



Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium  
for Monitoring Educational Quality

## Quality of Primary School Inputs in Zanzibar

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### Introduction

This paper highlights the quality of four primary school inputs in Zanzibar in relation to the nation's defined benchmarks. The four inputs are: basic learning materials, mathematics textbooks, pupil-teacher ratios, and class size. These four indicators are described in the section titled Selected Indicators, where it is also shown how they are related to the quality of education. The data used in this paper were collected in 2007 from 2,791 Standard 6 pupils in 143 primary schools in all five regions in Zanzibar. This was part of a major international study known as the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) III Project. The SACMEQ III Project sought to examine the quality of education provided in primary schools in Zanzibar and 14 other African school systems.

The results in this paper cover Zanzibar as a whole, and are then further disaggregated by regions, school location (rural versus urban), and type of school (government versus private). The results from the SACMEQ II Project (2000) are also provided, to enable monitoring the general trend in the provision of the selected inputs in primary schools in Zanzibar between 2000 and 2007.

### Background

After the 1964 revolution, Zanzibar introduced Free Compulsory Education (FCE) from Standard 1 to Form 2. The FCE was introduced as an effort to realize Universal Compulsory Education (UCE) and to attain the Education for All (EFA) goals. As a result, all fees were waived in all government (public) schools, which meant that that no children,

especially from poor families, would be denied access to basic education, because of their inability to pay school fees. Before the introduction of FCE, schools were responsible for collecting funds from parents for purchasing teaching and learning materials, and other operational expenses, while the government was mainly responsible for the payment of teachers' salaries.

Under the FCE policy, schools in Zanzibar receive teaching and learning materials (for example, charts, teachers' guides, and textbooks) from the central government. However, unlike in Tanzania Mainland, schools in Zanzibar do not receive money from the central government for operational expenses. Parents are required to contribute funds to support the running of schools. The guidelines for the amount of funds to be contributed by parents are provided by the Ministry of Education. Schools themselves, through School Management Committees (SMC), can decide to increase the amount at an agreed reasonable level. However, according to the ministry's guidelines, no pupil can be expelled from school, because of failure to make this contribution. Schools are required to make every effort to convince parents to contribute towards the education of their children. Ideally, a primary school pupil is supposed to contribute TShs 3,000 (about US\$ 2) per year. Parents are also required to provide basic learning materials (for example, exercise books, pencils, pens, erasers, and rulers) because these are not provided by the government (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT), 2006).

Apart from the provision of teaching and learning materials, mentioned above, and the payment of teachers' salaries, the government is also primarily responsible for the improvement of existing facilities, the building of new classrooms, and building new

primary schools through the Strengthening of Primary Education Project (SPEP) and the Zanzibar Basic Education Improvement Project (ZABEIP). Public schools in Zanzibar can also access government funding for the construction and improvement of facilities through funds from the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) and also from the constituencies' parliamentary members. Private schools in Zanzibar do not receive any kind of funds from the government. However, private schools have the freedom to decide on what amount to charge for fees and levies (MoEVT, 1999).

The provision of textbooks and the supply of teachers in public schools in Zanzibar are centrally controlled. Class sizes are also centrally controlled and schools do not decide on the number of pupils to be enrolled.

The SACMEQ data are ideal for examining the progress made by Zanzibar in the provision of school resources for at least two reasons. Firstly, the data were collected using modern scientific sampling techniques that are known to be reliable. Secondly, the data are available for two time points (2000 and 2007). This made it possible to monitor the quality of school inputs in Zanzibar over time.

## Selected Indicators

The four indicators of the quality of school inputs are: (a) basic learning materials, (b) mathematics textbooks, (c) pupil-teacher ratios, and (d) class size. The descriptions of these four indicators have been provided in Table 1 below together with the set benchmarks for Zanzibar.

