

Who listens to the voices of citizens?

Use of Sauti za Wananchi evidence by key public figures



- Sauti za Wananchi (SzW) is the first **nationally representative** mobile phone data collection survey in East Africa.
- Twaweza released **10 briefs** based on SzW data to date; a new brief is being released every month through a public launch event.
- SzW findings have been **cited** frequently in print media, in television and radio broadcasts, and in social media.¹
- The simple **format** of the briefs as well as their **timeliness** and focus on “hot” issues was commended by a number of respondents.
- Results of this study suggest SzW data has **influenced** public and political debates.

Introduction

Sauti za Wananchi, or Voices of Citizens, is a longitudinal panel survey, collecting information among a nationally representative sample of mainland Tanzanian through the use of mobile phones. Implemented by the Uwazi unit of Twaweza, Sauti za Wananchi's primary objective is to liberate and package data to better inform public discussion and improve the link between citizens and policymakers.

Twaweza produces a monthly brief presenting recently collected data on various topical issues, primarily aiming to improve the quality of information and level of debate among key actors who have a significant influence on public wellbeing (all briefs can be found online www.twaweza.org/sauti).

These key actors include Members of Parliament, media editors, journalists, civil society leaders, academics, and development partners. The briefs primarily target these actors, although their format can make them accessible to a wider public, as they are short, and include illustrations and graphs (it should be noted that the briefs are not designed for a low-literacy audience). This report summarizes the results of a recent qualitative study, which examined whether the primary objective of Sauti za Wananchi is being met.



Methodology

The study relied on in-depth interviews with a number of key public figures selected by Twaweza. We endeavored to include respondents who would be neutral in their perception of Twaweza (although it should be noted the selection was not random). An independent consultant was engaged from December 2013 to January 2014 to carry out the study. This included review of key background documents, development of an interview guide and a list of key informants, and conducting the interviews and analyzing the findings. In total, 16 individuals were interviewed including government officials, members of parliament, media personalities, NGO and CSO education partners and scholars from academia. The full report and interview guidelines can be accessed by contacting Twaweza (info@twaweza.org).

Main findings

Do respondents recall the briefs?

Two briefs released in 2013 were recalled very well: the brief on the Mobile Phone Sim Card Tax, and the brief on the Form Four Examination Results; the latter particularly among respondents from the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. All respondents recalled having seen at least one brief before the interview.

Does the format work for the target audience?

All respondents liked the presentation of the briefs: short, with visuals, and concise text. No specific recommendations were made as to changes in language, layout, or formatting. A few respondents noted that for the briefs to have a wider appeal, the Swahili language would have to be simplified (although, as noted above, the briefs are not targeting citizens with low literacy levels).

How are Sauti za Wananchi briefs used?

The study found that the information in the briefs is perceived as useful for policy-makers, as it provides a representative overview of the public opinions while the debated issues still are hot. In a sense, SzW briefs help to keep the politician's feet to the fire; in the words of one academic scholar, Uwazi is "informing the public about a social problem or any other disturbing situation".

Furthermore, a Member of Parliament stated that he always tries to get hold of the latest brief, and that the information provided in the briefs enables him to "formulate concrete arguments." In other conversations with politicians (outside this research), some MPs have even expressed the interest of including their own questions into the SzW rounds.

All the respondents at the MoEVT had heard about the brief on the Form 4 results but interestingly, several of them did not think the briefs were significantly discussed among colleagues. They ascribed this to the fact that colleagues primarily use data from the Ministry's own Basic Education Statistics Tanzania (BEST) publications, which are also publicly available. One informant at the Ministry expressed that the low level of engagement with the briefs may simply be due to a too narrow distribution.

