

RADIO INSTRUCTION TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATION (RISE) AND ZANZIBAR TEACHER UPGRADING BY RADIO (ZTUR)

Post-Project Evaluation in Zanzibar

Final Report
Executive Summary
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND TO THE RISE AND ZTUR PROJECTS

The Radio Instruction to Strengthen Education (RISE) Projects and Zanzibar Teacher Upgrading through Radio (ZTUR) Projects were established in Zanzibar in 2006. The programs ran consecutively through 2011 with the goals of:

1. Building the capacity of Zanzibar’s Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) staff in the area of early childhood development (ECD) and education – which this report defines as services for children through the age of 8, and within Zanzibar’s education system covers two years of preschool education and Standards 1 and 2;
2. Improving access to quality math, literacy and life skills instruction and materials for underserved young children (preschool to grade two); and
3. Developing a quality distance and open learning program through which in-service early childhood teachers can upgrade their skills and work towards preschool accreditation.

RISE was implemented jointly by Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC) and Zanzibar’s MoEVT, and sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). RISE activities were implemented in Zanzibar’s two lowest-performing districts, and eventually expanded into a Zanzibar-wide teacher training and certification program through ZTUR.

The key activities under the RISE project were:

- Developing and piloting three series of *Tucheze Tujifunze*¹ (*Tu Tu*) Interactive Audio Instruction (IAI)² programs for preschool, Standard 1 and Standard 2 students, including those in formal and non-formal settings, with accompanying instructional and learning materials;
- Establishing over 180 *Tucheze Tujifunze* early childhood learning centers (*TuTu Centers*) in areas with poor access to ECD and education;
- Producing interactive videos for guiding teacher professional development in *teaching English as a second language*;
- Training a cadre of preschool and early grade educators (formal and non-formal) to teach literacy, math, and life skills; and

¹*Tucheze Tujifunze*, translates as “Let’s Play, Let’s Learn” and is a name used locally to refer to the IAI programs.

² IAI is an interactive teaching and learning pedagogy that promotes quality learning in diverse environments, including those with shortages of qualified teachers, school infrastructure, and learning materials. Based on child-friendly instruction, which is inclusive, playful, active, and engaging, each 30-minute broadcast uses the formal Zanzibar curriculum as the foundational content (Kiswahili, math, English and basic life skills), but integrates games, songs, and activities through a common story-line. The IAI programs encourage problem solving and self-directed exploration.

- Building the capacity of a MoEVT team to lead distance and open learning for all of Zanzibar.

At the close of the project, RISE had provided ECD opportunities to over 35,000 Zanzibari children³ and trained over 809 formal teachers and non-formal facilitators in IAI pedagogy, classroom management and other key areas. The project also distributed over 28,000 teaching and learning materials developed by the team.

The subsequent ZTUR Project was designed to further RISE's ECD work by creating a comprehensive preschool teacher certification program to be implemented by MoEVT. The intention of the certification program (the Early Childhood Advancement Certificate Program, or ECACP) is to provide in-service teachers with critical knowledge, skills, and practice through a distance learning platform administered through their district in-service Teacher Centers. The ECACP program consists of audio, video and print materials that guide teachers through ECD instructional theory and practice, and support them as they actively apply their knowledge in their classrooms.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

In 2014, EDC commissioned a post-project study to answer the following questions:

1. *To what extent have the ZTUR and RISE Project activities been sustained or expanded under the leadership of MoEVT after the projects were transferred in March 2011?*
2. *Do learners that participated in IAI (Tucheze Tujifunze) programming perform higher at the end of their primary cycle than those that did not participate?*

The study uses a mixed-method design (process and impact evaluations) to explore these questions. The process evaluation looks at what has been sustained, how it has been sustained, and what challenges and success MoEVT has experienced along the way. Interviews and surveys were conducted between March and June 2014 with 94 individuals, including MoEVT officials from the central and district offices, Teacher Center staff, head teachers of RISE intervention schools, teachers that were trained in *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming, and learners that listened to the programs. Data were analyzed qualitatively to elicit common themes in responses related to the research questions.

