



Press Release | 12 December 2017

## **Ministers: there are 2,000 citizens on the line**

### ***Ugandans talk service delivery through a new nationally representative mobile phone survey***

**12 December 2017, Kampala:** *Sauti za Wananchi* (Voices of Citizens) is a new initiative, managed by Twaweza, that uses mobile phones to regularly collect information from a broad cross-section of Ugandan citizens. The initiative will allow survey data to be gathered quickly and efficiently, at low cost providing policy-makers, the media and the public with a unique opportunity to understand citizens' experiences and views on a range of issues.

The initial data collection, released today to mark the launch of *Sauti za Wananchi*, provides powerful insights into Ugandans' experiences of service delivery. These findings are being released by Twaweza in a series of research briefs titled *We the People* presenting data on Ugandans' livelihoods, experiences of service delivery and views on governance. The briefs are based on data collected during the baseline phase of *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 2,000 respondents across Uganda in August - September 2017.

The majority of Ugandans name health as one of the three most pressing challenges for the country (59%) and their own household (55%). Similarly 65% of citizens think the government is managing health services badly. And many citizens (46%) report being asked or expected to pay bribes for health services. Despite this, few citizens take action to address health services: less than 4 out of 10 raise the issue in community meetings (26%), talk to authorities (36%), or call in to radio programs (5%).

Perhaps relatedly, only half of Ugandans (51%) report making use of a government health facility the last time they were sick or injured. While there, the majority do not encounter long waiting times (experienced by 30%) or a lack of medicine or supplies (experienced by 29%). Other problems at health facilities including lack of attention or respect from staff (18%), expensive services (18%), or patients sleeping on the floor (16%) are reported by less than one out of five citizens.

When it comes to education, far fewer citizens report this as a problem for the country (24%) or for their own household (19%). A small majority (53%) nonetheless think that the government is managing education badly. And 41% of Ugandans report being asked for or expected to pay bribes in interactions with public schools or universities. At the same time, citizens are most engaged in the education sector, when compared to health and water. Half of citizens (54%) have attended a committee meeting and many have spoken to authorities (44%) about education issues or discussed the problem in a group (24%).

Three out of four children of school-going age (6-16) are in primary school while 1 out of 10 are not in school at all (11%). When it comes to adults, half of Ugandans (47%) have no education or some primary education, one out of three (35%) have completed primary education and one out of five (18%) have secondary or higher education. Although urban residents, men and wealthier citizens are more likely to have secondary education, there is no difference in terms of age. Similar numbers of younger people (aged 18-24: 18%) as older people (aged over 55: 18%) have secondary or higher education.

In terms of challenges reported by citizens, distance to school (19%) and excessive contributions (11%) are cited most often. However many parents also mention issues associated with teachers: lack of teachers (11%), poor teaching (9%) and absenteeism or disengagement (5%), or with inputs: lack of books and tools (9%), space (8%), or water and electricity (5%).

And finally when it comes to water services, more citizens see this as a challenge for their household (31%) than for the country (24%). And six out of ten (60%) think the government is managing water services badly. The water sector is fourth in line when it comes to corruption; four out of ten (41%) report being asked for or expected to pay bribes. But very few citizens address their concerns to authorities (16%), they are much more likely to attend committee meetings (39%).

Three out of four Ugandans report using a water source that is classified as improved in the wet (80%) and dry (73%) seasons. Urban and wealthier citizens are much more likely to use improved water sources. In both rural and urban areas it takes half the amount of time to collect water in the wet season compared to the dry season. In terms of sanitation, a full 1 out of 4 citizens in urban areas use hanging latrines (25%) which are straight piped into water sources or drains. One out of twenty (5%) urban residents use flush toilets. In rural areas, just under 9 out of 10 households use either VIP latrines (37%) or pit latrines (49%).

Marie Nyanzi, Sauti za Wananchi Officer at Twaweza, said *“The data collected during the baseline provide deep insight into citizens’ experiences of and views on service delivery in Uganda. Three stories emerge: reported experiences of corruption in service delivery are high. Secondly citizens do see service delivery in the country as a challenge and are broadly dissatisfied with how these sectors are managed. And finally, although small in absolute terms citizens’ engagement in education is higher than for health and water across a range of possible actions. It is also the sector in which citizens are most satisfied with government management in comparison with other public services.”*

Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Country Lead and Manager – Uwezo Uganda, at Twaweza, said: *“Sauti za Wananchi provides a powerful new way to put citizens at the centre of government decision-making. On a range of topics from service delivery to access to information to land reform, Sauti za Wananchi will bring synthesized nationally representative views and experiences to the forefront of public and policy debate.”*

---- Ends ----

**For more information:**

Martha Chemutai, Twaweza | e: [mchemutai@twaweza.org](mailto:mchemutai@twaweza.org) | t: 0782 405 210

**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)