

GESI in Tanzania



**BOTANIC
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Understanding GESI looking at local context

GESI stands for **Gender Equality** and **Social Inclusion**. For an introduction to GESI, read [*What is GESI?*](#) first. This resource is a simplified version of a report developed for the Darwin Initiative Native Tree Species in Tanzania to analyse the country's GESI situation. It shows how Tanzania performs on GESI issues compared to the rest of the world.

It begins with a look at national data that is relevant for the Human Development Index and zooms in on data for women. Because numbers in itself don't tell the full story, they are compared with global averages and neighbouring countries.

The second part looks more closely at decision-making processes, access to and control over resources and national laws and policies in Tanzania. Across all these areas, gender equality and social inclusion play a critical role. For example, when men have a proportionally larger say in decision-making processes or what happens with resources at home, inequalities increase.

Important note: This document is not intended to judge or criticise Tanzania or its policies. Instead, it provides an overview of the current situation and uses comparisons with other countries to give context. The final section offers practical suggestions for improving GESI.

Tanzania compared to the rest of the world

The Human Development Index (HDI) is commonly used to compare development across countries. It measures the progress of a country looking at data important for human development. This includes health and growing to old age, years of education, and standard of living. On a scale of 0 to 1, Tanzania scores 0.52, ranking 167 out of 193 countries. For more detail, see table 1.

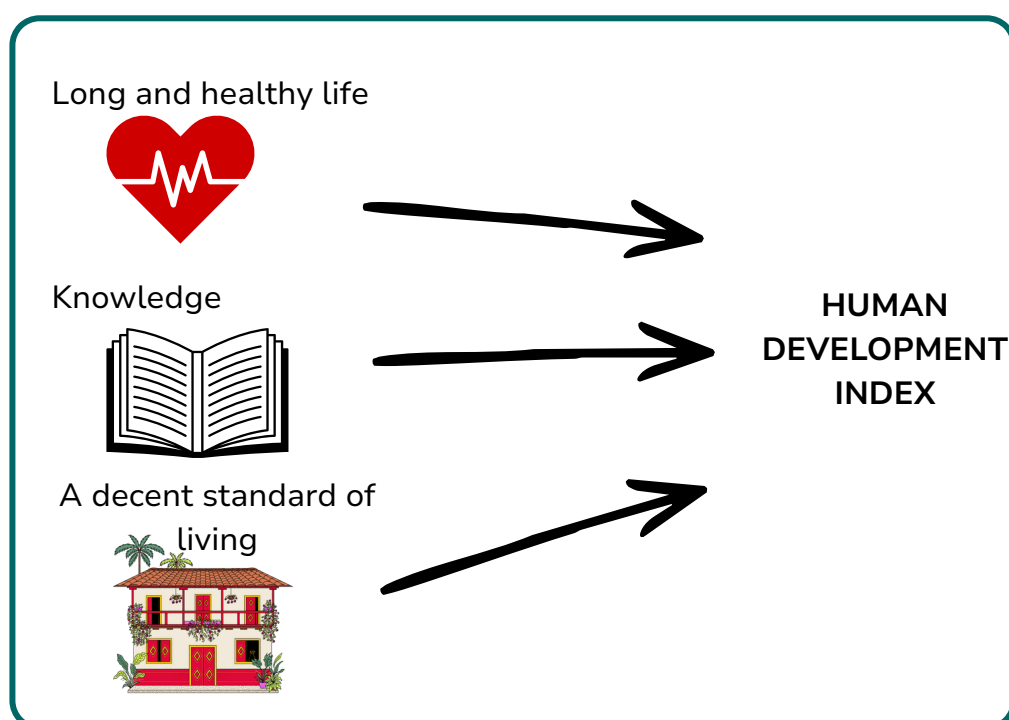


Fig. 2 Human Development Index, based on UNDP (2023)

	HDI Ranking	Life expectancy at birth	Mean years of schooling	Expected years of schooling	Income per person (USD)
World average		69.1	7.5	11.1	\$14,255
Norway	2	83.3	13.0	17.7	\$86,785
Kenya	143	58.3	3.8	7.9	\$3,989
Tanzania	167	51.8	3.4	5.4	\$1,724
Mozambique	181	45.1	1.6	3.9	\$480

Table 1: Human Development Index of Tanzania compared to the world average and other countries.

