

PRIMARY EDUCATION STRATEGIES FOR BASHANET DIVISION

Results of the 2008 baseline survey and strategies for 2008-2010

1. HISTORY

The Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Local Initiatives Support Organisation (LISO) has been working in Bashanet Division for a number of years now, aiming to support locally initiated development efforts. LISO found itself getting more and more involved in education projects, especially in primary schools. During its strategic planning process in the second half of 2007 it was decided to focus primarily on education, reducing efforts in other areas. Unfortunately there was no comprehensive overview of education related problems in the area, apart from the rather ad-hoc data collected by LISO on individual schools. Therefore a baseline survey was inevitable. The District Education Office released staff to cooperate in data collection and analysis.

Every so often some disturbing statistics and reports are availed to the public and we wanted to quantify the current situation in our area. Apparently some 97% of all children attend school in Tanzania (The Citizen, 07.03.2008). This is in itself a considerable achievement. Yet, out of those only 69% finish primary education (Sunday Citizen, 16.09.2007 and The East African, 18-24 June 2007). This means that only 67% (69% X 97%) of the total population finishes 7 years of primary education. Among the early drop-outs in 2007 were some 14,000 primary school girls who had become pregnant (The Citizen, 12.02.2008). All this results in a rise of illiteracy, with only 68% of adults being able to read and write (The Citizen, 20.12.2007). We have grounds to believe that in Babati District roughly the same applies and it is beyond our means to verify the validity of this.

Only 54% passed the final exams in 2007 out of those who sat through their 7 years primary education (The Citizen, 28.01.2008). And out of those who passed, just under 84% were enrolled in secondary school in Manyara Region, of which we are part, in January 2008 (The Citizen, 19.02.2008). 80% of those enrolled finish 4 years of secondary education. This would mean only 24% (97% X 69% X 54% X 84% X 80%) of the total population has a secondary education, whether they passed their final exams or not. Disturbing indeed to have to conclude that less than a quarter of the population has reached a level of education comparable to what is compulsory education in European countries. How are they going to compete on the labour market and in business?

In 2007 there was a shortage of some 38,958 pre-primary and primary teachers (The Citizen, 20.12.2007). This results in overflowing classrooms, as we can see in our area as well, which again impacts negatively on the quality of education, on teacher motivation and on the status of the teaching profession. Then how are we going to find sufficient teachers to brake the cycle?

With this baseline survey we wanted to quantify the actual situation and its problems and enable a search for ways to at least reduce them in the short to medium term, if not eliminate them in the long term.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE BASE LINE STUDY

In a joined workshop in August 2007 already the District Education Office and LISO had decided that the goal of our efforts should be **to improve the quality of education and its accessibility**. See Annex 01 for the problem tree that the workshop developed.

Annex 01

In line with the above the objectives of the survey were as follows:

1. Obtain a set of data on primary schools, enabling comparison among schools and wards, as well as comparison of our area with national data
2. Be able to base decisions for intervention on a broad set of objective and up-to-date data
3. Be able to evaluate impact of interventions, by comparing data sets over the years
4. Establish a system that can be used in other areas and by other stakeholders, and that can easily be adapted where necessary
5. Further stimulate the process within the community of valuing education and therefore investing in education, by making data and its conclusions available for wider use
6. With the final report establish links for cooperation and mutual learning, by making other education stakeholders aware of our efforts
7. Enhance cooperation among the District Education Office and NGOs, notably LISO

3. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was designed during a series of meetings among LISO and education coordinators in the area. The final set of 16 questions was distributed to all 53 primary schools for answering. Distribution and collection was done through the local education coordinators. Using this existing system strongly enhanced acceptability of the process and helped to reduce costs, both of which are extremely important for sustainability of the process of evaluation and planning.

As the schools differ considerably in size, analysis focused mainly on ratios and percentages, so as to enable fair comparison. We mainly relate to the number of pupils, e.g. teacher to pupil ratio, books to pupil ratio, etc.

The gathered data were processed and analysed by LISO. LISO produced a draft report, which was verified jointly. Finally at a workshop with head teachers, education coordinators, LISO and the school inspectorate the outcomes were discussed, the conclusions better specified and strategies developed for tackling the identified problems, taking into consideration the strengths and capacities of different education stakeholders.

