

Improve the quality of teaching and provide water for schools in Tanzania

Progress report – April 2010 to March 2011

year 2 of a 3 year project

Achievements

- Pass rates in the two districts increased by 17 and seven per cent respectively.
- More female teachers are taking on leadership roles and schoolgirls have been contesting and winning school council elections.
- School management is improving in many schools, with greater transparency of school funding and spending, and more school committees holding management to account.
- 90 per cent of upper class pupils are now aware of the causes of HIV and AIDS, effects and prevention measures and are discussing these in and out of school.

Background

A successful push to get all children into primary school over the past decade in Tanzania has meant that enrolment has doubled. But education quality remains a pressing concern, with rote learning still prevalent in most schools, particularly in poorer rural areas like Shinyanga.

Social custom and prejudices about women's subordinate role in society has meant that few girls and female teachers get to make and act upon their own decisions – both in family and public life – and also to go on and become leaders.

Since 2003, Oxfam, with the local government and NGOs, has supported the training and development of 1,700 primary teachers in Shinyanga. As a result, teaching practices and pupils' performances have greatly improved.



Two children in maths class come out to read their group's answers and write them on the board. Group working is one of the key classroom strategies taught to teachers in this project. This works well despite the class sizes – here in this Grade five class at Solwa primary school there are more than 80 students.

Credit: Geoff Sayer/Oxfam.

The Project

This year, the project has been supporting hundreds more teachers to take up the child-centred teaching approaches, which has further improved their teaching practices. We have been developing expert teacher organisations, which conduct training and ensure the quality of teacher training; mentoring; resources and special needs education – to ensure that these improvements are sustained and expanded. We've been supporting girls and female teachers to develop the skills and confidence to take on leadership roles in their schools.

We've also been empowering communities to become more engaged in their school's work, ensuring they are better managed, and holding them more to account. This project works in 184 schools and benefits over 90,000 children.

In October 2010, Tanzania held its General Election. As many local government officials were involved in election campaigning, some activities were postponed to avoid potential interruptions. Nevertheless, all the planned activities were completed this year.

Activities and Impact

Teacher training, mentoring and resources

➤ Refresh the skills of 30 teacher trainers.

- 30 teacher trainers received refresher training in December 2010.

This three-day refresher training built on last year's foundation training to refine the skills of new teachers on child-centred methodology, which will ultimately benefit over 5,000 pupils from their respective schools. Four 'super trainers', trained in the first phase of the project (2003-08), conducted the activity supported by the District Council and the Shinyanga Education Network (SEN). The training topics included curriculum analysis, gender and HIV & AIDS, and resulted in each teacher developing a personal action plan.

➤ Train 100 new teachers and provide further training to 368 year one and two teachers.

- 83 new teachers were trained on child-centred teaching methods in December 2010.
- 368 year one and two teachers received further training in June and July 2010.

83 teachers newly deployed to schools in the project districts underwent in-depth in-service training on child-centred teaching methods, especially participatory methods, which they previously had no practical experience on. Participatory methods, such as group work, involve children better in the learning process, rather than traditional lecture-style rote learning.

Various training techniques such as pair and share, brainstorming and group discussions were applied. These approaches are intended to give participants opportunities to share their experiences and to take an active role in learning. Unfortunately due to illness and leave commitments, only 83 out of the planned 100 teachers could attend the training.



Teacher Yosepha Mahengen describes the way teaching has changed under the project:

"We, the teachers, are not so talkative in class. We give more space for the children's voices. If you had come before, you would see many questions written on the board and the children left to answer them in their exercise books. We still write questions for them, but now no more than five or so. It is only a small part of the lesson." Credit: Geoff Sayer/Oxfam.

368 year one and two teachers also received further training on how to better teach the early years' classes tailored to improving skills of teaching numeracy, reading and writing skills through songs, games, drama and other participatory methods, so that these children can get a better start in school.

➤ **Support 340 existing mentors and train 20 new mentors.**

- 340 mentors were supported, and 20 teachers trained as new teacher mentors.
- Monitoring visits were conducted at 30 schools to assess mentoring processes.

