mainly teachers in public schools. However, when it comes to punctuality, teachers from all types of schools are affected. In addition, in more than half of the selected schools, it is clearly indicated the attending on-site trainings lead to absence from the classroom, and it affects teachers of both public and private schools. According to respondents, teachers' participation in training activities especially impacts pupils when teachers are only informed of the training seminars once they arrive in school, which prevents them from coordinating class periods in advance.

#### **4.2.3. National initiatives to enhance monitoring capacity at all levels**

To enhance monitoring capacity at the decentralized level, the United Republic of Tanzania Government took a series of measures that have proved to be useful. Firstly, it has provided important incentives to head teachers and WEOs to strengthen their monitoring capacity. It was suggested that head teachers receive a monthly "responsibility allowance" of TZS 200,000 which incentivize them to perform leadership and monitoring roles. And according to respondents, WEOs are not only provided with a monthly TZS 250,000 allowance, but also motorcycles to facilitate their monitoring of schools. Respondents suggested the LANES programme has also provided transport facilities to WEOs to support their school quality assurance.

In addition, it was suggested the Government had provided capacity building for head teachers and WEOs and revised the previous approach of school inspection to make it friendlier and more participatory.

Furthermore, it was indicated that the Government had provided monitoring guidelines for school quality assurers, including a checklist for school inspection, and was preparing a guideline for community involvement and a parent-teacher partnership programme to seek to create a conducive relationship between teachers and the community.

The national Government's efforts in enhancing monitoring capacity at all levels have a direct impact on teacher absenteeism of different types, according to qualitative data. First of all, it was indicated that from the national level, the Government had issued strict directions on ensuring teachers' school attendance. It was suggested the Government had also introduced a School Information System, which captures teachers' school attendance and the time spent on teaching. It is indicated that this system is currently working in 13 regions as part of the EQUIP and Tusome Pamoja projects.

Secondly, through the capacity building provided to head teachers and WEOs, it is expected these actors will be capable of monitoring the entire teaching and learning process, including teachers' attendance at school, attendance in classroom, and teaching time while in the classroom.

### 4.3. Subnational-level factors affecting teacher absenteeism

#### Summary

There are four types of subnational education actors and institutions in Tanzania Mainland, namely, REOs, DEOs and WEOs – all of which fall under PORALG – and school quality assurers who report directly to the MoEST. In all of the selected schools, a certain degree of subnational monitoring and engagement can always be identified. According to interview results, REOs and DEOs mainly provide two types of support to motivate schools and teachers. Firstly, they provide in-service training opportunities to teachers from both public and private schools. Secondly, REOs and DEOs organize meetings with head teachers and teachers to discuss and follow up on school- and teacher-related matters.

However, according to various respondents, it is clear there are still areas where REOs and DEOs fall short of support. This mainly occurs at public schools in the sample because public schools depend largely on government support. For example, it is suggested that the REOs and DEOs have not implemented promotion policy and provided leave allowances on time. Secondly, in some schools, the visits of REOs and DEOs to schools occur only once a year, which is considered by many teachers as insufficient.

Based on interview data, two themes have emerged related to the role of subnational education actors, which are directly linked to different types of teacher absenteeism, including:

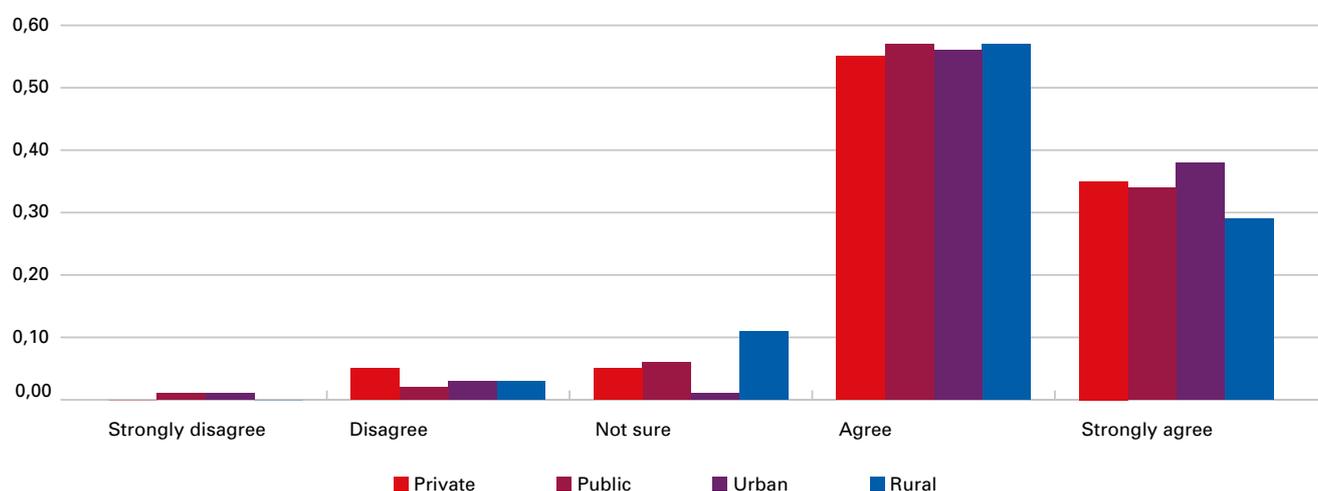
- School visits and school quality assurance conducted by subnational education actors, which mainly help discourage teacher absence from school, and to a lesser extent, lateness, absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in the classroom.
- Sanctioning capacity of subnational education actors, which mainly targets teacher absence from school.

#### 4.3.1. School visits and school quality assurance

It is clear from interview results that all types of subnational education actors make visits to the schools and conduct school quality assurance. In terms of frequency of their visits, according to respondents, it ranges from 1-2 times to 4-5 times per year, and it is clear that DEOs visit schools more frequently and work more closely with schools than REOs. WEOs are the ones that visit schools most frequently. This could be on a monthly or even weekly basis, according to respondents. It is also clear from qualitative data that both public and private schools receive visits and quality assurance from subnational education actors.

Teacher survey results corroborate this finding. Among all valid responses, more than 90 per cent of teachers from both public and private schools, agree or strongly agree that “school inspectors and academic advisers visit this school regularly”. This high rate is consistent throughout all regions involved in the study, indicating strong involvement and engagement of subnational education actors across the country in school quality assurance and school affairs in general.

Figure 13: Percentages of responses to survey statement: “School inspectors and academic advisers visit this school regularly.” Public-private and rural-urban variations



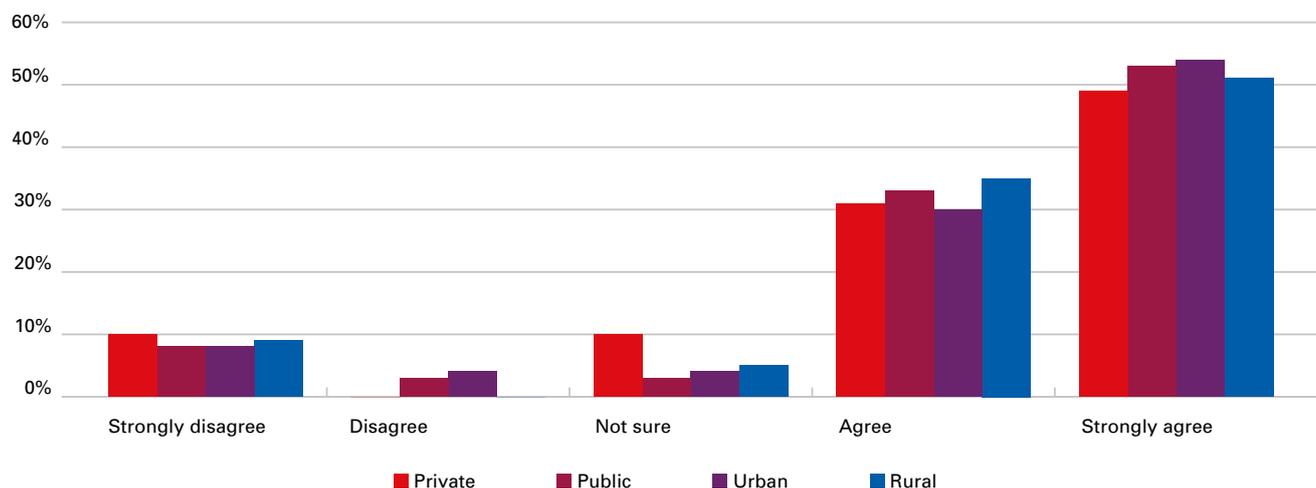
Respondents say they have experienced two types of school quality assurance: one is general inspection of short duration and another one lasts longer, focussing on teaching and learning activities. However, in policy documents, there are three types of school quality assurance. This is probably because school-level respondents have difficulty distinguishing between different types of school quality assurance. In terms of feeding back information, it was suggested that quality assurers, although directly accountable to MoEST, would share their inspection reports with the DEOs. WEOs would also submit their monitoring reports to DEOs on a regular basis, and head teachers would submit teacher attendance reports to the DEOs on a monthly basis. And based on these reports, DEOs and REOs would make follow-up visits to the schools.

Interview data clearly shows the most important role of subnational education actors' school visits and school quality assurance is supporting teachers' school attendance. In most of the selected schools, regardless of geographic location and school type, subnational education actors play an important role in discouraging absence from school through school visits and quality assurance. It is suggested by some that the visits themselves already help deter absence from school. This is especially the case given that education officers and quality assurers would often make surprise visits as a way to identify and discourage teacher absence from school. When absence from school is identified, subnational education actors usually provide advice, request explanation letters or give warning to the absent teacher.

In a small number of cases, it was suggested that during school quality assurance, subnational education actors would check teachers' attendance books and identify the issue of lateness. Moreover, it was clearly indicated that when visiting a school, part of a quality assurer's job was to inspect teachers' attendance in the classroom and their teaching activities. For instance, during visits and school quality assurance, subnational education actors would often check teachers' lesson plans so as to understand whether or not a teacher was behind the timetable. If a teacher was found to be lagging behind the lesson plan, he or she would be asked to provide explanations.

Survey data shows that 85 per cent of all teachers that provided valid responses agreed or strongly agreed that school inspectors and academic advisers heavily discouraged teacher absenteeism, including 86 per cent of public school teachers and 80 per cent of private school teachers. This rate is consistently high across all regions in the sample.

Figure 14: Percentages of responses to survey statement: “School inspectors and academic advisers heavily discourage teacher absenteeism.” Urban-rural and private-public variations



Interview results show that subnational education actors also discourage teacher absenteeism in several other ways. One of them is organizing meetings with head teachers where subnational education actors emphasize the importance of teacher attendance and work ethic. There were also instances where verbal praise and certificates of appreciation were granted to teachers, which helped encourage hard work and minimize teacher misconduct. Finally, subnational education actors also provide technical support to head teachers in monitoring teacher attendance, such as providing guidance on how to use the attendance book and how to keep track of teachers' sessions according to teachers' lesson plans.

