



Money flows, water trickles

Challenges of access to clean water in Tanzania



1. Introduction

Access to clean water is a major challenge for a large number of people in Tanzania. Though globally, the water supply Millennium Development Goal (MDG) have been met, access to clean water in Tanzania has stagnated. For decades the country has lagged significantly behind other countries that are at similar levels of development and geography.

The challenge of access to clean water persists despite significant investments in recent years. The Government of Tanzania has recently renewed its efforts to improve access to clean and safe water for rural citizens, including through the *Big Results Now*¹ Initiative. The aim is to provide access to more than 15.4 million people living in rural areas, raising the percentage of people with access to clean water to 75% by 2015.² The findings in this brief, which represent the most recent national data on access to clean water, show that such efforts are timely, although targets are ambitious and may be unrealistic given the magnitude of the challenge.

These findings are based on the sixth round of *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative mobile phone survey. Calls were made between 7 and 13 August 2013; and data includes responses from 1,702 households. This brief also presents findings from the water module of the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey which was implemented between October 2012 and January 2013 and covered 2,000 households, as well as the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation, and the 2012 Afrobarometer Survey.

- ¹ "Big Results Now (BRN) initiative aims at adopting new methods of working under specified timeframe for delivery of the step--change required", with a focus on six priority areas of the economy, including water (<http://www.pmoralg.go.tz/quick--menu/brn/>).
- ² Statement by Hon. Jumanne Maghembe, Minister for Water, in article from African Review of Business and Technology, "Tanzania to launch more than 1,800 water projects," 25 April 2013. <http://www.africanreview.com/manufacturing/water--a--environment/tanzania--to--launch--more--than--1--800--projects--to--battle--water--woes>

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The key findings are:³

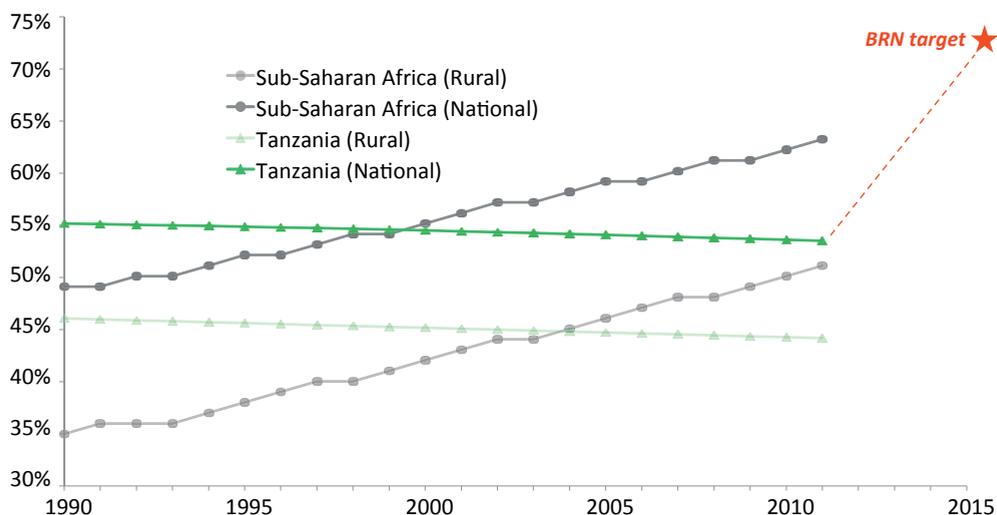
- Access to clean water in Tanzania has either stagnated or declined over the past two decades, counter to generally positive regional trends and despite significant investments.
- Nearly one-third of Tanzanians say that the challenges of water supply are among the three most serious problems facing the country today.
- The vast majority of Tanzanians (89%) collect water for their daily needs from public sources. This can take an hour or more – which is twice the official target of 30 minutes.
- Women and girls have the primary responsibility to collect water for their households' daily needs.

2. Seven facts about access to clean water in Tanzania

Fact 1: Tanzania lags behind in Africa

The percentage of people in Africa using clean and safe water for drinking has increased for most countries since comparable statistics began to be collected – from 49% in 1990 to 63% in 2011.⁴ This primarily reflects increases in access for rural citizens, which has risen from 35% to 51%. The data for Tanzania however, tells a different story. Overall, in the past two decades access has declined slightly from 55% to 53% and for rural citizens from 46% to 44%. As shown in Figure 1, the *Big Results Now* target of 75% by 2015 will require a dramatic improvement over current trends. It requires Tanzania to achieve in 2-3 years what African countries on average have failed to do in the last 20 years.

