



Press Release
15 March 2016

8 out of 10 Kenyans support devolution And are more willing to pay taxes to county governments than to the national government

15 March 2016, Nairobi: Kenyans are overwhelmingly positive about devolution: 47% strongly agree and 35% agree with the statement 'I support devolution in Kenya.' Citizens are also largely satisfied with the outcomes of devolution so far, 43% say that health services have improved since being taken over by County governments. However 29% also do not think health services have improved since the transition.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief entitled *Taking government closer to the people? What citizens think about Devolution*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,830 respondents between 14 December 2015 and 6 January 2016.

In addition to being positive, citizens appear to be informed about County governments, with over half (54%) claiming knowledge of their County development plan. In particular, citizens referenced infrastructure projects (85%), education (45%), and electricity (29%) as key issues in the plans.

Some citizens are also engaged in devolution processes with two out of ten (19%) having attended a County government meeting. Of those who attended the meetings, 4 out of 10 report asking a question (41%), raising an issue (41%) and/or responding to an issue that was raised (35%).

Citizens are supportive of devolution even though 84% say that taxes and levies have increased with the new decentralized structures. Despite this, citizens are more willing to pay taxes and levies to County governments (52%) than the national government (36%).

Despite this general enthusiasm and positivity, citizens are split on which level of government should manage health services, with 45% preferring their county government to deliver healthcare and 43% wanting the national government to do so.

On the part of the County governments, six out of ten citizens (58%) think that their County government encourages them to participate in its day-to-day affairs. However of those that were informed about their County's development plan, only 1 out of 4 (25%) say that implementation of the plan has started. In addition, the projects that most citizens mention when asked about implementation are those that fall under both the national government and County governments: roads (67%), water (38%), health facilities (32%) and education (31%).

The release of these data also marks the launch of *Sauti za Wananchi* in Kenya. *Sauti za Wananchi* uses mobile phones to regularly collect information from a broad cross-section of Kenyan citizens. The initiative will allow survey data to be gathered quickly and efficiently, at low cost.

Policy makers regularly make decisions for the whole country, but with poor access to the experiences and realities of a large majority of citizens. It is also difficult for them to know whether policies are properly

implemented or actually working. Policy makers typically use administrative or survey data to inform their work. But administrative data often suffer from inadequate technical, logistical and quality assurance arrangements and survey data are costly and time-consuming to collect.

Sauti za Wananchi offers a solution that overcomes these limitations. It provides access to frequently updated statistics on a range of topics, with a focus on quality of public services and citizens' realities, for policy makers, analysts, media, other organisations and the public. *Sauti za Wananchi* embodies the rigour and quality of traditional survey methodology but uses mobile phones to lower costs and speed up the process of data collection.

Sauti za Wananchi builds on careful design, testing and rigour; the program has been in operation in Tanzania for three years, and has now expanded to Kenya. Full details of the methodology and process for setting up *Sauti za Wananchi* are available in a brief, released by Twaweza, entitled *Collecting national data using mobile phones*, based on data collected from 2,000 respondents between 12 November and 24 December 2015

John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza, said *"Citizens appear to be ready to play their part in devolution and are largely informed and engaged in these processes. However, despite this apparent enthusiasm, it is telling that there is such a split between who citizens think should manage health services. Health has been one of the most significant services to be allocated to the County governments to manage and it appears that the citizen jury on this is still out."*

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza added *"We are delighted to be launching Sauti za Wananchi in Kenya. Citizens can provide quick, informative feedback on how services are being delivered and how policies and plans are being implemented. It is fascinating to discover, for example, that Kenyans are more willing to pay country taxes than national taxes. Leaders at local and national levels should be listening to these voices, because these are the citizens whom they are working to serve."*

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Notes to Editors

- This **brief, photos for media use** and the **data** can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, www.twaweza.org/sauti
- The margin of error for baseline data collection is +/- 2 at a 95% confidence interval. The margin of error for the first call round is +/-2.9 at a 95% confidence interval.
- The target population for this survey was Kenyans aged 18 years and above, living in urban and rural areas.
- Data was collected through telephonic interviews, (CATI) with a nationally representative panel of *Sauti za Wananchi* respondents (Mobile Phone Panel Survey; established through a face-to-face baseline survey)
- Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a globally respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa's largest annual citizen assessment to assess children's learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership
- You can follow Twaweza's work

Web: www.twaweza.org **Facebook:** Sauti za Wananchi Kenya **Twitter:** @SautizaWananchi