



POLICY BRIEF

TCPD in Tanzania: Design-Based Implementation Research Cycle 1 Recommendations

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Background

The current and ongoing research project, [The Impact of a Tech-Supported, School-Based TPD Model on Learning Outcomes in Tanzania](#),¹ using Design-Based Implementation Research (DBIR), is closely aligned with the Tanzania National TCPD implementation plan (TIE, 2021).² The project has been co-developed and designed collaboratively between EdTech Hub, Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) and Aga Khan University in consultation with key stakeholders on the ground.

This policy brief presents a summary of the key findings and recommendations from the first cycle of the DBIR carried out between September and December 2022.³ Data collection methods in the four participating rural schools in Lindi region comprised fortnightly classroom and Community of Learning (CoL) observations and end-of-cycle feedback survey, interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with key stakeholders, including teachers, peer facilitators, school TCPD teams, ward, district and regional education officers, as well as additional interviews with national officials at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) and the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local (PORALG) in March 2023.

Summary of key findings

System-level findings

Effective workshops for all relevant stakeholders are key to building a shared understanding of MEWAKA (*Mafunzo Endelevu kwa Walimu Kazini*, or Teachers' Continuous Professional Development (TCPD)) — a landmark teacher professional development programme being implemented by the Government of Tanzania. The peer facilitator manual workshop, in particular, was highlighted by participants for demonstrating how communities of learning (CoLs) should be run.

1. **Monitoring** is seen as key to ensuring quality TCPD is implemented through weekly CoLs. Schools keep records of weekly CoLs, and

¹ See

<https://edtechhub.org/evidence/edtech-hub-research-portfolio/impact-of-tech-supported-tpd-model-on-learning-tanzania/> Retrieved 24 May 2023

² Tanzania Institute of Education. (2021). *National Plan for Teachers' Continuous Professional Development (4a)*.

³ Contact authors for more details on the sample, participants, methods and detailed findings: saalim@edtechhub.org; <https://edtechhub.org/our-team/>

Ward Education Officers (WEOs) are monitoring, but School Quality Assurance (SQA) has not yet been integrated with MEWAKA.

2. **Financial resources** to support TCPD implementation are viewed as insufficient by schools and wards, and incentives and motivation for teacher participation were commonly cited as a need.
3. **CoL participation is affected by scheduling.** Schools are holding CoLs weekly; though some have found it challenging to motivate teachers to participate in CoLs, particularly when they take place after regular school hours or during lunchtime.
4. **Special needs schools** have specific needs for content and for accessing TCPD materials.

School-level findings

1. **Schools have adapted their own routines** for the required schedule and record keeping.
2. The **selection of topics for the CoL** was also handled differently by schools.
3. **Some schools offer opportunities to share peer facilitator responsibilities.**
4. In CoLs, peer facilitators and teachers engage respectfully, but **there is room for improvement in CoL facilitation and interactions.** CoL observations showed **inconsistent use of interactive engagement**, with lecturing with questions and answers still the predominant form of interaction and a focus on subject content rather than teaching strategies in CoL Sessions. In several mixed-sex CoL observations, **female teacher participation was notably lower** than that of male teachers.

Teacher-level findings

1. Teachers and TCPD teams at all schools reported **increased collaboration** (corroborated by the research team observations), and at three of the four schools, a **marked increase in teacher confidence and problem-solving.**
2. The majority of teachers expressed **positive attitudes** towards TCPD. Teacher dissatisfaction mainly centred on **motivation** to make the

time to engage in CoLs, with a desire for incentives.

3. Teachers felt that they were learning to use interactive teaching methods and technology and that when they used these in lessons, they noted increased student confidence and enthusiasm for learning; however, these interactive methods were rarely observed by the research team.

Findings on the use of technology in TCPD

1. Teachers in all four schools and WEOs reported using phones and tablets to access the learning management system (LMS) for materials and share resources and strategies with other teachers via social media, search online for materials to use in class and submit reports to and receive information from their superiors.
2. Benefits of technology, as perceived by teachers:
 - Reduces workload
 - Convenient, quick access to materials
 - Increased learner engagement / performance
 - Improving digital literacy
 - Reduces administrative tasks
3. Challenges with technology reported by teachers:
 - Desire for more devices to use in CoLs and classrooms
 - Electricity, connectivity, and cost of internet bundles
 - Projector limitations
 - Digital literacy
 - (Non)inclusive design
 - Desire to download materials from LMS

TCPD: DBIR Cycle 1 recommendations

Teacher learning is an incremental process and changing pedagogical practices takes time. In the first few months of MEWAKA, teachers were more aware of their use of interactive methods and stakeholders surveyed (teachers, head teachers, and Local Government Authority (LGA) officers) reported a shift in teachers' mindsets toward collaborative problem-solving. These are promising initial outcomes of MEWAKA.

Barriers and challenges are inevitable in any TCPD programme and particularly at the early stages of roll-out. The findings from interviews, FGDs, and observations suggest several recommendations to be considered in the next phase of implementation.

Immediate and medium-term actions for the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE)

1. **Schools should focus more on general pedagogy and problem-solving within CoLs rather than school curriculum content.** TIE is to provide model CoL session videos and a digitised peer facilitator's manual.
2. **TIE and educational leaders are to provide more ongoing support for peer facilitators,** for example, developing a coaching and mentoring guide or handouts, a module or guidance for TCPD-Team CoLs, and a workshop guide for Year 2 (or "level 2") peer facilitator workshop.
3. **TIE is to consider CoL module content for special needs schools / special needs units.**

Actions that could be tested in the eight schools participating in DBIR Cycle 2

The following recommendations are for actions to be jointly planned and implemented by the researchers, schools, and LGA officers participating in the DBIR.

