



Press Release

4 August 2016

1 out of 2 Kenyans claim they have heard about the changes taking place in education 3 out of 10 think students should have an open forum to air their grievances

4 August 2016, Nairobi: Kenyans appear to be well informed about changes occurring in the education sector. Half (52%) say they have heard of changes in the education sector. In the last several months there have been a number of announcements made about education – ranging from presentations on the curriculum reform process so far to student unrest as a result of a ban on leisure activities and visits during the third term when students are sitting for examinations.

These findings were released by Twaweza, in a research brief titled *What's going on in our schools? Citizens' views on recent developments in education*. The findings are based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,783 respondents across Kenya in June and July 2016.

When asked to name specific changes in the education sector, most answers relate to curriculum changes. Of those who said they are informed about changes, 4 out of 10 (41%) mention curriculum reforms. A further 26% are aware of the recent ban on leisure activities (such as prayer days, half-term, sports, prize-giving events) and visits. Far fewer Kenyans are informed about the Ministry of Education centrally procuring text books (8%) or the announcement that students will not be allowed to enter schools before 7.15am (6%). However it is noteworthy that 30% of the responses given to this question were incorrect, meaning that some Kenyans who claimed to be informed actually are not.

When it comes to addressing the recent violence in schools, Kenyans favour conciliatory solutions. The majority of citizens are in favour of dialogue between the affected parties including an open space for students to air grievances. Far fewer Kenyans want to arrest and punish those responsible. Specifically, 3 out of 10 citizens (34%) think that students need an open forum to air their grievances – this was the most popular solution. Other responses include providing guidance and counselling for students (24%), for teachers on handling student issues (12%) or for parents (5%). On the punitive side, citizens mention re-introducing corporal punishment in schools (19%), expelling students from education entirely (12%) or putting those responsible in prison (6%).

John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza, said *"It is heartening to know that Kenyans are following developments in education closely. The recent unrest has sent shockwaves through the country and it seems that citizens favour conciliatory approaches to addressing the issues. It is unlikely that student anger will be quelled through punishments so the government may do well to heed the advice of citizens and allow all those involved to air their concerns and work together to find a way forward."*

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For more information:

Brezhnev Otieno, Advocacy Manager for Kenya, Twaweza

e: botieno@twaweza.org | t: (+254) (0) 786 563 722

Notes to Editors

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, or www.twaweza.org/sauti
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