



Taking Government closer to the people?

What citizens think about devolution

1. Introduction

The 2010 Kenya constitution was revolutionary in many ways. It dramatically transformed the governance landscape in the country. One of the most significant changes outlined in the Constitution is the concept of devolution: a transfer of power from the National Government to the 47 County Governments, which became effective after the March 2013 elections. The devolution process divided government responsibilities, reserving some, like security, largely to the National Government, and transferring others, like healthcare, to the Counties. The goal of devolution is to improve service delivery and increase citizen participation in public affairs.

During the past three years, Kenya has been taking government closer to citizens with both positive and negative effects. County governments consistently lament the lack of resources allocated to them to address social services and corruption. On the other hand, the media abounds with stories of unprecedented numbers of county works and projects. Naturally, the introduction of specific structures for counties would lend itself to greater focus on each county.

Devolution is perhaps the biggest shift in Kenyan governance since independence. So, what do citizens think about it and how it is being done in their Counties. Do citizens support devolution? How informed or involved are they in the activities of their County Government? Are they participating as envisaged in the Constitution? Are they happy with service provision?

What are their views about the taxes/levies under this new system?

Data for this brief come from Twaweza's flagship *Sauti za Wananchi* survey. *Sauti za Wananchi* is a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey. Information on the overall methodology is available at www.twaweza.org/sauti. For this brief, data were collected from 1,830 respondents. This was the first round of calls to the panel, conducted between 14 December 2015 and 6 January 2016. The margin of error for this call round is +/-2.9 at a 95% confidence interval.

The key findings are:

- 8 out of 10 Kenyans (82%) support devolution.
- Just over half of citizens (54%) are informed about their county's development plan.
- 1 out of 4 citizens who are informed about their county's development plan (25%) state that implementation has already begun.
- Two out of ten citizens (19%) have participated in a meeting organized by their County Government.
- Citizens are divided on whether the County or National Government should be in charge of health services.
- 8 out of 10 citizens (84%) state that since devolution the amount of taxes and fees has increased
- More citizens are willing to pay taxes to County Governments (52%) than to the National Government (36%)

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Sauti za Wananchi



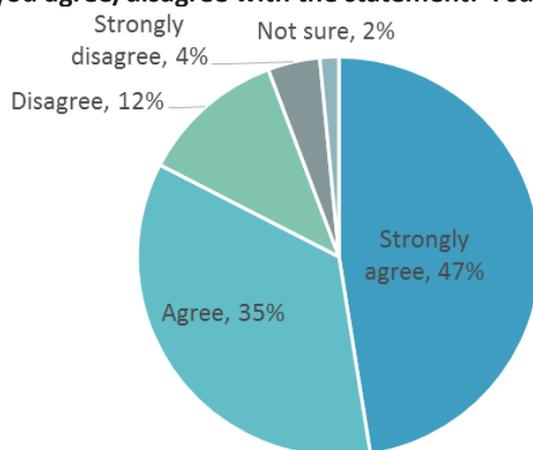
2. Six facts about citizens' views on devolution

Fact 1: 8 out of 10 citizens support devolution

A large majority of Kenyans (82%) agree with the

statement, "I support devolution in Kenya": 47% agree strongly and 35% agree. Only 16% disagreed with the statement.

Figure 1: "How much do you agree/disagree with the statement: 'I support devolution in Kenya?'"¹



Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)

Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)²

Almost all citizens (94%) also agree that participation³ is an effective way to make County Governments responsive to citizen needs. And six out of ten citizens

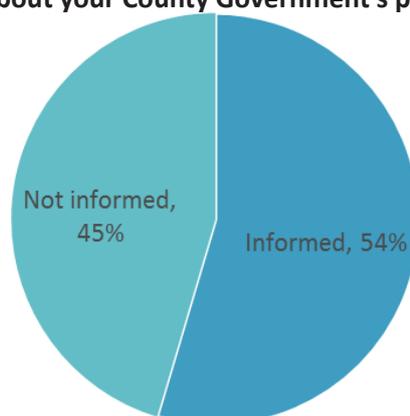
(58%) think that their County Government encourages them to participate in its day to day affairs⁴.

Fact 2: Half of citizens are informed about their County's development plan

Just over half of citizens (54%) say they are informed

about their County development plan. In contrast 45% of Kenyans say they don't know about the plan.