Tanzania scores below the world average on all HDI indicators. Neighbour Kenya has a better score in comparison, while Mozambique has one of the lowest scores in Africa. Norway is one of the highest scoring countries and therefore has a much higher score on all categories (Human Development Reports, 2023).

Literacy in Tanzania

Adult literacy rate (people who can read and write and understand numbers) is 83% for men and 75% for women, slightly below the global average of 86.3%.

The percentage of students going to primary school is very high with 98% of both boys and girls but:

- Only 81% of the boys and 77% of the girls finishes primary school.
- Secondary school participation is a lot lower: 47% and 43% for lower secondary school and 11% and 9% for higher secondary.
- Only 5.2% of the young adults go to college or university of which 61% is male and 39% female (theglobaleconomy.com/tanzania).

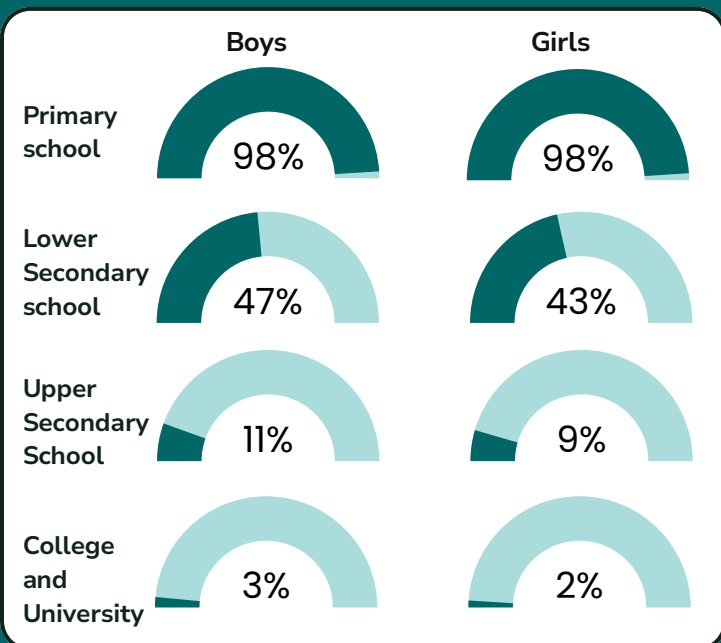


Fig. 2 Education in Tanzania. Percentage of boys and girls going to school.



Data on women

Pregnancy

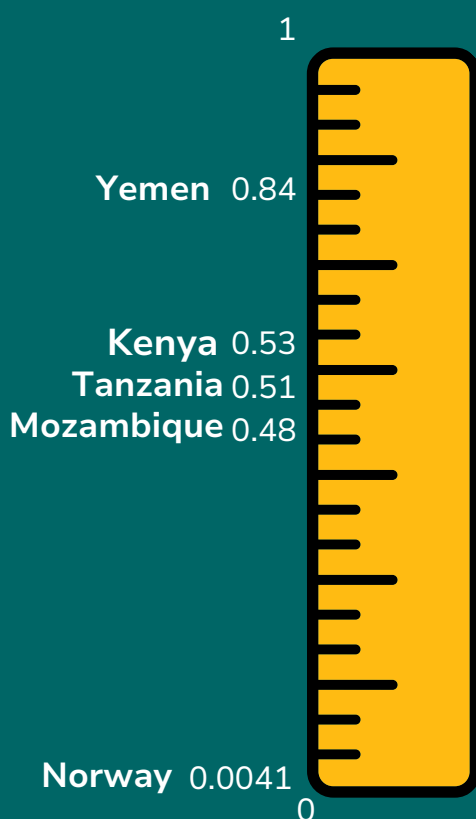
- Girls of the age 15-19 becoming a mother is high with 114 per 1000 girls compared to the global average of 41.
- Mothers dying while they give birth is much lower compared to global levels at 104 per 100,00 live births compared to 223 globally. While 91% of urban women use healthcare during pregnancy, the number drops to 56% in rural areas.
- 36% of the women are head of their household, which is higher than the global average of 29% (<https://data.unwomen.org/country/United-republic-of-tanzania>).