1. **Review the frequency of CoLs and cluster group meetings.** With the permission of the ministries and local authorities, different scenarios could be tested in different schools. For example, one set of

DBIR schools could continue to hold CoLs weekly and another set bi-weekly (twice a month). The research team can compare the levels of teacher motivation, engagement, and practical classroom application of what is learnt in CoLs in the two sets of schools.

2. **Pilot cost-effective incentives to continue teacher motivation for CoLs.** Through mutual agreement with the LGAs and schools participating in the DBIR Cycle 2, different forms of teacher incentives could be tested, such as various forms of recognition or private-public partnerships whereby schools or WEOs solicit refreshments for CoL meetings from local businesses, organisations, or community members.
3. **Test the most useful way to publish the peer facilitator manual**
4. **Test the use of Braille**
5. **Investigate why female teachers are less engaged than male teachers.**
6. **Understand the adaptations schools have made** — departing from the original plans, such as sharing the peer facilitator role among teachers and using different mechanisms to identify the topic of CoL sessions. **Assess the relative effectiveness of these local adaptations.**

System-level recommendations

The following recommendations include actions that could be taken by LGA and SQA officers, as well as larger considerations for ministry actions that could further strengthen TCPD.

Recommendations for LGA level

1. **LGA officers to provide more peer-facilitator support and mentoring.** WEOs, District Education Officers (DEOs), District Academic Officers, as well as SQA Officers can monitor CoLs and provide formal and informal support to peer facilitators, focusing on issues such as CoL management, facilitation strategies, and the use of relevant pedagogies, including experiential learning and gender equity and responsiveness within CoLs.
2. **LGAs and school leadership to strictly dedicate CoL time for teachers.** Steps should be taken to ensure that duties assigned to

teachers / schools can be completed without interfering with CoL attendance.

3. **LGAs to strictly dedicate WEO time for monitoring CoLs and TCPD activities.**
4. **LGAs could motivate teachers to engage in TCPD by providing recognition** for teacher participation in TCPD and improved teaching, for example, through awards, assigning new responsibilities, letters of recognition, certificates, public announcements, or social media.

Recommendations for MOEST and PORALG

1. **Ensure all schools receive the opportunity to participate in the peer facilitator manual workshop.** LGA officers and peer facilitators unanimously reported that the workshop introducing the peer facilitator manual (piloted between August and September 2022) greatly clarified the CoL modality and motivated workshop participants to implement CoLs at the school level.

For schools that did take part in the pilot peer facilitator manual workshop, implement the next phase of the National TCPD Plan, whereby an annual workshop is held to refresh and deepen the skills of peer facilitators and school-level TCPD teams.

2. **Align SQA support with TCPD (MEWAKA):** Ensure that SQA officers are included in MEWAKA workshops and that they provide relevant and up-to-date advice to teachers and schools.

Update SQA monitoring tools and criteria to explicitly include monitoring of CoLs and TCPD.

3. **Consider adjusting the official school timetable to accommodate CoLs within normal working hours:** Findings from the DBIR showed that scheduling CoLs is a challenge for schools. When schools held CoLs after regular hours, fewer teachers were motivated to stay and engage in CoL activities, but when CoLs were held when students were still in school, some teachers had to miss the CoL in order to supervise students. Examples of how the school timetable could be adjusted to accommodate TCPD include:

- Models from other countries, such as adding 15 minutes to the school day 4 days a week so that on the 5th day, students go home 1 hour early, and teachers use that 1 hour for CoL.

- Creative use of the existing timetable and community support; e.g., make use of community volunteers to teach and supervise students during religion classes and / or *Elimu ya Kujitegemea* [Education for Self-Reliance] and hold CoL sessions for teachers during that time.
4. **Support teachers with hearing and visual impairment to engage in TCPD.** Ministry-level Special Needs Units and TIE could collaborate to ensure teachers in all regions are given technological aids and appropriately formatted materials that will help them engage with CoLs and TCPD.
 5. **Consider linking TCPD participation to incentives, certificates, or promotion.** Research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and East Africa specifically⁴, has shown that merit-based promotion and certification for TCPD increase teacher motivation. Incentives for participating in CoLs can be considered in the development of the Teacher Incentivisation Guide, particularly if CoLs remain outside teachers' normal workday schedules.
 6. **Provide a sustainable budget line for TCPD.** There are no dedicated funds for workshops or running CoLs at the school level. Findings have shown that school capitation grants have generally been insufficient to cover CoLs as well. A dedicated budget line for TCPD at the school, ward, district, and national levels would help to ringfence funds to ensure implementation and monitoring that sustains the quality of TCPD provided through school and cluster-level CoLs and peer facilitator workshops.

⁴ See, for example:

Bawalla, O.G. & Omolawal, A.S. (2022). Non-financial rewards and job commitment among public secondary school teachers in Ogun State public secondary schools. *Reality of Politics* 20(2), 55–75.

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Natalia, Z. (2016). *Exploring the effect of non-financial incentives on job satisfaction of teachers at Lubuto and Kayele Secondary schools in Ndola District*. Zimbabwe Open University and the University of Zambia.