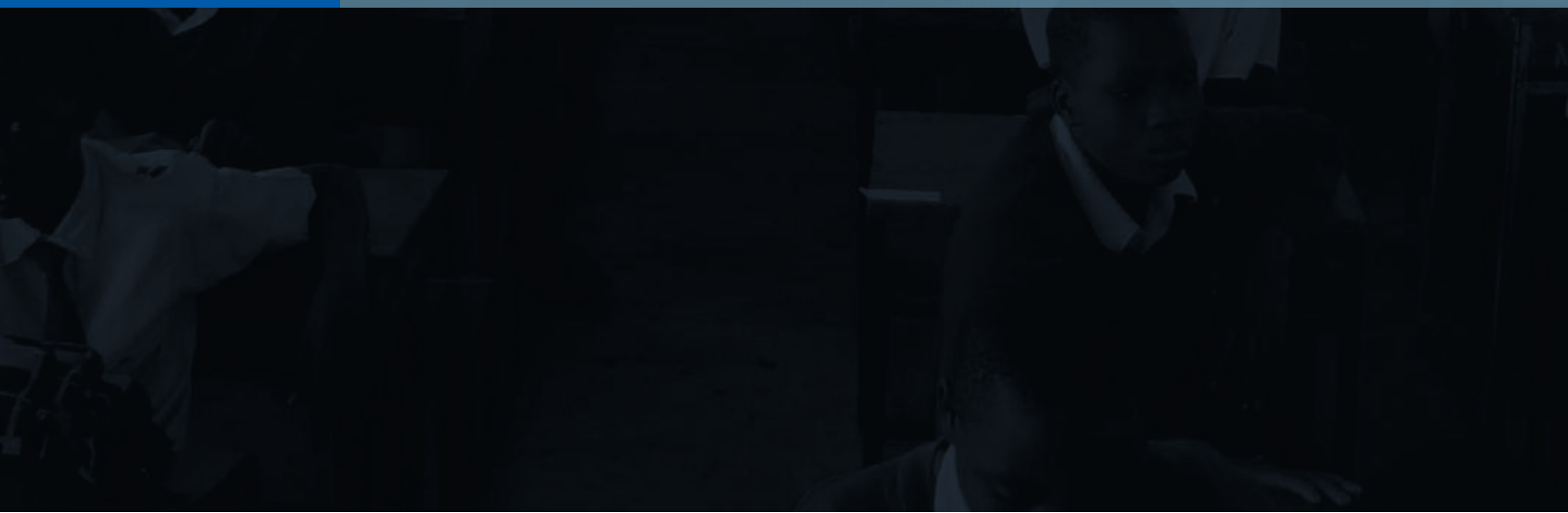




HUMAN
RIGHTS
WATCH

“I Had a Dream to Finish School”

Barriers to Secondary Education in Tanzania



SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

I liked to study so that I could have a wide mind. There was nothing I didn't like [to study]. I had a dream to finish school and go to college, graduate, and work as an accountant.

Like millions of adolescents in Tanzania, Imani, 20, from Mwanza, a region in northwestern Tanzania bordering Lake Victoria, wanted to study as much as she could so that she could graduate, find a job, and support herself and her family. From the age of 14, when she entered secondary school, she traveled more than an hour and a half every morning to get to school:

I was very tired by the time I got to school. I started arriving late all the time. When I would arrive late I would be punished.

Imani's plans changed when she was only 16 years old. She was sexually abused by her private tutor, a secondary school teacher whom her parents hired to teach her during the weekend. When Imani discovered she was pregnant, she informed the tutor. He disappeared.

A nurse would carry out monthly pregnancy tests and check all girls at her school, but Imani skipped school on two occasions when the nurse conducted the tests. On the third month of her pregnancy, school officials found out she was pregnant. "My dream was shattered then," she told Human Rights Watch. "I was expelled from school. I was expelled from [her sister's] home, too."

Like many adolescent girls in Tanzania, Imani tried many ways to get back into education once she had her baby, who, at the time she spoke to Human Rights Watch, was three years old:

I tried [to go back to school]. I went to every [preparatory] program, [and] I went to do the [Form II] national examination. I paid the examination fee to the teachers and teachers left with the money [and did not register her] so I didn't do my exam. This was in 2015.

When Human Rights Watch interviewed her in January 2016, Imani had just started a computer literacy program set up by a small nongovernmental organization in Mwanza to ensure more young women like her can find a way back into education.



