
# Voices of the people

## Introducing the second *Sauti za Wananchi* panel

## 1. Introduction and summary

Citizens have a crucial role in governance that goes well beyond casting a vote every few years. A policy is far more likely to be successful if it takes the needs of the public into account during policy formulation and if citizens' views and experiences of how the policy is working in practice are heard. And yet, often, the channels for citizens' voices to be heard are either piecemeal and anecdotal, reflecting the needs and opinions of a vocal and well-connected minority rather than the whole population, or are too slow to influence policy on a timely basis.

Since 2017, Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* initiative has been working to fill this gap in Uganda, building on a model first developed in Tanzania in 2011. Regular phone calls are made to a nationally-representative panel of 2,000 respondents, asking for their experiences and opinions on a range of topics. The results have attracted attention from the media, the public and policymakers, influencing the government's direction on health service provision and access to clean and safe water. In 2021, a new panel was established to ensure the panel remains fully representative of a changing population.

As with the first panel, the new *Sauti za Wananchi* panel has two phases: the first consists of a standard household survey with face-to-face interviews, implemented in October 2021 – the baseline. A representative sample of 3,000 respondents from all regions of Uganda was randomly selected to participate. As part of the baseline, mobile phones were distributed to those who agreed to become *Sauti za Wananchi* respondents, and solar chargers were made available locally. This helps ensure the panel is truly representative of the population by enabling even poorer citizens to participate. During the second phase, these respondents are contacted by phone via a call centre.

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Twaweza ni sisi

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

Data for the brief comes from the baseline survey for the second Uganda panel of Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* survey. *Sauti za Wananchi* is a nationally-representative, high-frequency mobile phone panel survey. Information on the overall methodology is available at www.twaweza.org/sauti. For this brief, data were collected from 3,000 respondents through in-person interviews forming the baseline survey for a second *Sauti za Wananchi* panel, conducted between 15 September and 14 October 2021.

The key findings are:

- 3,000 respondent households have 13,501 members across different ages
- The panel represents a cross-section of the national adult population
- The *Sauti za Wananchi* panel closely matches the profile of the population as a whole
- Most panel members earn a living mainly from agriculture
- Around half of the panel members are literate in English and their household's primary language
- The languages spoken most widely by respondents at home are Luganda, Runyankore-Rukiga, Lusoga and Leblango
- Most citizens believe that providing their opinion is very important
- Panel members' main expectation from participating is to help improve public services

## 2. Nine insights on the second *Sauti za Wananchi* panel

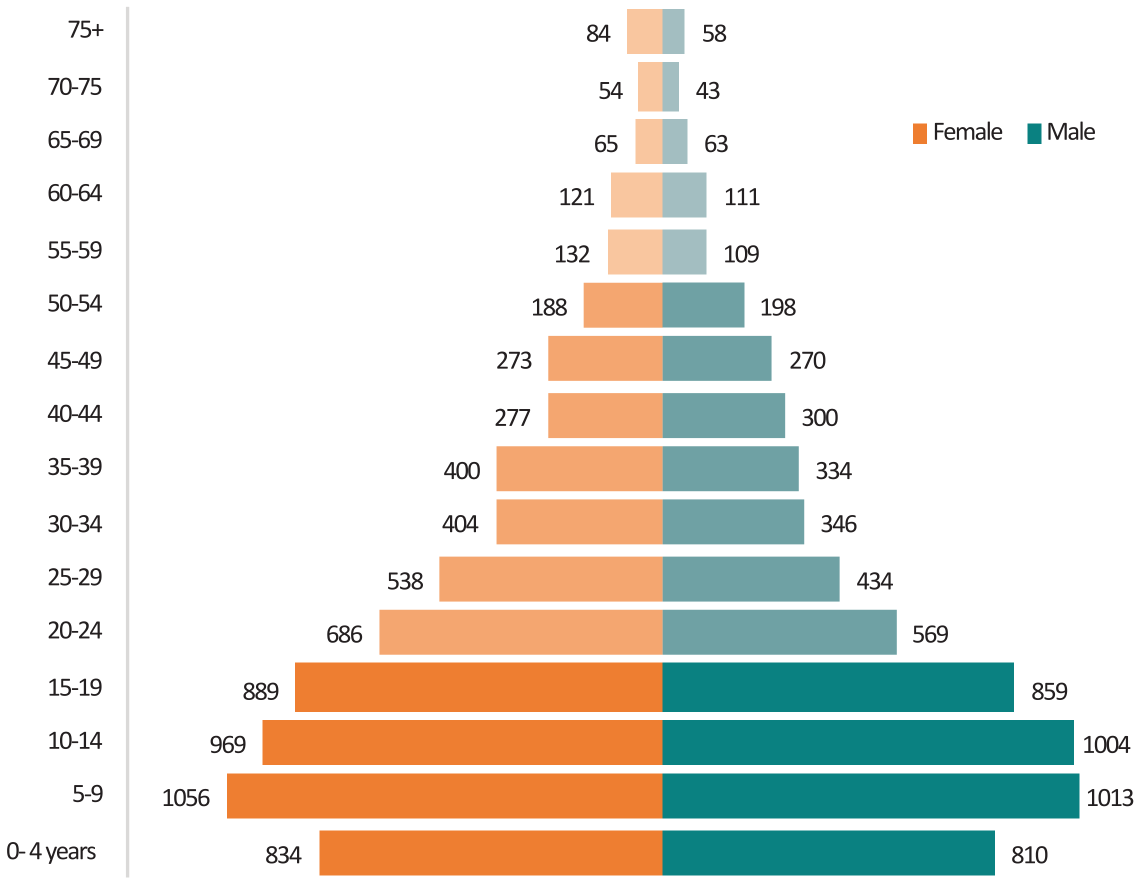
### Insight 1: 3,000 respondent households have 13,501 members of all ages

The second *Sauti za Wananchi* Uganda panel comprises one member from each of the 3,000 randomly selected households from across the country. The sample is nationally representative of Uganda's population as a whole.

The 3,000 households have 13,501 members across a wide age range, including several hundred babies and eighteen members aged 90 or above. Of this number, 6,696 are adults (aged 18 or above).

Of the adults in the panel households, just over a half (54%) are aged 18-34, a third (33%) are aged 35-54, and one out of eight (13%) is aged 55 or over, making it a very young population.

