

# **Validated Participation Promotes Self-Efficacy and Citizen Engagement in Development**

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Thanks to our implementing partner, Twaweza ([www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org)).

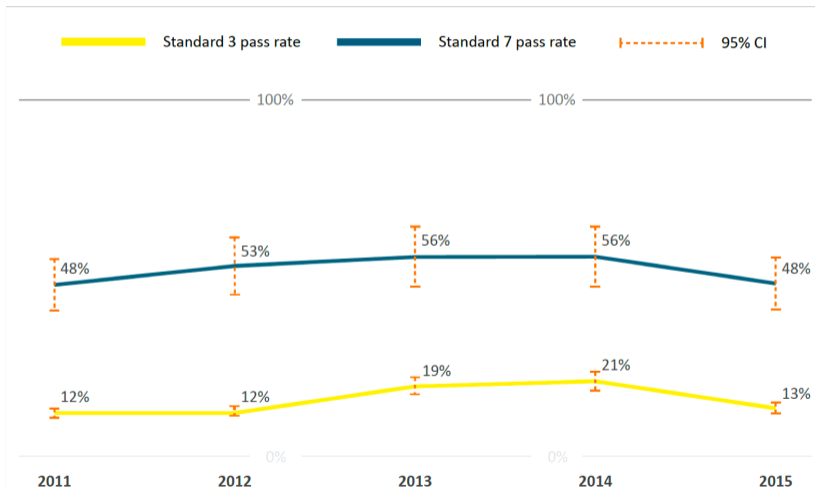
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## Motivation

- In 2001, Tanzania introduced universal free primary education, *enrollment* increased from 52% (2000) to 94% (2008).
- But *quality* is low: 14% of teachers absent from school, 47% absent from the classroom. Less than half of schools had functional toilets, only 25% of the students had access to a textbook (World Bank, 2016).
- *Parental involvement* is also low: 20% of parents had never met with their child's teacher, 43% had never visited the school, 88% had never helped out at the school within past year.
- But 85% of Tanzanian citizens recognize that lack of parental involvement is a serious problem (Twaweza, 2016).

# Primary Education in Tanzania

From Twaweza's 2015 report, pass rates for reading a 2nd grade story in English:



## Parents can play a bigger role

*“There is generally low support of schools in the community due to poor relationship between schools and the community. Community members do not assist schools to ensure students’ school attendance. Most parents have little time to spend with their children in their learning. **Lack of parents’ involvement negatively affects students’ performance because students do not get correlated activities as regarding lessons while at home or away from school.**”*

– Tanzania Ministry of Education. School Improvement Toolkit: Practical Guide for Head Teachers, p. 8.

## Prior Research

What prevents citizens from taking actions that would advance their interests?

### **Are information asymmetries about government performance and process the main bottlenecks?**

- Research in Uganda, Benin, Malawi, the U.S., and Pakistan show positive effects of information on parental investment.  
(Reinikka and Svensson, 2004, 2005; Bjorkman, 2007; Dizon-Ross, 2014; Rogers and Feller, 2016; Andrabi, Das and Khwaja, 2017)
- Yet other studies in India, Chile, Kenya, Mexico, and recent Metaketa cast doubt on the positive effects of information.  
(Banerjee et al., 2010; Mizala and Urquiola, 2013; Lieberman, Posner and Tsai, 2014; Chong et al., 2014; Dunning et al., 2019)

# Research Questions

- 1 Why is information – about (lack of) quality in service provision, citizens' rights, benefits, strategies – not sufficient to drive new action?
- 2 Is low self-efficacy a constraint on citizen participation?
- 3 If so, what factors might positively affect self-efficacy?

