



Citizens, radios, noticeboards

Information demand and supply in Tanzania



1. Introduction

What do citizens know about government personnel and policies, and what is their primary source of information? Are most Tanzanians informed enough to hold service providers to account? *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey, answers these and other questions around access to information in Tanzania.

The government of Tanzania plans for and provides basic services, impacting the lives of millions of citizens. Citizens are taxpayers and, as such, finance national policies and programs. They demand and use services on a daily basis, for example, in health facilities and schools, making the delivery of basic services the primary point of interaction between government and citizens. From local to national, successful service delivery requires information to flow: what are the opening times of the health facility and are medicines available? How is my child doing in school? At a national level, citizens may read about water projects coming to their district, send messages to their MP or listen to a minister making a speech about the budget.

In order to understand ways in which Tanzanians access information and are aware of national policies, *Sauti za Wananchi* presents the most recent nationally representative data on access to information in this brief. The findings are based on the third round

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of *Sauti za Wananchi*. Calls were made between 10 and 24 May 2013; data include responses from 1722 households. This brief also presents findings from the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey (face to face interviews) which was conducted between October and December 2012 among 2,000 households across mainland Tanzania.

This brief’s key findings are:

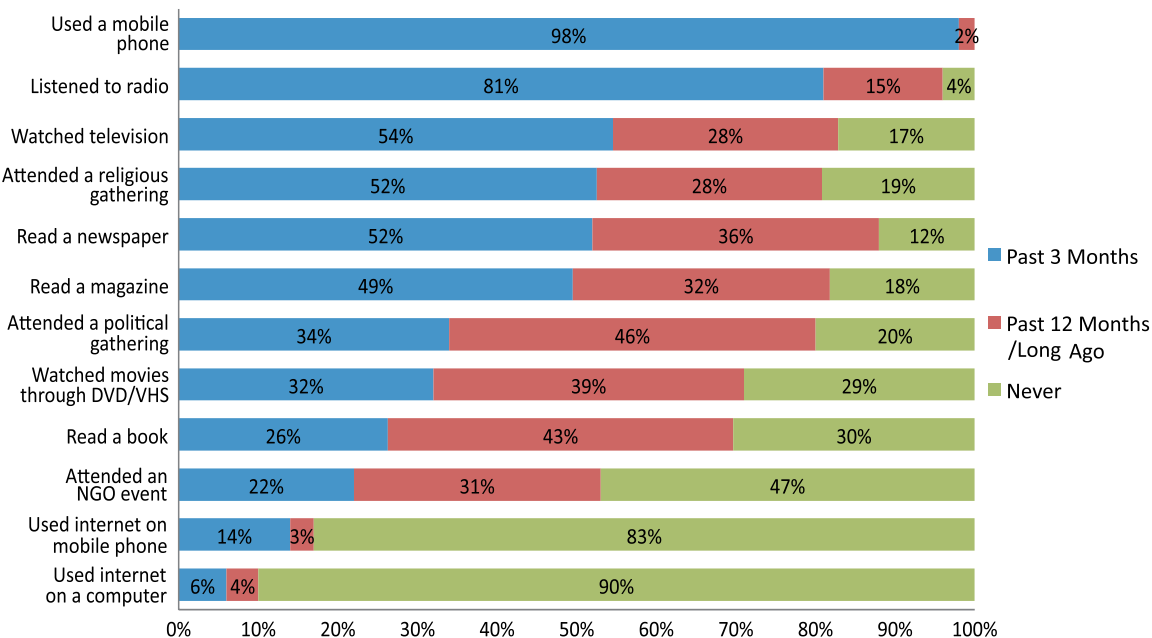
- Radio continues to be the primary mass medium for most Tanzanians
- Few citizens are well informed about national policies
- Information noticeboards at schools and facilities are largely absent
- Citizens would like the government to make more information and data public

2. Eight Facts about access to information in Tanzania

Fact 1: Radio rules the media space

In the past three months, 81% of Tanzanians have listened to the radio. This makes radio the most used mass media in the country. However television no longer appears to be the preserve of the elite: citizens are almost as likely to have watched television (54%) as to have attended a religious gathering (52%) or to have read a newspaper (52%) in the past three months. Internet use is still limited.

