

OVERVIEW OF TANZANIA SCHOOL SYSTEM

Education sponsors donate funds to Songea's Kids so that all children students cared for by Jirani Mwema are supported in school so they learn skills to support themselves and their future families. What is the education system in Tanzania?

The Tanzanian education system is 2-7-4-2-3+. The first 2 years of pre-primary education are followed by 7 years of primary education (compulsory), 4 years of ordinary level secondary education, and 2 years advanced level secondary education. University education ordinarily covers a minimum of 3 years. There are 194 school days per year. Each day a pupil should receive between three and four hours of school learning per day (that is, 8 lesson periods of 40 minutes each for Standards 3 to 7 and 30 minutes each for Standards 1 and 2).

PRE- PRIMARY SCHOOL (Ages 5-6 years)

Most schools are organized so children attend from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. At 10.00 am, the children eat porridge and rest for a short time. In the 5 year-old class, the children's basic studies are counting, singing, and playing. At 6 years, they do exercises in writing and mathematics. Books are given to them for more studies.

Before 1990, there were few pre-primary schools. In the mid 1990's, many pre-primary schools emerged, mostly government schools. Beginning in 2000, many private pre-primary schools started and challenged government pre-primary schools. There are different fee structures for government and private schools, with the private schools being more expensive. Pre-primary schools are so essential to Tanzanian children, which is why the villagers of Mshangano asked Jirani Mwema and Songea's Kids to build a nursery/pre-primary school as part of Hope Village.

Boarding Pre-Primary School

- Dormitories are not enough and not satisfactory
- Funds to support workers
- Shortage of teachers
- Late fee payment
- Sickness like malaria, diarrhea and skin diseases.
- Lack of playground
- Lack of books

CHALLENGES CHILDREN FACE.

- Access to daily pre-primary schools
- Transport to the school from far distances
- Funds to pay workers like teachers and cooks
- Shortage of teachers with experience and education in the field
- Food support to the children
- Late payment of fees by parents and guardians
- Sicknesses like malaria, diarrhea, skin diseases
- Truancy
- Inadequate rooms for studies and playgrounds.

PRIMARY SCHOOL (Standard 1-7--Ages 7-14 Years)

Most problems and challenges are similar to those of pre-primary schools. The main challenges here are the shortage of laboratories, classrooms, books and teachers. But the government is providing a lot of effort to solve the problem. Besides government day schools, there are primary boarding schools, although some private primary schools offer a day system. Primary education is basic to all Tanzanians according to Tanzania government laws. To advance to secondary school O level, students must pass the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) to attend a government school. However, the student may choose to join a private secondary school, which is more expensive. Those who do not pass the examination also can seek to attend a private school. Private schools are more expensive..

SECONDARY SCHOOL

This level is divided into two:

- **Ordinary Secondary Education** (O Level—Form 1-4) covers ages 14 years to 18 years. There are 4 areas of studies. Students study all arts and science subjects in English, except classes in *Kiswahili* and French. The Form 4 student is supposed to pass 3 subjects of interest to advance to A level studies.
- **Advanced Secondary Education** (A Level—Form 5-6) covers ages 18 to 20 years old. A student chooses three subjects to study according to her/his interest. Students study in either a government day school or a private day or boarding school. Many schools emerged since 2000 and the parents are aware of the need for Secondary Education. Major challenges in this point of education include:
 - Language barrier because English is medium of studies but is not the student's native language
 - Shortage of books for teachers and students, especially science books
 - Students with disabilities have difficulty since the schools lack facilities and equipment to support them
 - Transport to daily schools because of shortage of specified cars for students only
 - Students with HIV in boarding schools
 - Common sicknesses such as malaria and skin diseases
 - Shortage of a safe, permanent water system and wells.

Students who fail classes or do not pass exams for secondary school hope to get vocational training so they learn skills to give them power to stand on their own. They study subjects such as computers, mechanics, tailoring and carpentry.

UNIVERSITY

Some students advance to three years of university studies and get a diploma if they have sponsorship from the government or private sources. In 2010 Songea's Kids is working through Jirani Mwema to support its first university scholarship student, thanks to a USA sponsor. Lucy is studying economics at Dodoma University.

Special thanks to Tanzania secondary school teacher Josephina Kaziulaya for this summary.