



Press Release
14 March 2017

81% of Kenyans report that their income is insufficient to meet their household's basic daily needs

Large numbers of citizens struggle to afford food, schooling and housing

14 March 2017, Nairobi: On average, Kenya citizens estimate their daily needs at KES 99 per person yet 8 out of 10 citizens (81%) feel their income is insufficient to meet their household's needs. Faced with these cash constraints, half (49%) of those affected tighten their expenditure to survive.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Going Without? Household economics in Kenya*. The brief is 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 1,739 respondents across Kenya in September to October 2016.

The data provide insight into the many faces of poverty which a significant number of Kenyans experience.

- **Food:** Almost half of Kenyans (43%) went to bed without eating for the whole day due to a lack of money or other resources and 65% skipped a meal when hungry in the past three months
- **Education:** Almost half (44%) of the households with school-going children have had to withdraw their children from school in the past six months because they could not pay the fees or buy school supplies
- **Housing:** A relatively small but significant proportion (23%) of Kenyans rent their homes (23%), but three out of four of them have had difficulty paying their rent in the past 12 months.

Notably, citizens name inflation and the high cost of living as the main problems facing their households (41%) and the country as a whole (34%).

If citizens were given KES 10,000 by the government as a gift, they would spend three quarters of it on starting or growing a business (KES 3,600), on school fees (KES 1,900) and on food (KES 1,900)

Dr John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza, said: *"Measuring poverty and its relationship to our ever-rising GDP may be a contested area. But the lived reality of poverty presented in these data can not be ignored. Most Kenyans make difficult choices everyday between basic needs despite the credit our economy gets for strong growth. Even those slightly better off are living on a knife-edge, at the mercy of price shocks or any personal misfortune that harms their ability to earn an income. Recognizing how financially vulnerable we all are, will help us face the major task of forging a propensity that is shared by all Kenyans.."*

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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 works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a globally respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa's largest annual citizen assessment to assess children's learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership
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