Funding of Dar es Salaam primary schools
How accessible is school level information?

Key Findings

- Many teachers are unaware of their school's capitation grant entitlement
- Capitation grants are often only disbursed in part and in an unpredictable manner
- Obtaining public information from schools is problematic due to both poor record keeping and fear of reprisal

Introduction

Since 2002, the Government of Tanzania has been implementing the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) with two specific aims: making education more accessible and improving its quality. To achieve these objectives, the Government sends funds to schools in two forms:

a) Capitation Grants, meant for repairs, purchase of learning materials, and conduct of school-based exams; and

b) Capital Development Grants, meant for major infrastructure improvement and procurement of required materials.

This brief, which is part of a monitoring survey conducted in 40 public schools in Dar es Salaam between August and December 2010, examines: the degree to which teachers are aware of their school's capitation grant entitlement; the predictability of capitation grant flows; and the degree to which citizens can access information about capitation grants.

The findings show that many teachers do not know the amount their school is entitled to receive from Local Government Authorities (LGAs) in capitation grants. Further, the money received by schools is only a fraction of what should be received. Finally, the study found that funding and expenditure information for schools is not easily accessible to parents or the general public.

The brief recommends that information about schools' grant entitlements should be publicly announced to parents and schools at the beginning of the fiscal year, and that the disbursement schedule should be honoured.

This brief was produced under the general guidance of Rose Aiko of Uwazi at Twaweza, housed by Hivos-Tanzania.

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Finding 1: Most teachers have little knowledge about the capitation grant entitlement for their school

Eighty percent of teachers do not know the amount of the capitation grant their school is entitled to receive and only few are able to state the correct amount of USD 10 per child per year: figures mentioned included TZS 10,000, TZS 5,000, TZS 3,000, or TZS 1,000. Most teachers indicate that although the funds are supposed to arrive in installments every quarter, that schedule is hardly ever followed.

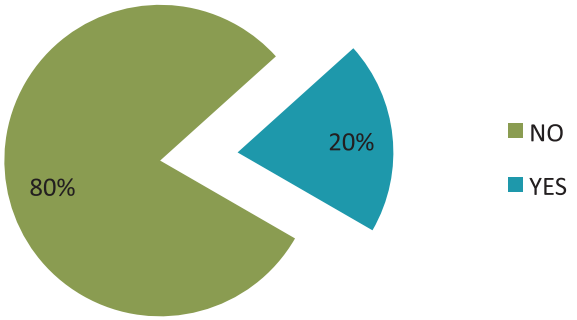
Teachers do know the formula for allocating money that arrives at their school for various expenses, however. Because the allocation formula is strictly followed, and because money often only arrives in part or late, teachers are sometimes in debt as they purchase classroom supplies on credit.

For example, the May 2010 allocation to Mapambano primary school was TZS 250,919.23. According to the prescribed allocation formula for capitation grant resources, the money should be used as follows:

- 20 percent for facility repairs;
- 40 percent for text books and teachers guides;
- 20 percent for chalk, pens, pencils and exercise books;
- 10 percent for administration and,
- 10 percent for examination papers and printing.

Based on this formula, the head teacher has TZS 100,367 for books for the school's entire population of 810 pupils; TZS 25,091.92 for administration, which normally includes transportation to government offices and other related travels, financing teachers' seminars, etc.; and TZS 50,183.85 for repairs. Given that the amount is too little, one wonders how many desks, door handles, or toilets it can be used to repair.

Figure 1: Do you know how much capitation grant your school is entitled to receive in 2010/11?



Source of data: Uwazi, 2010.

Teachers' views

"We just wait for it to arrive, which is a mystery too most of the time," says one head teacher, echoing the view expressed by many others.

"We sometimes ask vendors to provide services on loan and when the money arrives, we settle the bills," comments another teacher.

Finding 2: "Public" information is not easily obtained

The survey examined the information that was plastered visibly on the walls of the head teacher's office in most schools. This included statistics on the number of students and the number of toilets in the school, records of school income and expenditures, and information about future plans for the school.

Although this information is supposed to be public, it was not possible to obtain any of it without a written notification and approval from "higher levels." Researchers had to seek authorization from the Regional Commissioner's office, where a letter copied to all district directors was issued. For some schools, this was enough reassurance to allow them to release public information, but for other schools, another letter had to be produced, signed by the Municipal Education Officer.

This paperwork alone took 6 weeks. Even after submission of relevant approvals, some teachers still needed further reassurance that they would not be jeopardizing their employment status or condition in the future by providing the requested information. A climate of non-disclosure and lack of transparency pervades the sharing of basic school related information, despite policies and pronouncements to the contrary.

Finding 3: There is poor record keeping about resource flows in schools

Because of poor record keeping in schools, making sense of the maze of numbers in the capitation grant reports at the school level is quite a challenge. The Uwazi survey asked teachers to report the amounts of capitation grant received by their schools in 2008, 2009, and the first quarter of 2010. The confusion surrounding even this simple request necessitated a deeper look, beyond the school records, into the disbursements by the education departments of each municipality.

There were many complications associated with understanding the data. First, the majority of head teachers who were interviewed considered a financial year to start in January (i.e., at the start of a school year), while the official government fiscal year starts in July. With quarterly disbursements, it should theoretically still be possible to construct figures that match the disbursements from the municipal councils to schools. However, this could not be done in practice due to the erratic receipt of the disbursements. Second, in most schools, there was no systematic way of documenting and retrieving the disbursement information. In some instances, teachers referenced minutes of school committee meetings for the information, instead of records of school accounts. In the worst cases, the information could not be retrieved at all because there had been a change in school leadership, and relevant information had never been transferred formally from the old administrator to the new one.

Conclusion

This brief shows that most teachers do not know how much capitation grant funds their schools are entitled to receive, that the money that does arrive is often inadequate, and that funds arrive unpredictably. The brief illustrates that record keeping is poor in most schools, and that accessibility of information about school resources is complicated, making public access difficult.

Uwazi recommends three measures to overcome these challenges:

- The amount of grants to which schools are entitled to receive and their disbursement schedules should be made known to schools/head teachers and parents at the beginning of each fiscal year. Announcing this could well be done by the Minister for Education during a specially called press conference and widely disseminated through the media and in popular formats.
- Proper record keeping of the funds sent should be made mandatory for the school administration, and systems put in place to ensure proper transfer of information when there is a change in school management.
- Teachers should be given authority to release public information when it is sought by anyone, without the need to provide written reasons for wanting to know the information.

Annex: Public primary schools visited in the survey

Temeke District (16)	Ilala District (13)	Kinondoni District (11)
Vijibweni	Buguruni Moto Mpya	Kawe A
Mji Mwema	Boma	Kumbukumbu
Mivinjeni	Amana	Mapambano
Toa Ngoma	Buguruni Viziwi	Mbuyuni
Kibada	Msimbazi Mseto	Oysterbay
Chang'ombe	Gerezani	Kinondoni
Geza Ulole	Muhimbili	Msisiri
Mtoni Kijichi	Ukonga	Mlimani
Kimbiji	Buguruni Moto	Bunju A
Kurasini	Buguruni	Mtongani
Kibugumo	Mnazi Mmoja	Kunduchi
Tandika	Uhuru Wasichana	
Mgulani	Bunge	
Mikwambe		
Kigamboni		
Mbagala		

Source of data

This brief is part of ongoing citizen monitoring at Uwazi, www.uwazi.org. The data were collected through a monitoring survey conducted by Uwazi between August and December 2010. All data can be obtained from the Uwazi.