



Inclusive Futures

Promoting disability inclusion

Gender Analysis baseline: Inclusive education project in Shinyanga municipal council, Shinyanga district council, and Misungwi district council of Tanzania

September 2022



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background This gender analysis report is a product of the baseline study of an inclusive education project funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). This Disability Inclusive Development consortium project is led by Leonard Cheshire, ADD and Sense International. It is based in Shinyanga District council, Shinyanga Municipal council and Misungwi District council of Tanzania. The aim of the project is to ascertain the existing conditions and set a standard to measure change within the three domains and key outcome areas identified in the Task Order's results framework. The project is working in 47 mainstream pre-primary and primary schools across the three councils, aiming to enroll 1 880 children with disabilities within these schools. As part of the baseline study the consultants were requested to explore the gender norms of the project site, to enable a better understanding of the context and to reflect on how gender mainstreaming can be ensured through the project interventions.

Methodology The consultants collected gender related data, with areas of enquiry including knowledge, attitudes and practices of the community towards disability and children - especially girls - with disabilities. There was also identification of barriers and challenges that children - especially girls - with disabilities face in accessing education. Other questions related to societal gender roles and division of labour, power of decision-making and access to resources in households as well as harmful gender cultural norms, practices and traditions.

Findings The study found that there is limited equality in gender roles and division of labour at community and household level. Participants of this study revealed that women and girls do most of the domestic activities and spend more time than men and boys on unpaid care work. Power of decision-making and access to resources reside predominantly with men, while women and girls have little access, ownership or control over resources of their households.

Women, men, children, teachers and leaders confirmed pervasive negative community perceptions and attitudes towards disability and children with disabilities. Children with disabilities are often seen as a burden and curse, with families not seeing the benefits of investing in their education. Related to poverty, early marriage is also a common occurrence in this region. Harmful gender cultural norms, practices and traditions further erode the right of girls with disabilities to access education.

Recommendations It is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) together with the Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Women and Special Groups ensure that mainstreamed disability, gender and inclusive education plans, strategies, budgets and frameworks are well implemented, monitored and evaluated all over the country.

The efforts of government, Development Partners and other stakeholders would be enhanced through collaboration towards changing the mindset of the community regarding gender inequality and cultural norms that hinder the development of both sexes. Public awareness campaigns and community engagement on the importance of education for girls

and children with disability is essential, so too is the need to challenge harmful beliefs, norms and cultural practices which impact negatively on the well-being and development of girls, women and children with disabilities.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| CFM | Child Functioning Module |
| FGD | Focus group discussions |
| GBV | Gender-based violence |
| KII | Key informant interview |
| MoEST | Ministry of Education, Science and Technology |
| ODK | Open data kit |
| OPD | Organization of persons with disabilities |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SGMs | Sexual and gender minorities |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for Social Sciences |
| UNCRPD | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children’s Fund |
| VEO | Village executive officer |
| WEO | Ward executive officer |
| WASH | Water, sanitation and hygiene |

1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of gender equality has been one of the main goals of inclusive education for several decades. United Nations agencies and other institutions offer guidance for achieving gender equality in inclusive education, towards ensuring that both boys and girls with disabilities access education. However, there is still a significant disparity between the distribution of male and female pupils in education.¹ UNICEF also argues that while gender parity has improved, barriers and bottlenecks around gender equality and discrimination remain in place. Indeed, research indicates that only 10% of children with disabilities in developing countries go to school and just 1% of women with disabilities worldwide are literate². There is abundant evidence that children – especially girls - with disabilities, face exclusion and discrimination in different areas of life, among these, exclusion from education. As a result, they are consistently lagging behind in educational outcomes compared to their peers without disabilities, in terms of school enrolment and completion, mean years of schooling and literacy levels.

In working towards gender equality, the Government of Tanzania has put in place the National Development Vision 2025. An element of this vision is the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all socio-economic and political relations and culture by the year 2025. Furthermore, there are several national policies related to gender equality. These include Women in Development Policy (1992), Women and Gender Development Policy (2000) and National Gender Policy (2007). The intention of these is to bring about gender equality and integrate gender equality into policies, plans, development strategies and actions in all sectors and at all levels in the development process. The government has also formulated the National Plan of Action (NPA, 2017-2022) as a comprehensive framework with strategies and activities for preventing gender-based violence and achieving gender equity in Tanzania. There has been collaboration between the government and its agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to oppose violence against women and girls and to sensitize the public on the need to remove gender inequalities and gender-based violence. This awarene-raising has been done through mass media, seminars, workshops and drama.