Figure 1: Percentage of population using a safe (“improved”) source of drinking water



Source of data: WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation.

³ For the sake of readability Sauti za Wananchi briefs report means without confidence intervals. However, these are available on request.

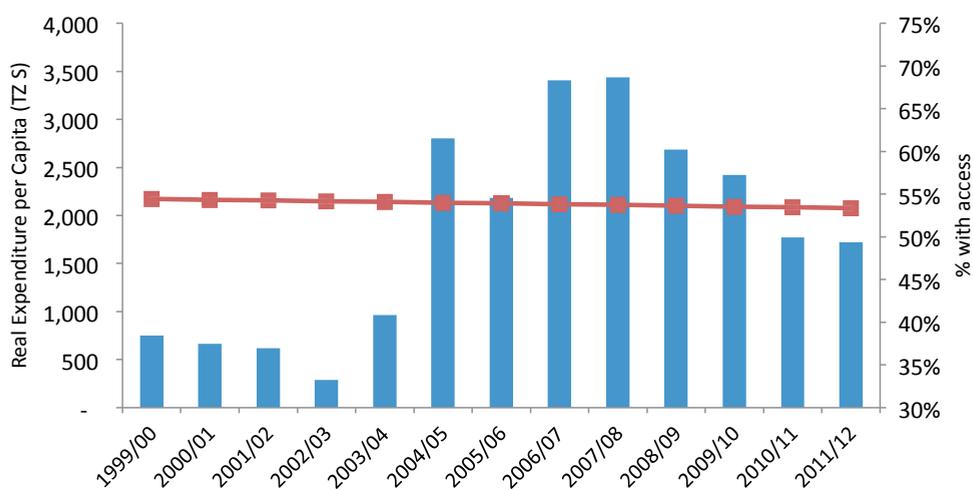
⁴ These percentages reflect the proportion of the population using an ‘improved’ source of drinking water, which may be any one of the following: piped water into dwelling, piped water to yard/plot, public tap or standpipe, tubewell or borehole, protected dug well, protected spring, or rainwater.

Data from the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline survey confirm the WHO/UNICEF JMP findings. According to this more recent survey, 54% of all Tanzanians obtain their drinking water from an ‘improved’ source; again the figure for rural citizens is significantly lower at 42%.⁵

Fact 2: Increased budget and aid do not translate into improved access

The failure to increase access to clean and safe water is striking when compared to the significant increases in spending in the water sector. Figure 2 contrasts the inflation-corrected “real” expenditure per Tanzanian on water since 1999/2000 with the percentage of the population using a clean and safe source of drinking water. The significant per capita increases from less than TZS 1,000 to over TZS 3,000 in the last decade while not even a dent has been made when it comes to improving access.

Figure 2: Spending versus access

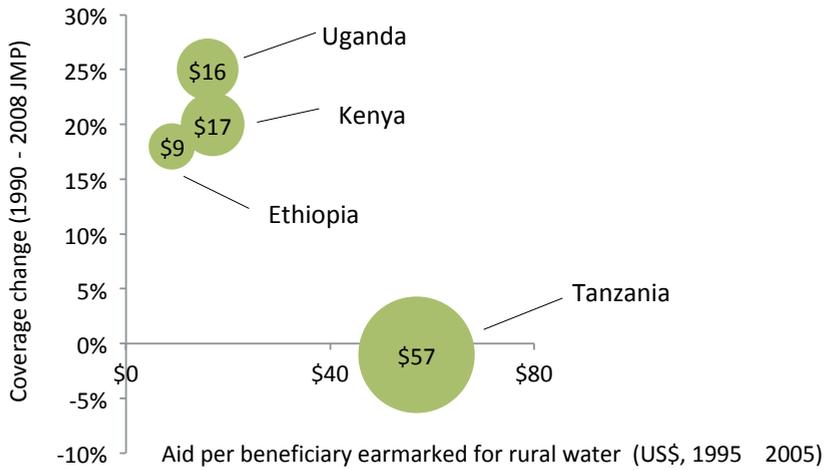


Sources of data: Tanzania Public Expenditure Review (PER) of the Water Sector, 2009; Tanzania PER 2010; 2013 Overseas Development Institute Rapid Budget Analysis of the Water Sector in Tanzania; National Accounts of Tanzania Mainland 2011; World Bank World Development Indicators; World Bank / IMF Consumer Price changes data

It is worth noting that Tanzania also receives considerably higher levels of aid per beneficiary earmarked for rural water supply and sanitation than its neighbours, without much to show for it in terms of coverage. Over the 10 year period of 1995-2005, Tanzania received USD 57 per beneficiary in aid flows earmarked for water but coverage fell by 1%. Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda all received considerably less aid but managed to improve their coverage significantly, as shown in Figure 2a.

