



SHULE BORA

Quality learning for all children



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Inclusion at Heart of Education: Shule Bora Approach

Children across Tanzania face daily exclusion challenges that affect their access to school and their opportunity to learn, thrive and remain in education.

The Government of Tanzania (GoT) is committed to addressing these issues by putting inclusion at the heart of equitable education and ensuring that girls and boys of all abilities, from all geographical locations and socio-economic backgrounds, have access to the same quality learning opportunities. To deliver inclusion, GoT is working to build an education system which supports all students to succeed without discrimination and have the opportunity to transition to further education or training after primary level.

This Information Brief aims to inform and support these ambitions by highlighting the work of Shule Bora to support government ministries, institutions, and departments at all levels to implement policies and strategies that create safe, inclusive, and resilient learning environments in Tanzania's primary schools.

Addressing Intersectional Inclusion Challenges

Shule Bora supports effective policy and practice that can be scaled and adopted nationally. As a government-led programme, it works on interventions to simultaneously tackle multiple, intersectional challenges such as safety, disability inclusion, gender equality, geographical and language barriers, and climate resilience.

This approach is underpinned by Shule Bora's support to the development and implementation of the *Framework for Enabling Schools to Become More*

Inclusive (under EP4R), which identifies schools with the highest dropout rates, and addressing the inclusion challenges each faces holistically.

In its nine target regions, Shule Bora develops innovative approaches, collaborating with regional and local authorities, schools, and communities, to support marginalised children to stay in school and succeed. By partnering with, and influencing, education stakeholders across Tanzania, it advocates for and facilitates good practice to be scaled up and sustained beyond the programme.

System-Wide Approaches to Safety and Inclusion

Shule Bora work is aligned with the Ministry of Education Science and Technology's (MoEST) 2022 *Safe School Plan for Pre-Primary and Primary Schools* to develop system-wide approaches that contribute to a positive and safe school culture. In doing so, Shule Bora invests in the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of teachers, head teachers and education officers so that they are equipped to prevent and respond to abuse and violence - and supporting the development of safe routes to schools.

The programme has worked to establish safety and inclusion practices and systems at national, sub-national and local levels. Nationally, Shule Bora supports MoEST and the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG) to establishing prevention systems and standardised reporting and referral mechanisms.

Shule Bora works closely with MoEST and PO-RALG to support Local Government Authorities (LGAs) to implement the Safe School Programme, focusing on effective violence prevention and reporting mechanisms¹. In doing so, Shule Bora fosters communication between schools

and communities, helping LGAs build capacity among teachers, students, and local communities to uphold child safety and respect through improved collaboration and coordination, communication materials and local engagement activities.

Further, in partnership with LGAs and Ward Education Officers (WEO), Shule Bora is supporting the establishment, effective functioning, and monitoring of Parent-Teacher Partnerships (PTP), a key interface between the school and the community, which are contributing significantly to reducing dropout and enhancing inclusion of marginalised children.

Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion

In line with Tanzania's *National Strategy for Inclusive Education III*, Shule Bora has adopted a twin-track approach to disability inclusion. This approach addresses specific needs through targeted interventions (such as screening for functional difficulties), while mainstreaming inclusion across all programme system strengthening approaches targeting different levels of the education system.

At school level, teachers and school leaders are shown how to adapt lessons

to reflect the needs of learners and use inclusive teaching methods, individualised education plans, inclusive classroom management and targeted additional support to meet students' needs.

At community-level, PTPs are supporting schools to improve the accessibility of infrastructure, raise awareness of the value of inclusive education for children and address barriers to improve attendance and reduce dropout rates.

At sub-national-level, LGAs receive training to enhance data-driven planning and budgeting for disability inclusion, as well as support in rehabilitating school infrastructure to ensure safe and accessible environments for all students. For example, LGAs use screening data to allocate resources for assistive devices, specialist teacher support, or accessible learning materials based on the number and type of disabilities identified in each school.

At national level, inclusive pedagogy approaches have been built into Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) teacher training. National strategies for improving inclusion in schools with the highest dropout rates have been developed and are being implemented as part of Shule Bora's support to data driven responses to inclusion.

