REF2025: PC01

TANZANIA 2014 EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY – 2023 EDITION

Strengths, Gaps, and the Digital Transformation Imperative

February, 2025

Prepared by:
Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

About This Policy Commentary

This Policy commentary on Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023) provides a critical analysis of its strengths, gaps, and opportunities for digital transformation. It highlights key areas requiring enhancement, including technological integration, AI governance, assistive technologies, digital literacy, and technical skills development, ensuring the policy aligns with the demands of a digital economy and an inclusive education system.

The analysis aims to inform policymakers, educators, and stakeholders on necessary reforms, emphasizing stronger regulatory frameworks, investment in digital infrastructure, and equitable learning models to bridge the digital divide.

Tech & Media Convergency (TMC) has developed, produced and published this commentary as part of its commitment to promoting digital governance, applied and emerging policies, and ICT integration in Tanzania. As an advocate for *"Advancing Technological Adaptation and Digital Transformation within a Democratic Digital Ecosystem;"* TMC continues to support policy innovations that enhances a technology-driven society, ensuring Tanzania's competitiveness in the global digital landscape and digital economy.

This is the first of many TMC Policy Commentaries to come, focusing on ICT integration and its impact to the community and beyond. Through these efforts, TMC aims to bridge ICT related policy gaps, foster informed decision-making, and drive meaningful digital transformation. By engaging policymakers, educators, fellow CSOs, and stakeholders, TMC remains dedicated to shaping an inclusive, innovative, and future-ready digital ecosystem for Tanzania.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Revised Education Policy (2023)

Education policies are not merely administrative frameworks; they shape national development trajectories, workforce readiness, and social mobility. Tanzania's Revised Education Policy 2023 is a bold attempt to modernize the country's education system, responding to the evolving demands of a digital and globalized economy. By restructuring the education cycle, integrating digital literacy, and aligning curricula with labor market needs, the policy aims to equip Tanzanians with the skills necessary for the 21st century.

Education is a critical driver of economic growth and social development, particularly in emerging economies like Tanzania. Over the past decades, Tanzania has undertaken several reforms in its education sector to enhance access, equity, quality, and relevance. The Revised Education Policy of 2024 is the latest effort by the government to address systemic challenges in education and align the country's learning framework with its long-term national development goals, including the Tanzania Digital Education Strategy 2024-2030 and international commitments such as Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) on quality education for all.[1] This Revised Policy was developed along side other documents to support the changes brought by it, these includes curriculums, Strategies and Directives.

The revision of Tanzania's Education and Training Policy (ETP) 2014 was prompted by several factors, including: The need for curriculum modernization to equip students with 21st-century skills; Gaps in technological adaptation, as digital education was not prioritized in previous policies; Challenges in access and equity, particularly for marginalized groups such as girls, rural students, and persons with disabilities and the changing labor market, which requires stronger linkages between education, vocational training, and industry needs.[2]

Despite these efforts, one of the major gaps in the Revised Education Policy (2023) is its failure to explicitly integrate emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital education innovations. Additionally, non-formal digital learning pathways remain unrecognized within the policy's accreditation system, posing a challenge in an era where individuals can acquire valuable skills through online platforms without necessarily attending formal institutions.[3]

[1] UNESCO. (2023). Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: Technology in Education. Retrieved from Jonathan Patterson

[2] World Bank. (2022). Digital Transformation in Education: A Global Perspective. Washington, D.C.

[3] Page 42, The Revised Education and Training Policy 2023.

1.2. Policy Framework and Supplementary Documents

While the Revised Education Policy does not explicitly address AI and digital education, two major supplementary documents outline Tanzania's digital education agenda: National Digital Education Strategy (NDES) 2024-2030 which aims to integrate ICT into all levels of education to enhance learning outcomes and focuses on digital content development, teacher training, and research in education technology.[4]

Another document is the National Digital Education Guidelines for AI in Education (2025) which establishes principles for ethical and sustainable AI use in education. Highlights data privacy, inclusivity, and AI-driven learning solutions.[5]

The absence of a direct mention of these AI and digital strategies in the Revised Education Policy creates a policy disconnect, making their implementation dependent on institutional willingness rather than mandatory enforcement. This raises concerns about the sustainability of AI and digital education initiatives in Tanzania.