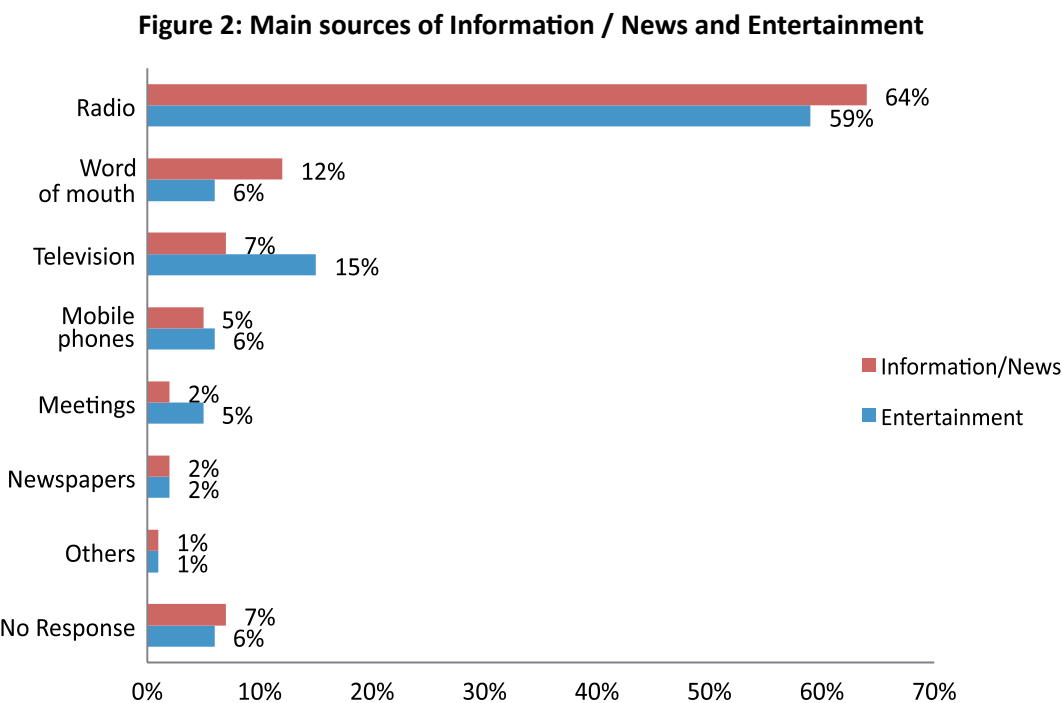
Figure 1: Media used recently by Tanzanians



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013.

Fact 2: Tanzanians use radio to access information

Tanzanians use various media to be informed and entertained. As Figure 2 illustrates, radio is by far the most popular source, both for general information and for entertainment. Word of mouth takes second place as a popular information source, TV is the second most popular source of entertainment. The internet is not an important source of information or entertainment.



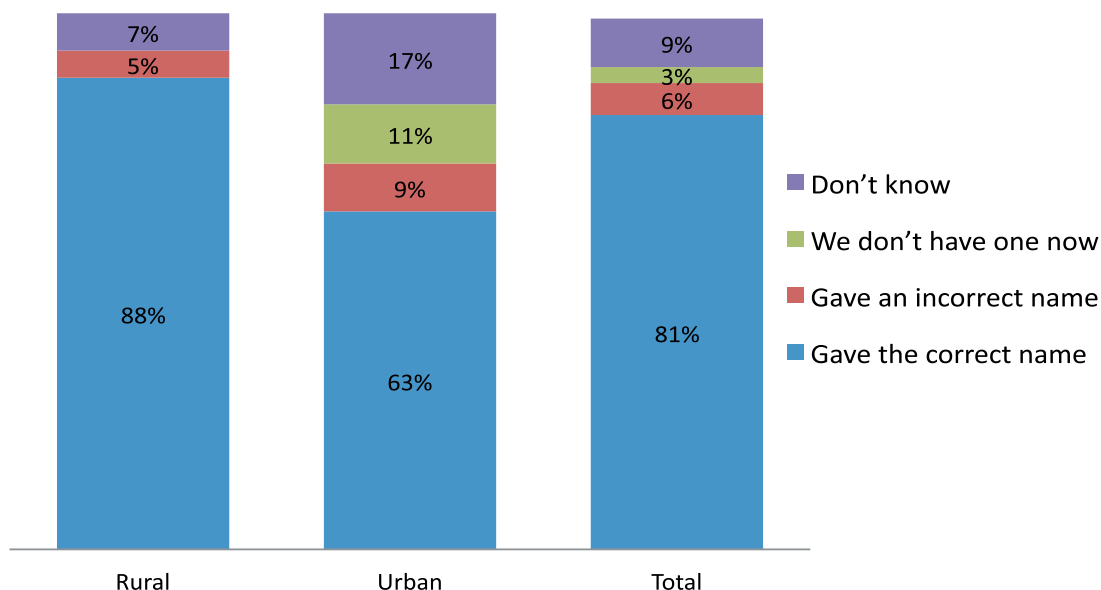
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013.