4. SURVEY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Unfortunately we found that some questions had not been clear to all teachers. In coming years we will adapt the questionnaire and brief the head teachers during ward meetings, which take place regularly. This time we prepared an introduction letter that accompanied the questionnaire. With the travel distances in our area, even the Ward Education Officers who were involved in developing and evaluating the questionnaires, could not be available at all times in case of unclarity. Despite these shortcomings, still we consider the vast majority of data valuable and accurate enough to base conclusions on. The outcome is presented in a set of tables, which are given as annexes to this report. Every annex indicates to which question in the questionnaire its data refer. The text below therefore refers to the annexes. Furthermore the number of the concerned annex is given in the left margin with every text. A complete set of results was obtained from all 53 schools.

Some issues would require community data for more accurate strategy planning. We found the number of handicapped children who are school going. However we do not know how many remain at home. This would be very valuable additional data in order to plan which special facilities might be required in order to cater for all, enabling all children to reach their potential. Such extensive surveying is currently beyond our capacity.

Annex 01

Financial capacity constraints however are not a new issue. As can be derived from annex 01 and all the annexes that follow, “insufficient investment has been done in primary education for many years” is a conclusion that keeps popping up alarmingly, culminating in an enormous backlog. With the strategies defined in chapter 5 below we intend to reduce the backlog and find ways of sustaining the flow of investment in education.

Annex 02

4.1 The total number of pupils in the primary schools

The sampled 53 schools have 27,957 pupils. We found a more or less equal distribution of boys and girls (average 50.7% versus 49.3%) in all schools, which is encouraging, indicating that the community has no bias in favour of either. We have no data on how many school-going-aged children are out of school in our area.

Bashanet and Dareda wards clearly lead in school size with on average 571 respectively 569 pupils per school. Not surprisingly the biggest school can be found in Dareda ward, Dareda Mission Primary School, with 855 pupils. This has implications for individual attention, both for staff and pupils.

Annex 03

4.2 Handicapped children

No school has any special facilities for handicapped children. Yet there are 142 handicapped children in school. We presume that these are mainly the ones with less severe handicaps, but still, they are there and they are role models. We found them quite evenly dispersed among classes, indicating a continuing awareness within the community that handicapped children have the capacity and the basic right to obtain education.

With 57 pupils, the physically handicapped are the majority, making up 40% of the total. The second biggest group, with 37, or 26%, is “other handicaps”. This group includes 21 intellectually impaired pupils from Dareda ward. At Patrick Winters Primary School a class for them was initiated, enrolling 14 of these, though the teachers have since left. Unfortunately “intellectually impaired” was accidentally deleted as a separate category in our questionnaire. In future this will be corrected. Also the questionnaire should ask for an elaboration in case “other handicaps” is filled in. The high number, 20 children, or 14%, of autistic children surprises us as we would expect autistic children to require much more individual attention than can be given in the crowded classes that prevail in our area.

Most wards have considerably more handicapped boys in school (60% of all handicapped pupils) than girls (40%), with the only exception being Madunga ward, with 35% respectively 65%. Among all school going boys 0.62% are handicapped, while out of all school going girls only 0.43% are handicapped. Only in Madunga ward the girls (0.67%) represent a higher relative percentage than the boys (0.36%). Assuming that boys and girls have equal chances to be born with or attain a handicap, this disparity indicates that parents are more likely to send their handicapped son to school than their handicapped daughter.

Visually, hearing and speech impaired pupils are mostly girls, while physically impaired and autistic pupils are mainly boys. Albinos and multiple handicapped are boys only, but this certainly is because of the low number. "Other handicaps" scores equal percentages boys and girls. We have no clue as to why this is so.

Annex 04,
01

We do not know the percentage handicapped people in the total population, but it must be considerably higher than the 0.51% found within the school population. So we dare conclude that still the majority of handicapped pupils does not go to school, which confirms the root cause of education problems that "the community does not appreciate the value of education to the full" as given in the problem tree in annex 1. Apart from community awareness issues, this also has to do with the schools' lack of facilities that cater for their specific needs and the extreme shortage of teachers. Annex 04 shows that there are only 2 specialised teachers in our area, on a total of 510 teachers. If we want to attract more handicapped children in school, both facilities and specialised teachers have to be added considerably.

