Election choices
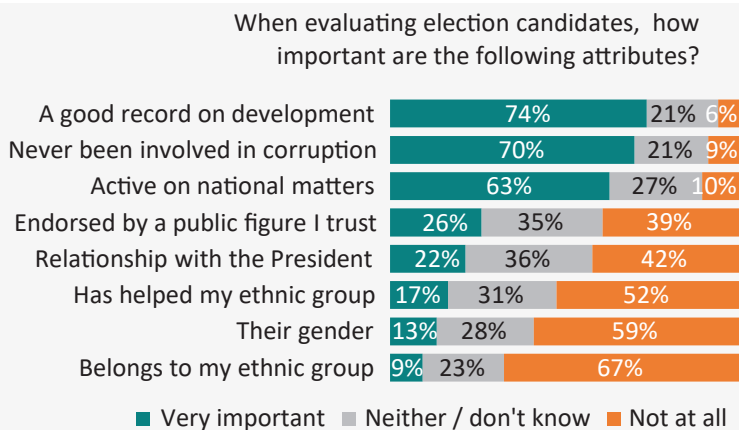## Kenyans' opinions on decisions and priorities at election time

This brief explores questions around electoral choices among Kenyan citizens. What do citizens see as important when choosing who to vote for? And what issues do they think should be prioritised? The data presented here comes mainly from Twaweza's Sauti za Wananchi survey, a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey of public opinion and citizens' experiences. Further details are available from www.twaweza.org/sauti.

Insight 1. Citizens say they value a candidates record on development and corruption over their gender or ethnicity

Most citizens say a candidate's record on matters of development (74%), corruption (70%) and national affairs (63%) are important factors when evaluating candidates.

In contrast, few citizens say a candidate's gender (13%) or ethnicity (9%) is important.
among artists in rural areas (17%).

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022

When evaluating election candidates, how important are the following attributes?

Attribute	Very important	Neither / don't know	Not at all
A good record on development	74%	21%	6%
Never been involved in corruption	70%	21%	9%
Active on national matters	63%	27%	10%
Endorsed by a public figure I trust	26%	35%	39%
Relationship with the President	22%	36%	42%
Has helped my ethnic group	17%	31%	52%
Their gender	13%	28%	59%
Belongs to my ethnic group	9%	23%	67%

■ Very important   ■ Neither / don't know   ■ Not at all
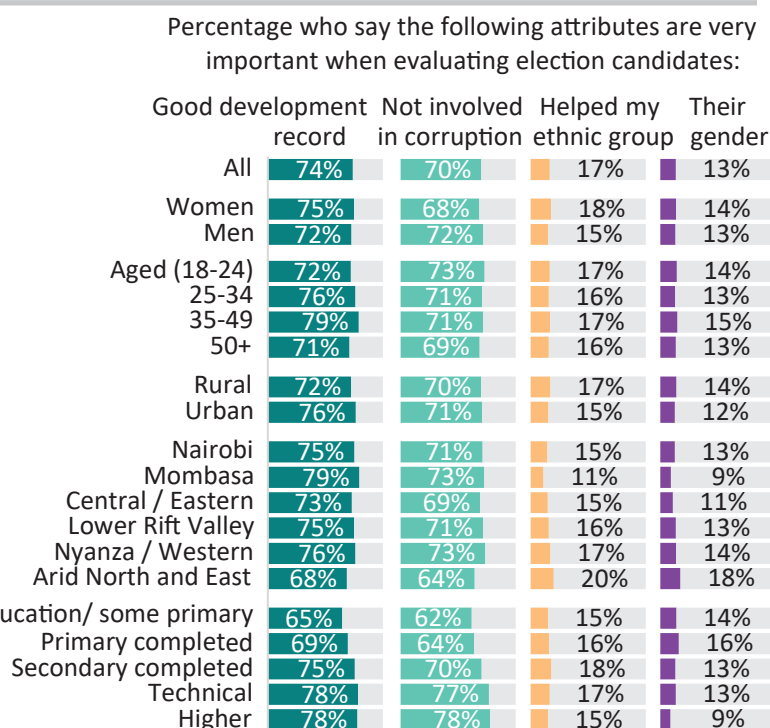
Insight 2. Different demographic groups share the preference for a candidate's record over their identity

Across a range of demographic groups, the pattern of preferring candidates with a good record on development and corruption over other matters is broadly consistent. Very little difference can be seen in the preferences of men and women, younger and older citizens, those in urban and rural areas or in different regions of the country.
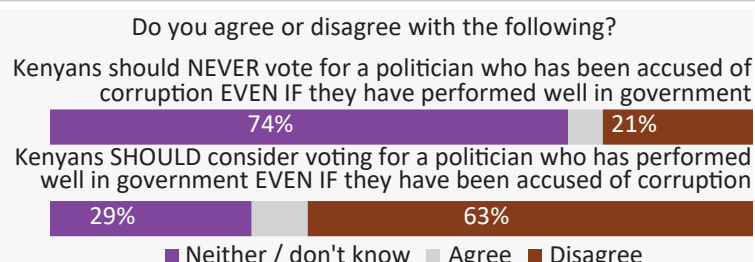
The only demographic breakdown showing any substantial difference is education level, with better-educated citizens showing even greater preference for a candidate's record on development and corruption. Those with less education still rank these as the most important factors, but not so much as those with higher levels of education.

