

Proposal for Evaluation Study Submitted to
***Twaweza* – “We Can Make it Happen”**

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Evaluation/Assessment of the Uwezo Projects in Tanzania and Kenya

(1 January 2011- 31 December 2013)

Overview of proposed research

Twaweza, in conjunction with its partner organization Uwezo, has embarked on a bold project to increase the agency and participation of citizens, and to improve the quality of education in East Africa, as measured by school age literacy and numeracy. This proposal reflects our understanding of Twaweza's interest in a multi-method analysis and assessment that will incorporate a variety of measurement strategies and analyses.

The proposed research will allow for a rigorous assessment of the Twaweza/Uwezo core interventions: literacy/numeracy tests administered to students in villages and urban locations, as well as various follow-up informational campaigns. The study will allow us to understand the direct impact of the literacy/numeracy tests and the immediate follow-up information provided by Uwezo on parent attitudes and participation in their child's education, and the impact on student performance in the short-term. It will also shed light on the effects of different informational campaigns in generating broader social mobilization and feelings of efficacy both in the communities in which Uwezo worked and in adjacent communities via spillover. Our findings will also provide us with a rich combination of qualitative and quantitative data on the processes that may be activated by these campaigns and how these processes may be shaped by pre-existing contextual and institutional factors.

We are proposing to study the effects of the Uwezo intervention in Kenya in two phases, as described below.

Tanzania Study: Analysis of the December 2010 "Baseline" Survey

This study will assess the impact of the Uwezo I assessment module on educational outcomes, school choice, and political attitudes and behavior at the household- and village-levels in Tanzania. We will analyze whether, following the administration of the Uwezo test and the reporting of literacy/numeracy results to parents, parents and villagers act in ways predicted by the "Twaweza model." Some of the particular questions we hope to be able to answer include:

- Do literacy and numeracy improve in the short term among tested children?
- Does school attendance improve among tested children and within schools that contain tested children?
- Does teacher attendance improve in schools with tested children?
- Do parents of tested children who learn that their children are underperforming take action by moving their children to another type of school?
- Are parents in households with tested children more likely to take actions to improve school performance (for example by attending school committee meetings, raising education issues in community discussions or with school committee members, or by monitoring teacher attendance)?
- Do parents of tested children feel empowered to address problems of education, or other types of problems in their community?
- Do parents of tested children contribute to the functioning and upkeep of the school at higher rates than parents of untested children, or than parents in villages that contain no tested children at all?

To answer these questions, we will compare three groups: Parents of learners who received the Uwezo I assessment test (UA); parents of learners in an "Uwezo village" (that is, a village/urban area

in which children were given the Uwezo assessment) but who were not assessed (Ua); and, as a control group, parents from villages where there were no Uwezo I assessments (ua). We will also measure changes over time in test performance and school attendance rates of children assessed in Uwezo I.

Because the Uwezo I assessments were carried out in villages, (and households within villages) that were selected at random, we can compare differences in outcomes across treated and untreated units without concern for selection effects. In all cases, the Twaweza model implies that post-treatment, we should expect $UA > Ua > ua$ for all outcomes of interest.

We will conduct additional analyses to assess the degree to which the impact is conditioned by:

- The income or wealth of the household or village
- The degree of political competition within the village
- The ethnic group membership of the household/ ethnic composition of the village
- Other background variables

Methods: The Uwezo I assessment was administered to a random sample of villages in Tanzania in May 2010. In December 2010- January 2011, Twaweza, in conjunction with a research partner AIID, administered a survey to a multistage-sample of households that will include both Uwezo-treated and non-treated villages/urban areas.

We will analyze these data once they are furnished to us by Twaweza/Uwezo.

Limitations and Comments: While the proposed analysis will yield rich insights into the effects of the Uwezo intervention, it will suffer from three limitations that bear highlighting. First, because the baseline survey was conducted in December 2010-January 2011, we will be assessing the impact of the Uwezo I intervention just 7-8 months following the assessment, whereas the Twaweza model implies that the full impact of the interventions (on both literacy/numeracy and on community-level social mobilization) may require a significantly longer time frame to emerge. While it is certainly possible that we could observe a substantial effect within a shorter period of time, there is a significant likelihood that the measured effects will be smaller than they would have been had the follow-up research taken place at a later date.