However, if they want specific information Tanzanians listen to the radio and seek expert or specialist opinion. For example: if they want medical advice 36% would listen to the radio while 25% would contact health facility staff. Similarly, if they want to know the best school in their district, 33% would listen to the radio while 29% would contact a head teacher or teacher. In other words, government service providers play an important role in providing information to citizens.

Fact 3: Citizens in rural Tanzania know their MPs’ names

Members of Parliament are elected every five years. They are expected to serve their constituents’ interests and to be accountable to them. For a start, this means citizens should know the name of their member of parliament: do they? Across mainland Tanzania, 81% of citizens can name their Member of Parliament. As Figure 3 illustrates, this figure is higher in rural areas.

Figure 3 : What is the name of your Member of Parliament?

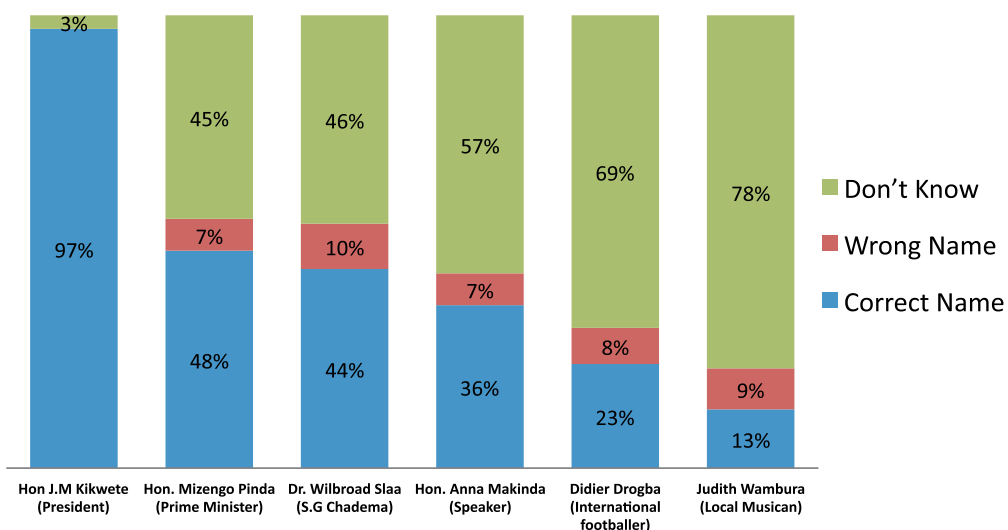


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

Fact 4: President Kikwete beats Didier Drogba (97% to 23%)

In the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey (face to face interviews, October-December 2012), respondents were asked to identify six famous faces from picture cards. An overwhelming majority (97%) of the respondents were able to identify the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, H.E. J.M Kikwete while less than half were able to identify the faces of the other people on the photo card.

Figure 4: Do you know the names of the person in this picture?

