



Tanzania is one of Africa's fastest-growing economies, with youth under the age of 15 years making up 45 percent of the country's population of 55 million.

Girls and boys living with disabilities in Tanzania still suffer from sexual violence, including rape, child and forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and sexual assault, exploitation and abuse despite governmental efforts to prevent this violence.

Tanzania has made important steps toward protecting children, including through child justice reform. Nonetheless, violence, exploitation, and abuse are realities for many children and adolescents in Tanzania.

Those at greatest risk include children living with disabilities, those suffering extreme poverty, girls and boys in institutional care and children separated from their families or on the move.

Terre des Hommes Netherlands in Tanzania aims to protect children from all forms of violence, which is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to education, gender equality and health.

CHILDREN IN TANZANIA

Many children in Tanzania experience violence, neglect and exploitation. The prevalence of child marriage remains high. Many girls and boys experience sexual violence during childhood, with children and adolescents becoming increasingly exposed to online protection risks. The practice of physical violence is deeply rooted in cultural beliefs and norms, and further reinforced by legal frameworks that legitimise physical discipline of children at home and in schools. Domestic violence is also generally accepted in families.

More than twice the number of girls (28%) than boys (13%) experience some form of sexual violence before turning 18. Orphans are more vulnerable to sexual and emotional abuse. 8% of children under 18 years of age are orphans. Additionally, 36% of women (25–49 years) were married before the age of 18. Close to three-quarters of 13 to 17-year-olds report having been slapped, punched, beaten or threatened with a weapon by a relative, authority figure or intimate partner. Furthermore, a quarter of children have been called bad names, made to feel unwanted or threatened with abandonment, all of which constitute emotional abuse.

Abuse is rarely reported as the perpetrators are usually known to the abused child. Children also do not know where to go for care, treatment and support. Very few children have birth certificates, making it difficult to access social services and legal protection. Early marriage (before the age of 18) is common in Tanzania. This exposes young girls to the risk of violence.

DEMOGRAPHICS



Population

69.4 Million



Children (up to 18 years)

49%



Urban - rural ratio

35% - 65%

Social-economic data

\$ 1,200

Per capita income (GNI per capita)

25.7%

Living below the poverty line (of \$1.90 per day)

4.6%

Annual growth of per capita (GDP growth)

76%

Literacy rate

2024 Budget

€ 63,755

Percentage of children in school



85%

Net attendance of children in primary school age



49%

Net attendance of children in lower secondary age



16%

Net attendance of children in upper secondary age

OUR WORK IN TANZANIA

In Tanzania, Terre des Hommes Netherlands works with communities, government, private sector, civil society organisations and children themselves, to address systemic and structural drivers that expose children to exploitation.

◆ Child Trafficking

Mwanza region is a source, transit and destination region for trafficked children. Trafficking of children for domestic labour is the leading form of child trafficking in Tanzania. It is facilitated by unscrupulous individuals who manipulate the traditional practice of child fostering to subject children to domestic servitude. Family members, friends, or intermediaries play a key role by unknowingly handing over their children to traffickers who place children into households as child domestic workers.

The government of Tanzania has made several efforts to combat human trafficking through enacting different laws, policies and regulations. Despite all the efforts, children mostly from impoverished-rural settings remain at risk of child trafficking whereby the traffickers exploit children in domestic servitude and in sex trafficking as well as in forced labour on farms, occasionally as hunters and in gold and gemstone mines and quarries, the informal commercial sector and on fishing.

◆ Sexual Exploitation

Tanzania has a number of institutions that can, and do, play a role in responding to cases of child exploitation and abuse, potentially including OCSEA. These range from the Women and Children Protection Committees at the village/community level to the 14 multi-agency One Stop Centres, which makes it possible to provide medical, psychosocial and criminal justice support in a single child-friendly setting. Children in Tanzania are facing the harms and realities of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA). The majority (67%) of children in Tanzania aged 12–17 years old are internet users. Available literature on sexual exploitation of children indicates that 4% of internet users aged 12–17 years in Tanzania were victims of grave instances of online sexual exploitation and abuse.

Promising practices are taking place in Tanzania to tackle OCSEA, but greater awareness raising, and system strengthening is required. The government, public institutions and society can all do more to disrupt the harm OCSEA is causing and threatens to cause to children in Tanzania.

◆ Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in Tanzania, but some communities in Mara region still see FGM as an important cultural practice. This is a leading root cause of high school dropout rates and child marriage in the region. According to the Tanzania National Bureau of statistics (2012), it is estimated that about 75% of girls aged 9-16 years undergo FGM every year within Tarime District-Tanzania.

In most communities where this happens, FGM is conducted as a rite of passage and it is believed that it prevents women's sexual desires and therefore controls sexual behaviours and infidelity in marriage. The practice subjects children to early marriage as it is believed that the "cut" girl is ready for marriage and men prefer young-cut girls for marriage thus making economic gains to families due to the high dowry paid to the young circumcised girls.

◆ Support for Children with Disabilities

The entrenched social and structural discrimination against girls and boys with disabilities in Tanzania means that many live with relatives in isolation and are invisible from society, often kept indoors and out of sight. They have less interaction with peers or adults in whom they could confide. The stigma surrounding children with disabilities can result to their needs and rights being dismissed by communities, authorities and families. Boys and girls with disabilities, children with albinism and with autism are especially vulnerable to violence and exploitation in Tanzania. This is frequented by the acute lack of access to education, child protection medical support, psychosocial support, legal and other services, including reporting mechanisms, that rarely accommodate their individual needs. Girls with disabilities suffer a double disadvantage as they are also trafficked for child labour (begging on the streets) and child marriage as a result of FGM, which jeopardise their survival, developmental, protection and participation rights.

