

# Twaweza East Africa Annual Report | 2024



## Annual Report 2024

### Statement from the Interim Executive Director

It is with renewed hope that I welcome you to Twaweza's Annual Report for 2024. This report marks a significant milestone—the first year of our new strategic period (2024–2027)—and sets the tone for an ambitious chapter of systems change to improve the lives of 10 million East African citizens with special attention on women, youth and other marginalized people.

We stepped boldly into this phase, guided by the enduring belief that open societies, rooted in public participation and government responsiveness, are essential to equitable and sustainable development for all.

In a rapidly shifting political and economic landscape across East Africa, we anchored ourselves in clarity and purpose. We invested in aligning our teams and partners around the refreshed strategy. Together, we sharpened our results framework, set clear targets, and defined outcomes that speak directly to the aspirations of citizens and the need for stronger democratic practices.

Throughout the year, we navigated a complex civic space with agility and intention. We deepened our engagement with national and local governments to nurture trust-based partnerships and supported civil society peers through open dialogue and collaborative learning. Whether contributing to reforms in Kenya's land rate system, amplifying women's voices in Tanzania's Karume Market, or shaping Uganda's development planning processes, we witnessed the power of citizen agency to shape more inclusive policies.

Internally, we focused on strengthening the heart of our organization. We launched a new organisational development strategy, equipped senior leadership with skills for strategic resource mobilisation, and created dedicated roles to consolidate our fundraising efforts. These shifts signal our resolve to sustain impact while remaining nimble and responsive to context.

Yet, amid progress, we faced loss. In May 2024, we mourned the passing of our colleague and friend, Herbert Humphrey Harold. His dedication to learning and excellence leaves a lasting legacy. We are grateful to all who supported us during this time.

This report is more than a reflection—it is a call to action. The voices and stories within these pages demonstrate that democracy thrives when citizens are empowered and institutions are accountable. To our partners, donors, and the incredible Twaweza team—thank you for walking this journey with us.

Let us continue to imagine, build, and fight for societies that work for everyone.

# Annual Report 2024

## Our 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan in a Nutshell

### *Our Enduring Vision*

We believe in an open society, built on the human impulse to make a difference; where information and ideas flow, all citizens engage, and authorities are accountable to the people

In such a society, citizen agency is enriched, government responsiveness is enhanced and citizen-government trust is restored.

### *Our Theory of Change*

**IF** Twaweza empathetically engages public institutions responsible for local governance, **THEN** these institutions will use their political, financial, legal and other levers to promote inclusive decision-making practices, leading to greater citizen participation in planning, budgeting, execution, and evaluation. **AS A RESULT**, 10 million East African citizens—especially women, youth, and people with disabilities—will feel more respected in governance processes, experience increased self-efficacy, and benefit from improved public services.

### *Our Role*

Mission 1: Demonstrating citizen agency and government responsiveness to build trust

Mission 2: Generating evidence to inform better decisions and actions

Mission 3 (NEW): Strengthening civil society to enhance legitimacy and impact

### *Our Core Values*

**Collaborative:** We work with and learn from others knowing that the most powerful things can only be achieved when we pull together our strengths.

**Transparent:** We practice what we preach, foster a culture of deep transparency, be honest about failure and success, and share widely

**Imaginative:** We think anew, reframe, wonder, imagine possibilities beyond traditional boundaries driven by a thirst for learning.

**Strategic:** We seek big challenges and appreciate the power of clear thinking and sound judgements about scale, scope, timing, connection, impact and sustainability

**Rigorous:** We seek quality – attention to detail, clarity and elegance – in everything that we do.

**Inclusive:** We intentionally expend effort to ensure that traditionally excluded groups are part of our work with special focus on women and youth

# Annual Report 2024 | Part I

## Stories of Progress, Impact and Lessons

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### *Shaping Tanzania's Future: The People's Vision 2050*

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In 2024, Tanzania embarked on a historic journey to define its future, crafting Vision 2050 – a comprehensive blueprint set to guide the country's growth over the next 25 years. At the heart of this ambitious initiative was a fundamental principle: the voices of ordinary Tanzanians must shape the nation's path forward. Recognizing Twaweza East Africa's expertise in citizen engagement and data-driven advocacy, the government invited its Executive Director to join the Vision Development Commission, led by Professor Kitila Mkumbo and chaired by Prof. Semboja. This marked a significant opportunity for Twaweza to ensure that the aspirations, concerns, and imaginations of citizens were at the core of the country's development roadmap.

