FACT 1
Only one in four children in Standard 3 can read a Standard 2 story in Kiswahili.

FACT 2
Four out of ten children in Standard 3 are able to do multiplication at Standard 2 level.

FACT 3
One out of ten children in Standard 3 can read a Standard 2 level English story.

FACT 4
Where a child lives can affect if and when they learn to read and do arithmetic.

FACT 5
Three out of ten children in Tanzania know the meaning of the colours of the national flag.

Although very small in Standard 3, an above average number have mastered more theory and theoretically should be at the Standard 2 level. Yet, reality is not at all the same in this large country. Ensuring that children are learning in Tanzania and the quality of learning in Tanzania is a major concern for parents and the community. In answering the simple question ‘Are Our Children Learning?’ this summary presents key findings from the 2012 Uwezo assessment in Tanzania. The core components of the assessment have remained constant since the survey’s inception in 2010.

The assessment is a large-scale, household-based survey of children’s basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Although every child in Tanzania in Standard 3 or above should have mastered core literacy and numeracy skills at the Standard 2 level, the reality falls far short of this goal. Over the past three years literacy levels have remained low and largely unchanged, but results for children’s numeracy skills are showing improvement.

The following five facts on learning outcomes and five facts on learning environments highlight some of the most important findings from the 2012 assessment.

More children seem to be acquiring number skills sooner. Pass rates for the numeracy test in 2012 were higher across all grades. For example, 44% of students in Standard 3 passed the numeracy test compared with 37% in 2011. However, the 2012 assessment excluded seven districts and these results will need to be further confirmed in future years.

Competence in reading and comprehending a story in English remains low. Uwezo 2012 confirmed that rates of English literacy are significantly poorer than rates of Kiswahili literacy in all classes. By Standard 7, half of all students leaving primary school have not acquired basic English reading skills, which is the medium of instruction in secondary school.

The national flag is everywhere in Tanzania, particularly in school environments. But do children understand the significance of the colours of the flag? Findings show that 69% of children aged 7 to 16 cannot explain the meaning of the three major colours on the flag.

Disparities exist between those enrolled in school or those out of school as well as between rural and urban areas.

Data for 2012 confirm clearly the regional, district and urban-rural disparities in children’s learning outcomes. In general, children in urban schools do better in the assessment than children in rural schools.

Overall government expenditure on education is significant. Gross domestic product is substantial. Yet, expenditure on primary education is not enough to ensure quality learning outcomes in Tanzania. In learning outcomes and factors that influence learning outcomes highlight some of the most important recommendations to the government.

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FACT 1
CLASS SIZES ARE STILL TOO LARGE WITH, ON AVERAGE, 47 STUDENTS PER TEACHER

Class sizes are still too large, with, on average, 47 students per teacher.

Nationally, only 4 in 10 government primary schools have access to clean drinking water.

The pupil-teacher ratio of 47:1 observed during the 2012 assessment was almost unchanged from 2011 (48:1). This ratio is likely to be even higher in some regions of the country, where there is limited access to clean drinking water.

The highest pupil-teacher ratio of 55:1 was observed in Kagera region, while 47:1 was the lowest in Dar es Salaam region. The pupil-teacher ratio in urban areas was significantly lower than in rural areas.

School conditions can have adverse impacts on learning outcomes. Lack of drinking water is a key indicator in terms of school environment and has a high possibility of negatively affecting children’s abilities to absorb new knowledge at school.

FACT 2
RESOURCES TO SUPPORT LEARNING VARY SIGNIFICANTLY BY REGION

Resources to support learning vary significantly by region.

In Dar es Salaam, 14 pupils share one textbook compared with 41 pupils for each textbook in Kigoma region. As with the majority of school facilities, there is large regional variation in the number of pupils using one textbook between them.

Of note, with the lowest pupil-teacher ratio (34:1) in the country, Dar es Salaam Region outperformed all other regions. There is very little improvement in teacher absenteeism from 19% in 2011 to 18% in 2012. This means that almost 1 in 5 teachers were absent on the day of the Uwezo assessment.

Schools in Kagera Region have the highest pupil-teacher ratio of 55:1, which is more than twice the national average. In Lindi Region, only 5% of government primary schools have a library, while in Dar es Salaam, 67% of schools have a library.

Schools in Lindi Region have a very low pupil-teacher ratio of 34:1, which is the lowest in the country. However, the lack of resources in these schools can make it difficult for students to learn effectively.

FACT 3
FEEDING PROGRAMS ARE PROVIDED BY 3 OUT OF 10 OF SCHOOLS NATIONALLY.

Feeding programs are provided by 3 out of 10 of schools nationally.

Nationally, 29% of schools provide feeding programs. This figure masks significant regional differences: no schools in Kigoma provide such a program while 79% of schools in Kilimanjaro do.

FACT 4
79% OF SCHOOLS ARE AWARDED ELITE STATUS DUE TO EXCELLENCE

79% of schools are awarded elite status due to excellence.

Only 21% of schools were assessed as non-elite. This figure highlights the significant variations in school performance across Tanzania.

FACT 5
3 OF 10 SCHOOLS HAVE LIBRARIES

3 of 10 schools have libraries.

All schools are meant to have libraries, but many don’t, and there are vast disparities across the country. In Kagera Region, 67% of government primary schools have a library, while in Dar es Salaam, only 5% of schools have a library.

In Dar es Salaam, 14 pupils share one textbook compared with 41 pupils for each textbook in Kigoma region. As with the majority of school facilities, there is large regional variation in the number of pupils using one textbook between them.

School conditions can have adverse impacts on learning outcomes. Lack of drinking water is a key indicator in terms of school environment and has a high possibility of negatively affecting children’s abilities to absorb new knowledge at school.