



SHULE BORA

Quality learning for all children



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Disability inclusion in education: A twin-track approach for equity

Every child deserves to feel safe, supported, and able to learn. Yet for too many children with disabilities in Tanzania, that's not the reality.

Shule Bora is working alongside the Government of Tanzania to change this, making sure disability inclusion is not an add-on but a core part of the education system.

The challenge

Children with disabilities are among the most marginalised in the education system. Barriers include inaccessible schools, lack of identification and support, untrained teachers, and social stigma. The data is clear:

- Only 0.5% of enrolled pupils have special needs, despite global estimates that 1 in 10 children have a disability (UNICEF, 2021).
- 49% more likely to have never attended school than children without disabilities.
- 66% retention rate for children with disabilities, compared to 85% overall (Education Sector Analysis, 2021).
- Fewer than 60% of children with disabilities complete primary education.

However, the data also obscures the scale of exclusion, so many disabilities go unreported or undiagnosed, preventing targeted support. In 2020, children with special needs made up less than 1% of enrolments, despite estimates suggesting 1 in 10 children may have a disability (UNICEF, 2021; Education Sector Analysis, 2021).

A system that includes everyone: Shule Bora in action

Shule Bora is working with the Government of Tanzania to support schools in identifying and supporting children with disabilities, so they are more likely to stay in school, attend regularly, learn effectively, and transition beyond primary education. This approach supports the achievement of DLI 1.5 (The national framework for enabling schools to become more inclusive) and is in line with Tanzania's National Strategy for Inclusive Education III.

Shule Bora is using a twin-track approach: targeting specific needs while also embedding inclusion across the education system.

Shule Bora, in partnership with the Government, is embedding disability inclusion in three distinct result areas.

1. Inclusion strengthens systems

Shule Bora is helping to mainstream inclusive practices into the everyday running of schools, ensuring that all children can thrive, not just survive.

Inclusive teaching and leadership mainstreamed: Over 1,500 teachers and school leaders have received training in inclusive pedagogy, lesson adaptation, and child-centred classroom management. Headteachers are learning how to foster inclusive cultures using data and practical tools.

Parent-teacher partnerships (PTPs) mainstreamed: Through over 1,000 PTPs, communities are learning how to tackle stigma, raise awareness, and advocate for the rights of children with disabilities.

Twin track approach to inclusion

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming learning interventions to ensure that they are inclusive of all students, including those with special educational needs.

Targeting

Targeting specific interventions to address the particular needs of individual learners to ensure their presence, participation and achievement in education.



Equality of rights and opportunities for all groups in the Shule Bora Programme

Data-driven planning mainstreamed: Local Government Authorities are trained to collect and use data on disability to improve budgeting, track enrolment and retention, and deliver more equitable services.

2. Local solutions and national impact

Practical innovations are showing what works and informing system-wide change.

School-based screening targeted: Shule Bora supported the development of a cost-effective disability screening tool for early identification, which MoEST and PO-RALG are now using in programme regions.

National Inclusion Framework

targeted: Supporting the development and implementation of the “National Framework for Enabling Schools to Become more Inclusive” has provided LGAs and schools with a structured approach to identify and address major barriers to inclusion, including critical disability inclusion issues.

3. Safe and accessible spaces for all

Inclusion means more than attitudes; it must be built into the physical environment.

Infrastructure upgrades targeted:

With Shule Bora’s support, LGAs are completing classrooms and upgrading facilities to include ramps, safe paths, and disability-friendly toilets, thereby providing children with access to learning spaces.

Assistive facilities targeted: Shule Bora is also helping roll out accessible sanitation solutions and hygiene programmes, especially for girls with disabilities, to promote safety and dignity.

Early results and lessons learned:

- Increased identification of children with functional difficulties in School Readiness Programmes (SRPs) and primary schools.

- Better classroom practices through the use of inclusive teaching methods and visual aids.
- Improved enrolment in areas where inclusive infrastructure was installed.
- Greater community demand for disability-inclusive services and learning environments.

What’s Next?

To go further and faster, Shule Bora and the Government of Tanzania are focusing on:

- Strengthening data quality and use
- Embedding inclusive education into training colleges and local plans
- Supporting schools to implement inclusive frameworks at scale
- Exploring sustained financing and policy support



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Shule Bora is a six-year programme (2021 – 2027) funded by UK International Development with technical assistance provided by Cambridge Education. The programme is led by the government of Tanzania, and its aim is to improve the quality of pre-primary and primary level government schools by enhancing teaching, inclusiveness, and safety. Shule Bora works in partnership with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST), the President’s Office, Regional Administration and Local Government Tanzania (PO-RALG) and its agencies.