Education for Development: Policy Directions

Education is a pillar of Tanzania's economic transformation, as outlined in Tanzania Development Vision 2025, which calls for a skilled, tech-savvy workforce to drive industrialization and compete globally.[6] This requires STEM, digital literacy, and AI integration in the curriculum, yet major gaps persist—only 15% of schools have ICT infrastructure, and teacher training in digital pedagogy is limited (World Bank, 2022).

Without urgent reforms, inequitable access, outdated curricula, and technological deficits will hinder progress. This commentary provides an analytical critique of the Revised Education Policy 2023, focusing on its strengths, gaps, and the broader implications for Tanzania's digital transformation agenda.

It examines how well the policy aligns with global best practices, national economic goals, and the evolving educational needs of a workforce that must compete in an AI-augmented future. Without strategic investments in digital infrastructure, teacher capacity building, and regulatory frameworks for AI governance, Tanzania risks widening its digital divide rather than closing it.

[4] The National Digital Education Strategy (NDES) 2024-2030, pg. 10

.

[5] The National Digital Education Guidelines for AI in Education 2025; p. 4.

[6] Tanzania Planning Commission, 2021 Report.

2. Analysis of the Education Policy

2.1 Tanzania's Revised Education Policy 2023: A Vision for the Future

In a landmark move, Tanzania's government has unveiled the Revised Education Policy of 2023, aiming to overhaul the nation's educational framework to better align with contemporary demands and future aspirations. This policy introduces significant structural changes, notably extending compulsory education from seven to ten years and emphasizing practical skills alongside traditional academics.

The restructured system, denoted as 1+6+4+2/3+3+, encompasses one year of pre-primary, six years of primary, four years of lower secondary, followed by two or three years of upper secondary education, and a minimum of three years in tertiary education. This approach seeks to produce graduates equipped with the competencies required in today's dynamic job market.

Tanzania's Revised Education and Training Policy (2023) introduced a new Primary Education Curriculum for Standard I to VI, effective from 2024. The curriculum is structured into two stages: Stage 1 (Standard 1-2) focuses on foundational competencies in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic (3Rs) for children aged 4-5, while Stage 2 (Standard 3-6) enhances these skills alongside life skills development for children aged 6-11. Key subject reforms include English being introduced from Standard 1, with students learning both English and Kiswahili phonetics from the outset.

Additionally, to foster digital literacy, coding and programming have been integrated into the Science curriculum from Standard 3.[7] These changes aim to equip students with essential skills from an early age, preparing them for a technology-driven future.

2.2 Policy Long-Term Objectives

The policy's long-term objectives focus on transitioning from rote learning to a competency-based curriculum that fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It emphasizes the integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across all educational levels, aiming to develop digital infrastructure, promote e-learning platforms, and train educators in digital pedagogies.

[7] Tanzania's Revised Education and Training Policy (2023), p. 31-33.

Furthermore, the policy emphasizes the importance of inclusive and equitable access to education, ensuring that all Tanzanians, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, or geographic location, have access to quality education. Strategies include building more schools in underserved areas, providing scholarships for disadvantaged students, and implementing programs to support learners with disabilities.

The enhancement of teacher professional development is also a key focus, with initiatives such as regular training workshops, opportunities for advanced studies, and the establishment of mentorship programs to improve teaching quality. Furthermore, the policy promotes the strengthening of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) to address the skills gap in the labor market, involving updating curricula to align with industry needs, partnering with businesses for apprenticeship opportunities, and investing in modern training facilities. Lastly, the promotion of research and innovation is encouraged, supporting research initiatives, fostering partnerships with research institutions, and promoting a culture of inquiry and creativity among students and educators.[8]

Aligning with the Draft Tanzania Development Vision 2050, which aspires for a high-quality livelihood, a robust and competitive economy, and good governance, the policy underscores the necessity of a well-educated and skilled populace to drive economic growth and social development. The emphasis on competency-based education, ICT integration, and TVET reflects this vision by preparing a workforce adept at meeting modern economic demands.

Moreover, the policy resonates with global educational trends, such as personalized and technology-enhanced learning, inclusive education, and lifelong learning, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.[9]

As Tanzania embarks on this transformative educational journey, the successful implementation of these reforms will require collaborative efforts from all stakeholders, including adequate resource allocation, ongoing public engagement, and strategic partnerships between various institutions. The government's commitment to these reforms reflects a forward-thinking approach to education, aiming to equip Tanzanian students with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

[8] The Citizen, Tanzania New Education Policy implementation to kick off in 2024.

