



# Half empty or half full?

## Citizens' views on accessing clean water



## 1. Introduction

Getting clean water continues to be a major challenge for Tanzanians; half of citizens (46%) cite water as one of the three main challenges facing the country<sup>1</sup>. This has also been highlighted by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and has been incorporated into Big Results Now (BRN). BRN aims to restore access to water for 5.3 million Tanzanians currently experiencing disruption and provide access to piped water to 7 million new individuals over the course of two years (by 2015/2016)<sup>2</sup>. The MDG target is broader: 74% of the rural population should be using an improved drinking water source by 2015<sup>3</sup>.

Since both of these goals are supposed to be realised by 2015 / 2016, this is an important moment to learn about citizens' experiences and opinions regarding access to clean water in their localities. Do citizens see access to clean water as a challenge? How long does it take for them to collect water for their daily needs and what are the challenges they experience? And perhaps most importantly, have they seen any difference as a result of the Government's major initiative in the water sector, Big Results Now?

An assessment of citizens' experiences in accessing clean water also provides an overview of progress so far as the world moves from the MDGs to adopt the new Sustainable Development Goals. Water continues to be a priority area and the goal is even more ambitious: clean water for everyone by 2030.

<sup>1</sup> *Sauti za Wananchi*, Brief No. 27, Let the people speak, September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> "Water NKRA Overview." President's Delivery Bureau. N.P., n.d. Web. <http://www.pdb.go.tz/?q=node/40>

<sup>3</sup> "Tanzania Country Report on The Millennium Development Goals 2010." UNDP, 2011. Web.

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. It is representative for Mainland Tanzania. Information on the overall methodology is available at [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti). For this brief data were collected from 1,852 respondents from the second panel for *Sauti za Wananchi*. This was the second round of calls to the new panel, conducted between 9 and 26 September 2015.

The key findings are:

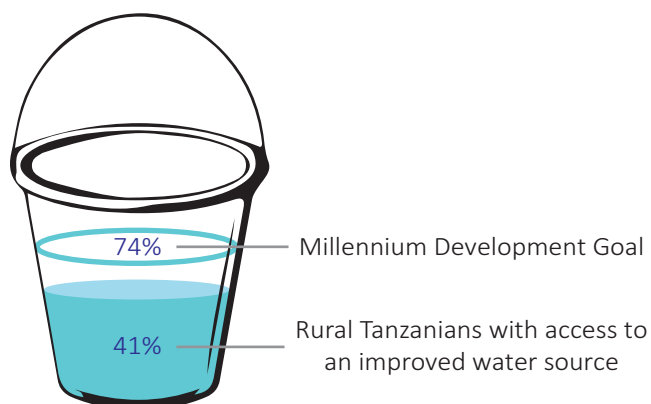
- Four out of ten rural citizens have access to an improved source for drinking water.
- Fewer than 4 out of 10 citizens have access to piped water. The majority collect their drinking water from wells and surface sources.
- More than half (57%) of the population treats water for household use, with boiling being the most common method.
- Water collection is time-consuming and remains primarily the responsibility of women and girls.
- Dirty water and distance to water points are among the main challenges rural communities face in accessing clean water. The main challenges for urban citizens are cost and irregular supply.
- Despite the ambitious Big Results Now initiative, 80% of respondents have not seen any improvements in the water sector.
- Although it has received much attention, the spread of cholera in Tanzania seems to be limited.

## 2. Seven facts about accessing clean water in Tanzania

### **Fact 1: 4 out of 10 rural citizens have access to an improved drinking water source**

Only 41% of rural residents report using any type of improved drinking water source. According to the Millennium Development Goals, at least 74% of rural Tanzanians should be using an improved drinking water source (like piped water, protected wells, and tube wells) by 2015.

**Figure 1: Has Tanzania achieved the Millennium Development Goal on water?**

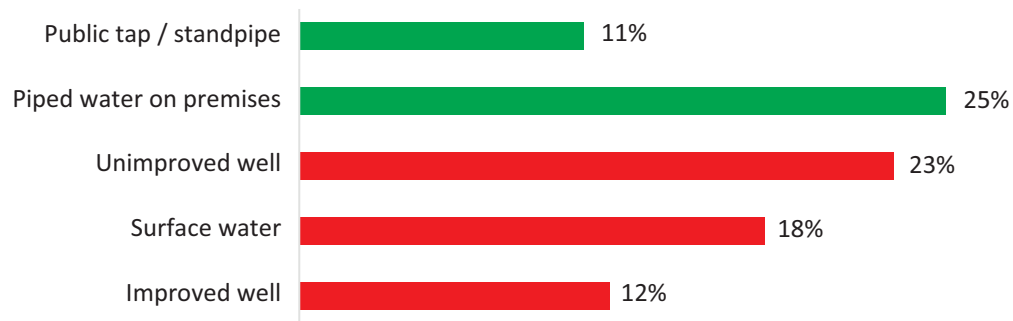


**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015) and Tanzania Country Report on The Millennium Development Goals (2010)

