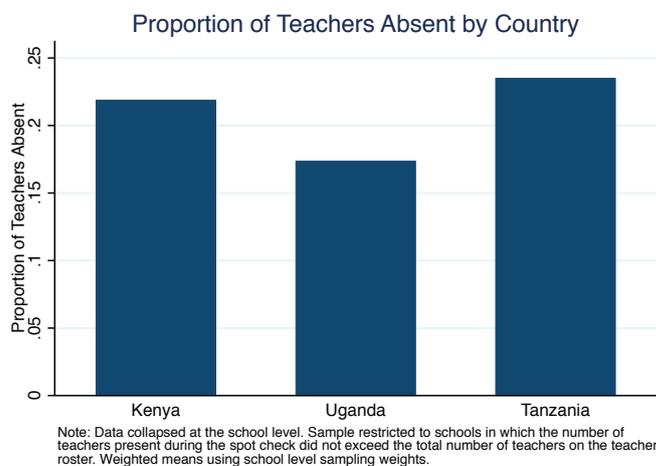
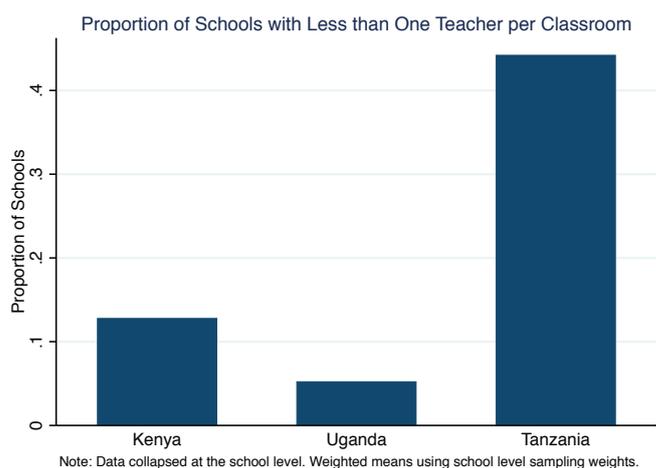
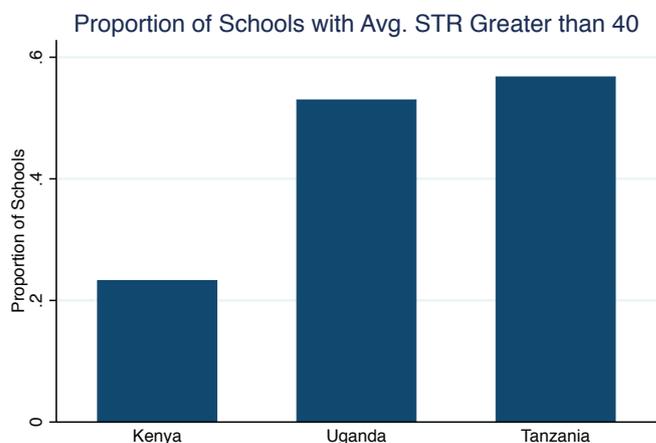


Policy Brief

Teacher Allocation and Absenteeism in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda

We relied on the Uwezo National Learning Assessment as our primary data source, using the most recent household and school surveys conducted in 2015. Although there has been little systematic study on teachers and teacher allocation policies in East Africa and how they relate to best practices, a few salient themes emerged in our research.



Tanzania has large class sizes and many classes without teachers.

Student-teacher ratios (STR) are 32 to 33% higher on average in Uganda and Tanzania than in Kenya. In Kenya, the average STR is 35, while the average class size in both Uganda and Tanzania is 46 students. Compared to an international benchmark of 40 students per class, far more schools in Kenya are meeting this standard than in Uganda and Tanzania. Only 23% of Kenyan schools have average STRs greater than 40, whereas in Uganda and Tanzania, 53 and 57% of schools respectively have average class sizes greater than 40.

Students in Tanzania also fare worse in terms of class per teacher ratios, which indicate whether countries are able to staff each grade level and/or class with a teacher. 46% of schools have less than one teacher per classroom, whereas in Kenya and Uganda, only 18 and 6% of schools have more than one class per teacher on average. Uganda, which has STRs nearly as high as Tanzania, has had greater success in allocating a sufficient number of teachers to schools so that each grade has at least one teacher.

Teacher absenteeism is high, but not starkly different across countries.

No stark differences in rates of teacher absenteeism stand out across countries. In Kenya, 22% of teachers were absent at the time of the Uwezo survey; in Uganda 17% and in Tanzania 24%. Rates of absenteeism varied little between rural and urban areas in all three countries.

Students in poor and rural schools are doubly disadvantaged.

The average household wealth of students attending a school as well as urban/rural distinctions are important determinants of teacher allocation. Schools with more affluent households on average have lower STRs, fewer classes per teacher, and lower rates of teacher absenteeism. Using data on urban and rural distinctions that is available only for Kenya and Tanzania, we find that the differences in the average number of classes per teacher in rural versus urban schools is significant in both countries. Furthermore, in Tanzania, rural and urban schools have STRs that differ by 11 students on average. In short, using different measures of teacher allocation, we find that rural and urban inequities are most apparent in Tanzania.

This policy brief is based on information included in a report on teacher characteristics and teacher allocation policy in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda for Twaweza, a non-profit organization in East Africa. The authors of this Capstone report—Jessica Jones, Rachel Jones, and Andrés Mojica—are master's degree students at the McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University.