The UNESCO data for Sub-Saharan Africa³ highlighted that in respect of education, girls with disabilities were disadvantaged as compared with their male counterparts. Boys with disabilities had almost one year more of schooling than girls with disabilities, and men with disabilities had higher literacy rates than women with disabilities (62% versus 49%). By virtue of both gender and disability, girls with disabilities are exposed to multiple levels of discrimination. They face many barriers to completing their education, including early

¹ Saran, A., H. White, and H. Kuper (2018) Effectiveness of interventions for people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: an evidence and gap map. Campbell Collaboration.

² UNICEF (2020) Policy brief: Promoting inclusive education for girls and boys with disabilities in West and Central Africa

³ UNESCO-UIS (2018) Fact Sheet N°48: One in five children, adolescents and youth is out of school.

marriage, gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment, exploitation and a high domestic workload. Education is important for girls with disabilities, as it is well established that the education of women generates multiple benefits, including greater protection against abuse, and improved health and educational outcomes of their children.

Girls with disabilities are among the most marginalized groups of society. This is a result of a range of factors including social norms, traditions, customs and cultural biases in relation to both gender and disability. Yet their needs, and the double discrimination they face, have largely been neglected and overlooked in education dialogue and practice, and thus their educational opportunities and development potential has been limited. African women continue to face a grave situation in respect of gender inequality. Girls are still much less likely than boys to access education. African girls and women often have little influence over resources, or customs and norms which affect them and are subject to job restrictions. Rates of gender-based violence are reaching alarming levels. They also experience poor access to legal rights, sexual and reproductive health services, freedom of movement, and lack of political voice. All of these factors impede the development of girls with disabilities and the realization of their right to education.

The research on gender-responsive inclusive education was conducted to assess cultural norms, traditions, practices and attitudes in the community towards disability - especially girls and women with disabilities. It was also intended to explore gender-related issues impacting on inclusive education, including barriers and challenges children - especially girls - with disabilities face in accessing education.

This is a situation analysis, which is to be used to inform a gender mainstreaming plan for the project as a whole, including guidance to progress towards achieving gender equity. Findings of the gender analysis are to guide project consortium partners on areas which need stronger advocacy, capacity building and other interventions in order to narrow gender disparities that characterise the area in which the project is located.

2. METHODOLOGY

This assignment adopted both participatory and non-participatory approaches using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods. The data was disaggregated by gender, age, and disability as defined by the child functioning module Washington Group Questions (CFM). The triangulation of methods was used to conduct gender-sensitive research where sex disaggregated information and data were collected.

The gender analysis study involved a range of participants. These included:

- children with and without disabilities from the schools in and not in the project (a total of 21 primary schools were visited),
- parents with the likelihood of having children with disabilities,
- heads of school and teachers, both in and not in the project areas,
- key education officials at ward, district, regional and Ministry levels,
- key local leaders such as Village executive officers (VEOs), Ward executive officers (WEO), both in and not in the project areas,
- School committee members, both in and not in the project areas,
- Project Consortium officials,
- Organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and
- institutions offering training on teaching

A range of methods and tools were used to gather data from respondents. The Child Functioning Module (CFM) Washington Group of Question Survey was carried out in households with the likelihood of having children with disabilities as well as with children with disabilities at schools. It was applied using a mobile data collection tool (Open Data Kit, ODK). Focus group discussions (FDGs) were conducted with girls and boys with and without disabilities, as well as with parents of children with disabilities and with teachers. Roundtable discussion were held with school committee members. Key informant interviews (KII) were held with headteachers, government and education leaders at ward, district, regional and national levels. Social mapping and observations were also applied. Furthermore, an internet search and review of relevant quantitative and qualitative literature on gender-responsive inclusive education was carried out.

In two areas, the consultants convened group sessions with women only, so that participants could be free to speak up and express their views and experiences. The researchers chose a convenient time and place for both men and women, towards ensuring conducive participatory information-gathering exercises. Most of the FDGs with parents were done during the afternoon when all of them were available after farm activities. All of them were done in school grounds which was seen as a centre to which everyone has access, and a conducive place in which to meet. Both men and women were involved in the discussions. At household level, the researchers had to make sure that both men and women were involved in the discussion and answering the questions. Children with disabilities were also included, as well as OPDs and government officials.

The main focus of the discussion was on gender relations in society; gender division of labour, patterns of decision-making, access to resources, access to education for children with disabilities, and harmful cultural norms and traditions affecting women and girls, including those with disabilities. Appendix 1 contains the FGD guide for parents and teachers, and Appendix 2 the FGD guide for children with and without disabilities. The key informants were also asked a few questions on gender issues.

