

Can fewer books and less chalk bring quality education?

An analysis of Tanzania National Budget 2009/10

Policy Brief 5.09

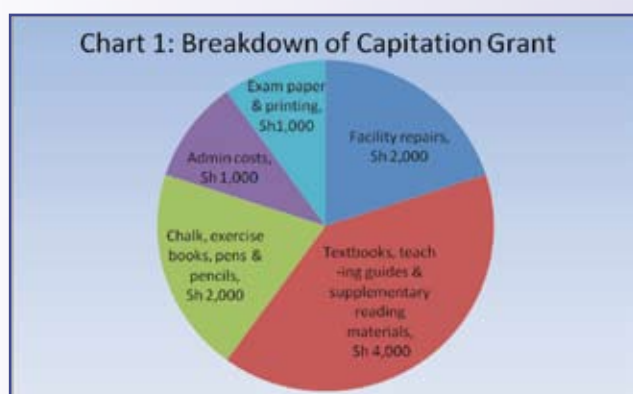
“The deterioration of the student: textbook ratio is attributed to stagnation of capitation grants”

Rising enrolments, projected to rise by 30% across all education levels by 2012, will reduce further the number of books to go round. A recent Tanzanian study stated that 66% of respondents complained of insufficient textbooks. Currently the student: textbook ratio stands at 5:1. How will the Government reach its admirable goal of 1:1 by 2010 if finance for books is not available?

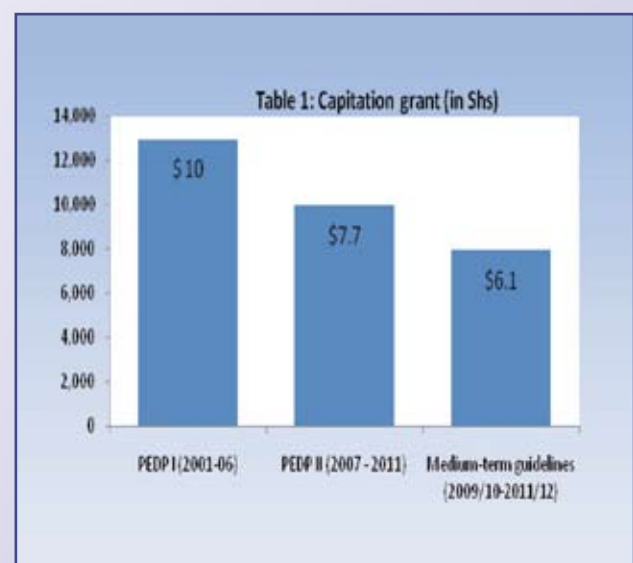
Source: Mosha J, Annual Education Sector Review, 2008 and PEDP II Annual performance report for 2007/08:12, PMO-RALG and MoEVT

The Education Sector Development Programme (2008-17) aims for a ‘total transformation of the education sector into an efficient, effective, outcome/output based system’ (2008:vii). The principal variable in developing countries that enables this transformation is the quality of education. Quality education includes well-managed, safe schools and sufficient well-trained teachers *with* adequate, diverse and relevant materials and resources needed for them to perform their job well. These should include key textbooks, teaching aids such as mathematical equipment, teacher’s guides and supplementary materials. Providing good teaching materials is easily possible, but a reduction in the funding envelope for these supplies means that Tanzania is falling short. Will the proposed education budget rectify? How will resource deficiencies affect the quality of education for Tanzania’s students?

Funding for essential teaching and learning resources are disbursed via the capitation grant. This grant is received by all LGAs and has strict guidelines on what it should be used for (see Chart 1). It funds administration costs, school level maintenance and minor repairs, furniture and accessories for classrooms, laboratories and toilets as well as textbooks, teaching guides, supplementary reading books, chalk, exercise books, pens and pencils – i.e. **critical teaching and learning materials**.