[9] See: SDG 4 Progress and Information— the education goal and targets Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

2.3 Technology Integration: Bridging the Digital Divide

Recognizing the transformative power of technology, the government has developed a National Digital Education Strategy (2024/25 - 2029/30) to integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) across all educational levels. This strategy emphasizes expanding broadband coverage, equipping schools with digital devices, and ensuring affordable internet connectivity. A significant focus is on AI-enhanced learning, including personalized education and adaptive learning platforms.

In 2023, the government allocated 18 billion Tanzanian shillings to purchase ICT equipment for schools. This investment resulted in the distribution of approximately 17,700 desktops and 10,384 laptops to primary schools, with 61.9% of these institutions connected to the national power grid. Secondary schools received over 31,000 desktops and 10,000 laptops, with 72.2% having electricity access. To ensure effective utilization, over 3,000 secondary school teachers underwent ICT training.[10]

However, challenges persist. Unequal access to devices and internet services, particularly in rural areas, coupled with teacher training gaps and cybersecurity risks, pose significant hurdles. Addressing these issues is crucial for the successful implementation of the digital strategy.

2.4 Equity and Access: Bridging Educational Divides

The Revised Education Policy (2023) underscores Tanzania's commitment to equitable education, emphasizing inclusivity for marginalized groups, including girls, rural students, and learners with disabilities. A pivotal initiative in this endeavor is the SmartWASOMI project, launched in May 2024 through a collaboration between the government, Airtel, and UNICEF. This project aims to accelerate digital learning by providing free internet connectivity to schools nationwide, thereby enhancing access to quality education resources.

In alignment with the National Digital Education Strategy (2024/25 - 2029/30), the government has distributed 300,000 tablets to schools, reflecting its dedication to advancing digital education. This initiative is part of a broader commitment to

[10] The Citizen, Tanzania turns to tech to tackle teacher shortage. Available at: https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tanzania-turns-to-tech-to-tackle-teacher-shortage-4863280.

revolutionize education through digital means, as pledged during the 2022 Transforming Education Summit at the UN General Assembly.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist, particularly in rural areas where infrastructure limitations and digital literacy barriers are more pronounced. The success of these initiatives hinges on sustainable funding, robust implementation mechanisms, and continuous monitoring to ensure that no student is left behind.

2.5 Quality of Education: Aligning with Market Needs

To enhance the quality of education, the policy mandates continuous professional development for educators, ensuring they can effectively integrate digital tools into their teaching. Curriculum reforms are underway to align education with labor market demands, emphasizing practical skills and competencies. The policy also supports alternative learning pathways, such as online education and open distance learning (ODeL), to promote lifelong learning and make education more flexible and accessible. Nevertheless, challenges in curriculum implementation persist, particularly concerning teacher preparedness and resource availability. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system will be crucial to assess the effectiveness of these reforms.

Tanzania's higher education sector struggles with low access and quality, with a Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of 6.1%, lagging behind the sub-Saharan Africa average (9.4%) and regional peers like Kenya (11.5%), Uganda (7.1%), and Rwanda (8.3%). Limited access and underperformance threaten socioeconomic progress, undermining efforts toward industrialization and technological advancement. Strengthening higher education is crucial for developing a skilled workforce and driving national growth.[11]

In conclusion, while Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023) sets a solid foundation for digital transformation, equity, and quality improvement in education, its success hinges on effective implementation, adequate funding, and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Addressing infrastructure gaps, ensuring teacher readiness, and bridging the digital divide are key areas that require continuous policy refinement and investment.

[11] The National Digital Education Guidelines for Universities 2025.

2.6 Legal Review: Strengthening Policy and Coordination

The Revised Education Policy (2023) commits the government to review key education laws to ensure they align with the policy's objectives. This review aims to clarify institutional mandates, eliminate legal conflicts, and enhance coordination between educational institutions. However, to fully leverage digital technology and internet-enabled education, these laws must also be strengthened to support universal access to education, digital learning, and ICT integration.[12] Existing laws, such as the Education Fund Act (Cap 412) should be revised to support financing for ICT infrastructure, e-learning programs, and affordable internet access in schools and universities so as to streamline the Universal Access to Digital Education.