The gender analysis was weighted towards qualitative research, with MAXQDA and NVivo software used to aid qualitative data analysis. For the quantitative data collected, descriptive statistics were included, with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Software used as a tool to analyse them. Cross tabulation and narrative analysis were done to inform analysis of data disaggregated by gender. Reporting was done with the view of ensuring integrity of data gathered from respondents.

3. FINDINGS

This section provides findings of the study, as emerging from the field and the desk review. These include issues on society gender roles and division of labour, powers of decision making and access to resources. In addition, community perceptions and attitudes relating to disability and children with disabilities were discussed, as were harmful gender cultural norms, practices and traditions. Finally, barriers to access inclusive education for children with disabilities were identified.

3.1 Status of children with disabilities in the study area

In all of the 21 primary schools visited (both control and intervention), a total of 271 children with disabilities were identified according to the difficulties they had, among them 153 were boys and 118 were girls. The study findings indicate that there were 35 more boys with disabilities attending school than girls.

It was not easy to track the children with disabilities who were not attending school at households, 85 children with disabilities were found, among them 35 were girls and 50 were boys. The total number of pupils enrolled in 21 schools were 18 224 (9 034 boys and 9 190 girls). Thus the 271 children with disabilities in school make up just 1.5% of all the children attending schools in the study area. This concurs with the study by White and Kuper (2018), which found that in the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries, less than 5% of children with disabilities attend primary school.⁴ In terms of the type of difficulties among the 356 children identified (271 in school and 85 out of school) identified, the majority (57.2%) had difficulty in the domain of learning, compared to other types of difficulties as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Status of Enrolled children with disabilities by gender

| Type of difficulty | Girls | Boys | Total | Percent (%) |
|--------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Learning | 65 | 90 | 155 | 57.2 |
| Hearing | 19 | 23 | 42 | 15.5 |
| Seeing | 19 | 21 | 40 | 14.7 |
| Albinism | 9 | 9 | 18 | 6.6 |
| Walking | 4 | 7 | 11 | 4.1 |
| Communication | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1.5 |
| Multiple | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | 118 | 153 | 271 | |

⁴ Saran, A., H. White, and H. Kuper (2018) Effectiveness of interventions for people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: an evidence and gap map. Campbell Collaboration.

3.2 Gender roles and division of labour

As revealed from participants of this study, community members like many other communities in Tanzania, have rigid traditions in which imbalanced gender roles within the household are still common due to the prevalence of patriarchal systems. Respondents indicated that socially constructed gender roles influence the lives of women and men, girls and boys with disabilities, their experiences, their needs, and their position in society.

Focus group discussions conducted with women show that women and girls are supposed to do all the domestic activities (and not attend school) and spend more time than men and boys on unpaid care work such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and firewood, and caring for children, ill and elderly people. Respondents also said women were responsible for food security, family clothes and community services. When men were asked if it is true that women and girls work more than men and boys, men justified it by saying that nature and culture require men and boys as well as women and girls to do certain type of activities, so it was normal in society for the gender roles to be allocated. One participant (a man) had the following to say:

“In our area there is a clear and strong sexual division of labour between men and women which is according to nature and our culture. Women and girls should perform those household chores and help men in farm activities while men and boys are for shorter and heavy tasks together with looking after cattle.” (FGD with parents, Ikonda Village).

These roles place a heavy burden on girls from a young age and keep them occupied for an extended period of time each day, while boys have fewer activities compared to girls. This was well explained by a woman:

“Girls are expected to get married and perform never-ending tasks like managing large households. They always go to sleep late and [are] tired having worked all the day long, wake up early when the hyenas are still out preying, and not involved in crucial decisions of the family” (FGD with parents, Salawi Village).

During a FGD in one of the villages in Shinyanga Rural, parents (men and women) were asked to identify the daily work patterns and activities of women, men, boys and girls in their society. It was mentioned that women wake up at 6am in the morning and go to fetch water, whereas husbands wake up between 6:30am and 7am. In those households where they can afford breakfast, the woman prepares breakfast. Otherwise, for the majority they go directly to begin farm work. Both men and women stay on the farm until midday when they come back home together for lunch, which is prepared by the women. The rest of the activities with their respective times, among the men, women, girls and boys are indicated in the following table drawn during the discussion.