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022

Percentage who say the following attributes are very important when evaluating election candidates:

	Good development record	Not involved in corruption	Helped my ethnic group	Their gender
All	74%	70%	17%	13%
Women	75%	68%	18%	14%
Men	72%	72%	15%	13%
Aged (18-24)	72%	73%	17%	14%
25-34	76%	71%	16%	13%
35-49	79%	71%	17%	15%
50+	71%	69%	16%	13%
Rural	72%	70%	17%	14%
Urban	76%	71%	15%	12%
Nairobi	75%	71%	15%	13%
Mombasa	79%	73%	11%	9%
Central / Eastern	73%	69%	15%	11%
Lower Rift Valley	75%	71%	16%	13%
Nyanza / Western	76%	73%	17%	14%
Arid North and East	68%	64%	20%	18%
No education/ some primary	65%	62%	15%	14%
Primary completed	69%	64%	16%	16%
Secondary completed	75%	70%	18%	13%
Technical	78%	77%	17%	13%
Higher	78%	78%	15%	9%

Insight 3. Most citizens say we should never vote for candidates accused of corruption, even if they have a good record in other ways

Three out of four citizens (74%) say Kenyans should never vote for a politician who has been accused of corruption, even if they have performed well in other matters of government. Similarly, six out of ten (63%) disagree with the view that citizens should consider voting for politicians who have performed well even if they have been accused of corruption.

Do you agree or disagree with the following?

Kenyans should NEVER vote for a politician who has been accused of corruption EVEN IF they have performed well in government

Agree	Neither / don't know	Disagree
74%	21%	

Kenyans SHOULD consider voting for a politician who has performed well in government EVEN IF they have been accused of corruption

Agree	Neither / don't know	Disagree
29%		63%

■ Neither / don't know   ■ Agree   ■ Disagree

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022

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"conquer with love"

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Twaweza
ni sisi

Insight 4. More citizens think their elected representatives cannot be trusted than say they can be trusted a lot

More citizens say their elected representatives cannot be trusted at all than say they can be trusted a lot. A significant number say the representatives can be trusted only to some extent.

This pattern is consistent across five different types of representatives: Member of County Assembly (MCA), Member of Parliament (MP), Woman Rep, Senator and Governor.
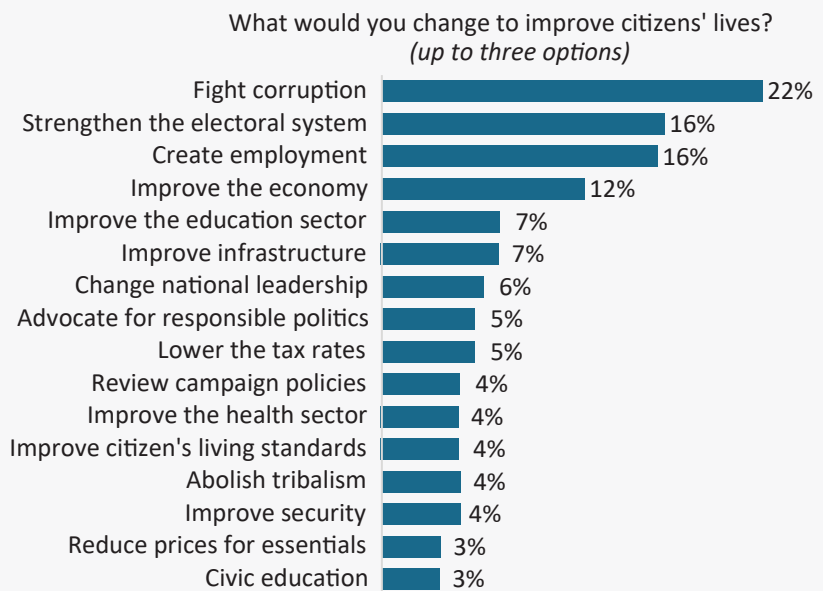
To what extent do you think that the following leaders can trusted to act with honesty and integrity?

