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# WATOTO KWANZA

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN ZANZIBAR  
FINAL EVALUATION

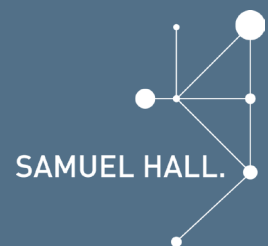
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENGLISH



دبي العطاء  
Dubai Cares





**Samuel Hall** conducted the final evaluation of Watoto Kwanza.



**Dubai Cares** funded Watoto Kwanza over a period of four years (2014-2017).



The **Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)** was the grant manager for Watoto Kwanza.



The **Madrasa Early Childhood Programme – Zanzibar (MECP-Z)** was the main implementing partner for Watoto Kwanza.



The **Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT)** was the public implementing partner for Watoto Kwanza.

This publication was commissioned by Dubai Cares. It was prepared and conducted by Samuel Hall. The views and analysis contained in the publication therefore do not necessarily represent the views of Dubai Cares. Any errors are our own and should not tarnish the reputations of others.

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Samuel Hall (2018). *Watoto Kwanza: Improving access to and quality of early childhood education in Zanzibar – Final Evaluation, Executive Summary (English)*, commissioned by Dubai Cares.

### Low-cost teaching/learning materials at a community school in Unguja (Magharibi)



### Low-cost teaching/learning materials at a government school in Pemba (Micheweni)



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AKF</b>	Aga Khan Foundation	<b>MoEVT</b>	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
<b>DEO</b>	District Education Office	<b>PPE</b>	Pre-Primary Education
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education	<b>PTR</b>	Pupil-to-Teacher-Ratio
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion	<b>SUZA</b>	State University of Zanzibar
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview		
<b>MECP-Z</b>	Madrasa Early Childhood Programme – Zanzibar		

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The importance of early childhood education (ECE) to a child's life has recently been gaining in prominence. In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals set "access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education" as a goal for all children by 2030. In the context of Zanzibar, this goal is being increasingly pursued by the government since pre-primary education (PPE) was declared part of basic and compulsory education in 2006 – but, as of 2018, non-governmental stakeholders still play a significant role in the actual provision of PPE or ECE (both terms are used interchangeably in this report).

The present study assesses the *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability* of the Watoto Kwanza project, designed to address some of the key challenges facing Zanzibar's PPE sector as of 2013. With funding by Dubai Cares, the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), the Madrassa Early Childhood Programme – Zanzibar (MECP-Z) and the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) jointly implemented the Watoto Kwanza project from 2014 to 2017 across Zanzibar's two main islands, Unguja and Pemba. **In addition to evaluating the three key project elements of Watoto Kwanza – Training and Professional Development of Teachers; Conductive and Constructive Teaching and Learning Environments; and Support Systems and Networks – the research situates these within the currently changing landscape of ECE in Zanzibar and looks ahead to the future of the project's outcomes.** Finally, it proposes recommendations based on these findings at three levels: specific to Watoto Kwanza, specific within the ECE sector, and broader sectoral recommendations.

Samuel Hall took a mixed-methods approach, using qualitative and quantitative research tools, to gather solid and diverse data on the project outcomes over a period of one month (February/March 2018) across eight districts in Unguja and Pemba. The information in the report is based on a desk review, over thirty key informant interviews (KIIs), twenty focus group discussions (FGDs), fifty-one school observations and a quantitative survey with more than 500 teachers trained by Watoto Kwanza. A workshop with key stakeholders was conducted in Zanzibar in May 2018 to further discuss and nuance recommendations.

## EVALUATING WATOTO KWANZA AND ITS THREE KEY PROJECT ELEMENTS

**The findings from the mixed-methods research of this study paint a positive image of the project's outcomes and the way in which MECP-Z achieved these.** Watoto Kwanza was designed and implemented with high *relevance, efficiency and effectiveness* ratings, ***sustainability forming the main point of concern.***

With regards to the **Training and Professional Development of Teachers**, a key gap in the ECE system as of 2013/14, when the programme was being designed, was efficiently and effectively addressed. Positive and negative takeaways include but are not limited to:

- + **896 teachers overall were trained between the two different in-service courses and one pre-service course, with all of them being considered of the highest quality by various stakeholders.** All courses were designed and implemented together with the MoEVT, allowing them to be government-recognized and creating jointly owned training curricula for further use.

- + Teachers reported an uptake in appreciation of ECE teaching, ‘domino’ effects with teachers not directly involved in the programme, and, generally, a positive impact on their life (over 98% of teachers).
- + Implementors adapted the project to reflect appreciation of discrete elements and changing circumstances; for example, the mentorship component, which trainees particularly appreciated, was broadened during the project’s implementation
- **The key concern for this element is the lack of actual and formal employment for trained teachers.** Although trainings responded to a gap in trained teacher numbers, limited employment opportunities exist for those who have been trained – only one-third of trained teachers are currently employed (for those who participated in the pre-service training this numbers drops to 10 %). Instead, nearly half of all trained teachers are currently volunteering without appropriate remuneration, which is, in most cases, an individual coping strategy due to limited employment opportunities. Without significant progress in this matter, the positive outcomes of Watoto Kwanza and the positive future of the PPE in Zanzibar are threatened, as volunteer teachers start quitting their jobs, teachers get demoralized, and becoming a pre-primary teacher becomes a less compelling job option for potential candidates in the future.

