

Sauti za Wananchi

Timely and nationally-representative data

1. Introduction

Sauti za Wananchi (Voices of Citizens) is a new initiative 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.

Policy makers regularly make decisions for the whole country, but with poor access to the experiences and realities of a large majority of citizens. It is also difficult for them to know whether policies are properly implemented or actually working. Further, citizens do not have an easy way to know what is going on around the country, and to compare their situation with others’.

Policy makers typically use administrative data – information collected by government bodies at lower levels and compiled at district, regional and national levels – to inform their work. But there can be issues

with the integrity of administrative data, due to inadequate technical, logistical and quality assurance arrangements. Alternatively, policy makers turn to survey data, which can have more robust technical design, sampling, and quality assurance procedures. But traditional surveys based on face-to-face interviews can be very costly and time-consuming. Surveys can cost millions of dollars each and often take more than two years from concept to the data becoming available. For example, the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey data was collected in 2011 but the report was published in August 2012.

This means policy makers have had to deal either with delayed and/or expensive data. It has been virtually impossible to obtain a nationally representative, reliable picture in a quick and affordable manner.

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Sauti za Wananchi





Sauti za Wananchi offers a solution that overcomes these limitations. It provides access to frequently updated statistics on a range of topics, with a focus on quality of public services and citizens' realities. *Sauti za Wananchi* embodies the rigour and quality of traditional survey methodology but uses mobile phones to lower costs and speed up the process of data collection. Through the infrastructure created, policy makers, analysts, media, other organisations and the public can access data that are collected frequently on a range of issues. The intention is that the data will be collected and published on a bi-monthly basis.

Sauti za Wananchi Uganda builds on a model that was developed in Tanzania in 2011 and 2012, and implemented in Tanzania since 2013 and Kenya since 2016. The current initiative has two phases: the first consists of a standard household survey with face-to-face interviews, implemented in August to September 2017. A representative sample of 2,000 respondents from all regions of Uganda was randomly selected to participate. During the household visits that made up the first phase, mobile phones and solar chargers were distributed to those who agreed to become *Sauti za Wananchi* respondents. During the second phase, starting October 2017, these respondents are contacted by phone from a call centre.

Sauti za Wananchi offers a unique opportunity, particularly to policymakers, to access data that provide insight into the real-time experiences and views of citizens. Additionally, the public will have the chance to access the views and realities of people from across the country.

Who are the respondents in the *Sauti za Wananchi* setup? Do they reflect the diversity of the country in terms of sex, age and geography? Do they have access to mobile phones and network coverage? How are phones used? This brief presents key characteristics of the *Sauti za Wananchi* panel.

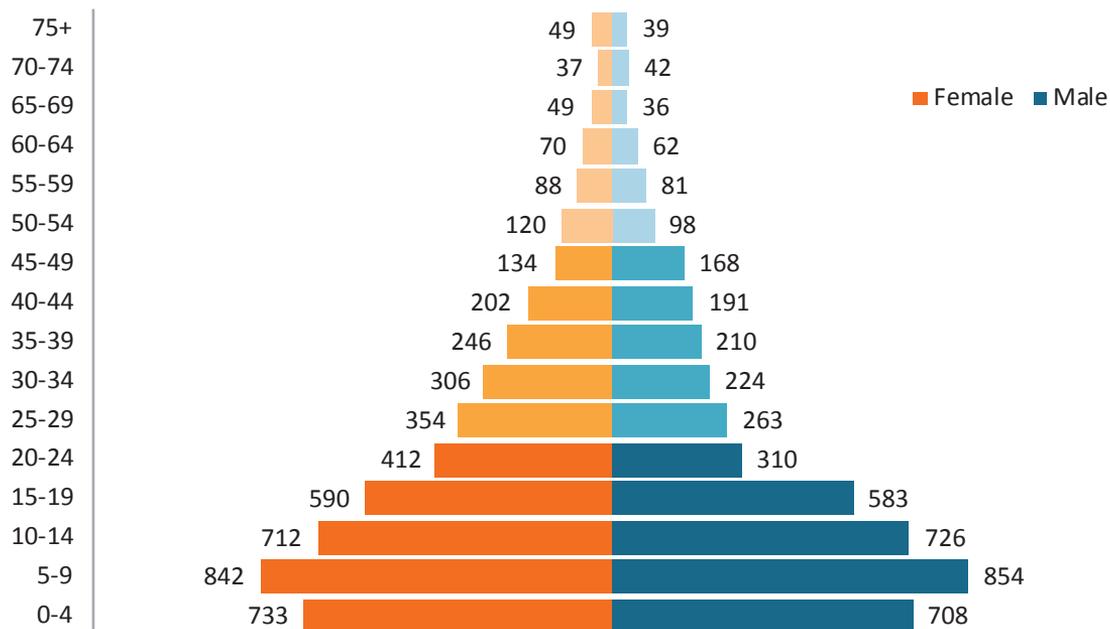
2. Five facts about the *Sauti za Wananchi* panel

Fact 1: Close to half the adult population are aged 30 or below

The *Sauti za Wananchi* panel comprises 2,000 randomly selected households from across the whole country. The sample is nationally representative of the population as a whole.