Table 2: Gender daily activity calendar

| Time | Father | Mother | Boy | Girl |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 6:00-6:30 am | Asleep | Awake | Awake | Awake |
| 6:30 -7:00 am | Awake | Fetching water | Compound cleaning | Fetching water |
| 7:00-12:00 pm | Farm activities | Farm activities | At school | At school |
| 12:00-1:00 pm | Resting | Preparing lunch | At school | At school |
| 1:00-2:00 pm | Eating afternoon meal | Eating afternoon meal | At school | At school |
| 2:00-3:00 pm | Resting or visiting local brew bar | Home chores (washing utensils) | At school | At school |
| 3:00-4:30 pm | Tends the livestock | Home chores (bathing the children) | Returning from school and eating the afternoon meal | Returning from school & eating the afternoon meal |
| 4:30-6:00 pm | Tends the livestock | Gathering firewood | Helping father with livestock | Helping mother gathering firewood |
| 6:00-7:00 pm | Resting | Preparing dinner, milking cows | Playing and resting | Helping mother with domestic chores |
| 7:00-8:30 pm | Eating dinner | Eating dinner | Eating dinner | Eating dinner |
| 8:30-9:00 pm | Family discussions | Family discussions | Family discussions | Family discussions |
| 9:00-10:00 pm | Listening to radio/watching TV | Washing dishes | Studying | Studying |
| 10:00-10:30 pm | Sleeping | Sleeping | Sleeping | Sleeping |
| Total hours working | 8 hours | 12.5 hours | 8.5 hours | 12 hours |

In general, as the table above indicates, women and girls were found to work longer hours and have more varied tasks and responsibilities compared with men and boys.

3.3 Power of decision-making and access to resources

During FGDs with women, it was found that the women in the study location work hard and produce much wealth for their families through agriculture and conducting small scale businesses, yet they have no access, ownership or control over this wealth. It is the men who have access and authority to use the wealth produced in the family in ways they that they choose. In the family system of the study location; the father/husband is perceived to be the head and owner of the family wealth. He dominates all the resources and makes all the

decisions, while the mother/wife has no voice or influence on decisions about uses of the wealth or other resources of the family. When asked about decision-making powers, access and ownership of household resources, one of the men said:

“According to our tradition and culture, men are regarded as the head of households, that makes them the main and the key decision makers and owners of nearly all the household resources (except cooking utensils). Men are the ones with power on the control and utilization of incomes from family farms, livestock and other family income generating activities, including those of women.” (FGD with parents, Mwalukwa Village).

The study found that there was unequal distribution of power over resources in family wealth and in decision-making. In many societies in Tanzania, men have access to different forms of power as a result of their gender identity, and females are viewed as inferior and subordinate to males.⁵

3.4 Community perceptions of gender and children with disabilities

During the FGD with teachers, participants expressed their view that disability is often regarded by the community as curse, tragedy or punishment from God to the family. These beliefs lead to discrimination against children with disabilities and the view that there is no value in ensuring their access to education. In general, it is the more educated parents who take their children with disabilities to school. The potential of girls - especially girls with disabilities - is not valued by society. This was explained by a teacher:

“Girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to stigma and more likely to be abandoned or abused. Also, those with intellectual disabilities and those with Albinism are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence because some people believe (bad cultural belief and advice from witch doctors) that having sex with them will bring wealth and power, or cure them of AIDS.” (FGD with teachers, Misasi Primary school).

A parent gave the perspective of families:

“Children with disabilities are not treated and cared well within the family. Parents hide them and lock them inside because they are ashamed of them. Others think that disability especially Albinism is contagious, one can get it by coming close to them or touching them” (FGD with parents, Ng’hama Village).

3.5 Harmful gender cultural norms, practices and traditions

The research found that the study area is characterised by a patriarchal and male dominated society. There are many beliefs, norms and cultures rooted in society which constitutes one

⁵ Available at: Save the Children ‘Children’s situation in Tanzania’ (2003). Available at <http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/start/countries/tanzania>.

of the most significant barriers to the education of children with disabilities, and of girls in particular. Women and girls with disabilities are continuously impacted by stigma and discrimination because of their disability and gender. Many harmful traditional practices are based on a perception of male superiority, and women suffer many human rights abuses in the name of culture. Harmful traditional norms, beliefs and practices include early marriages (immediately after the first menstrual period) and forced marriages, marriage by abduction. The practice position women/girls as commodities of particular monetary value. Furthermore, disproportionate labour allocations, accusations of witchcraft of older women, and the fact that the birth of a child with disability is seen as a curse, all perpetuate discriminatory attitudes towards girls and women.

3.5.1 A girl child regarded as a commodity

During the study it became evident that, in Shinyanga and Mwanza rural areas, community members regard women and girls as commodities, due to the dowry and bride-price that is paid when they marry. The girls' parents use the bride price to increase family income and get wealth at the expense of their daughters' education and wellbeing. This increases a girl's chance of early marriage, and was described by a female respondent:

“Normally in our culture, girls' family receive the bride price for their daughter. The bride price is between 15 to 40 cows, but sometimes where there are men competition over the beautiful white girl, as many as 60 cows were provided. Due to this a woman/girl can endure constant torture from her husband and her in-laws after marriage, create male domination and female subordination in marriage and man sense of ownership of his wife as a commodity.” (FGD with parents, Ng'wihando Village).