Improving Gender Inclusion

Shule Bora is working with LGAs and schools to identify the most significant gender inclusion issues, acknowledging the importance of context. In some locations, the dropout primarily affects boys whereas, in some areas, post-primary transition for girls is a key challenge.

Shule Bora collaborates with LGAs to strengthen PTPs and build capacity in gender-responsive practices that identify and support children at high risk of dropping out. These 'high risk' groups include girls at risk of early or forced marriage, children living with disabilities, children from the poorest households and boys facing pressure to drop out of school to work.

As part of its response, Shule Bora is using a *Social Behaviour Change Communication* (SBCC) approach to promote gender-responsive teaching that leads to more equitable classroom environments. In addition, gender-transformative approaches challenge community attitudes and behaviours surrounding harmful practices such as FGM and early marriage while encouraging support for girls' education. SBCC supports awareness raising of gender and inclusion through campaigns, community dialogues, and community radio.

In partnership with the Agency for Development of Educational Management (ADEM), Shule Bora is promoting gender inclusion for staff and learners. In one example of this it is collaborating on the development of a programme to improve female representation in school leadership and promotes menstrual dignity for girls through better menstrual health services and the introduction of reusable sanitary products.

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



¹ The Tanzanian Government permits use of corporal punishment, but under very strict guidelines.

Supporting Geographical and Language Inclusion

The School Readiness Programme (SRP) is Shule Bora's key strategy to address geographical and language barriers, giving preschool-aged children in remote and non-Kiswahili-speaking communities without access to formal pre-primary classes a strong foundation for learning and a smooth transition to formal schooling.

In partnership with the GoT, Shule Bora strengthens the SRP by raising community awareness, training volunteer teachers in Kiswahili communication skills to support literacy and confidence in children, and by ensuring consistent application of SRP guidelines. The programme collaborates with local, regional, and national authorities to expand its reach, secure government commitment, and promote sustainability through training materials, evidence-based improvements, and a graduation plan, supporting SRP's role as a bridge from early learning to formal education.

Addressing Climate and Environmental Inclusion

Climate change and environmental challenges disproportionately affect the most marginalised and vulnerable children adding to the obstacles they already face in accessing school and learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Shule Bora employs a multi-faceted approach to help GoT prioritise climate resilience, so schools are adaptable, safe, and welcoming in the face of environmental change.

A component of this work involves two complementary strands of activity: supporting Pwani region to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) risk analysis to identify the most at risk schools; and using research to improve schools' learning environments through pilot adaptations to make them cooler, better lit and with better acoustics



and water supplies. Together the two strands present an opportunity to improve targeting of resources by using GIS to identify where new school designs would be best deployed.

As well as supporting the GoT to pilot climate-smart construction projects through its existing procurement and management systems, Shule Bora is providing technical guidance to MoEST to create disaster-resilient strategies that consider all learner needs, including customised evacuation plans and safe spaces.

In addition, Shule Bora is working with regional and local authorities to integrate climate and inclusion strategies into education planning fostering collaboration between ministries to ensure climate change policies explicitly address the needs of children with disabilities. Further, Shule Bora is bringing together different external partners supporting GoT on different elements of climate change to support greater integration.

Conclusion

Shule Bora's approach to inclusion focuses on building a safer, more equitable and strengthened system for all pre-primary and primary school children in Tanzania. Addressing key barriers such as safety, disability inclusion, gender equality, geographical and language barriers and climate resilience can ensure vulnerable children have regular and safe access to quality education and the opportunity to thrive in inclusive, supportive learning environments.

Through strategic collaborations with local and national authorities, schools, and communities, Shule Bora is not only helping to overcome systemic exclusion but also fostering a culture of respect, inclusivity, and sustainability in education.

As lessons are learned from interventions and policy implementation, practices will be refined to more effectively address challenges and contribute to the development of a stronger, more inclusive, and resilient education system in Tanzania, so every child is supported to learn, complete their education and achieve their full potential.

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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.