A Comprehensive Review of the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) in Tanzania

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to analyze how the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) addresses the educational challenges of out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania through its flexible, competency-based approach. The study also sought to provide insights for improving the program's effectiveness and scalability. A descriptive and analytical design were employed, using existing data from official reports, program documentation and previous studies. The study draws on qualitative and quantitative data to assess the program's development, structure and outcomes. Key documents analyzed include the 2015/2016 profiling study on out-of-school children, IPOSA administrative and real-time implementation reports, comprehensive reports from UNICEF and Tanzania's national education strategies. Key study revealed that IPOSA is distinct from previous educational models due to its emphasis on flexibility, inclusivity and competence-based learning. It effectively addresses the diverse needs of out-of-school adolescents, equipping them with practical, real-world skills that align with workforce demands. The program's design, which integrates literacy, life skills, vocational training and entrepreneurship, has demonstrated a significant impact on marginalized groups. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, along with the Institute of Adult Education, allocate additional resources to expand IPOSA's reach, particularly in marginalized communities. Additionally, regular curriculum updates, enhanced collaboration between stakeholders and improved monitoring and evaluation systems are recommended to ensure the program's continued success and scalability.

Keywords: IPOSA; IPPE; COBET; ICBAE; ASEP; Open-Schooling.

Introduction

Tanzania has made commendable progress in increasing literacy rates and expanding access to education, yet a significant portion of the population, particularly adolescents, remains outside the formal education system. According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census, while the overall literacy rate for individuals aged five years and above stands at 79.1%, disparities persist across different age groups and regions, with rural areas and older populations being the most affected. The literacy rate among those aged 15-19 years is higher, at 88.9%, but many adolescents still face barriers that prevent them from completing their education (NBS, 2024).

In 2015, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) reported that approximately 3.5 million school-aged children were out of school with 23% being of primary school age and 41% of secondary school age (MoEST, 2015). These alarming figures highlight a critical challenge in Tanzania's education sector: the inability to retain a significant number of children and adolescents within the formal education system. Factors contributing to this issue include socio-economic barriers such as poverty and child labor, cultural

practices like early marriage and pregnancy and infrastructural challenges, including inadequate school facilities and a shortage of qualified teachers (UNICEF et al., 2019).

To address the educational needs of out-of-school adolescents, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), in collaboration with UNICEF developed the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) (IAE, 2018). This program is a key component of Tanzania's Education Sector Development Plan (2016-2021) and the National Inclusive Education Strategy (2017-2021), both of which emphasize improving access to education for those who have missed out formal schooling opportunities (MoEST, 2017, 2018). IPOSA is designed to provide a flexible, inclusive and competency-based learning environment that equips adolescents with essential literacy, numeracy, vocational and life skills (Kristeen et al., 2024). The program aims to bridge the gap between formal education and the practical needs of out-of-school youth, helping them to become productive members of society and contributing to the Tanzania's socio-economic development (PORALG, 2019).

Previous initiatives like the Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania (COBET) and the Integrated Post Primary Education Program (IPPE) have addressed similar challenges by offering alternative education pathways. However, there is a scarcity of research on how programs like IPOSA have contributed to promoting literacy and developing a skilled workforce in Tanzania (Siafu & Ng'umbi, 2024; Vuzo et al., 2015).

This study sought to establish how the IPOSA program addresses the educational challenges of out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania, through its flexible, competency-based approach and to provide insights for improving the program's effectiveness. This study is a response to requests from various education stakeholders, who sought to understand the IPOSA program in terms of its origin, structure, organization and practical application. By examining the development and implementation of IPOSA, this study assessed its impact on the targeted population and provided recommendations to enhance access to education for out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive and analytical design to assess the development, implementation, and impact of the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA). The study focused on the analysis of existing data obtained from official reports, program documentation and relevant literature to explore how IPOSA addresses the educational challenges faced by out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania.