These 2,000 households contain a total of 9,539 household members, from across the whole age range, including several hundred babies and three members aged 100 years. Close to half of the adult population (46%) are aged 30 or below, four in ten (41%) are aged 31-54, and one in eight (13%) is aged 55 or above, making it a very young population.

Figure 1: Population pyramid of household members in panel households

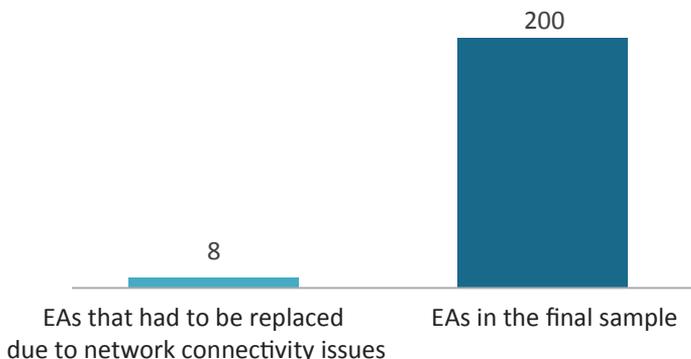


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, baseline survey, August-September 2017; n=2,000 households

Fact 2: 8 out of 200 of the initial randomly selected enumeration areas did not have mobile phone network coverage

Of 200 randomly selected enumeration areas (EAs), just eight (4%) were found in practice to have insufficient mobile network connectivity for inclusion in the panel. These were replaced by a further random selection.

Figure 2: Included and replaced Enumeration Areas in the final sample

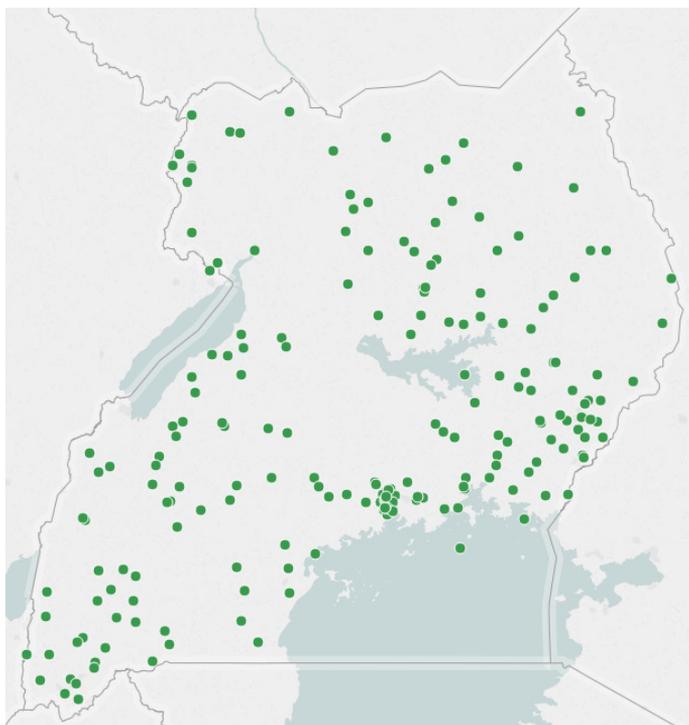


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*

Fact 3: Enumeration Areas in the sample cover the whole country

The 200 enumeration areas included in the final sample cover the whole country. This includes a clear concentration of EAs in and around Kampala, reflecting the concentration of population in that area, and fewer EAs in less-densely populated areas.

Figure 3: Map of included EAs in the final sample



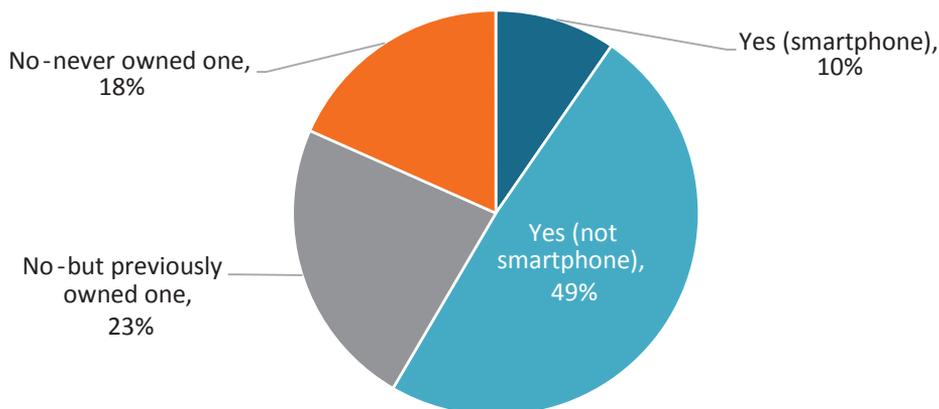
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*

