

## Abstract

Tanzania has been experiencing a number of disasters/hazards for years now. The disaster history in Tanzania can be traced back to 1872. Common disaster/hazards are epidemics, pest infestation, drought, floods, major transport accidents, industrial accidents, refugees and fires (URT-PMO, 2001). One of the biggest disasters in Tanzania history was the influx of refugees in Ngara district during the Rwanda genocide in 1994, where more than 250,000 people crossed the border to Tanzania from Rwanda overnight. The influx of that big number of refugees overnight created a big crisis of housing, water, sanitation, health and insecurity to refugees themselves and host communities. Schools and the surrounding community were seriously affected, that some of the schools in the area had to be closed, and buildings were damaged and used as accommodation for refugees. The impacts were exacerbated by poor capacity of the people to absorb, deflect or manage the actual disasters.

For the case of fire hazards, the experience shows that children are among the most vulnerable groups, especially those attending school. In the recent years Tanzania has experienced hazards which affected children in some schools and others places. In 1994, Shauritanga secondary school in Kilimanjaro region was gutted by fire and more than 40 students died in one school dormitory. The same incident happened again in the same school in 2005. In July 2005, Nsumba secondary school in Mwanza had its dormitories gutted by fire on different days in the same week whereby students lost all their properties. In 2006, fire gutted Kilimani primary school in Iringa region destroyed buildings, furniture and teaching material. In 2007, Bigwa secondary school in Morogoro region was gutted by fire and two student dormitories were burnt to ashes. In August 2008, Imalilo secondary school in Kwimba district, Mwanza was gutted by fire. In July 2008, nineteen children of between eight and fourteen years died in a disco hall in Tabora town due to suffocation. In July 2009, Ole Sokoine secondary school in Monduli district was gutted by fire, no one was killed but properties of the students' were destroyed (Habari Leo, July 2009). In August 23rd 2009, twelve girl's students died and fifteen were injured at Idodi secondary school after the school dormitory was gutted by fire (Daily Newspaper, August 2009).

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On 3rd September 2009, the fire gutted Tubuyu day secondary school in Morogoro municipality, some classes were damaged and some students fainted and rushed to the hospital, no one was killed (Nipashe Newspaper, September 2009). On 8th September 2009, fire gutted Same secondary school in Kilimanjaro region, administration office, teacher's offices and important documents were destroyed. The effort to suppress the fire proved futile due to lack of fire tender in the district (Mwananchi Newspaper, September 2009).

The incidences described above are clear evidence of a lack of fire emergency preparedness, prevention, mitigation and awareness in schools.