4.3 Prolonged absenteeism by pupils

Annex 05

Truancy seemed to be a big problem, so this was included in the questionnaire. Unfortunately it seems this part was not entirely clear to all teachers. Especially "absent for how long" should be more clearly specified. Absent for reasons of poverty did not have clear indicators to use and will not be discussed. It is a good reason for being bullied and after that for absconding altogether. Still we can draw a few conclusions from the remaining data we collected. During visits we noticed in some schools a more severe situation than displayed here, which would definitely impact negatively on exam results. In future we should improve this part of the questionnaire. Sometimes there is an overlap. A pupil can be poor and ill simultaneously. This is probably why in one school the total "children with problems" was 108.5% of the total number of pupils.

Boys and girls are being withheld from school in more or less equal numbers when a family member falls ill. They may not be directly involved with taking care of that patient, but rather substitute the lost labour.

Truancy/absent without permission is more common among boys than girls (59% versus 41%). The same trend is seen in all wards, though not everywhere equally significant.

LISO has supported sports education and tournaments in the past and these have shown to increase attendance, reducing absenteeism without reason. Activities should be held regularly in order to keep the momentum. Also teachers should be given up to date sports instructions so that they can make the lessons fun and ensure safety. Music lessons could serve the same purpose.

4.4 Orphans

Annex 06

There are 2,096 orphans, 1,839 lost one parent and 257 lost both. As expected, this affects boys and girls equally. Also it is equally spread over all classes. We have no data to show a correlation between being an orphan and being absent from school in order to take over as bread winner, as mentioned in paragraph 4.3 above when a relative falls ill, though it seems likely to be the case.

Constituting 7.5% of all pupils, we can confidently say that this must impact on school life, if only on concentration of pupils and consequently performance in exams. We could not find reasons why Arri ward has such a high percentage of orphans with 9.5%. Are there really more orphans or are more orphans known, meaning in the other wards some are hidden?

Pupils who are from one-parent families, either born to an unmarried woman or where parents are divorced, face many problems similar to orphans. Especially where it concerns demands on their labour and financial contributions. Also families where one or both parents do not take responsibility for their children, especially because of exorbitant use of alcohol, are said to be many. We anticipate that the children from these families face similar problems to orphans. Maybe future questionnaires could look at this as well. The percentage of pupils who do not live with both parents must be quite considerable in our community. And this could well have an impact on relations in the classroom and on performance. This is a problem area where the community and the government probably have a bigger responsibility than an NGO like LISO.

Annex 07

4.5 Number and distribution of teachers

Not only are Special Needs Teachers in extremely short supply as we explained in paragraph 4.2 above, the total number of teachers is also 37% below what is required for the number of pupils, with especially a shortage of male teachers. But this is not the whole picture. The distribution of teachers over the schools is also unequal. In Dareda ward only 2 schools have a shortage of over 20%. Annex 07, table 4 shows the data set for Dabil ward as an example. This shows that while Mandi has the required number of teachers, Birsima faces a shortage of 67% because it only has 2 out of the required 6 teachers. The worst shortage however is in Getabuske primary school. With only 4 out of the required 16 teachers available, they have a shortage of 75%.

This inevitably means that the ratio of pupils per teacher varies, which will inevitably impact on the quality of education. On average the class size is 62 pupils per teacher, about one and a half times the required ratio. In total 17 schools have a ratio of 70 or more pupils per teacher (7 have more than 100 pupils per teacher). And none of these schools is in Dareda ward. Unofficial data indicate that Dareda is most preferred by teachers and the results from our questionnaire point in the same direction. Dareda has some facilities like electricity, television, telephone network, hospital, and from Dareda one can easily reach Babati town. Apart from some personal benefits, the fact that information access is regarded a benefit, is a clear indication that teachers are information hungry. This is also visible in the computer literacy rate (paragraph 4.6). The Teachers Resource Centre (TRC) that is planned for Dareda may make this effect even stronger. The TRC that is under construction in Bashanet will probably divert some pressure. Table 2 in annex 07 shows that this is necessary as well, as the teacher shortage in Bashanet zone is 47%, while in Dareda zone it is 25%. Though we appreciate that a staff shortage of 25% is considerable, the situation is almost twice as bad in Bashanet zone. LISO has supported the TRCs and should continue to do so, but eventually the service should be brought closer to the schools, e.g. at ward level, to make working at the more remote schools more attractive. Other incentives, especially “hardship allowance” as suggested by some teachers, can not be the responsibility of an NGO, if only for reasons of sustainability.