**Fact 2: Fewer than 4 out of 10 citizens have access to piped water, and those in rural areas are more disadvantaged.**

Access to piped water is known to have positive effects on hygiene and health<sup>4</sup>, and reduces the burden of collecting water. Unfortunately, only 36% of citizens get drinking water from piped connections. This figure has been static since 2014<sup>5</sup>. The majority of citizens rely on either wells (35%) or surface water (18%), which are generally less hygienic sources.

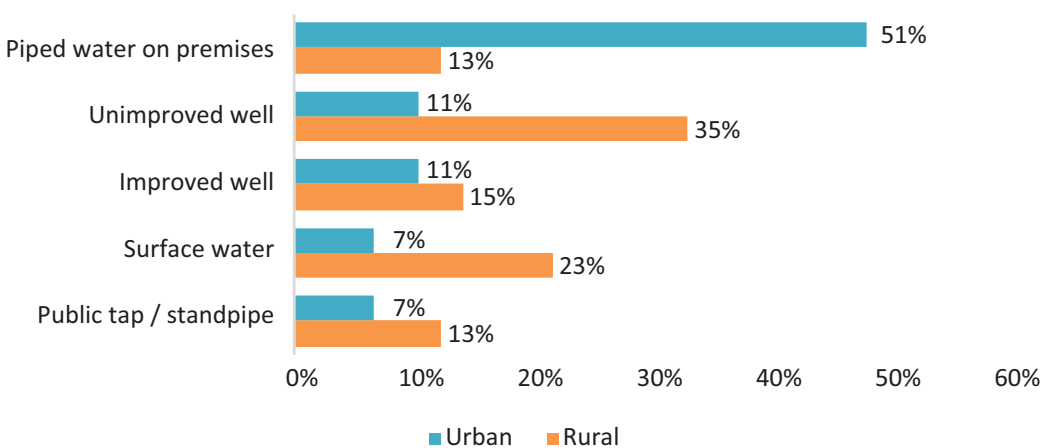
**Figure 2a: What is the main source of drinking water for members of your household?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

The lack of access to piped water is more pronounced in rural areas. While six out of ten (58%) of urban citizens have access to piped water for drinking (either on their premises or from a standpipe), just one in four (26%) of rural citizens enjoy the same access.

**Figure 2b: What is the main source of drinking water for members of your household?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

<sup>4</sup> “Drinking Water: Equity, Safety, and Sustainability.” UNICEF and World Health Organization, 2011. Web

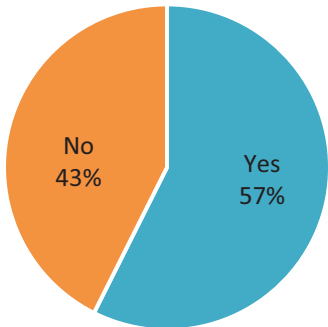
<sup>5</sup> *Sauti za Wananchi* Brief No. 10, Money flows, water trickles, April 2014

**Fact 3: Boiling is the most common method of treatment.**

Almost 6 out of 10 citizens (57%) report treating their water to make it safer to drink. Most of them (85%) boil their water. However large numbers also report straining the water (69%) or letting it stand and settle (38%). These are not appropriate methods of treatment according to World Health Organization and UNICEF standards<sup>6</sup>.