Nonetheless, the Twaweza model posits that information will lead to action, and one critical piece of information provided is a contribution to a parent's knowledge of their child's educational attainment—as presented by a friendly but hopefully credible stranger. We expect the greatest impact for parents of students who performed poorly on the test. The proposed analyses will allow us to assess whether this treatment has any impact on parent attitudes or actions. If there *is* an impact, then it will obviously be important to identify it and measure its size. If there is *not* an impact, but if the Uwezo treatment more generally does generate results, then we will know that the results were largely driven by other processes, not by the assessment itself.

Second, information dissemination campaigns launched by Uwezo/Twaweza concerning the results of the study may affect both villages/urban areas that received the Uwezo I assessments (i.e., treated sites) and those that did not (i.e., untreated sites). If these campaigns have similar effects as those predicted by the initial assessment module, then this will have the effect of diminishing the magnitude of whatever difference we may observe between treated and untreated villages. Specifically, if we find evidence of citizen agency among households in both sets of villages, we may have a difficult time

concluding whether or not Uwezo I had any impact. On the other hand, if we find very low levels of agency in the Uwezo villages, irrespective of what we find in the control villages, then we will be in a position to conclude that there was no effect caused by the Uwezo I treatment.

Third, because we will not be able to stratify the sample according to the factors hypothesized to have conditional effects (i.e., household income, ethnic identity, political competition), our ability to generate inferences about the effects of those factors will depend heavily upon the distribution of households and villages that emerge from the random sampling.

Kenya Study, Phase I (May-October 2011)

We are proposing a two phase research plan. The first phase—which constitutes the “plus-plus” part of our “RCT-plus-plus” research design—will attempt to understand if and how the various Uwezo interventions have had an impact on citizens attitudes and behavior within a relatively small number of villages/urban locations located within a single county in Kenya.¹ On the basis of what we learn in this module, we will carry out more focused research in phase II to estimate more precisely the effects of select interventions that appear to have the greatest impact and/or are of the most interest to Uwezo/Twaweza.

During phase I, we will focus on our research on villages/urban areas located within two districts (Rongo and Kirinyaga), with relatively low/high levels of socio-economic development.

From each district, we will select approximately 10 villages/urban areas that are geographically insulated from one another, that did not receive treatment in Uwezo I, but were selected for the Uwezo II intervention. From those 10, Uwezo should conduct their full range of assessments and immediate follow-up interventions in just 6 villages, and conduct the assessment only in the 4 remaining villages. We will also select an additional 6 villages from each district that are matched with the first six villages on a range of relevant background features on the basis of available sub-location-level census data.

We will ask the Uwezo coordinator to take careful notes regarding the exact implementation of the treatment, and perhaps have a graduate student member of our research team accompany the Uwezo enumerators in some villages.

This will provide us with 16 villages in each of 2 districts for a total of 32 villages for study.

During the period of early June – late August/early September, we will observe household and village activity in the treated villages, using the control villages as a comparative reference. Specifically, we propose to employ 2 American graduate students and 4 Kenyan graduate students to form 2 research teams. Each team will be responsible for studying the respective districts.

The research teams will visit each of their 16 study villages at least once, and will try to visit as many as possible on repeated occasions. The research will include the fielding of a household survey in each village, and engaging in close range observation of meetings, action, etc. The teams will be mandated to write up careful field notes from their visits to each village. In particular, the graduate student team leaders will spend more extended periods of time in key treatment villages selected depending on field conditions and preliminary findings. Their multi-method research will allow us to observe the

¹ Under Kenya’s new constitution, counties have displaced districts as the major unit of sub-national administration and governance. Hence we define our research areas in phases I and II in terms of counties.

processes that unfold in real time after an Uwezo assessment takes place and to understand the outcomes that are most immediately affected, the mechanisms through which these changes take place, and the background conditions under which changes are more likely to take place. While the questionnaire we will implement will include many of the variables identified in the Tanzanian Baseline Survey, our field-based approach will also allow us also to identify unanticipated perceptions, actions/reaction, and dynamics in the villages.

As part of this study, we would like to carry out close observations of the impact of the follow-up information dissemination campaigns that Uwezo undertakes in the aftermath of the literacy/numeracy assessments. To facilitate our analysis of the impact of these critical Uwezo activities, *we will ask that Uwezo plan some of its follow-up information dissemination campaigns in our study county to occur prior to the scheduled departures of our graduate research assistants*, and to inform us and our researchers about the exact timing of the dissemination. In this way, our researchers will be in place and well-positioned to observe how those campaigns actually reach the villages, and to observe reactions in the villages in the subsequent weeks.

