

Kenyans' views on the teaching profession and teachers



Key findings

- Only about 14% and 16% parents want their male and female children respectively to join the teaching profession.
- Perceived low pay for teachers and the frequent strikes are the major reasons many parents would rather their children do not become teachers.
- On the other hand, teachers and the teaching profession is still highly regarded by Kenyans.
- Majority of Kenyans think monetary incentives are the most effective in motivating teachers to attend school regularly, and also teach as required.



About Twaweza

Twaweza means “we can make it happen” in Swahili. 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 world 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 *SautizaWananchi*, 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.

Methodology

In December 2016, Twaweza East Africa commissioned Ipsos Kenya to gather feedback on a number of our areas of work, through a nationally representative “omnibus” survey. The survey consists of face to face interviews with randomly selected respondents, aged 18 or over, using a semi-structured questionnaire administered through smart phones. A sample size of 2,057 interviews was achieved with a margin of error +/- 2% at 95% confidence interval. This sample was distributed evenly based on the estimated population size, and is also representative of the rural/urban clustering.

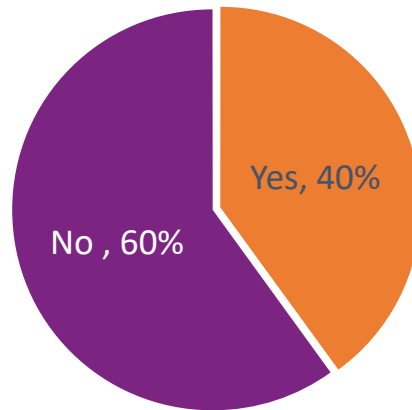
In this brief, we summarize the findings from the questions which gathered Kenyans’ view on teachers and the teaching profession. These questions help to inform Twaweza’s What Works in Education (WWE) Unit in planning for initiatives around teacher motivation.

Main findings

Fact 1: At least 4 in every 10 households in Kenya have a child in a public primary school

In order to set the stage for questions around schooling and views on teachers, this study first asked whether the household had at least one child in a public primary school. As shown in Figure 1 below, 40% of the households have at least one child attending a public primary school. A question on the gender of the eldest enrolled child revealed that 53% of these children are male and 47% are female

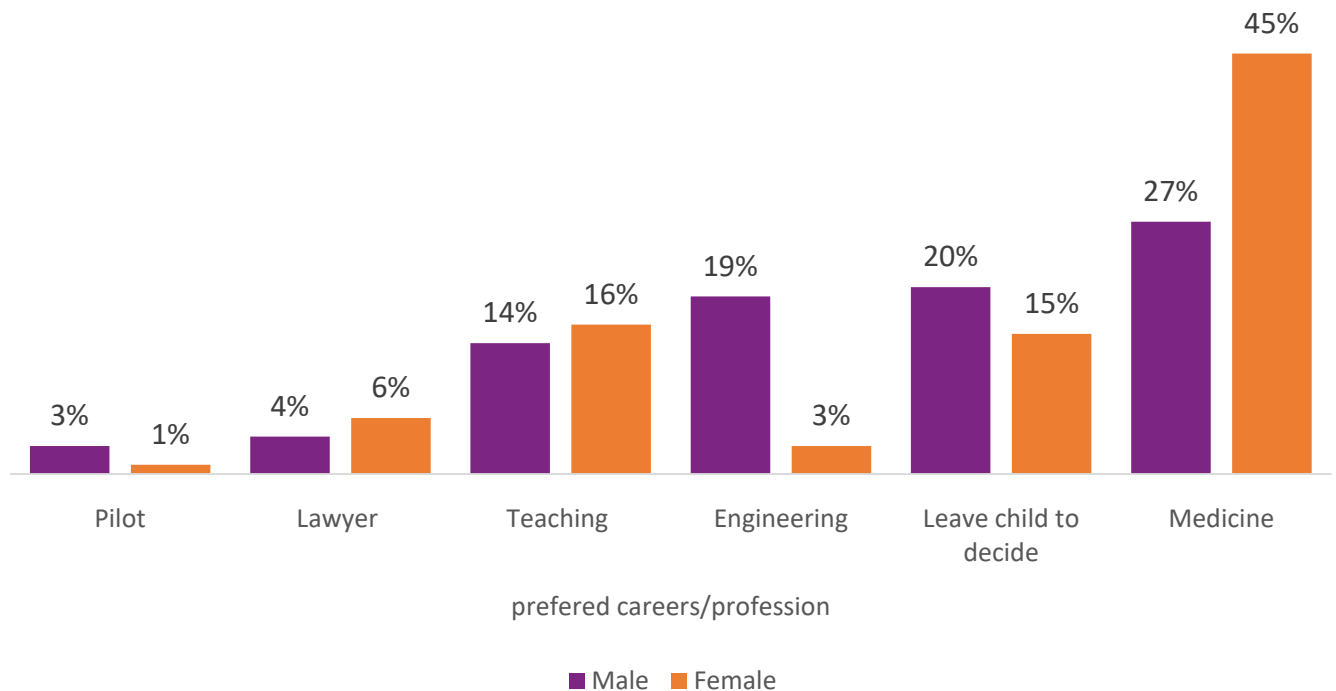
Figure 1: Proportion of households with children in public primary schools (n=2057)