Fact 4: Six in ten adult Ugandans own a mobile phone

Six in ten citizens (59%) own a mobile phone, including one in ten (10%) whose phone is a smartphone. A further one in four (23%) do not currently own a phone but have done so in the past, while one in five (18%) have never owned a mobile phone.

This is the reason why the initiative distributes phones to respondents. Otherwise, 4 out of 10 citizens would be excluded automatically from participating. As such, this would mean the data could not be considered nationally representative.

Figure 4: Do you currently own a mobile phone? Is it a smartphone?



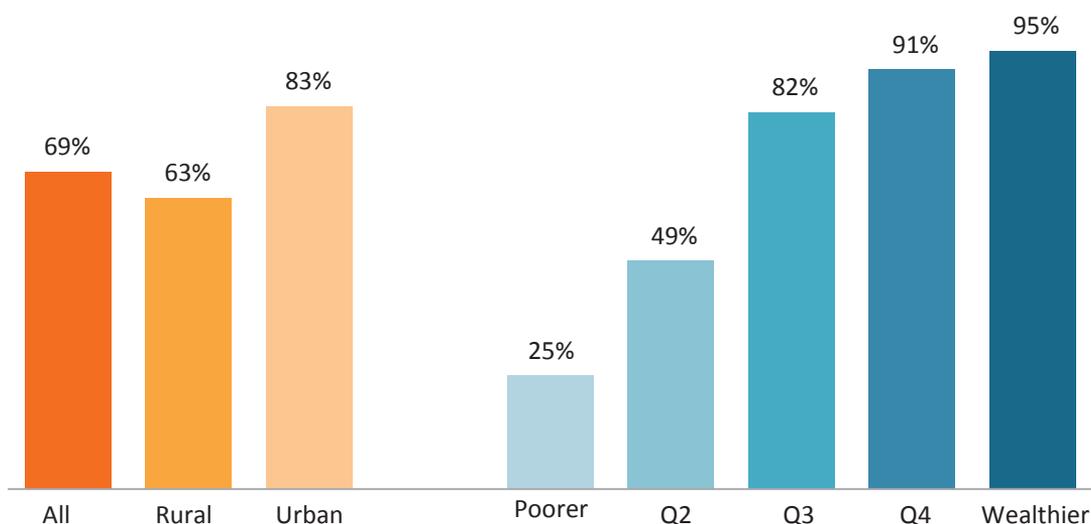
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, baseline survey, August-September 2017; n=2,000

Fact 5: Mobile phone ownership is highly unequal

Mobile phone ownership varies between different social groups. In urban areas, eight in ten households (83%) own a phone, while in rural areas, six in ten (63%) do. Similarly, just one in four poor households (25%) have a mobile phone, compared to almost all wealthy households (95%).

Again, this demonstrates the necessity of providing panel members with a mobile phone. By doing this, we ensure that households in both urban and rural areas and those that are poorer and wealthier are all fairly represented in the sample.

Figure 5: Does your household own a mobile phone? (prior to inclusion in panel)