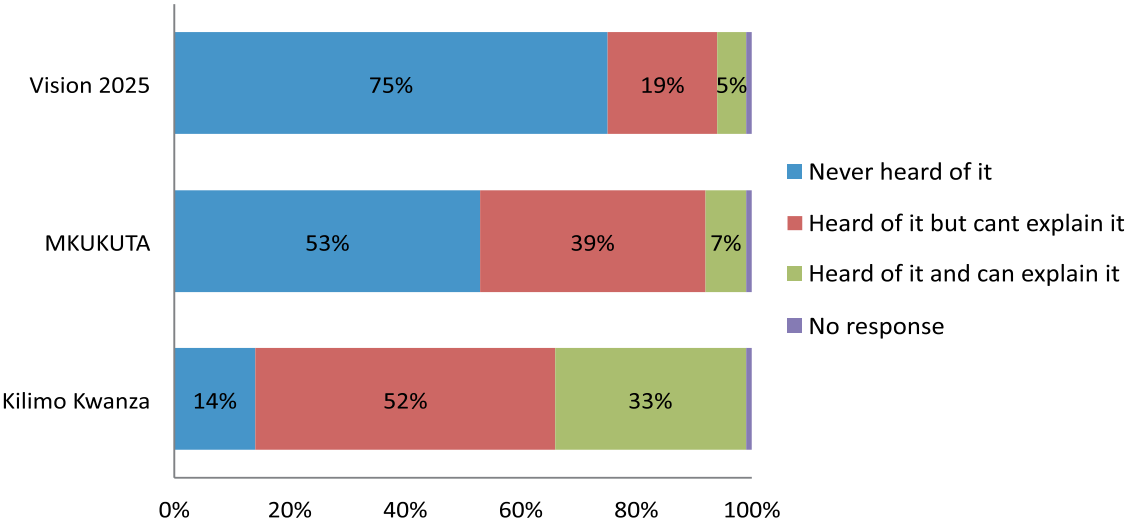


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

Fact 5: Few citizens are well informed about national policies

While MPs and prominent national level politicians are quite well known in Tanzania, this is not true for a number of high profile policies and programs that they have designed. The sustained implementation of national policies and programs requires awareness and understanding of these policies by the citizens. However, data from the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey show that levels of national policy awareness and understanding among citizens are low. Figure 5 illustrates: 75% of the respondents had never heard of Vision 2025¹. Kilimo Kwanza is better known but citizens often cannot explain the meaning of the policy; only 33% of Tanzanians can explain what Kilimo Kwanza means.

Figure 5: Citizens’awareness and understanding of national policies



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

Fact 6: Noticeboards are missing, some citizens ask questions at facilities

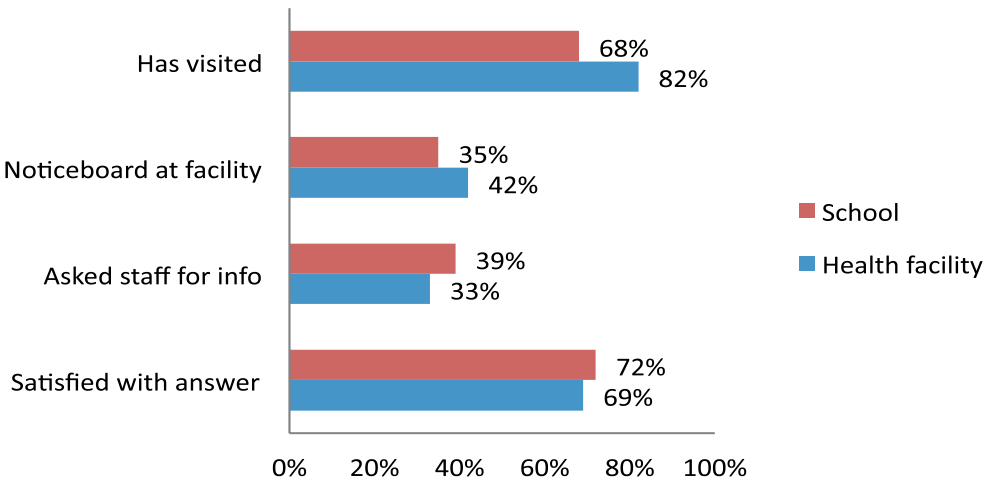
One central function of health and education systems is to provide citizens with information on the services they receive, e.g. on medication, waiting times, school facilities and student progress. Does this happen in Tanzania?

Figure 6 illustrates that 82% of Tanzanians have visited a health facility. Schools were visited by 68% of Tanzanians. In both cases most of the visits were within the last four weeks before the survey. This shows that these service providers are important to huge numbers of citizens. The standard tool for public information provision is a public noticeboard, both at health facilities and at schools. Less than half of the *Sauti za*

1 Vision 2025 is a national strategy which envisions that by 2025 Tanzania should be a middle income country with a high level of human development, free from abject poverty. Kilimo Kwanza is a national resolve to accelerate agricultural transformation. MKUKUTA (Mkakati wa kukuza uchumi na kupunguza umasiki) is the national strategy for growth and reduction of poverty

Wananchi respondents who made a visit reported that such a noticeboard was at the school (35%) or health facility (42%) during their visit. Some citizens ask health staff and teachers for information and are generally satisfied with the answer when they do.