A pool of 340 expert teacher mentors was established in the first phase of this project. These mentors provide fellow teachers with professional coaching support and an opportunity to share best practices and challenges to help improve their teaching practices. Each mentor supports around five teachers. The mentoring scheme has also proved motivating to teachers, and helped to boost their morale, as they feel more supported and able to ask for support from their peers. The mentors each receive a token monthly honorarium for their mentoring services. 180 mentors also were observed during their sessions by the joint District Council and Oxfam monitoring team.



Kennedy Malesa, head teacher of Samuye primary school, describes the impact of the project:

“We really commend Oxfam’s contribution in raising the quality of education in our district, and particularly my school. Since 2008, the school pass rate has risen from 32% to 89% last year.

Oxfam also played a big part in training the school committee, which is now active and well informed. The committee participates in the planning and budgeting of funds, and follows up on all financial in and outgoings. To be more open, we now post all important information on the notice board for the public to see.”

Credit: Kimberly Shilton/Oxfam.

However, due to transfers to other districts, retirement, promotion and career moves, the total number of mentors in the district has fallen to 280. In December and January, twenty new mentors (ten female) were trained by four experienced mentors in collaboration with the district council officers supported by Shinyanga mentors’ network. This was conducted at Kambarage Teacher Resource Centre (TRC). Also, as a result of our lobbying, the district council agreed to finance the training of a further 40 new mentors in 2011/12 to further address the shortfall in mentors.

“The mentoring training has really motivated me. As well as mentoring my fellow teachers and learning from them, I now reflect on my own teaching, and this has helped to improve on my teaching in the classroom day after day.” Flora Elias, a newly trained mentor and a teacher at Ibadakuli primary school.

➤ **Establish one new teachers' organisation, strengthen four others and support four teachers' subject networks.**

- New female teachers' network was established, and four other teachers' organisations received organisational advice and support.
- Successful lobbying of local government to fund more teacher training on difficult subjects has taken place.

A new female teachers' organisation was established by the end of February 2011. It provides a forum for female teachers to come together to support fellow leaders and to jointly address the common challenges, such as the lack of teacher housing in remote schools. Together with the support of the Shinyanga Education Network (SEN), they have begun the process of legally registering.

Throughout the year, we have provided ongoing support to strengthen four new expert organisations for mentors, trainers, and special needs teachers, and TRC co-ordinators. This has enabled them to take the lead in delivering key project activities, such as in-service training and teacher mentoring, and to raise their own funds so they are self-financing.

As teachers identified mathematics, science, English and Kiswahili as the lowest performing and most challenging subject areas to teach, specific networks for teachers of these four subjects have been formed and supported. The networks have organised training sessions amongst themselves during weekends at the TRCs to share and reflect on every day challenges, and provide solutions and peer support to improve all aspects of their teaching. The stronger teachers also organised other technical sessions on how to teach these subjects. They have also successfully lobbied the local council to allocate more resources for further training of 14 teachers in these difficult subjects and also early years' teaching.

➤ **Supply materials to schools for children with disabilities.**

- Three special needs schools received a range of learning and play materials.

Following initial consultations, Buhangija, Ng'walukwa and Uhuru special needs primary schools received a range of learning and recreational materials, such as Braille machines, writing styli, and games designed for 200 children and 30 teachers with visual impairment and learning difficulties. These materials will enable these children to participate more effectively in learning processes, and give them a much greater chance to complete primary education and progress onto secondary schools than before.

➤ **Provide resources, training and support for eight Teacher Resource Centres.**

- Over 500 books and multi-media resources provided to eight TRCs.
- Eight TRCs co-ordinators received IT training and
- Eight TRCs received regular repairs and maintenance.

A range of prioritised new teaching and learning materials for the eight TRCs were identified and provided. This included assorted science, mathematics, English and Kiswahili language, literature and social science textbooks, as well as video, DVD and radio cassette players, many of which were not previously available locally. This will increase the access teachers have to key teaching materials to help them improve their work in the classroom, and also to develop themselves professionally.

