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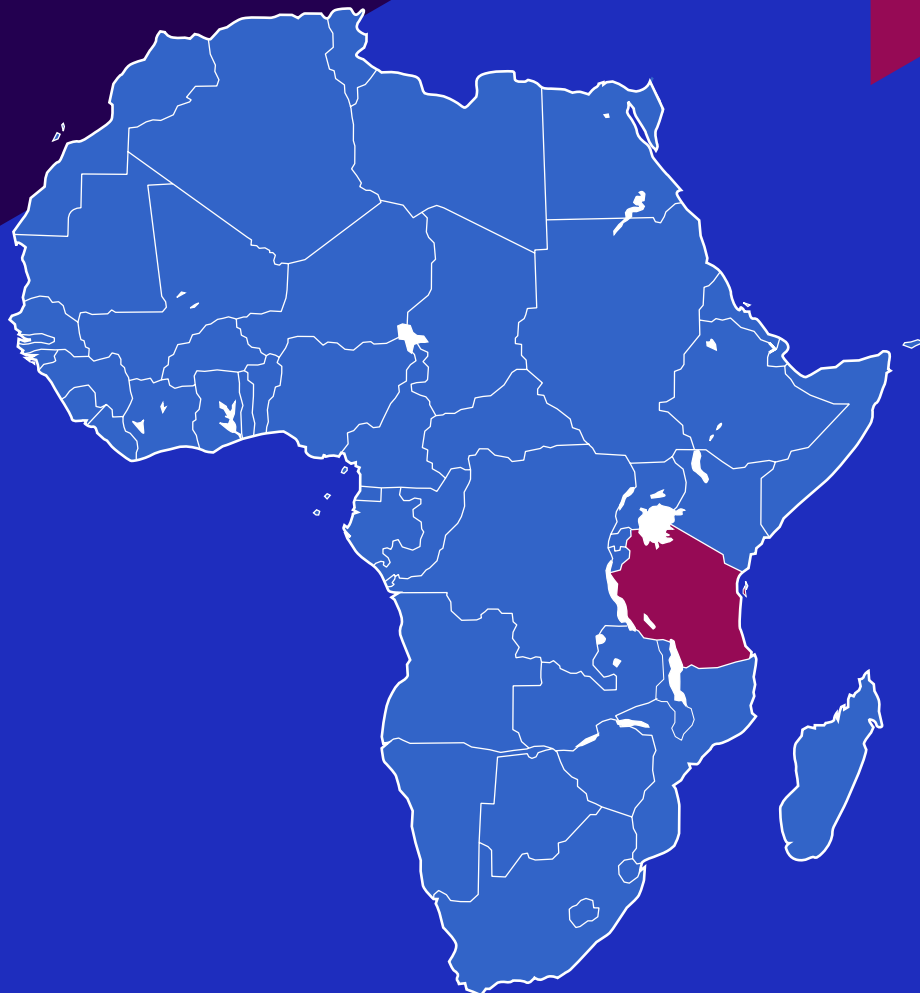
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Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

Background report

▶ Digitalization in teaching and education in the context of COVID-19: United Republic of Tanzania

Digitalization, the future of work and the teaching profession project

Patrick Renatus Manyengo



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With financial support from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

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First published 2021

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Graphic and typographic design, layout and composition,
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Code: JMB-REP

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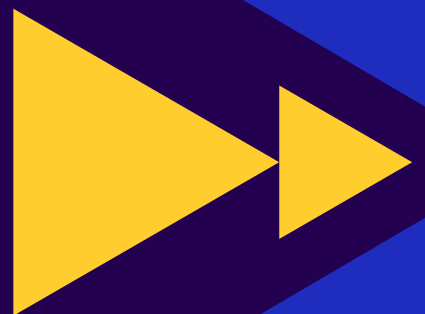
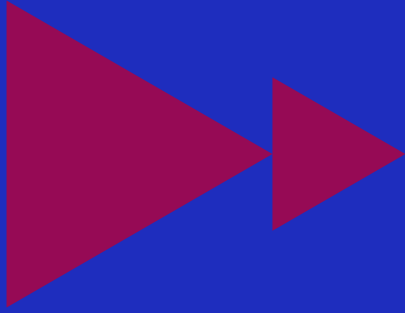
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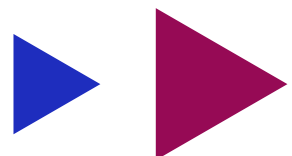


► 1. COVID-19 and Tanzanian education context

Following the first confirmed case of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United Republic of Tanzania on 16 March 2020, the Tanzanian Government banned all public gatherings and closed all educational institutions, including pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, as well as technical and vocational education and training institutions and universities on 17 March 2020. To ensure that learning continued during school closures the Tanzanian Government, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, utilized radio and television programming as well as YouTube to deliver lessons to students. Equally, owners of private schools sought means by which students could be engaged in learning remotely.