The impact evaluation looks at student performance at Standard 7 (equivalent to grade 7 in the United States) Kiswahili, English, and Math. The test was developed by the evaluation team based on an existing government exam. The same sample of learners who took part in an earlier evaluation in 2008 (when they were in Standard 1) was used for the subsequent 2014 data

³ Note that over 35,000 unique learners were reached. However, as some learners received multiple years of intervention (preschool, Standard 1 and Standard 2) the total aggregated learners by year is 44,843.

collection. Of the total 1,543 learners from the 2008 sample, 904 (or 58.6%) were tested in 2014; including 552 from the RISE group (those that had listened to the *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming) and 352 from the comparison group (students in a district with similar demographics that did not have direct exposure to the *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming). Not all students tested in 2014 were found to be in Standard 7; assessment data for those who were in lower grades were not included in the analysis of the assessment results since the test was developed to test Standard 7 proficiency.

FINDINGS

INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFER AND SUSTAINABILITY OF RISE AND ZTUR PROJECTS

The main success of the RISE and ZTUR Projects consisted of successfully establishing a distance and opening learning division (the eLearning Division), within the MoEVT. The eLearning Division consists of the staff who were trained and supported by RISE and ZTUR; this continuity has allowed the division to further some of the work started under the projects. By 2014 there were 14 technical staff working in the eLearning Division, and their activities (which continue to build on the foundational activities established under the RISE and ZTUR Projects) were in the process of being further developed with support of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). By 2016, 120 new centers (60 in Pemba's Mkoani, 60 in Unguja's North B) will be opened, materials and training will be provided to 240 mentors, and 200 new preschool programs will be recorded.

As of 2014, 179 of the original 180 *Tucheze Tujifunze* ECD centers are still in existence, and some efforts have been made to help build more permanent spaces for the centers that were in non-permanent structures. Payments for *TuTu* Center mentors have been fully integrated into the Ministry's annual budget, and the augmentation of mentor remuneration in 2013 is evidence of the division's commitment to providing continued support to its mentors.

Broadcast of *Tu Tu* lessons has continued, with the exception of a 4-month interruption in 2014, when the Voice of Tanzania, Radio Zanzibar underwent restructuring and semi-privatization. All preschool programs are now being aired by ZBC.

Head teachers (principals), formal school teachers and mentors (non-formal teachers in the *Tucheze Tujifunze* centers) all expressed the continuing importance of the *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming. Mentors have continued to facilitate classes, despite limited access to the programs and materials and the resource-lean circumstances.

The RISE continuous training model has not been sustained, largely because of a lack of allocated funds for training. However, two trainings took place in early 2014 to build the capacity of new mentors for the 51 newly established centers. Funds were provided by GPE.

The ECACP certification program, which was designed and developed under ZTUR, was rolled out in seven Teacher Centers early in 2014.⁴ Currently, support is being provided by the GPE to implement ECACP across Zanzibar. At the time of this study, there were 352 teachers from all ten districts going through step 1 and 26 trainers had been trained by the e-Learning Division and Aga Khan Foundation. All 26 trainers had received ECD certificates from Aga Khan Foundation. Over 700 teacher participants are expected to benefit from the ECACP, starting in 2014.

The major challenges to continued quality implementation lie in maintaining both access to and quality of materials and programming. Maintenance and replacement of radios and broadcasting are major barriers to listenership. A lack of printing and distribution of new materials and limitations on the resources committed to regular trainings and monitoring also affect the quality and fidelity of implementation.

LEARNER PERFORMANCE

The 2008 evaluation showed that the RISE IAI programming and approach had increased learning gains in both formal and non-formal settings in Zanzibar relative to a comparison group (students in formal schools that did not receive IAI programming). RISE participants demonstrated substantial test score gains across all three tested disciplines (Kiswahili, math and English). Although learners in formal treatment classrooms made the most significant learning gains, non-formal treatment learners were not far behind them. Whereas both boys and girls benefited from the RISE intervention, girl learners showed greater overall growth. The 2008 evaluation demonstrated that RISE's unique combination of IAI radio programming and early childhood education not only engaged learners, but also promoted the quality of their learning.