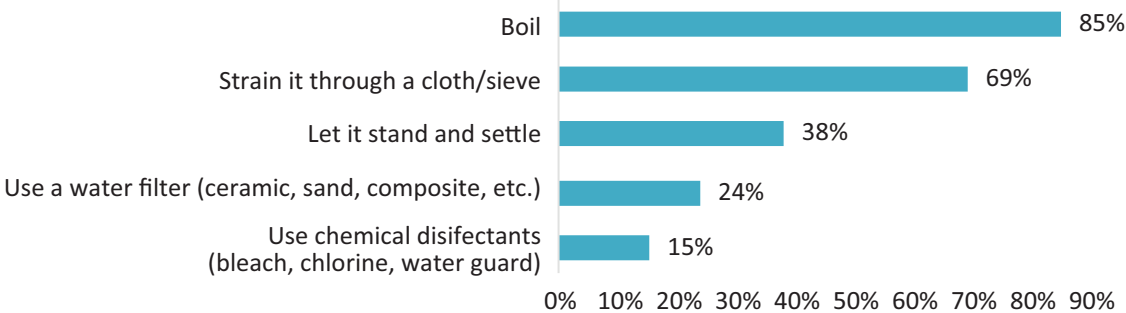
When asked why they did not treat their water, more than 3 out of 10 said it was due to a lack of time and/or resources (data not shown in graph).

**Figure 3a: Do you do anything to your water to make it safer to drink?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

**Figure 3b: What do you do to the water to make it safer to drink?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

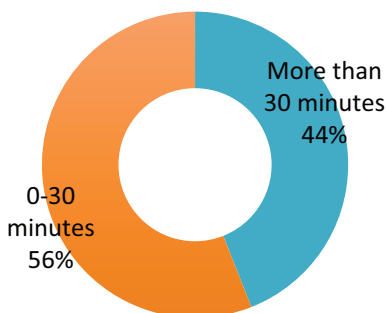
**Fact 4: 44% of citizens spend more than half an hour collecting water.**

While a large majority of respondents (79%) had access to enough water in the two weeks prior to the time of data collection (data not shown in graph), more than 4 out of 10 spent over 30 minutes collecting water per trip. Government policy guidelines recommend that a round trip to collect water should not take more than 30 minutes.

The burden of water collection is not shared equally amongst household members. In more than 7 out of 10 households, women and girls are solely responsible for collecting water (data not shown in graph).

<sup>6</sup> “Drinking Water: Equity, Safety, and Sustainability.” UNICEF and World Health Organization, 2011. Web

**Figure 4: How long does it take to get to your main water source, collect water and come back?**



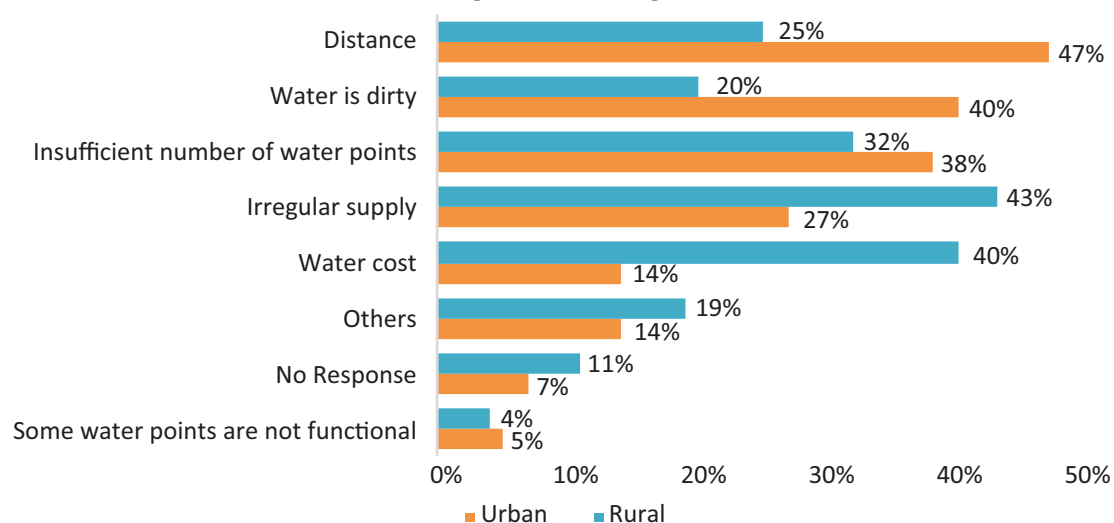
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

### **Fact 5: More than 6 out of 10 citizens see access to clean drinking water as the most serious problem in their community**

Despite the fact that so many respondents were able to obtain the water they needed in the recent past, 65% still believe that access to clean drinking water is the most serious problem facing their community (data not shown in graph).

Citizens experience many challenges in accessing water, with significant differences in the experiences of rural and urban communities. Rural residents emphasized the distance to water points (47%) and the water being dirty (40%), while urban residents were troubled by the irregular supply (43%) and high cost (40%) of water. Similar numbers in both groups reported the lack of water points as a challenge.