One of Twaweza's most profound contributions to the Vision 2050 process was conducting an unprecedented Sauti za Wananchi survey in collaboration with the President's Office Planning Commission. Unlike previous surveys that typically engaged 1,500-3,000 respondents, this special initiative reached an extraordinary 7,500 citizens across mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. This large-scale, nationally representative study significantly enhanced the inclusivity and reliability of the data, ensuring a broad spectrum of voices informed the national vision.

The survey unearthed key insights about what Tanzanians envision for their future. A majority of citizens expressed optimism about the country's direction, citing infrastructure improvements as a key driver of progress. Agriculture emerged as central to economic development, with many emphasizing overall economic growth as a top national priority. The high cost of living was identified as the most urgent concern, with citizens advocating for increased investment in health services and education. When it came to governance, Tanzanians valued integrity and accountability in leadership, while national unity and ethnic harmony were seen as essential to good governance. By systematically gathering and amplifying these citizen perspectives, Twaweza helped anchor Vision 2050 in the lived realities and aspirations of Tanzanians, shifting the process from a traditional top-down approach to a genuinely participatory endeavour.

Beyond data collection, Twaweza played a pivotal role in making Vision 2050 accessible and relatable to citizens. We worked closely with the commission's communications team to develop a compelling strategy that translated the national vision into clear, engaging messages. This ensured that people from all walks of life could understand and connect with the long-term goals set for the country.

Language also plays a crucial role in fostering inclusivity. Recognizing this, Twaweza played an active role in the development of the Kiswahili version of Vision 2050, ensuring that the document was not just a direct translation but a culturally resonant and easily digestible articulation of the vision. Given that

Kiswahili is Tanzania's national language, this effort was instrumental in making the vision document widely accessible and meaningful to citizens across the country.

Twaweza's involvement in shaping Vision 2050 was a milestone in our ongoing mission to promote open government, citizen participation, and evidence-based policymaking. However, the work does not stop with the document's launch. We remain committed to ensuring that citizen voices continue to shape its implementation. Through continued monitoring, public discussions, and accountability mechanisms, we will work to keep Tanzanians informed and engaged as the country's vision unfolds. A nation's strength lies in the voices of its people. By embedding citizen aspirations into Vision 2050, Tanzania has set a powerful precedent for inclusive governance. And as we look ahead, Twaweza stands ready to ensure that this vision is not just a policy document, but a living, evolving framework that truly reflects the dreams and realities of its citizens.

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### *Holding the Line: Advocating for Electoral Integrity*

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In 2024, Twaweza took on a difficult but essential mission: pushing for electoral reforms to contribute to ensuring free, fair, and credible elections in Tanzania. The political landscape was tough, and the odds of securing progressive amendments were slim. But that did not deter us. Our advocacy was driven by an unwavering commitment to democratic principles and a belief that when history looks back, our voices—and those of countless citizens—will be on record, standing firm for electoral integrity.

In November 2023, the Tanzanian Parliament introduced four key bills: the Election Expenses Act, the Elections Bill, the National Electoral Commission Bill, and the Political Parties Affairs Bill. These pieces of legislation had profound implications for the electoral process. Alongside partners like the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), Tanzania Constitution Forum (JUKATA), Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL), and Jamii Forums, we conducted a thorough review of the proposed laws. Our analysis exposed critical gaps that threatened the independence of the National Electoral Commission and the fairness of elections.

A major concern was the process for appointing electoral commissioners thus failing to guarantee the Commission's independence, leaving it vulnerable to political influence. We also identified restrictive provisions that could undermine political participation, particularly for opposition candidates and independent voices. Moreover, the proposed amendments failed to embrace the potential benefits of using technology in improving electoral integrity from voters' registration, nomination of candidates, voting, tallying and record keeping. In January 2024, when Parliament invited public input, we seized the opportunity, presenting detailed submissions to the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Governance, Constitution, and Legal Affairs.