According to respondents, especially national and subnational level respondents, in more than half of the districts involved in the study, there are challenges hindering the monitoring capacity of REOs, DEOs and quality assurers. Firstly, the insufficient number of quality assurers has resulted in insufficient numbers of school quality assurance visits. Secondly, the remoteness of schools and poor road conditions creates an obstacle for quality assurers as some schools in Tanzania Mainland are located in hard-to-reach areas, according to respondents. The third constraint relates to lack of resources, especially lack of transport, which affects the capacity of DEOs and REOs to visit the schools regularly. In some cases, all education officers only have one vehicle to share, which prevents them from visiting all schools in their respective areas. An REO said: "Here at the regional office, we are a total of 15 education officers who are responsible in overseeing more than 100 schools. But we have only one car. It is impossible for all of us to use that same car. At the same time, even the other departments – for example, health departments – sometimes come to borrow our car. So, you can see we cannot work efficiently without having adequate resources."

However, it is suggested that WEOs have now been granted motorcycles to facilitate their monitoring of schools, which has been a major motivation for them. School quality assurers have also been provided allowances which motivates their monitoring work.

### 4.3.2. Sanctioning capacity of subnational education actors

Interview data shows that in most of the schools in the sample, both public and private across various regions, there are sanctioning mechanisms in place that allow subnational education actors to take suitable actions in case of teachers' behavioural issues, such as teacher absences, most often in cases of teachers' absence from school.

Several sanctioning methods that are not mutually exclusive have emerged from interviews. Firstly, and at the minimum, after a case of school absence is identified, subnational education actors, mainly DEOs, WEOs and school quality assurers, call for the absent teacher in person and/or ask for an explanation letter, in which the absent teacher provides reasons for his/her absence. Secondly, subnational education actors, usually DEOs and school quality assurers give a verbal warning or a warning letter to the absent teacher. Thirdly, it was mentioned that if a teacher was absent for three consecutive days or more without a justifiable reason, his/her salary would be withheld by the DEOs until valid reasons were provided. Last but not least, the most serious sanction emerging from respondents' experiences is dismissal.

According to interview results, the district level has the authority of sanctioning teachers while the school quality assurers are only capable of providing warnings and reporting absent cases. It was suggested that the TSC had the ultimate authority of taking action against repeated teacher absences.

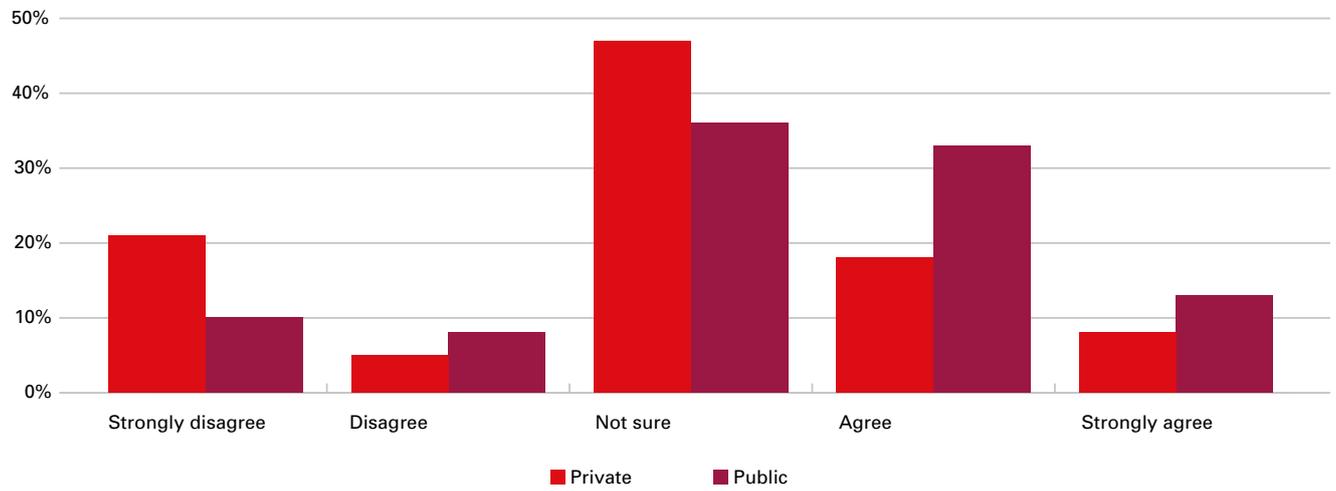
Based on qualitative data, it is clear that there are important differences between public and private schools, in terms of sanctioning teacher absences. For public schools, there is usually a bureaucratic procedure to follow, which involves reporting along the hierarchy, from the head teachers to the school quality assurers and WEOs, then to the DEOs and REOs, before reaching the TSC. It is suggested that normally the cases of teacher absence are settled at the district level before it has to reach the TSC. For private schools, although they are also subject to school quality assurance, absent teachers, once identified, receive a warning from subnational education actors but will only be reported to the head teacher because the school is the official employer of the teacher. Since private school teachers are not employed by the Government, they are not subject to sanction by government entities. Instead, it is the head teacher or school owner who acts upon any teacher misbehaviour.

“For the whole year, three teachers' salaries were stopped for a while after recognizing that they were not available at school for a week without notification. Their salaries were not given until they gave reasons for not attending school without notice and confessed not to repeat the mistakes again. The fact is, after these measures were taken, many teachers increased their attendance efforts.”

– DEO, Tanzania Mainland

Survey results can illustrate the public-private differences in terms of sanction. Among all public school teachers providing valid responses, 46 per cent say school inspectors frequently enforce sanctions against teacher absenteeism, whereas only 26 per cent of teachers in private schools agree or strongly agree with this statement. This is largely due to the fact that school quality assurers and subnational education offices do not have the authority to take action against teacher absenteeism in private schools except for providing warnings or reporting it to the head teacher, whereas they play a much more important role in regulating teachers' behaviour in public schools.

Figure 15: Percentages of responses to survey statement: "School inspectors and academic advisers frequently sanction teacher absenteeism." Public-private variations



## 4.4. Community-level factors affecting teacher absenteeism

### Summary

The study covers 11 rural communities and nine urban communities across nine regions of the country, including pastoral, fishing, mining and service areas. These communities share many similar traits but also have different challenges. The socio-economic conditions of the 20 communities are mixed. Based on field work observations, it is found that most of the communities, urban and rural alike, experience a certain degree of infrastructural and service challenges, including poor road conditions, shortage of water supplies and electricity, and absence of health and financial services. It is clear that rural areas face more acute challenges in infrastructure, as many of them do not have access to quality roads, electricity, water and health services. It was also observed that unemployment represents a major challenge for young people in many of the communities, especially urban areas.

Despite the Government's efforts in addressing gender disparity in regard to accessing primary education, girl dropout still exists in many communities across the country, mostly rural areas, due to child marriage and/or early pregnancy. Child labour is prevalent across the country, especially in coastal, mining and pastoral zones where children are frequently found to be engaged in economic activities, leading to absenteeism and even dropout. It is evident from field data that parents' engagement in children's education is especially problematic in these economic zones, as they prioritize economic activities over children's education and sometimes even actively support child labour. Other traditional practices, such as male circumcision and female genital mutilation, still exist in some regions across the country, in both rural and urban areas, affecting pupil absenteeism to a great extent.

In Tanzania Mainland, communities make up an integral part of the education-governance structure and provide necessary financial and non-financial support to schools and teachers, complementing the Government's efforts. For instance, interview data shows that community members are actively contributing to schools, both financially and materially, including providing for school meals, paying for school security guards and electricity bills, and supporting school infrastructure construction, to name a few. Some communities have even taken initiatives to recruit and finance volunteer teachers, to address the issue of teacher shortage. However, field data shows that, overall, regardless of school type or geographic location, parents' attitudes towards education and participation in children's learning is mixed; only half of surveyed teachers hold positive views of parents' roles in supporting children's education.

Data from the field points to four major factors at the community level that have an impact on different types of teachers' attendance, namely:

- Community support and monitoring capacity, including school committees and community leaders' monitoring capacity and parents' awareness of the importance of education and their active follow-up on children's learning, which affects teacher attendance at school and punctuality
- Availability of financial services in the vicinity of the community, which primarily leads to teacher absence from school, but also lateness to a lesser extent
- Availability, reliability and affordability of transport affects teacher attendance in school and punctuality, especially in cases of harsh weather conditions and for teachers that live far away from the school.
- Availability of quality teacher housing near the school, affecting teacher attendance in school and punctuality

#### 4.4.1. Community support and monitoring capacity

In this section, the role of three types of community actors will be discussed, namely, parents in general terms, school committees, and community leaders. In Tanzania Mainland, school committees and community leaders play a key role in supporting education and school affairs. Field data suggests they not only conduct frequent visits to schools and help mobilize financial and material resources to meet schools' needs, but also conduct awareness-raising activities to help increase parents' awareness and engagement in children's education. Their positive role is especially evident among public schools in the sample, and relatively weaker in private school settings, because private school committees are less powerful in decision making than their counterparts in public schools, which affects their incentive to engage with schools to a certain extent.

School committees and community leaders have a direct role in identifying and discouraging teacher absence from school, as well as lack of punctuality to a lesser extent. This role is especially prominent among public schools in the sample. They do so through frequent visits to schools, identifying which teachers are frequently absent or late for school, and requesting the head teacher provide reasons. They also bring the issue of teacher attendance to school committee meetings. According to teachers and head teachers, parents' lack of awareness of and support for education represents a major barrier for teachers' work in general. In some cases, parents would actively discourage children from attending school and would show disrespect towards teachers. There are even instances where teachers need to put extra effort into educating parents about the importance of education.

Teacher: The community does not like how we handle disciplinary issues at the school. They do not want kids to be reprimanded. They want their kids to be treated according to their directives.

Enumerator: Can you give an example? How do they know that you have punished their kids?

Teacher: The kid may go back home and tell his parent. The issue of absenteeism, for example, the parent wouldn't want his kid punished because he has gone to help with making ends meet at home. And we tell the parent to bring the kid to school. There was one instance where a parent informed us that his kid is sick and wouldn't be coming to school. But one of the teachers found the kid, with his parent fishing at the lake, perfectly healthy. When the teacher punished the kid the next day when he reported for school, the parent was furious when he found out.

Enumerator: What did the parent do?

Teacher: He came here, insulting teachers and instructing them to strike out the name of his kid from school.

Enumerator: Was the punishment to the kid too harsh?

Teacher: It wasn't. He was only asked to cut tall grasses at the area surrounding the school.

Enumerator: How did the rest of you take it?

Teacher: We had to educate him, that he should let his kid get an education. The time for the kid to go out looking for money to support his family hasn't come yet. The parent is the one responsible for the kid, and not the other way around."

