

Call for Research Fellows

Understanding and Enhancing Citizen Agency for Better Local Governance and Service Delivery

Our Vision: *We believe in an open society, built on the human impulse to make a difference; where information and ideas flow, citizens engage and authorities are accountable to the people.*

Our Mission: To realize the vision stated above, Twaweza and partners work to:

- *Demonstrate how citizens can come together to collectively address their systemic development problems, and make government work better for them.*
- *Enable citizens' voices, interests and experiences to be heard and taken seriously in decision-making across multiple governance levels; and*
- *Promote and protect open civic space which enables citizens to freely assemble or organize, speak and act.*

Background

Twaweza East Africa invites interested early career professionals to partner in conducting a mini-study aimed at understanding and enhancing the relationship between citizen agency and development. We define citizen agency broadly as the participation of citizens in making and implementing decisions affecting their lives. Specifically, citizen agency involves seeking information, monitoring and following up on policy decisions and their implementation, attending public meetings, speaking out in public, and acting to make positive change. We contend that, when citizens exercise their agency effectively, better decisions are usually made resulting in more sustainable and equitable outcomes.

For decades, practitioners and scholars around the world have been learning, experimenting, unlearning and innovating various approaches aimed at promoting active citizenry and responsive authorities. In developing our current Strategic Plan (2019-2022) we reflected on our past experience as well as experiences of others. *We have realized that to fully understand and improve the dynamics of citizen – state interaction, we need to spend much more time in the villages and working along with communities on issues that are most relevant to them, there and then.* As a result, we have adopted the animation approach as an approach for galvanizing local citizen agency in select geographies in Tanzania and Uganda.

We have started implementing this animation approach in Mbogwe and Kigoma Ujiji since 2018. Plans are under way to introduce this animation approach in six Districts other in Tanzania and Uganda. Ultimately, this strand of work aims to see citizens who are acting, organising for change, they use multiple strategies to do so and their local governments are largely supportive and responsive to their demands.

The work of Twaweza and partners will focus on unblocking demand side (citizens) and supply side (government) factors that prevent them from realizing meaningful citizen-state collaboration in bringing about equitable and sustainable development. On demand side, our collaborative initiatives aim at contributing in enhancing the ability, motivation and opportunity for citizens to engage effectively in solving their systemic problems at the local level. On supply side, our collaborative initiatives aim at contributing in making local and national government agencies operate in ways that take account of citizen concerns, voices and civic action, and are able and driven to act in response.

Research Aims

As we embark on the second year of our current strategic plan, we want to conduct a mini study that will improve our understanding of whether and how meaningful citizen agency results in improved local governance and development outcomes. This proposed study will document the experiences, successes and lessons from ongoing and concluded animation initiatives by others within and beyond Tanzania in order to inform our own work and sharing the findings with the broader community of researchers and practitioners on issues of citizen participation in local governance processes and service delivery.

Approach and methodology

Detailed approach, methodology and identification of literature sources will be included in implementation plans to be jointly developed with selected research fellows. Here, we summarize key methods to inform the application process and fellows are welcome to critique and improve on this. Field based assessment will combine key informant interviews, oral historical interviews, review of relevant documents, observational data and FGDs with citizens to discuss about the process, outcomes and future/sustainability of the citizen animation process. We will identify and visit about three districts where the animation approach has been implemented in Tanzania. Review of literature beyond Tanzania will cover the past 20 years and case studies/ experiences from places with similar socio-economic, cultural and political contexts to East Africa, that is, tropical developing countries.

Responsibilities of the research fellows

The selected fellows will work closely with a senior researcher from Twaweza and other researchers (to be identified) in:

- Developing a research protocol that describes in more detail rationale, aims, approach, methods and timelines of the assignment.
- Collecting and analysing data: both empirical data from field based research and secondary data from extensive review of existing literature.
- Drafting one joint academic publication, one policy brief and other communication materials (e.g. blog article) in order to share the findings with other researchers, practitioners and policy makers.
- Coordinating and reporting to Twaweza on all research activities.

Responsibilities of Twaweza

- Twaweza will cover all agreed costs for conducting this study including accessing literature sources and conducting fieldwork in selected Districts
- This is not a consultancy assignment, therefore, Twaweza will pay a reasonable fee to the research fellows in lieu of consultancy fees
- More detail will be included in the research fellowship contracts

Required competencies

- Minimum Master's level education in relevant fields: political science, sociology, anthropology, history, economics, and development studies among others
- Strong research and analytical skills
- Excellent communication skills in English and Kiswahili languages: writing, reading, speaking and listening
- Experience in conducting extensive/systematic literature reviews and synthesizing the findings
- Passionate about learning and contributing in promoting meaningful citizen participation in local governance processes

- Knowledge of and experience in conducting wide online searches is a plus
- Knowledgeable and respect for professional and research ethics

Timeline: March – July 2020

How to apply

Interested candidates are encouraged to submit their application materials by close of business on Wednesday, March 11th, 2020. A complete application package will include:

- (1) Three page letter expressing interest and stating applicant’s fit for the assignment (sent directly to Twaweza by the applicant);
- (2) Two page resume (abridged CV) (sent directly to Twaweza by the applicant); and;
- (3) Two confidential letters of recommendation/evaluation in support of the applicant (sent directly to Twaweza by the reference);

Applicants are responsible to ensure that their references have submitted letters of recommendation by the stated deadline. All application materials should be sent via email to jobs@twaweza.org copying mmwaibula@twaweza.org.