The data collection process involved a comprehensive review of key documents, including the 2015/2016 profiling study on out-of-school children, Administrative IPOSA development reports, Real-time implementation reports and comprehensive program reports from UNICEF. Additionally, national education strategies, such as the Education Sector Development Plan (2016-2021), were analyzed to provide context and support the analysis of the program's alignment with Tanzania's broader educational goals. Secondary data was sourced from peer-reviewed research articles and studies focused on non-formal education and vocational training in Tanzania.

For data analysis, both qualitative and quantitative methods were applied. The qualitative data, including program documentation and reports, was critically reviewed to identify key themes related to IPOSA's objectives, structure and outcomes. Quantitative data, such as statistics on out-of-school adolescents and program reach, was analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize trends in enrollment, completion rates and skills acquisition.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was employed. This involved cross-verifying information from multiple sources, including government and program reports, to develop a comprehensive understanding of the program's effectiveness and to identify any gaps in its implementation. By combining insights from different data sources, the study provides a well-rounded analysis of IPOSA.

As this study relied solely on publicly available documents and secondary data, no direct ethical concerns were raised. All sources were appropriately cited and the data was handled in compliance with academic standards to ensure the integrity and reliability of the study.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings of the study and discusses their implications in relation to the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA). The analysis draws on key documents,

including administrative and real-time implementation reports as well as national educational strategies, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how IPOSA addresses the educational challenges faced by out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania. The discussion will focus on the program's development, structure and outcomes, highlighting its effectiveness in addressing the educational needs of marginalized youths. Additionally, the section explores the challenges encountered during implementation and offers insights into potential areas for improvement to enhance the program's scalability and sustainability.

Research Question 1: What are the key demographic, geographical and socio-cultural factors contributing to the high rates of out-of-school children and youths in Tanzania?

Demographic Factors

In Tanzania, demographic characteristics, such as age, gender and family structure significantly affect educational access and retention rates. The 2015/2016 profiling study by the MoEST revealed that 3.5 million school-aged children were out of school. Of these, 23% were of primary school age while 41% were of secondary school age (MoEST, 2015). These figures highlight a critical challenge, particularly for secondary school-aged youth, who face higher risks of exclusion from formal education.

Gender disparity plays a pivotal role in school dropout rates. Girls are disproportionately affected due to socio-cultural practices such as early marriage and early pregnancy. These factors force some girls to leave school prematurely, especially after the age of 12, when societal pressures to fulfill domestic roles or marry become more pronounced (UNICEF et al., 2019). Girls who undergo initiation rites are often considered adults within their communities, and their chances of continuing with formal education diminish, with many directed toward marriage and family responsibilities. As a result, girls are more likely to drop out of school compared to boys, especially in rural areas where these cultural practices are more prevalent (MoEST, 2015).

Another significant demographic factor is orphan hood, which severely impacts a child's ability to access education. Orphaned children, especially those aged 11 to 12, face multiple barriers, including loss of parental support and financial instability. Data shows that 31% of orphans have never attended school while 5% dropped out after enrolling (Bijaoui, 2021). Children from single-parent households, particularly those headed by mothers, are also at a higher risk of leaving school. The lack of financial and emotional support in these households often leads to an increased burden on children to contribute to household income through child labor, further limiting their educational opportunities (Jingzhong & Lu, 2011; UNICEF, 2005).

Geographical Disparities

Geographical factors create significant inequalities in educational access. Rural areas, in particular, face challenges related to infrastructure, distance and teacher availability. Rural communities lack adequate school facilities, leading to overcrowded classrooms and long travel distances for students. In these areas, access to quality education is severely hampered by the shortage of qualified teachers and inadequate learning resources. The geographical remoteness of these communities often means that students must walk long distances to reach the nearest school, which discourages attendance and increases dropout rates (MoEST, 2015).

