



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION



Summary report | 2026

# What changed, how, and for whom

## Key findings and recommendations

Qualitative research on changes in violence against children between Tanzania's 2009 and 2024 Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys

In partnership with



unicef   
kwa kila mtoto

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This Summary Report presents the main findings and recommendations of the full study report. Evidence, sources and references are set out in full in: Economic and Social Research Foundation (2026). *Qualitative research on changes in prevalence between Tanzania's Violence Against Children and Youth Surveys, 2009–2024: What changed, how, and for whom*. Dar es Salaam: ESRF and Together for Girls.

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*The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Together for Girls or UNICEF.*

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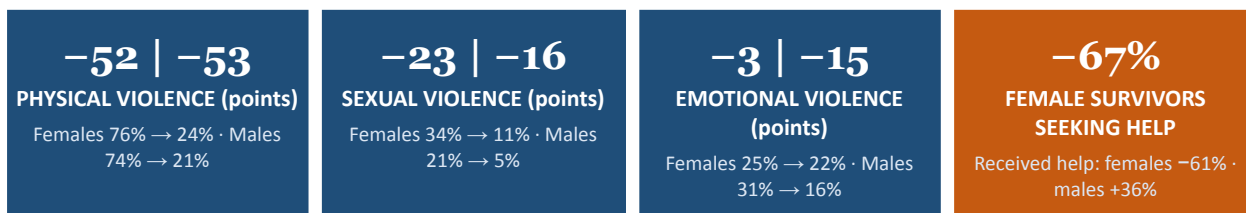
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## Key Messages

### Two surveys, fifteen years apart, tell a remarkable story.

In 2009, three in four young Tanzanians aged 13–24 had experienced physical violence. By 2024, sexual violence against girls and young women fell by two-thirds. This study asked the people who designed, delivered and lived with Tanzania's response what drove the change.



Lifetime prevalence among 13–24-year-olds, United Republic of Tanzania; help-seeking among survivors aged 18–24 (relative change).

Sources: MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025); Together for Girls (2025).

#### 1. The decline was real and broad

Every form of violence measured fell, for both sexes and in both jurisdictions; physical violence among young women in Zanzibar fell from 62% to 9% (MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC, 2025).

#### 2. No single law or programme explains it

People learned about laws and feared violent acts; many doors for reporting, structures that reached the ward and *Shehia*, leaders who carried the message, and parents at home reinforced one another.

#### 3. The gains have not reached everyone

Fewer than one in ten survivors of sexual violence seek formal help; fewer young women seek help than in 2009, rural girls, refugee-hosting communities, and children in informal spaces are least reached (Together for Girls, 2025).

#### 4. Progress has stalled where law and practice diverge

The marriage law is not yet fully harmonised with the 2019 Court of Appeal ruling; corporal punishment remains legally permitted in Mainland schools and homes, and emotional violence has barely moved (UN CRC, 2026).

#### 5. The system rests on borrowed money

Only 17% of the first NPA-VAWC budget was disbursed (World Bank, 2022), and United States support for the VACS and many services is ending.

#### 6. Tanzania can lead

With a world-class dataset, national institutions, and the 2050s vision of a society free from violence against children, the task now is nationally led and domestically financed child protection (URT, 2025).

# 1. About the Study

## 1.1 Why this study

In 2009, Tanzania became the first country in Africa to survey violence against both girls and boys through a Violence Against Children and Youth Survey (VACS). The findings alarmed policymakers and catalysed fifteen years of legal, institutional and programmatic reform (UNICEF Tanzania et al., 2011). The second survey, completed in 2024, recorded substantial declines in every form of violence measured (MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC, 2025). Because each round surveys a different nationally representative sample (Chiang et al., 2016), the surveys show *what* changed but cannot explain *how* or *for whom*. This qualitative study was designed to answer these questions.

## 1.2 What the study set out to investigate

1. Identify the legal frameworks, policies, programmes and interventions implemented between 2009 and 2024.
2. Explore the factors and mechanisms that contributed to the reduction in violence.
3. Identify persistent gaps in prevention and response systems.
4. Make evidence-based recommendations to policymakers, practitioners and development partners.