An insightful example of how the access to recent data can have influence at policy level was recalled by respondents regarding the Mobile Phone Sim Card Tax that was deliberated upon in Parliament in June 2013. Sauti za Wananchi revealed that the new tax was equivalent to a whole week's monetary value of airtime among the lowest social groups. The tax would clearly be of significant influence on people's lives, yet more than half of all Tanzanians did not know about the tax at all. As expected, there was no citizen support for the tax as 83% disagreed with the proposition. Several of the informants at the ministry level, academic scholars, media experts and CSO/NGO partners recalled the brief on this topic, and according to a respondent at the CSO level the brief "stimulated debate until the government gave a statement towards revising the Sim tax"

Sauti data contributes to shaping arguments in other arenas as well. The briefs are reportedly used by hosts who prepare and lead TV and radio discussion programs, and according to the media experts interviewed, guests on the shows that refer to the data briefs make stronger presentations than those who rely on their own judgments and arguments. Another media expert reported that "the quality of the data is highly appreciated by the public and government officials as well," and that the briefs have earned a reputation as reliable sources of information. Furthermore, it was noted that that the briefs are relevant because they are published when "the issues are still hot;" the appreciation for the timeliness was also echoed by respondents from the academia, MPs and CSOs alike.



Conclusions

It appears that the Sauti za Wananchi briefs are well-received, and have carved out a solid space in the media arena as well as with some of the key actors (interestingly, more on the MP side than on the technical MoEVT side). In the second year of SzW, Twaweza could engage in more frequent feedback loops to follow up on the immediate use of the briefs and the data – particularly those which address current and heated social and political issues.

Tanzanians still split over union

Fifty-one per cent of respondents in Mainland Tanzania supported three governments while 48 per cent were not in favour of the system

By Athuman Mtulwa
The Citizen Reporter

Dar es Salaam. Public opinion is still deeply divided over the structure of the Union months after constitutional assemblies after consultation assemblies meetings which both debated the proposed to a new study by Twaweza. 51 per cent of respondents from 1,708 households across Mainland Tanzania supported three governments while 48 per cent were not in favour of the system.

The organisation classified the data using four parameters of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree where both those who strongly agree and those who strongly disagree collided at 26 per cent. 25 per cent agree with the proposed structure while 22 per cent disagree.

According to Mr Elvis Mushi, a researcher with Twaweza, the difference in percentage is minimal and it calls for further national debate. "When the 'strongly

44 When the 'strongly agree' and the 'strongly disagree' share the same percentage it confirms that the issue is contentious yet important, we need to cool our heads and ponder the best way forward" Twaweza researcher Elvis Mushi

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Research faults govt hospitals

The research also shows that religious and private health facilities are more likely to provide access to the medication in religious and private health facilities

By Heema Moses
The Citizen Correspondent

Dar es Salaam. Good health is one of the major states that all human beings in the world strive to attain.

When one has poor health they cannot achieve their goals in life. That is why there is a need for good health services in the country.

The labour force in Tanzania depends on better health conditions of the citizens and the latter development in the process of citizen-centred change in East Africa.

However, Twaweza – a ten year old research brief titled 'Stock Out or In Stock?' Access to Medicines in Tanzania, shows that there is a big problem in the government's health facilities.

The brief is based on data from Sauti za Wananchi, a national representative household phone survey conducted in Tanzania. Two out of three people in Tanzania reported that they had a problem in getting medicines.

The brief also shows that the government and private health facilities are more likely to provide medicines to patients than government health facilities. About 99 per cent of

patients access the medication in religious and private health facilities.

Twaweza, in a research brief gives more details on the issue, revealing that 80 per cent of the patients in religious institutions receive medicine in the same hospital. Only 19 per cent of the patients who go to private health institutions receive medicine in the same hospital and 29 per cent of the patients go to

pharmacies. However, the trend is different whereby 64 per cent of the patients who go to the state health facilities receive medicine in the same hospital while 46 per cent of the patients cannot receive medicine.

The research also shows that 26 per cent of the heads of health facilities lack of medicine at the hospital while 46 per cent of them said it was one of the three main problems encountered.

Mr Elvis Mushi, a researcher at Twaweza, said that at health facilities those who are diagnosed with malaria are the most common diagnosis. He said 13 per cent of patients in general fever often a challenge but the latter is

not a challenge due to lack of test. It is reassuring that anti-malaria medicines are widely available but the provision of stock out, although it is a challenge for health workers.