⁵ These figures refer to the dry season. Over half of the sample (60%) use the same water source in the rainy season; for those who use a different source, the proportion with access to an improved water source is somewhat higher – 70% overall and 63% for rural dwellers. These higher figures likely reflect the fact that rainwater is considered an ‘improved’ water source by the JMP.

Figure 2a: Aid for water versus changes in access

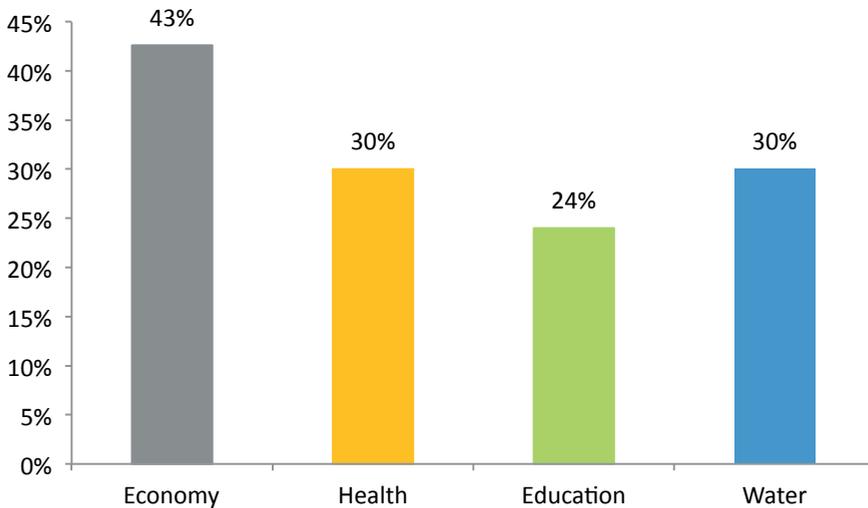


Source of data: African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW)
Country Status Overviews Regional Synthesis Report

Fact 3: Access to clean water is seen as a serious problem

Unsurprisingly, given these statistics, nearly one third (30%) of the Tanzanian population rank lack of access to clean water as one of the three most serious problems facing the country today. The proportion is slightly higher for rural dwellers (33%) than for urban residents (26%). Other serious service delivery problems cited by large numbers of Tanzanians included problems with health services (30%) and education (24%).⁶

Figure 3: What are the most serious problems facing the country?



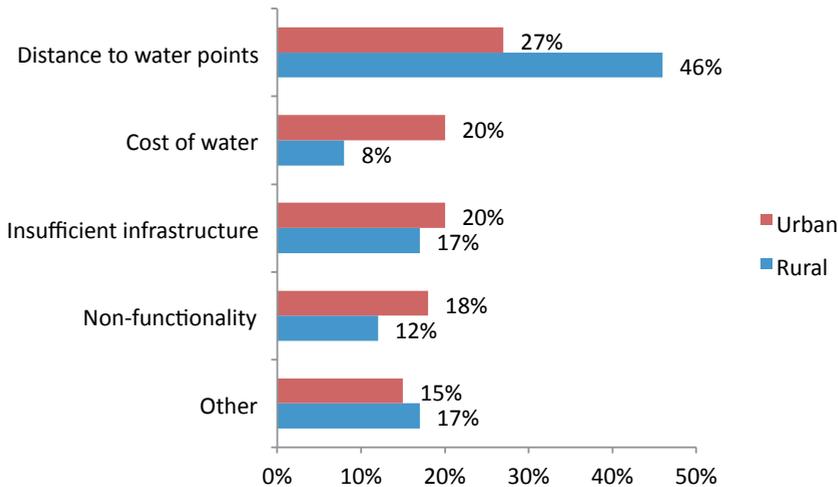
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

⁶ These findings are in line with the 2012 Afrobarometer, which finds that 35% of Tanzanians report that problems with the water supply are among the three most important problems facing the country that government should address.