In contrast, urban centers tend to have better infrastructure and access to schools, but they face challenges of overcrowded classrooms and socio-economic disparities. While students in urban areas may have more educational opportunities, many face difficulties due to poverty, which limits their ability to afford school fees, uniforms and learning materials. Urban children from low-income families are often required to work to support their households, which negatively impacts their school attendance and performance (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). The geographical divide between rural and urban areas thus contributes to disparities in educational outcomes, with rural students facing greater barriers to accessing and completing their education.

Socio-Cultural Barriers

Socio-cultural practices in Tanzania play a significant role in hindering access to education for many children. Practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriage and child labor are deeply embedded in certain communities, making it difficult for children, particularly girls, to stay in school. Girls who undergo FGM or other initiation rites are often seen as adults, ready for marriage, leading to early school dropouts (Boyden et al., 2013).

Cultural beliefs in some regions place a low value on formal education, particularly for girls, with parents opting to send their children to work rather than to school. Child labor remains a widespread issue in Tanzania, with 35% of school-aged children engaged in work, particularly in agriculture, forestry and fishing (ILO, 2014). This economic exploitation affects children's ability to attend school regularly and to perform well academically. Girls employed as domestic workers are especially vulnerable, as their work often goes unpaid and they are at risk of exploitation, including increased vulnerability to HIV infection (Bijaoui, 2021).

Children with disabilities face even greater challenges. According to the National Disability Survey (2008), 7.9% of Tanzanians have disabilities, yet only 1% to 2% of these children attend pre-primary, primary or secondary school (MoEST, 2017). Physical barriers such as lack of accessible transportation and school infrastructure, coupled with stigma and cultural discrimination, make it particularly difficult for children with disabilities to attend and complete school. Similarly, children with albinism (CWA) face unique challenges, including health risks, security concerns and social exclusion, which further prevent them from accessing education (Brocco, 2016; MoEST, 2015).

Economic Challenges
Economic hardship is another significant barrier to education in Tanzania, particularly for girls. Poverty forces some children to engage in work at an early age to support their families, making education a secondary priority. Child labor in sectors like agriculture, forestry and fishing is particularly prevalent in rural areas, where children's contributions to the family's income are essential (ILO, 2014). This economic pressure is a major contributor to high dropout rates, as children who are engaged in work struggle to balance school with their responsibilities.

The economic challenges are even more pronounced for orphans and children from single-mother families. These children face significant educational disadvantages as their families are often unable to afford school fees, uniforms or learning materials. Single-mother households experience almost double the rate of out-of-school children compared to households with both parents present, further compounding the issue (MoEST, 2015).

Research Question 2: How was the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) developed to address the educational challenges?

Development Process of IPOSA
The development of the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents (IPOSA) was a response to the critical need to address the growing number of out-of-school children and adolescents in Tanzania. By 2015, the country faced a significant educational challenge, with 3.5 million school-aged children out of school (MoEST, 2015). In response, the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and UNICEF, developed IPOSA as part of the national Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016-2021 and the National Inclusive Education Strategy 2017-2021 (MoEST, 2017).

The IPOSA initiative was built on the principle of inclusive basic education, aimed at offering flexible, competency-based learning pathways to adolescents who had missed formal schooling. Stakeholder engagement played a crucial role in shaping the program. A series of consultations, work sessions and validation processes were conducted with various stakeholders, including government ministries, NGOs, community organizations and educational experts. These meetings ensured that the program addressed the specific needs of out-of-school adolescents and was aligned with Tanzania's broader socio-economic development goals (Siafu, 2021).

One of the key features of IPOSA's development was its alignment with global trends in education, science and technology. These trends include the increasing emphasis on competency-based education, which focuses on equipping learners with practical, marketable skills rather than purely academic knowledge. Additionally, there is a global shift toward inclusive education, ensuring that all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background or learning challenges, have access to quality education. In terms of science and technology, there is a growing recognition of the importance of digital literacy and information technology skills, which are essential for success in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven global economy. Furthermore, the rise of lifelong learning and vocational training as key components of education systems has influenced programs like IPOSA to focus on equipping out-of-school youths with skills that

prepare them for the workforce and continued education.