**Figure 1: Population pyramid of household members in panel households**

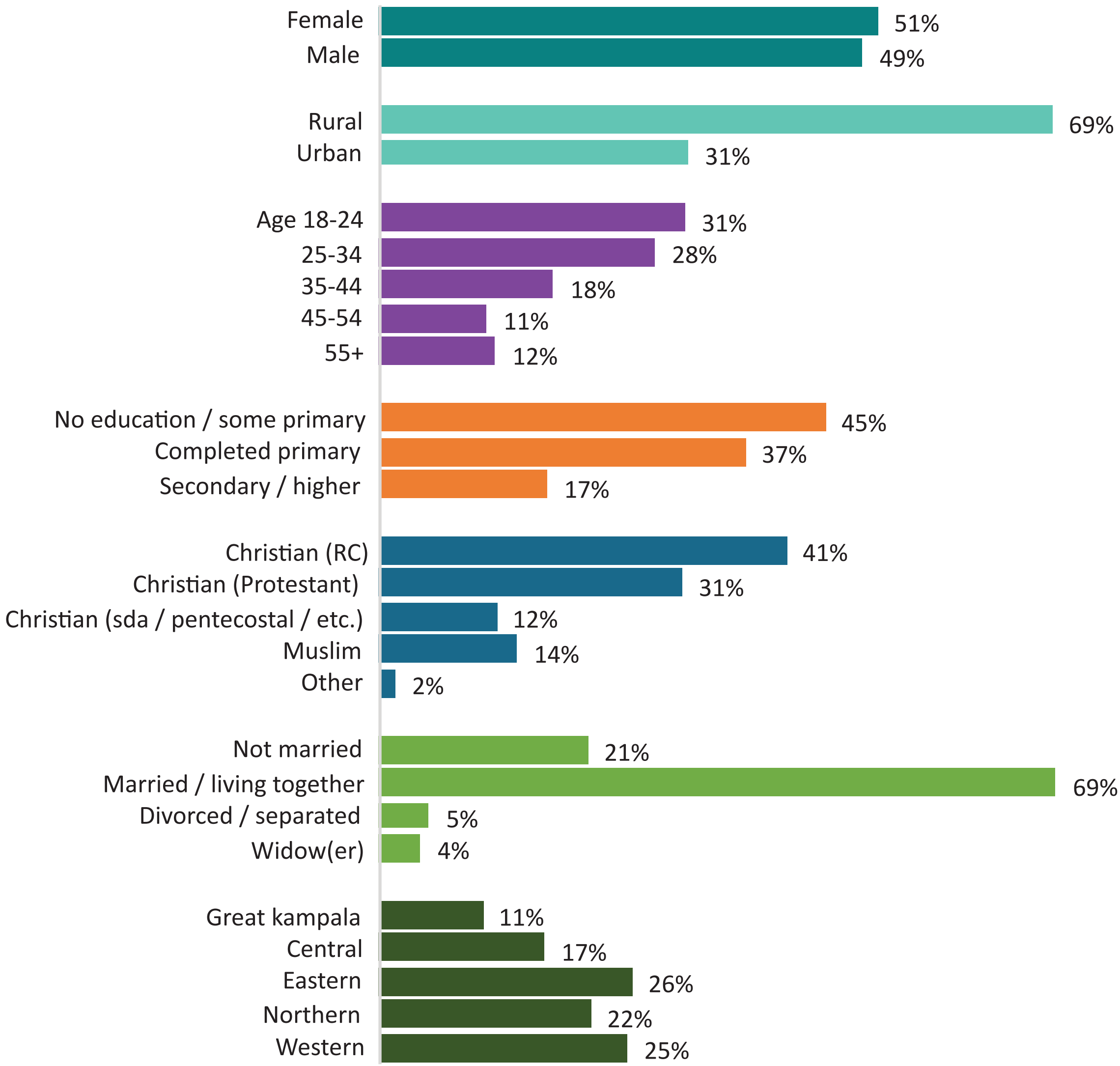



**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

## Insight 2: The panel represents a cross-section of Uganda's adult population

The panel represents all aspects of the adult population of Uganda – men and women, those in urban and rural areas, those with more or less education, and those from different religious communities and marital statuses. They are also widely dispersed across all regions of the country.

**Figure 2: Panel characteristics**

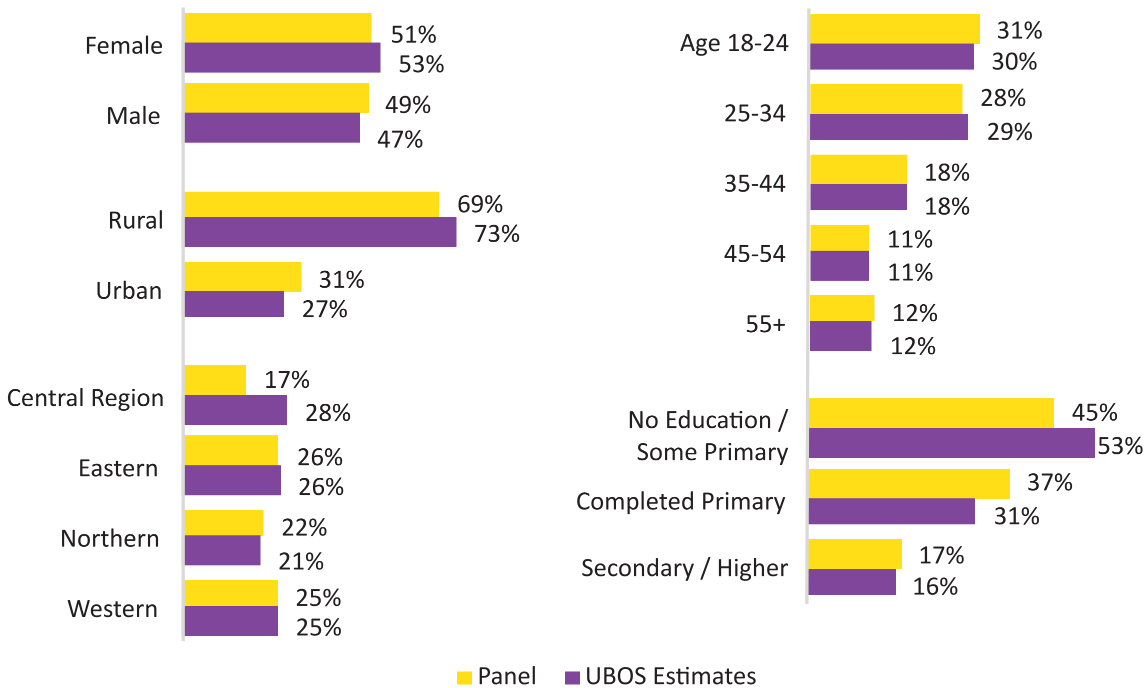



**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

## Insight 3: The *Sauti za Wananchi* panel closely matches the profile of Uganda's population as a whole

The panel members closely reflect Uganda's adult population's demographic profile. The panel and the best estimates of the national population closely match across gender, urban/rural setting, age, education and geography.