## 1.3 How the study was done

In October 2025, ESRF consulted **134 participants** — government officials, service providers, religious and community leaders, parents and caregivers, and civil society representatives — through key informant interviews and ten focus group discussions. A desk review of laws, plans and programmes, and rapid ethnographic observation in Kigoma completed the evidence. The evidence was analysed through the framework set out in Section 1.4.

**Table 1: Study areas**

| Area                                                   | Why selected                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Shinyanga (Mainland)</b>                            | Among the highest rates of child marriage in the country                                     |
| <b>Mbeya (Mainland)</b>                                | Cross-border region; site of community child protection committees; first round of fieldwork |
| <b>Kigoma (Mainland)</b>                               | Major refugee-hosting region; site of rapid ethnography                                      |
| <b>Unguja (Zanzibar): Kaskazini A, Mjini Magharibi</b> | Seat of government; Zanzibar-level stakeholders                                              |
| <b>Pemba (Zanzibar): Wete, Chake Chake</b>             | More rural and remote; comparison across the islands                                         |

Source: ESRF (2026), full report, Table 1.

**Table 2: Participants by jurisdiction and method**

| Jurisdiction                                                        | Methods                                                            | Focus group discussions | Participants |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Mainland Tanzania (Shinyanga, Mbeya, Kigoma; national level)</b> | Key informant interviews; focus groups; rapid ethnography (Kigoma) | 6                       | 66           |
| <b>Zanzibar (Unguja, Pemba)</b>                                     | Key informant interviews; focus groups                             | 4                       | 68           |
| <b>Total</b>                                                        |                                                                    | <b>10</b>               | <b>134</b>   |

Source: ESRF fieldwork records, October 2025; ESRF (2026), full report, Table 2.

## 1.4 How the evidence was read: the conceptual framework

Explaining why violence fell — and for whom it did not — needs more than a list of interventions. The study therefore asks four questions, each answered by a different lens (Table 3).

**Table 3: The conceptual framework at a glance**

| Question                 | Lens                                                                                                        | What it shows in this study                                                    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What was done?</b>    | INSPIRE: seven evidence-based strategies for ending violence against children (WHO et al., 2016)            | Which strategies Tanzania implemented, and that worked best in combination     |
| <b>Where did it act?</b> | Socio-ecological model: individual, relationship, community and society (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Heise, 1998) | Whether national laws and plans reached communities and households             |
| <b>Whose obligation?</b> | Human rights-based approach: children as rights-holders, the state as duty-bearer (OHCHR, 2006)             | Whether duty-bearers met their obligations to every child, not only on average |
| <b>For whom?</b>         | Intersectionality: how gender, age, disability, poverty, location and displacement combine (Crenshaw, 1989) | Which children were left behind and why                                        |

Source: ESRF (2026), full report, Section 2.4.

### INSPIRE

The seven INSPIRE strategies — from enforcing laws and changing norms to supporting parents and providing services — are the map against which Tanzania’s interventions are assessed. They work best in combination (WHO et al., 2016; Lachman et al., 2024).

### Socio-ecological model

Violence has causes at four nested levels: individual, relationship, community and society. Laws act at the societal level; their effect on children depends on whether they reach communities and households (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Heise, 1998).

### Human rights-based approach

Protection is an enforceable duty of the state, not a matter of goodwill. Children are right-holders, and the question is whether duty-bearers have met their obligations to every child, not only on average (OHCHR, 2006).

### Intersectionality

Children are not a single group. Gender, age, disability, poverty, location and displacement combine to shape both a child’s exposure to violence and their access to protection, producing disadvantages that no single category captures (Crenshaw, 1989; Callaghan et al., 2018). Gender sits at the centre of this lens: it shapes who experiences which form of violence, where and in whose hands, and violence in turn enforces unequal gender roles (Heise, 1998; UNESCO, 2024). Intersectionality explains *who* has been left behind; the socio-ecological model explains *where* and *how*.

