



Press Release  
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**Half of Uganda's parents do not speak to anyone about problems they see at school  
More parents name school contributions as the biggest challenge than any other issue**

**Thursday, 8 November 2018, Kampala:** Just under half of Ugandan parents (46%) do not speak to anyone about problems they identify at their children's schools. If parents do report problems they see, they tend to speak to proximate school leaders rather than people in government. Parents mention head teachers (26%), School Management Committees (17%) and teachers (10%).

Further, 8 out of 10 parents (82%) do not do anything about the problems in the education sector beyond reporting them. Previous *Sauti za Wananchi* findings have shown that citizens claim they are more likely to take action in education than other sectors.

When parents do report an issue, they are met with limited response. Around 1 out of 10 say the problem was solved completely (7%), three out of ten say it was partially solved (32%) and the rest, six out of ten, say the problem was not solved at all (61%).

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Preparing the Next Generation: Ugandans' opinions and experiences on education*. 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 1,878 respondents across Uganda in September and October 2018.

When asked to name the main problem facing their child or children's school, however, more parents name school contributions than any other issue for both primary (14%) and secondary (23%) schools. The second most reported issue is distance (12% both for primary and secondary schools). Parents report paying for tuition / extra classes (68%), food items (60%), school books / materials (58%) and construction (57%).

Nonetheless, citizens are engaging with schools. One out of three have asked for financial information from their local school (34%), although men are more likely than women (38% vs. 30%) and rural residents are more likely than urban citizens (36% vs. 30%) to do so. In more than half of such cases, citizens were able to find some financial information on display.

On school finances, however, half of citizens (57%) are familiar with the Capitation Grant (41% aware, 16% aware after probing). And even more citizens cannot name any item that the Capitation Grant is used for (59%) while only 2% say they know the amount of the grant. Among these the responses range from UGX 300 to UGX 3 million per pupil. The Capitation Grant may help to reduce some of the burden of contributions on parents.

Citizens are also fulfilling their responsibilities in school governance: 1 out of 10 report being members of school committees (10%) and almost all of these (8% of all citizens) claim to be active participants.

Parents also report some knowledge about how school committees function, who is supposed to be a member and the type of issues committees are supposed to work on, ideally and in practice.

Half of citizens have seen a teacher out of school during school hours (47%). Half of them (24%) report having approached the absent teacher to raise the issue. The most popular reason given for not approaching the teacher was the fear of negative repercussions (42% of those who did not speak to the teacher directly mentioned this). Parents do see teacher attendance as the primary responsibility of the school or head teacher (63%).

When it comes to school values, citizens hold emphatic views. Almost all citizens (94%) want girls who get pregnant to continue with their education whether after giving birth (74%), during pregnancy (13%), or in another school (7%). And this appears to be a far-reaching problem: four out of ten citizens (35%) know of a family member who dropped out of school due to pregnancy. Among these, half are now housewives (51%), 14% are unemployed and 12% are back in school. When it comes to the male students who impregnate school girls however, citizens are tougher: half want them to continue in their school while the remainder want them to be punished either by transferring to another school (30%), being expelled (16%) or being arrested / imprisoned (6%).

Citizens are similarly tough on schools found to be cheating in national exams. Citizens think these schools should be closed down (37%), those involved should be punished (20%), or arrested (11%) or schools should have their results cancelled and be required to repeat exams (11%). When it comes to schools that perform poorly, one out of ten (14%) think this should be an offense punishable by closure but many more think teachers or head teachers should be transferred (31%).

This may be because the majority of citizens cite high exam pass rates (80%) as the most important factor informing their school choice. The second most popular quality, and the only other one named by more than half of citizens, is motivated teachers (69%).

Marie Nyanzi of *Sauti za Wananchi* at Twaweza, said: *“Despite many saying they don’t report problems they see at schools, Ugandans are engaged in the education sector. However these findings throw up three important challenges. First is the issue of contributions at school and relatedly the Capitation Grant. There is no clear information on the amount of this grant and what it should be used for, or for how contributions are supposed to be collected and managed. This can lead to confusion, mismanagement and can undermine the free primary education policy.”*

*“Second,” she continued, “citizens seem more willing to approach local school leadership, who are close to citizens’ lives rather than with responsibility for how the system works overall. Head teachers and teachers are named across the board as responsible for financial management, teacher attendance and challenges faced by parents. And finally, when most parents who report problems find these are not or only partially resolved, this may discourage anyone who wants to report in the future. The Government could invest more into explaining the Capitation Grant and its uses, and into complaint reporting and handling procedures.”*

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**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org) / [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://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. Follow us at Twaweza Uganda (Facebook), @TwawezaUganda (Twitter), Twaweza East Africa (Instagram)