Table 3 in annex 07 shows that there are still 46 (10.2%), mainly male, teachers who only have level 3 B/C, which the government would like to phase out. They urgently need to upgrade to level 3 A. The majority of primary school teachers have attained level 3 A, while only 4, again mainly male, teachers having reached diploma level. No higher educational levels were found among the current teachers. We assume that as soon as a teacher reaches diploma level, he/she moves on to teach at a secondary school. This situation must have implications for the capacity of the remaining teachers in coping with the very demanding, often strenuous, workload.

We should anticipate that a considerable teacher shortage will remain a reality for quite some time. A recent government survey in secondary schools revealed 1,413 teachers on its pay roll did not actually work any more (The Citizen, 18.04.2008). So these need to be added to the national shortage. We do not have data for primary school teachers, but it might be safe to suggest that the shortage can not be overcome in the near future and we should therefore plan for short-term and long-term solutions.

Annex 08

4.6 Computer literacy among teachers

Out of the 450 teachers, only 29 are computer literate, or 6%. Most of these gained their knowledge from the LISO computer course. This includes 14 from Dareda Kati Primary School, for whom LISO has managed to obtain considerable funding for their course.

This has serious negative implications for accessibility of information. And we cannot engage in any serious efforts to make pupils computer literate as long as the vast majority of their teachers is not able to use a computer. A compounding issue is that electricity is not available at any of the schools, the majority being far from the electricity grid, so even if they would know how to use it, installing one in school requires installing also a source of electricity, e.g. solar panel.

Annex 09

4.7 Buildings

In recent years a lot has been built, but the backlog was enormous. And it still is, because more than 50% of all buildings is still lacking. Despite the drive to add classrooms, still another 307 are needed, which is 45% of the total requirement. In teacher houses the situation is even worse, another 511 houses are needed, constituting 75% of the total requirement. 4 schools do not even have a single house, with 3 of these schools in quite remote areas, where possibilities for renting are very limited as well. Some teachers live under unenviable circumstances. This undoubtedly contributes negatively to a teacher's enthusiasm for work and to the status of the teaching profession within the community. Also one of the conditions a school has to fulfil nowadays in order to be allocated additional teachers is to prove that the school will have a classroom and a house for that teacher.

The toilets we talk about here, are permanent structures and are therefore very expensive. The shortage of 53% for boys respectively 56% for girls says it all. Some semi-permanent structures are in place, but at some schools the toilets simply are insufficient.

Annex 09,
12

A kitchen and lunch hall are obviously only useful if a school provides its pupils with lunch. All schools are supposed to, but many are facing problems, as elaborated in paragraph 4.10 below. Then scarce construction money is better spent on classrooms, teacher houses or toilets. Equally a school that has barely any books is unlikely to build a library. The few books they have fit in a cabinet or on a desk or table.

All schools have one office. Though they should have a head teacher's office and at least one general teachers' office, depending on the number of teachers the school has. Adding an office is not a priority for most schools.

4.8 Furniture

Annex 10

All schools have a considerable shortage of furniture. With a combined shortage of 4,324 school desks for their pupils, or 38% of the total requirement, the sitting arrangement is crowded. But also the teachers are not spared. They need to do their work despite a shortfall of 741 tables (59%) and 704 chairs (53%). Books, stationary, etc cannot be cared for properly while there is a shortage of 642 cabinets, 76% of the total requirement. The requirement for shelves is not so clear and head teachers filled out that question very variably. We therefore consider those data unreliable and refrain from drawing conclusions from them, apart from that experience shows that they are in short supply at most if not all schools. In total more than half of all furniture is lacking.