**Figure 3: Comparison of panel with national population profile:**

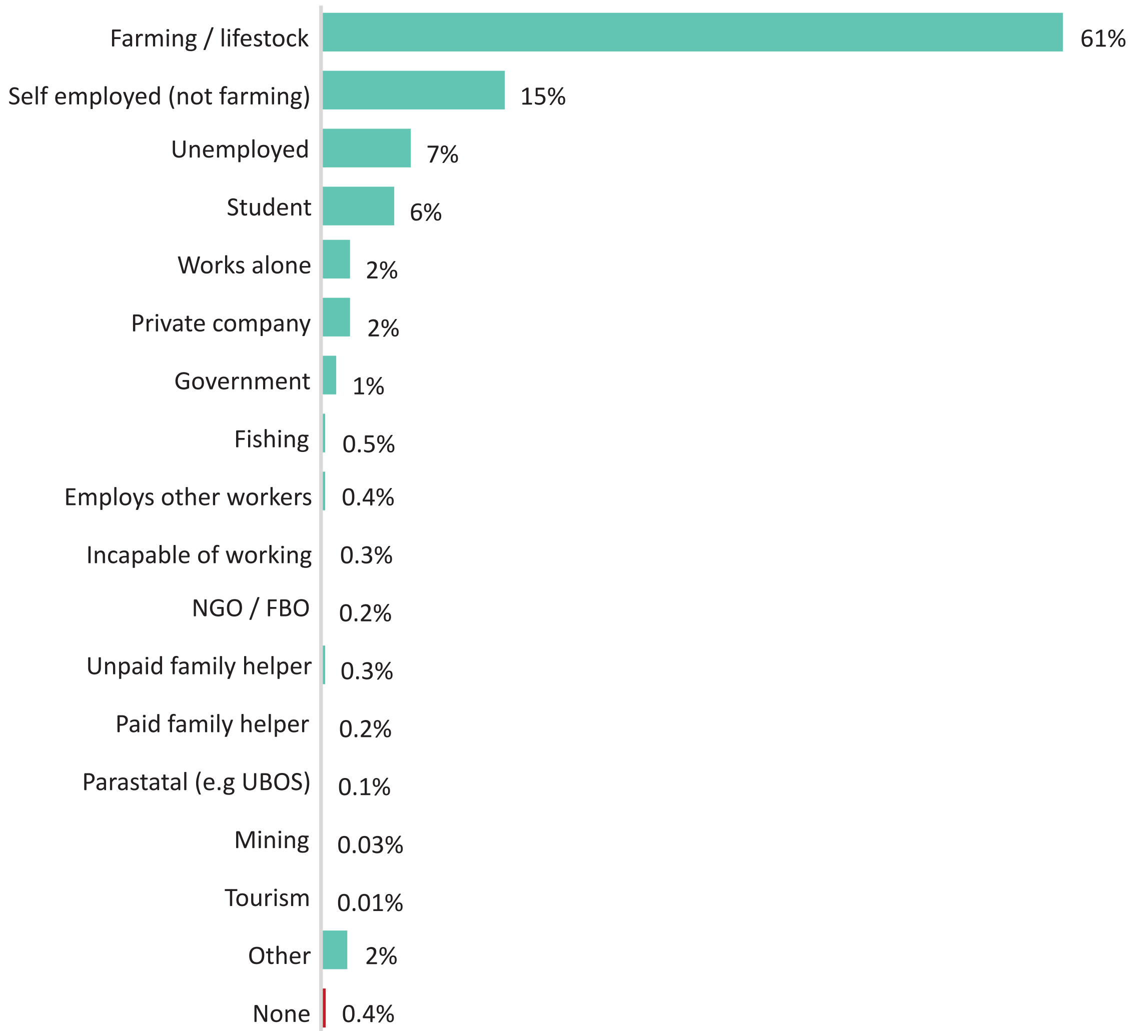



**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021);
Base: all respondents; n=3,000
UBOS estimates are projections for 2021 based on the 2014 census and 2020 national household survey

## Insight 4: Most panel members earn a living from agriculture

Most panel members (61%) give farming or livestock production as their primary occupation over the previous year. This matches the findings of the National Survey Report, 2019-2020, conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (62%). Significant numbers of others are self-employed outside the agriculture sector (15%), unemployed (7%) or students (6%).

**Figure 4: What was your main occupation for the past 12 months?**

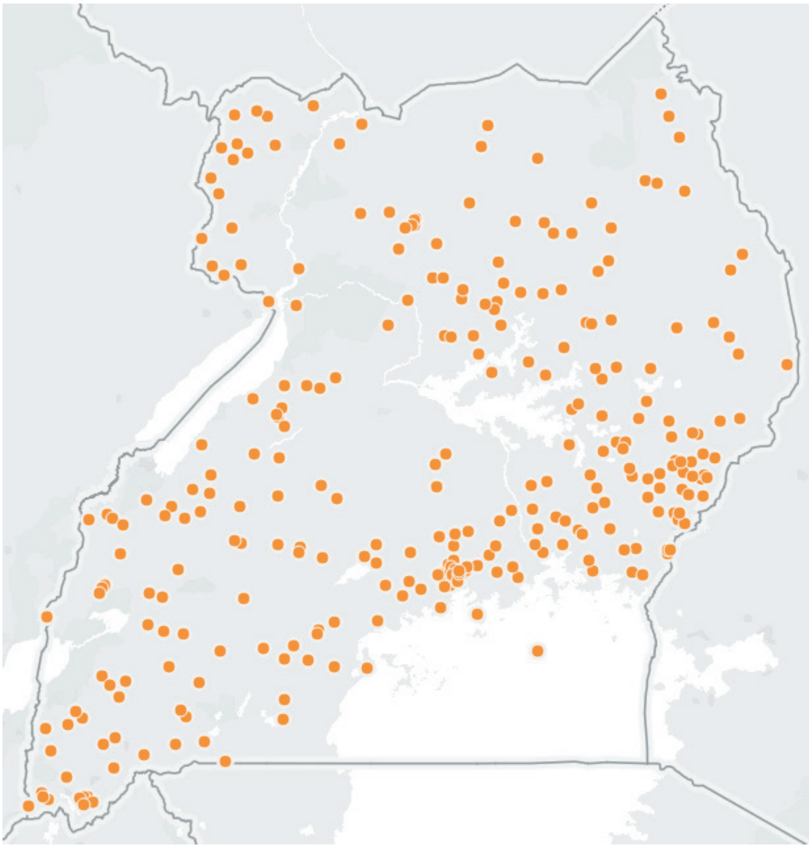



**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

## Insight 5: Enumeration Areas in the sample cover the whole country

The 300 enumeration areas included in the final selection cover the entire country. This consists of a concentration of EAs in and around Kampala that reflects the concentration of population in that area and fewer EAs in less-densely populated areas.

**Figure 5: Map of Enumeration Areas (EAs) included in the *Sauti za Wananchi* panel**



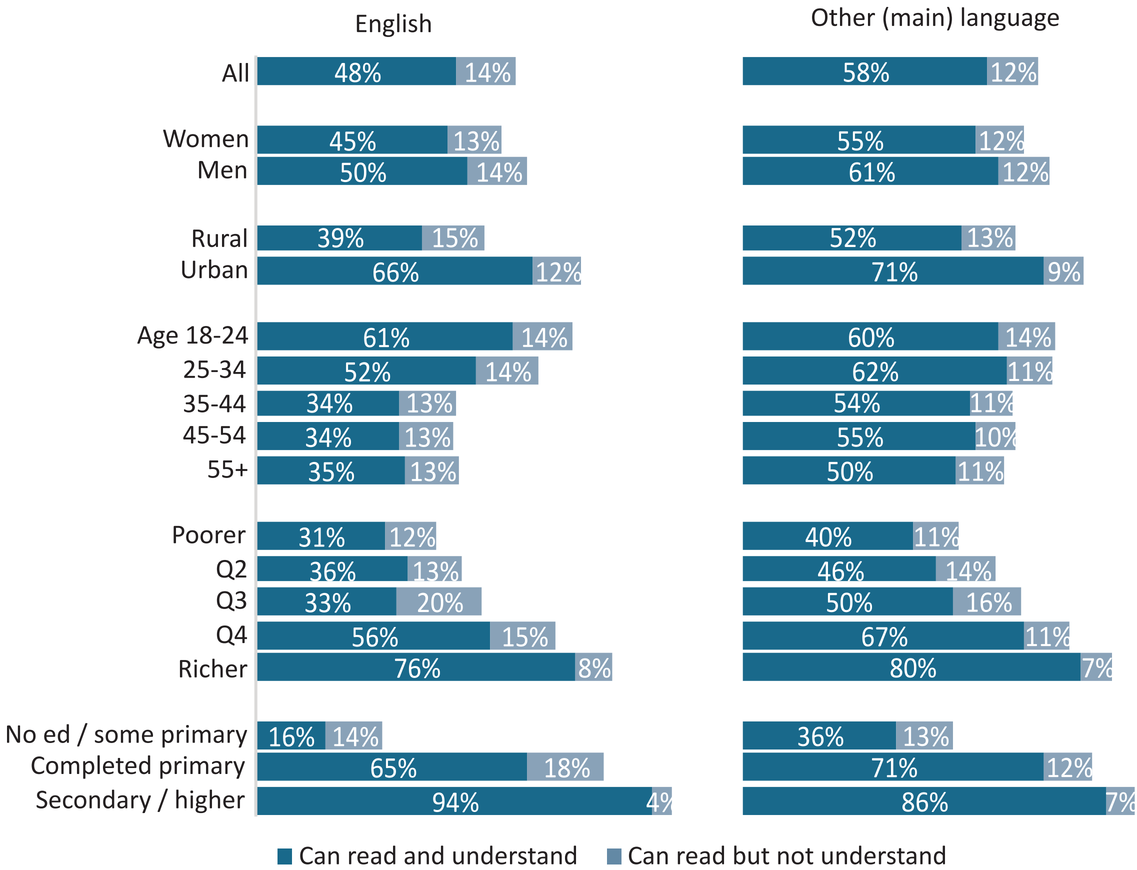
**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021);