Politically active

Women hold 38% of the seats in national parliament, while at a global level the number is 28%. Representation drops at local levels

- 3% of District Council chairperson roles
- 2% of Village Chairpersons positions and
- 11% of Street Chairpersons
- 34% of the councillors are women (<https://data.unwomen.org/country/United-republic-of-tanzania>)

Gender Inequality Index



Gender inequality

Another worldwide ranking is the Gender Inequality Index (GII) that looks at the differences in opportunity for men and women. The index looks at part of the data that has just been discussed like secondary school attendance, women dying while giving birth, becoming a mother at a young age and women active in politics. A score of zero means that there is almost no difference between men and women, while a score closer to one shows a big inequality. With a score of 0.51 Tanzania has a high inequality. Best scoring countries are Norway and Switzerland where men and women are almost equal with a score of 0.0041. Lowest scoring country is Yemen with a score of 0.84. Kenya 0.71, see also Figure 3 (Gender Inequality index, 2023).

Fig. 3 The Gender Equality Index ranks between 0 and 1. Closer to 0 means that men and women are very equal, closer to 1 means men and women are very unequal.

Decision-making process

Women's participation in local and community level decision-making is improving in some areas. However, in communities and spaces where men still dominate decision-making, women tend to be overlooked a lot.

There are several social barriers and challenges that individuals in Tanzania face when it comes to engaging in decision-making processes. These barriers are deeply influenced by factors such as gender, income, cultural and traditional norms, lack of education, geographic location and social stigmas.

Men are still the heads and decision makers, and this trickles up to local and national leadership roles where men normally have more power than women.

Access and control of resources

Access and control resources is unequal in Tanzania. In some parts of the country gender norms are deeply embedded and men decide who has access to land, financial resources, education, healthcare, and other forms of capital.

Laws

The Tanzania Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2027 outlines priorities for promoting gender equality across various sectors at a national level. Yet, at community level unwritten rules and practices and religious laws often influence gender roles and rights, which might conflict with national laws. Efforts are ongoing to merge these systems (UNDP, 2021).

Marginalized groups, including LGBTIQ individuals, as well as persons with disabilities face heightened risks of gender-based violence and protection concerns. They face criminalization and stigmatization, violence and abuse, restricted access to healthcare, social exclusion, limited support services, and discriminatory practices even in law enforcement. Homosexuality is a socially taboo topic, and same-sex sexual acts are criminal offences.



Indigenous people lack recognition at the national level, particularly concerning land tenure security. As a result, local land-related conflicts and challenges are common. Unwritten rules and practices do not always take indigenous people's rights into account. LGBTIQ rights are limited and people face discrimination, violence and hostility. They have restricted access to healthcare and limited support services. Homosexuality is a socially taboo topic and can lead to imprisonment. Understanding and awareness of national and local laws within the population is not widespread.

Conclusion

This analysis highlights the complex interplay between gender, social inclusion, and inequalities in Tanzania. While progress has been made, cultural norms still influence gender roles, especially in rural areas. This means there are still challenges for both women and socially excluded groups. Women are at a disadvantage in all stages of their life with gender roles starting as a girl, leading to possible education restrictions. As an adult, women have less decision-making power and access to resources like land and finances. Socially excluded groups like indigenous people and the LTBTQ community face the same fate.

National laws make it possible to promote equality, but are not fully implemented, as cultural norms are sometimes preferred over laws. Environmental stressors and climate vulnerabilities make it harder to address these inequalities.

Taking the data into account and translating this into actions for your own organisation is not easy. However, it would be worthwhile to think about how you can make your organisation a more equal setting for both men and women. Read the next resource [What can you do?](#)