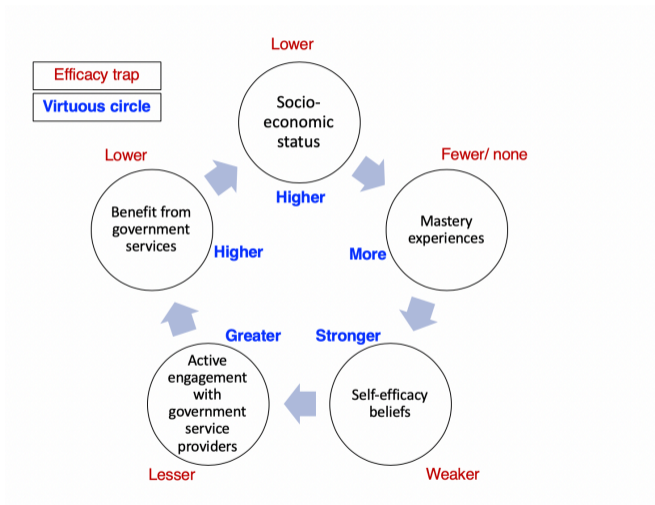
## Efficacy as the missing link

**Efficacy: the belief that I have an integral role to play *and* that I am capable of affecting change.**

*Internal efficacy: the belief that I have the abilities and competence to participate.*

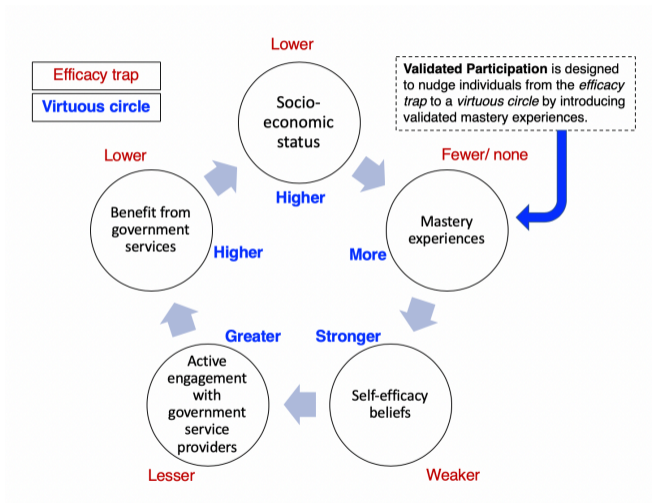
*External efficacy: the belief that institutions and authorities are responsive to my attempts at influence.*

# Theory of the “Efficacy Trap”





# Role of Validated Participation in Shifting the Equilibrium



# Validated Participation is an Experiential Route to Efficacy

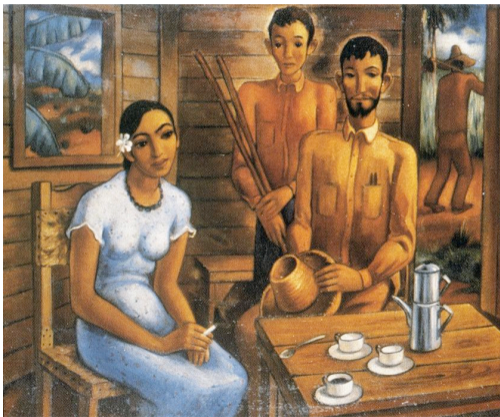
**In partnership with Twaweza, we developed *Validated Participation (VP)*, four 90-minute meetings which:**

- Provide parents opportunities to *practice* deliberation and decision-making in a public setting,
- Receive positive feedback from the authority figure (facilitator) and peers.
- Components of VP (next slides) are delivered alongside information about how to become more involved in their child's learning.

Trained facilitators encourage parents to discuss “Visual Evidence.”



Parents describe what they observe and how they generate inferences about selected pieces of art.



"What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What more can you find? There are no right or wrong answers!"

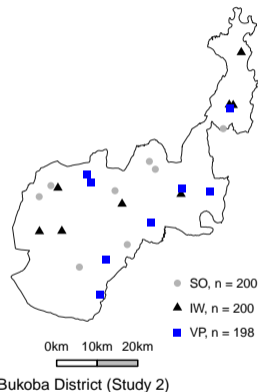
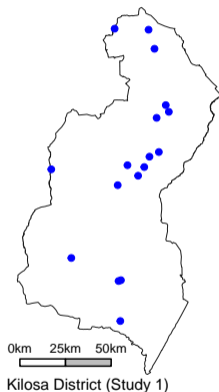
“Resource Vote” allows parents to debate and vote on a material decision, that is immediately acted upon



