

## Dar es Salaam Primary Schools Do parents act to improve child learning?



### 1. Introduction

Do parents in Dar es Salaam act to support their child's learning process? Do students in Dar es Salaam primary schools have access to textbooks? When the support from the government is falling short do parents fill the gap?

The role that can be played by parents in the learning process of their children is potentially enormous. However parents may not always be aware of or able to fulfil this potential. According to the Uwezo Tanzania 2011 Annual Learning Assessment, one out of four parents help their children with homework, and one out of four has discussed education at a school committee meeting. Four out of 10 have spoken with their child's teacher at least once in the past year, indicating that the majority of parents are not involved in their children's learning process.

Recently, the Centre for Economic Prosperity and Uwazi at Twaweza organized a survey in 20 randomly selected primary schools in Dar es Salaam (a list of the schools surveyed is provided in the Annex on page 4). The survey was conducted from December 2011 to January 2012, during the time when pupils were either on break or on their way home from school.

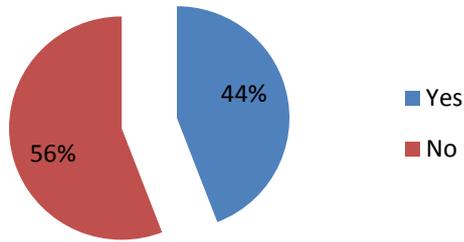
During the survey, 222 pupils from Standards Three to Six were interviewed about their parents' engagement in their learning and the availability of textbooks at school. This brief explores the degree of agency among parents in Dar es Salaam in improving learning outcomes for their children. The findings raise questions around parents' understanding of the importance of their role in the learning process.

### 2. Four facts about parental involvement in primary school learning

#### Fact 1: Almost half of the students receive help with their homework

Parents of children going to primary school can be involved in the learning process in a number of ways. When asked whether their parents are helping them to do homework, 44 percent of pupils responded positively. The remainder did not receive assistance from their parents (Fig. 1).

**Figure 1: Do your parents help you do homework?**

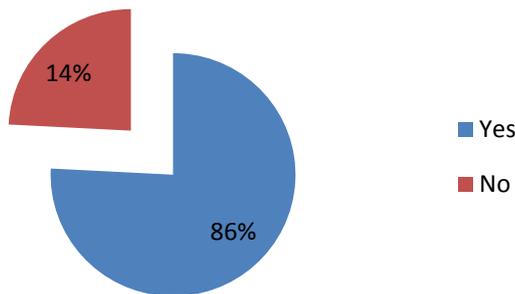


Source: Centre for Economic Prosperity, 2011/12

**Fact 2: Some parents inspected exercise books**

Of the 124 pupils who said their parents did not help them do homework (56 percent of the total, see Fig. 1), 94 pupils report that their parents did inspect their exercise books. This means, however, that 30 out of 222 pupils (14%) neither get help with homework nor have their books checked (Fig. 2).

**Figure 2: Did your parents inspect your exercise book / help you do homework?**

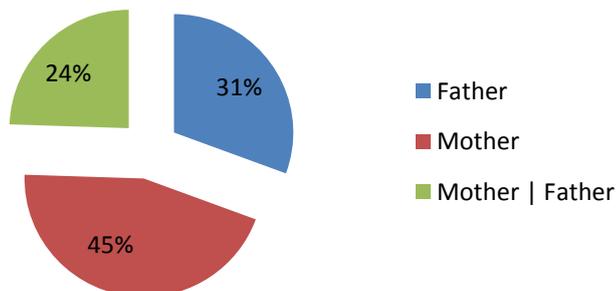


Source: Centre for Economic Prosperity, 2011/12

**Fact 3: Mothers are more likely to engage in learning than fathers**

When parents help children with homework, mothers help more often than fathers. When asked who has helped them to do homework, 45 percent of the pupils reported that their mothers helped, compared to 31 percent who said that their fathers helped them. 24 percent of the pupils answered that both mother and father helped them do homework (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Which parent helps you with your homework?**

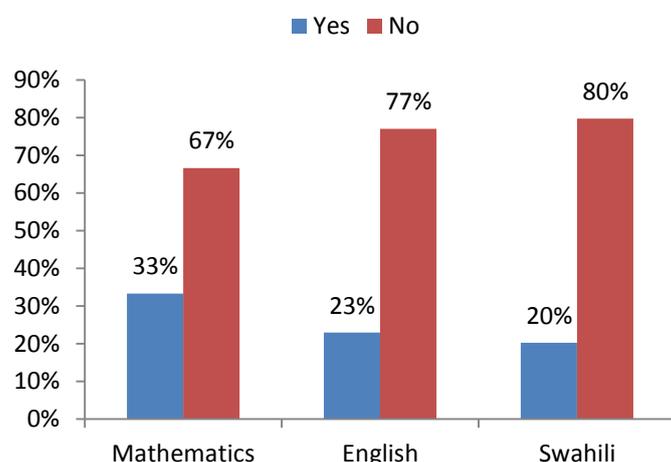


Source: Centre for Economic Prosperity, 2011/12

### Fact 4: Parents largely do not buy textbooks

Availability of textbooks still remains a challenge in our sample of Dar es Salaam Primary Schools: the average pupil-to-textbook ratio is 7:1 for Mathematics, English and Swahili. On average, when considering the same three subjects, a third or less of pupils reported that parents purchased textbooks (Fig 5).

**Figure 4: Do your parents buy you Mathematics, English and Swahili books?**



Source: Centre for Economic Prosperity, 2011/12

### 3. Conclusion

The facts presented in this brief show parents' involvement in the learning processes of their children in a sample of 222 pupils in 20 randomly selected Dar es Salaam primary schools.

Engaged parents can impact significantly on learning outcomes. The findings of the brief suggest that, although some parents actively engage in their children's education, there is still some way to go in this area.

The survey also highlighted that government allocations for education may be insufficient or may not be reaching schools. Although inputs alone do not translate into improved learning outcomes, without basic materials it is unlikely that children will learn.

Policy-makers may consider working with parents and teachers to ensure that funds are allocated appropriately and reach target groups while also prioritising parental engagement in education.

### Annex: List of schools surveyed

TEMEKE	ILALA	KINONDONI
Kurasini	Chanika	Msasani B
Chamazi	Pugu Kajiungeni	Tandale Elimu
Chang'ombe	Kitunda	Goba
Likwati	Uhuru Mchanganyiko	Hekima
Ukombozi	Buguruni	Salasala
Yombo Vituka	Mtakuja	
Tandika	Kinyerezi	
	Kigilagila	