Basic learning materials (that is, possession of at least one exercise book, something to write with, and a ruler) are considered crucial to ensure that the pupils participate reasonably in learning activities in the classrooms. Therefore, it is desirable for all pupils to have these materials. A ruler is especially important for mathematics and science lessons, particularly for the upper primary school classes (Standards four to seven). Likewise, it is desirable for each pupil to have sole use of a textbook (especially for the core subjects, such as reading, mathematics, and science), because research evidence has shown that sole use of textbooks is essential for effective teaching and learning in the classroom. Sole use of textbooks is also preferable, because it enables pupils to undertake academic activities at home, such as doing homework and revising school work.

Concerning pupil-teacher ratios and class size, research evidence shows that lower values are desirable for better quality education. It is thought that, to a certain limit, lower values on these two indicators are associated with more interaction between teachers and pupils, resulting in better quality education. Pupil-teacher ratios and class size are also key indicators for checking if expansion in participation rates is accompanied by adequate provision of teachers and classrooms.

The recommended pupil-teacher ratios and class size for primary schools in Zanzibar are 40 pupils per teacher, and 45 pupils per class, respectively (MoEVT, 2006).

**Table 1: National Benchmarks for the Selected Indicators of the Quality of Education**

Selected Indicator	Description of the Indicator	National Benchmark
Basic learning materials	Pupil has at least one exercise book, a pencil or a pen, and a ruler	100%
Mathematics textbooks	Pupil has sole use of a mathematics textbook during mathematics lessons	100%
Pupil-teacher ratios	Total number of pupils in a school divided by number of teachers in the school	40:1
Standard 6 class size	Average number of Standard 6 pupils per class	45

SOURCE: MoEVT, 2006.

## Key Findings

The data on the four inputs were analyzed and the results are depicted in Figures 1 to 4.

### Basic Learning Materials

Figure 1 reveals that in 2007 only 84 percent of the Standard 6 pupils in government schools had at least one exercise book, a pencil or a pen, and a ruler. In other words, around one in every six (16%) pupils did not have all the three basic learning items that were considered necessary for effective participation in classroom activities. There were no great variations among regions, but North Unguja and South Unguja recorded the lowest percentages of 75 and 80, respectively. In addition, there was little variation between pupils in rural schools (82%) and pupils in urban schools (89%). However, there was a notable difference between public (84%) and private schools (94%) in the provision of these three basic learning materials.

On average, 79 percent of the pupils in all the SACMEQ countries had basic learning materials. This implied that the situation in Zanzibar was marginally better than the overall situation in SACMEQ countries. Between 2000 and 2007, the percentage for Zanzibar went up by 12 points, which meant that the situation had improved tremendously. These findings indicate that the recent efforts made by the Zanzibar Government in the provision of basic learning materials were working. However, it is clear that there is still a lot left to be done if Zanzibar is to achieve its target of 100 percent in the provision of these learning materials.

### Mathematics Textbooks

The government's target is for each pupil to have sole use of a textbook per subject. It is, therefore, worrying that only about one-half (47%) of Standard 6 pupils in 2007 had sole use of mathematics textbooks (see Figure 2). This meant that the other one-half of the pupils (53%) did not have sole use of these textbooks. However, it is encouraging that the availability of these textbooks had increased enormously since 2000, when the percentage of