“Peer Validation” involves creating a set of collective goals



## Study 1 (Kilosa District) and Study 2 (Bukoba Rural District)



Study 1 randomized 1-meeting treatment within 16 schools (N = 1,633). Study 2 randomized 4-meeting treatment across 24 schools (N = 598)

# Measuring Efficacy

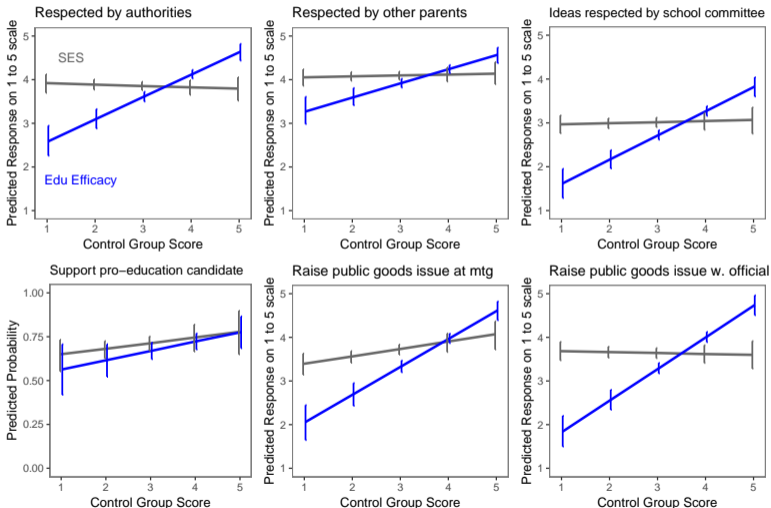
## 1 Educational Self-Efficacy Scale (9 questions, scale from 1 to 5)

- How confident are you that you could communicate with your child's teacher concerning an issue s/he faces at school? (*internal efficacy*)
- How confident are you that your child's teacher will act on the problem you talked about in your discussion? (*external efficacy*)

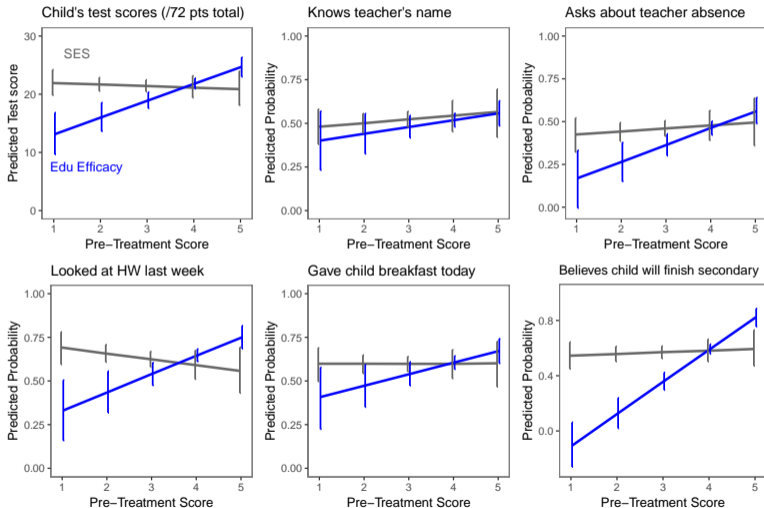
## 2 General Self-Efficacy Scale (10 questions, score ranges from 10 to 40) (Jerusalem and Schwarzer, 1995)



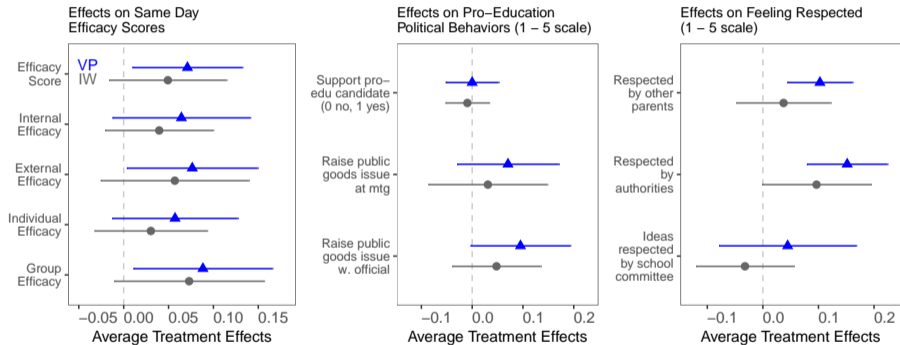
# Association between Efficacy and Active Citizenship: Study 1



