



Father: “My daughter . . .”

Headmaster: “Um, . . . wait while I talk to this important person first.”

Tanzania has invested heavily in ensuring that all children have access to education. Civil society group HakiElimu stepped in to take the political commitment beyond enrollment and graduation targets to meaningful policy decisions that lead to higher quality schooling.

Cartoon courtesy of HakiElimu

The following case study illustrates how expenditure monitoring has been used as part of an advocacy strategy for realizing the right to education in Tanzania. This is a summary of a more in-depth study prepared by Ruth Carlitz and Rosie McGee as part of the Learning Program of the International Budget Partnership’s Partnership Initiative. The PI Learning Program seeks to assess and document the impact of civil society engagement in public budgeting.

Download a PDF of the complete case study at <http://internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/HakiElimu-Case-Study.pdf>.

## TANZANIA: PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Tanzania’s first post-independence President, Julius K. Nyerere, is still referred to as *Mwalimu* (teacher) and is globally renowned for his pioneering commitment to education as a means of liberation.

Approaching the 50th anniversary of its independence, Tanzania retains its founding President’s commitment to the right to education; in 2001 the country scrapped primary education fees in a bid to achieve universal primary education.

Yet, at times, government actions on education policy in Tanzania may be more concerned with maintaining the *appearance* of commitment. A government-sponsored “crash course” in education for high school graduates to address the teacher shortage, for example, was dismissed as a political maneuver when a real solution was needed.

HakiElimu — “right to education” in Kiswahili — is a Tanzanian civil society organization (CSO) that has worked to make sure that the country truly delivers quality education. But HakiElimu also understands that the

obstacles to ensuring high-quality, universal education are intertwined with larger issues of governance, accountability, and democratization in Tanzania.

This case study looks at HakiElimu’s advocacy work on policy and budgeting for education, illustrating how the organization has raised the political stakes in education to ensure that policy decisions lead to meaningful improvements in the sector.

## THE ISSUES: A TANGLED HISTORY OF EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

Thanks to President Nyerere’s emphasis on education as a route to national self-reliance, education holds a special place in Tanzania’s politics, history, and public opinion.

Perhaps ironically, Tanzania’s dependence on international aid has also fostered a commitment to education (nearly 33 percent of government spending in the financial year 2010-2011 came from foreign assistance). The Education for All (EFA) movement and the education targets within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided some of the impetus for Tanzania’s renewed effort in 2001 to achieve universal primary education.

In spite of the frequent promises made about education in Tanzania, the sector is plagued by broader governance challenges, including its dependence on foreign aid and a lack of accountability, which often result in policies not being fully implemented.

Tanzania is currently ranked 152 out of 187 countries with comparable data on the Human Development Index, placing it slightly above the regional average for sub-Saharan Africa but still indicating major existing challenges, including in education. As of 2010 Tanzanian adults had an average of only 5.1 years of schooling.

Children today, however, are expected to end up with far more education than their parents, owing partly to the government's 2001 decision, backed with a \$150 million loan from the World Bank, to make primary education free. In 2004 the government received another \$150 million loan from the World Bank to expand access to secondary education.

The efforts have dramatically increased enrollment, which grew by over 60 percent, from 4.4 million in 2000 to well over 7 million in 2006. Expansions in access to secondary education have been even more dramatic. For example, 401,011 students were enrolled in the first year of secondary in 2007, up from 148,412 just two years earlier.

While these improvements in access to educational opportunities may be laudable in their own right, they have created major strains on Tanzania's education system. Principal among these is a shortage of qualified teachers.

The Tanzanian government's initial response to the teacher shortage was largely in keeping with the politicized nature of the policy process. In 2006 it reduced normal teaching diploma training from a two-year taught course to a one-year course combined with one year of teaching experience. Furthermore, in an attempt to fill acute gaps even more quickly, the government instituted a "crash program" nicknamed "VodaFasta" (a reference to a rapid electronic airtime distribution and recharge service promoted by one of Tanzania's major mobile phone companies) through which high school leavers were trained for three months before being dispatched to schools. Around the same time former Prime Minister Lowassa issued a directive to build a secondary school in every ward, seen by some as a "blatant political decision."