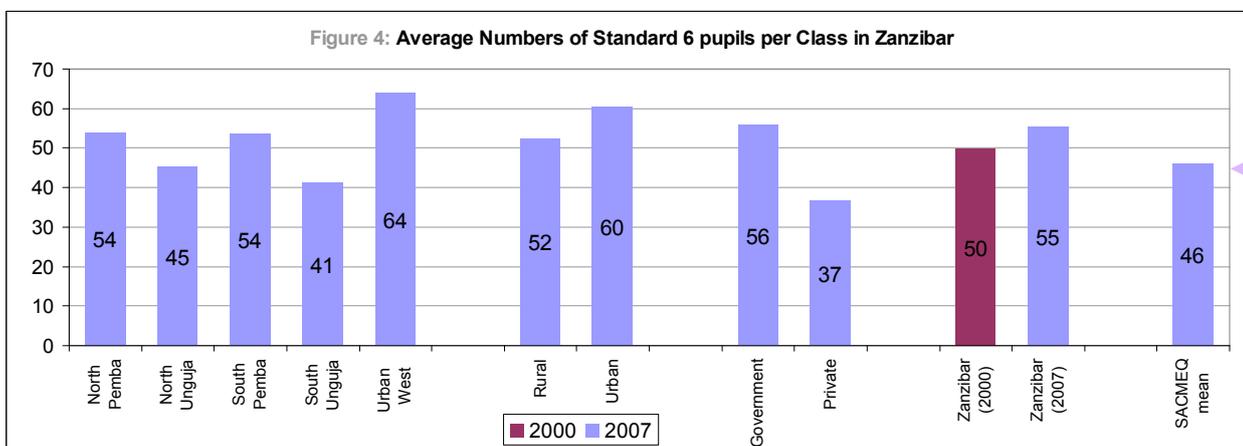
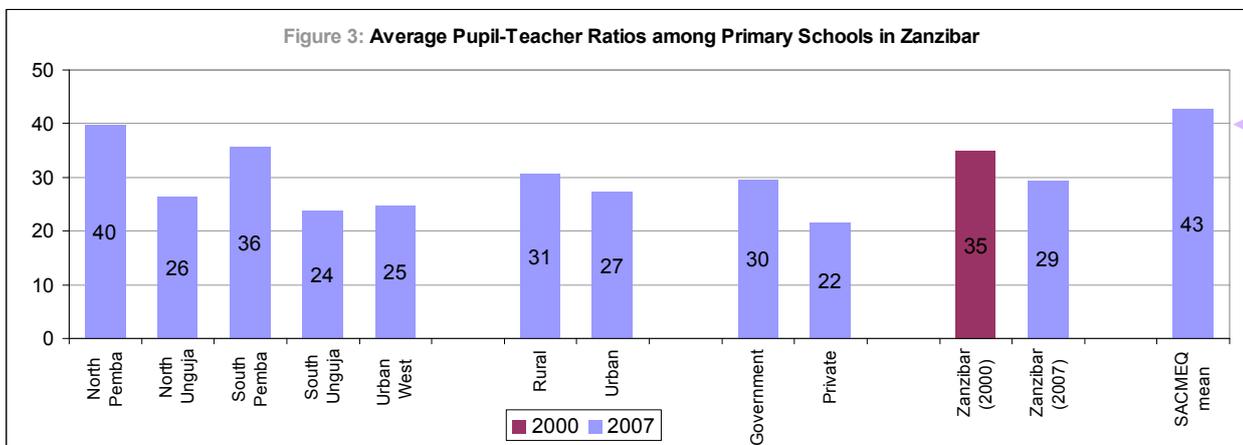
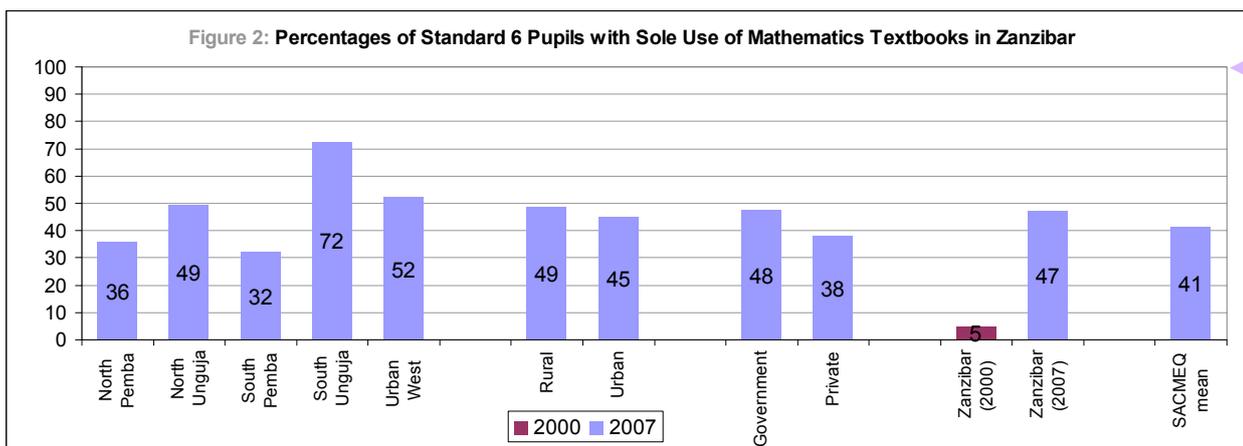
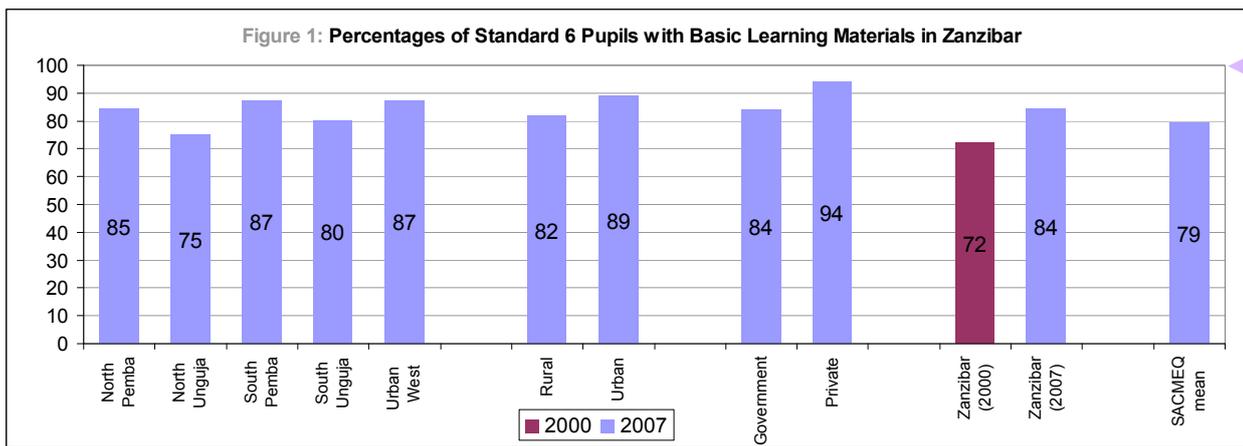
Standard 6 pupils with sole use of mathematics textbooks was just five percent. Moreover, it is consoling that the textbook situation in Zanzibar was generally better than the overall situation in SACMEQ countries (41%).