Beyond media engagement, we worked closely with civil society organizations, legal experts, and democracy advocates to build sustained pressure for reforms. At the grassroots level, our work in five districts revealed deep-seated mistrust in electoral processes. Many citizens had boycotted meetings and mobilization efforts by village council leaders, a lingering effect of the flawed 2019 local government elections. This only reinforced our belief that legal reforms were not just necessary—they were urgent.

In February 2024, The Chanzo, a leading multimedia story telling platform and Jenerali Ulimwengu moderated a live-streamed dialogue at the busy Makumbusho bus stop, where citizens going about their daily commute engaged with representatives from Twaweza, the Centre for Strategic Litigation, and a gender expert. The event revealed a strong appetite for this style of discussion, where experts and everyday citizens could engage directly. Recognizing this, The Chanzo and Twaweza organized another conversation with bodaboda riders at Ubungo Msewe a few weeks before the local government elections in November 2024. These street-level dialogues further underscored citizens' mistrust of electoral processes, leading many to seek alternative ways to push for their demands and interests. Democracy cannot thrive in silence, and we were determined to amplify voices that are too often unheard.

Despite our tireless efforts, the final amendments fell short of addressing all key concerns. While some of our recommendations were acknowledged, others were left unaddressed, raising ongoing challenges for the electoral system. Our concerns were reflected in the local government elections in November 2024, where reports emerged of voter registration challenges, candidate disqualifications over procedural issues, and irregularities in vote tallying. These issues disproportionately affected opposition candidates, leading to questions about the overall inclusivity of the process.

The election results showed a sweeping victory for the ruling party, CCM, with over 98% of the seats. While this outcome aligned with historical patterns of dominance, it also underscored the need for continued reflection on how electoral processes can be strengthened to foster broader participation and trust.

We did not enter this process expecting complete and instant success. We understood that meaningful reforms take time and require ongoing engagement. By participating in these discussions, we have contributed to a body of evidence that can inform future reforms and support the work of democracy advocates in Tanzania and beyond.

Democratic change is not a one-time event; it is an ongoing journey. The road ahead remains challenging, but we remain resolute. We will continue to engage, advocate, and hold institutions accountable. In the face of resistance, we stood firm – and we will continue to stand. For democracy. For justice. For the right of every Tanzanian to participate in free and fair elections.

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### *Citizens' Voices at the Heart of Uganda's Development Planning*

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When governments make plans for the future, the people they serve must have a say. When the government invited Twaweza and other civil society organizations in drafting Uganda's Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV), we ensured that citizen perspectives were not just heard but meaningfully integrated into national priorities.

Invited by the National Planning Authority (NPA), Twaweza played a central role in shaping the plan by participating in key consultations and drafting processes alongside other civil society organizations (CSOs). We engaged in three critical activities: contributing to the National CSO Stakeholders

Consultative Meeting in March, which reviewed lessons from the previous plan; collaborating in a 4-day drafting workshop (in August) to analyse and refine national priorities; and in September leading the development of a CSO issues paper, which was formally submitted to the NPA.

Our leadership was particularly significant in five of the 18 development programs, where we chaired discussions on Human Capital Development, Public Sector Transformation, Governance and Security, Administration of Justice, and the Legislature. These conversations underscored the importance of citizen participation, emphasizing that development planning cannot be effective without direct input from the people affected by policies. As a result, issues of community engagement, participation, and empowerment were elevated in the final discussions.

Twaweza and its CSO partners made a strong case for the inclusion of citizen-driven priorities in NDP IV. Key recommendations included enforcing local government compliance with participatory planning guidelines, institutionalizing village feedback meetings tied to budget cycles, and integrating citizens' perspectives into the Prime Minister's monitoring framework. We also advocated for civic education on governance and justice and a regionally tailored approach to the Parish Development Model to enhance its effectiveness. Recognising the urgent need to address teenage pregnancies and child marriages, we pushed for investments in prevention strategies aligned with national policies.