## Insight 6: Around half of the panel members are functionally literate in English and their household's primary language

Six out of ten panel members (58%) can read and understand a question written in their primary language, and a few more can read the question but not understand it (12%). Fewer can do this with a question written in English: half (48%) can read and understand the question, and one out of ten (12%) can read the question but not understand it.

Unsurprisingly, these figures link closely to education levels, with better-educated respondents more likely to be able to read and understand the questions. Similarly, younger respondents and those in urban and wealthier households are more likely to be functionally literate. Men are a little more likely than women to be able to read and understand the questions.

**Figure 6: Percentage able to read and/or understand a written question in English / their primary language:**




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

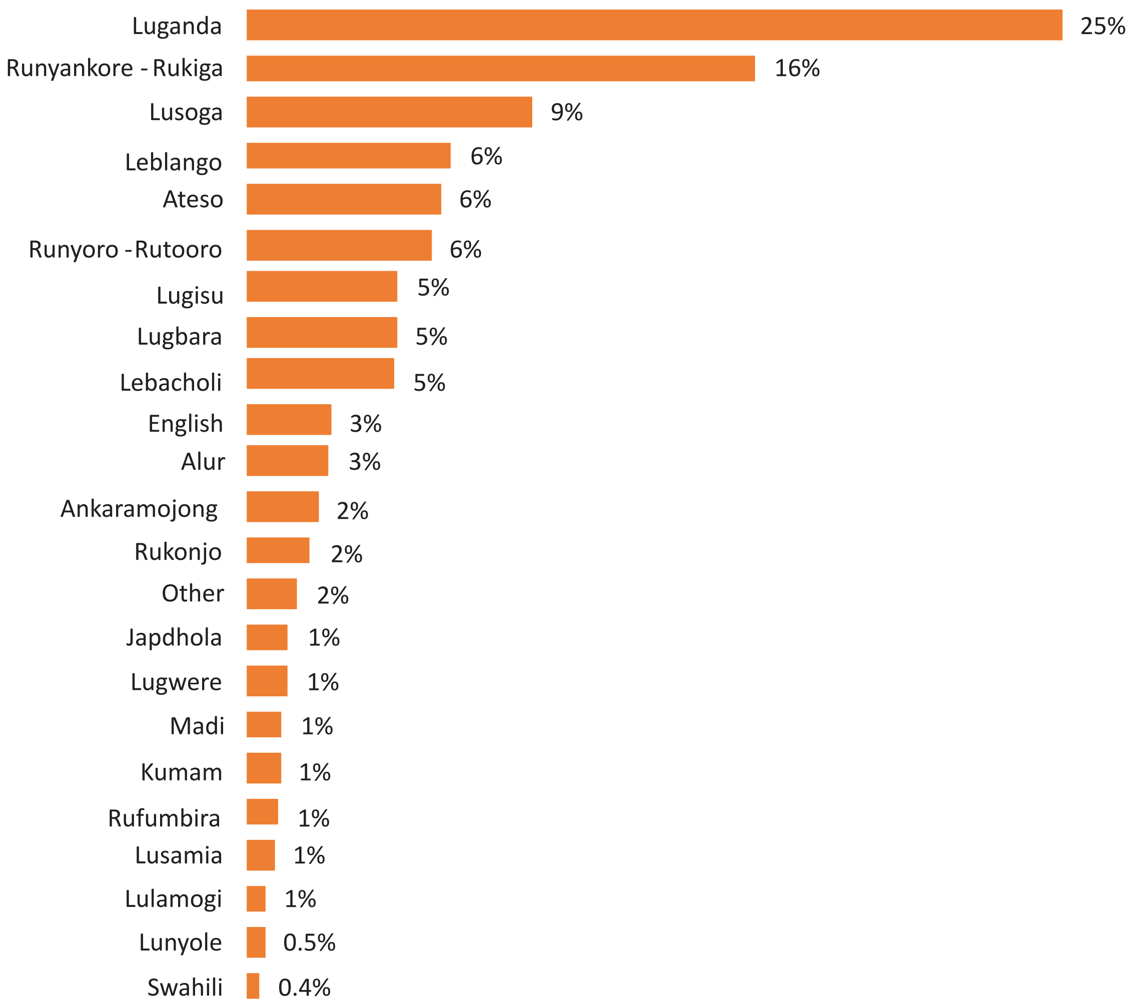
This data has implications for public communication strategies. In particular, communications that are exclusively in English are likely to exclude some women, older citizens, poorer citizens and those in rural areas.

## Insight 7: The languages spoken most widely by respondents at home are Luganda, Runyankore-Rukiga, Lusoga and Leblango

The languages spoken at home by most respondents are Luganda, spoken by one out of four respondents (25%), Runyankore-Rukiga (16%) and Lusoga (9%). Together, these four languages account for half of the panel members (50%), with a wide range of other languages making up the remainder.

A small number speak English (3%) as their primary language at home, and an even smaller number use Swahili (0.4%).