Tanzania's ambition to achieve middle-income status by 2025, as outlined in Tanzania Vision 2025, further guided the creation of IPOSA. The program was designed to equip youths with the knowledge, skills and perspectives required for active participation in the country's socio-economic development (Kikwete, 2014; Tandari, 2004). This vision ensured that IPOSA was not merely a remedial program but a transformative educational initiative aimed at empowering out-of-school adolescents to contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.

Research Question 3: What are the key objectives of the Integrated Program for Out-of-School Adolescents in supporting the nation's socio-economic development?

The primary objective of the IPOSA program is to empower adolescents with the skills and competencies necessary to achieve self-reliance and actively contribute to Tanzania's socio-economic development. The program recognizes that education is key to transforming the lives of young people who have been left behind by the formal education system. To this end, IPOSA was designed to address the root causes of educational exclusion by providing inclusive and accessible learning opportunities (IAE, 2018).

Specifically, IPOSA aims to achieve the following key objectives:
  (a) Literacy and Numeracy Proficiency: Learners gain basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy to prepare for pre-vocational training.
  (b) Life Skills Development: The program emphasizes self-awareness, critical thinking and citizenship, enabling youths to actively engage in community development (Kristeen et al., 2024).
  (c) IPOSA offers training in trades like agriculture and entrepreneurship, promoting self-reliance and poverty reduction (IAE, 2018).
  (d) The program provides an alternative pathway for out-of-school adolescents to re-enter the education system or transition into the workforce (UNICEF et al., 2019).

IPOSA contributes to Tanzania's industrialization agenda by preparing a skilled workforce and reducing the youth unemployment. The program empowers adolescents, particularly in rural areas, to overcome educational barriers and become productive members of society, supporting the nation's long-term development (Dimoso et al., 2020).

Research Question 4: What were the key steps involved in the development of the IPOSA program?

The development of the IPOSA involved a series of structured steps, each contributing to a comprehensive and effective intervention to address the educational needs of Tanzania's out-of-school youth. The foundation of IPOSA was built upon the findings of the 2015/2016 out-of-school children profiling study, which revealed that 3.5 million school-age children were out of school (MoEST, 2015). This urgency led to the creation of IPOSA as part of Tanzania's Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2016-2021 (MoEST, 2017).

Stakeholder Engagement
A critical first step in the development of IPOSA was the involvement of key stakeholders, including MoEST, IAE, UNICEF and other educational organizations. Stakeholder meetings helped validate study findings and ensure that the program reflected the priorities and realities of out-of-school adolescents (Siafu, 2021). By engaging a broad spectrum of experts and policymakers, the development of IPOSA was grounded in the needs of both the target population and the broader national goals.

Work Sessions and Curriculum Development
A series of work sessions were held to design the curriculum, engaging experts in adult education, pre-vocational training, community development and curriculum design. These technical sessions synthesized ideas and experiences, leading to the creation of a draft IPOSA curriculum that addressed the diverse learning needs of out-of-school adolescents (Siafu, 2021).

Ministerial and Technical Working Group Meetings
To ensure alignment with national policies, ministerial meetings were convened to gather feedback from policymakers, ensuring the curriculum adhered to national education strategies. In addition, several Technical Working Groups (TWGs), which included representatives from government agencies, NGOs and community-based organizations, were established to review the

technical aspects of the program. These TWGs provided input on pre-vocational and life skills training, helping to create a curriculum that was practical and aligned with workforce needs (Siafu, 2021).

Education Sector Development Committees (ESDC)

The final approval and endorsement of IPOSA was achieved through Education Sector Development Committees (ESDC) meetings. These meetings mobilized resources, aligned efforts across stakeholders and reviewed decisions made by the technical groups, ensuring that the program's development was comprehensive and sustainable (MoEST, 2018).