– Teacher, rural public school, Geita Region

#### 4.4.2. Availability of financial services

Infrastructural shortage is a common challenge facing almost all communities involved in the study. For almost half of the schools in the sample, in both rural and urban areas across different regions, there is an evident shortage of financial services in the vicinity of the community, resulting in difficulties in receiving salaries for teachers. This primarily leads to teachers' absence from school, but also being late to school to a lesser extent.

According to interview data, the issue of receiving pay appears to be more acute in rural areas than urban areas. In urban areas, such a challenge has to do with not only the lack of availability of banks nearby, but also the quality and efficiency of banking services. For instance, internet issues could cause a long wait at the bank. For schools in rural areas, where social services are even less available, difficulties in receiving pay each month were even more frequently mentioned as a major reason for teachers' absence from school. It was suggested that it usually takes more than one day for a teacher to go to a bank in the nearest town, withdraw salary, and come back. And there are usually very limited transport options. In some cases, there is only one bus that can take teachers to the nearest town in the morning and come back in the afternoon, leading teachers to being absent from school for the entire day. And in a few cases, it could take a teacher up to 3-4 days to receive pay due to such long distance as well as the lack of capacity and efficiency of banking services.

Some teachers suggested that, given such an unavoidable challenge, the head teacher would grant permission on a particular day of the month for some teachers to leave school and follow up on payment issues. And the head teacher would coordinate teachers shifts so that they could take turns to go to the bank and receive their payment, so all teachers are not absent from school at the same time. As a head teacher in a rural public school in Dodoma illustrated: "Teachers are always at school, except there are some emergencies. Such emergencies are likely to be salary affairs, which occurs to our school as we don't have bank access as we're located in [a] remote area. Once it becomes a pay day, we actually organize a shift where there are some teachers who'll go to access bank services while others [are] waiting for their turn."

Teacher survey results show that, overall, compared with other personal- and school-level factors, the difficulties of receiving pay represents a relatively less important factor accounting for teacher absence from school and lack of punctuality. However, it is a relatively important factor for teachers in Geita region, where 21 per cent of all respondents suggest receiving pay has made it difficult for them to be present in school – the highest rate among all regions involved in the study. It is not surprising since qualitative data indeed reveals many communities in Geita region lack basic infrastructure and social services. And according to respondents in Geita, the closest financial institution is more than 50 kilometres away, coupled with poor road conditions and lack of transport, making it extremely difficult for teachers to receive pay without missing school.

#### 4.4.3. Availability, reliability and affordability of transport

In many communities across Tanzania Mainland, teachers are facing challenges of transport, which mainly prevents them from being in school and being on time.

Qualitative data reveals three main aspects to the issue of transport: availability, reliability and affordability. Firstly, the availability of transport is closely linked with the availability of quality roads and is affected by climate conditions and remoteness. It was frequently mentioned by respondents in both rural and urban areas that heavy rain affects teachers' access to school as it damages road conditions, making teachers' travel to school difficult. Given the geographic landscape of many regions of the country where there are high grounds and valleys, heavy rain creates flood and makes roads dangerous and impassable. This especially affects teachers that live far away from the school, making them more prone to harsh climatic conditions and poor road conditions. Unavailability of transport affects teachers of both private and public schools, leading to absence from school and lack of punctuality. A DEO explained the difficult transport situation causing teachers to arrive late to school and depart early: "During heavy rains, the roads become

impassable in some areas, there is a lot of mud and the road becomes slippery. Cars get stuck in the mud, therefore making the community members, including teachers, come late to their work places. And during those days, a teacher may decide to leave early because very few buses operate when the roads are like that. One cannot stay at work until the evening, they leave early so that they can find transport means to travel back home.”

Secondly, in many cases it was mentioned that the available transport lacked reliability, in terms of both quality and punctuality. The lack of transport reliability mainly causes teachers’ **delayed arrival at school**, as a head teacher from a rural public school in Tanga illustrated: “Many of us are living here in the teachers’ quarters except one teacher who lives in Pangani. This is the only one who may come to school late because of rain, or sometimes when he gets a breakdown on the way to school. He may tell me that, ‘Old man, I will be late today due to a breakdown or rainfall.’ And when the motorcycle is not in good condition, he may come with public transport. So you bear in mind that he may arrive late as buses usually arrive here at around 8 a.m.; and on very rare occasions at 07:30.”

Interview data shows that many teachers, in both urban and rural areas, use private means of transport to travel to work, including bicycles and motorcycles. These private means of transport also have reliability issues and may cause teachers to be late for work because of frequent breakdowns, especially under bad weather conditions. For schools in urban areas, one particular factor causing buses to arrive late appears to be traffic jams. Transport-reliability issues occur to teachers of both public and private schools. However, private schools normally have dedicated school buses to take teachers from their residence to school. Thus, for private school teachers, the punctuality of teachers depends largely on the punctuality of school buses. In addition, respondents indicate that school buses can also experience breakdowns and delays, causing teachers to arrive late to school.

Last but not least, qualitative data also suggests the affordability of public transport represents another challenge for teachers, with some – especially those living far from the school – sometimes failing to board public transport or take a motorcycle due to expensive prices, leading to absence from school or lateness. It is evident that this applies only to public school teachers. For private school teachers, there are usually dedicated school buses provided without extra cost.

#### 4.4.4. Availability of quality teacher housing near the school

It is largely recognized by national and subnational education actors that the Government has fallen short of providing for the housing needs of teachers and their families. It is clear from interview data that many teachers – in both public and private schools and regardless of whether in rural or urban areas – are not benefiting from teacher housing. Many of them are found to be living far away from the school. Interview data clearly illustrates two issues related to teacher housing and their consequences: unavailability/inadequacy and low quality, causing teachers to be absent from school and to lack punctuality.

In terms of availability and adequacy of teacher housing, in one third of the schools in the sample, it was suggested that teacher housing was not available. These include both public and private schools in both rural and urban areas across different regions of the country. And in almost half of the schools in the sample, most of which are public schools in rural areas, it was indicated that teacher housing was available but not able to accommodate all teachers.

There are two ways in which the unavailability and inadequacy of teacher housing affects teachers’ attendance at school and punctuality. Firstly, given the unavailability of teacher housing and the difficulty in getting accommodation in the vicinity of the school area, some teachers have been forced to live far away from the school, increasing their propensity to being absent from school and being late to school. A DEO illustrated how lack of teacher housing can lead to teachers’ lateness and how difficult it is to justify sanction in this situation: “There is a school in rural areas where teachers live about 27 kilometres from where the school is. There are no decent houses near the school so teachers have rented houses far from

the school. For a teacher to reach the school, he or she must take two buses. Under such conditions, the teachers have to be considered when they arrive late to school. We cannot punish them because they do not have any other alternative.”

Secondly, the unavailability/inadequacy of housing for teachers, as well as for their families, makes it necessary for teachers to visit their family from time to time, or go back home to deal with family matters, leading to absence from school. As one DEO argued: “If a teacher lives with family members, he or she will prefer to stay close to them, and even if there is an activity that makes the teacher to travel, it will only be for a short period of time. This will attract teachers to stay in one area because of the presence of his or her family. But for now, we have teachers living 7 kilometres away from the school so even if one goes back home to deal with a challenge during work hours, it is difficult to return to the school on that day because of the long distance. But if the teachers’ houses were near the school, that would have helped a lot.”

The unavailability and inadequacy of teacher housing has a direct impact on the capacity of head teachers to monitor and sanction teachers in cases of absence from school or lack of punctuality. One head teacher said: “Due to the shortage of teachers’ quarters in this school, two teachers reside out of school premises and this somehow makes it easier for them to get excuses of not coming to school commonly during the rainy season. They just inform you that, ‘I failed to come to school due to rain,’ while maybe he/she didn’t take any alternative efforts to attend school. But if they all stay within the school premises, even when it rains, he/she may take his/her umbrella and come to school as usual. But due to the shortage, even as the head teacher you can’t sanction such teachers because if you scrutinize, you lack the basis to sanction the teacher because there is no house for them to reside in.”

In addition to the issue of availability and adequacy of teacher housing, the issue of housing quality was also raised by many respondents. Interview data shows that among all schools that have available teacher housing, half of them experience quality issues, including dilapidated infrastructure and lack of safety, which leads some teachers to search for accommodation elsewhere. Low housing quality also demotivates and distracts teachers from their daily work in general and could lead to absence from school. There are cases where teachers have been occupied by issues of the house, such as water leakage, instead of going to work.

## 4.5. School-level factors affecting teacher absenteeism

### Summary

The 20 schools selected for this study encompass 16 public schools and 4 private schools. All schools in the sample face varying degrees of infrastructural and material challenges, such as: dilapidated infrastructure; lack of electricity and water, absence of libraries, science labs and computers; and shortage of age-appropriate desks and chairs. It is clear from interviews and field observations that these challenges are much more acute in public schools than private ones, although there is no evident difference between schools in urban and rural areas.

Interview data shows teachers in all 20 schools consider the head teachers' leadership style supportive and inspiring. For instance, it was often suggested that head teachers would frequently involve teachers in decision-making related to key school matters, and provide teachers with training opportunities. In a few schools in the sample, both public and private, there are reward systems in place, where the head teacher provides financial and non-financial incentives to teachers based on their performance, in the form of bonus, a letter of recognition, a gathering to celebrate achievement or verbal praises. In almost all schools in the sample, the working relations between teachers were largely described by respondents as cooperative, congenial and respectful. Teacher survey results support these findings where an overwhelming majority of teachers from both public and private schools, who provided valid responses, expressed satisfaction with the leadership of and support from head teachers, as well as the relationship between teachers.

The relationship between teachers and pupils were observed to be largely positive, although according to interview data, corporal punishment is widely practiced against misbehaving children, across all types of schools and geographic locations, ranging from beating to assigning manual labour. Pupil absenteeism is common across all types of schools and geographic locations, which mainly results from pupils' health problems, lack of learning materials, lack of support and follow-up from parents and also engagement in economic activities – child labour is prevalent across many communities in the country. However, it is evident from qualitative data that pupil absenteeism is more common in public schools than private ones, given that parents pay fees for private schools and therefore tend to have a more vested interest in making sure their children go to school.

Four major themes, directly related to different types of teachers absenteeism, have emerged from field data, including:

- Head teachers' leadership and monitoring capacity, which is linked to all types of teacher absenteeism, namely, attendance at school, punctuality, attendance in classroom and teaching time while in the classroom.
- Availability of quality school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials, which mainly affects teacher attendance in the classroom and teaching time while in class.
- Teachers' workload, in the form of meetings, administrative and academic duties, receiving visitors or simply having too many sessions to teach, mainly contribute to absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in the classroom, but also absence from school and lack of punctuality, to a lesser extent.
- Pupils' attendance and health, including pupils' hunger, contribute to attendance at school, punctuality, attendance in the classroom and teaching time while in class in some cases.

#### 4.5.1. Head teachers' leadership and monitoring capacity

At the school level, the head teacher plays a central role in ensuring teachers' attendance. Among all teachers involved in the study, the general perception of the head teacher's capacity to monitor teachers' attendance is largely positive, where almost 90 per cent of teachers surveyed consider the head teacher to be playing an effective role in recording and discouraging teacher absences. The leadership and monitoring capacity of the head teacher has a direct impact on all forms of absenteeism, namely, school attendance, punctuality, classroom attendance, teaching time while in class.