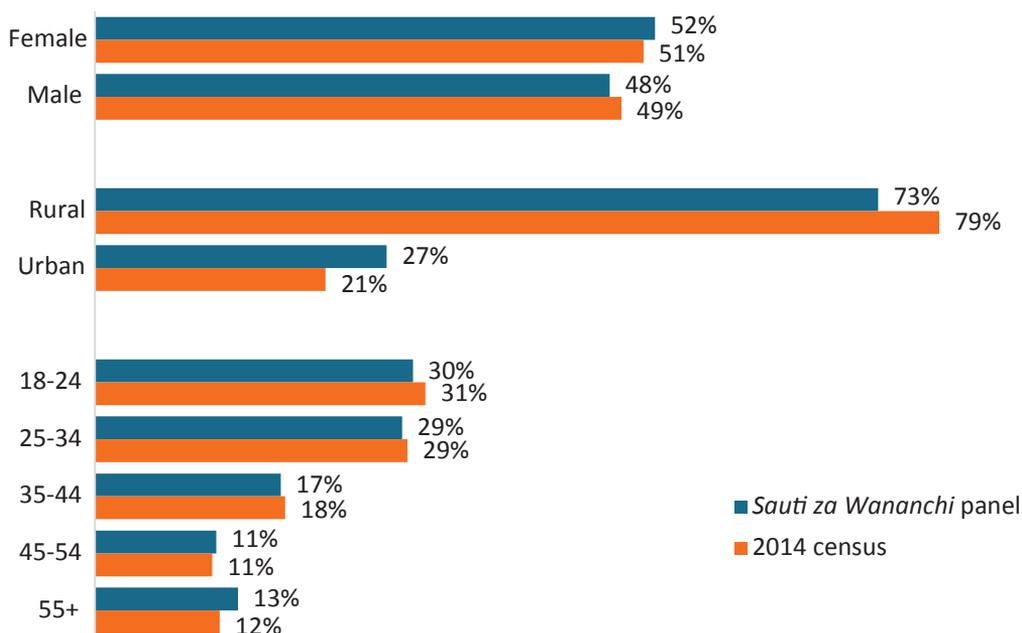


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, baseline survey, August-September 2017; n=2,000

Fact 6: The *Sauti za Wananchi* panel closely resembles the profile of the population as a whole

Across gender, urban-rural setting and age, we can see that the *Sauti za Wananchi* panel closely resembles the profile of the overall population of Uganda. This shows how the panel is representative of the country as a whole.

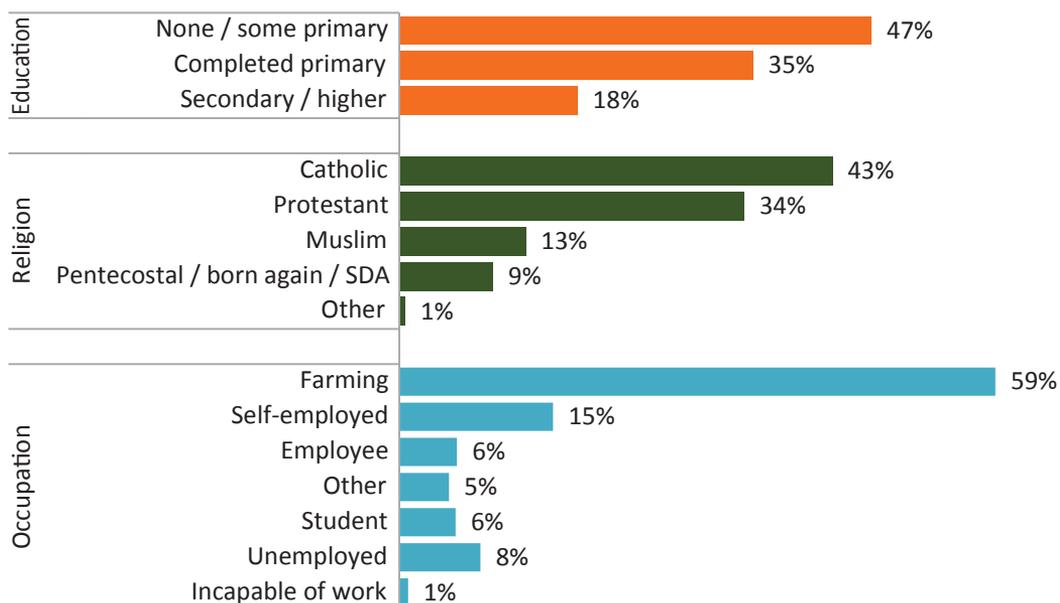
Figure 6: Comparison of *Sauti za Wananchi* panel characteristics and the national profile (from 2014 census)



Sources of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, baseline survey, August-September 2017; n=2,000
Population and housing census, Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2014

Beyond this, we can also see how the panel covers a range of different levels of education, religions and occupation.

Figure 7: Characteristics of *Sauti za Wananchi* panel



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, baseline survey, August-September 2017; n=2,000

3. Conclusion

This brief shows how the *Sauti za Wananchi* initiative will use mobile phone technology to establish a timely, cost-efficient and nationally-representative data collection infrastructure. The first phase involved a rigorous multi-stage random sampling procedure – enlisting individual respondents from across Uganda who provided baseline data and received mobile phones and solar chargers. The launch of *Sauti za Wananchi* marks the start of the second phase of the project in which respondents will be contacted regularly.

Data will be put in the public domain and findings will be published regularly. The *Sauti za Wananchi* database is scheduled to grow on a bi-monthly basis through phone calls on a wide range of topics, with a focus on public service delivery, citizen engagement and current affairs. The data – including baseline data and later survey rounds – will be made public through the Twaweza website (www.twaweza.org/sauti). Moreover, research briefs on specific topics will be published and launched regularly. Policymakers, MPs, analysts, journalists, donors and the public at large will be able to make use of the data and statistics offered on the website.

Twaweza hopes that the rigorous and high frequency nature of *Sauti za Wananchi* will provide a powerful new way for citizens to inspire public imagination and inform policy decisions in Uganda.