Fact 2: Less than one in five parents would want their child to become a teacher

Parents were asked to mention some of the careers (as first choice) they would preferred for their children. We look at the choices as stated for female and male children. As shown in figure 3, almost half (45%) parents said they preferred their daughter to go into the medical field, while only 16% said they would want their children to be teachers and 15% said they would leave their children to decide for themselves. Similar to the parents of female children, only 14% of those with male children would want them to be teachers. There is however a difference in the pattern of most preferred careers for the boys and girls with medicine and engineering leading as most preferred at 27% and 19% (Figure 2). Slightly more parents (20%) of male children as compared to only 15% parents of female children also said they would let the child decide their careers.

Figure 2: Parents preferred careers for children

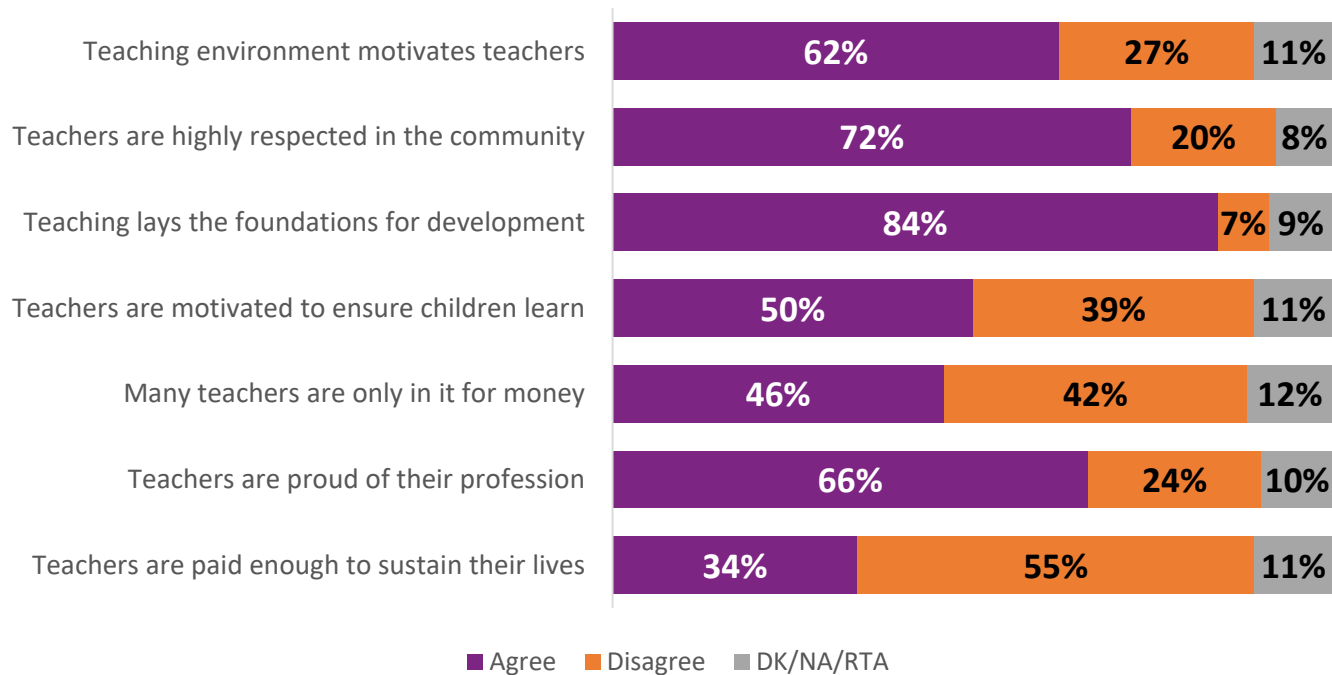




Fact 3: 8 in 10 Kenyans regard the teaching profession as important for the development of the country