Firstly, in all selected schools, there is a monitoring system in place that helps identify cases of teacher absenteeism, most commonly in the form of an attendance book that keeps track of teachers' attendance at school and punctuality. In many cases, across both public and private schools, it is academic committees, academic boards or academic teachers that monitor teachers' attendance. The teachers are requested to sign the book upon arrival and sign again when leaving. In this way, the head teacher is able to see who is not present at school on a particular day. In addition, the head teacher draws the cut-off line every day at a certain hour and identifies teachers who are late for school or depart earlier from school than planned. There are also permission books, sometimes called "gate passes", used to grant teachers permission for their school absence. Using the information in the attendance book and permission book, the head teachers, mainly those at public schools, compile a monthly report and submit it to the REO, DEO and school inspectors. The permission is usually granted under the head teacher's discretion, based on the actual need of the teacher. For instance, a head teacher at an urban public school in Kigoma suggested: "If one is sick, then, it must be really serious. But if it is normal illness, one has to come to school first, sign in and make sure she/he is around until at least 10 a.m. She/he has to teach her/his classes before leaving. Then again, you'll have to sign out. If the teacher is sick but it is not serious, we encourage her/him to take medications right here at school. For serious cases, they can go out."

Interview results show that if a teacher is found to be absent from school or late for work, there are several measures the head teacher will usually take, including talking to the absent/late teacher, providing advice or verbal warning, or ordering him/her to provide an explanation letter. In some schools, both public and private, there are even dedicated school discipline committees, which deal with issues related to teacher misbehaviour, including teacher absences. For public schools, some respondents suggested that, as per ministry requirement, the head teacher would issue a warning letter to the absent/late teacher if such behaviour was repeated three times or in case a teacher was absent for five consecutive days or more. If it continues, the head teacher reports the teacher to WEOs and DEOs for further action. Some private schools, although not subject to government regulations, also appear to apply the three-time rule.

To motivate teachers and ensure teacher attendance, it was widely mentioned that the head teacher would emphasize, during weekly meetings with teachers, the importance of professional behaviour, and would request teachers seek permission in case of the need to leave school. In a small number of cases, there are financial incentives and material support provided to teachers to encourage attendance, such as gifts at the end of the school term to reward a good attendance record, primarily school attendance; or a transport support and housing allowance provided by the head teacher on an ad hoc basis to support punctuality.

To a lesser extent, head teachers also play a key role in discouraging absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in the classroom. According to teachers and head teachers of a few schools, both public and private, classroom attendance and the time spent on teaching while in the class are monitored through a classroom record book, sometimes called a "class journal". This keeps track of teachers' class periods, including what time a teacher enters and exits the classroom, as well as specific classroom activities. Such monitoring is usually done by academic teachers or class monitors dedicated to inspecting teachers' class periods. In addition, the head teacher and academic teachers frequently visit classes to observe teachers' presence in the classroom and teaching activities, and check pupils' exercise books against teachers' lesson plans to make sure all the lessons are taught. While teachers and head teachers consider the existing system for discouraging classroom absences and reduced time on task while in the classroom quite effective, subnational education actors tend to think otherwise. According to them, head teachers' failure to supervise and follow up on teachers' work is the main reason for teachers' absence

A teacher from an urban private school in Dar es Salaam provided an account illustrating such a difference:

“In private schools, we are monitored tightly and if it happened you are not in school then there should be a reason that waives you from being in school, with strong evidence to provide that without reasonable doubt. In due procedure, the head teacher is the one who provides permission of a teacher not to be in school, even if you have [a] critical problem, the permission to be out of school should not exceed three days, regardless of distance. The rules apply to all. Here at school we are tightly monitored, you cannot find that a teacher is away for more than three days. Maybe he/she should be seriously sick but not for personal problems, and if that happens then you might be given only two days.”

“There is much [more] absenteeism in public schools than in private schools. This is because the school owner is around the school and is the one who pays the salary and she/he is the final decision maker. In private schools, there is no patience. On the contrary, in public schools, teachers are so carefree in such a way that they never miss an excuse. Any teacher is likely to miss and will produce any false reason for the absence and will continue working.”

– DEO, Tanzania Mainland

from the classroom. A few cases also show the failure of the head teacher to resolve conflict or respond to teachers’ grievances can result in classroom absence and reduced teaching time, as teachers become too demotivated to teach. This indicates that although the monitoring system at the school level is considered to be working, the effectiveness of monitoring could still be improved.

National and subnational respondents emphasized the role of training and allowances provided to head teachers, arguing that they helped enhance head teachers’ sense of responsibility and monitoring capacity. However, they also pointed out that challenges remain, with regard to head teachers’ capacity as well as willingness to monitor and sanction teachers. For instance, it was indicated primarily by subnational education actors that head teachers may decide to intentionally cover up for teacher absences due to friendly relationships with them or mutual financial interests involved. Secondly, head teacher absenteeism is also a factor that hampers head teachers’ monitoring capacity.

In terms of variations between public and private schools, evidence points to the fact that the monitoring approaches used by private schools are not necessarily different from or more sophisticated than those employed by public schools. However, it was suggested that private schools have stricter rules in place and stronger supervision exercised by the school management compared with their public counterparts, whose sanctioning power is limited by their mandate.

It is clear from interviews that in private schools, teacher misconduct can lead to dismissal, whereas this rarely happens in public schools. The most severe cases of sanction mentioned by respondents in public schools are not more than transferring the teacher to other schools or suspension of duty. According to respondents, in public schools, there is usually a lengthier bureaucratic process involved for reporting and sanctioning teachers. It could take up to three months before any action is taken, whereas in private schools, the school owner has the ultimate authority to take measures against any teacher misbehaviour, including absenteeism.

#### 4.5.2. Availability of quality school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials

Interview data and field observations show that the shortage of quality infrastructure and teaching and learning materials represents a challenge for schools across different regions, especially public schools. Infrastructural and material challenges directly affect different types of teacher attendance, including classroom attendance and teaching time while in the classroom. These effects are especially pronounced for public schools in the sample. Three aspects of infrastructure and material shortage emerged from interviews, namely, the lack of quality school infrastructure and the shortage of teaching and learning materials.

Firstly, in many schools across the board, mostly public schools, the school infrastructure is not weather-resilient, leading to teachers' absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in class. For instance, it is frequently mentioned that because of the quality of classrooms, rain water will flow in or leak from the ceiling and disrupt classes. In other cases, due to the noises that heavy rainfall creates, communication between the teacher and pupils can be affected and the teacher subsequently decides to either leave the classroom or reduce the time spent on teaching while in the classroom.

Lastly, almost all schools in the sample experience shortage of teaching and learning materials and it appears to be a more severe challenge for public schools, according to field data. Without basic tools for teaching and learning, teachers find it difficult to fulfil their duties and they lose motivation. As a result, it is not surprising to find that the lack of teaching and learning materials can impact different types of teacher absenteeism, including absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in class. More specifically, according to various respondents, in some cases, especially for public schools, the shortage of textbooks and teaching aids contributes to teacher absence from the classroom and reduced time on task while in the classroom because it is difficult for teachers to elaborate on the subject matter without basic and appropriate tools.

Teacher survey responses show the shortage of teaching materials and teaching aids affects teachers in public schools more severely than those in private schools, while there is no evident rural-urban difference. Around 20 per cent of public school respondents consider the lack of teaching materials and teaching aids to be a main reason for their absenteeism whereas only 3-5 per cent of private school teachers consider it an important factor.

#### 4.5.3. Teachers' workload

Across all schools in the sample, it is evident that teachers' heavy workload diminishes their motivation and also affects the overall teaching time. The most evident effects of teachers' workload include teachers' absence from the classroom and reduced teaching time while in class, which occur to all schools in the sample, regardless of school type or geographic location.

The most frequently mentioned types of workload leading to being absent from classroom include:

- Participation in various meetings, including staff meetings, parents' meetings, school committee meetings or emergency meetings convened by the head teacher.
- Performing administrative tasks, such as filing statistics and preparing reports assigned by the head teacher.
- Fulfilling academic duties, such as marking exercises or supervising exams. These factors affect schools of all types and geographic locations. Other reasons include receiving visitors from the ward or district – this mostly affects public schools.

"In our school here, there may be a lot of missing scheduled classes as compared to other schools. I will give you an example: from January to May, we were seven teachers, and one is the head teacher, who happens to have few classes because of a lot of administrative duties. Then it was decided that, out of the six full-time teachers, four were selected. Two would teach Standard 1 and two would teach Standard 2. From Standard 3-7, only two teachers were assigned. Six subjects in one class!

– Teacher, urban public school, Geita region

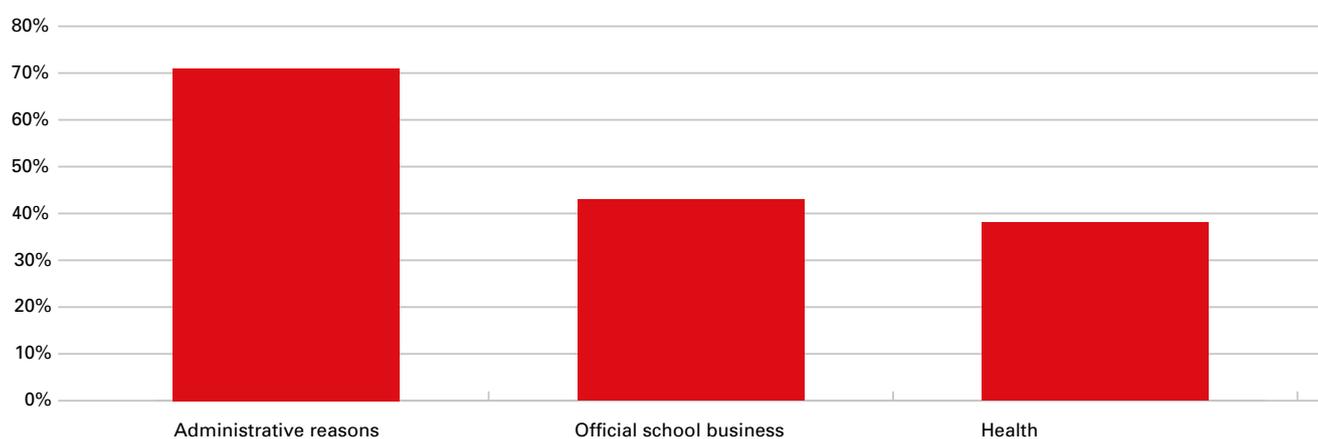
Survey data confirms this by showing that "administrative reasons" and "official school business" emerged among the top three reasons reported by surveyed teachers for classroom absence, regardless of school type or geographic location.