The TRCs also received regular repairs and maintenance to ensure they look professional, are secure, and are conducive learning environments. Eight TRC co-ordinators were also trained on basic computer skills so that they can help teachers with word and spreadsheet processing, as well as internet research.

➤ **Produce child-centred teaching guides for every school in Shinyanga.**

- 8,500 teachers' guides produced and distributed, including for all 1,800 teachers in the 184 schools.

These science, mathematics, vocational studies and Kiswahili teachers' guides will help teachers master the new curriculum, and also reduce the problem of scarcity of teaching materials, especially amongst teachers in rural and remote communities.

They were distributed to different stakeholders, including two copies for every school, education partner networks, and Ministry of Education, Inspectorate and district councils. As a result, a greater number of pupils will be able to learn better and achieve more at school.

Encourage learner-centred teaching

➤ **Organise three national conferences, meetings to influence policy makers, and develop campaign materials.**

- Three national education conferences were held, bringing together over 200 key partners to discuss and influence local and national education quality.

In June, a national campaigning conference was organised, attended by 67 delegates from Oxfam's partners, the Tanzania Education Network (TEN/MET) and SEN, as well as Ministry of Education officials and journalists. The event built the skills of participants on advocacy and campaigning, and strengthened alliances across the education sector. It also resulted in new joint advocacy plans and budgets for 2010-2015, complete with agreed advocacy messages, and roles and responsibilities.

In November, TEN/MET together with Oxfam, organised the five-day National Community of Education Practice Forum on developing a learner-centred competency-based curriculum. 65 participants attended, including primary and secondary school teachers, tutors from teachers' colleges and higher learning institutions, local education officers, inspectors, community based organisations, as well as parents.

Finally, in March 2011, the National Quality Education Conference was held, aimed at strengthening the teaching profession. This was an opportunity to share best practices and learning from our education work with key education partners, and generate critical debates, and encourage the replication of this project's learner-centred model across the country.

Promote gender equality and HIV and AIDS awareness

➤ **Train 90 schoolgirls and 200 female teachers in leadership.**

- 80 school girls and 180 female teachers were trained.
- More female teachers are assuming leadership roles; and schoolgirls have been contesting and winning school elections.
- 620 children have received HIV and AIDS awareness raising sessions.

Oxfam's experience strongly suggests that the greatest changes tend to occur in communities where women take up positions of leadership, or have a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives and surroundings. Therefore, a strong emphasis of this project has been to support girl children and female teachers to develop the skills and confidence to become role models and take on leadership roles in their schools and society. These 80 high potential schoolgirls and 180 female teachers were trained to improve their leadership skills, confidence, and assertiveness. Unfortunately, some of the planned participants (10 school girls and 20 teachers) were not able to attend the training due to heavy rains restricting access to the training facilities.

Already as a result of this support and emphasis on women's leadership, more girls have been contesting and winning school elections (against boys), and a greater numbers of female teachers are taking on leadership roles in their schools (such as deputy head teachers, storekeepers, etc.) and their communities.

Oxfam's partner, RAFIKI, has organised HIV and AIDS awareness raising sessions and debates with 620 children through 24 school HIV and AIDS clubs. These sessions have covered a range of issues, such as HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment and care, and also more generally on more general sexual, reproductive and human rights issues. The clubs have proven to be successful at raising awareness, especially among upper class children, who are now discussing HIV causes, effects and prevention both in and outside of school.



Chiku Chamu, 11, was recently elected as Prefect to head the hygiene and sanitation team at her school.

"The election processes made me confident in contesting with others and I won. My confidence and leadership abilities were the secret behind my victory. I am really committed to work with my colleagues to improve the health in our school. I now feel like I can go on to higher responsibilities in school, and continue up to university."

Credit: Wilfred Mwita/Oxfam.

Water and sanitation in schools

➤ **Construct rainwater tanks and install latrines in four schools and build four wells for their communities.**

- Four rainwater harvesting tanks and latrines were constructed in remote schools, and four community wells drilled.