## 2. Two Surveys, Fifteen Years Apart

The 2024 VACS interviewed 11,414 young people aged 13–24 in all 31 regions of Tanzania. Compared with 2009, lifetime physical violence fell by 52 per cent among young women and 53 per cent among young men; sexual violence by 23 and 16 points; and emotional violence by 3 and 15 points. In Zanzibar, physical violence among young women fell from 62% to 9% — among the largest falls recorded in any VACS (MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC, 2025; Together for Girls, 2025).

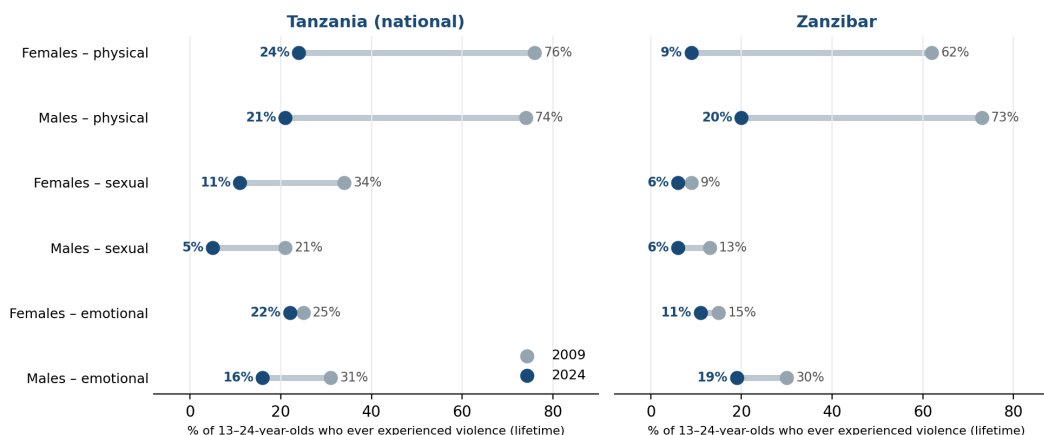


**Figure 1: Lifetime prevalence of violence among 13–24-year-olds, 2009 and 2024**

Source: MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025); Together for Girls (2025), national and Zanzibar fact sheets.

## 2.1 Fewer young women are seeking help

Alongside the falling prevalence, the 2024 survey recorded a troubling countertrend. Among survivors aged 18–24, the proportion of females who sought help fell by 67% and males by 41%; the proportion of female survivors who received help fell by 61%, while it rose by 36% among males (Together for Girls, 2025). Today, fewer than one in ten survivors of sexual violence seek help from a formal service. Female survivors are twice as likely as males to tell someone, but less likely to know where to go; male survivors rarely tell anyone at all (MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC, 2025).

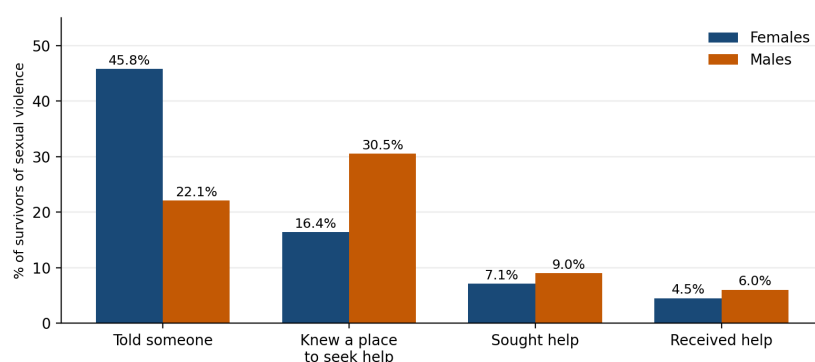


**Figure 2: From telling someone to receive help — survivors of sexual violence aged 13–24, 2024**

Source: MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025), Table 4.3.1. National estimates.

### Box 1: Which indicator?

The VACS measures four separate steps after violence: whether a survivor **told someone**, **knew a place to seek help**, **sought help** from a formal service, and **received help**. ‘Reporting’ in this summary means the third step only.

### 3. What Drove the Decline

Participants in both jurisdictions described five changes that reinforced one another across households, communities, institutions and society.