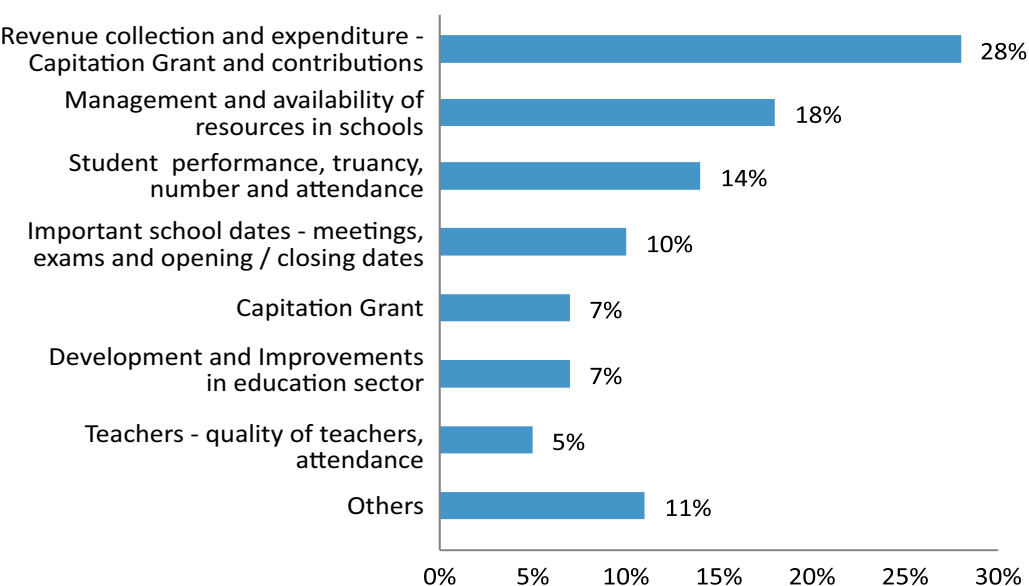
Figure 6: Information at health facilities and schools visited



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013.

What do citizens want to know more about – is there a need for the noticeboards? As shown in Figure 7, those who visited a primary or secondary school are interested in getting information on items such as revenue collection, capitation grants and expenditure in schools (28%), and management and availability of resources in schools (18%).

Figure 7 : The type of information citizens want to find in schools

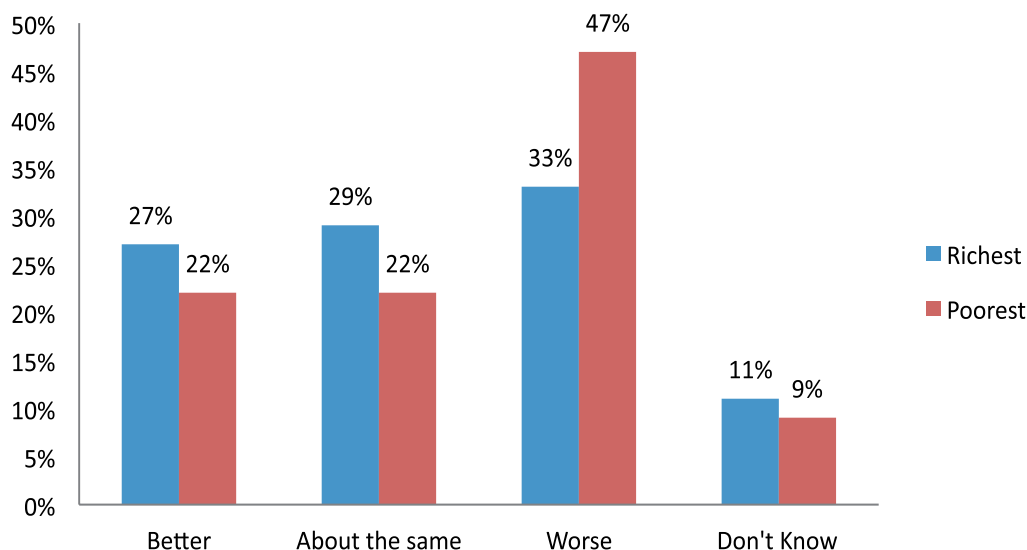


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013.