These efforts bore fruit. The final NDP IV includes commitments to increase citizen participation in government programs, enhance planning capacity across government and strengthen coordination in implementation. The plan also prioritizes better budget alignment, improvements to statistical systems for tracking progress, and increased public trust in the justice system. Additionally, it explicitly addresses the need to reduce child labour, child marriages, and teenage pregnancies—directly reflecting CSO advocacy.

As Uganda embarks on this new phase of national development in July 2025, the impact of citizen engagement is clear. The country's Vision 2040 goal—achieving sustainable industrialization for inclusive growth, employment, and wealth creation—now has a stronger foundation in community-driven priorities. The lesson is simple but powerful: when citizens are actively involved in shaping national policies, development becomes more relevant, effective, and sustainable. Twaweza's work in this process reaffirms our belief that open, participatory governance is not just an ideal but a necessity for real progress.

We will continue to monitor NDP IV implementation to track whether public participation is enabling citizens to contribute their views, prioritize their needs and how national level government motivate local governments to use citizen feedback to inform decisions.

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## *Ignoring Citizen Voices: The Controversial Shift from NHIF to SHIF*

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For years, Twaweza has championed citizen participation in policymaking, ensuring that the voices of ordinary people shape the decisions that affect their lives. When the Kenyan government proposed replacing the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) with the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF), we took action. Through our *Sauti* survey, we gathered real-time perspectives from citizens on healthcare financing, revealing deep frustrations with NHIF's inefficiencies, corruption, and unaffordable contributions, particularly for informal workers. However, rather than calling for NHIF's abolition, citizens overwhelmingly supported reforming and strengthening the system – not replacing it.

With this compelling evidence, we engaged policymakers at multiple levels. We presented our findings to the Ministry of Health, the Parliamentary Health Committee, and NHIF leadership, advocating for a citizen-driven approach to health insurance reform. Our message was clear: rather than discarding NHIF entirely, the government should improve its governance, transparency, and accessibility. However, despite this evidence-backed advocacy, the government pressed ahead with SHIF, dismissing citizen concerns and triggering widespread uncertainty.

Determined to ensure public voices were heard, we expanded our engagement beyond government offices. We convened a high-profile public dialogue, bringing together representatives from civil society, healthcare professionals, and the media. The event sparked critical discussions on health insurance reform, amplifying citizen perspectives and fostering constructive debate on Kenya's healthcare future.

Recognising the power of media, we leveraged multiple platforms to sustain the conversation. Through television and radio talk shows, we reached millions of Kenyans, highlighting key issues in the SHIF transition. Our digital advocacy included live Twitter/X Space discussions, engaging a broad online audience in real-time exchanges on healthcare financing. Across these channels, the message remained consistent: meaningful reform requires listening to the people.

Nevertheless, despite this extensive engagement, policymakers moved forward with SHIF. The consequences have been stark. Hospitals now struggle with funding gaps, patients face bureaucratic delays in accessing treatment, and even parliamentarians are questioning the viability of the new system. The disruption could have been avoided had the government heeded citizen concerns and adopted a reform-first approach rather than a wholesale replacement.

Looking ahead, Kenya's healthcare system must be built on transparency, efficiency, and accessibility. Real and lasting reforms must reflect the lived realities of citizens. Twaweza remains committed to ensuring that citizen voices are not just heard but acted upon – because policies made without the people are bound to fail. We will strengthen our strategic engagements with our partners to consistently share the key insights to sustain the conversation on the insurance policies in the healthcare system until when the citizens concerns have been listened to and settlement that meets interests of government and citizens arrived at.



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## *Collaboration for Impact: Civil Society Week 2024*

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Once again, Twaweza played a central role in convening Civil Society Week 2024 in Arusha, a crucial platform for Tanzanian civil society organizations to reflect on their role, impact, and legitimacy. This year's theme, "Vision, Voice, and Value," resonated deeply with our ongoing work in shaping Tanzania's Vision 2050, amplifying citizen voices, and demonstrating the tangible contributions of civil society. The event reaffirmed the power of collaboration, strategic thinking, and innovation in strengthening civil society's influence and effectiveness.