Fact 4: Access to clean water is a daily challenge

Even those who manage to get drinking water from clean and safe sources face challenges in doing so on a daily basis. Over three out of four Tanzanians (76%) report water access challenges, of various types. At the top of the list, large proportions of both rural and urban residents report that the distance they have to travel to reach water points is a major challenge. This however appears to be more of an issue in rural areas. Challenges related to functionality are also common in both rural and urban areas, as are challenges related to insufficient number of water points (infrastructure). The cost of water is more commonly cited as a challenge among urban dwellers.

Figure 4: Problems related to accessing clean water



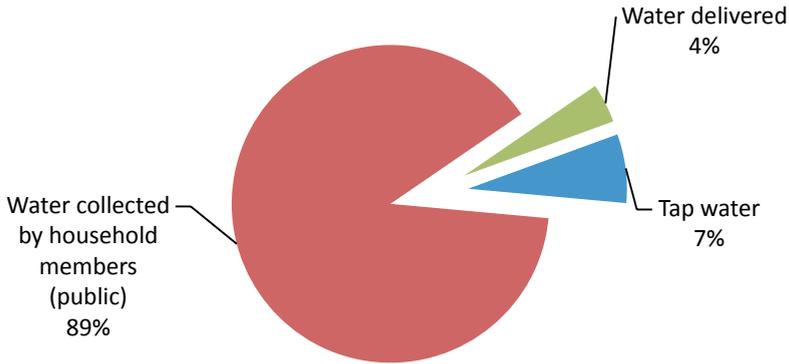
Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Mobile Phone Survey – Round 6, August 2013.

Fact 5: Most people collect water from public sources

People's dissatisfaction with water services may reflect the challenges they face accessing clean water for daily use. The vast majority of Tanzanians (89% of households) collect water for their daily needs from public sources, compared with 7% who have a private tap at home or a private standpipe within their compound and 4% who get their water delivered.⁷ Over four out of five (81%) households who get water from a tap or have their water delivered reside in urban areas.

⁷ These figures refer to the dry season; the respective figures for the rainy season are very similar: 6% have tap water piped into their households; 91% collect water from public sources and 3% have water delivered.

Figure 5: Mode of accessing water

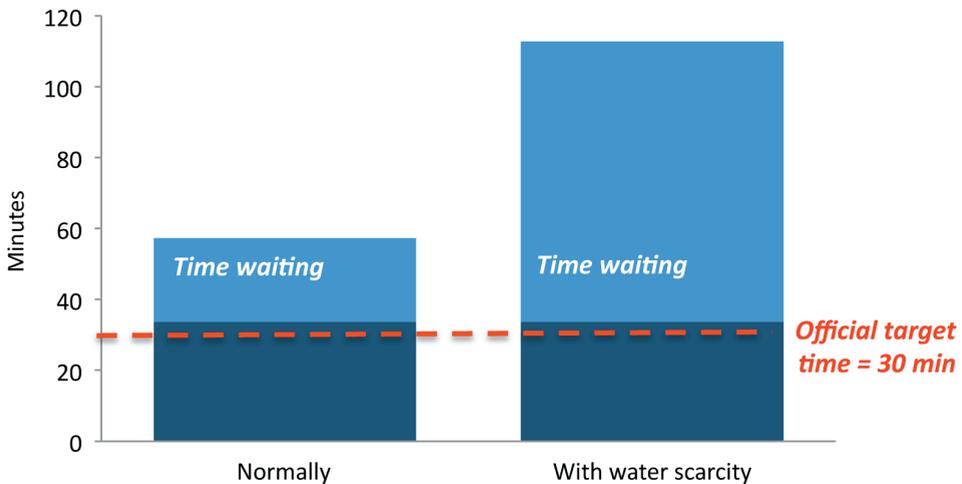


Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

Fact 6: Collecting water is very time consuming

Among people who collect water for their daily needs, it takes an average of about an hour (57 minutes) to get drinking water from the public water point to their homes⁸ - this is twice the official target time of 30 minutes round trip.⁹ People typically spend about half of this time (24 minutes) waiting at the water point. The waiting time can be more than three times that (79 minutes) during times of scarcity.