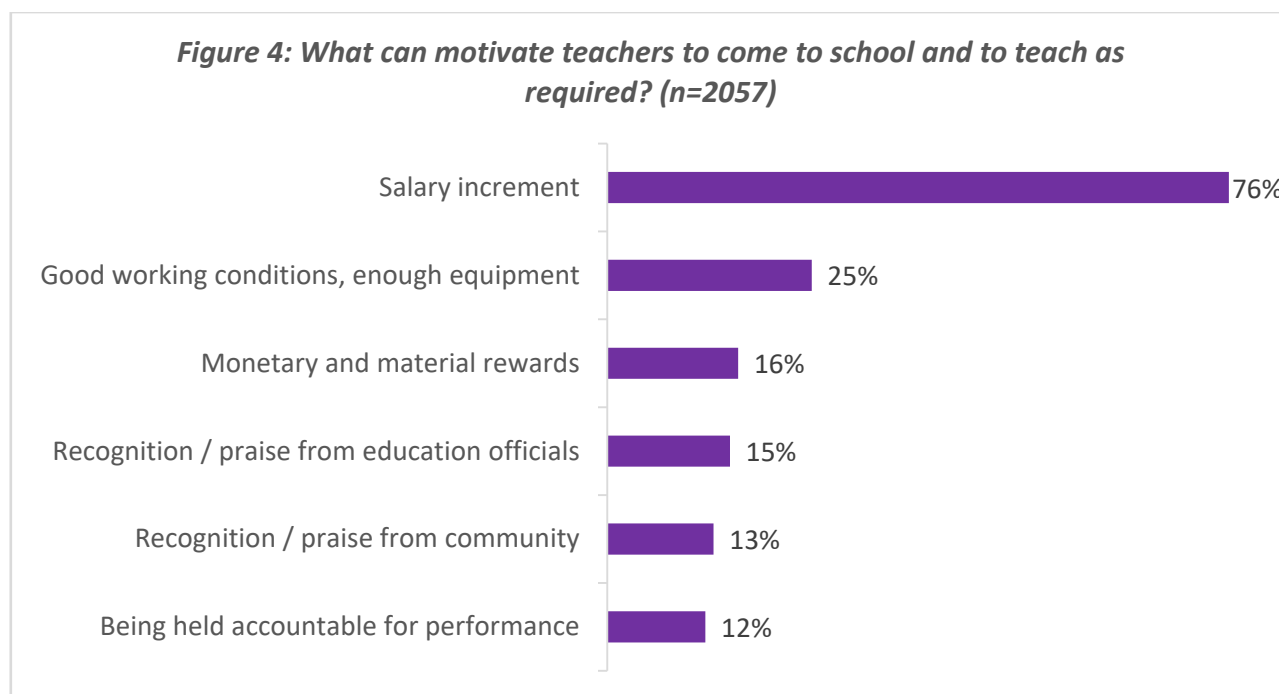
Several statements regarding the teaching profession (Figure 3) were presented to all the respondents regardless of whether they had a child enrolled in a public primary school. Most Kenyans (84%) generally feel teaching is the profession that lays the foundation for development of a country, 72% feel teachers are highly respected in the community, 66% feel teachers are themselves proud of their profession, and 62% feel the teaching environment motivates teachers to teach. However, very few feel teachers are paid enough and less than half report that their children’s teachers have gotten in touch with them at any time to discuss performance of their children.

Figure 3: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=2057)



Fact 4: More than 7 out of 10 Kenyans believe salary increment would be the best way to motivate teachers.

As illustrated in figure 4 below, majority of Kenyans (76%) believe that better pay would be the most ideal way of motivating teachers to come to school and to teach as required. The 2nd most mentioned way to motivate teachers was said to be rewards, recognition and praise at 44% cumulatively, this percentage was further split with an almost similar frequency, between materials and monetary rewards (16 %) and recognition and praise from education officials (15%) and from parents and community were mentioned at, by13%. improving the working conditions including providing the necessary equipment could also motivate teachers.



Conclusions

These findings reveal interesting insights around how the teaching profession and how teachers are viewed in Kenya; to our knowledge, there aren't other publicly available data on perceptions of the teaching profession among Kenyans. On one hand, the profession is held in high regard among the Kenyan public yet it is a much less preferred profession due to perceptions of low pay, low motivation and the incessant strikes that dog the profession. Most Kenyans are also of the view that the most efficient ways of motivating teachers would be through monetary and material incentives; this view is likely influenced by the numerous strikes which usually call for pay increase. A significant portion of respondents also think that recognition and praise from education official and parents can help in motivating teachers. These findings are therefore a good basis for a more in-depth study on teacher's image and satisfaction which Twaweza's What Works in Education unit plans to conduct in the course of the year. In this future study, we will seek to understand whether teachers feel respected and proud of their jobs (as the public purports), as well as what teachers themselves say about measures that would motivate them to improve their performance.