Instead of a conventional keynote address, Twaweza opened the week with an interactive conversation on government-civil society collaboration, a dynamic session moderated by Dr. Baruani Mshale, Twaweza's Director of Learning and Strategy. The discussion featured Prof. Kitila Mkumbo, Tanzania's Minister for Planning and Investment, and Dr. Stigmata Tenga, Executive Director of the Africa Philanthropy Network. Prof. Mkumbo outlined key priorities for Tanzania's Vision 2050, such as education reform, energy expansion, and industrialization, while Dr. Tenga underscored the historical and contemporary significance of a vibrant civil society. The format – designed to foster dialogue rather than passive listening – was widely praised, with even the Minister endorsing this approach as a model for future engagement.

Twaweza also led "The Great Debate," an electrifying session examining the role of youth in national development. The motion, "Young people are a burden for Tanzania, and the future is a liability to them," sparked intense, well-researched arguments from young debaters representing civil society, Vodacom Foundation, the World Bank in Tanzania, and Stanbic Bank. Dr. Mshale served as lead adjudicator, joined by two Arusha-based comedians who played provocateur roles, injecting both humour and critical insight. The success of the session extended beyond the event: the World Bank invited Dr. Mshale to adjudicate a regional youth debate on education quality, and the EU Commission in Tanzania enlisted him for a national championship on youth unemployment. These invitations underscored the importance of fostering open, critical discourse as a tool for shaping national and regional conversations.

Twaweza's Executive Director, Aidan Eyakuze, and Dr. Mshale also introduced participants to futures thinking in a morning session that, despite its 7:45 a.m. start, drew over 45 engaged attendees. Through scenario-building exercises, the session explored how organizations can prepare for different future possibilities. Drawing from his extensive experience, Mr Eyakuze illustrated the real-world impact of scenario planning, citing case studies such as Kenya's 2007 post-election crisis and the Rockefeller Foundation's 2011 pandemic scenarios. The session highlighted the importance of creating "future memories" – visualising both desirable and undesirable scenarios to guide present-day decision-making. Several organizations expressed keen interest in learning more about this strategic approach, reflecting its growing relevance in an era of uncertainty.

Twaweza, in collaboration with JamiiForums and Tanzania Bora Initiative in September to host a session on amplifying youth perspectives in decision-making. Titled "Amplifying Youth Voices in a Divided World: The Power of Mixed Methods," the discussion showcased innovative ways to capture and elevate young people's experiences. TBI demonstrated how gaming can facilitate meaningful discussions among youth, while JamiiForums shared insights from its "Stories of Change" essay competition, which encouraged young people to imagine alternative futures. Twaweza presented findings from its Sauti za Wananchi

initiative, illustrating how mobile technology can enable real-time data collection and citizen voice amplification. The session underscored the value of diverse methodologies in ensuring youth concerns are acknowledged and acted upon.

Another podcast-style conversation, co-hosted by Twaweza and Just Systems, explored how civil society can engage government constructively. In this session, Dr. Mshale interviewed Risha Chande, Director of Just Systems, on strategies for shifting from an adversarial stance to an empathetic, propositional approach in engaging the government for systems change. The conversation provided practical insights into influencing policy and leveraging government structures to create meaningful change at scale. Participants left with actionable strategies for building more effective relationships with public institutions.

Beyond formal discussions, Twaweza collaborated with Youth Hub, Restless Development, and MEDEA to host a creative offsite event at MS-TCDC in Tengeru, Arusha. This informal gathering facilitated intergenerational dialogue on youth participation in Tanzania's Vision 2050. Through poetry readings, open conversations, and a screening of the film *Bahasha*, which depicts the corrosive effects of corruption, the event reinforced the need to align national development plans with young people's aspirations.

Civil Society Week 2024 was a resounding success – marked by stimulating discussions, meaningful collaborations, and actionable insights. The week underscored the importance of engagement, evidence-based advocacy, and innovative approaches in strengthening civil society's role in shaping Tanzania's future. As Twaweza continues to champion inclusive dialogue, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering a civil society that is not only effective but also influential in driving sustainable national development.

