

Restoring Teacher Dignity: Quality Education, TDMS, and the 2010/11 Budget

The following is a brief of a report by HakiElimu by the same title which highlights certain programs within the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) that have been left unimplemented due to under-funding and offers ideas on how such funding may be provided. For further reading and all sources, see the full report.

As the development of Tanzania moves forward, the role that each and every citizen has to play in the process is becoming more and more apparent. Through unified, collective efforts we achieve more than we could as individuals.

One of the key tools that citizens of a representative government create to achieve their common goals is the national budget. The budget is a guide that helps efficiently transform funds into improvements in service delivery, such as safer drinking water, more reliable health services, and better roads.

And just as the budget has implications on social services such as water, health, and infrastructure, so it does on education as well. These implications are not merely in terms of material progress such as schools constructed, books bought, and exams administered. They potentially translate into the real desired results of education—learner outcomes by which children, community members, and citizens attain the capacities to think critically, solve complex problems, and discover creative solutions to propel communities and the nation forward.

The following is a brief on how to improve these learner outcomes by adjusting certain budget mechanisms. The key solutions identified are:

- 1) **Provide incentives for teachers posted in remote schools.**
- 2) **Upgrade licensed and paraprofessional secondary school teachers.**
- 3) **Ensure opportunities for professional growth through in-service training.**

What is TDMS?

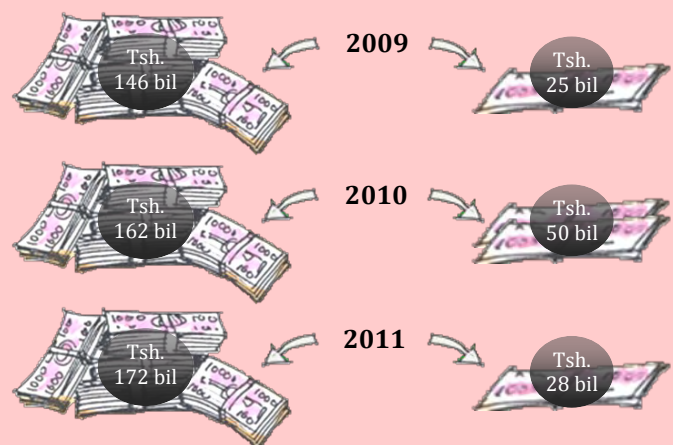
Fortunately, Tanzania already has a strategy in place ready to deal with these matters. The Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS), a five-year plan formulated by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, was passed in 2008. Its stated aim is “to address the existing demand for teachers, while attempting to

address challenges related to quality, including teachers’ professionalism, management and motivation.” Together, its 13 strategic objectives are designed “to have and sustain adequate numbers of competent teachers and tutors to effectively support the pre-primary, primary, secondary, adult and non-formal education, as well as Teachers’ Colleges.” All of this aims at ensuring that Tanzania’s future generations have the best educators and the best education so they may lead their communities and country well.

Though it addresses many of the issues plaguing the teaching profession and learner outcomes, TDMS has not received enough funds in the national budget to even provide for a minimal level of its implementation.

Budget in TDMS Policy

Actual TDMS Budget



Provide Remote Incentives

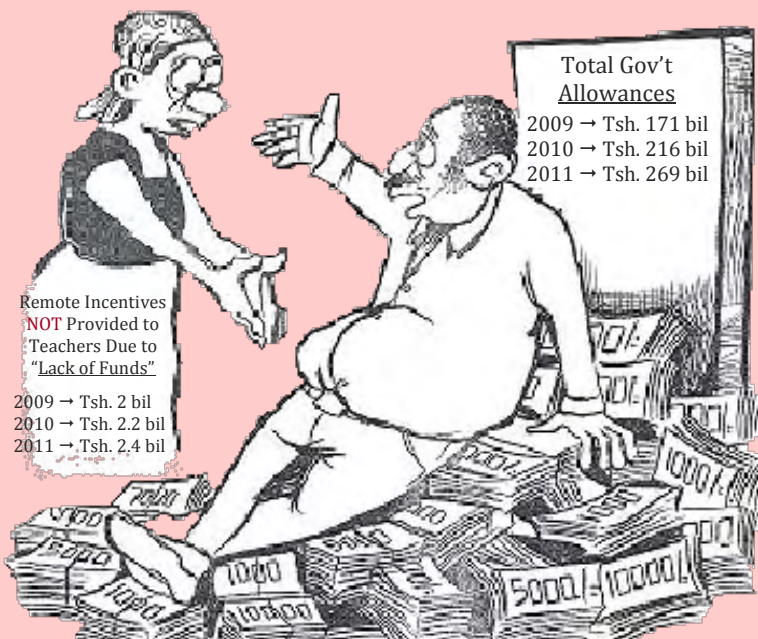
One of the elements of TDMS is to provide incentives to teachers working in remote areas. Also known as hardship allowances, such incentives may be flat rate bonuses or percentage increases in salaries.