**Table 4: Drivers of the decline and how they worked**

| Driver                                                              | Mechanism                                                                         | Level                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Laws and their enforcement                                          | Deterrence: violence, child marriage and impregnating schoolgirls carry penalties | Society                 |
| Reporting channels (116, police and school desks, One-Stop Centres) | Lowered the cost of reporting; multiple entry points to help                      | Community, institutions |
| Religious and community leaders                                     | Gave legitimacy to new norms, especially in Zanzibar                              | Community               |
| NPA-VAWC committees and village by-laws                             | Brought accountability to ward and <i>Shehia</i> level                            | Community               |
| Parenting and economic programmes                                   | Offered non-violent discipline; reduced household stress                          | Household, individual   |
| Training and data systems                                           | Larger, better-trained workforce; better information for decisions                | Institutions            |
| Children's Councils                                                 | Gave children a voice and knowledge of their rights                               | Individual, community   |
| Civil society and development partner support                       | Financed and sustained much of the above                                          | All levels              |

Source: KIs and FGDs, October 2025; ESRF (2026), full report, Table 6.

**Table 5: Main services and programmes, 2009–2024**

| Service or programme                                    | Description                                                                                               |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Police Gender and Children's Desks                      | Dedicated desks with trained officers in police stations in both jurisdictions                            |
| School child protection desks                           | 4,082 on the Mainland and 1,978 in Zanzibar                                                               |
| One-Stop Centres                                        | Medical, psychosocial, legal and police support under one roof at district and regional hospitals         |
| National Child Helpline 116                             | Free, confidential reporting and counselling line run by C-Sema since 2013                                |
| Children's Councils                                     | Platforms for children to raise concerns with local authorities, introduced in 2011                       |
| KUWAZA (Zanzibar)                                       | Referral strengthening and engagement of <i>Shehia</i> committees and children (C-Sema, 2024)             |
| Ujana Salama                                            | Cash-plus programme combining livelihoods, SRH and gender attitudes (UNICEF Innocenti, 2024)              |
| Waache Wasome; Shule Bora; BOOST; Whole School Approach | School programmes improving safety, retention and community engagement (Bantwana, 2021; World Bank, n.d.) |

Sources: desk review; ESRF (2026), full report, Table 5; URT (2017); RGoZ (2017).

#### Laws that people came to know and fear

The Law of the Child Act (2009), Zanzibar's Children's Act (2011) and the 2016 prohibition on marrying or impregnating schoolgirls made violence a matter for the police, not only the family (URT, 2009, 2016; RGoZ, 2011).

*“The laws passed prohibited marriage of children below the age of 18 years. This helped greatly to reduce these early marriage practices, as people were afraid of the legal consequences.”*

— KII, Shinyanga, female government official

### **Many doors for reporting**

One-Stop Centres, Police Gender and Children’s Desks, more than 6,000 school protection desks, desks at bus terminals and the free 116 helpline gave children and neighbours places to turn (URT, 2017; UNFPA Tanzania, 2020).

### **Structures that reached the ward and Shehia**

Successive national plans of action built committees from national to ward and *Shehia* level, and village by-laws carried the law into daily life (URT, 2017; RGoZ, 2017).

### **Leaders who carried the message**

Religious and traditional leaders became messengers for protection — most visibly in Zanzibar, where framing protection within Islamic teaching gave it authority that government messages alone could not (Fay, 2015).

### **Parents reached at home**

Parenting programmes such as Familia Bora, Taifa Imara and Furaha Teens, and cash-plus programmes such as Ujana Salama, offered alternatives to beating and eased household stress where much violence occurs (GISP, 2024; Lachman et al., 2024; UNICEF Innocenti, 2024).

*“Positive parenting helped parents understand that correcting a child doesn’t mean beating them.”*

— KII, Mbeya, male NGO representative

### **Stronger systems: people and information**

Behind these changes was sustained investment in trained police, health workers, teachers and social welfare staff; new community roles such as para-social workers and child protection volunteers, and better information, including the District Case Monitoring System (Kalisti & Kimaro, 2022). The decline was largest where these mechanisms worked together, as the INSPIRE framework predicts (WHO et al., 2016; Kerr-Wilson et al., 2020).