**Figure 7: Which language do you speak most frequently at home?**



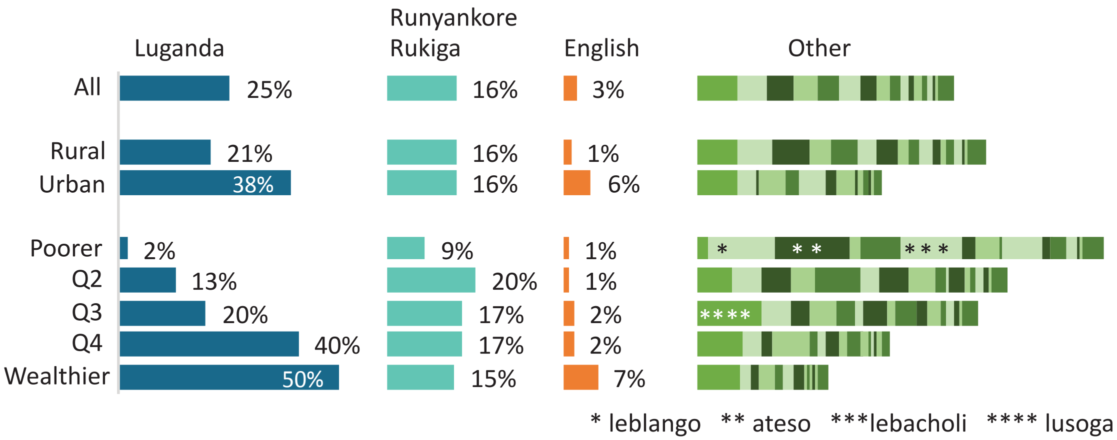

**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

There is a strong link between languages spoken at home and household wealth. Wealthier households are more likely than others to speak either Luganda or English at home.

Some languages are spoken by small numbers overall but account for a large proportion of poorer households, including Ateso (17%), Leblango (15%), Lusoga (14%) and Ankaramojong (9%). Together, these four languages are the primary spoken language in over half (55%) of poorer households, and just 11% of other households.

However, the strongest link, unsurprisingly, is with region. Those in Central Uganda and Greater Kampala are much more likely to speak Luganda at home, those in Western Uganda are most likely to speak Runyankore-Rukiga, while very few of those in Eastern and Northern Uganda speak those languages. Instead, in these regions, they speak a wide range of other languages including Leblango, Ateso, Lebacholi, Lusoga, Lugbara and Lugisu.

**Figure 8: Which language do you speak most frequently at home?**




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021);
Base: all respondents; n=3,000

## Insight 8: Mobile phone ownership is highly unequal

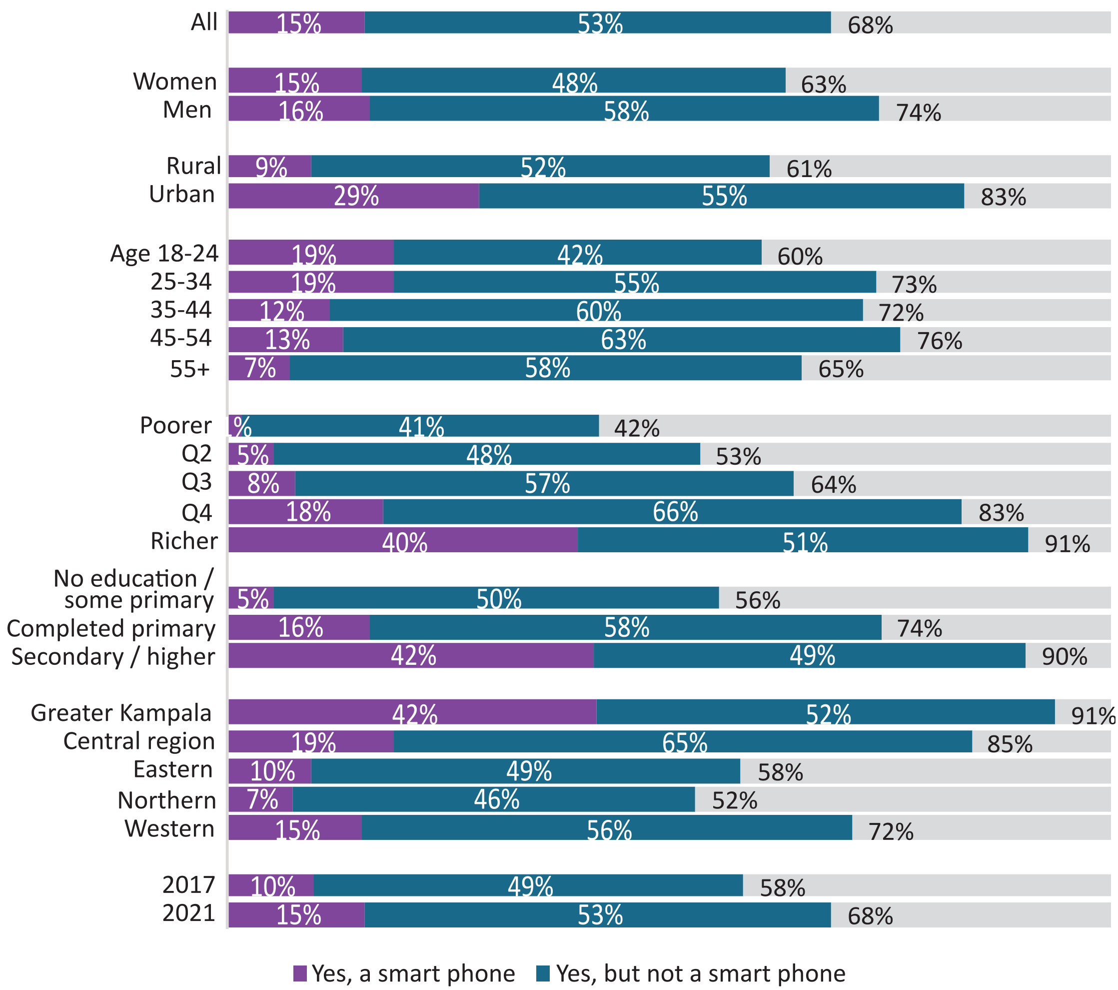
Two out of three citizens (68%) own a mobile phone, including a small number (15%) who own a smartphone. This means that without providing mobile phones to panel members, one out of three citizens would not be represented in the survey.

Further, mobile phone ownership is highly unequal. Men (74%) are more likely than women (63%) to own a mobile phone, but the difference is more significant between those in urban (83%) and rural (61%) areas. The differences are greater still between wealthier and poorer households and citizens with higher and lower levels of education.

Again, this demonstrates the necessity of providing mobile phones to panel members to ensure that disadvantaged groups in society are not excluded from the survey. Indeed, if we look only at women over 55 in poorer households in rural Uganda, only one out of five (18%) own a mobile phone (not shown in charts). Without providing mobile phones, therefore, the voice of younger wealthy men in urban areas would be heard at a much greater volume than older poorer women in rural areas.

In the four years since the first *Sauti za Wananchi* panel was established in 2017, mobile phone ownership has risen from 58% of the population to 68%. Over the same period, ownership of smartphones has increased from 10% to 15%.