Every morning, when teachers arrive, they go to their respective classes till after 11:00 or 12:00. Teachers are working hard, but the workload and the responsibilities they have here outmatch their abilities. It comes a time when they are working from morning without a respite, one class after another. They do not have even the time to just sit and mark a textbook. It comes a time when they fail to go to other classes and take a breath and go through kids' textbooks.

Many scheduled classes go missing. It doesn't matter how hard-working a teacher is, because it is difficult to follow the schedule."

– Teacher, urban public school, Geita region

Figure 16: Percentages of responses to survey question: "What are the main reasons that may sometimes keep you outside of the classroom, even though you are physically present at school?"



According to various respondents, essentially, teachers' heavy workload is a result of the shortage of teachers and high PTRs in many schools across the country. There are cases where teachers miss scheduled classes while in school simply because they are unable to cope with such large numbers of sessions per day. This occurs mostly to public schools. For instance, it was mentioned that, in a few schools, teachers can teach up to 10 sessions per day. There were cases where two sessions were scheduled at the same time for one single teacher, forcing him/her to abandon one of the sessions.

When it comes to reduced teaching time while in the classroom, the most frequently mentioned type of workload is marking exercise books or exams in the classroom, which is oftentimes also due to high numbers of pupils and a shortage of teachers. The high PTRs in many schools also stresses and discourages teachers, to a point where they would give work to pupils instead of entering the classroom or spending full time teaching in the classroom.

To a lesser extent, it was mentioned that teachers would be assigned by the head teacher to perform administrative tasks outside the school, such as delivering and receiving letters and reports, leading to absence from school and late arrival to work, which occurs mainly in public schools, since in private schools, the school management system is stronger.

#### 4.5.4. Pupils' health and attendance

Quality interaction between teachers and pupils depends on teachers but also on pupils' wellbeing. Field work data shows there are a few factors limiting the quality teacher-pupil interaction, which mainly include pupils' health problems and pupil attendance. These pupil-related challenges affect various types of teacher absenteeism, primarily attendance in classroom and teaching time in class.

Pupils' health issues, such as sickness and injuries, also cause teachers to be absent from school, arrive late, depart early, be absent from the classroom and reduce time spent on teaching while in the classroom because teachers often need to attend to the children that are sick or injured, either on the spot or send them to hospital. This happens more frequently in public schools in the sample, according to interview data. In addition to pupils' health, interview results also show pupil absenteeism is prevalent in schools of all types and geographic locations across the country, directly affecting different types of teacher absenteeism, although to a lesser extent than pupils' health. It was suggested that, in view of the insufficient number of pupils present in the class, a teacher may decide to stay in school but not in the classroom, or remain in the classroom but not teaching, knowing that he/she would have to repeat the topic when more pupils were present in the class. It was shown that this usually happened at the beginning of the school period when pupils reported to school.

## 4.6. Teacher-level factors affecting teacher absenteeism

### Summary

Teacher statistics show there are more than 350 teachers currently working at the 20 schools in the sample. Overall, urban schools tend to have a larger number of teachers compared with rural ones. The male/female ratio of all teachers in the 20 schools is about 1:2. However, the percentage of female teachers is much higher in urban and public school settings. More specifically, among all teachers in the sample, gender balance is much more evident in rural areas than in urban areas, where female teachers account for more than 76 per cent of all teachers. In terms of public-private variation, about 60 per cent of all teachers in private schools are female as opposed to 70 per cent in public schools. Almost all teachers in public schools have permanent civil servant status, whereas in private schools, all teachers are contractors or temporary workers.

A total of 259 teachers participated in the teacher survey, including 175 female teachers and 83 male teachers. Based on self-reported data, it is clear that private school teachers generally possess higher teaching qualifications than their public school counterparts. Seventy five per cent of private school teachers hold either a diploma or a degree, compared to only 26 per cent in public schools, where the vast majority hold a Grade III A Certificate. This result is consistent with the overall qualification of the primary teaching force in Tanzania Mainland described in section 2. In addition, in terms of education level, self-reported data shows that 76 per cent of private school teachers have completed university-level education, whereas the vast majority of public school teachers have completed secondary school and only about 13 per cent of them have completed university education.

Four major themes related to teachers' personal traits emerged from field data, which appear to cause different types of absenteeism of teachers, including:

- Teachers' personal health challenges, which affect their school attendance, punctuality, classroom attendance as well as teaching time while in the classroom.
- Family duties and social obligations, including taking care of family members, attending funerals and other social events, mainly lead to absence from school and affect punctuality.
- Teachers' professional behaviour and work ethics, including alcoholism, affects school attendance, punctuality, classroom attendance and teaching time while in the classroom.
- Teachers' competencies, including gaps in content knowledge, teaching techniques and the mismatch of language capacities, affect teachers' attendance in class and teaching time when in class.

#### 4.6.1. Teachers' personal health challenges

At the individual level, teachers' personal health issues constitute the single most important factor affecting teachers' attendance of different types, including school attendance, punctuality, classroom attendance as well as teaching time while in the classroom.

According to interview data, health problems are common among teachers in different types of schools and all geographic locations. While it is not the objective of this study to identify the specific health challenges facing teachers across the country, some of the commonly mentioned types of sickness and diseases include asthma, headache, stomach ache, pregnancy-induced complications and other chronic diseases.

According to teacher survey results, teachers' own health issues emerged as the top cause for teachers' absence from school, lack of punctuality and reduced teaching time while in the classroom, and it holds true for both public and private school teachers, irrespective of them being in rural or urban areas. In terms of regional breakdown, health problems also emerged as the top cause of these three types of absenteeism for most of the regions involved in the study.

Figure 17: Percentages of responses to survey question: "What are the main reasons that may sometimes keep you away from school?"

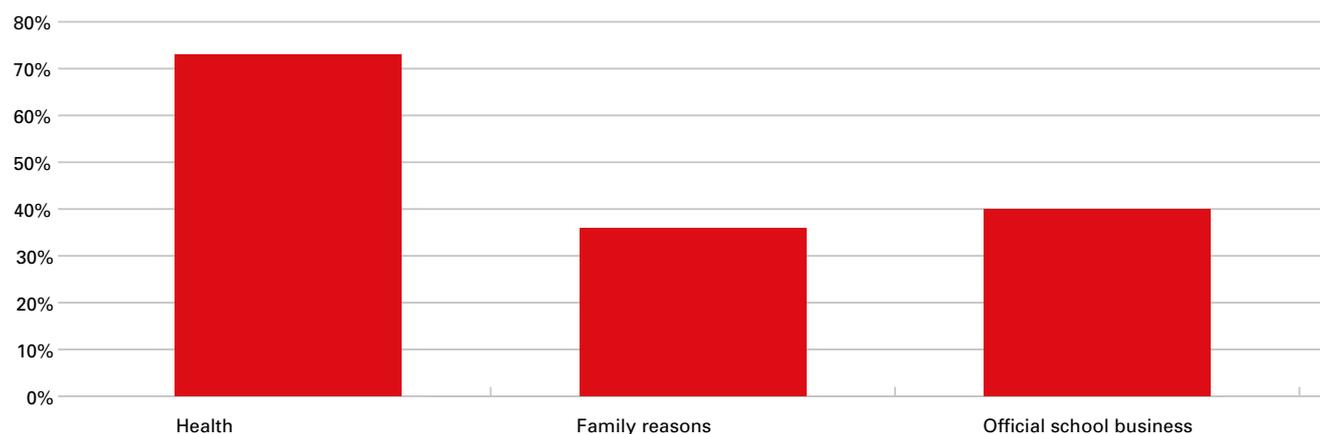


Figure 18: Percentages of responses to survey question: “What are the main reasons that may sometimes cause you to arrive to school late or leave from school early?”

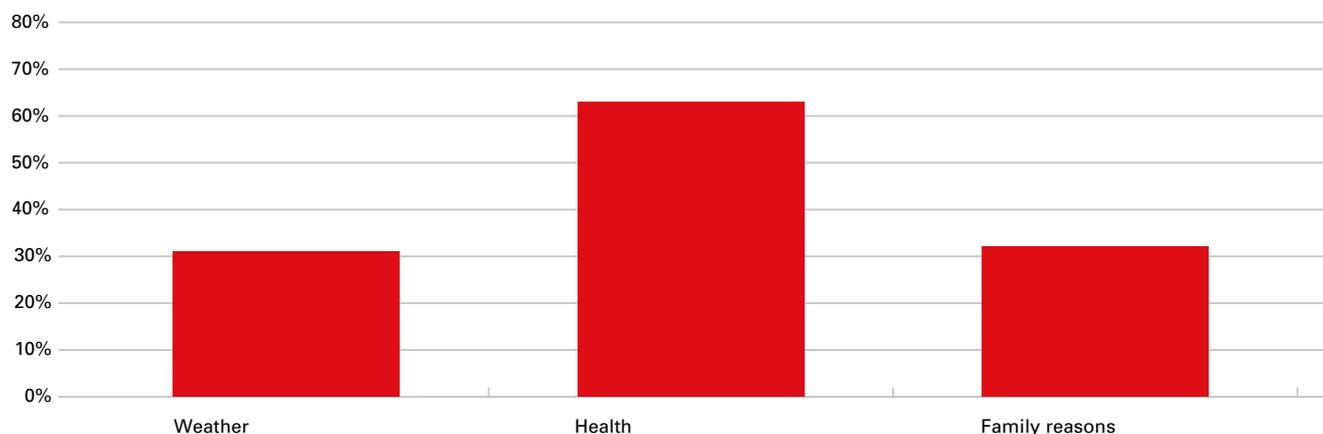
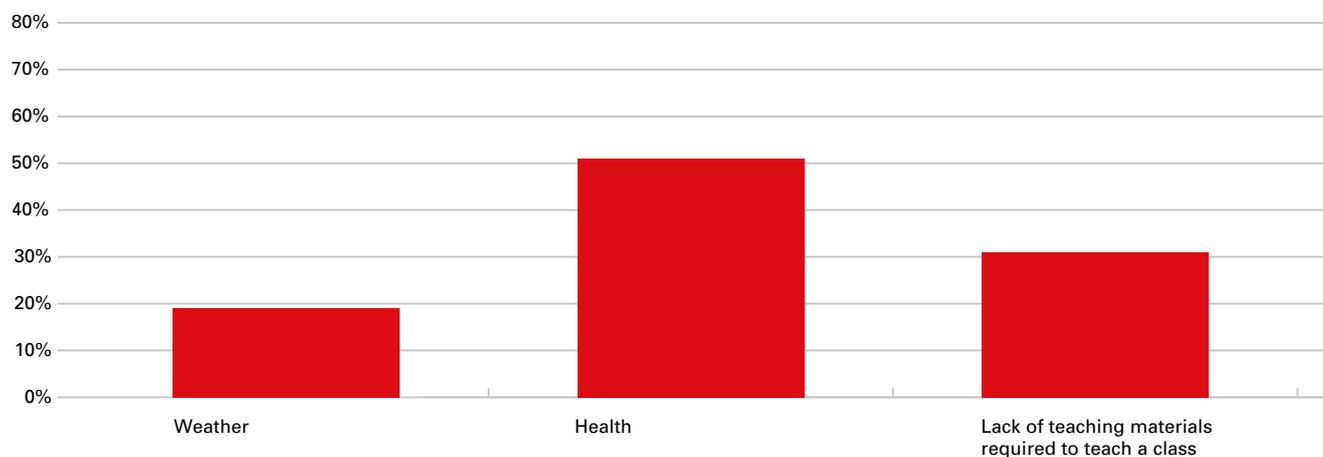
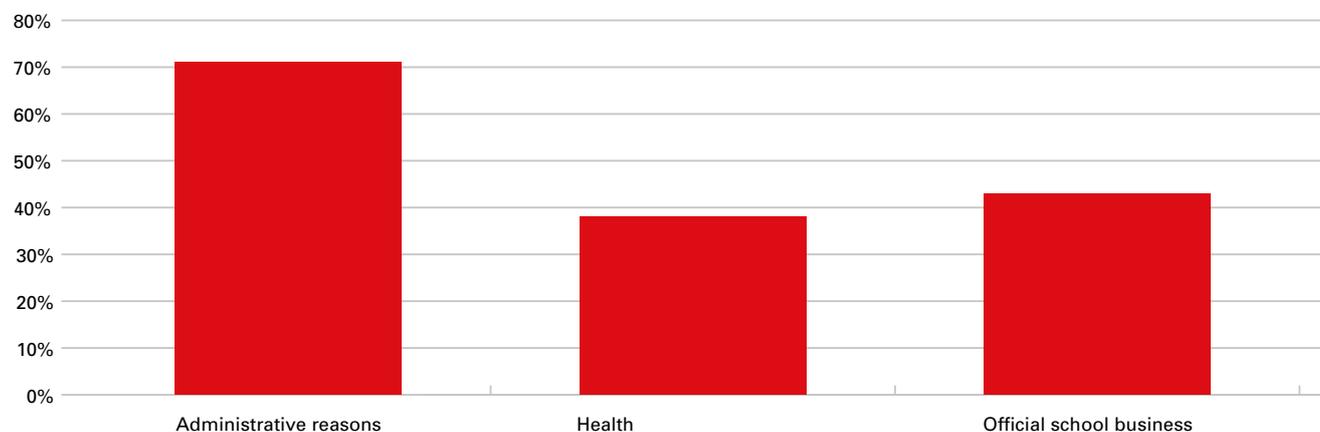