#### **Box 2: Drivers of violence against children in Tanzania**

Household poverty · Harmful social and gender norms · Acceptance of violent discipline · Child marriage and relationships with much older men · Being out of school · Displacement and migration · Alcohol and substance use · Disability and harmful attitudes towards disability · Limited access to services · New digital risks

Because these drivers interact, prevention must act at multiple levels and across sectors. Sources: Schaffnit et al. (2019); Shubina et al. (2023); Mesiäislehto (2024); MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025); ESRF (2026).

## 4. Whom the Gains Have Not Yet Reached

Participants consistently reported that urban areas improved faster than rural ones. The children least reached are girls in poor rural households, especially where child marriage remains common, as in Shinyanga; children in refugee-hosting Kigoma; adolescent mothers out of school; and children with disabilities, about whom the system knows least (Mesiäislehto, 2024).

Violence is gendered in ways that differ for girls and boys. For girls, risk rises with adolescence and increasingly comes from partners: intimate partners committed almost a third (32.2%) of first incidents of sexual violence reported by young women in 2024 (MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC, 2025). For boys, norms that value toughness normalise physical punishment and keep them silent (Mhando, 2011; UNESCO, 2024). Online harms affect both: 4.7% of young men and 1.0% of young women reported technology-facilitated sexual violence in the past year.

### Box 3: Children the system cannot see — observations from Kigoma

At Kigoma's night markets, women traders worked late into the night while infants slept under market tables, and adolescent girls cared for younger siblings in the same spaces. Under nearby bridges, children slept without shelter or adult protection.

Researchers observed no outreach worker, protection desk or awareness activity at either site. These children are counted neither as school dropouts nor as survivors in any data system — a design gap in a protection system built around schools, health facilities and formal structures (UN Women Africa, 2024).

## 5. Where Progress Has Stalled

The gaps identified through the desk review, the 2024 VACS and the fieldwork converge on five themes.

**Table 6: Persistent gaps, by theme**

| Theme                                                | What the evidence shows                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Who is most affected                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Incomplete and contradictory laws</b>             | Marriage law is not yet fully harmonised with the Gyumi ruling; corporal punishment is legally permitted in Mainland schools and the home; the Child Development Policy (2008) is outdated in relation to the digital environment | Girls in high child-marriage areas; children in school; children online |
| <b>Laws that are not enforced</b>                    | Corruption, delays, missing witnesses, families protecting perpetrators, ignored summons                                                                                                                                          | Survivors of abuse by relatives; girls                                  |
| <b>Services that do not reach those most at risk</b> | Programmes concentrated in towns and schools; survivors face financial and other barriers to care                                                                                                                                 | Rural girls; refugee-hosting communities; children in informal spaces   |
| <b>Norms that change slowly</b>                      | Bride price, family honour, silence about sexual violence, girls' care burden; four in ten young people think teachers' corporal punishment is necessary                                                                          | Girls; adolescent mothers                                               |
| <b>A system financed and staffed from outside</b>    | Only 17% of the first NPA-VAWC budget disbursed; donor-dependent programmes; too few trained staff, frequent transfers                                                                                                            | All children, especially where donors are absent                        |

Sources: ESRF (2026), full report, Section 5.3; MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025); World Bank (2022)

*“Sometimes we receive a report that a child had been sexually abused, and we wish to go there but there is no vehicle or money for petrol.”*

— KII, Dodoma, male government official

### 5.1 The liminal space between law and practice

The practices that have changed least sit in a ‘liminal space’ between formal prohibition and social acceptance (Kelly et al., 2022; Turner et al., 2024). **Corporal punishment** is the clearest case, because the law itself sends two messages: abuse is prohibited, yet caning and ‘reasonable’ correction remain legal. **Emotional violence** has no everyday name — insults and humiliation are treated as discipline — and it declined least. **Child marriage** has been declared unconstitutional, yet the statute is not yet fully harmonised. In September 2026, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child acknowledged Tanzania’s progress but asked what measures it was taking to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings (UN CRC, 2026; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2025; Fay, 2015).