**Figure 9: Do you currently own a mobile phone? Is it a smartphone?**

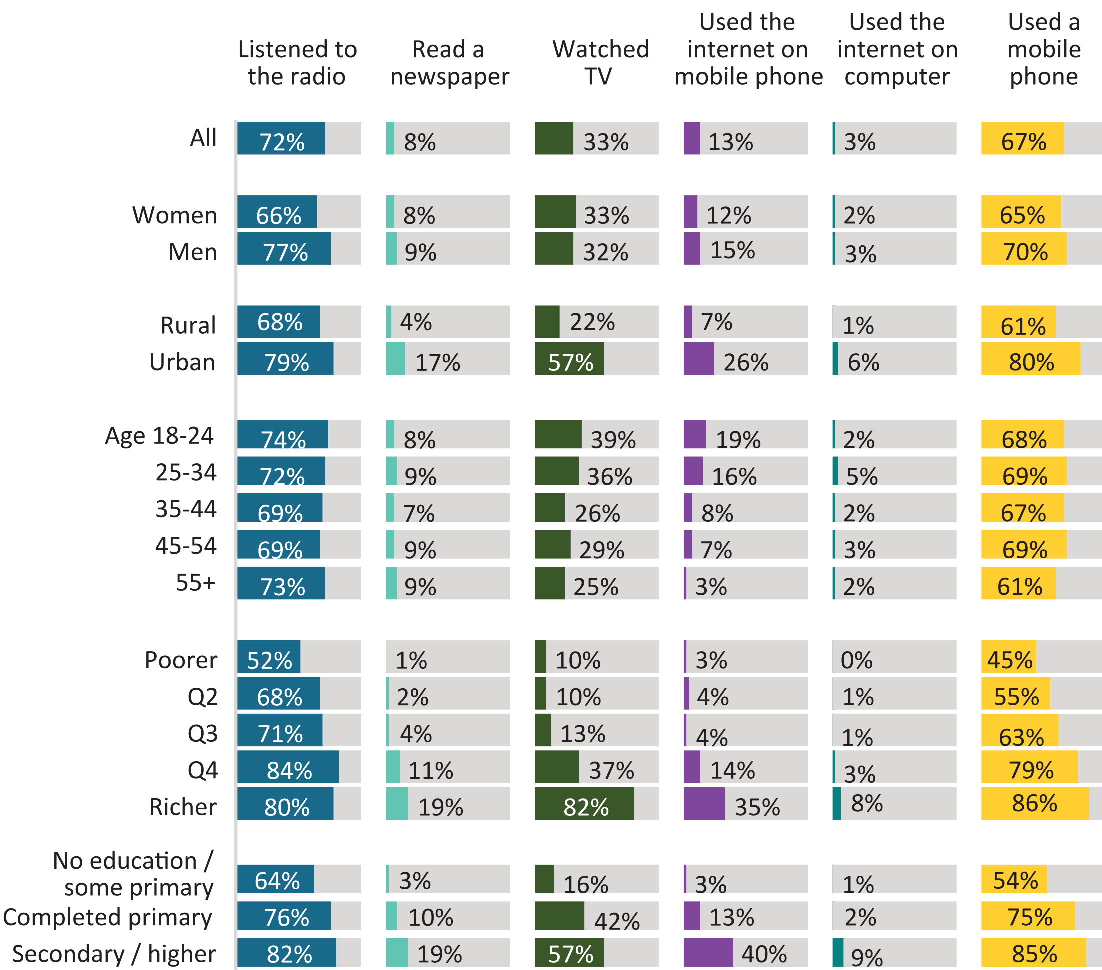



**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

Similarly, media habits vary widely by demographic group. Radio listening is consistently high (though falling) across all major demographic breakdowns, but this is the exception. Newspapers, TV and the internet are all consumed far more by wealthier, better-educated citizens and residents of urban areas. Indeed, wealthier citizens are ten times more likely than poorer citizens to watch TV and to access the internet.

Men are a little more likely than women to engage with the media, but the difference is relatively small compared to the difference between wealthier and poorer citizens.

**Figure 10: Percentage who did the following in the past seven days**




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October, 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

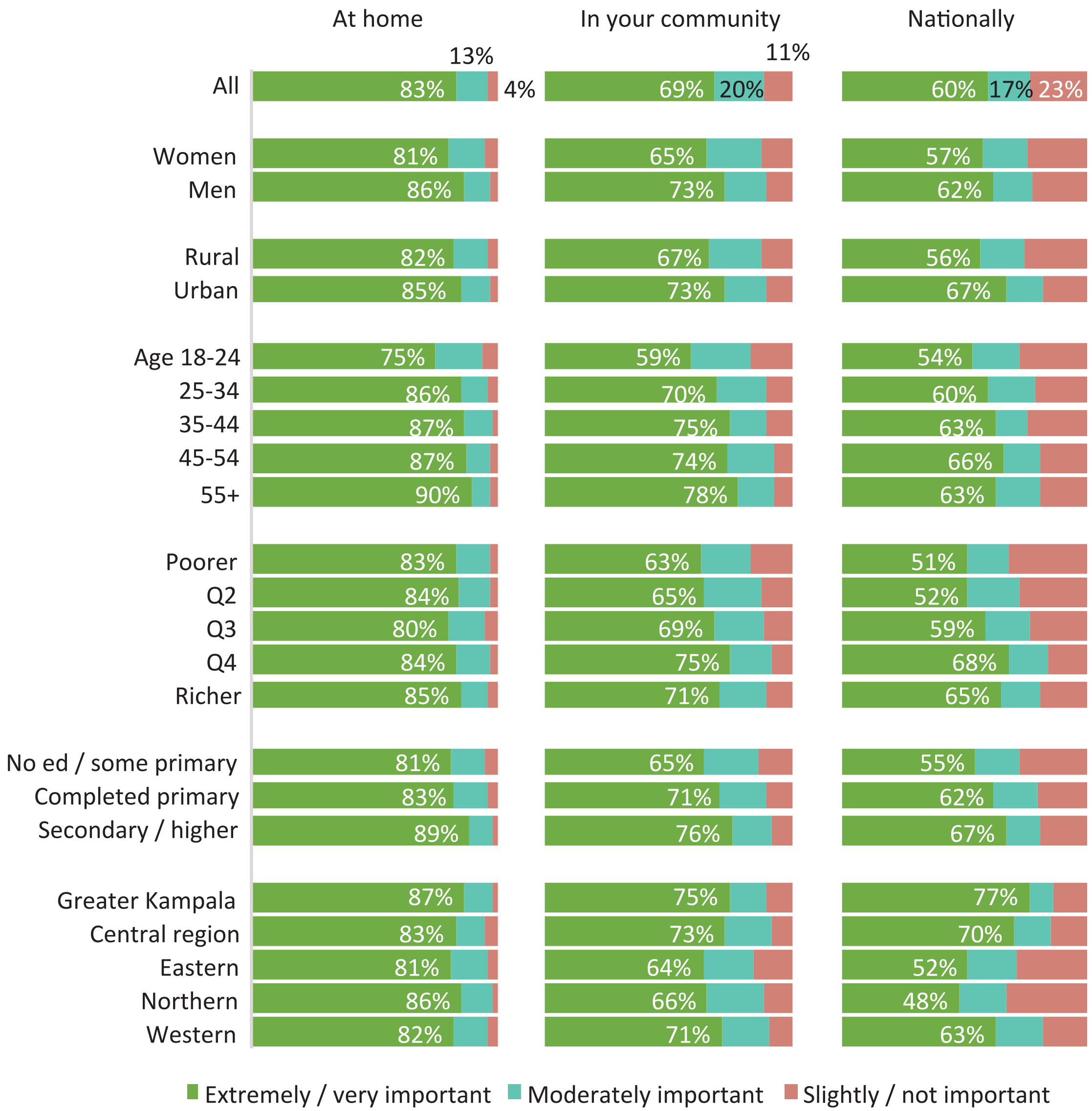
The most common use of the internet is for chatting with friends (10% of citizens), followed by following the news (6%) and sending and receiving emails (4%). One out of ten adult citizens (12%) is a member of at least one social networking site. This rises to one out of four (24%) in urban areas, one out of three (34%) among wealthier citizens, and four out of ten (40%) among those with secondary education or higher. (Not shown in charts.)