One young woman from Ng'wihando Village shared her own experience:

“When my parents were given my bride price from one of the rich family in the village, I lost my freedom of choosing who to marry as I was forced to get married to the one who paid many cows to my parents. Many young girls in our society are married to elderly suitors because those men have more cows.”

When were asked about the bride price and girls being seen as commodities, one man rebutted this perception:

“Paying bride price to the family of the bride has been a culture to our society, is a sign of expressing love and thanking the girl's family for taking care of the girl, [it] is not a bad thing to do. Marriage in our culture is not recognized without paying bride price. Women/girls were not regarded as commodities by paying bride price, but is a guarantee that she will not go back to her family when there is mis-understanding.” (FGD with parents, Ng'wihando Village).

3.5.2 Having a child with disability seen as a curse and bad luck

During the round table discussion with school committee members and FDGs with parents, respondents expressed the view that children with disabilities were segregated and stigmatized, labelled 'Nsebu,' (one who is sickly and brings bad luck). Having them in the family is regarded as a curse due to bad luck or a punishment for parents doing something bad in the past. The situation even worse when the child is a girl: they have been suffocated at birth by the midwife or left to die in the bush and their burial is done secretly at night. This was explained by a parent:

“Children with disabilities were regarded as a tragedy in a family. A good example is meeting a child/person with Albinism on the road is believed by the society that, it creates and brings bad luck. So, when one sees an Albino, he or she was supposed not to look at him/her and spit on themselves to remove bad omen.” (FGD with parents, Masengwa Village).

This was supported by a child with disability in one of the FDGs:

“People say I am a curse to my family because I cannot help much at home, play with other children and even go to school alone.”

One village leader also said;

“In our area people with Albinism are normally killed so that their body parts.. used as a charm and medicinal ingredients for diamond and gold miners' good luck. They are not treated well like other human beings. As a government, we sensitize community to protect them and educate people to abandon this belief.” (KII with village leaders, Mwalukwa village).

3.5.3 Early marriage and forced marriage

It was found that many girls still marry under the age of 15 before they are physically, physiologically, and psychologically ready to shoulder the responsibilities of marriage and childbearing. Even when legislation condemns this practice (Article 16(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), the laws are usually weakened by customs and norms as well as corruption. During a FGD with children, one girl shared her experience:

“We girls were considered ready for marriage when we reach puberty. My parents said marriage protects girls from pre-marital pregnancy that affect family honour and decreases the amount of bride price.” (FGD, children with and without disability, Ng'hama primary school)

During a FGD one man said that the community in the study location believe that women (and girls) are for marriage and a girl who gets older without being married is usually not respected, she is seen as having a problem, and is referred to as 'Nshimbe'. Government

statistics demonstrate that 4 in 10 Tanzanian girls get married before turning 18.⁶ A parent explained further:

“Girls marry early, some do not go to school at all, others drop out of school to get married, others marry immediately after completing primary school (12 to 14 years). They are told by their parents not to write well their Standard seven national examinations and fail. Consequently, girls aged 12 to 17 years are either married, divorced or widowed” (FGD with parents, Mwalukwa Village).

During the FGDs, both men and women explained that sometimes forced marriage or marriage by abduction takes place in the community. This was explained by one participant:

“There is a traditional habit called “chagulaga” where a girl as young as 12 years old is grabbed and kidnapped, from the street and taken away by a man after the agreement between the families without girls’ knowledge or willing. So, the girls were not married to the suitors of their own choice, but the suitors of their parents’ choice.” (FGD with parents, Salawi Village).

When the researchers asked the village leaders about this forced marriage called ‘chagulaga’ and its existence, one VEO explained;

“It is true - chagulaga was a practice in this society where the girl was abducted although most of the time there were prior arrangements between families. It is true, it was the bad practice but the by-laws and society education has reduced this habit of bride kidnapping in the society. If it happens, the kidnapers are taken to law and punished.” (KII, Kadoto village).

3.5.4 Menstrual periods for girls

Taboos and harmful traditional practices surrounding menstruation is one of the major barriers to girls’ education. During the FGD with women in Bulambila village, cultural beliefs around menstruation were discussed, and one of these being that during menstruation women/girls are considered to be impure, contaminated, dirty, or sinful. These beliefs, combined with limited access to sanitary products, results in girls missing school completely during their menstrual period. Women talked extensively about this, with one saying:

“The society believes that girl’s first period is a signal that she is ready for marriage and childbearing. Having a period is regarded as something secret and shameful. Also, as parents we fail to provide assistance to our

⁶ Human Rights Watch ‘Tanzania: Child marriage harms girls’ 29 October 2014. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/29/tanzania-child-marriage-harms-girls>; See also Legal and Human Rights Centre Tanzania Human Rights Report 2014 LHRC (2015) 380.

daughters to buy safe sanitary pads, as a result girls stays at home until the period is over.” (FGD with women in Bulambila village).

Lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and menstrual hygiene management facilities at school are a barrier for adolescent girls with disabilities who are regularly forced to stay at home during their menstrual period, eventually resulting in dropping out permanently. When asked about the contribution of lack of girl’s special rooms, water and sanitation in many schools to assist girls attend schools even during their menstrual period, one of the Ward education officers said:

“It is true that most of our primary schools lack access to water and sanitation, but the government and ministry of education are working hard to ensure that all the schools have enough toilets, water and special room for girls; and where possible to assist them with sanitary pads, especially those coming from poor families.” (WEO, Mwamala ward).

One of the girls also shared her view:

“It is shameful for others to know that I am in my period, so during that time I opt not to attend school. I usually have stomach pain during my periods and I fail to have sanitary pads. In our school we do not have enough toilets, water and even education on menstrual period.” (FGD with children, Ikonda primary school).

This finding confirms those of other studies done in Kenya, Ethiopia and several countries in Sub-Saharan Africa viz. that menstruation affects girls’ attendance and participation in education. The research by UNESCO found that one in 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa missed school; they miss between 1 and 4 days of school every month due to menstruation.⁷

3.5.5 Old women with red eyes accused of witchcraft

The study found that in the study area, there has been an increase in the violation of women’s right to life through killings and torture in relation to witchcraft beliefs. Old women with red eyes were punished by mob justice and murdered, whereas their red eyes were a result of a lifetime of cooking in unventilated kitchens using smoky firewood and sometimes dry cow dung. This was clearly said by a male participant;

“In our community witchcraft is normally used as an excuse for violence against older women. Red eyes are perceived to be a sign of one engaging in witchcraft practices. Use of firewood and dry cow dung for cooking, affect their eyes. Traditional healers normally point out witches in the society. The government and NGOs have been working to educate people on the rights of women and stop belief that misfortune; such as illness, death or financial

⁷ UNESCO (2018). Puberty education and Menstrual hygiene Management. <https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org>

problems are the result of witchcraft.” (FGD with parents, Masengwa Village).

A woman voiced her grave concern about this issue:

“The killings of older women have been increasing in our society despite various education and awareness campaigns, government must take serious efforts to stop them.” (FGD with parents, Ng'hama Village).

3.6 Barriers to inclusive education for children with disabilities

3.6.1 Lack of awareness

The majority of parents interviewed during the FGDs were not able to explain the rights of children, especially children with disabilities rights to education. There is a lack of information regarding inclusive education. This was explained by a parent:

“Many parents and society in general are not aware of benefits of inclusive education to children with disabilities. Most of us here, the parents of children with disabilities we are not aware of their needs and rights even the availability of assistive equipment needed.” (FGD with parents, Ng'hama Village).

Teachers were also asked on the teachers and community on the Inclusive education awareness. All the teachers were found to have an idea what inclusive education is and its value over special education. But teachers said that the majority of parents and community members were not aware on the importance of inclusive education for children with disabilities. This was explained by a teacher:

“The community lack awareness of the rights of children with disabilities and inclusive education in general. [This has] led to negative perceptions towards disabilities, and failure of parents to bring their children with disabilities to school. There is a need for parents and the whole community to be educated on the rights of children with disabilities and parents get community and development partners assistance to take care of these children.” (FGD with parents, Ng'hama primary school).

Lack of community awareness of the rights of children with disabilities has contributed to negative perceptions disability, as well as to perpetuation of discrimination against persons with disabilities and disabling environments.⁸

3.6.2 Poor school infrastructure for children – especially girls – with disabilities

In nearly all of the 21 schools visited, school infrastructure was not conducive for children with disabilities. Schools have a shortage of classrooms, and buildings have narrow doorways, no ramps and no handrails. Only four of the schools were found to have accessible toilets for children with disabilities, and most had no water.

Girls require safe and separate toilet rooms from those of boys, they also need facilities in order to dispose of sanitary products. There needs to be a special changing room for menstruating girls, which is not available in any the schools visited for study. Girls need a safe, private and hygienic space in which to manage their menstrual hygiene, as explained by one of the FGD participants:

⁸ Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/final-study-awareness-raising/168072b421>

“For girls to change during the period, we need a safe and very private place to avoid the shame and sexual harassment. Other girls change their sanitary towels in the bushes following the washroom crisis. Our school has no water and has very few toilets and no place to throw our used sanitary pads, as a result we sometimes opt to stay home during our periods.” (FGD with children, Ikonda primary school).