All photos
© 2016 Elin Martínez/Human Rights Watch

A painting outside Rafiki Social Development Organization's office in Kahama district, Shinyanga. The painting aims to create awareness about sexual abuse of girls on their way to schools, and shows a female student refusing to take money from an adult man, saying "Sidanganyiki" or "I cannot be deceived" in Kiswahili.



Eileen (pseudonym), 21, dropped out of Form II when her school conducted a pregnancy test and school officials and parents found out she was pregnant. In Tanzania, school officials routinely subject girls to forced pregnancy testing as a disciplinary measure to expel pregnant students from schools.

Education has been a national priority for successive Tanzanian governments since independence. Tanzania has one of the world’s largest young populations, and its young people are at the heart of its aspiration to become a middle-income country by 2025.

The country’s economic and social progress and human development depends, in part, on empowering and educating this unique resource with the skills needed to take forward this nationwide goal. Quality education can lift families and communities out of poverty and increase a country’s economic growth. Completing secondary education has been shown to strongly benefit individuals’ health, employment, and earnings throughout their lives.

Secondary education, including technical and vocational training, can empower young people with soft skills needed for sustainable development, including citizenship and human rights, and ensure access to essential information to protect their health and well-being. For girls, safe and equal enrollment in secondary education can act as a powerful equalizer, ensuring all girls and boys access the same subjects, activities, and career choices.

Yet, millions of Tanzanian children and adolescents do not gain a secondary education or vocational training. It is estimated that a total of 5.1 million children aged 7 to 17 are out of school, including nearly 1.5 million of lower secondary school age. Education ends for many children after primary school: only three out of five Tanzanian adolescents, or 52 percent of the eligible school population, are enrolled in lower-secondary education and fewer complete secondary education. Formal vocational training is unavailable to many of the children who want it.

Instead of enrolling in school, many children resort to child labor, often in exploitative, abusive, or hazardous conditions, in violation of Tanzanian law, to supplement their family’s income. Girls also face many challenges on account of their gender. Almost two out of five girls marry before 18 years; and thousands of adolescent girls drop out of school because of pregnancy.

Until recently, many families did not enroll their children in secondary school because they could not afford school fees and related expenses, often costing more than Tanzanian Shillings (TZS) 100,000 (US\$50) per year.

But in December 2015, Tanzania’s new government took a crucial step: it abolished all school fees and “contributions” —additional fees charged by schools to pay for the schools’ running costs—previously required to enter lower-secondary schools in the country. According to the government, secondary school enrollment has significantly increased as a result.



A bamboo cane used by a teacher to cane students in a classroom lies on a desk at a secondary school in Mwanza, northwestern Tanzania. Human Rights Watch found that some teachers also beat students with wooden sticks, or with their hands or other objects.

The abolition of school fees is one of the most important actions taken by the government to implement its ambitious education goals. Tanzania’s 2014 Education and Training policy aims to increase access to primary and secondary education, and to improve the quality of education. These goals are in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a United Nations initiative which sets a target for all countries to offer all children free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education by 2030. The goals are also in line with Tanzania’s international and regional human rights obligations to realize the right to primary and secondary education for all.

But it is only one of several short- to long-term measures needed to fully realize the right to secondary education for



A girl shows the marks she sustained on her legs from regular caning by teachers in her school. She told Human Rights Watch: “We have marks in the legs, they hit our hands, they hit us on the head.”

all children in Tanzania. This report is based on over 220 interviews with secondary school students, out-of-school adolescents, parents and a wide range of education and government stakeholders in four regions of mainland Tanzania. Research for this report was conducted throughout 2016, coinciding with an important year for Tanzania that marks the rollout of free lower-secondary education and greater attention to the government’s secondary education plans. It builds on two previous Human Rights Watch investigations about abuses against children and the impact these harmful practices have on secondary education and well-being, conducted in 2012 and 2014 – *Toxic Toil: Child Labor and Mercury Exposure in Tanzania’s Small-Scale Gold Mines* and *No Way Out: Child Marriage and Human Rights Abuses in Tanzania*.

