

**A snap shot: Barriers secondary school girl students face in Tanzania**

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| **Poverty** | About 49% of the population live below the $1.90 per person per day international poverty line. Vulnerability is also still high: for every four Tanzanians who moved out of poverty, three fell into it. Rural poverty is higher, with about 73% of families in the Iringa region being subsistence farmers.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| **Long walks to school that increase girls vulnerability** | Infrastructure is poor and transportation to schools is non-existent. Students in remote and rural areas of the country have to walk up to 20 kms to get to school, or live in unsafe accommodation. With little or no money for food or rent, this can be dangerous and puts the girls into very vulnerable situations. |
| **Girls face sexual harassment and expulsion due to pregnancy or marriage** | Many girls are exposed to widespread sexual harassment, especially on their walk to school. Teenage pregnancy rates in Tanzania are increasing: more than one in four adolescents aged 15-19 had begun childbearing in 2016.[[2]](#footnote-1)[[3]](#endnote-2) Girls in rural communities are more likely to fall pregnant: 32 per cent of rural teenagers have had a live birth or are pregnant, compared with 19 per cent of teenagers in urban areas.[[4]](#footnote-2) The number of child marriages in Tanzania is high, with almost two in five girls marrying before the age of 18. Girls who are married are also expelled according to government’s guidelines. In rural areas, there are no Alternative Education Pathways for girls who have been expelled or drop out of school. |
| **Low levels of secondary completion, especially among girls** | Only 1% of rural based girls who start primary school will complete advanced secondary school. Progression to secondary school for girls in Tanzania was reported at 69% in 2017, while the net lower secondary enrolment stood at 26% for rural Tanzania in 2018, with only 6% going on to A-levels.[[5]](#footnote-3) This is a major barrier for young women to fulfil their potential and makes it more difficult for them and their family to escape a life in poverty. |
| **Rural secondary schools suffer from a basic lack of infrastructure, educational materials,**  **qualified personnel, and overcrowding** | 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, with schools lacking adequate classrooms, learning material, laboratories, and libraries. Many schools lack enough teachers to cover all subjects, with significant gaps in mathematics and science subjects. Classes are too large with at least 60 students on average in some cases up to 100, even though the recommended government class size is 40. Millions of students are required 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.  Girls lack access to adequate sanitation facilities, a challenge for menstrual hygiene management. In addition, due to poverty, parents lack sufficient funds to support purchase of sanitary pads, leading to the girls often missing school during their monthly periods. |

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. World Bank, Tanzania Mainland Poverty assessment, Executive summary 2018

   2. <https://tanzania.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/factsheet_teenage%20pregnancy_UNFPA_14oct.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
4. 3Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey and Malaria Indicator Survey (TDHS) 2015/16. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
5. 4<https://tradingeconomics.com/tanzania/gross-enrolment-ratio-upper-secondary-female-percent-wb-data.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)