Awareness campaigns alone cannot close a liminal space: people already know the rule; what they doubt is whether it is meant. Closing it requires the law to speak with one voice and community-owned norm change (CRC Committee, 2006).

## 6. A System Built Across Two Jurisdictions

Figure 3 traces the main laws, plans and surveys that shaped the response between 2009 and 2025, on the Mainland and in Zanzibar.

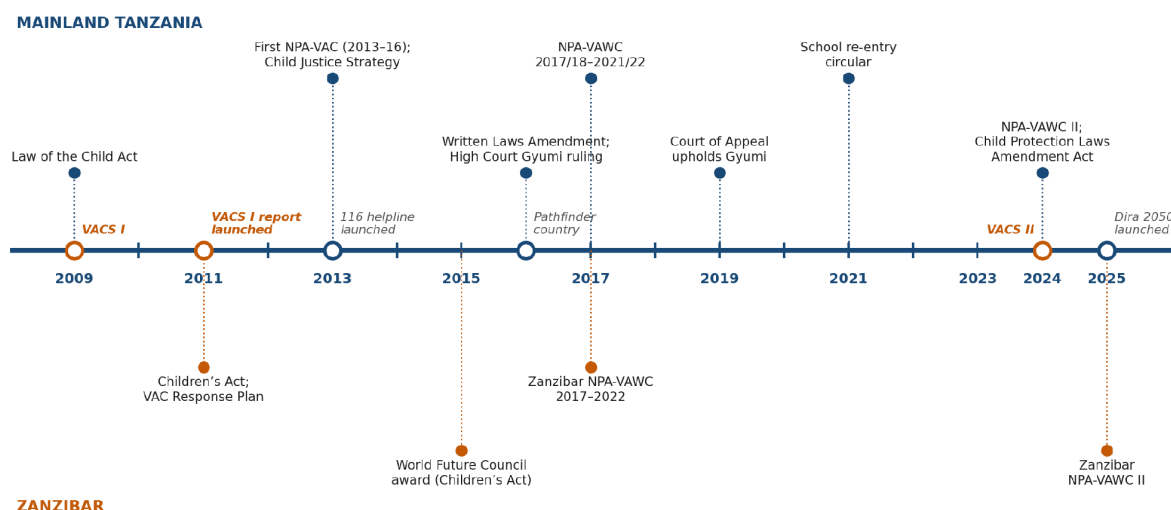


**Figure 3: Key milestones in Tanzania's response to violence against children, 2009–2025**

Sources: URT (2009; 2016; 2017; 2021); RGoZ (2011; 2017); Court of Appeal of Tanzania (2019); World Future Council (2015); MoCDGWSG & MoCDGEC (2025); URT (2025).

Both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar built integrated national plans to end violence against women and children (2017–2022) on the INSPIRE framework, with committees reaching the lowest level of local government. The Mainland plan follows INSPIRE almost strategy by strategy and prioritises household economic strengthening. Zanzibar groups the strategies under an enabling environment, prevention and response. It works through *Shehia* committees, Children's Councils and religious institutions — the more culturally embedded of the two models, in the jurisdiction with the steepest fall in physical violence (URT, 2017; RGoZ, 2017).

**Table 7: Key legal and policy frameworks, 2009–2024**

| Instrument                                                             | What it does                                                                                | Status / gap                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Law of the Child Act, 2009 (Mainland)</b>                           | Defines a child as under 18; establishes child protection systems and child-friendly courts | Section 13 still permits “justifiable” correction                                   |
| <b>Children's Act, 2011 (Zanzibar)</b>                                 | Consolidates child rights within Zanzibar's legal system                                    | Does not prohibit corporal punishment in the home; World Future Council award, 2015 |
| <b>Written Laws (Misc. Amendments) Act No. 2, 2016</b>                 | Criminalises marrying or impregnating a school student (up to 30 years' imprisonment)       | In force                                                                            |
| <b>Law of Marriage Act, 1971; Gyumi judgments (2016, 2019)</b>         | Courts declared marriage below 18 unconstitutional                                          | Statute not yet fully harmonised; further reform reported under way                 |
| <b>Corporal Punishment Regulations, 1979 (Circular No. 24 of 2002)</b> | Permit up to four strokes in Mainland schools                                               | Contrary to CRC General Comment No. 8; Zanzibar has prohibited it in schools        |