In both the schools and homes that do not have sufficient water, children often risk becoming dehydrated. They are more likely to suffer from waterborne diseases, affecting their health, concentration and learning. Children, particularly girls, frequently miss school



Children at Bugayambebele school in front of their new 30,000 litre rainwater harvesting tank that now provides a supply of clean drinking water.

Credit: Wilfred Mwita/Oxfam.

to walk long distances to fetch water, often from unclean or unsafe sources. Hygiene is poor in the schools without latrines, especially in those with no water. Furthermore, when girls are menstruating they often do not attend school due to the inadequate conditions.

Therefore, these new water and sanitation facilities will lead to increased attendance and concentration at school, especially for girls, as well as better health for both the pupils and the wider community. The four rainwater tanks and four community shallow wells in Ng'wabagehu, Ng'wanhangala, Ng'walukwa, Bugayambebele now benefit approximately 7,000 children and community members.



The new Bugayambebele community shallow well.
Credit: Kimberly Shilton/Oxfam.

Improve local education management

➤ Train 120 student council members in leadership.

- Elections for student councils held for first time in March 2011, and 224 council members trained.

Until this year, it was common practice of school administrators to decide the make-up of student councils and their leadership. In order to instil a culture of democracy within schools, we encouraged ten schools to organise student council elections for the first time in March, and out of the ten positions, eight were won by girls. These 224 student councils members then received training on how to effectively manage themselves, as well as provide leadership for others to voice their needs.

➤ Train 540 teachers and local government staff to improve academic committees, and train 70 heads and 20 local education officers in school management and monitoring.

- 538 academic committee members from school to district levels were trained.
- 70 head teachers and 20 district and ward officials were also trained.

In the academic committee member trainings in July and August, teachers and education officials reviewed their roles and responsibilities and the main areas of improvement, including effective school management and monitoring of education delivery.

The 70 head teachers and 20 district education officials attended five days of training on competence-based teaching and participatory learning as well as monitoring in July and August. This was organised by the Agency for the Development of Educational Management. This was aimed at improving the management of schools, and ensuring that adoption of learner-centred methodologies takes place and is maintained in all schools.

➤ Train 200 members of School Management Committees, and encourage 50 communities to monitor their schools.

- 192 school management committee members trained in January 2011.
- 50 community mobilisation events held to encourage school monitoring.

The chairperson, secretary, and store and supplies officer from 64 school management committees were trained on school administration, financial management and procurement, as well as how to greater engage the local community in the school's activities. As a result, follow up visits have indicated that more school committees are now being much more transparent in their decision making processes, and school funding and spending are now posted in head teachers' offices.

Also in January, community mobilisation meetings and drama events were held in 50 villages. Debates and theatrical performances were held on various issues that affect or hinder the access to and delivery of quality education, such pupil and teacher truancy, insufficient teachers, low prioritisation of girl child education, etc. The aim was to make communities more responsible for all of their children's education, and to participate more effectively in monitoring the progress of their schools.

“School Management Committees were there on paper but not in practice. Oxfam is supporting their revival so that they can deal with issues of academic performance – how to improve results, how to support girls. The committees are all in place now – from school level up to district level.”

Wilfred Mwita, Oxfam.

Financial Report

Activities	Full year budget (£)	Full year expenditure (£)
Teacher training and mentoring	73,920	82,299 ¹
Teaching and learning resources	24,941	23,555
Water and sanitation in schools	29,400	25,211 ²
Promote gender equality and HIV and AIDS awareness	18,731	25,313 ²
Encourage wide adoption of learner-centred teaching methods	35,000	35,150
Improve local management of education services	43,008	41,669
Programme management, monitoring and evaluation	75,000	66,441 ¹
Total	300,000	299,638

¹ Savings were achieved in programme management, which were used to support teacher training, additional teacher mentor visits, as well as women's empowerment and leadership activities.

² A more competitive contractor (Geotang Mining and Construction) was identified to construct the water and sanitation infrastructure, under the supervision of Oxfam's partner Tanzania Water and Environmental Sanitation Association (TWESA). These savings were used to support additional gender and HIV and AIDS awareness raising activities.

Thank you for your generous support for this project.