There were notable variations among regions in the provision of mathematics textbooks. South Pemba (32%) and North Pemba (36%) recorded the lowest percentages, while South Unguja (72%) recorded the highest percentage. The textbook situation in rural schools (49%) was slightly better than the situation in urban schools (45%). Moreover, the textbook situation in government schools (48%) was much better when compared with the situation in private schools (38%). The better levels of these textbooks in government schools than in private schools can be attributed to the government's effort to provide textbooks to all primary school pupils. However, just like basic learning materials, these results also indicated that there is still a lot that has to be done to acquire the target of all pupils having sole use of mathematics textbooks.

### Pupil-Teacher Ratios

In 2000, the mean pupil-teacher ratio among primary schools in Zanzibar was 35 (see Figure 3). This mean was well within the country's set benchmark, which is 40. Moreover, in 2007, the mean had dropped remarkably, (and, therefore, improved) to 29 pupils per teacher. It is interesting to note that the mean for the private schools (22) was even better than the mean for public schools (30). Of interest, is that the overall mean for Zanzibar was much lower (thus, better) than the overall mean for SACMEQ countries (43). These results depicted a primary school system with a substantial teaching workforce.

In 2007, there were some variations between regions, but all the mean values were within the set benchmark. The highest mean values were in North Pemba (40) and South Pemba (36) while the lowest was in South Unguja (24). Furthermore, the mean value of pupil-teacher ratios for schools located in towns (27) was slightly better than that of schools located in rural areas (31) and both these values were within the set benchmark.