Figure 2: "Are you informed about your County Government's plan for development in this area?"



Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)

Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

1 Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

2 The option "Don't Know" is not shown

3 When asked to define participation, Kenyans responded as follows: shaping the development agenda (31%), electing my MCA/Senator/Governor (28%), participation in meetings (21%), participation in the county budgeting process (17%).

4 *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016). Full dataset available at www.twaweza.org/sauti.

Of those who were informed of the development plan, a number of issues appeared to be prominent across

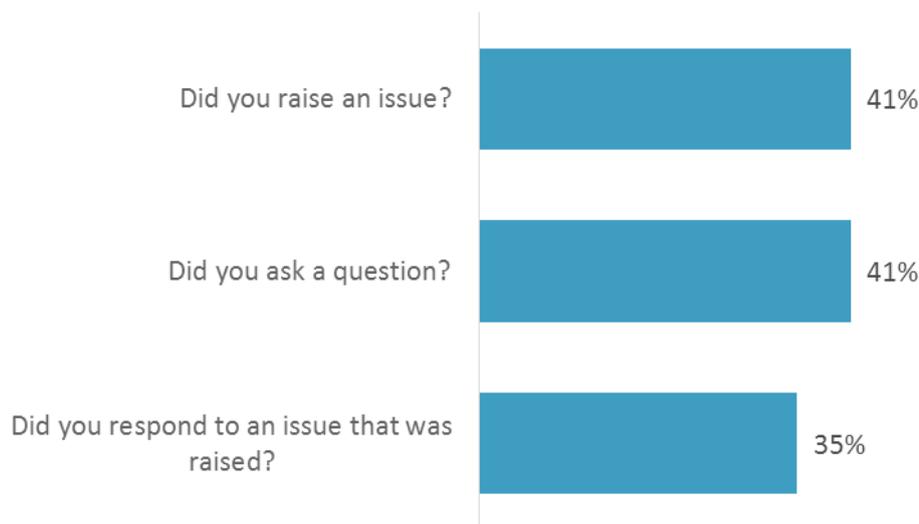
the counties: infrastructure (85%), education (45%), electricity (29%) and access to water (28%)⁵.

Fact 3: 2 out of 10 citizens have participated in a county government meeting

In total 19% of citizens report ever having participated in a county meeting⁶. Of those who have participated,

about 4 out of 10 report asking a question (41%), raising an issue (41%) and/or responding to an issue that was raised (35%).

Figure 3: “During the last meeting that you attended..?”



Base: Those saying they have participated in a meeting organized by the county government (n=354)

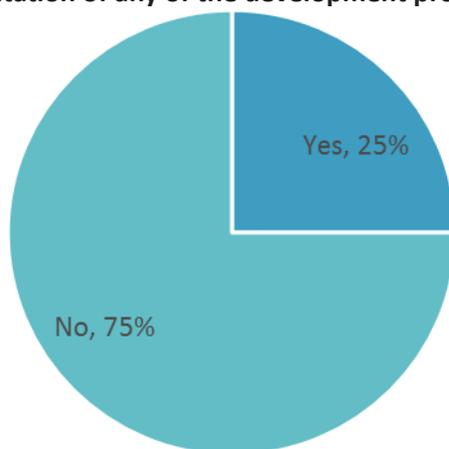
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

Fact 4: 25% of informed citizens say that projects are being implemented

Of those citizens who are informed about County

development plans (Fact 2, 54%), 1 out of 4 (25%) say that implementation of these projects has already begun.

Figure 4a: “Has implementation of any of the development projects discussed begun?”



Base: Those saying they are informed about their County’s development plan (n=996)