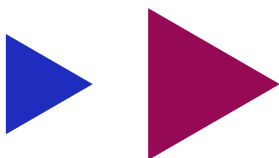
The pandemic exposed a deep digital divide in the country, but has also presented opportunities to further integrate technology into education. Despite the United Republic of Tanzania graduating to a lower-middle-income status in 2019, much more needs to be done to alleviate poverty and ensure inclusion and equity in education, for example by providing electricity to rural areas, including schools, and investing in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure. According to the Ministry of Energy (Government of United Republic of Tanzania 2020a), by December 2020, 2,384 villages out of 12,884 are still to be provided with electricity. The government plans to supply electricity to all villages by 2025. With electrical power in all villages, government educational institutions will also have electricity, providing greater opportunities for the use of ICT for teaching and learning.

In late June 2020, the United Republic of Tanzania became the first country in East Africa to reopen its educational institutions. Some of the measures taken by both the public and private sectors in the immediate and medium terms, as well as future plans and projections for the education sector, are highlighted in the subsequent sections.



▶ 2. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study involved collection and review of documents capturing COVID-19 prevention and response initiatives, relevant education policies and literature related to education, ICT and the COVID-19 pandemic. The reviewed documents were supported by information from key informant interviews with officials from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Tanzania Institute of Education and Tanzania Teachers' Union.



► 3. Education sector response to COVID-19

3.1 Immediate impact and responses

Following the closure of schools on 17 March 2020, the Tanzania Institute of Education, in collaboration with other stakeholders, was tasked with preparing lessons to be aired on television and radio programmes. Both audio and video lessons were recorded in accordance with primary and secondary school syllabuses. Community and national radio were utilized to maximize reach, including to remote areas. In Dodoma region, for example, six radio stations were used to broadcast live and interactive lessons, whereby students from their homes could ask questions by phoning in or by texting the teachers presenting from the radio studios. An interview with a Tanzania Institute of Education key informant revealed that close to 80 per cent of television stations utilized were private, including Zuku TV, Azam TV, Upendo TV and Clouds Plus. Azam TV, for example, dedicated one of its channels (UTV) to school lessons. The Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation, a public TV station, was mainly used by the National Examination Council of Tanzania for programmes directed at students in form VI¹ preparing for national examinations, which were scheduled to start on 29 June 2020.

All programmes aired during the COVID-19 pandemic can be accessed through the Tanzania Institute of Education YouTube channel. YouTube was also used by some regions to provide opportunities for continued learning. Morogoro region, for example, developed its own YouTube channel named Eteta, which was used by students in the region to access learning content. The YouTube channel is continuously updated for students to continue learning even after the reopening of schools. Despite these measures, many students were not able to access lessons during school closures due to not owning televisions, radios or digital devices, and the absence of parental support for remote learning.

Individual schools, particularly private schools and some public schools located in towns and cities, used messaging applications, such as WhatsApp, and communication platforms, such as Zoom, to engage students in learning remotely (Todd 2020). Teachers and parents often communicated and shared lessons and learning materials through messaging applications. However, lack of access to electricity, internet connectivity, computers, smart phones and data amongst some families inhibited many students from accessing remote learning. Some telecommunication companies reduced tariffs and introduced internet bundles to allow students to access learning material (The Citizen 2020a).

Some schools provided students with printed notes and notebook packages to continue learning from home. According to a key informant at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, some parents, however, could not afford to purchase printed notes and internet bundles for downloading learning materials, while other parents lacked the skills needed to use digital devices to facilitate the learning process. These were among the reasons that the government initiated teaching and learning through television and radio (United Nations 2020).

The immediate response to remote and distance learning revealed the deep digital divide between rural and urban areas, as well as between students from poor and well-to-do families (Makoye 2020). In 2019, 65.5 per cent of the total population of the United Republic of Tanzania lived in rural areas (World Bank 2020). Many of those students living in rural areas were not able to participate in remote learning due to limited internet connectivity, lack of access to needed devices and limited availability of some parents to closely monitor their children's learning.

According to media sources, during school closures, some girls assumed household responsibilities, such as cooking, washing clothes and taking care of siblings, resulting in them missing radio and TV broadcasted lessons. In some cases, girls have also been subjected to forms of harassment and domestic violence

¹ The Tanzanian education system consists of pre-primary, primary (standards I–VII), ordinary secondary (forms I–IV), advanced secondary (forms V–VI) and college or university.

(UNOCHA 2020; Robi 2020; Makoye 2020). School closures not only impacted learning, but also presented challenges in relation to school dropouts, early pregnancies, early marriages and delayed return of some private school students due to inability to pay school fees. Research by Human Rights Watch (Odhiambo and Martinez 2018) indicates that early marriages, pregnancies and parenthood are some of the factors driving girls out of school. Some schools discourage or ban married, pregnant and parenting girls from attending school.