Figure 6: Time to fetch water (minutes)



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

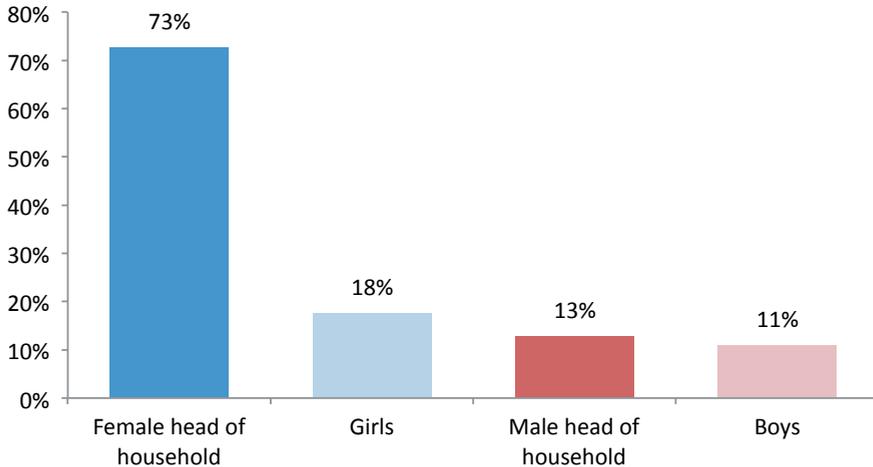
⁸ This is the estimate for the dry season; the *Sauti za Wananchi* baseline did not ask about the rainy season.

⁹ According to the 2005 National Water Sector Development Strategy (NWSDS): “The strategy for service levels will be to... ensure that any water point is used by a maximum of 250 persons at not more than 400 metres from the furthest user, and 30 minutes time for a round trip to fetch water”.

Fact 7: Women and girls have primary responsibility for fetching water

Women and girls are mostly responsible for fetching water for their household. In particular, in 73% of households that collect water for their daily needs (rather than have it piped in or delivered), the female head of household is responsible for this task.¹⁰

Figure 7: Who collects water?



Source of data: *Sauti za Wananchi*, Baseline Survey, October-December 2012.

3. Conclusion

This brief provides a quantitative assessment of access to clean water in Tanzania. Data from the *Sauti za Wananchi* mobile phone survey shows that access to clean water is seen as one of the most serious problems facing Tanzania today. Most households collect water from a public source, which takes one hour per round trip on average. Water collection is also nearly always done by women or girls. Since clean water is a basic necessity and contributes to health, especially for young children, water access is clearly a policy priority for Tanzania.

Despite a threefold increase in per capita expenditure on water between 2000 and 2012, access to clean water sources has not improved; in fact, the coverage rate has decreased slightly over this period. The fact that there is no positive relationship between expenditure and service delivery in the water sector in Tanzania raises serious questions about policy choices and accountability. Sizable additional funds were budgeted and disbursed over recent years: where did all this money go and how is it that access did not improve? Planning and installing a village pump can take up to a year: so why did the huge jump in resources, particularly between 2003 and 2007, not result in large scale water point installation?

¹⁰ These percentages summed together exceed 100% since households could give more than one response to this question.

In recent years several new initiatives in the water sector have been established. Since the launch of the Water Sector Development Programme in July 2007, the Government of Tanzania and its donors have spent over USD 900 million (nearly TZS 1.5 billion) to address challenges relating to access to clean water, with little to show for it.¹¹ Will *Big Results Now* represent a sea change? While renewed efforts and attention to the water sector are welcome, the Government has yet to release detailed plans for achieving results, which will make it difficult to track progress. For example, promises made as part of the Open Government Partnership Plan¹² to disclose water point mapping data online have also not been fully realized. Overall, it is not clear whether new plans are informed by evidence, and whether an adequate transparency and accountability framework is in place to ensure value for money.

The findings presented above lay bare the magnitude of the challenge of access to clean water in Tanzania. They suggest a need to set clear priorities; to reflect on why previous efforts to improve access have been largely unsuccessful; to re-think current policies and practices in the sector on the basis of solid evidence regarding technical and governance matters; and to ensure meaningful transparency at all levels. Otherwise, the challenge of access will likely persist, further increasing the gap between Tanzania and its Sub-Saharan African neighbours, and failing to fulfil the aspirations of millions of men and particularly women and children across the country.

¹¹ Tanzania 10th Joint Supervision Mission, Water Sector Development Program, May 20 -- 31, 2013, Aide memoire.

¹² Commitment 3.4 (i) in the Tanzania Open Government Plan 2012 - 3: <http://bit.ly/1fOhcZ> (accessed 12 March 2014)