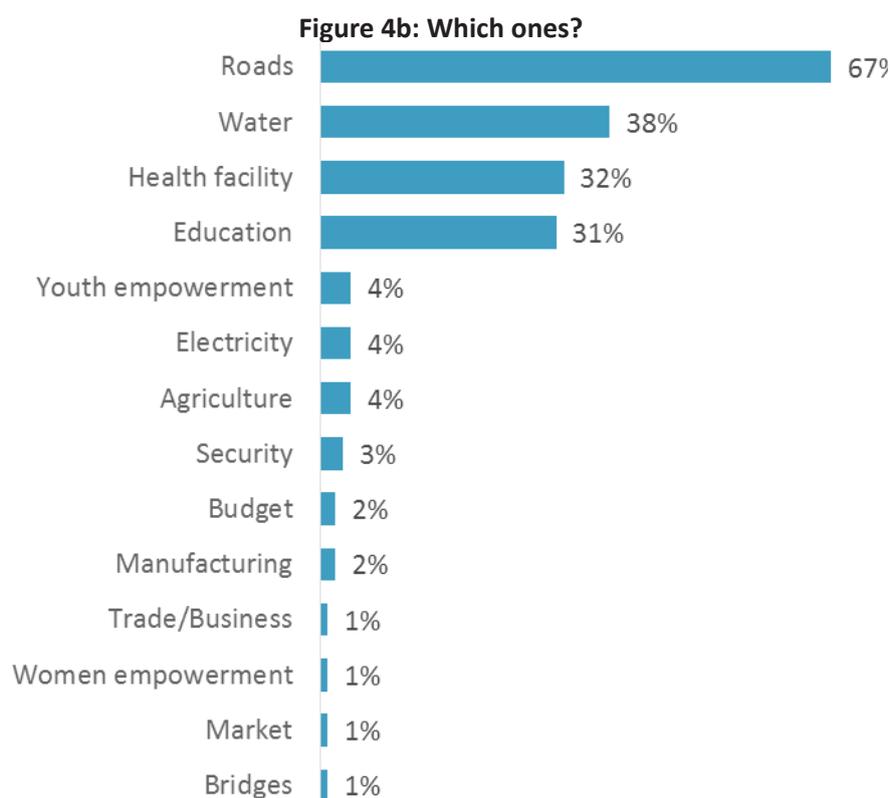
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

In particular, citizens reference projects being implemented in the following sectors: roads (67%),

water (38%), health facilities (32%) and education (31%).

5 ibid

6 ibid



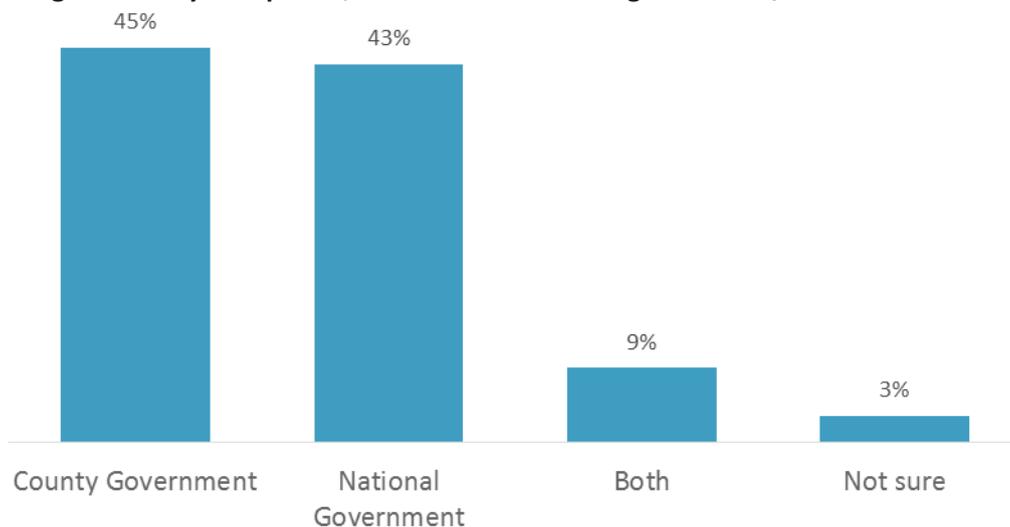
Base: Those saying that implementation of the development projects discussed have begun (n=250)
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

Fact 5: Citizens are divided on who should manage health services

The County Governments are in charge of most health services, including health centres, pharmacies and ambulances, while the national government is in charge of national referral health facilities. When asked who

they think should be in charge of health services, citizens are divided: with 45% choosing County Governments and 43% opting for the National Government. Citizens who chose the National Government cite quality (68%) as the main reason for their choice⁷.

Figure 5a: In your opinion, who should be in charge of health/medical services?