Remote incentives are an effective means of retaining teachers in rural areas. Tanzania currently struggles with this issue as many new teachers who are posted to remote areas do not report to work, transfer to urban schools, or quit their jobs in the first year, a trend costing the country Tsh. 511 million annually.

This results in teacher shortages particularly in rural areas. Despite a national target of one teacher per 40 students, recent research by the Ministry found rural schools to average one teacher for 59 students and one school to have only one teacher for 283 students!

To address this, the Ministry allocates more new teachers to rural schools than urban schools every year. In 2008, even though the Ministry planned for nine out of ten new teachers to be posted in rural areas, by the end of the year, more new teachers had ended up in urban schools than rural ones. Addressing the teacher shortage when this trend exists is like trying to fill a bucket with water when there are huge holes in the bottom: a lot of water will be wasted, it's questionable if the bucket will ever be full, and even if it may become momentarily full, it will immediately start draining again.

Remote incentives, which help alleviate this issue, are a provision in TDMS but have not been implemented due to budget shortfalls. This is not an issue of the availability of public funds, however, but of how public funds are used. The relatively small amount of hardship allowances are not provided to teachers while allowances for mostly central government officials increase drastically year after year.



While the Tanzanian government fails to commit even 1% of its total allowances to rural teachers as remote incentives, neighboring countries have succeeded in implementing remote incentives. Uganda, for example, established a 20% salary increase hardship allowance in 2001 and just

raised it to 30% this year. How long will the Tanzanian government lag behind?

Upgrade Licensed & Paraprofessional Teachers

Another important component of TDMS is its objective to upgrade licensed teachers to degree-holders because the under-qualifications of teachers is also negatively impacting learner outcomes. Though the Tanzanian government has succeeded in increasing student enrollment and constructing secondary schools, this one-sided approach has resulted in a human resource strain.

To cope, secondary schools, particularly the more recently built community schools, are forced to hire the least qualified teachers. According to Ministry research, on average half of the teachers at government secondary schools are diploma-holders and the other half are degree-holders. But at community secondary schools on the other hand, there are almost no degree-holders, and three out of ten teachers only have licenses or are Form VI leavers community-hired as "paraprofessional" teachers. The level of education a teacher has attained affects the quality of education he or she can bestow onto students, and it is estimated that schools nationwide are paying Tsh. 59.8 billion annually to these under-qualified teachers, even though their contributions to learner outcomes appear to be marginal.

TDMS's initiative to upgrade these teachers into the qualified professionals they need to be would cost Tsh. 7.5 billion in 2011, but again, it looks like the Ministry has not supplied the budget to achieve this. This need not be the case, as there seems to be plenty of money elsewhere.

For example, looking at higher education, while other African countries such as Kenya allocate an appropriate 20% (or one out of every five shillings) of their education funds to higher education, Tanzania has been giving higher education an average of 26% of all education funds and just increased its share in 2011 to be 36% (or one out of every three shillings)!

Despite taking up a third of the education budget, higher education serves only 1.5% of all types of students enrolled in any form of education in Tanzania. For example, comparing only university and secondary school students, there are currently only 118,911 government university and university college students in Tanzania while there

are 1,388,347 (12 times as many) enrolled in government secondary schools.