While several of HakiElimu's founding members are critical of the ruling party and its style of government, HakiElimu's objective has always been to make the existing education system more effective rather than to introduce fundamental changes to it. It works on the principle that the shortcomings in educational quality do not stem primarily from deficient policies, but from a lack of policy

implementation, poor resource allocation, and weak government accountability. HakiElimu's strategy, therefore, is to "hold up a mirror to government," drawing the attention of the government, donors, and the public to instances and patterns of non-implementation of policies and budgets. By so doing, it seeks to raise the political cost of inaction on these issues within the education sector.

## THE CAMPAIGN

HakiElimu's strategy works "from above" and "from below." Relevant government institutions, including the legislature and the executive, are targeted with efforts to change their behavior. This is done through a combination of tactics ranging from strategic, high-level advocacy to mass communication through public forums, as well as through print, radio, and TV media. Meanwhile, HakiElimu has mobilized a countrywide grassroots coalition of over 30,000 *Friends of Education*, including community organizations and individuals who have signed up to receive periodic delivery (by mail) of HakiElimu publications and other relevant documents (such as government budget speeches), and who are also informed of opportunities for networking and capacity building. Although HakiElimu provides limited financial support for some *Friends'* activities (such as building community libraries), the network is fairly loose and self-sustaining, and only about 1,000 of the *Friends* can be considered to be very active. The *Friends* have been most involved in monitoring disbursements from the programs to expand primary and secondary education.

In addition to the monitoring done by the *Friends*, HakiElimu conducts its own primary research (including local-level public expenditure tracking exercises, school-level resource transfer and expenditure monitoring, and the Open Budget Survey), secondary research (especially into government commitments), and aims to join up the disparate commitments and actions by different institutional actors involved in education. This research forms the basis of its television and radio "spots" (short broadcasts that highlight a problem area in education governance or delivery) and other popular outputs.

HakiElimu frames its messages in a thought-provoking way, often dramatizing the negative consequences of government's failures to fully implement policy. HakiElimu spots and popular publications also often incorporate aspects of humor in the content. Its style has typically centered on encouraging people to question the status quo, rather than providing specific suggestions for improving policy. This has led to criticism by government officials — and among some other members of Tanzanian citizen society — that HakiElimu focuses on complaints without offering solutions.



## TACTICS FOR INCREASING SCRUTINY ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR IN TANZANIA

### Coalition Building and Grassroots Mobilization

- Partnerships with other CSOs and allies within government
- Forming a nationwide network of volunteers
- Budgetary research, such as public expenditure tracking

### Working with Government and the Legislature

- Training of local government leaders, legislators, and journalists
- High-level lobbying and advocacy

### Media Outreach

- A mass communication strategy of informative and thought-provoking “media spots”

### Targeted engagement with government officials

- Strategic engagement with specific individuals and units within government

In its varied initiatives, HakiElimu also partners with other organizations, such as the Tanzania Education Network, Policy Forum, and the Tanzania Teachers’ Union. At the local level, key partners include Teacher Resource Centers and Teacher Training Colleges. Some civil society peers observe that over recent years the organization has shifted its efforts from confrontation toward cooperation with government.

Indeed, HakiElimu identifies a limited number of individuals and units within government whom it considers strategic partners or allies. For instance, the in-service training advocacy campaign identifies the Teacher Education Department of the Ministry of Education and the Basic Education Development Committee, which authored the strategy that the campaign seeks to get implemented. But in general, government actors or units are seen as either targets or likely opponents rather than allies. In HakiElimu’s early years, the organization’s leadership spent considerable time and energy trying to get a seat at the table of high-level discussions between government and donors, through the official dialogue structure. However, as one of HakiElimu’s founding members explained, civil society participation through these official channels became less meaningful over time, and the organization decided there were better uses of its time, including working with local government actors.

In addition to engagement with local government officials, such as District Education Officers, HakiElimu has begun

providing training to local government leaders on the concept of quality education, the importance of education in society, children’s rights, governance, democracy, social accountability monitoring, budget and public expenditure, and the legal framework in education.

Finally, HakiElimu has established a closer working relationship with the legislature. In July 2011 a group of Members of Parliament (MPs) established an Education Caucus and asked HakiElimu to help manage the secretariat. According to one close observer of the education sector, this shows that HakiElimu has established significant legitimacy and expertise. This is an activity that HakiElimu did not specifically plan for but implemented in response to an unexpected opportunity. Likewise, during the preparation of the 2012-2013 budget, HakiElimu was contacted by the parliamentary Social Services Committee to give its members some basic budget analysis training.