Examining the **Conductive and Constructive Teaching and Learning Environments** element shows mixed results. While the material development course stands as disproportionately influential and successful, other elements under this component lagged in implementation and *sustainability*:

- + **533 teachers were trained in the development of low-cost teaching and learning materials.** These three-day courses were repeatedly mentioned by teachers as a favourite part of the project and have left a positive and visible outcome at many schools in Zanzibar.
- Watoto Kwanza also included a small component of material distribution (books, storage gallons, mats). **While 316 schools received these elements, the availability of materials at schools observed was inconsistent in terms of materials provided and their durability.** Although material provision may have, in theory, addressed a highly relevant challenge in Zanzibar’s pre-primary sector, its implementation falls short in terms of *efficiency* and *sustainability*; especially in comparison to material development courses.

Finally, the **Support Systems and Networks** element established and facilitated a school cluster system, but little direct outcomes on community awareness and engagement can be attributed to Watoto Kwanza:

- + **The school cluster system continues to this day, with 75 % of teachers stating that their school is part of a cluster.** These meet regularly, discussing issues highly relevant to the pre-primary sector in Zanzibar. In addition, the supervision for the clusters has been handed over to the MoEVT and its District Education Offices (DEOs).
- **Watoto Kwanza featured limited engagements with small groups of selected parents and community members,** who were then supposed to further disseminate this knowledge; yet, few parents interviewed in FGDs had even heard of Watoto Kwanza, and the government remains seen as the main driver for positive trends around engagement and PPE activity. This lack of information and inclusion can be a major hurdle for appropriate ownership and support by parents and communities.

## SITUATING WATOTO KWANZA IN ZANZIBAR'S CHANGING ECE LANDSCAPE

Watoto Kwanza had to navigate a challenging context, with systemic factors impacting the project and its outcomes:

- **ECE in Zanzibar has been and is undergoing a phase of dynamic changes** (e.g. increasing government involvement and increasing enrolment rates);
- **Insufficiencies and setbacks on various fronts** (e.g. high PTRs and lack of classrooms) show that Watoto Kwanza was a step in the right direction but just formed one piece of a larger puzzle; and
- **Lack of appropriate and strategic planning and funding of projects and parts of the ECE sector** (by the government) jeopardizes the positive outcomes of projects such as Watoto Kwanza.

**Watoto Kwanza has clearly strengthened the ECE system** (for example, the independently running school cluster system, and the continued use of developed training curricula by the MoEVT and MECP-Z). However, from a practical perspective, missed opportunities to further promote the *sustainability* of the project's outcomes include the limited efforts to ensure employment for trained teachers, lack of uptake on material development courses by official trainings (beyond SUZA courses), and a continued reliance on communities to provide or even fund PPE services (through, for example, the support of volunteering teachers). **Further steps to increase the independence of the system and communities as well as clearer communication about the temporary nature of interventions are called for in future projects.**

Looking towards the future, and in addition to the funding challenges implied above, a severe lack of appropriate infrastructure presents one of the key challenges to PPE in Zanzibar. Without the appropriate quantity and quality of classrooms, children's attendance and learning are threatened; this is especially concerning given the increasing enrolment in ECE in Zanzibar. Barriers to enrolment on the 'demand' side continue to include financial constraints for poor parents (uniforms, transport, etc.), lack of awareness, and distance to and safety at schools (in peripheral areas). In addition to all the above, current or planned changes in the PPE system – including devolution through decentralization and a revision of the PPE curriculum for children – will need to be considered for future programming.

Playing equipment at a government school in Unguja (Magharibi)



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Beyond an evaluation of the Watoto Kwanza project, this study seeks to provide a way forward to ensure quality ECE in Zanzibar. In this regard, it proposes the following as steps forward at different levels:

### **1. Recommendations specific to improving the outcomes of Watoto Kwanza**

1. Promote trained teacher employment
2. Build on curricula and capacities developed
3. Nurture the school cluster system

### **2. Broad sectoral recommendations to underpin future ECE policy and programming**

1. Coordinate stakeholders for system-based planning
2. Ensure reliable forecasting and rigorous monitoring

### **3. Specific sectoral recommendations to address identified challenges**

1. Update the ECE curriculum
2. Apply and refine clear and transparent recruitment and employment procedures and policies
3. Increase parental awareness, demand and engagement
4. Design and build appropriate (infra)structures

The implementors of Watoto Kwanza – AKF, MECF-Z and the MoEVT – are, based on their experience, expertise and mandate, uniquely placed to drive the above forward to promote a strong, sustainable ECE sector in Zanzibar.



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