Inter-Ministerial Meetings and Launch

The final step in IPOSA's development was the convening of inter-ministerial meetings to finalize the implementation framework, which included the IPOSA triangle of implementation. This triangle defines the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and outlines the responsibilities of the three main pillars involved in the program's execution: the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST), the President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Government (PORALG), and the Institute of Adult Education (IAE).

Under this framework, MoEST is responsible for overseeing national education policies and ensuring that IPOSA aligns with Tanzania's broader educational strategies, such as the Education Sector Development Plan (2016-2021). MoEST sets the KPIs related to policy compliance and the educational outcomes expected from the program. PORALG manages the regional and local implementation of the program. It coordinates with local government authorities to ensure that the necessary infrastructure, resources and personnel are available for successful IPOSA deployment at the community level. PORALG's KPIs focus on the operational aspects of the program, including the establishment of learning centers, teacher recruitment, and resource allocation. The IAE plays a central role in coordinating the program by developing the curriculum, training educators and monitoring the program's overall progress. IAE also serves as a bridge between MoEST and PORALG, ensuring that the program's objectives are met at both the national and local levels.

The development partners, including UNICEF, KOICA, CARE International and PLAN International, provide additional support in terms of funding, expertise and resources. Their contributions are vital for scaling the program and ensuring that it meets international educational standards. These partners also assist in the monitoring and evaluation processes, helping to refine the program based on their expertise in similar global initiatives.

The official program was launched in March 2019 in Tabora, marking the start of the government's formal efforts to implement IPOSA nationwide (PORALG, 2019).

Research Question 5: How does the approved IPOSA curriculum integrate various skill areas to holistically develop out-of-school adolescents?

The IPOSA curriculum is designed to provide holistic educational experiences that integrate multiple skill areas, including literacy, life skills, pre-vocational training and entrepreneurship. This comprehensive approach ensures that out-of-school adolescents receive a well-rounded education that prepares them not only for the workforce but also for meaningful participation in their communities.

Literacy Skills

The foundation of the IPOSA curriculum is literacy and numeracy skills, which are essential for personal and professional development. The program focuses on helping learners achieve proficiency in reading, writing and basic arithmetic, which serve as a stepping stone for further education and pre-vocational training. By ensuring that adolescents have these essential skills, IPOSA equips them for both formal employment and self-reliance (IAE, 2018).

Life Skills

Life skills education is a critical component of the IPOSA curriculum, designed to develop learners' ability to navigate and interpret their environment. The program emphasizes four main life skills areas: learning to know (cognitive skills), learning to be (personal empowerment), learning to do (employability skills) and learning to live together (social well-being). These skills foster critical thinking, problem-solving and personal empowerment, helping learners build self-awareness and make informed decisions in their lives (MoEVT, 2010).

Pre-vocational and Pre-pre-pre-vocational skills

IPOSA integrates pre-vocational and pre-vocational training to prepare adolescents for self-employment and gainful work. The curriculum includes training in trades such as food processing, beekeeping, soap making and masonry, allowing learners to acquire practical skills that are in demand in their local economies (Siafu, 2021). This training ensures that students leave the program with marketable skills that can lead to income generation and improved livelihoods.

Entrepreneurship Skills

In addition to pre-pre-vocational skills, IPOSA emphasizes entrepreneurship as a key pathway to economic empowerment. Learners are taught how to identify business opportunities, manage resources, and create sustainable enterprises. This component of the curriculum fosters self-reliance by encouraging students to start small businesses, thus contributing to their own well-being and the development of their communities (Goldsmith, 2010).

Research Question 5: What distinguishes IPOSA from previous educational models for out-of-school children in Tanzania?

IPOSA stands out from previous educational models, such as COBET (Complementary Basic Education in Tanzania) and IPPE (Integrated Post Primary Education Program), through its emphasis on flexibility, inclusivity and competency-based learning.