4.9 Teaching aids

Annex 11

These are in extremely short supply. Unfortunately the questionnaire did not ask to specify exactly which books and other teaching aids are available. It is possible that a school has e.g. a good number of mathematics books, but none for e.g. standard 3. This should be investigated as well in future surveys.

While a novel or dictionary should be shared among 3.3 pupils, a mathematics book (always a very poor performance in all schools in final examinations) by 5.1 pupils, history books are supposed to be shared by 19.9 pupils. Science kits and mathematical kits are in extremely low supply, though they are only in use in higher classes, so the numbers are slightly distorting. French is an additional subject and none of our schools has French books.

Having one first aid box (though not a teaching aid in a strict sense) for an average 1,398 pupils, one can only hope that these will never be needed.

Annex 08,
11

For those aids that are in shortest supply, we also calculated how many of them there are on average per school, as given in table 2 in annex 11. Science kits and mathematical kits still score extremely low, with 2.6 respectively 2.9 kits per school. Information and communication technologies are increasingly important, also in our rural area, yet the schools are very ill prepared, in books as well as in teacher training on this topic, see also paragraph 4.6 above (data in annex 08). Leaving Dareda ward, the other wards score approximately 1 book per school. And this is possibly not the most up to date copy either. None of the 7 schools in Arri ward has a single book. During lessons on religion a school is supposed to have books for all major religions that are among its pupils. With some schools having no books at all, this topic fully depends on the knowledgeability of the teacher, concerning all (!) religions.

Annex 09,
10, 11

If one were to assist in increasing the number of books, one should also consider bringing cabinets and eventually building a library, as we have seen above in paragraph 4.8 respectively 4.7 (annex 10 respectively 09) in order to guarantee safe keeping of those teaching aids.

4.10 Providing lunch

Annex 05,
09, 12

All schools are supposed to supply lunch to their pupils, in order to boost attendance (see paragraph 4.3 above and annex 05 for data on truancy), to reduce differences to the financial status of the parents/ caretakers and to increase concentration during lessons. Unfortunately many schools fail to get sufficient food contributions from the parents. Only 24 out of the 53 schools supply lunch, 45% of schools. Also this differs considerably from ward to ward. Only 2 out of 10 schools in Madunga ward supply lunch. All 9 schools in Ufana ward supply lunch, also these schools have big areas under cultivation and probably harvest a considerable part of the food requirements there, without need for the parents to contribute.

We assume that this is also one reason why so few schools put up a permanent structure as a kitchen, as we saw in paragraph 4.7 above (and annex 08).

4.11 Tree nursery, vegetable garden and water supply

If a water supply is near, preferably at the school compound, then providing lunch becomes easier (paragraph 4.10) and the food can be more nutritious and more varied by establishing a vegetable garden. Only 15 schools have such a garden, or 28% of the schools.

With water also a tree nursery can be started. But only 13 schools (25%) have one. Both a vegetable garden and a tree nursery can be used for teaching practical skills and for improving the teaching environment.

In total 18 schools (34%) have a tap within their compound, while another 23 (44%) fetch water within a 1 km range from their school. This means a total of 78% has water within reasonably easy reach. We have no clear data on 2 schools, while the other 10 (11%) fetch water at a distance bigger than 1 km. If one wants to assist schools to get water, we suggest giving priority to the latter 10 schools. The others could be assisted to make better use of the existing water supply.

Unfortunately we have no data on the water quality.

Another issue with tree nurseries and vegetable gardens is the question of security. If goats can graze freely than no vegetable and no tree is going to survive. Also theft should be prevented. Otherwise growing trees and vegetables will be very demotivating activities.

5. STRATEGIES IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE PROBLEMS FOUND IN THIS SURVEY

The above data certainly gave some insights and gave rise to serious discussions among the analysing team. This is very positive in itself. Furthermore the analysis shows that more investment in education is desperately needed and that once done, effects are visible. The enormity of the problems also indicates that both short-term and long-term strategies are needed.