◆ Child Labour

The Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics report (2016) estimates that the Agricultural industry accounted for at least 28.8% of child labour cases as of 2016.

Recent statistics by the US Bureau of International Labour Affairs indicate that the agricultural sector accounts for 94% of working children in Tanzania, most of whom are between the ages of 5 and 14. The report further states that children working in the sector are drawn from school dropouts often due to teenage pregnancies, child marriage, abandoned children who end up taking the role of heads of households, and children from poor households, often as a result of human trafficking, and those accompanying their parents to work.

OUR APPROACH

◆ Children at the centre

Children are at the centre of everything we do. We support them to get access to education and other skills development so they can eventually find jobs to earn better incomes to enhance their opportunities to live a decent and dignified life. We build their resilience and facilitate their empowerment. We help them amplify their voice, opening opportunities to speak up to those with the power to realise systemic change.

◆ Strengthening child protection

We educate parents and communities. We build the capacity of local structures to effectively prevent, detect, report and respond to child exploitation. We collaborate with other actors to influence strengthening of the legal and policy environment for better promotion and protection of children's rights.

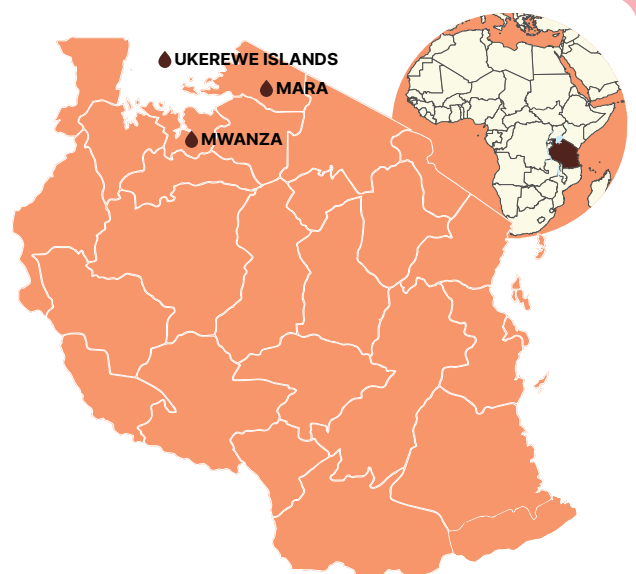
OUR PROJECTS

Our work concentrates on the Lake Zone, consisting of the regions surrounding Lake Victoria: Mara and Mwanza including the Ukerewe islands.

Current projects

- ◆ Sexual Exploitation of Children - 1 Project
- ◆ Give a Voice to Exploited Children with Disabilities in Tanzania (GIVE) Project.

The primary targets of the GIVE project are girls aged 9-17 years with disabilities and girls who are at risk of FGM and child marriage. The overall objective of the project is to amplify the voices of children with disabilities including survivors of sexual violence and exploitation to access quality services including protection from retrogressive cultural practices (FGM and forced marriage).



References

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2023 REACH



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Strengthened 6 school based-child rights clubs (150 members) to support create awareness on disabilities and lobby against FGM, child marriage and child trafficking in Tarime. The 6 school-based child rights clubs created awareness in schools and communities on stopping FGM and preventing child trafficking for children with disabilities. 175 children (105 girls and 70 boys) were engaged in the activity.
- Linked up girls with disabilities and those at risk of FGM, child marriage with learning institutions and supported them with learning materials and school uniforms. 14 CWDs (11 girls and 3 boys) were supported to join Lake Victoria Disability Centre vocational school for skills development. One (1) other girl was supported to join a primary school. One (1) girl was supported with school uniforms and a school bag so she no longer shares her older sister's school uniforms.
- Supported 20 children with physical disabilities with assistive devices according to specific needs. (9 boys and 11 girls) received wheelchairs.
- Sensitised 29 government officers including police, gender and children desk, ward community engagement officers on the by laws to protect CWDs from 16 Wards in Tarime district.
- 10 families of children with disabilities were counselled on how to take care of their children, how to protect their children from child abuse and exploitation including FGM and child marriage, giving all children equal opportunities and basic services with special attention to those with disabilities.

PARTNERSHIPS

Terre des Hommes Netherlands works closely with the following partners:

- Association for the Termination of Female Genital Mutilation (ATFGM)
- Kiota Women Health and Development (KIWOHEDE)

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“Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights, health, integrity and personal development of girls and women, stripping them of their childhood and excluding them from education. It cannot be justified as a cultural or traditional practice. Even if you are not directly affected, it is important we create a world where everyone has zero tolerance for FGM.”

Josephine Akiru
Country Director, Uganda and Acting
Country Director, Tanzania
Terre des Hommes Netherlands

About Terre des Hommes Netherlands

Terre des Hommes Netherlands (TdH NL) is an international child rights organisation committed to stopping child exploitation. Our mission is to protect children by preventing and stopping child exploitation, and by empowering children to make their voices count. Our vision is that 'children can flourish in a world free of all forms of exploitation.

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