The children’s experienced were confirmed by parents as follows:

“Our school lacks a lot of facilities for our children to study. The school has shortage of classrooms and toilets for children to use. My child has a physical disability, it becomes a problem when he wants to use a toilet. Entering the classroom and moving around the school is a challenge to him.” (FGD with parents, Misungwi village).

During a key informant interview, one of the the ward leaders talked about school infrastructure:

“In our area, I think the problem is not only lack of infrastructure conducive for children with disabilities in our schools, but also inadequate inclusive education policies, plans and budgets, inappropriate teaching methods and teaching materials, negative attitudes of communities and poverty of our people” (KII with VEO, Kadoto Village).

During the FGD in Mitindo primary school, children with disabilities explained the challenges they face in respect of school infrastructure. One pupil said:

“This school has large number of children with disabilities but look at our classrooms and toilets. They are not enough, sometimes we fail to access the toilets especially during break time, when all the pupils are outside.” (FGD with children, Ng’hama primary school).

3.6.3 Gender-based violence and abuse

The study shows that gender-based violence (GBV), sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation is prevalent in the location of the study area. These practices are often legitimised and perpetuated by a male dominated patriarchal system which is pervasive in the community. It was found that in some instances, children without disabilities assist and protect children – especially girls – with disabilities in situations of abuse or violence. GBV happens within schools and on the way to school. This issue emerged during FGDs with children with and without disabilities:

“Some children here at the school mock children with disabilities especially girls, because they are regarded [as] weaker. Others act the way those with physical disability walk and laugh at them when they fail to do some activities. At the street, we normally walk with them home so that we prevent any kind of bullying.” (FGD with children, Ng’walukwa B primary school).

This indicates that children with disabilities are bullied by other pupils at school as well as outside of school. It impacts negatively on the children, leading to poor school attendance, learning and retention. This problem was also reported by parents:

“Due to high cases of gender-based violence present in our area, families often resist sending their children – especially daughters – with disabilities to school for fear of their safety and the lack of protection from violence and sexual abuse. We have few examples of girls with disabilities who got pregnant, while the parents did not know who gave them pregnancy” (FGD with parents, Salawi Village).

This finding is supported by different studies done which show that women and girls with disabilities are twice as likely to experience gender-based violence compared to women and girls without disabilities.⁹

3.6.4 Low level of household economic and financial capacity

During FGDs with parents and interviews with village and ward leaders, it emerged that, at the household level, families were not able to send their children to school due to lack of uniforms and books and other required scholastic materials. Families perceive education for girls with disabilities as an economic loss rather than a benefit, due to the additional costs that are incurred. A ward leader said:

“Girls with disabilities coming from a family in poverty has less chances to be sent to school and receive education, they come last in resource allocation at the family. Girls who do not go to school become easy targets for child marriages. Child marriages are quite common in the community because marriages occur as a result of poverty when parents cannot provide for their children and want to transfer responsibilities to other people.” (KII with ward leaders, Mwalukwa ward).

A male parent added his own perception of this issue:

“Other families give their daughter away for marriage at young age so that they can collect cows for bride price. Also, girls stay at abusive marriage and fail to go back to their families because their families were not able to pay back the bride price due to poverty.” (FGD with parents, Mabuki Village).

⁹ Plan International (2013). Fact sheet violence against women and girls with disabilities

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

From the evidence gathered it was found that there were some strong and distinctive gender disparities in the project areas. These were in respect of gender roles and division of labour among community members. Women and girls have many responsibilities in both the home and in the family farming activities and spend more hours a day working than men whose role is mostly to do with farming activities. Men have greater access to resources and decision-making powers.

Socio-cultural gender norms also affect women and girls – especially girls with disabilities – and their right to access and complete their education. Girls are often arranged into early marriages not of their choice. Women and girls with disabilities are at greater risk from harm resulting from cultural misconceptions and superstitions, which increase their social exclusion and isolation and even putting them at risk of their lives.

Furthermore, boys and girls with disabilities face additional barriers to education such as shortage of teachers with knowledge of inclusive education and inclusive pedagogical skills. Limited access to assistive devices, long distances and limited means of transport to school – especially for those rural schools which are few and located far from households – all hinder the chance of a disabled child being able to access and complete their schooling. Further disabling factors include community stigma against children with disabilities, inaccessible school infrastructure, especially WASH facilities that don't have adequate water and are not supportive of girls during their menstruation.

4.2 Recommendations

It is important for the inclusive education project to work with the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Gender to support gender mainstreaming in the project. Education systems are also required to focus more on children – especially girls – with disabilities, to empower and support them to reach their full potentials.