Another analysis will be done on the marks that the pupils got for their standard VII final exams. These will be monitored annually, as the ultimate indicator of success of our development efforts.

Several priorities came to the fore in this analysis, and these are the responsibility of different stakeholders. The survey was done in a relatively small sample of 53 schools in one area. We hope however that education stakeholders elsewhere will find the conclusions of this analysis equally appropriate for their environment, after analysing their situation. The participants of the strategy workshop recommend the comprehensive and participatory method of surveying and analysing that we used.

Each stakeholder needs to define its strategies and plans. This paper therefore only indicates what tasks could be done by whom and indicates the both short and long term strategies. The process we followed cannot command any stakeholder into certain action. Yet all participants agreed that the strategies identified were the best identifiable at the time and all expressed their commitment. Yet not all stakeholders were included. Parent committees and local government were only indirectly represented. Direct representation was by the teachers, education department (ward and district level), the Schools Inspectorate, the Teachers Resource Coordinators, the chairman of the District Council and LISO.

5.1 THE DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

The strategy planning workshop identified the primary education stakeholders as given in the table below. In most activities several stakeholders have complementary roles. And roles can overlap at times. Currently there is no formal forum for all stakeholders to meet, discuss and plan together so as to avoid gaps and duplications. The process we initiated this year was agreed upon to be the best option that we currently know of and should be continued till a better way is designed. We may learn from experiences in other parts of Tanzania and should actively seek for such experiences for constant improvement of the process.

Stakeholder	Main strength or main responsibility
Teachers	Teaching plus identifying problems and opportunities and then forwarding these, especially to the Parent Committee, the Ward Education Co. and the TRCs
Parent Committees	Coordinating all school activities in close cooperation with the teachers
Ward Education Coordinators	Checking on education quality and assisting schools where necessary, especially in meetings and in communication with district authorities
Teachers Resource Centres (TRCs)	Keeping teachers up-to-date on curriculum issues and other education related issues. Organise a platform for exchanges of experiences. Also assisting teachers to upgrade.
District Council and Schools Inspectorate	Closest representative of the employer, Central Government. Allocate teachers to the schools, guarantee government funding is submitted to the schools. Checking that rules are followed. Guarantee quality of education
Village and ward government	Cooperate closely with the teachers and Parent Committee in order to develop the school, e.g. in fundraising
Teachers' Trade Union (Chama cha Walimu Tanzania, CWT)	Facilitating constructive dialogue between the government and its employees and especially lobbying for the rights of teachers as government employees
Savings and Credit Coop. Societies (SACCOS)	Facilitate teachers to save and to get loans
Central government	Curriculum development, allocation of funds, employer of the teachers, preparing laws and policies and final responsibility for education quality. And creating an enabling environment for all stakeholders to cooperate
LISO and NGOs in general	Assist with information searches and investment. Its regular partners are the Ward Education Coordinators and TRCs. Regular contact with teachers and Parent Committees. Coordinating its activities with the District Council

5.2 STRATEGIES FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

Several strategies were developed and the presentation here follows the topics in the same way as they were clustered for the workshop's group work. The general topics were:

- A. Children. Here we look at absenteeism, handicaps, being orphans, etc.
- B. Teachers. Their numbers relative to the number of pupils, their qualifications, the possibilities they have for upgrading and remaining up-to-date, etc.
- C. Facilities. This includes buildings, furniture, teaching and learning aids, etc.

Below follows an overview of the challenges, the strategies that the workshop came up with to tackle the problems, and the indicators for success of those strategies. An additional indicator for success, indicating steady progress in education, is having active, frequent and cordial communication among the stakeholders.

One general problem area, or challenge as was the participants preferred term, is that all too often there is political interference with the executive, prohibiting sound implementation of education strategies. This challenge should be taken up by all government organs, the parents committee as the most direct local actor, and the teachers' trade union.

Finally, taking into consideration the situation as described in the previous chapters, and the strategies as presented below, LISO will develop its strategies for assisting primary education. Also LISO will continue communicating with the other stakeholders in order to streamline all stakeholders' efforts, for the common goal

to improve the quality of education and its accessibility.