This report highlights key barriers to secondary education that prevent many adolescents from completing secondary education, and identifies numerous areas that require the government’s action to ensure all children access secondary education equally. In particular, this report points out government policies that specifically discriminate against girls, enabling schools to expel pregnant and married girls from school, robbing them of an education, as well as a policy that allows school officials to subject students to corporal punishment that can take brutal and humiliating forms. These policies deliberately facilitate discrimination and abuse, and stand in sharp contrast to the spirit of the government’s efforts to provide universal education.



Frances (pseudonym), 21, struggled to pay for secondary school. She worked as a domestic worker to help pay her school fees: “From 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. I studied, then from 5 p.m. – 11 p.m. I worked [at her employee’s home] and I also worked over the weekends ... I got 30,000 shillings [US\$14] per month ... not enough to pay for school.” She failed the secondary school exam and dropped out of Form IV.

Below is a summary of Human Rights Watch’s findings:

Many Students Still Face Significant Financial Barriers: Although official fees are no longer levied in schools, many of Tanzania’s poorest students are still unable to attend school because of other school-related costs. Their parents or guardians cannot afford to pay for transport to school, uniforms, and additional school materials such as books. When secondary schools are far away, students sometimes stay in private hostels or boarding facilities near school; many poor families cannot afford this. These serve as a significant barrier to children from poor families.

The Abolition of School Fees Has Left Significant Gaps in School Budgets: Schools are not able to fund basic needs they previously paid for with parents’ contributions (additional fees charged by schools to pay for running costs), including school construction and renovation, the purchase of learning materials, and hiring of additional teachers.

Primary School Exam Policy Blocks Access to Secondary Education: The government controls the number of students who enter secondary education by relying on the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE), an exam at the end of primary school. The government only allows students who pass the exam to proceed on to secondary school and it cannot be re-taken, meaning children who fail cannot continue with formal schooling and often drop out without completing the last year of primary education. Since 2012, more than 1.6 million adolescents have been barred from secondary education due to their exam results.

Infrastructure is Poor and Transportation to Schools is Inadequate: Students in remote and rural areas of the country have to travel very far to get to school, and many do not have access to a community secondary school in their ward. Many secondary schools suffer from a basic lack of infrastructure, educational materials, and qualified personnel. The government has not carried out its plan to build enough safe hostels to accommodate girls close to schools.

Corporal Punishment is Endemic in Secondary Schools: School officials and teachers in many schools routinely resort to corporal punishment, a practice that is still lawful in Tanzania in violation of its international obligations. Many students are also subjected to violence and psychological abuse that amounts to humiliating and degrading treatment. Some teachers beat students with bamboo or wooden sticks, or with their hands or other objects.

Girls Face Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Expulsion Due to Pregnancy or Marriage: Less than a third of girls that enter lower-secondary school graduate. Many girls are exposed to widespread sexual harassment by



Female students who are blind, are guided down a steep and slippery hill by their teachers. They have to walk through rough terrain to get from their secondary school to their school’s hostel in Mwanza city.



Broken braille machines, formerly used by students who are blind, sit on a shelf at a secondary school’s resource center for students with disabilities in Shinyanga, a city in northern Tanzania. Many secondary schools lack the equipment, materials, or pedagogical support needed to make education accessible to all students on an equal basis.

teachers. Many also face sexual exploitation and abuse by bus drivers and adults who often ask them for sex in exchange for gifts, rides, or money, on their way to school. In some schools, officials do not report cases of sexual abuse to police, and many schools lack a confidential mechanism to report abuse. Many, and perhaps most, schools force girls to undergo pregnancy testing in school and expel girls when they find out they are pregnant. Girls who are married are also expelled according to the government’s expulsion guidelines. Once out, girls struggle to get back into education because of discrimination and stigma against adolescent mothers, financial challenges, and the absence of a re-admission policy for young mothers of compulsory schooling age. Girls also lack access to adequate sanitation facilities, a particular problem for menstrual hygiene, and often miss school during their monthly periods.

Secondary Education Remains Inaccessible to Many Students with Disabilities: Children with disabilities face many barriers and discrimination in primary education, and very few adolescents with disabilities attend secondary schools across the country. Most secondary schools in Tanzania are not accessible to adolescents with physical or other disabilities, and are inadequately resourced to accommodate students with all types of disabilities. Many lack adequate learning materials, inclusive equipment, and qualified teachers.