The service Delivery Indicators Survey in 2010 does show that close to one quarter (24 per cent) of a list of frontline essential medicines, on average, were not available in health facilities across the country.

According to the research brief Artemether-lumefantrine (Alu) was more expensive in pharmacies and the malaria medicine prescribed to the disease. 61 per cent of patients who suffered

from malaria, Alu is clearly an essential medicine, and the official recommended price of Alu is \$14.99 per adult dose and \$6.20 per child per adult dose and 20 per cent of patients who go to pharmacies pay more than \$20.000 per adult dose and 26 per cent of patients pay more than \$20.000 per adult dose.

The study also shows that most of the private pharmacies are owned by a person working at a government health facility or a member of public facilities but raises questions about potential conflict of interest.

However, the data shows that 38 per cent of the patients and 35 per cent of the patients who buy medicine from government health facilities are from their family members, while 24 per cent said they didn't know.

Commenting on the issue, Twaweza boss Rakodi Rajani said for the government to find solutions to this problem.

"Our data shows that even when the public health services are breaking down and accounting for the products and services they require, but one

can never be certain about the quality and design, and its effects. The three ways to solve this problem," he said.

The Twaweza Education adviser, Mr Joseph Mubwanda, said that mismanagement in health facilities was "the core cause of the problem."

Twaweza shows the reality of health facilities in Tanzania, our hope is that when the citizens get access to the information they will discuss it openly and demand for the changes," said Mr Mubwanda.

A developed health system requires access to medicines, which is determined by availability of medicines. It's time now the government and health stakeholders remembered to repair the wall before it falls, he said.

BACKGROUND: TWAZEZA

Twaweza is an independent East African initiative that was established in 2009 by Githaka Kariuki, a Tanzanian civil society leader who founded HakiElimu, a Tanzania civil society leader who founded HakiElimu, and served as its first executive director until 2012.

Twaweza's approach and theory of change is built on the lessons from the (lack) of progress in health development, and the incubation space for Twaweza's work is the health sector across East Africa.

Twaweza is a non-profit organisation that is fully independent of any government or donor. It is a non-profit organisation that is fully independent of any government or donor. It is a non-profit organisation that is fully independent of any government or donor.

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WATAFITI TWAZEZA

WATAFITI huu unafuata 7,980 watamwazi kushiriki katika tathmini ya madi ya Uwezo, unaoarabwa na taasisi isiyoyasitirika ya Twaweza katika wilaya 137 za Tanzania. Bata, inayofiti Emma Lawrence au SAUTI.

Akiingamiza, nitadi huo Mradihu Mkaazi wa taasisi ya Twaweza, Zaidi Mgella alisema jana kuwa mwingi huo unafuata kutafiti huo wa taasisi hizi katika kusoma na kuhesabu.

"Tafiti huu unafuata kukusanya takwimu ili kupata ushahidi wa watoto wetu katika kusoma na kufanya hesabu. Utathini unatafiti watoto zaidi ya 150,000 kwa kwanza cha mitala wa Darasa la pili," alisema Mgella.

Mgella aliongeza kuwa msingi wa matalamiki bora katika chini katika nguzi ya chini ni kujua Kusoma na kufanya hesabu.

Uwezo inaamini, kwamba kushindwa kwa watamwazi wengi sekondari katika nguzi ya kwanza, kama vile, kumafutua kwa kisi fatoni na kukosana kwa stadi mhimu za kusoma na kufanya hesabu kwa watoto," alisema.

1 Twaweza monitors the media through agreements with a private sector provider, and supplements these records by content seen / heard by staff. According to these records for 2013, SzW findings were cited 47 times (across print and broadcast media). However, we are constantly alerted to missing press coverage so the numbers provided here and in future briefs should be taken as an indication not a final complete figure. Electronic media in particular is problematic to monitor in Tanzania because of a lack of fixed broadcast schedules. Monitoring is conducted by manually listening to or watching different radio and TV stations. Given limited resources and the vast numbers of media outlets in Tanzania, it is almost impossible to fully track media coverage accurately.