# Association between Efficacy and Active Citizenship: Study 2



# Study 1 Results: Effects on Parent-level Outcomes



## Study 2 Post-Endline Teacher Interviews

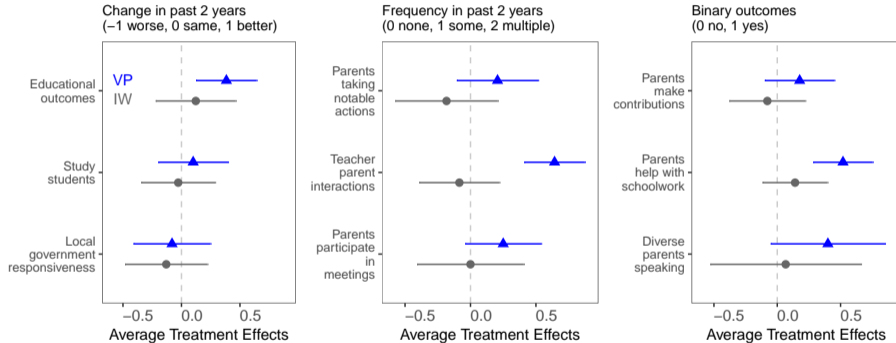
- Two months and Two years following treatment, research assistants visited the study schools.
- We prepared structured interview guides for head-teachers and classroom teachers, should not have social desirability bias by treatment status since teachers were not aware of experimental design.
- Questions about specific evidence of change in parent-teacher-student behaviors and educational outcomes.
- Independent RAs coded parent, teacher, and head teacher responses to structured questionnaire, *blind* to treatment arm.

## Study 2: Coding Qualitative Evidence blind to Treatment Status

**No Change:** “I have been teaching this class for a month now but throughout this period I have not have any interactions with parents.” – Classroom Teacher

**Positive Change:** “Yes. There was a public meeting around here in which the District Executive Director (DED) was asked very sensible question by some parents on the school issues; the parents asked the DED how comes that the school is facing a shortage of teachers ... How can the school performance be improved without enough teachers? I find this as very new experience! This had never happened before.” – Classroom Teacher

# Study 2 Results: Effects on School-Level Outcomes



## Conclusion

- Efficacy under-explored concept in developing country contexts; feasible to measure in rural Tanzania.
- Efficacy is highly correlated with pro-development outcomes of interest.
- Despite small-scale studies, experimental evidence of VP boosting efficacy and feelings of respect immediately post-treatment. Qualitative evidence of behavioral and pro-education outcomes in the medium- and long-term.

Thank you! Please email comments to [evanlieb@mit.edu](mailto:evanlieb@mit.edu) and [yangyang.zhou@ubc.ca](mailto:yangyang.zhou@ubc.ca)

Extra Slides



# Measuring Education Efficacy Survey Questions

How confident are you that...

- 1 you could make a meaningful contribution to a discussion with other parents about issues at the school?
- 2 you could find out what is being taught in your child's classroom?
- 3 you could communicate with your child's teacher concerning an issue he faces at school?
- 4 you could communicate with your child's head teacher about any educational questions or other issues concerning you?
- 5 other parents will take action based on your recommendation (suppose you made one about a school issue)?
- 6 the head teacher will remember what you discussed one week later (suppose you discussed insufficient school materials with him/her)?
- 7 he/she will act on the problem you talked about in your discussion?
- 8 he/she will act on the problem you discussed if you went with a group of parents?
- 9 people like you can have any influence in making the school better?

1 (Not at all) to 5 (Very confident)

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