| Instrument                              | What it does                                      | Status / gap                                            |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Education Circular No. 2 of 2021</b> | School re-entry, including for adolescent mothers | Implementation uneven                                   |
| <b>Child Development Policy, 2008</b>   | Overall child development framework               | Outdated for the digital environment; review begun 2024 |

Sources: URT (2009; 2016; 2021); RGoZ (2011); Court of Appeal of Tanzania (2019); UN CRC (2026); Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2025); Ifakara Health Institute (2024).

#### Box 4: Actors with a responsibility for child protection in Tanzania

**Mainland Tanzania.** Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups; PO-RALG (regional and council social welfare and community development officers); Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; Ministry of Health; Tanzania Police Force (Gender and Children's Desks); Ministry of Constitutional and Legal Affairs; National Prosecutions Service; the Judiciary; Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance; National Bureau of Statistics.

**Zanzibar.** Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training; Ministry of Health; Zanzibar Police; Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; the Judiciary of Zanzibar (Children's Court); Office of the Chief Government Statistician.

**Across both.** NPA-VAWC committees at the village, *mtaa* and *Shehia* levels; *Shehas*, ward and village executive officers; One-Stop Centres; the 116 helpline (C-Sema); Children's Councils; religious institutions; NGOs; development partners and the private sector.

Sources: URT (2009; 2017); RGoZ (2011; 2017).

Table 8: How the two national plans map onto INSPIRE

| INSPIRE strategy                              | Mainland NPA-VAWC 2017/18–2021/22           | Zanzibar NPA-VAWC 2017–2022                          |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Implementation and enforcement of laws</b> | Implementation and enforcement of laws      | Enabling environment: laws and policies              |
| <b>Norms and values</b>                       | Norms and values                            | Prevention: norms and community engagement           |
| <b>Safe environments</b>                      | Safe environments, media and ICT            | Prevention: safe community, school and online spaces |
| <b>Parent and caregiver support</b>           | Parenting, family support and relationships | Prevention: family and parent support                |
| <b>Income and economic strengthening</b>      | Household economic strengthening            | Prevention: livelihoods and social protection        |
| <b>Response and support services</b>          | Response and support services               | Response: services, referral and case management     |
| <b>Education and life skills</b>              | Safe schools and life skills                | Prevention: education and life skills                |

Sources: URT (2017); RGoZ (2017); WHO et al. (2016)

Routine data have improved — the District Case Monitoring System now tracks cases from village to closure in many districts — but each sector still keeps its own records, so no single source shows how many children are reported, referred and supported, or how this varies between regions (UNICEF, n.d.; Kalisti & Kimaro, 2022).

## 7. From Donor-Supported to Nationally Led

Much of the progress since 2009 rests on project funding rather than the public budget. Service providers described cases they could not reach because they lack a vehicle or fuel, and services that shrank when a project ended. Religious leaders in Zanzibar, parents and civil society representatives voiced the concern most strongly: the committees, by-laws and faith-based outreach that carry prevention day to day run on volunteers and partners' funds (World Bank, 2022; TGNP, 2021).

The closure of CDC's Field Epidemiology and Prevention Branch, the end of PEPFAR support for the VACS and the suspension of USAID funding now remove both money and long-standing technical partnership. Tanzania is better placed than most to manage this transition: it has a world-class dataset, national research institutions and a functioning coordination structure.

### Box 5: Dira 2050 and the children who shaped it

Tanzania Development Vision 2050 envisions a society free from child labour, all forms of violence and discrimination, in which every child thrives in a safe and nurturing environment. More than 14,000 children helped shape it, in person and online. Delivering that vision now depends on nationally led, domestically financed child protection — a modern expression of Tanzania's own tradition of self-reliance (URT, 2025; UNICEF Tanzania, 2024a; Mazrui & Mhando, 2013).