The Quality of Secondary Education is Poor: Many schools lack enough teachers to cover all subjects, with worrying gaps in mathematics and science subjects. Students sometimes go without teachers specialized in these subjects for months, and must often find alternative ways to learn these subjects or pay for private tuition, or fail exams as a result. Classes are too large with 70 students on average. In addition, many secondary schools lack adequate classrooms, learning material, laboratories, and libraries. Millions of students are obliged to take two compulsory tests in secondary education, even if they have not had qualified teachers or materials to study for those tests. Many students fail these exams, and often drop out of secondary education prematurely. Once out of school, many adolescents lack realistic options to complete basic education or to pursue technical and vocational training.

Out-of-School Adolescents Have Limited Options To Complete Lower-Secondary Education: The government provides very few realistic alternatives for several million students who do not pass the PSLE or drop out halfway through lower-secondary education, without completing basic education. A return to secondary education is possible if students enroll in private centers to study, but many students lack the financial means and information to



An unfinished science laboratory next to a classroom at a secondary school in Shinyanga region, northern Tanzania. Construction work was put on hold when school officials were no longer allowed to ask parents for financial contributions following the government’s abolition of school fees and “contributions” in December 2015.

pursue this option. Formal vocational training requires the successful completion of lower-secondary education and is costly. Other vocational training courses are limited in quality, scope, and use.



Old female and male latrines at a secondary school in Mwanza, northeastern Tanzania. Safe and adequate toilets and sanitation facilities are a basic component of an acceptable learning environment, but in many secondary schools, toilets do not meet any basic standards. Many students interviewed by Human Rights Watch reported having to use dirty and congested pit latrines.

The government’s recent commitment to guarantee access to free secondary education provides new hope to hundreds of thousands of adolescents who have been barred from secondary school due to financial and other systemic barriers.

The solutions to many of the problems and barriers outlined in this report are resource intensive, and will require a greater focus on national resources for secondary education. To its credit, over the last decade, the government of Tanzania has demonstrated its political will to implement its education goals, in spite of its resource constraints. The government should, however, develop concrete plans to tackle these remaining barriers over time by adopting measures, in line with national resources and international financial support, to ensure more adolescents access a barrier-free secondary education.



“Speak English” signs found in secondary schools in Ukerewe, an island on Lake Victoria, and Mwanza, in northwestern Tanzania. Many secondary schools strictly enforce the use of English — a new language for most secondary school students, as Kiswahili is the medium of instruction in primary schools. Many students are not given adequate support to transition from Kiswahili to English, and some reported being punished for not speaking English in class. In 2014, the government adopted a policy to allow the dual use of Swahili and English as languages of instruction in secondary schools.



A snapshot of “Our Cries,” a website and civil society platform launched by Modesta Joseph, a secondary school student at the time, to report widespread abuse against students who travel by bus in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’s business capital.

© 2015 Our Cries

In keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals, the government should focus on expanding access to secondary education, while also guaranteeing a good quality education to all students, ensuring students are empowered, gain skills, and build specialized knowledge to drive Tanzania forward. To ensure all adolescents gain skills, it should take steps to ensure out-of-school adolescents can more easily get into secondary education or quality vocational training.

To the greatest extent possible given available resources, and with financial support from its development partners, the government should speed up construction and renovation of secondary schools and ensure a good quality of education by placing sufficient numbers of qualified teachers in schools, and increasing learning materials for all students.

The government should also use this momentum to urgently review existing policies which conflict with its obligation to guarantee the right to secondary education, free from discrimination and all forms of violence.

Tanzania should take specific steps to protect the rights of girls and the rights of students with disabilities, ensuring their inclusion in secondary schools. The government should immediately adopt regulations to stop mandatory pregnancy testing of girls and allow pregnant or married girls to continue their education. It should unequivocally ban corporal punishment, and ensure students are safe from sexual harassment and abuse in schools.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

TO THE GOVERNMENT OF TANZANIA

Ensure Access to Free Secondary Education for All Adolescents

- Ensure that all schools implement Education Circular No. 5 of 2015, the government’s policy on the removal of fees and contributions and monitor compliance.
- Progressively increase budgets to ensure that schools receive adequate government funds for all education matters, including the construction or renovation of buildings, teacher housing facilities, and learning and teaching materials.
- Progressively increase budgets available for secondary schools to ensure schools can adequately cover financial gaps previously covered through parental contributions, and meet minimum standards of funding for all secondary schools.