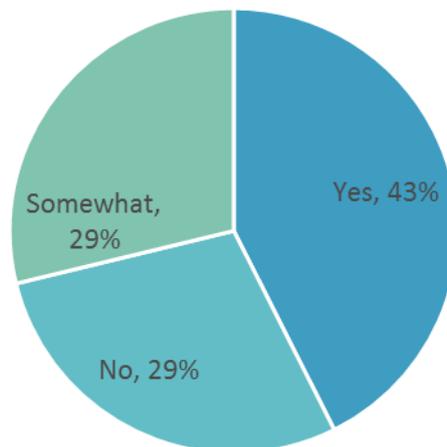


Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

⁷ ibid

In addition, 43% of citizens say that health services have improved since 2013 when they were taken over by County governments whereas 29% disagree.

Figure 5b: “In your opinion, has your County Government helped improve health services from what it used to be before 2013?”



Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)

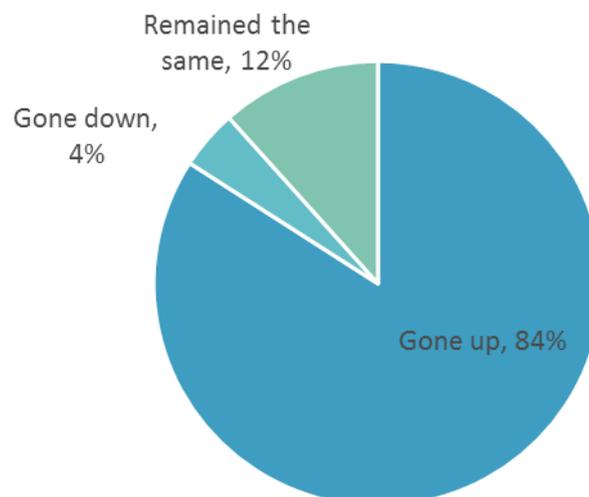
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

Fact 6: More citizens (52%) are willing to pay taxes to County Governments

The funding of county government activities is an important aspect of devolution. County Governments are provided with funds from the national budget, but

they are also able to raise funds themselves through taxes and fees at the county level. 84% of citizens state that since devolution, the amount of taxes and fees has increased.

Figure 6a: Since devolution, would you say that the amount of taxes and license fees has:



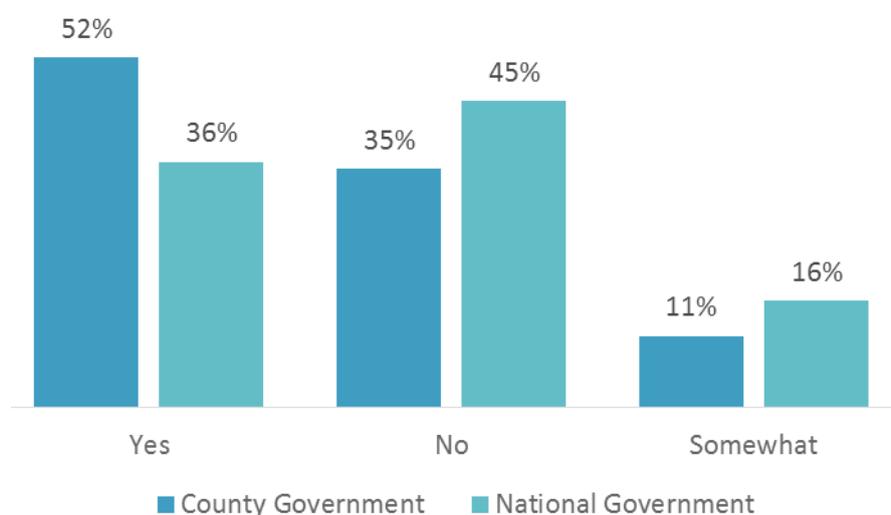
Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)

Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

Despite these perceived increases, citizens are more willing to pay taxes to the county governments (52%)

than to the National Government (36%).

Figure 6b: Since devolution, would you say that you are more willing to pay tax to the:



Base: All panel respondents (n=1,830)

Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi* Mobile Phone Survey – Round 1(December 2015/January 2016)

3. Conclusion

After three years of implementation, Kenyans are fairly ambivalent about devolution in many ways. On the one hand 82% of citizens support devolution, and 43% say that health services have improved since 2013 (when the county structure was operationalized). On the other hand they are divided about whether the national (45%) or county (43%) governments should be responsible for health. This reflects of the tensions of devolution itself, so much of the promise and potential of decentralization is as yet unrealized.

