



Press Release
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Parents see shortages of teachers as the biggest challenge in education ***But most parents know little about school financing, recent education reforms and learning***

24 May 2018, Nairobi: Parents say that a shortage of teachers is the biggest challenge facing schools at all levels: pre-primary (named by 40% of parents), primary (46%) and secondary (35%). The largest group of citizens (22%) also name teacher shortages as the main challenge arising from making education free, followed closely (20%) by poor teacher performance.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *What's going on in our schools? Kenyans' opinions and experiences of the education sector*. 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 1,703 respondents across Kenya between October and November 2017.

Although they are consistent about what challenges seem prevalent in the sector, Kenyans are divided on whether the quality of education has improved (42%) or deteriorated (32%) since schools became [fee] free.

A large majority of citizens are also unaware of recent education reforms: curriculum changes were most well-known, mentioned by 1 out of 4 citizens (26%), but 6 out of 10 citizens (58%) could not name any reforms at all and 1 out of 10 (10%) mentioned a reform that has not happened.

Citizens are also disengaged from school finances: only 3 out of 100 can correctly state the amount of money government sends to primary and secondary schools per student in replacement for school fees. Three out of four do not know if this money arrives at their local school (76%) and the same number (75%) say they have never been to school to look for information about finances.

However, 8 out of 10 citizens (81%) think that they have a role to play in improving the quality of education in the country. And in some ways they are actively fulfilling their obligations: 8 out of 10 citizens visit their children's school and discuss learning with teachers at least once a term. Half of parents also help their children with homework more than twice a term, although one out of five (19%) never do.

Victor Rateng of *Sauti za Wananchi* at Twaweza, said: *"Citizens are engaged and interested in their children's education. However, there is an emphasis on individual actions such as helping with homework or talking with teachers. Citizens are unlikely to be engaged with school finances and systems. This, combined with low levels of knowledge about school quality, means that they are unlikely to come together to demand systemic change to how public education is delivered."*

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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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