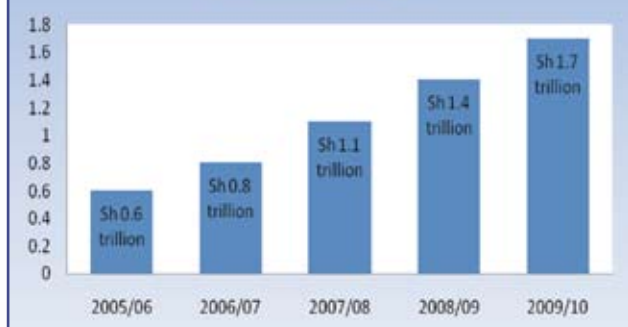


The capitation grant was originally set at **Sh 13,000/-** (approximately USD 10 at current exchange rates¹) per primary school pupil per year as part of the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP 2001-2006). This was largely funded by Donor Partners who determined the amount of capitation grant and how it was spent. Despite challenges with disbursement and unpredictability it was very beneficial. PEDP II (2007-2011) now mostly funded by the Government (using money from General Budget Support or GBS) has reduced the grant to **Sh 10,000/-** (USD 7.7) per pupil per year. However the more recent ‘Guidelines for the preparation of the Medium-term plan and budget framework for 2009/10-2011/12’ reduced the rate even further to **Sh 8,000 /-** (USD 6.1) per pupil per year (see Table 1).



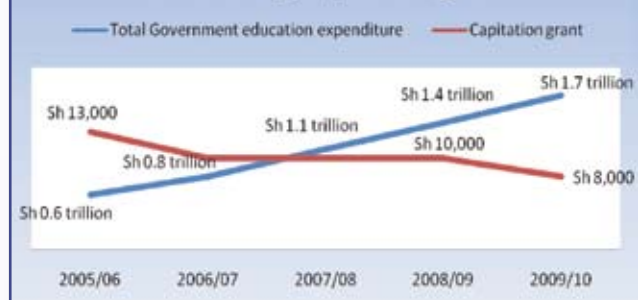
The proposed 2009/10 education budget figures promise an impressive rise in total Government expenditure on education. It now stands at **Sh 1.7 trillion** (from Sh 1.4 trillion in 2008/09) and commands over **18.3%** of Tanzania’s total budget spending² (see Table 2).

Table 2: Year on Year rise in the total education budget



In fact, education constitutes the largest share of Government spending. It is difficult to ascertain how this figure is divided between pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher and teacher education. It is also tricky to figure out what the money will actually be spent on. With such an overall budget increase it would be hoped that the capitation grant would also increase. But, as shown in Table 3, as the overall budget increases, the capitation grant decreases.

Table 3: A rising education budget but a falling capitation grant



A reduction in money for vital resources will no doubt affect the quality of education in our primary schools. If teachers do not have the basic resources and materials to carry out their duties adequately and with ease, not only will our students not learn

effectively but teachers' motivation and commitment will be challenged – a dire thought when considering the national teacher shortage.

Adequate and relevant learning and teaching materials are vital for improving the quality of Tanzania's education. The reductions in available funding for books and chalk will only make it harder to teach *and* harder to learn.

Recommendations

A quality education improves not only literacy and numeracy skills but also creativity, confidence, critical thinking and preparedness for the changes Tanzania will face in her developmental process. In order for the Government to achieve its policy objectives and development aims, the following are suggested ways forward:

- With such a massive education budget, the Government is in an excellent position to make positive change. **Priorities** should reflect a focus on **quality**. Spending should be matched between the forecast numbers of students and teachers and the educational materials and resources required to learn and teach. Teacher training is crucial and action should be taken to improve teacher motivation via better salaries and related incentives to induce enhanced performance and quality. Improved resources should be part of this stimulus package.
- Quality education should be redefined. The current focus on infrastructure needs to be more carefully balanced with relevant activities that improve learners' outcomes. Appropriate resources for teachers and students are an essential component.
- Resources and materials should usefully reflect the diverse cultural, economic and social (including gender) needs of Tanzanian children from all 133 districts.

1 Bank of Tanzania, April 2009
2 Budget Digest 2009/10, URT, June 2009



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