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### *From Local Voices to National Policy:*

#### *How Kiambu Citizens Inspired a Nationwide Land Reform*

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In Kiambu County, land is more than just property – it is a source of livelihood, security, and heritage. So, when the county government enacted the Kiambu County Valuation and Rating Act in 2023, residents were alarmed. The Act imposed steep land rate increases, backdated penalties, and erased zoning distinctions, sending shockwaves through communities. Families feared losing their land, businesses faced mounting financial pressure, and uncertainty loomed over property rights. The government framed it as a necessary revenue-generation measure, but for the people, it felt like an ambush.

Amid rising tension, Twaweza Kenya saw an opportunity for constructive citizen engagement. Partnering with Bunge Mashinani, a grassroots advocacy group in February, 2024 we facilitated a series of community dialogues – vibrant roundtables where residents could voice their concerns and strategize. These discussions, along with advocacy caravans across Kiambu, became platforms for collective action. Through these engagements, residents not only gained a deeper understanding of the Act but also devised ways to challenge its impact effectively.

To amplify these voices, Twaweza strategically engaged the media. Coverage by Inooro TV brought the issue into the public domain, creating momentum for policy debate. As more residents spoke up, the pressure mounted on the county government to respond. What began as local discontent soon transformed into a powerful, citizen-led movement. Recognizing the strength of the advocacy, Kiambu County leaders backed down, scrapping the punitive land tax provisions. Residents celebrated not only the policy reversal but also their newfound confidence in collective action.

Behind the scenes, Twaweza provided critical support in navigating the legislative process. In April 2024, we worked with Bunge Mashinani to engage sympathetically with members of the County Assembly, equipping them with analysis and policy alternatives. By breaking down complex legal jargon into accessible language, we ensured that citizens could engage meaningfully with their leaders. Informed and empowered, they advocated for fairer reforms, turning frustration into effective policy engagement. This engagement involved Bunge Mashinani submitting a petition to the Kiambu County Assembly in April which was tabled during the July Assembly session and passed during the September Assembly session.

But the impact did not stop in Kiambu. Insights from Twaweza's Sauti za Wananchi survey on land and housing underscored a nationwide need for transparent and citizen-inclusive land valuation policies. These findings became instrumental in conversations with the State Department for Lands and Physical Planning, helping shape the National Ratings Act, 2024. By establishing a clear legal framework, this Act now ensures public participation, accountability, and consistency in land valuation across Kenya. And in December 2024 the Act was amended. As a result, Kiambu County amended the County Valuation and Rating Act exempting freehold under 10 acres from taxation and reducing penalties from late payments from 36% to 10% per annum.

The journey from a local protest to a national policy shift highlights the power of citizen engagement. What started as a struggle in Kiambu grew into a catalyst for nationwide reform. This experience reinforces Twaweza's belief in the power of informed, organized, and engaged citizens. When communities take charge of their narratives and challenge unfair policies, they not only shape their own futures but also influence governance on a national scale. Together with our partners, we will document human interest stories after the implementation of the amendments to share the impact of the new policy changes on the people of Kiambu.

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### *Amplifying Market Women's Voices: Women Traders Demand Change*

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The Karume Market in Dar es Salaam is always alive with movement. Vendors call out prices, customers haggle over fresh produce, and goods are shuffled and stacked in an endless rhythm of commerce. But in November, a different kind of energy filled the air. In the middle of the market's daily hustle, a group of women sat in a circle, their voices rising – not to sell, but to speak. It was a conversation about change, about power, and about the future of women traders in Tanzania.

This was the first joint initiative between Twaweza, The Chanzo, and Equality for Growth (EFG), a collaboration designed to amplify the voices of women traders. Though each organization had long been engaged in efforts to empower marginalized groups, this initiative marked a new approach: a live-

streamed discussion that provided women traders with a platform to share their experiences, articulate their struggles, and propose concrete solutions. Twaweza ensured a dynamic and skilled female moderator to steer the conversation, The Chanzo provided the expertise in conceptualizing the discussion and documenting it for a wider audience, while EFG played a crucial role in mobilizing women leaders from 15 markets across Dar es Salaam through the Tanzania Market Women Entrepreneurs Association (UWAWASOTA). This was not just a conversation; it was a coordinated effort to push for change.