SOURCES of Figures 1 to 4: SACMEQ Data Archive.

## Class Size

From Figure 4, it can be seen that the mean number of Standard 6 pupils per class had increased (thus, deteriorated) from 50 in 2000 to 55 in 2007. Disappointingly, the numbers for 2000 and 2007 were well beyond the set national benchmark of 45 and worse than the SACMEQ mean of 46 pupils per class in 2007. Nevertheless, the mean for private schools (37) was well within the set national benchmark, and much better than the mean for public schools (56).

In 2007, only one region (South Unguja) had a mean value (41) near the national benchmark. The mean value was worst in Urban West (64) and on average, the numbers of Standard 6 pupils in this region exceeded the national benchmark by 19 pupils. The number in rural schools (52) was lower (hence, better) than the number in city and town schools (60).

## Summary of Findings

- This study showed that around one in every six Standard 6 pupils in Zanzibar did not have all the three basic learning materials needed for effective participation in classroom activities. Most of the pupils without these basic learning materials were in public schools and schools in North Unguja.
- This study also revealed that around one-half of the pupils did not have sole use of mathematics textbooks. Most of the pupils without mathematics textbooks were in schools in South Pemba, and North Pemba.
- In addition, this study revealed that the mean pupil-teacher ratio (29) was well within the set benchmark for Zanzibar (40).
- Finally, this study revealed that in 2007 the mean numbers of Standard 6 pupils per class (55) was well beyond the set benchmark for Zanzibar (45). In Urban West, the mean number of Standard 6 pupils per class exceeded the national benchmark by 19 pupils.

## Suggestions

Regarding the problems with the provision of basic learning materials and textbooks in Zanzibar primary schools, the following policy options could be considered.

1. School Management Committees need to sensitize parents to ensure that they provide basic learning materials to their children. These are exercise books, pens, pencils, compass boxes, and rulers, since these are not provided by the government.
2. The school heads should see that the textbooks provided by the ministry are accessible to the pupils. Since 2006, the pupil-textbook ratio in all Zanzibar primary schools was expected to be one-to-one. There are strong indications that some school heads do not give the textbooks to the pupils, because they fear that the pupils will lose or damage the textbooks.
3. Parents through Parent-Teachers Associations (PTA) should be urged to assist in ensuring that the pupils take care of their textbooks and other learning materials so that these can last longer. When the pupils lose the textbooks or other learning materials, parents should take responsibility for replacing them.
4. Concerning the need to improve class sizes in Zanzibar primary schools, the Ministry of Education in association with the local communities should consider building more classrooms and new schools, especially in the Urban West region and in the urban areas.
5. The Registrar of Education could adopt a long-term strategy to encourage the private sector, non-governmental organizations, communities, and individuals to establish affordable private schools so as to relieve the enrolment pressure in public schools.

## Conclusion

This policy brief highlighted the quality of primary school inputs in Zanzibar using four indicators, namely: (a) basic learning materials, (b) mathematics textbooks, (c) pupil teacher ratios, and (d) class size. Against the country's own benchmarks, Zanzibar scored rather disappointingly in the provision of basic learning materials, the provision of

mathematics textbooks, and the provision of classrooms. However, the country's score for the provision of teachers was quite impressive.

Between 2000 and 2007, the results showed that Zanzibar had improved on three indicators (basic learning materials, mathematics textbooks, and pupil-teacher ratios), and deteriorated in one indicator (class size).

It is clear from the findings presented here, that Zanzibar has improved substantially in the provision of most school inputs. However, Zanzibar needs to urgently address the issue of deteriorating class sizes.

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## References

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFA	Education for All
FCE	Free Compulsory Education
MoEVT	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
PTA	Parent-Teachers Association
SMC	School Management Committee
SPEP	Strengthening of Primary Education Project
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
UCE	Universal Compulsory Education
ZABEIP	Zanzibar Basic Education Improvement Project
ZEP	Zanzibar Education Policy

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