Phase Out the Use of Exams as Filter to Select Students for Secondary Education

- Explore all possible options to accelerate plans to phase out the use of the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) to bar students who do not pass the exam from secondary education before the 2021 deadline.
- Immediately change existing policy to ensure students who do not pass the PSLE can repeat Standard 7 to gain basic skills and knowledge before they proceed to Form I.

Increase the Availability of Secondary Schools and Hostels

- To the greatest extent possible given available resources:
 - Build new secondary schools and ensure all secondary schools have adequate classrooms and sanitation facilities. Take steps to ensure all parts of the new buildings, including toilets, are fully accessible to students and teachers with disabilities.
 - Expedite building of safe hostels for female students.

End the Use and Tolerance of Corporal Punishment and Sexual Abuse in Schools

- Abolish corporal punishment in policy and practice, including by revoking the National Education (Corporal) Punishment Regulations of 1979, and adopting a policy and regulations that comply with Tanzania’s international and regional human rights obligations.
- Ensure cases of sexual harassment and abuse, including by bus drivers, teachers, or school officials, are reported to appropriate enforcement authorities, including police, and that cases are duly investigated and prosecuted. Teachers and drivers who are under investigation should be suspended from their job.

End Discriminatory Barriers and Sexual Abuse Against Girls in Schools

- Stop expelling pregnant and married girls from school, and revise Regulation No. 4 of the Education Regulations (Expulsion and Exclusion of Pupils from Schools) of 2002 by removing “offences against morality” and “wedlock” as grounds for expulsion.
- Immediately end pregnancy testing in schools, and issue an official Government Notice to ensure that teachers and school officials are aware that the practice is prohibited.
- Expedite regulations which will allow pregnant girls and young mothers of school-going age back into secondary school, in compliance with the 2014 Education and Training Policy.

Guarantee Inclusive Education for All Students with Disabilities

- Ensure students with disabilities have access to free or subsidized assistive devices, including wheelchairs, canes, or eye glasses, needed to facilitate their movement, participation, and full inclusion in schools.
- Take steps to ensure secondary schools with students with disabilities have an acceptable minimum of books, teaching materials, and inclusive materials for students and teachers with disabilities.
- Take steps to ensure teachers have adequate training in inclusive education. Provide training in counseling for teachers to enable them to support children with diverse disabilities and their families.

Strengthen Quality Education in All Secondary Schools

- To the greatest extent possible given available resources:
 - Ensure teachers are adequately compensated, commensurate with their roles. Provide financial incentives to teachers placed in remote or under-served areas of the country, and provide adequate housing facilities for teaching staff.
 - Ensure all students have access to textbooks and learning materials.

TO INTERNATIONAL DONORS AND UN AGENCIES

- Urge the government to repeal the corporal punishment regulations and end the practice in schools, and provide funding to support large-scale trainings in alternative classroom management for all teaching staff and school officials.
- Urge the government to end the expulsion of female students who become pregnant, and to expedite the adoption of a robust policy that allows re-entry for parents of school-going age.

“I Had a Dream to Finish School”

Barriers to Secondary Education in Tanzania

In December 2015, the Tanzanian government abolished school fees and additional financial contributions for lower-secondary education, removing an important financial barrier for many adolescents. While enrollment numbers have increased as a result, more than 40 percent of adolescents are out of lower-secondary education in the country, and very few adolescents complete secondary school.

Based on interviews with more than 220 students, teachers, officials and other stakeholders, *“I Had a Dream to Finish School”* highlights key barriers to secondary education that prevent many adolescents from completing secondary education, and identifies numerous areas that require the government’s action to ensure all children access secondary education equally. The report documents government policies that specifically discriminate against girls, enabling schools to expel pregnant and married girls from school, robbing them of an education, as well as a policy that allows school officials to subject students to corporal punishment that can take brutal and humiliating forms. These policies deliberately facilitate discrimination and abuse, and stand in sharp contrast to the spirit of the government’s efforts to provide universal education.

While the government of Tanzania has invested significant resources in education, it needs to do far more. Human Rights Watch calls on the Tanzania government to urgently remove policies that lead to widespread violations of the right to education, develop and implement plans to overcome remaining barriers for adolescents left out of school, and focus on strengthening the quality of education in under-served schools across the country.



All photos © 2016 Elin Martínez/Human Rights Watch

More than 120 Form II students prepare to sit their mock exams in a secondary school in Mwanza, northwestern Tanzania.