	A lot	To some extent	Don't know / refused	Not at all
Your MCA	22%	40%		35%
Your MP	26%	40%		31%
Your Woman Rep	21%	38%		36%
Your Senator	23%	39%		35%
Your Governor	27%	38%		33%

■ A lot ■ To some extent ■ Don't know / refused ■ Not at all
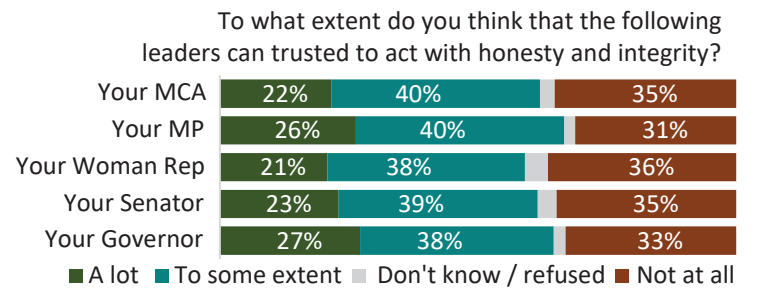
Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022

Insight 5. Citizens top priorities for improving citizens' lives are to fight corruption, improve the electoral system and create jobs

The main actions suggested by citizens to improve people's lives in Kenya are to fight corruption (22%), strengthen the electoral system (16%) and create employment (16%).

These are followed by improving the economy (12%), the education sector (7%) and infrastructure (7%).
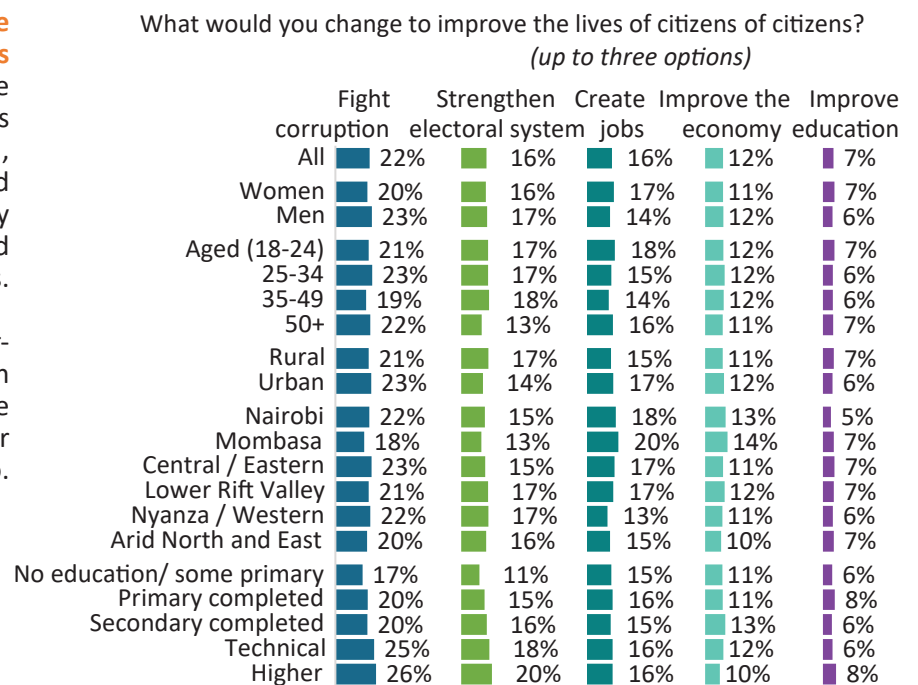
What would you change to improve citizens' lives?
(up to three options)

Fight corruption	22%
Strengthen the electoral system	16%
Create employment	16%
Improve the economy	12%
Improve the education sector	7%
Improve infrastructure	7%
Change national leadership	6%
Advocate for responsible politics	5%
Lower the tax rates	5%
Review campaign policies	4%
Improve the health sector	4%
Improve citizen's living standards	4%
Abolish tribalism	4%
Improve security	4%
Reduce prices for essentials	3%
Civic education	3%

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022

Insight 6. Different demographic groups share the same priorities for improving citizens' lives

Across a range of demographic groups, the same suggestions for improving people's lives are broadly shared. Women and men, younger and older people, those in rural and urban areas and different parts of the country all say corruption, the electoral system and employment should be the top priorities.

The exception is education level: better-educated citizens are even more likely than others to prioritise corruption and the electoral system, while those with lower levels of education are less likely to do so.

What would you change to improve the lives of citizens of citizens?
(up to three options)

	Fight corruption	Strengthen electoral system	Create jobs	Improve the economy	Improve education
All	22%	16%	16%	12%	7%
Women	20%	16%	17%	11%	7%
Men	23%	17%	14%	12%	6%
Aged (18-24)	21%	17%	18%	12%	7%
25-34	23%	17%	15%	12%	6%
35-49	19%	18%	14%	12%	6%
50+	22%	13%	16%	11%	7%
Rural	21%	17%	15%	11%	7%
Urban	23%	14%	17%	12%	6%
Nairobi	22%	15%	18%	13%	5%
Mombasa	18%	13%	20%	14%	7%
Central / Eastern	23%	15%	17%	11%	7%
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Nyanza / Western	22%	17%	13%	11%	6%
Arid North and East	20%	16%	15%	10%	7%
No education/ some primary	17%	11%	15%	11%	6%
Primary completed	20%	15%	16%	11%	8%
Secondary completed	20%	16%	15%	13%	6%
Technical	25%	18%	16%	12%	6%
Higher	26%	20%	16%	10%	8%

Source: *Sauti za Wananchi* special panel round 6, Dec 2021-Jan 2022