The stories that emerged were raw and urgent. These women were more than traders; they were entrepreneurs, breadwinners, and leaders in their communities. Yet, they faced structural barriers that made sustaining their businesses a daily struggle. One of the most pressing concerns was access to financial support. Many market women were locked out of the formal banking system, forcing them to rely on informal lenders who charged exorbitant interest rates. Even the government's 10% loan fund, meant for women, youth and people living with disabilities, remained out of reach due to complex bureaucratic requirements. The solution, they proposed, was straightforward: allow market-based loan applications, recognising markets as the primary workplaces for these women rather than tying eligibility to residential status.

Beyond financial hurdles, the traders spoke about the crushing weight of operational costs. Daily expenses for waste disposal, toilet access, cargo handling, and stall space chipped away at their already slim profit margins. Many questioned why they were forced to shoulder these costs while markets remained in poor condition. During the rainy season, inadequate drainage turned market stalls into waterlogged hazards, making it nearly impossible to conduct business. Basic facilities such as clean toilets and rest areas for women were non-existent. The issue of maternity leave was particularly striking – many women returned to work just 40 days after giving birth, bringing their newborns into unsafe and unsanitary market conditions.

Their demands were clear: improved infrastructure, better sanitation, and a reduction in the hidden costs of doing business. "We are the backbone of the economy," one woman declared. "Why are our needs always an afterthought?"

As the discussion unfolded, the conversation turned to leadership and political representation. With local government elections approaching, many women traders found themselves excluded from civic participation simply because voter registration was tied to residential areas rather than workplaces. Given the long hours they spent at the markets, many women missed opportunities to register, effectively silencing their political voices. Meanwhile, those who aspired to leadership positions within market associations faced an uphill battle against entrenched gender biases.

EFG had been working tirelessly to train women in leadership and rights awareness, but those who stepped forward often encountered resistance. "Women know how to organize, how to negotiate, how to sustain businesses – why are we still being told we cannot lead?" one trader asked. The women agreed that solidarity was key; they needed to actively support one another in leadership bids and demand recognition in decision-making processes. Change, they realised, would only come if they stood together.

As the discussion drew to a close, the air was thick with resolve. These women had done more than list grievances; they had identified actionable solutions. They called on authorities to streamline access to financial resources, invest in market infrastructure, and ensure women had a seat at the table in

governance and policy-making. They also pushed for training initiatives within markets to equip women with business skills and legal knowledge.

For Twaweza, The Chanzo, and EFG, the success of this discussion reinforced a vital truth: real transformation happens when conversations are inclusive, open, and deeply connected to lived realities. By coming together, the three organizations had not only amplified the voices of market women but had also set in motion a movement for meaningful change.

And for the women of Karume Market, this was not just another conversation. It was a declaration of their rights, their power, and their determination to shape their own futures. Their voices had been heard, and they would not be silenced.

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### *One Region, Many Voices: A Decade of Listening to East Africans*

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For over a decade, Sauti za Wananchi has been the pulse of East Africans' views and lived experiences, offering a unique window into the everyday realities of citizens in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. What began as an ambitious pilot in Tanzania in 2013 has grown into a regional effort, expanding to Kenya in 2015 and Uganda in 2017. The idea was simple but powerful: citizens are the heart of any nation, and governments exist to serve and be accountable to them, so their voices should be heard.

From the outset, Sauti za Wananchi has aimed to bridge the gap between public discourse and policymaking by providing rigorous, rapid, and relevant data on citizens' priorities. Over the years, the initiative has conducted five baseline surveys, carried out 126 rounds of mobile phone interviews totalling 74,000 hours, and explored themes as varied as education, health, governance, democracy, financial inclusion, climate change, and the cost of living.

To mark this milestone, Twaweza launched the *Sauti at 10* compendium, a landmark regional conversation exploring a decade's worth of data on livelihoods, public services, and governance. The event was more than a retrospective; it was a moment to analyse key trends, discuss similarities and differences across the region, and create a platform for meaningful dialogue. Policymakers, researchers, civil society actors, and citizens engaged in a dynamic discussion on the past, present, and future of East Africa – grounded in evidence and shared experiences.

