



Impact of the Girls Education Challenge Project in Tanzania



Intervention

Despite the overall educational system in Tanzania being similar across the mainland, there are persistent regional differences in school attendance and learning outcomes. Gender role beliefs often push young women to teen marriage and early pregnancy which keep them away from schooling.

BRAC follows a community- and need-based approach within its education programme. Supported by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), BRAC Tanzania implemented the *Girls Education Challenge (GEC)* project between 2013 and 2016. It served 15,900 girls 12 to 18 (13,950 in primary grades 5 and 6 and 1,950 out-of-school girls for secondary education) from Dar es Salaam, Singida, Tabora, Shinyanga and Mwanza regions.

The project offered peer mentoring, life skills-based education (LSBE) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education. For the *in-school girls*, one-hour tutoring was organised by teachers thrice a week after classes. The special focus in the curriculum was on math, science, and English. Girls were supported by peer-mentoring and were granted access to mini-libraries established in the later years within schools. For the *out-of-school girls*, a one-room-one-teacher study group was organised in their community to complete four years of secondary education within two academic years. Life-skills and SRH education were organised to build up their business skills and raise their SRH awareness. Finally, parents and community members were sensitised on the intervention through regular monthly meetings.



Research

Girls' Education Challenge Project: Endline Evaluation Report (Gulesci et al., 2017, Dar es Salaam: [BRAC IERC](#))



Method

A *difference-in-differences* (DID) estimate was applied with an *intention-to-treat* (ITT) analysis to evaluate the learning and socio-economic outcomes of girls. A 102 communities (70 treatment) across five project regions with 163 out-of-school and 484 in-school girls were followed to the endline. Of them, the comparison girls were selected based on the same criteria as the treatment girls. The study also applied some qualitative tools.



▲ **3.5**
pp numeracy
test score

▲ **5**
wpm by out-of-
school girls

▲ **10**
pp enrolment
rate

▼ **2**
pp teen
pregnancy

▼ **12**
pp violence
targeting girls
in school

The GEC project positively affected the learning outcomes of treatment girls; in particular, their numeracy test score increased **by 3.5** percentage points (pp) from the midline to the endline and relative to the comparison group. These results were large and mainly driven by the out-of-school girls who increased numeracy score by 6.6 pp opposed to 2.2 pp by in-school girls. The average literacy score of treatment girls improved by 0.86 words per minute (wpm). While the in-school girls did not improve much by the endline, out-of-school girls improved by nearly **5 wpm**, as opposed to the comparison girls.

Out-of-school girls expectedly performed better than in-school girls at school enrollment. Treatment girls who were in schools at the midline, on the other hand, increased their attendance by two extra days at the endline in comparison to the comparison group. Their attendance rate was higher by 7 pp. A similar positive shift was noted in case of the boys (some boys received support); their enrolment rate in the secondary school was **10 pp** higher than in the comparison group.

The SRH education positively affected the teen pregnancy among the girls in the treatment communities reducing it **by 2 pp**. This result implies effectiveness in reducing teen pregnancy in the long run. At the endline, treatment girls were 11 pp more likely than the comparison girls to think that they can influence the decision about their marriage. In-school girls were, to that, **12 pp** less likely to report violence targeting girls in schools which was again a large effect.

➤ The Way Forward

The intervention with peer-mentoring support for in-school students on selected subjects and one-room-one-teacher arrangement along with stipend for out-of-school students created significant educational outcomes in terms of their attendance and numeracy performance. Even the life-skills and SRH education benefited female students by reducing teen pregnancy and violence targeting girls in schools.

Future studies would require full compliance to research protocols and should consider some contextual issues for better quality implementation. For instance, the clubs for out-of-school students could offer, in addition, market-based vocational training and job placement. Future implementers should also secure higher allowance for refreshments and fees within peer mentoring, clubs, community and parents' meetings to increase the attendance and the impact. Finally, the school-based mini-libraries for a sense of more buy-in and longer sustainability should be run by the schools themselves.