The high budget and low enrollment in higher education means that, even if you exclude student loans, the Ministry is spending much more money per university student than secondary school student:



Even excluding student loans, the gov't annually spends an average of 19 times more per each university student than each secondary school student.



Naturally the inputs of higher education are more expensive and it is difficult to advocate cuts in one education sector to provide improvements in another, but is there no way that this extreme disparity between higher and secondary education can be remedied? With the higher education budget increased to Tsh. 698 billion in 2011, cannot just 1% of this go toward TDMS's teacher upgrade component to improve secondary education? With the increased enrollment in secondary schools, the budget must be rectified so as ensure that the masses, not just the elite, receive a quality education in order to lead the country into a brighter future.

Ensure Opportunities for Professional Growth

TDMS also includes several measures to ensure opportunities for professional growth for teachers, particularly in-service training. Such training is not only important to refresh teachers to enable them to best teach their students but also because it helps address a leading problem in the

Tanzanian education system: teacher absenteeism. Research from the Ministry shows that on average over 13% of primary and secondary school teachers are not at work for months or even years at a time:



Out of every 15 teachers that are being paid to teach, two of them are nowhere to be found at school.

This teacher absenteeism is estimated to represent a total loss of Tsh. 58.7 billion per year, not to mention the loss of knowledge to Tanzania's children and future leaders.

Research suggests that a successful means of curbing teacher absenteeism is to provide professional development opportunities such as in-service training that keep teachers interested in their careers. Tanzania's TDMS has an entire multistage objective to "ensure continued in-service teacher training and professional growth," much of which focuses on the reviving of Teachers' Resource Centers (TRC), places teachers can go for additional training and teaching resources. Though there are 600 TRCs nationwide, they are reported to have been neglected over the years, to offer little services, and to have even less resources, despite their name. Indeed, most of TDMS's in-service training budget is directed toward strengthening TRCs.

TDMS's price tag for in-service training in 2011 is Tsh. 22.9 billion, but it has not received this funding because of the low priority given to TDMS. These priorities must be reconsidered. It is poor financial management to allow teacher absenteeism that costs the country Tsh. 58.7 billion a year to continue while it could be curbed by a in-service training strategy that costs less than half that amount.

Can Tanzania Afford Not to Implement TDMS?

As discussed, the Teacher Development and Management Strategy (TDMS) contains measures that, if taken, can ensure a more quality education to Tanzania's children and youth, a quality education that will facilitate a more sustainable growth for Tanzania as a whole as it moves into the future. This brief has focused on three of TDMS's objectives that can enable this growth, namely, to:

- 1) **Provide incentives for teachers posted in remote schools.**
- 2) **Upgrade licensed and paraprofessional secondary school teachers.**
- 3) **Ensure opportunities for professional growth through in-service training.**

However, these measures have not been fully taken as TDMS remains vastly under-funded as a low budget priority.

Tragically, the failure to implement these measures results in the nation paying for the very losses TDMS could prevent. While in 2011

TDMS would cost Tsh. 102 billion, even more money will be spent on factors that diminish the quality of education in Tanzania:

Cost of newly-graduated teachers not reporting or abandoning their posts:	Tsh. 511 mil
Cost of licensed and paraprofessional teachers not contributing as greatly to learner outcomes:	Tsh. 59.8 bil
Cost of primary school teacher absenteeism:	Tsh. 47 bil
Cost of secondary school teacher absenteeism:	<u>Tsh. 11.7 bil</u>
	Tsh. 119 bil

Of course, the costs of not implementing TDMS don't stop here. The loss in national resources created year after year by under-educated primary and secondary school students leaving the education system with less-than-desired capacities to help themselves and their country is vast and immeasurable. At the same time, finding the resources required to implement TDMS may be much more in reach than previously thought, and implementing TDMS may very well be cheaper than not.

One is indeed reminded of the quote by Derek Bok, academic and lawyer, who was cited by Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda in a speech in 2008: "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." The case of TDMS shows how costly doing the unwise thing can be. The question that remains is: How much longer will Tanzania pay for ignorance?