In previous models like COBET, the focus was primarily on basic literacy and numeracy, aimed at reintegrating children who had dropped out of formal schooling. However, COBET faced challenges, such as rigid learning structures that often did not accommodate the diverse needs of learners. COBET's curriculum was largely content-based, meaning it emphasized theoretical knowledge without necessarily providing practical, employable skills. Additionally, COBET had limited focus on vocational training, leaving many learners without the skills needed to transition into the workforce (Mushi, 2009). IPPE, on the other hand, aimed to provide an alternative route to secondary education for those who missed formal schooling. While IPPE offered some vocational skills, its structure remained too rigid and lacked flexibility, making it difficult for adolescents balancing family or work commitments to participate fully (Mlekwa, 1990).

In contrast, IPOSA adopts a competency-based approach, ensuring that learners develop practical, real-world skills that meet the demands of the workforce. Unlike the earlier models, IPOSA places a strong emphasis on vocational and entrepreneurship training, which equips learners with the knowledge and skills to become self-reliant and actively participate in Tanzania's economy. Through its pre-vocational skills training, learners engage in hands-on learning in areas such as agriculture, carpentry, soap making and other trades that have immediate applications in their communities (Kristeen et al., 2024).

Additionally, IPOSA's flexibility is a key differentiator. The program allows learners to engage with the curriculum at their own pace, which is critical for adolescents balancing education with other life responsibilities such as work, family obligations or caregiving roles. This feature enables IPOSA to serve a more diverse population of out-of-school adolescents, particularly those in rural areas or those facing socio-economic challenges (IAE, 2018).

Furthermore, IPOSA's focus on inclusivity distinguishes it from earlier programs. The program is designed to accommodate learners with different abilities and backgrounds, including those with disabilities or those who were never part of the formal school system. IPOSA provides a more personalized learning experience, ensuring that no group of adolescents is left behind, which was often a limitation in earlier models that followed a one-size-fits-all approach (UNICEF & MOEST, 2019).

Indeed, IPOSA is not just a continuation of previous efforts but a significant advancement in addressing the learning needs of out-of-school children. By incorporating competency-based learning, a flexible structure and a focus on practical skills in four learning areas of literacy, life-skills, entrepreneurship and prevocational skills, IPOSA offers a more effective solution to the diverse challenges faced by out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania, enabling them to transition into productive societal roles.

Research Question 6: How do the three pillars of flexibility, integration and competence-based learning in the IPOSA program contribute to creating an adaptable, holistic and effective educational model for out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania?

The IPOSA program is built on three foundational pillars: flexibility, integration and competence-based learning (Figure 1). These pillars create a comprehensive, adaptable model that meets the diverse needs of out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania.

Flexibility

One of the key strengths of IPOSA is its flexibility. The program is designed to accommodate the unique circumstances of each learner, allowing them to engage with the curriculum at their own pace. Learners have the option to choose between open learning systems, which include self-instructional modules or traditional classroom settings. This flexibility ensures that adolescents who face constraints—such as teenage mothers, orphans or children engaged in work—can still access education and progress through the program without the rigid structure of formal schooling (Levira & Gange, 2007; Singh, 2008).

Additionally, IPOSA allows learners to enter the program at different competence levels based on their prior knowledge and skills. This ensures that learners do not have to start from scratch but can instead build on what they already know. The flexibility of the program ensures inclusivity and access for a wide range of learners, from those with minimal literacy skills to those who are ready for pre-vocational training (IAE, 2018).
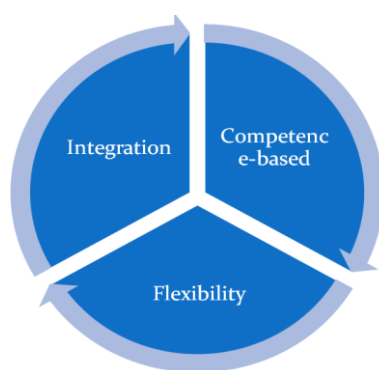

Figure 1. Pillars of IPOSA

Integration

IPOSA integrates four critical skill areas: literacy and numeracy, life skills, pre-pre-vocational skills and entrepreneurship. This blended approach ensures that learners receive a well-rounded education that addresses not only academic knowledge but also practical and emotional skills essential for life and work. By combining literacy with pre-vocational and entrepreneurial training, the program prepares learners to be self-reliant and active participants in their communities.