The 2014 study tracked approximately 59% of the students from the original sample. Slightly more students from the RISE formal school model group (63.4%) were located and included in this study than from the RISE non-formal school model group (55.9%). Fewer students from the RISE non-formal and combination non-formal and formal intervention models were located than from the RISE formal schools. Consequently, the study team made a decision to combine students from the RISE non-formal and combination models into a "mixed" group for analysis.

The 2014 assessment found that RISE formal school students performed significantly better on standardized grade-level assessments in Kiswahili, English and math, compared to their counterparts from the comparison group and from the RISE mixed group. Six years after the intervention, RISE formal school students demonstrated a better mastery of grade-level concepts. However, the overall performance level in English and math was found to be very low among all study groups.

⁴Centers include: Kiembe, Samaki, Bububu, Mkwajuni, Dunga, Kitungoni, Mizingani-Mkoani.

RISE appears to have contributed to sustained advantages for the formal school students who participated in the program. Unfortunately, not enough students from the non-formal or combined groups (the mixed group) could be traced to enable the drawing of strong conclusions about the effect of the program on non-formal populations. A significant portion of RISE mixed group students either could not be found for inclusion in the study, or had repeated grades and thus could not be included in the analysis. Since those students were particularly disadvantaged, due to very low parental literacy or due to poverty, they were an important focus of the RISE intervention. Determination of the long-term benefit of the *Tuchzeze Tujifunze* programming on their academic performance would be helpful in informing policy decisions about how to target continued interventions for similar populations through the eLearning Division of the MoEVT. Additional follow up or tracer studies that focus particularly on this non-formal group of students would be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

Despite logistical and coordination challenges, which are common when donor-funded projects are transferred to an official counterpart institution, the MoEVT's goal of using RISE and ZTUR as the foundation for long-term improvements in ECD in Zanzibar has largely been achieved. The eLearning Division has been strategic about moving its work forward with the support and guidance of the MoEVT leadership. eLearning staff have made conscious and noble efforts to sustain and scale-up RISE and ZTUR activities and to ultimately ensure that their policy goals related to early childhood development are advanced. The insistence of the MoEVT leadership that the division remains cohesive, as it was created under the RISE and ZTUR Projects, has ensured the sustainability of the team and their work, and encouraged the confidence of new partners who can substantially contribute to continued development of this sector.

In addition, the *Tucheze Tujifunze* model of intervention has demonstrated sustained positive effects on students who participated in the programs, providing them with an advantage in academic performance 6 years after their initial performance was assessed. This is particularly true for students in the RISE formal school group. However, the assessed achievement of both RISE and comparison participants was still relatively low, when compared to national expectations for grade-level performance in Standard 7. Clearly, as identified in the Zanzibar Education Policy and Zanzibar Education Development Programme, work remains to be done to increase the percentage of Zanzibari students who meet performance standards across pre-primary and primary education. Additional tracer research on the impact of the *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming model on the most disadvantaged students (those in the RISE non-formal group) would also help ensure the greatest possible impact on that group as programming continues to evolve.

Given the Zanzibari context, IAI programming remains a viable and useful intervention format for increasing access to high-quality early education, particularly in the most challenged districts. Careful attention will need to be paid to the mechanisms necessary for continuing to ensure the

quality of *Tucheze Tujifunze* programming (specifically: management of hardware resources; thoughtful integration of the programs into the increasingly dense school timetable; the provision of continuous support and professional development for teachers and mentors; and sufficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of programs as they are rolled out). With additional investment in these quality assurance processes, and the continued commitment of the MoEVT to the work of the eLearning Division, the improvements begun under RISE and ZTUR can continue to be built upon and sustained.