## Insight 9: Most citizens believe that providing their opinion is very important

Six out of ten citizens (60%) rate the value of offering their view at the national level as very or extremely important. The figure is even higher when providing opinions at community (69%) or household (83%) levels.

These figures are broadly consistent across key demographic groups. However, residents of urban areas and wealthier households, as well as better-educated citizens, are more likely to say that providing their opinion on national issues is very important.

**Figure 11: How would you rate the value of your opinion in shaping the decisions at home, in your community, and nationally?**



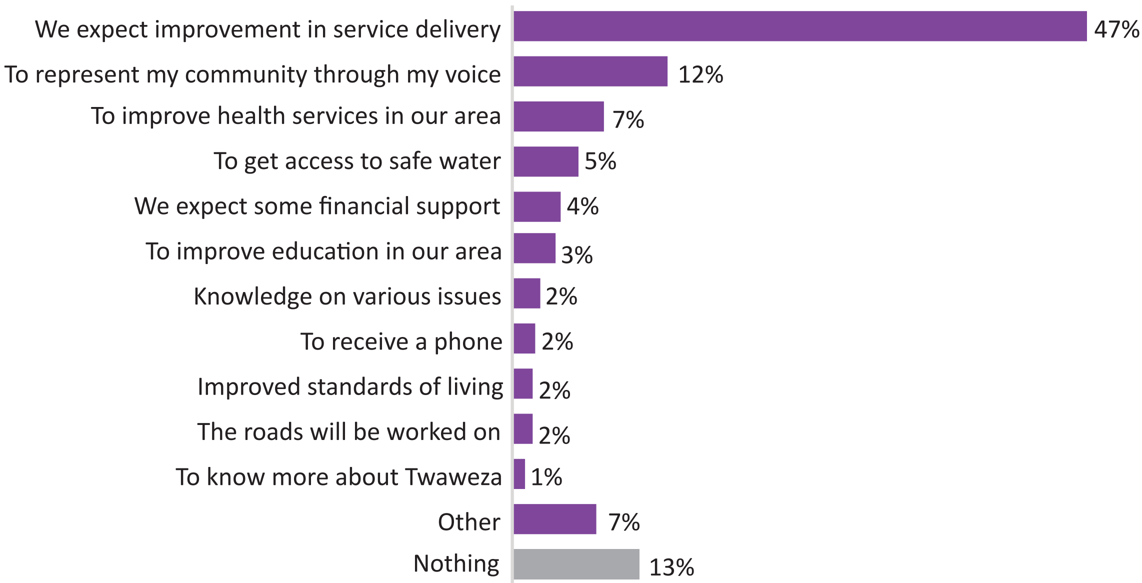

**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

## Insight 10: Panel members' main expectation from participating is to contribute to an improvement in public services

Half of the panel members (47%) say they expect to see an improvement in public service delivery due to their participation in *Sauti za Wananchi*. Others mention specific types of services, including health (7%), water (5%), education (3%) and roads (2%). Other possible motivations for participation, including representing their community (12%), rank much lower.

Few panel members mention motives involving personal gain. This includes receiving financial support (4%), receiving a phone (2%) and gaining knowledge (2%).

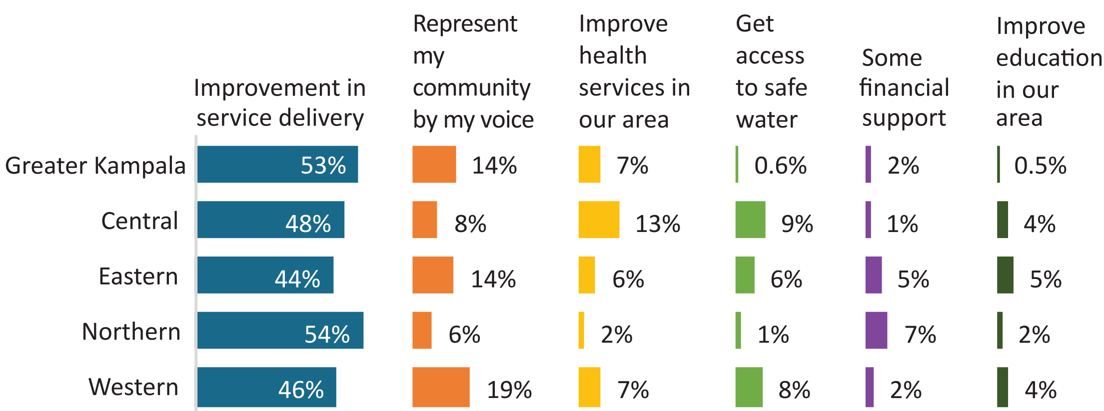
**Figure 12: What do you expect from participating in this survey?**
*(multiple responses permitted)*




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021);
Base: all respondents; n=3,000

Across all regions, the main expectation of panel members is to bring about improvements in service delivery. There are some differences in other priorities, however. This includes greater prioritisation of health and water services in the Central Region and greater expectation of some financial support in the Northern Region.

**Figure 13: What do you expect from participating in this survey?**
*(multiple responses permitted)*




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* baseline for second panel (September – October 2021); Base: all respondents; n=3,000

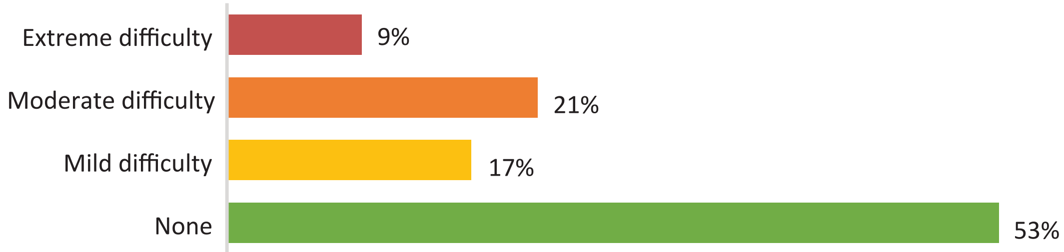
## Insight 11: 1 out of 10 panel members has some form of disability[1]

One out of ten panel members (9%) has some form of disability, defined here as having a high level of difficulty with one or more everyday actions. This includes those who have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, washing, sleeping, household tasks, community activities or getting on with people, those who feel extremely sad or anxious and those who experience a high level of bodily aches and pains. Two out of ten panel members (21%) have moderate difficulty in one or more of these areas.

1 It is unavoidable that some randomly-selected citizens will be unable to participate as panellists due to their disability – eg. those who are unable to hear, those with some forms of mental health difficulties. As such, this data on panel members with disabilities should not be interpreted as being fully representative of the population as a whole.

Please note also that data on disability comes from Round 1 of the *Sauti za Wananchi* survey, rather than from the baseline. It has been included here as disability is an important element of the diversity represented by the panel.