Figure 19: Percentages of responses to survey question: “What are the main reasons that may sometimes limit the time you spend on teaching?”



Health issues also emerged among the top three causes for absence from the classroom, according to teachers’ self-reported responses.

Figure 20: Percentages of responses to survey question: “What are the main reasons that may sometimes keep you outside of the classroom, even though you are physically present at school?”



Besides physical health problems, another important aspect of teachers' health is mental preparedness. In a number of schools, regardless of school type or geographic location, there are cases where teachers' stress and depression impacts teachers' attendance, especially their school attendance, classroom attendance, and teaching time while in the classroom. This is because teachers lack mental preparedness to fulfil their duties. According to interview data, such stress is usually caused by financial difficulties and family conflict.

It is clear that many communities and schools across the country have not established strong support systems to address teachers' health issues. For instance, according to field observations, a few of the communities involved in the study, both rural and urban, do not have health centres in the community at all, and in others, the nearest health centre is still quite far away. The availability of health facilities in the vicinity of the school is an important determining factor of teachers' school attendance, as suggested by one head teacher at a rural public school in Njombe: “Many teachers here are female so one of the reasons is to take baby to clinic. But they do not lose many periods, perhaps they will lose only two or three periods because the dispensary is not located very far away but if the dispensary would be around here, possibly she could not lose even one period.”

In addition, at the school level, there is lack of consideration for teachers that have health issues. For example, a teacher from a rural public school in Njombe pointed out pitfalls in the school management system that do not take into consideration female teachers' need to breastfeed: “There must be a period I have to lose in order to do this work, and those who are breastfeeding are given time so that time may go on to breastfeed the baby for a while and then return to work. But the time for breastfeeding does not have a period in the sense that when [an] academic teacher designs a schedule, does not design [a] period in the time for breastfeeding.”

#### 4.6.2. Family duties and social obligations

Field data suggests teachers have important family and social responsibilities to fulfil, which directly results in teachers' absenteeism. Family reasons are among the top three reasons reported by selected teachers for being absent from school and lacking punctuality. Disaggregated by school type and geographic location, survey data suggests "family reasons" are a stronger cause for both types of teacher absenteeism reported by teachers in public school settings than those in private schools, where family reasons did not feature on the top-three list. This is likely due to the stronger monitoring and sanctioning systems of private schools that limit teachers' opportunities to be absent due to personal and family reasons.

Family duties and social obligations manifest themselves in the following ways, based on interview data. Firstly, in addition to teachers' own health problems, it is frequently mentioned that having to take care of sick children and sick family members leads to absence from school, late arrival or early departure. It happens to teachers in both public and private schools across various geographic locations.

Secondly, attending funerals of deceased family members, neighbours, friends or colleagues is widely cited as a main reason for teachers' absence from school and delay to work, by respondents across the board. It was also suggested that besides close relatives and friends, in cases where anyone in the community passes away, the school will appoint representatives to attend the funerals. In Tanzania Mainland, it was suggested that attending burial ceremonies was largely accepted as a social requirement in Tanzania Mainland and therefore constituted a valid reason for being absent, as a DEO illustrated: "If there is a funeral, a teacher asks permission from the head teacher and is allowed to go there. You cannot avoid these things, you have to go to comfort the people, otherwise they will not come to your home when you face a similar problem. Being employed is not an excuse. So our head teachers understand this and give permission to their teachers."

Other social obligations, such as weddings and festivals, also lead to absence from school and reduced punctuality.

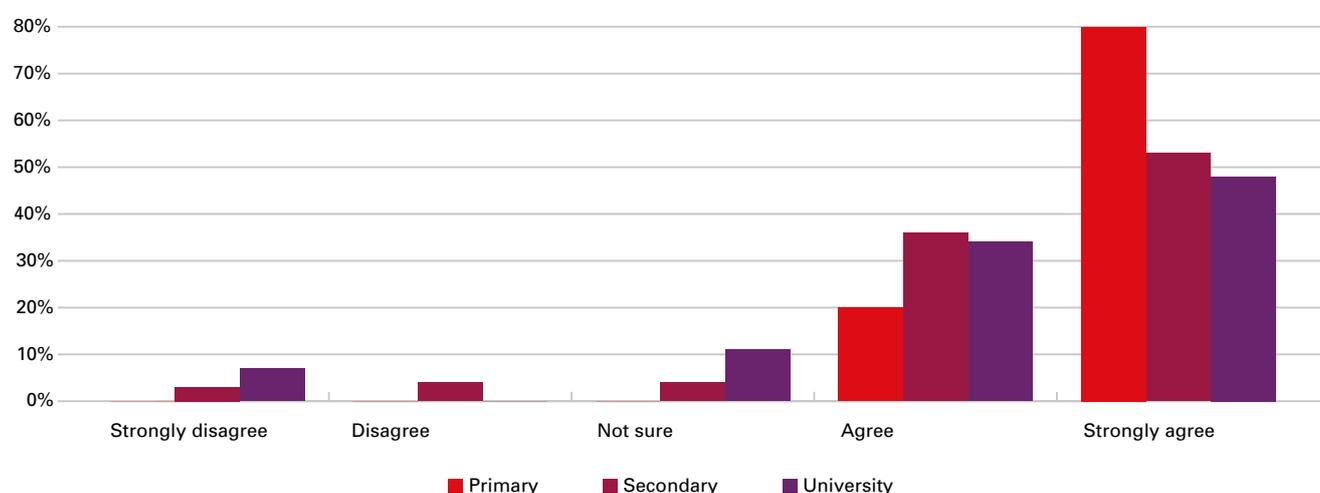
Thirdly, maternity leave and the need to breastfeed young babies also constitute important reasons for teachers' absence from school, late arrival or early departure. In Tanzania Mainland, by law, public school teachers are entitled to three months' maternity leave. Additionally, teachers who have just delivered babies enjoy a six-month "grace period", which allows them to leave school early to breastfeed their children. Field data suggest the maternity-leave policy applies equally to teachers in private schools as well, leading to absence from school.

Last but not least, being far away from family necessitates teachers to take time off to visit their family members, which leads to absence from school. This is closely linked to the issue of lack of transport and quality teaching housing, and is largely seen as a legitimate reason for being absent from school, as a DEO suggested: "When the teacher lives away from her/his family, where the village has impassable roads, when it occurs that there is a car going to the village where her/his family lives, and the driver demands no fare in such a distance – which would cost even TZS 10,000 in normal situations – the teacher will likely use that loophole to go visit her/his families. This is likely to happen during Fridays. In such circumstances, even the head teacher will just be calm, because she/he knows the situation of that particular area."

### 4.6.3. Teachers' professional behaviour and work ethics

In general, qualitative data points to strong intrinsic motivation of teachers in Tanzania Mainland. Almost all teachers that took part in the interview explicitly showed strong passion for the teaching profession and their pride in being able to help children and the society. The teacher survey also reveals the vast majority (88 per cent) of teachers who participated in the survey are satisfied with the teaching job, regardless of school type, geographic location or gender. However, the satisfaction rates tend to be lower for teachers who have high education levels (i.e., university level), compared with those that have lower education levels (i.e., secondary and primary education).

Figure 21: Percentages of responses to survey statement: "I am satisfied with my job." Variations between teachers of different education levels.



However, field data shows that teachers' strong passion for the teaching profession does not always translate into professional behaviour and sound work ethics. According to various respondents, especially national and subnational education actors, lack of professional behaviour and work ethics is a common issue among primary school teachers in Tanzania Mainland. It manifests itself in forms of unjustified absences, lack of preparation for classes and negligence of duties. Lack of professional behaviour and work ethics applies to teachers regardless of school type and geographic location. More particularly, in Tanzania Mainland, a frequently observed teacher behavioural issue is alcoholism. Although some respondents consider alcoholism to be more prevalent in rural areas, field data shows it applies to teachers in both rural and urban areas.

The lack of professional behaviour and work ethics at the individual teacher level has a direct impact on teacher absenteeism. For instance, it is mentioned that in some cases teachers would fail to come to school or delay work without providing any good reason, or because they were found to be drunk. Teachers would also decide not to enter the class when in school or reduce time spent on teaching while in the classroom, due to failure to prepare for lessons. A teacher from an urban private school in Dar es Salaam suggested: "Sometimes it happens that teachers enter in the class but they do not teach. The reason for this is that they lack preparation. Maybe the time to go to class has reached and you are not prepared yet. How can you teach the children? It means you will go to class but you will make stories and leave when the time ends."