The integration of life skills into the curriculum is particularly important. These skills—such as critical thinking, communication and problem-solving help learners develop personal empowerment and contribute positively to their social environments. This holistic approach ensures that learners are prepared for both economic challenges and personal development (IAE, 2018; Kristeen et al., 2024).

Competence-Based Learning

The competence-based learning approach of IPOSA focuses on developing practical skills rather than purely academic content. This shift from traditional, content-based education ensures that learners acquire marketable skills that are in demand in the workforce. By focusing on what learners can do rather than what they have memorized, the program promotes independent thinking and fosters a culture of lifelong learning (Cullen et al., 2012; Fischer, 2000).

In addition to pre-pre-vocational skills, the competence-based approach emphasizes entrepreneurship as a core component of self-reliance. Learners are taught how to create and manage small businesses, thereby contributing to economic empowerment in their communities. This practical focus ensures that students leave the program with the ability to support themselves and contribute to Tanzania's economic growth (Goldsmith, 2010).

Research Question 7: How is the IPOSA program organized to effectively address the diverse educational needs of out-of-school adolescents?

IPOSA is structured and implemented in a manner that addresses the diverse needs of out-of-school

adolescents in Tanzania. Through a strategic framework, the program ensures inclusivity, flexibility, and alignment with national education goals while also meeting the specific pre-vocational and educational needs of learners.

Learning Stages
The IPOSA curriculum is organized into two distinct stages to cater for learners with varying levels of competency. Stage I focuses on learners who lack foundational literacy and numeracy skills, providing basic education in reading, writing and arithmetic. This stage is particularly important for adolescents who have never attended school or those who dropped out at an early age, equipping them with essential skills that allow them to move on to further education and pre-vocational training. Stage II is designed for those who have completed Stage I or possess some level of literacy and numeracy. The focus in this stage shifts to pre-vocational and entrepreneurial training, preparing learners for employment or self-employment. The pre-vocational courses cover trades such as food processing, poultry keeping, beekeeping and soap making, which provide practical skills for income-generating activities (IAE, 2018).

This flexible staged approach allows learners to enter the program at the appropriate level and progress at their own pace, ensuring that each individual receives an education tailored to their needs and background.

Target Groups
IPOSA specifically targets marginalized adolescents who have been excluded from the formal education system. These include adolescents aged 14 and above, who have missed primary or secondary education, teenage mothers who left school due to pregnancy or early marriage, orphans and other vulnerable children facing economic or social barriers, children from rural or remote areas, where school access is limited and children with disabilities who often face discrimination or physical barriers to education. By focusing on these vulnerable groups, IPOSA addresses the most disadvantaged adolescents, providing them with opportunities to gain essential skills and re-enter the education system or join the workforce (MoEST, 2018).

National Implementation Strategy
The successful implementation of IPOSA relies on a well-coordinated national strategy, involving multiple stakeholders. The program operates through a triangle of implementation comprising the Institute of Adult Education (IAE), the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) and Local Government Authorities (LGAs).

The Institute of Adult Education (IAE) is responsible for the development of the curriculum, training facilitators and monitoring the program's delivery. IAE ensures that the curriculum aligns with national standards and is responsive to the specific needs of out-of-school adolescents. MoEST provides policy oversight and monitors the program's quality, ensuring that IPOSA is integrated into Tanzania's broader national education strategy, such as the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) and the National Inclusive Education Strategy (MoEST, 2017). Local Government Authorities (LGAs) are responsible for implementing the program at the local level. This includes identifying eligible adolescents, recruiting teachers and providing necessary infrastructure, such as classrooms and learning materials, in Folk Development Colleges (FDCs) and Post-Primary Technical Centers (PPTCs) (PORALG, 2019).