The new administrative layer of elected and appointed officials is working hard to prove their value, and the focus of the county governments on each and every county should lead to more equitable progress and development. At the same time there is a risk of fragmentation with each county having different tax regimes and potentially a different quality of service delivery, in health in particular. There is also the potential for the new structures to exacerbate corruption and mismanagement with a larger bureaucracy and more opportunities for wrong-doing at different levels.

Yet it seems that all the building blocks are in place. Citizens are supportive of devolution and 58% report that their county government encourages them to participate. Citizens are engaged: more than half know their county’s development plan, one out of five have

attended a county government meeting and of those close to half actively participated by raising an issue, responding to one or asking a question. Kenyans appear to be ready to play their part, since devolution over half are more willing to pay tax to the county governments.

At the same time, some citizens appear confused about the division of labour and responsibilities between the national and county governments. This undermines their ability to hold their representatives and governments accountable. As a result, the core purpose of devolution – to improve services and increase participation – could well be missed. Attention should be paid to ensuring greater clarity on roles and responsibilities within the new structure.

Kenya’s 2010 Constitution and the introduction of devolution changed the shape of governance in the country. Although we are still in the early stages of roll out, there is need to take regular stock of citizen feedback and to take advantage of the popular support for devolution to ensure results. Devolution presents an opportunity to change the way Kenya works and to ensure progress for all citizens. Whether this happens or not will depend on the ability and willingness of each arm of government to be held to account and the continued support of citizens to do so.

4. Methodology

The survey has two main phases:

1. Baseline survey (Household Survey)

This stage involves randomly selecting and enlisting participating households and respondents. Household and individual data is then collected to form a baseline, where mobile phones and solar chargers are then distributed to the selected individuals. Data collected in the 2015 Baseline Survey was done through a traditional household survey using face-to-face interviews, with responses recorded on smart phones.

2. Mobile phone survey (Computer Aided Telephonic Interviewing: CATI)

In this second phase, respondents selected during the baseline are contacted on the mobile phone given to them in monthly call rounds on various topics of public interest. Data collection in the mobile phone survey is done through interviews conducted from a call centre where agents use the CATI platform. These data are then analysed and synthesized into briefs which are launched to the public and made available on the Twaweza website.

Sampling – Making tasty salad

To understand sampling, one can ask: how many bites of a salad does one need to check how it tastes? Do you need to eat the whole salad or just a bite or two? Even though there are lots of different ingredients all mixed in together, we can determine the taste of the whole by tasting a small part of it. In essence that is the meaning of sampling.

The target population for Sauti za Wananchi is all adults (18+) living in Kenya. Sauti za Wananchi uses a standard three stage survey sampling design to recruit 2,000 respondents for the call rounds. Although 2,000 might sound like a small sample for a nation of about 40 million, the number of respondents is large enough to ensure a 95% confidence interval and a small margin of error. This rigorous procedure of random sampling ensures that the panel is nationally representative. In comparison, surveys and polls like Afrobarometer, Gallup, and Pew have sample sizes of 2400, 1000-2000, and 1500 respondents respectively¹.

Sampling for Sauti za Wananchi can be broken down as follows:

Stage one - 200 Enumeration Areas (EAs) are randomly sampled countrywide. EAs are the smallest sampling survey areas in rural and urban settings defined by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, using this sampling frame allows for a nationally representative split between rural and urban EAs.

Stage two - In each sampled Enumeration Area, all households are listed and 10 are selected randomly, (an additional two are selected as reserve after the first ten have been picked).

Stage three - One respondent (18+) is randomly chosen from all adult household members in each selected household.

How can we be sure that what you report represents the country?

The critical element is random sampling; since any Kenyan over 18 years of age has an equal likelihood of being selected as a respondent, the survey can be considered representative. Other types of surveys may have larger sample sizes but be less representative because of the way in which respondents are selected. For example online surveys may gather hundreds of thousands of responses but because only 18% of the country has access to the internet, these types of surveys can never be representative of the whole of Kenya. In addition the characteristics of the Sauti za Wananchi sample have been compared to the 2014 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) and the 2009 Census and found to be generally similar.

But why give the respondents phones and chargers?

Providing respondents with mobile phones and solar chargers is important because omitting this step (just calling people who already have phones) would exclude the poorest individuals from the sample. In addition, only about 1/3 of the population has access to electricity at the household level. Thus, provision of mobile phones and solar chargers ensures that the sample remains representative.