It is worth noting that according to some respondents, teachers with higher qualifications are more likely to be absent than others. It was pointed out that recently, in view of the increasing numbers of pupils at the primary level and the shortage of teachers, many secondary school teachers had been transferred to the primary level. This has resulted in attitude and behavioural issues due to differences in workload between the primary and secondary level, as well as lack of professional behaviour on the part of some secondary teachers. This is in line with teacher survey results presented above, which show that teachers with higher education level and qualifications demonstrate lower levels of satisfaction for the teaching job.

#### 4.5.4. Teachers' competencies

Despite the Government's efforts to improve the quality of the primary teaching force by providing pre-service and in-service training, and the various development-assistance projects and programmes in place to enhance teacher qualification, teachers' actual competencies remain a challenge in Tanzania Mainland, according to field data.

Teacher survey data shows that in public and private schools alike, the majority of teachers believe they have access to training opportunities and almost all of them consider themselves competent to teach. However, such positive views contradict in-depth interview results, due to limitations of the self-reported survey data. Various respondents revealed a number of issues related to the quality of the primary teaching force in the country. First of all, there is an overall competency challenge among many teachers, despite the fact they hold relevant teaching qualifications. This might reflect quality issues in the training schemes that the Government and development partners are providing. Secondly, there are few opportunities for in-service training, especially to refresh and upgrade teachers' knowledge and skills and to keep up with the changing curriculum. Thirdly, there are more acute shortages of competencies in certain subject matters, including ICT, Maths, Science and English.

Qualitative data shows that although the issue of competencies exists in both public and private schools, it is more frequently mentioned by respondents in public schools. In private schools, it has more to do with the need to improve existing teaching techniques rather than the lack of key knowledge and expertise. Insufficient competencies can lead to teachers being absent from classroom and reducing teaching time while in class. It was mentioned that when the teacher is not fully confident or prepared to deliver the lessons, they either decide not to enter the classroom or end the class earlier, reducing teaching time while in the classroom. According to interview results, this occurs mainly among teachers in public schools, which again reflects the quality issues in the current teacher-training schemes available to public school teachers.

Shortage of teachers could also exacerbate the challenge of teacher competencies, as teachers are sometimes requested to teach subjects they do not feel comfortable in, due to shortage of teachers in these particular subjects. For instance, when asked what factors could lead to teachers' reduced teaching time while in the classroom, an REO provided an example: "This can happen when the number of teachers is small compared with the number of pupils in a school. Every teacher has a specific subject that he or she has specialized in and mastered well. But because of shortage of teachers, some teachers are forced to teach subjects that they have not mastered well. This is common in rural schools all over Tanzania."

## Section 5: Bringing everything together: Commonalities and variations across different settings

Over the past decade, the Tanzania Mainland Government has made quality primary education a national priority and instituted a series of education policy changes to address challenges facing the primary education sector. Targeted efforts have also been made to improve teachers' attendance and motivation, by ensuring timely salary payment and enhancing the school quality-assurance systems, such as the provision of training and allowances to WEOs and head teachers. However, persistent challenges at different levels of the education system continue to affect teachers' attendance in Tanzania Mainland. The Time to Teach study focuses specifically on the issue of teachers' absenteeism in primary schools in Tanzania Mainland. It distinguishes between four types of teacher absenteeism and aims to identify the specific factors of each type in the context of Tanzania Mainland, and explore how each determinant affects different types of absenteeism. It also highlights the role of various education stakeholders, including the central-level, decentralized-level, community-level as well as school-level actors in monitoring and addressing the challenge of teacher absenteeism. This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the various challenges faced by teachers, especially system deficits that affect teachers' attendance and motivation, with a view to providing evidence-based policy recommendations to relevant education stakeholders in the country.

The selection of the 20 schools of this study follows a pre-defined qualitative sampling frame that covers two main types of schools in Tanzania Mainland: public and private, with the inclusion of faith-based and special-needs schools. It also covers two major geographic areas: rural and urban, across nine regions of the country. Based on a comprehensive analysis of the factors of four types of teacher absenteeism across five levels of the education system, some common themes have emerged across different types of schools and geographic locations, as well as evident variations among them.

### 5.1. Commonalities across the selected schools

Although the 20 selected schools cover a variety of geographic locations and school types in the country, based on analysis in previous sections, a number of similar experiences across the country have been identified, irrespective of school type or geographic location, summarized as follows.

1. At the national level, low salary and lack of promotion represents a major challenge that affects teachers' motivation and attendance across the board. Due to low income, many teachers have taken out loans, which exacerbates their financial burden. As a result, many of them resort to moonlighting activities to generate more income, which affects their teaching duty.
2. In-service training provided by both government and development partners was widely considered insufficient by respondents across the board.
3. Sub-national education actors play a key role in supporting schools, and in monitoring and discouraging teacher absenteeism. They not only provide quality assurance to schools, but also important technical, material and non-material support to teachers, improving their attendance.
4. Most of the communities in the sample experience acute infrastructural and material shortages, such as absence of health centres and banks, and lack of reliable transport and teacher housing, which impact different types of teacher absenteeism.
5. At the community level, parents' awareness and engagement in children's education is mixed. Despite persistent socio-economic challenges, there are parents who are actively supporting their children's education and providing necessary support to schools. However, low awareness

and support from some parents, due to low levels of education and poor economic conditions, represents a major barrier for teachers, affecting their motivation and their attendance.

6. At the school level, there is usually a monitoring system in place. Head teachers play an important role in supervising teacher attendance and performance, and teachers across the board are generally satisfied with the leadership and monitoring capacity of head teachers, which may have benefited from the allowance and training provided by the Government to head teachers.
7. Due to the shortage of teachers across the country, teachers are found to have heavy workloads, including teaching responsibilities as well as administrative tasks, which could carry them away from their duty station.
8. At the personal level, despite strong passion and respect for the teaching profession, many teachers do not have satisfactory levels of work ethics, impacting teaching time.

## 5.2. Variations across the selected schools

Despite these common experiences and challenges at different levels of the education system that affect teacher absenteeism, data analysis results show there are very important variations across different types of schools, different geographic locations and teachers with different personal traits.

Based on primary data analysis, it has become clear that in Tanzania Mainland, the public-private variations in terms of factors of teacher absenteeism are much more evident than rural-urban variations. This is largely due to the fact that teachers and schools in both rural and urban areas in Tanzania Mainland face similar challenges, including infrastructural, financial, material and capacity challenges. This can potentially explain why the rates of different types of teacher absences are as high in urban area – if not higher – as in rural areas, as suggested by the SDI study for instance.

However, due to differences in governance and incentive structure between public and private schools, field data has uncovered important variations between public and private school settings:

1. Free education and fee incentive: Given that private schools are not free, parents are found to have a stronger interest in following up on their children's education. On the other hand, the Government's free-education policy has led to accountability issues, where many parents of public school children have become disengaged from school affairs because they consider it the Government's responsibility. As a result, parents of private school children are generally found to be more engaged in school affairs than their public school counterparts and pupil absenteeism appears to be more prevalent among public schools than private schools, largely due to failure on the part of parents to encourage and follow up on their children's education. Pupils' hunger is much less common in private school settings than in public schools because of higher levels of parental support for private school children.
2. Sanctioning system: Private schools in Tanzania Mainland have stricter rules and stronger sanctioning systems in place, enforced by the head teacher or school owner, and the school has the final authority to exercise sanction, unlike public schools, which have to go through a lengthy bureaucratic process. Due to such a strong sanctioning system, private school teachers are less likely than their public school counterparts to be absent due to personal and family reasons.
3. Infrastructural and material challenges: It is evident that public schools in Tanzania Mainland face more acute infrastructural and material challenges than private schools, including school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials. However, the challenge of receiving pay is more acute in rural areas because there is usually a lack of financial services in rural communities.

4. School committee's role: Given that for private schools, the school owner has the final say in matters related to teachers, a school committee's role tends to be weaker in private schools compared with public schools, where school committees play a more active role in discouraging different types of absenteeism of teachers.
5. Training and teacher competencies: Teachers' competency challenge is more acute among public school teachers. Private school teachers, in general, have higher education levels and possess higher teaching qualifications. However, it was also found that teachers with higher levels of education and qualifications tend to show weaker work ethics and lower levels of satisfaction and motivation towards their teaching job.
6. Urban-rural differences: while there are limited urban-rural differences emerging from field data, it is important to note that parents in urban areas tend to be less engaged than rural areas, which is largely due to their engagement in economic activities.
7. Special-needs schools: Given the special context of special-needs schools, field data especially points out the importance of supplying school meals to children with disabilities, which has a huge impact on their learning. In addition, specialized knowledge and expertise in dealing with disabled children is required of head teachers of such special-needs schools, compared with head teachers of ordinary primary schools.

The analysis also clearly demonstrates that factors at different levels of the education system interact and reinforce one another. For instance, although existing projects and programmes on teachers' skills development provided by development partners have generated positive results, the challenges related to the provision of in-service training and the effectiveness of pre-service training are reflected in teachers' competency deficits and lack of work ethics. The centrally coordinated teacher recruitment and deployment policy has not been able to fully respond to the actual need for teachers, causing high PTRs and teachers' heavy workloads in many schools across the country. Allowances and transport support provided by the Government to WEOs and head teachers have enhanced monitoring capacity at the subnational and school level. And technical advice provided by subnational education actors to head teachers has helped the latter strengthen monitoring capacity, which is however undermined by teachers living far away from school.

The table below maps out all the major factors of each type of teachers' absenteeism at each level of the education system based on the conceptual frame of the study and the analysis of primary data from the field. It can be seen that for each type of teacher absenteeism, there are multiple contributing factors involving different levels of the education system.

Table 7: The major factors of teachers' absenteeism at each level of the education system

Factors by level of education system	School attendance	Punctuality	Classroom attendance	Teaching time in class
<b>National level</b>				
Remuneration and promotion policy	✓		✓	✓
Teachers' skills-development programmes	✓	✓	✓	
National initiatives for enhancing monitoring capacity	✓		✓	✓
<b>Subnational level</b>				
School visits and school quality assurance	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sanctioning capacity	✓			
<b>Community level</b>				
Community support and monitoring capacity	✓	✓		
Financial services	✓	✓		
Transport	✓	✓		
Teacher housing	✓	✓		
<b>School level</b>				
Head teacher's leadership and monitoring capacity	✓	✓	✓	✓
School infrastructure and teaching and learning materials			✓	✓
Teachers' workload	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupils' attendance and health	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Teacher level</b>				
Personal health challenges	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family duties and social obligations	✓	✓		
Professional behaviour and work ethics	✓	✓	✓	✓
Teachers' competencies			✓	✓

## Section 6: Improving teachers' attendance: Conclusions and ways forward

The Time to Teach study in Tanzania Mainland seeks to identify major themes and factors at each level of the education system that affect specific types of teacher absenteeism. The goal, however, is not to identify which type of teacher absenteeism deserves more attention than others, or to point out which level of authority in the education system ought to take on more responsibility to address this challenge. The analysis shows that all types of teacher absenteeism lead to reduced teaching time and can affect the quality of teacher-pupil interaction. Based on qualitative and quantitative data from the field, the study reveals that teachers' absenteeism of various types is impacted by multiple factors situated at different levels of the education system, from the individual teacher level, to the community level and up to the national level. Policies at the national level have direct and indirect impacts on the incentives and practices at other levels. Factors at the same level as well as across different levels of the education system can be inter-connected. It is therefore crucial to improve teachers' attendance from a system's perspective, an approach that involves education stakeholders at various levels, which sometimes even goes beyond the education sector.