**Figure 5: What are the two main challenges your community is facing in accessing clean drinking water?**



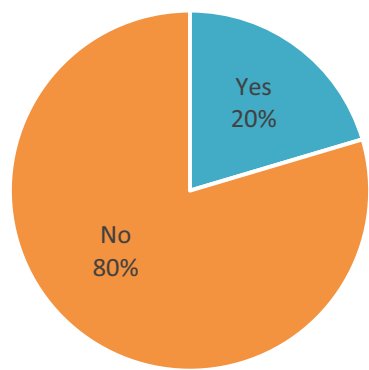
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

**Fact 6: Despite Big Results Now 8 out of 10 citizens see no change**

Big Results Now (BRN) was launched in 2013, and included an ambitious two-year plan for the water sector. It aimed to provide water to seven million previously unserved Tanzanians, and increase the overall coverage of the rural population from 40 to 67 percent by 2015/2016. However, with the initiative in its second year, 80% of citizens have not seen any improvement in coverage or access.

BRN reports that there has been a significant increase in access gained between 2013/2014 and the years before. In 2013/2014, water projects under BRN provided access to clean water to an additional 2.36 million individuals. Before BRN, the average annual increase in coverage was 300,000-500,000 people.<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 6: In 2013, the Government launched a new initiative know as Big Results Now “BRN” and one of the sectors in BRN is the water sector. Have you noticed any difference in the water sector in your community?**



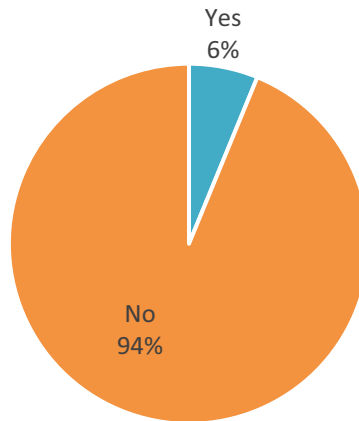
**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

**Fact 7: The spread of Cholera is limited in Tanzania**

Cholera spreads in dirty conditions, and contaminated water can carry this illness to individuals and communities. Recently there have been a large amount of media coverage of the onset and spread of cholera in Tanzania. Despite the high frequency of news stories, only 6% of citizens reported seeing or hearing of someone who had been diagnosed with cholera in the four weeks prior to our survey.

<sup>7</sup> “Big Results Now! 2013/2014 Annual Report.” United Republic of Tanzania President’s Office, President’s Delivery Bureau, n.d. Web.

**Figure 7: In the past four weeks, have you seen or heard of a relative, friend or neighbor who has been diagnosed with cholera?**



**Source of data:** *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Preliminary Wave 2 (September 2015)

### 3. Conclusion

It is clear that accessing clean drinking water continues to be a major daily challenge for Tanzanians. The national government and development partners acknowledge this, and have created plans to significantly improve the water sector in Tanzania by 2015/2016. However, results have been limited. As our data shows, access to piped water is inadequate in rural Tanzania. Water collection continues to be a time-consuming task that is mostly carried out by women. And the vast majority of citizens have seen no change in the water sector despite the ambitious goals set out by the Big Results Now initiative.

Tanzania is also lagging behind on the global and regional stage. According to a 2014 report by the World Health Organization and UNICEF, Tanzania was not on track to meet its MDG target for access to improved sources of drinking water by December 2015. This target had already been met by 116 countries in 2012, with an additional 31 being on track to meet it by the end of 2015. Tanzania has also fallen behind both Kenya and Uganda in providing access to water to its citizens. Uganda (at 75% access) has already met its MDG target, and Kenya (at 62%) was providing access to improved water sources for 10% more of its population than Tanzania (at 52%) in 2012. Since the new Sustainable Development Goal on water aims to ensure access to clean and safe water for all, Tanzania will be starting from a lower base than neighboring countries and will have to work very hard to meet this ambitious target.

As a new government starts its work, it is an opportune unique moment to rethink Tanzania's water strategy. The president and his ministers should evaluate past initiatives to understand why some water targets could not be met and create new programs to gradually improve access to water in all parts of the nation, especially rural areas. Despite significant increases in the budget for the water sector in recent years, the percentage of

the population with access to clean water has remained essentially static. With its sparse population and huge land mass, Tanzania faces a unique set of challenges in providing access to water for all citizens. But clean drinking water is a basic right and is essential to good health, especially for young children. Thus, we need to think creatively and quickly about how to ensure all citizens enjoy a regular and accessible supply of safe, clean water.