



Press Release  
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## **1 out of 4 Kenyans depend on casual employment, and they are most likely to suffer from food stress and insufficient incomes**

***And 1 out of 3 Kenyans are crop farmers and also suffer from food and income constraints***

**11 June 2019, Nairobi:** In Kenya, 1 out of 10 citizens (9%) makes their primary income from livestock farming and a similar number (8%) are formally employed. 1 out of 3 Kenyans depend on crop farming, 1 out of 4 are employed casually, and 1 out of 5 are self-employed. Among these groups, those who are casually employed are most likely to suffer from food insecurity or having insufficient income, including being forced to withdraw from school because of a lack of funds. But crop farmers also suffer from food insecurity: they were the group most likely, after the casually employed, to worry about running out of food (59%) and as likely as those who are self-employed to actually run out of food (18%).

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *Under Less Pressure? Kenyans' views and experiences of livelihoods and food security*. 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 1,637 respondents across Kenya between 21 November and 17 December, 2018.

Households' sources of income vary by location and other characteristics. Poor and less well educated households are much more likely to engage in livestock farming while wealthier and better educated households are more likely to be formally employed. Interestingly, the rich, those with no education and those in urban areas are the groups most likely to be self-employed.

When it comes to food insecurity, the situation has improved markedly across the board since 2017. Households were much less likely to report running out of food (from 51% to 30%), having a member go without eating for a day (from 42% to 20%), or having members worry about running out of food (from 68% to 56%). However, more than half of households overall (56%) worry about running out of food even if, in reality, far fewer have gone without food for at least one day in the past year (20%).

There are signs that households are also feeling less pressure on their incomes compared to 2017. Far fewer households (14%) report having to withdraw a child or children from school due to a lack of funds in the past year, compared to 44% who said they had to do so in 2017. Again there is variation between groups with the poor, less educated and casual labourers being most likely to withdraw children from school.

But when asked whether their daily income is sufficient to meet their needs, 1 out of 3 Kenyans say it is (33%). This proportion is similar across groups except for those with a college education (49%) and the formally employed (51%) who are more likely to say they have enough income. Those in casual employment are the least likely (24%) to say so.

When the money is not enough, the most popular course of action is to cut items to fit the budget (39%). Coping strategies vary considerably by household wealth however – poorer households are least likely compared to other groups to cut their expenditure and most likely to borrow money.

In an emergency situation, close to half of citizens (45%) say they would ask for help from family and friends. 1 out of 4 citizens (26%) would take out a loan. 1 out of 8 (14%) would sell something, and a similar number (12%) would draw on their savings.

There are again variations among groups. The wealthy, better educated and formally employed are most likely to take a loan compared to using any other strategy and compared to other groups; they are also more likely than other groups to draw on their savings.

Victor Rateng of *Sauti za Wananchi* at Twaweza, said: *“These data provide some cause for optimism: despite Kenyans’ increasingly negative views of economic management in the country, they report being better off in terms of food and funds in 2018 compared to 2017. However this also presents a challenge for the government: why is citizens’ dissatisfaction growing while their situation is improving?”*

*“But an important area of concern,”* he continued, *“is that casual labourers, who make up a significant proportion of the population, are worse off on all counts: they are more likely to be hungry and less likely to have enough money to meet their needs. Specific intervention may be needed to ensure the well-being of this particular group.”*

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**For more information:**

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**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [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
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