Based on this understanding and drawing from the analysis in previous sections, nine policy challenges have been identified, which cut across and directly affect different types of teacher absenteeism. Promising ways forward are suggested following each policy challenge.

### 6.1. Implementation of salary upgrade and promotion guidelines

Field data consistently suggests that low salary and lack of promotion represents a major demotivating factor for teachers, which leads to teachers' heavy loan burdens and moonlighting activities. It is also clear the Government has not yet fully implemented the salary upgrade for all public school teachers. Moreover, the criteria for promoting teachers to higher salary grades are not clear and they currently do not correctly reflect teachers' qualifications, as teachers with different qualifications and years of experience are oftentimes found to be paid at similar levels.

Ways forward:

- First and foremost, it is important to make sure that all public school teachers benefit from salary increments in line with their contract as well as national remuneration policy.
- It would be useful to conduct a salary survey that assesses the financial situation of all teachers in the country, with a view to developing a better understanding of the actual needs of teachers living in both rural and urban areas. This will be useful for the Government in adjusting the salary scale, if necessary.
- There is need to develop clear promotion guidelines based on teachers' qualifications, years of experience and performance. Implementation of the promotion policy could benefit from existing evaluation systems such as the OPRAS, which few schools are actually using.

## 6.2. Addressing teacher shortage

The distribution of teachers across all primary schools in the country currently does not reflect the actual needs of schools. Across different regions of the country, there are schools with surplus teachers and those that experience acute shortages. The Government has made efforts to address this challenge by deploying secondary school teachers to the primary level, which, however, has created issues related to work ethics and language difficulties. The challenge of teacher shortage also has a direct impact on teachers' workloads, leading to various types of teacher absenteeism.

Ways forward:

- Although the current teacher recruitment and deployment system is centrally coordinated with inputs from district and regional levels, it is clear there are challenges in meeting the need for teachers across different regions and districts. As such, an assessment could be conducted, involving DEOs and REOs, to better understand the real challenges of deploying teachers to schools and areas that are most in need. DEOs and REOs could be allowed to play a stronger role in making sure that sufficient numbers of teachers are recruited and deployed according to their needs.
- Priority should be given to schools with extremely high PTRs and PCRs in the country. For instance, more teachers should be recruited and deployed to schools where the overall PTR is more than 100:1. At the same time, more attention should be paid to the actual class sizes of different grades and streams. Targeted efforts should be made to identify and address the issue of over-sized classes in each school.

## 6.3. Improving quality standards of pre-service training and increasing the provision of in-service training

It is clear that teachers' in-service training in Tanzania Mainland is currently largely supported by development partners, which lacks sustainability. The Government has a teacher professional development framework, focusing mainly on teacher- and community-driven approaches, which do not guarantee regular and systematic provision of quality in-service training and skills upgrades. Moreover, quality issues concerning pre-service training have emerged, with knowledge and skills gaps common among teachers holding relevant teaching qualifications. These training challenges have resulted in teachers' lack of competencies, which affects their overall attendance.

Ways forward:

- Given that private providers of teacher training account for the majority of training institutions in Tanzania Mainland, it is necessary to streamline entry requirements and quality standards that apply to both public and private teacher-training providers. The Teachers' Professional Board, once fully established, could play a key role in coordinating and monitoring all pre-service training programmes in the country, making sure all teachers graduating from training programmes have passed standard assessments and possess the same and sufficient level of knowledge and skills for teaching at the primary level.
- While the teacher- and community-driven approach of in-service professional development is useful, more formal and systematic provision of in-service training would be necessary. This is especially so in the context of the changing education system and curriculum, where teachers need to constantly update their knowledge and skills to respond to the requirements of the new curriculum.

- It is also recommended that all training programmes, be it pre-service or in-service, focus more on work ethics and professional behaviour in the training curriculum. Refresher training should be provided to all in-service teachers on work ethics. This could help mitigate the challenge of teachers' lack of professional behaviour across the board.

## 6.4. Strengthening the monitoring capacity of WEOs and school committees

Field data clearly points out that as part of the new School Quality Assurance framework, WEOs and school committees play an increasingly important role in providing quality assurance to schools, especially in the context of the limited resources of REOs, DEOs and school quality assurers, which limit their capacity to conduct visits and inspection on a regular and frequent basis. Thanks to the capacity building and allowances provided to WEOs, as well as their geographic proximity to the schools, WEOs are able to visit schools very frequently and feed useful information back to their hierarchy. School committees, on the other hand, represent the body closest to the school, and play an indispensable role in supporting schools and teachers. They have also been playing an effective part in addressing teacher absenteeism.

Ways forward:

- Given the capacity constraints of REOs, DEOs and quality assurers, there is room for schools to rely more on the WEOs for the monitoring of teachers. The functions of WEOs should go beyond visiting schools and reporting back to the district and regional level, and incorporate substantive elements such as providing technical support to teachers on teaching techniques and classroom-management skills, as well as regular updates on curriculum changes. Detailed guidelines that monitor all types of absenteeism should be provided to WEOs.
- Currently the role of school committees in monitoring teacher absences is relatively ad hoc. Relevant training should be provided to school committee members on monitoring, reporting and addressing teacher absenteeism.

## 6.5. Implementing standards and improving the capacity of head teachers to monitor and manage teachers

At the school level, head teachers are key to providing monitoring and quality assurance to teachers' work, as well as discouraging all types of absenteeism of teachers. The current monitoring mechanism at the school level, in most cases in the form of an attendance book, tends to focus only on teachers' school attendance and punctuality. In a few cases, there are classroom attendance records that keep track of teachers' sessions. It is clear that the ministry has suggested standards for sanctioning teachers in case of absence, such as giving a warning after a teacher is absent three times, or for five consecutive days. However, these rules have yet to be applied by all schools. Therefore, granting permissions for teachers to be absent or late for personal, family or social reasons is still largely at the discretion of head teachers.

Ways forward:

- There is need to incorporate monitoring of all types of teacher attendance into the capacity-building programme for head teachers. For instance, the adoption of "class journals" and records of teachers' teaching activities could be more widely adopted by school management.
- Private schools have stricter rules when it comes to granting permissions, which public schools could draw from, including stronger enforcement of the three-time rule. It is necessary to monitor

the implementation of head teacher guidelines, especially for public schools, to make sure head teachers adhere to basic rules when granting permissions to teachers.

- For special-needs schools, there is need to appoint head teachers with specialized knowledge and expertise in working with disabled children. This will provide much needed technical support to teachers' work.

## 6.6. Campaigns to increase parents' awareness and engagement in children's education

The low level of parents' awareness and engagement in their children's education constitutes a major barrier for teachers across the country. This is in part due to parents' low education levels and their engagement in income-generating activities, but is also a result of the campaign message of the free-education policy, which was largely misinterpreted by parents. The policy, which was meant to increase primary enrolment, has created a "moral hazard" among parents in a sense that they have become largely disengaged from their children's education and consider education a Government responsibility.

Ways forward:

- Campaigns at the national and subnational level for the free-education policy should make sure they send the right message, and advocate for more participation and cooperation of parents and communities in school affairs and children's learning.
- At the community level, school committees and community leaders could play a more proactive role in raising awareness of parents about their responsibilities for their children's education.

## 6.7. Timely provision of school infrastructure and teaching and learning materials

Dilapidated infrastructure and shortage of teaching and learning materials affects teachers' attendance, especially in public school settings. Despite the Government's efforts in lowering the pupil-textbook ratio and PCRs, acute textbook shortages and congested classrooms are still commonly seen across the country. In some cases, the PCR can be as high as 200:1, especially in public schools and in lower grades.

Ways forward:

- Given the frequent rainfall in the country and the need to improve the quality of existing school infrastructure, in the country's education infrastructure development planning, priority should be given to both, construction of new classrooms, as well as rehabilitation of existing classroom infrastructure that does not provide a safe physical school environment for children. Quality standards should be better complied with by constructors.

## 6.8. Supporting the provision of quality transport and teacher housing

The unavailability and unreliability of transport represents a huge challenge for teachers in both rural and urban areas. However, for private schools, since school buses are usually available, the challenge is more related to the reliability of school buses rather than that of public transport or private means. Moreover, given the generally low salary of teachers, transport costs put a burden on many teachers, which also affects their attendance and motivation. In addition, the lack of quality teacher housing for teachers and their family members also constitutes an important cause for absenteeism.

Ways forward:

- In order to better respond to the need for teacher housing, it would be useful to understand the current teacher housing situation across the country and teachers' actual demand for housing. Therefore, a nationwide mapping exercise could be conducted, led by DEOs and REOs, which would look at the various challenges teachers are facing in terms of distance from school, transport difficulties, cost of renting houses and taking public transport, and the availability and quality of existing teacher housing. This will help the Government make decisions about what and where to prioritize in the construction of new teacher housing.
- Public schools could be encouraged to organize dedicated transport for teachers, for instance, renting a bus and hiring a dedicated driver. This could be piloted in urban areas as it might be difficult for schools in rural areas. Having a school bus could, to some extent, mitigate the challenge of transport for public school teachers, and lessen their financial burden.

## 6.9. Mitigating the challenge of accessing financial and health services

Most communities in Tanzania Mainland experience service shortages, including lack of health centres and financial institutions. These have a direct impact on teacher attendance. Field data shows health challenges are common in Tanzania Mainland, including teachers' own health issues and those of their family members, leading to absenteeism of various types. The absence of banks in many communities forces teachers to travel long distance to receive their monthly payment, which leads to teacher exhaustion and absence. It might be beyond the mandate of the education sector to directly address health challenges and community-level infrastructure challenges, but there are things education actors can do to mitigate these challenges.

Ways forward:

- As experience from some schools shows, to address the difficulty in receiving pay in remote communities, dedicated "pay days" could be coordinated by head teachers, where teachers take turns to receive their salaries. The head teacher would be responsible for coordinating teachers' sessions so as to minimize the impact of teachers' absence on pupils' learning.
- In view of the expanding internet coverage across the country and the increasing use of smartphones among teachers, mobile banking could be more actively promoted among teachers so they could both receive and spend money from their phones. The Government could take the lead in discussing ways to operationalize this initiative with communication and financial-service providers in the country.
- The Government could consider deploying health workers to schools that do not have or are far from health facilities. This will help to address both teachers' and pupils' health issues and reduce the time lost due to the need to go to hospital.
- It is recommended that MoEST and PORALG continue to work and coordinate with other line ministries to promote the provision and improvement of social services in the most deprived communities across the country.

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