3. Case Studies and Best Practices: Implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) Regulations in Educational Curricula

Recent years have witnessed several pioneering efforts by countries to integrate AI into their educational systems. These case studies offer valuable lessons for nations like Tanzania seeking to bridge gaps in digital education.

3.1 Finland

Finland has established itself as a frontrunner in integrating AI into education. In 2017, the Finnish government, in partnership with academic institutions and private sector collaborators, launched the "Elements of AI" initiative. This program, developed by the University of Helsinki and Reaktor, was designed to demystify AI for the general public and has since been integrated into various levels of formal education.[13]

Finnish curricula now integrate digital literacy, computational thinking, and AI ethics. With ongoing teacher training and strong digital infrastructure, Finland ensures students gain both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for a technology-driven future.

[12] The Revised Education Policy (2023). Chapter IV pp. 71-73.

[13] University of Helsinki & Reaktor. (2017). Elements of AI. Retrieved from https://www.elementsofai.com

3.2 Singapore

Singapore offers another compelling example of effective AI curriculum integration. The Ministry of Education in Singapore has implemented a comprehensive framework that weaves AI, data analytics, and digital ethics throughout the national curriculum. Initiatives such as the "FutureSchools@Singapore" program provide students with hands-on experience in AI and robotics, while extensive professional development programs ensure that educators are equipped with the necessary skills to teach these emerging technologies. Singapore's "Transforming Education through Technology" Masterplan 2030 serves as a strategic roadmap in digital infrastructure and curriculum reform to demonstrate how a focused policy framework can transform educational practices, preparing students to thrive in an increasingly digital economy.

3.3 European Union and UNESCO: Global Guidelines and Ethical Frameworks

At the regional level, the European Union has set strong precedents for ethical AI integration. The European Commission's Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI and the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 outline clear principles such as transparency, accountability, and inclusivity that member states must adhere to when integrating AI into education. These documents provide actionable benchmarks, ensuring that AI is implemented in a manner that is both ethical and sustainable. Similarly, UNESCO advocates for a global consensus on AI in education, emphasizing that AI-driven educational reforms should promote inclusivity and sustainability while protecting human rights.[14] Both the EU and UNESCO stress that integrating ethical considerations from the outset is critical for the long-term success of AI initiatives in education.

3.4 Implications for Tanzania

Tanzania could adopt a comprehensive strategy to integrate AI into its education system by drawing on international examples like Finland and Singapore. This should include curriculum innovation, teacher training, and improved digital infrastructure. Aligning with global ethical frameworks from the EU and UNESCO will ensure responsible and inclusive AI use. By learning from these case studies, Tanzanian policymakers can implement reforms to enhance digital literacy and create a future-ready education system.

[14] UNESCO, 2021. Artificial intelligence in education: challenges and opportunities for sustainable development https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000366994

4. Policy Recommendations: Strengthening the Path to Educational Transformation

To ensure the successful implementation of Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023), several key recommendations must be considered.

4.1. Establishing a Strong AI and Digital Education Governance Framework

A critical shortcoming of Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023) is the absence of a clear governance framework for AI and digital learning. While the policy acknowledges the need for digital transformation in education, there are no concrete legal provisions to regulate AI-driven learning systems, data privacy in digital education, or the accreditation of AI-powered assessments. Without a structured governance model, the adoption of AI in education remains fragmented and dependent on institutional willingness rather than national enforcement. To address this, the government should establish a National AI in Education Taskforce under the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST), comprising policymakers, EdTech companies, academia, and civil society representatives. This task force would be responsible for developing regulatory frameworks, ethical guidelines, and implementation strategies for AI-driven education. Additionally, existing laws such as the Vocational Education and Training Authority Act (Cap 82) and the National Council for Technical Education Act (Cap 129) should be amended to include AI governance provisions.

