



Press Release

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Personalities trump policies But citizens are demanding more data

7 August 2013, Dar es Salaam: Almost all (97%) citizens recognise the picture of H.E. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, while less than 1 out of 10 of them can explain MKUKUTA (7%) or Vision 2025 (5%). The best known high profile national policy is Kilimo Kwanza which 3 out of 10 citizens (33%) have heard of and can explain. After President Kikwete, less than half (48%) can identify Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda. At the same time, almost half (42%) of citizens would like government to make more data and information public.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Citizens, radios, noticeboards: Information demand and supply in Tanzania*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, a nationally representative mobile phone survey of households across mainland Tanzania.

The recent switch to digital television and the newly introduced SIM card tax have created national debate on access to information and communication. *Sauti za Wananchi* sought to find out how Tanzanians primarily access information and of what type, whether citizens were aware of politicians and policies and whether there is demand for information from government.

Radio continues to dominate as a source of information and entertainment. The majority (81%) of citizens have listened to the radio in the past three months: of those, 64% use it as a source of information and news while 59% use it for entertainment. Almost all citizens (98%) have used a mobile phone in the past three months but less than 1 out of 10 of them use mobile phones for entertainment or news. In terms of accessing information and news, after radio, word of mouth is the next most popular source with 12% accessing information and news this way. However when it comes to specific information about service delivery, many people ask government service providers: for medical advice 36% would listen to the radio while 25% would contact health facility staff and 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.

As is the case in much of the world, people know about political personalities but very few of them can describe important national policies. In total, 8 out of 10 (81%) Tanzanians know the name of their MP, this is particularly high in rural areas where almost 9 out of 10 (88%) of people know their local MP. In urban areas this drops to 6 out of 10 (63%). Three quarters of Tanzanians have never heard of Vision 2025 (national strategy aimed at making Tanzania a middle income country by 2025) and over half (53%) have never heard of MKUKUTA (national strategy for growth and reduction of poverty).

However, citizens would like government to provide more information on a range of topics including education (17%), the economy and development (13%), the Constitution (12%) and health and water (12%). Much of the information citizens are demanding covers basic services. For many citizens, this is

the primary point of contact with government and public information. Most Tanzanians have visited a health facility (82%) and a school (68%) in the last four weeks. At these facilities, noticeboards are the most common source of information yet these are largely absent: only 35% of schools and 42% of health facilities appear to have noticeboards. Yet, when asked about school information that they would like to know, citizens list a range of topics from revenues and expenditures including the Capitation Grant, to teacher and student information, and even developments in the education sector.

“Citizens want more information,” said Elvis Mushi, Researcher at Twaweza “particularly in terms of local service delivery. However the absence of noticeboards at facilities implies that information provision is not a priority and does not happen systematically, despite government regulations and commitments through the Open Government Partnership.”

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, emphasized the point. *“Greater access to information is a requirement and will support citizens to play a more active role in our country’s development.”*

The Twaweza brief presents several other findings as well and can be downloaded from www.twaweza.org/sauti

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Notes to Editors

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, or www.twaweza.org/sauti
- Twaweza is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action, and seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account.
- You can follow Twaweza’s work

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