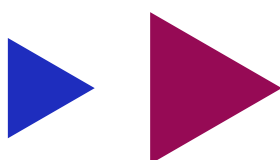
3.2 Medium-term impact and responses

Educational institutions reopened on 29 June 2020 following improvements in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Prior to the reopening of schools, the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children issued guidelines (Government of United Republic of Tanzania 2020b) to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in school settings, including by respecting social distancing, installing handwashing facilities and arranging running water and supporting regular handwashing and wearing of face masks (Makoye 2020). The guidelines stipulate, for example, that school management, in some cases in collaboration with health personnel from regional and district levels, should educate teachers and students on COVID-19 symptoms and preventive measures upon school reopening (Government of United Republic of Tanzania 2020b). Community instruction on preventing and handling COVID-19 cases was delivered through television and radio by health professionals (United Nations 2020).

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology reorganized the school calendar to compensate for the instructional time lost during school closures. A set time frame was established for schools to cover the syllabus and an additional two hours were added to the daily school timetable to allow for the material missed during school closures to be covered (Government of United Republic of Tanzania 2020b). The additional two hours, however, according to a key informant at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, were later found to be impractical due to various reasons, including student transportation issues, lack of school meals and scheduling issues for schools with double shifts or sessions. The ministry eventually ordered schools to resume their normal timetables, removing the additional two hours.

3.3 Long-term plans and projections

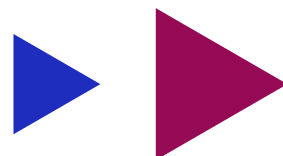
In May 2020, the Tanzanian Government established a team of various stakeholders to conduct a survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector. The findings of this survey will inform future plans in the education sector, as noted by a key informant at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, the government was working towards improving the digital infrastructure in the country and the capacity of teachers in that regard. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the need to invest in training teachers in the use of ICT for teaching and learning. In the first week of November 2020, for example, a total of 601 teachers from public primary and secondary schools underwent ICT training (Daily News 2020). The training is part of the implementation of the National ICT Policy of 2003, which was revised in 2016, and the Education and Training Policy of 2014. Both policies encourage the use of ICT in the teaching and learning process at various levels of education. The pandemic gave further credence to the Education Sector Development Plan 2016/17–2020/21 (updated in July 2018), which insists on the increased availability of ICT facilities to enhance teaching and learning at all levels of education (Government of United Republic of Tanzania 2018).



▶ 4. Impact of COVID-19 on the teaching profession

Following the closure of education institutions, many private schools introduced distance teaching and learning. Teachers prepared learning material at home and shared it with their students or their parents through messaging applications, email and learning and communication platforms. Lack of electronic devices, such as computers, smart phones and tablets, hindered the teaching and learning process.

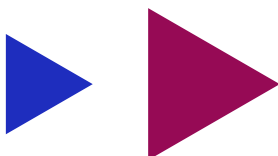
In some private schools, some teachers were paid full salaries, some were paid half salaries and others were not paid at all due to economic hardships resulting from school closures. The economic hardships arose from the fact that many private schools rely on student fees in order to pay teachers' salaries. In some cases, teachers' contracts were terminated as schools could not afford to retain them, and in other cases teachers were put on unpaid leave (The Citizen 2020b; Carvalho and Hares 2020; Kilimwiko 2020). Due to loss of income, some teachers left their respective schools for other income-generating opportunities. After schools were reopened, some private schools immediately paid all their salary arrears, while other schools made payments in instalments. In public schools, teachers continued to receive their monthly salaries throughout the school closure.

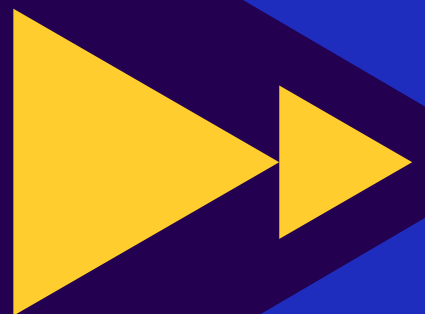
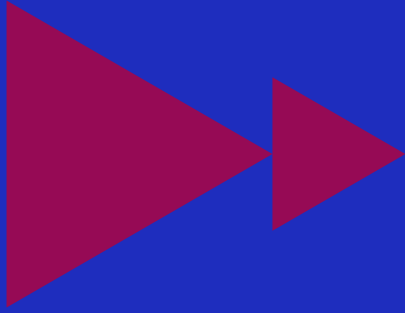


► 5. Governance and COVID-19 response

Most of the decisions related to the COVID-19 crisis were made centrally by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, as they are responsible for overseeing the pandemic and minimizing its spread and ensuring the continuity of learning, respectively. Based on key informant interviews, it appears that no comprehensive plan to ensure resilience to future education crises is in development; however, this may change upon the release of the report on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the education sector, as initiated in May 2020.

The Tanzania Teachers' Union and the Tanzania Association of Managers and Owners of Non-Government Schools and Colleges were consulted by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on how teachers could continue to engage students in learning during school closures. The President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government, collaborated with the Tanzania Teachers' Union on how to engage students in learning through radio and TV programmes (interview with Secretary-General of Tanzania Teachers' Union). The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology facilitated and funded all the efforts involved in the preparation, delivery and evaluation of activities that allowed for remote teaching and learning.





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