## CHANGES DUE TO THE CAMPAIGN

Though HakiElimu seeks to hold government to their stated priorities rather than targeting changes of their own to budget or budget processes, the organization has recorded some clear achievements in the education sector. The organization has left its mark, for example, on teacher training.

HakiElimu, through its TV and radio spots, raised public attention on the shortage of teachers and issues with teacher retention. HakiElimu and its partners have also been very vocal in their opposition to the “crash course” for teachers, even supporting investigative journalism into the impact of nonprofessional teachers. Amid a broader public outcry, HakiElimu’s efforts are seen to have contributed to the decision to rescind the program.

The Department of Policy and Planning decided in 2011 to initiate an in-service training for English and Mathematics teachers in response to the advocacy campaigns of HakiElimu and other CSOs. And Tanzania’s 2012 Education and Training Policy also seems to have been influenced by HakiElimu, particularly in its focus on teacher training and other quality issues. Officials at the Department of Policy and Planning who drafted the policy said that HakiElimu had given “very good inputs” into the document.

HakiElimu also boasts significant achievements in bringing attention to teacher housing shortages, which became an especially contentious issue between the ruling party and the organization.

Amid the 2010 general election campaign, President Kikwete accused HakiElimu of misleading the public with a TV spot stating that only 1 percent of the projected teachers’ houses had been built. A ruling party MP later

asked in parliamentary debate why HakiElimu had not been called to account for “misleading” information; the Minister of Education backed him in refuting HakiElimu’s claim. In paid advertisements in various media, HakiElimu cited the government reports that confirmed the 1 percent figure. The government then directed Local Government Authorities to submit figures for the previous five years, apparently with the intent of disproving HakiElimu, but this directive evaporated.

After this heated exchange, the government hastened the implementation of existing policy commitments and later increased its funding for teacher housing in the 2011 budget.

HakiElimu is further credited with having an influence over the disbursement of grants to secondary schools for teaching and learning. Evidence about funding blockages and leakages compiled by HakiElimu through community-level research by the *Friends of Education* influenced a government decision to disburse the full amount of the secondary school grant.

Finally, there is some evidence that HakiElimu has built the capacity of other actors to demand accountability in the education sector, and perhaps beyond. For example, the parliamentary Social Services Committee requested and received capacity building from HakiElimu in order to critically review the 2012-2013 budget proposal. In addition, HakiElimu has opened new spaces for civil society participation in education, and it has also pioneered the use of the media in Tanzania. The latter has paved the way for organizations, such as Twaweza and Uwezo, which are relying increasingly on broadcast campaigns and partnerships with investigative journalists. Finally, HakiElimu has contributed to building the capacity of citizens in the form of the *Friends of Education*, as well.



## OUTCOMES OF HAKIELIMU'S CAMPAIGN ON EDUCATION

- Increased public awareness on the teacher shortage
- A decision by the government to rescind a “crash course” for teachers
- The initiation of an in-service training for English and Mathematics teachers
- A greater focus on teacher quality issues in the 2012 Education and Training Policy
- Increased funding for teaching housing in the 2011 budget
- Expedited disbursement of the secondary school grant
- Strengthened capacity of others, including MPs and citizens, to demand accountability in the education sector

## CONCLUSIONS

HakiElimu recognizes that the problems in the education sector go beyond mere technical deficits. Enhanced accountability is needed within the sector, as well as a contribution to a more effective democracy. From HakiElimu’s perspective, even though the impact of the education-related advocacy might be considered partial or limited, the organization’s achievements are nonetheless important because they are stepping stones toward the full implementation of education policy and budget and because they are democratic gains in themselves.

This case study confirms that it is difficult, but also possible, to make unaccountable government systems more responsive to the needs of citizens if and when there is something at stake — in this case, a continued hold on political power by the party that has governed Tanzania for the last 50 years. The year 2015 is fast approaching, bringing Tanzania’s general elections and intensified donor efforts and funds for education as the end-date for the MDGs looms. Until then at least, the scope for HakiElimu to raise the stakes continues to grow.

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