We expect that this module will provide important information concerning the processes and pathways through which the Uwezo treatment affects citizens, as well as whether certain individual factors (SES, gender, ethnicity) and/or village-level characteristics (political competition, development, ethnic competition, information penetration) condition the effectiveness of the various Uwezo interventions.

Limitations: Again, we will face certain limitations in our abilities to make causal inferences, chief among them being that we are deliberately limiting ourselves at this stage to a relatively small set of villages/urban areas, and to a single county. These limitations are part of a tradeoff, where we sacrifice some generalizability for the sake of being able to observe extremely closely the patterns of behavior and attitudinal change that are triggered by the Uwezo interventions.

Kenya Study, Phase II (March 2012-August 2013)

We anticipate that, while we will learn a great deal from the Tanzania and Kenya phase I analyses described above, these studies will inevitably leave a number of unanswered questions of keen interest to Uwezo/Twaweza. The principal purpose of phase II (which will take place in conjunction with, and involve an evaluation of, Uwezo III) is to address the most important of these as of yet unanswered questions. Our preference, therefore, is to maintain maximum flexibility in project design in phase II so that we will be able to respond to the unmet research needs that we and Twaweza/Uwezo jointly determine to be of highest priority.

Since generating definitive answers to questions about causal effects will require comparisons across treated and untreated units, and in anticipation of phase II's role in generating definitive answers (we anticipate that this phase of the study will involve the RCT portion of our "RCT-plus-plus" research design), we would like Twaweza/Uwezo to commit to adhering to a precise sampling plan, to be developed by the research team, for the rollout of interventions and follow-ups associated with Uwezo III *in at least one or two counties of Kenya*. In this portion of the study, we fully support Uwezo delivering the "treatment" as it would "normally" do so, but we would like Twaweza/Uwezo to commit to following specified parameters in terms of the location and timing of such interventions—including the delay of assessments, information dissemination campaigns or communications activities until we have carried out the RCT portion of our study.

TIMETABLE

	Uwezo/Twaweza	Princeton research team
February 2011	Uwezo II treatment in field in Kenya	Begin to recruit American and Kenyan research staff.
March 2011	Uwezo II treatment in field in Kenya	Project manager arrives in Kenya to recruit Kenyan field researchers, discuss plans for training in human subjects, learn from Uwezo about scope of activities
May 2011	Twaweza to furnish Tanzanian household survey data to Princeton	Begin data analysis of Tanzanian survey Training of graduate student researchers, finalization of survey and ethnographic instruments/protocols
June 2011	Inform Princeton PI about follow-up information dissemination interventions in study county	Research teams begin field research in Kenya
July-August 2011		Research teams continue field research ; Shift focus to impact of Uwezo follow-up information dissemination activities following Uwezo actions
September 2011		Field research in Kenya completed Organize and clean data
October 2011-February 2012		Write papers based on Kenya phase I study and analysis of Tanzania survey
March-April 2012		Development of Kenya Phase II proposal
May 2012- August 2013	Uwezo III treatment in field in Kenya	Kenya Phase II implementation
May 2013 – December 2013		Write up results from Kenya phase II study

Research outputs

The contracting party will, prior to the end of this contract, do the following:

- Produce a scholarly paper that reports on the motivation and findings of the Kenya Phase I research and submit that to a leading peer reviewed disciplinary and/or development journal.
- Write a scholarly paper that reports on our analysis of the Tanzania survey data that we will attempt to publish in a leading disciplinary and/or developmental journal. However, because ours and related disciplines have a heavy bias against publication of null findings, we caution that the likelihood of publication will be heavily dependent upon the estimated effect sizes and robustness of the findings, which are, of course, beyond our control.
- Write a research report (which may be similar to #2 above) that may be published by Twaweza and/or the Contracting Party, in a timeframe to be agreed by both parties that summarize the findings from the analysis of the Tanzanian “baseline survey,” and from the Kenya Phase II research.
- Write a summary brief that explains the objectives, methods, and conclusions of the Kenya field research in clear and simple language.
- Send via email all compiled datasets collected from all stages of the research with Uwezo/Twaweza.
- Conduct an informal briefing on preliminary impressions from the field research conducted June-August 2011.
- Write periodic web-log (blog) entries about findings and field research to be published on a site created by Uwezo/Twaweza. Entries may also be posted on the investigators’ personal websites.
- Respond to queries about our research as directed by Uwezo/Twaweza.
- Attend two planned research conferences hosted by Uwezo/Twaweza, the budgeting for which will be borne by Uwezo/Twaweza.

Budget

Total Budget 2011-2013 including extra cost for baseline survey: USD 536,983