## 8. Priority Recommendations

The recommendations follow from the study's objectives and findings, which show that the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar and their partners need to scale up efforts to prevent and respond to violence against children, rapidly. Implement each where the gaps are largest.

### 8.1 Laws and policy

1. **Give legislative effect to the Gyumi ruling** by amending the Law of Marriage Act to set 18 as the minimum age of marriage for both sexes (Court of Appeal of Tanzania, 2019).
2. **End legal permission for corporal punishment** by revoking the 1979 Regulations (as amended by Circular No. 24 of 2002) and removing the allowance for 'reasonable' or 'justifiable' punishment by parents (CRC Committee, 2006).
3. **Update policy to current risks** by completing the review of the Child Development Policy to cover online harms, and guarantee free medical care for all survivors (Ifakara Health Institute, 2024; UNICEF Innocenti, 2022).

### 8.2 Prevention and response systems

4. **Address the decline in help-seeking** among young women and the silence of boys with a rapid study that informs service improvements within twelve months.
5. **Strengthen enforcement and accountability** of the police, prosecution and courts, and review the summons powers of social welfare officers.
6. **Extend services to where children are** — rural villages, refugee-hosting areas and informal spaces such as night markets — with clear referral pathways.
7. **Revitalise coordination and strengthen the workforce**, with staffing norms for social welfare officers and joint training across sectors.

### 8.3 Social norms and community engagement

8. **Scale up community-led prevention and norm change** with religious and traditional leaders, men, boys and parents — grounded in Islamic teaching on child welfare in Zanzibar and adapted to local contexts on the Mainland.
9. **Address the economic drivers of harmful practices** by linking parenting programmes with cash transfers and livelihoods in high child-marriage areas such as Shinyanga.
10. **Institutionalise meaningful child participation**, building on Children's Councils and U-Report, and report back to children on how their views were used (CRC Committee, 2009; UN Tanzania, 2019).

### 8.4 Financing

11. **Establish dedicated domestic budget lines** in all relevant ministries and local government authorities, and publish allocations and disbursements annually.
12. **Manage the transition from donor funding**, integrating services into routine government health, social welfare and education budgets.

## 8.5 Evidence and data

- 13. Strengthen national ownership of the evidence base** by analysing the 2024 VACS nationally and conducting a survey on a regular three-to-five-year cycle.
- 14. Strengthen administrative data systems** by scaling up the District Case Monitoring System and linking it with police, health and court records.

**Table 9: Lead institutions and timeframes**

| Area                                                | Lead institution(s)                                                                           | Timeframe                |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Laws and policy (1–3)</b>                        | MoCLA; Parliament; MoEST; MoCDGWSG; MoH; Zanzibar MoEVT, MoCDGEC and House of Representatives | Immediate to medium term |
| <b>Prevention and response systems (4–7)</b>        | MoCDGWSG; MoCDGEC; PO-RALG; Police; Judiciary                                                 | Immediate to medium term |
| <b>Social norms and community engagement (8–10)</b> | MoCDGWSG; MoCDGEC; MoEST; MoEVT; TASAF; faith councils                                        | Medium to long term      |
| <b>Financing (11–12)</b>                            | Ministry of Finance; sector ministries; development partners                                  | Next budget cycle        |
| <b>Evidence and data (13–14)</b>                    | NBS; OCGS; research institutions                                                              | Ongoing                  |

Full recommendations: ESRF (2026), full report, Chapter 8.

## Concluding Remarks

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Tanzania has shown that sustained, evidence-led, multi-sectoral action can produce historically significant reductions in violence against children. The decline was largest when laws, services, leaders and parents moved together. Where progress has stalled, it has stalled between law and practice, and among the children services have not reached.

Achieving a future free from violence against children will require nationally led, equitably financed and intersectionally grounded child protection — one in which every Tanzanian child, regardless of gender, geography or economic circumstance, is recognised as a rights-holder whose protection is the sovereign responsibility of the United Republic of Tanzania.

*At the heart of this work are children and young people — their safety, their dignity and their right to grow up free from violence.*

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