



Press Release  
25 February 2016

**3 out of 4 citizens believe that free education will improve quality  
Currently, 9 out of 10 parents pay some contribution towards public education**

**25 February 2016, Dar es Salaam:** Citizens are optimistic about the promise of free education: 9 out of 10 (88%) are confident it will be implemented on time and 3 out of 4 (76%) believe that providing education for free will improve quality. Despite this general optimism, 15% of citizens believe that free education will not improve quality, as the surge in enrolment will stretch resources.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *A New Dawn? Citizens' views on new developments in education*. 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 1,894 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) between 10 December 2015 and 2 January 2016.

The announcement by President Magufuli on free education, including the abolition of contributions, is timely. Too many parents are already paying contributions at school. In total, 9 out of 10 parents report paying contributions (michango) to schools; 80% report paying TZS 50,000 or less annually, while 8% report paying over TZS 100,000. Although almost all parents pay these contributions, half of them (49%) do not think the contributions are used as intended and 6 out of 10 (58%) think that the contributions are not authorized by the government. A large majority of parents (89%) think that teachers use the contributions as an extra source of income.

Schools ask for these contributions for a range of needs, according to parents: security (66%), tests (57%) and desks (34%), and a smaller share goes to graduation parties (4%) and school trips (4%). Despite the announcement to ban these contributions, the Capitation Grant funds that are now being delivered directly to schools and which are the main source of funding for schools, may not be enough to replace contributions. Capitation Grant funding is allocated to textbooks and other reading / reference materials (40%), writing materials (20%), administration (10%), and examination papers and printing (10%). So schools have discretion on limited amounts of these funds, and many of the items parents currently pay for may not be covered by the Capitation Grant.

Despite their optimism about the promise of free education, citizens are divided about the quality of primary education over the past ten years. Half of them (49%) think it has improved while another third (36%) think it has deteriorated. About one in ten (14%) think there has been no change.

One in three citizens say that teacher effort is the main driver of Standard 7 outcomes. Citizens also believe that teachers are the foundation for the country's development (93%), that they are respected (85%), proud of their profession (79%), and motivated to ensure children learn (60%). At the same time many citizens also agree that teachers only work for financial gain (80%). Citizens are most divided on whether teachers are paid enough to live (52% think they are, whereas 42% disagree) and whether the teaching environment motivates teachers to teach (58% say it does while 34% think it does not). Citizens

also think that raising teachers' salaries (56%) and improving their working conditions (19%) will improve teachers' motivation to teach.

Similarly when asked to provide advice to the government on improving the quality of education, 8 out of 10 citizens (82%) mention teacher-related issues. They suggest following up on teacher performance (40%), increasing salaries (19%), increasing the number of teachers (10%), providing teaching materials (7%), paying teachers on time (4%) and providing housing for teachers (2%).

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza, said *"Citizens have clearly and correctly diagnosed the challenges of education. All their advice and suggestions for Government revolve around teachers and improving teacher motivation and accountability. Many experts would agree."*

*"But their hopes for the promise of free education to improve learning" he continued "may well be dashed. Major reforms to address the challenge of teaching for learning have yet to be spelt out. Tanzania has over ten years of implementing the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) to learn from: abolishing fees and banning contributions may not solve all our problems. Funds allocated to schools in place of contributions and fees are likely to be insufficient and the larger question of how resources are managed to deliver learning has yet to be addressed. Although it is very encouraging that education is a priority for the Magufuli administration, we must all make sure we take a critical look at the evidence on what works to deliver learning when children are in school, that we carefully monitor policy implementation and that we support and enhance teachers and teaching. Otherwise we run the risk of more broken promises."*

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**For more information:**

Risha Chande, Senior Communications Advisor, Twaweza  
e: [rchande@twaweza.org](mailto:rchande@twaweza.org) | t: (+255) (0) 656 657 559

**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)
- 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
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