**Figure 14: Percentage who experience different levels of difficulty with everyday actions:**



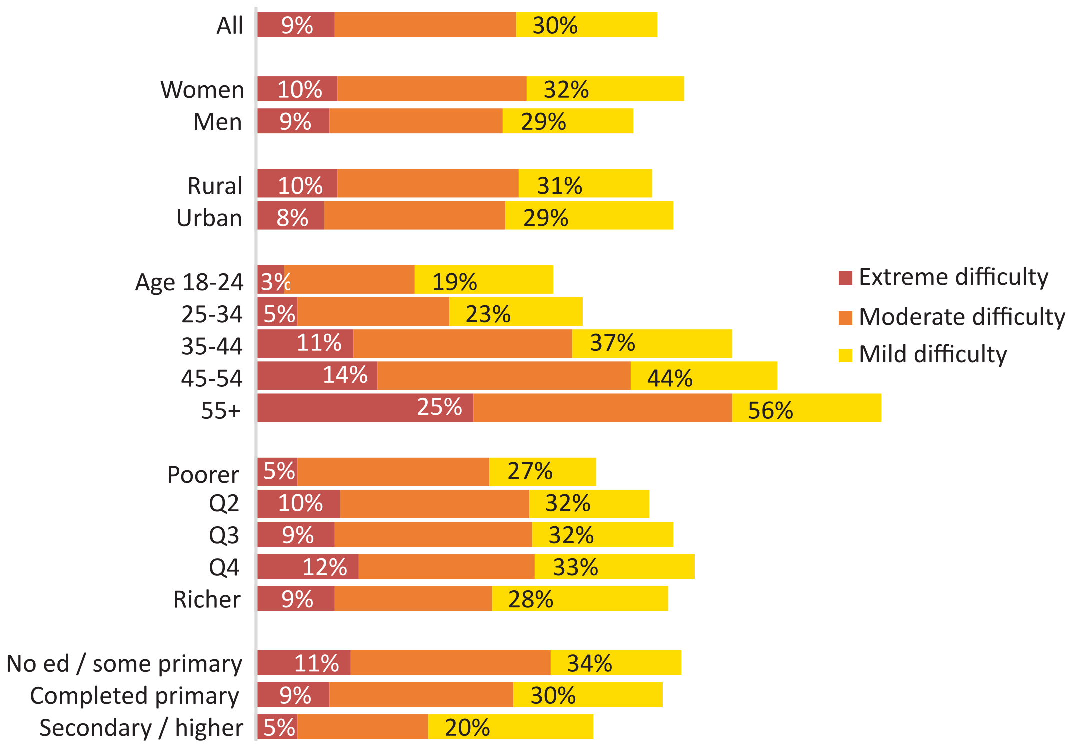

"extreme" = one or more difficulty at a high level; "moderate" = one or more at moderate level; "mild" = one or more at mild level; "none" = no difficulties in any area

Includes those who have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, washing, sleeping, household tasks, community activities or getting on with people, and those who feeling sad or anxious or who experience bodily aches and pains.

**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* second panel round 1 (January – February 2022); Base: all respondents; n=2,900

Disability is more common among older panel members. Among those aged 55 and over, half (56%) experience moderate or extreme difficulty, including a quarter (25%) who experience extreme difficulty. Disability is also a little more common among those with lower levels of education.

**Figure 15: Percentage who experience different levels of difficulty with everyday actions:**




"extreme" = one or more difficulty at a high level; "moderate" = one or more at moderate level; "mild" = one or more at mild level; "none" = no difficulties in any area

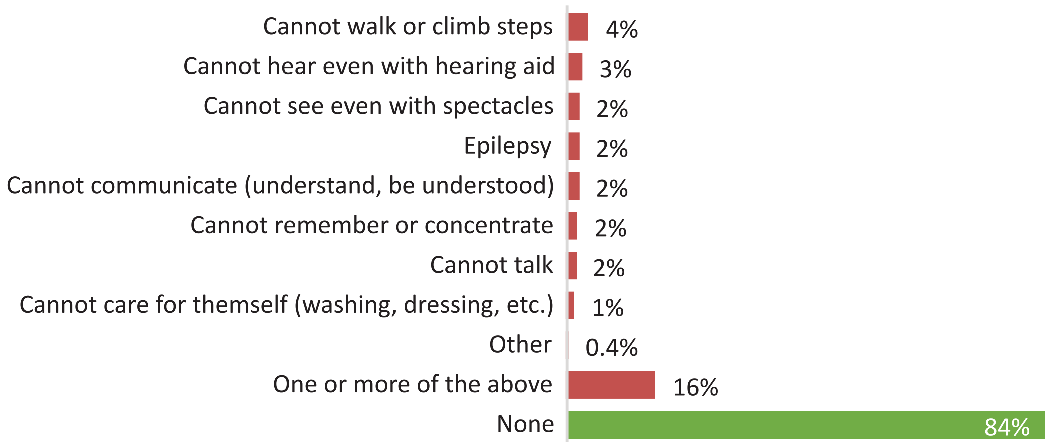
Includes those who have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, remembering, washing, sleeping, household tasks, community activities or getting on with people, and those who feeling sad or anxious or who experience bodily aches and pains.

**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* second panel round 1 (January – February 2022); Base: all respondents; n=2,900

## Insight 12: One out of six households have a disabled household member

One out of six households is home to one or more members (adults or children) with some form of disability. This includes households where someone cannot walk or climb steps (4%), cannot hear even with a hearing aid (3%), or cannot see even with spectacles (2%), among other forms of disability.

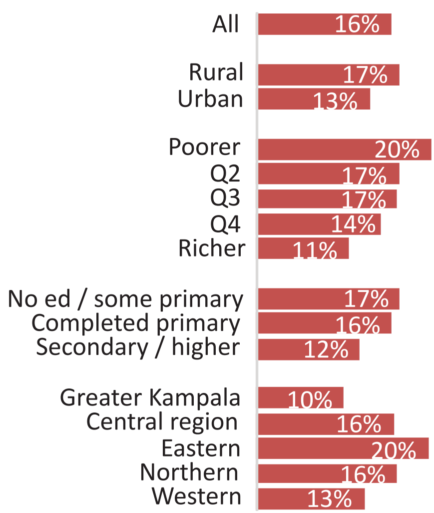
**Figure 16: Do any members of your household (adults or children) have any of the following difficulties?**




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* second panel round 1 (January – February 2022); Base: all respondents; n=2,900

Disability is more common in rural households, poorer households, those with lower levels of education, and households in Eastern parts of the country.

**Figure 17: Households where one or more member has any of the following difficulties?**
*cannot walk or climb steps; cannot see even with spectacles; cannot hear even with a hearing aid; cannot remember or concentrate; cannot talk; epilepsy; cannot care for themself (washing, dressing); cannot communicate (understanding, being understood)*




**Source:** *Sauti za Wananchi,* second panel round 1 (January – February 2022); Base: all respondents; n=2,900

# 3. Conclusions

This brief is about *Sauti za Wananchi*, which will use mobile phone technology to establish a timely, cost-efficient and nationally-representative data collection infrastructure. The first phase – the baseline – involved a rigorous multi-stage random sampling procedure, enlisting 3,000 individual respondents from across Uganda who provided baseline data and received mobile phones. A solar charger was placed in each enumeration area where we recruited respondents. Henceforth, in the project's second phase, respondents will be contacted regularly by phone with questionnaires on a range of public interest topics.

Data will be put in the public domain, and findings will be published regularly. The *Sauti za Wananchi* database is scheduled to grow quarterly through phone calls on a wide range of topics, focusing on public service delivery, citizen engagement and current affairs. The 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, development partners, and members of the public will be able to use 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.