With the help of the inclusive education project and other stakeholders, the government needs to change the mindset of people regarding gender inequality and cultural norms and culture that hinder the development of both sexes.

The inclusive education project needs to engage in public awareness campaigns and community engagement on the importance of ensuring that children – especially girls – with disabilities access education. They need to challenge harmful beliefs, norms and culture which perpetuate discrimination against girls, women and children with disabilities. Also, the project and the government need to work to change parental and community attitudes,

towards supporting and valuing girls' education, encouraging them to prioritize girls schooling over domestic work and early marriage.

With the help of community and development partners, the government should review and strengthen gender equality and disability-inclusion strategies in education systems in Tanzania and prioritise the specific needs of learners – especially girls – with disabilities.

The project needs to strengthen partnerships among gender, disability, and inclusive education actors (including government, NGOs and faith based organizations) at the local, national, and international levels in order to ensure that issues of gender, disability and education are addressed. In addition, there needs to be strong collaboration with community-based actors, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, policy and decision makers together and other stakeholders.

Among the identified stakeholders who can assist in attaining the success of the inclusive education project in the study area are the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Red Cross, New Light Children Centre organization (NELICO), THUBUTU Africa Initiatives, AGAPE AIDS Control Program and Life Water International. OPDs include Tusaidiane Disabilities Resource and Charity Organization Tanzania, Amani group and Voice with Disabilities Women who are working in the project area.

There is also a need for the inclusive education project to support families with children with disabilities to develop resilient livelihoods and be out of poverty to prevent reliance on bridal prices. Most of the families in the study location are farmers, and there is a need to improve their knowledge and understanding of sustainable agricultural methods, leading to increased yields and income, so as to enhance their economic capabilities. This will also enable them to cover the educational expenses of their children (both with and without disabilities) as well as refrain from considering girls as a source of income through the dowry or bride price.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: FGD guide for parents and teachers on gender analysis

| | Question |
|----|---|
| 1. | What is the current knowledge, attitudes, perception and practices in the community towards disability and children with disabilities especially girls with disabilities going to mainstream schools in the region? |
| 2. | How is the community members/parents' awareness levels on safeguarding children with disabilities and supporting their inclusive education? |
| 3. | Are there discriminatory traditions and customs/myths related to girls, women and gender? |
| 4. | What types of Gender Based-Violence reporting mechanisms available in the schools and community? Accessibility of those mechanisms? Case management and investigation? |
| 5. | What is the gender relation in the society in terms of gender division of labour, decision making, access to resources? |
| 6. | What are the barriers and challenges children with disabilities, especially girls, face in accessing education? |
| 7. | What are the specific challenges girls face in attending, participating and remaining in school? |
| 8. | What is the nature of safeguarding incidences reported in schools, and are they aggregated by gender and disability? |

Appendix 2: FGD guide for children with and without disabilities

| | Question |
|----|--|
| 1. | What are the discriminatory traditions and customs/myths affecting girls, women and boys in the society? |
| 2. | What prevents children with disabilities to attend school? (Barriers to access Inclusive education) |
| 3. | Is there any violence or mis-treatment done to you here at the school by the teachers? Your fellow pupils? In the streets? |
| 4. | What are your household activities as a girl? As a boy? |

Appendix 3: Profile of school enrollments

Number of pupils (girls and boys) enrolled at 21 primary schools visited for study

| S/N | Name of the School | Number of Pupils | |
|-----|--------------------|------------------|-------------|
| | | Boys | Girls |
| 1 | Ng'walukwa A | 302 | 366 |
| 2 | Ng'walukwa B | 222 | 229 |
| 3 | Bulambila | 274 | 280 |
| 4 | Ng'hama | 216 | 200 |
| 5 | Masengwa | 389 | 419 |
| 6 | Ikonda | 293 | 323 |
| 7 | Mabuki | 625 | 662 |
| 8 | Bugoyi | 795 | 805 |
| 9 | Mitindo Inclusive | 149 | 135 |
| 10 | Misungwi | 748 | 904 |
| 11 | Salawi | 297 | 286 |
| 12 | Misasi | 309 | 287 |
| 13 | Mwadui | 878 | 834 |
| 14 | Bugayambebele | 446 | 460 |
| 15 | Kambarage | 402 | 399 |
| 16 | Uhuru | 252 | 255 |
| 17 | Jomu | 217 | 197 |
| 18 | Ng'wihando | 697 | 783 |
| 19 | Old Shinyanga | 326 | 212 |
| 20 | Kizumbi | 347 | 346 |
| 21 | Nhelegani | 850 | 808 |
| | TOTAL | 9034 | 9190 |
| | | 18224 | |

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