Fact 7: Poor citizens feel their health care quality is worse

Sauti za Wananchi asked respondents to compare the quality of medical care they receive with that received by other Tanzanians. In this brief we look at the responses offered by the richest and poorest respondents in *Sauti za Wananchi*. The results in Figure 8 show that for the rich² there is no clear pattern: they are equally likely to feel better off as to feel worse off in terms of health care compared to other Tanzanians. Among the poor, almost half (47%) feel worse off in this respect. However, there are also poor respondents who feel better off than other Tanzanians when it comes to health care.

Figure 8: Compared with the quality of medical care recieved by others living in Tanzania how do you rate the quality of medical care you receive?



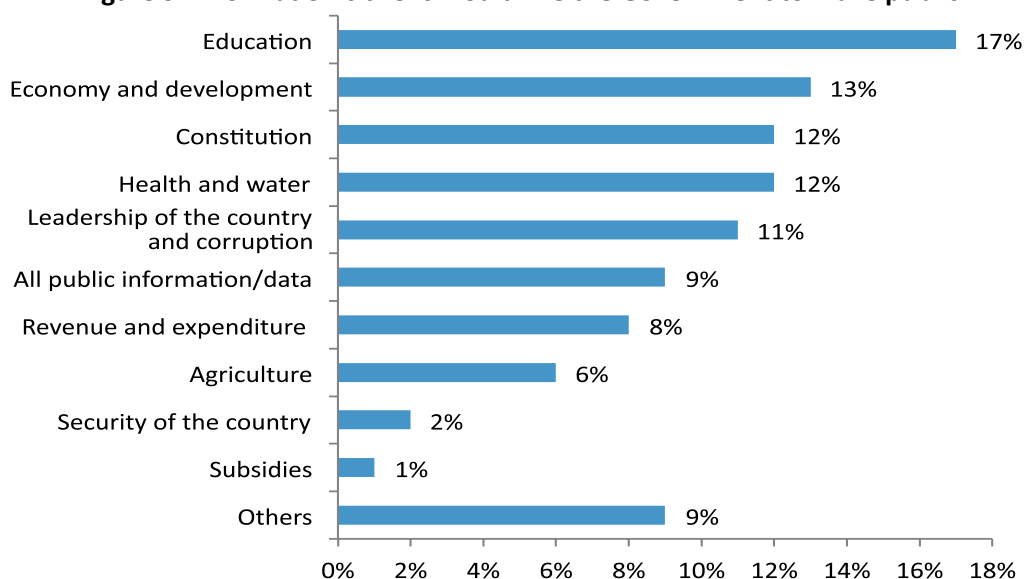
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013

Fact 8: Citizens ask for more public data

Sauti za Wananchi asked respondents whether there is any information they would like the government to make public. Citizens (42% of them) are interested in getting more information on a range of issues as shown in Figure 9. The main topics of interest are education; the economy and development; the constitution; health and water services; leadership of the country and corruption.

² The richest and poorest respondents are defined using a wealth index which is calculated using household ownership of selected assets, in which 20% respondents with the highest ownership of the selected assets are the richest while 20% of the respondents with the lowest ownership are the poorest.

Figure 9: Information citizens would like the Government to make public



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey - Round 3, May 2013

Conclusion

This brief finds that Tanzanians in large numbers express a thirst for getting more information and data from the government. Citizens are particularly interested in service delivery issues in education, water and health but also on governance and the economy. Furthermore, this brief appears to show that politics to many Tanzanians is about a few persons (their MP, the President), especially in rural areas: an overwhelming majority of citizens (97%) are able to identify the face of the President of Tanzania but very few are aware of and can explain major policies. It seems that political figures trump policy issues, as is found in many countries.

At a local level, fewer than 50% of the respondents who had visited either a health facility or a primary/secondary school reported seeing a noticeboard in these facilities. The missing noticeboards point to a wider issue: public information provision is not a priority and does not happen systematically, even though it is mandatory. This leaves citizens in the dark regarding what service standards to expect from service providers. A possibly related finding is that many people feel worse off than others. National transparency about service delivery quality will improve these services and could reduce tensions by managing expectations about service standards.

Lastly, the brief outlines areas and themes for which citizens want the Government of Tanzania to make more information and data available, including basic services (education, health and water), economics and governance. Fortunately Tanzania is one of the signatories to the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a global initiative that aims to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption and encourage use of new technologies to improve governance. This implies that in Tanzania there is both a demand for more public information as well as a government commitment to supply it. *Sauti za Wananchi* will, through periodic surveys, monitor the development of public data access by citizens.