4.2. Accrediting Non-Formal Digital Learning Pathways

The Revised Education Policy (2023) does not recognize online certifications, non-formal learning programs, or AI-driven personalized education platforms, despite the growing relevance of digital skills acquired through online learning. Many Tanzanians are already enrolling in global digital learning platforms such as Coursera, edX, Google Certifications, and LinkedIn Learning, but these credentials are not formally recognized in Tanzania's education system. To address this, the Tanzania National Examination Council (NECTA) and the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) should establish a national accreditation framework for online certifications and AI-driven learning assessments. Additionally, the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) [15] policy should be expanded to include certific-

[15] African Journal Online (AJOL). The Role of Open and Distance Learning in Promoting Professional Training and Development in Tanzania, https://bit.ly/ACaseStudyofTheOpenUniversityTanzania

ation levels beyond university degrees. This expansion would target personalized learning pathways, enabling students and self-learners to earn accredited qualifications through non-traditional educational modalities.

4.3 Leveraging the Innovative Emerging Digital Creative Sector to Promote the Digital Economy

The digital creative sector is one of the fastest-growing industries in Africa, contributing significantly to youth employment, digital entrepreneurship, and economic growth. However, Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023) does not explicitly integrate this sector into its education and skills development framework. The global demand for digital content creators, graphic designers, video editors, animators, game developers, and virtual reality (VR) innovators is rapidly increasing. Tanzania must position itself to take advantage of this digital transformation by integrating digital creative skills into education and policy frameworks. To achieve this, the government should prioritize investments in digital creative education, ensuring that students gain technical and entrepreneurial skills that align with the growing digital economy. This includes; Establishing Digital Creative Hubs in Schools and Universities, Recognizing Digital Creative Certifications as Part of Formal Education, or/and Public-Private Partnerships to Grow the Digital Creative Sector.

4.4 Teacher Training and Professional Development in Digital and Media Literacy

The effectiveness of competency-based education under the Revised Education Policy (2023) depends on teachers' ability to deliver digital learning effectively. However, many educators lack the necessary skills to integrate AI-driven learning tools, digital literacy, and media information literacy (MIL) into their teaching methods. Without a strong foundation in digital education and AI-enhanced teaching techniques, teachers will struggle to prepare students for the demands of the modern workforce. To close this gap, regular digital literacy workshops and mentorship programs must be institutionalized, ensuring that teachers continuously upgrade their digital skills. Schools and teacher training colleges must integrate AI-powered personalized training modules that allow educators to learn at their own pace while adapting to emerging digital trends. In addition, media and information literacy (MIL) should be embedded in teacher training programs. This will equip educators with the ability to critically assess online information, teach responsible internet usage, and effectively integrate digital tools into their classrooms.

4.5 Ensuring Inclusive Education and Assistive Technologies

Achieving a fair and inclusive education system requires ensuring that all learners, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, have equal access to quality education. While the Revised Education Policy (2023) makes broad commitments to inclusion, specific actions to address gender disparities, disabilities, and economic disadvantages must be reinforced. The government must expand scholarship programs for low-income students, particularly girls and learners with disabilities, to eliminate financial barriers to education. Additionally, more special-needs schools should be established, and existing institutions should be equipped with assistive technologies such as AI-powered text-to-speech software, braille-compatible digital platforms, and sign language translation AI. Schools and digital platforms must comply with universal accessibility standards, ensuring education is fully inclusive for blind, deaf, and physically challenged learners. Beyond physical accessibility, eliminating digital barriers is essential. More girls should be encouraged to enroll in STEM, AI, and digital creative programs, supported by gender-sensitive mentorship initiatives.

5. Conclusion: Strengthening Tanzania's Education System for a Digital Future

Tanzania stands at a pivotal moment in shaping the future of its education system. Tanzania's Revised Education Policy (2023) represents a significant shift towards competency-based learning, digital education, inclusivity, and vocational training, aiming to prepare a future-ready workforce. Its success depends on effective implementation, adequate funding, and collaboration among the government, public and private sector, and development partners with a national mentality that invests in efficient and effective education systems.

As the nation pursues the Tanzania Development Vision 2050, the education system must adapt to global trends. If executed well, these reforms could provide Tanzanian students with vital skills for a digital and interconnected world, making the next decade crucial for improving educational outcomes and national development.

Contact Information

Tech & Media Convergency (TMC)

Mikocheni B Plot no 35,
Block A, Post Code - 14112
House no MKC/MCB/5
Rose Garden Rd,
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

E: info@mediaconvergency.co.tz
M: +255 764 477 927

@mediaconvergency

linktr.ee/mediaconvergency

"Championing Technological Adaptation and Digital Transformation within a Democratic Digital Framework"