This coordinated approach ensures that IPOSA is effectively implemented at the national, regional, and local levels, with each stakeholder playing a key role in the program's success.

Resource Mobilization and Infrastructure
To support the program's implementation, IPOSA relies on the mobilization of resources to expand and rehabilitate existing educational facilities, such as Folk Development Colleges (FDCs) and Post-Primary Technical Centers (PPTCs). These institutions serve as key learning hubs, especially in rural areas, where access to pre-vocational training is limited. IPOSA emphasizes the recruitment and retention of qualified pre-vocational teachers, who are critical to the success of the program. IAE, in collaboration with MoEST, has developed specialized training programs for these teachers, ensuring that they are equipped to deliver high-quality instruction in both literacy and pre-pre-vocational skills (Siafu, 2021).

Monitoring and Evaluation
A robust Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is in place to track the progress of the program and ensure its continuous improvement. This system includes regular assessments of learners' outcomes in literacy, pre-pre-vocational skills and life skills. Additionally, teacher evaluations are conducted to ensure that facilitators are delivering the curriculum effectively. The M&E system also includes program

delivery assessments to identify gaps in resources, infrastructure, or support services. This dynamic and responsive system allows for necessary adjustments to be made, ensuring that the program meets the needs of learners and improves over time (MoEST, 2018).

Conclusion and Recommendations
Conclusions
The study concludes that socio-economic factors, geographical disparities and cultural practices continue to contribute significantly to the high rates of out-of-school adolescents in Tanzania. IPOSA addresses these challenges through its flexible, inclusive approach, offering alternative education pathways tailored to the needs of marginalized adolescents. The program is designed to equip adolescents with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary for their active participation in Tanzania's development.

The IPOSA curriculum is distinct in its integration of literacy, vocational, entrepreneurship and life skills. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners are not only prepared for the workforce but also equipped for lifelong learning and personal development, addressing a gap left by earlier educational programs. The pillars of flexibility, integration, and competency-based learning form the foundation of IPOSA's success. These elements allow the program to adapt to the diverse learning needs of adolescents, making it a more inclusive and effective alternative for those who have missed out on formal schooling.

Compared to previous educational models like COBET and IPPE, IPOSA stands out for its focus on practical, real-world skills and flexible learning options. By adopting a competency-based framework and emphasizing vocational training, IPOSA addresses the limitations of earlier programs and ensures learners are better prepared for the workforce. Therefore, IPOSA represents a significant advancement in Tanzania's efforts to provide equitable and relevant education to out-of-school adolescents. Its comprehensive and flexible structure makes it a vital program for addressing the educational challenges faced by this demographic, ultimately contributing to Tanzania's long-term socio-economic development.

Recommendations
To address the socio-economic, geographical and cultural factors contributing to high out-of-school rates, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the Institute of Adult Education allocate additional resources to expand IPOSA, particularly in marginalized communities. This expansion will ensure that the most vulnerable adolescents have access to flexible, inclusive education tailored to their specific needs.

The government agencies, local communities, and development partners need to work closely to ensure that IPOSA remains aligned with Tanzania's broader educational and socio-economic goals. Enhanced collaboration will improve program implementation and help address any arising challenges. To ensure that the IPOSA curriculum remains relevant and effective, it has to be regularly updated to reflect evolving educational needs and labor market demands. Introducing more advanced vocational training options will enable learners to continue their education beyond basic literacy and vocational skills, preparing them better for the workforce and lifelong learning.

To maintain the pillars of flexibility, integration and competency-based learning, it is recommended that IPOSA be further linked to advanced educational pathways, allowing learners to progress through various stages of education. This will ensure that the program remains adaptable to the diverse needs of out-of-school adolescents, particularly those balancing education with other life responsibilities. Finally, monitoring and evaluation systems need to be strengthened, with an emphasis on long-term research. This will provide insights into how IPOSA graduates transition into the workforce and contribute to Tanzania's socio-economic development.

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