Despite geographical and political distinctions, the data showed that East Africans share fundamental concerns. The rising cost of living was a dominant theme across all three countries, with unique national drivers but common global pressures such as climate change and the economic aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The business environment revealed striking contrasts: 73% of Tanzanians felt optimistic about business opportunities, compared to 63% of Ugandans and only 43% of Kenyans. Financial inclusion followed a similar pattern, with Kenyans leading in formal banking access, while women across all three nations continued to face significant barriers in accessing financial services.

On public services, governments remained the primary providers of healthcare, though with varying degrees of reliance. Seventy-two percent of Tanzanians sought care from public health facilities, compared to 57% of Ugandans and just 47% of Kenyans. Health insurance coverage was lowest in

Uganda at 2%, while Tanzania stood at 26% and Kenya at 30%. The data also pointed to a growing preference for private healthcare, especially in Kenya and Uganda, possibly driven by declining trust in public services or hidden costs in government facilities. Access to improved water varied sharply, with Uganda leading at 75%, followed by Kenya at 60%, and Tanzania at 50%.

When it came to governance, the findings highlighted both unity and divergence. Shared values – respect, hard work, religious faith, and community – provided a strong foundation for regional cohesion. However, participation in public life differed significantly. Tanzanians led in civic engagement, with 75% attending public meetings, compared to 56% of Kenyans and 50% of Ugandans. Meanwhile, concerns about national direction varied widely: in 2020, 78% of Kenyans and 56% of Ugandans believed their countries were on the wrong track, compared to only 19% of Tanzanians.

The *Sauti at 10* launch was a lesson in collaboration, showing that regional conversations can be meaningful and cost-effective when leveraging digital tools. With the right media partnerships and meticulous planning, Twaweza demonstrated that online convenings can bring together diverse stakeholders from government, civil society, academia, and the media. Engaging the right speakers and curating relatable content ensured a productive discussion, while the event reinforced the importance of using data to illuminate governance challenges and drive regional progress.

A key takeaway was that despite national differences, East Africans have more in common than they often realise. Where gaps exist – in governance standards, trade barriers, or social services – there is an opportunity to learn from each other. The data was not just about what is broken; it also sparked conversations on aspirations, possibilities, and a shared future. Charles Onyango-Obbo, a panellist at the launch, captured this in his reflections, noting the urgency of addressing disparities while harnessing regional strengths.

Looking ahead, the commitment remains strong: to use the wealth of data collected to inform policy, deepen media engagement, and invite academia to explore new dimensions. By continuously amplifying citizens' voices, *Sauti za Wananchi* is not just a tool for understanding East Africa – it is a catalyst for change, helping shape a region where governance is more responsive, services are more accessible, and opportunities are more inclusive.

The conversation has only just begun.

## Annual Report 2024 | Part II

# Reporting Progress Towards Achieving Our Strategic Outcomes

### The Overall Strategy Outcome

*Our main goal is to contribute to improving the well-being of 10 million East African citizens – especially women, youth, and people with disabilities – to make them feel more respected and involved in governance processes, experience increased self-efficacy, and benefit from improved public services.*

*Ten million citizens is an ambitious goal. About 10% of our target will be impacted (directly as well as indirectly) through interventions by Twaweza and partners in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The remaining 90% will be reached through empathetically engaging public institutions responsible for local governance so that these institutions will use their political, financial, legal and other levers to promote inclusive decision-making practices, leading to greater citizen participation in planning, budgeting, execution, and evaluation.*

*We will directly engage national level institutions so that they can support local governments to effectively engage citizens. We will also directly engage with local government authorities to support them in becoming more inclusive, transparent and accountable to citizens. We will also indirectly support these institutions through strategic collaboration with media, civil society organizations and citizens and leaders from lower local government authorities.*

### Our Building Blocks

Our understanding of the operational context, shaped by our experience and that of our partners over the past 15 years, has shown that achieving our strategy goal requires a strong foundation of common building blocks. Across all levels of society, we have learned that enriched citizen agency, enhanced government responsiveness, and improved citizen-government relations depend on the readiness of both individuals and institutions on either side of the social contract.

In all our work, we focus on key intangible elements that foster transformative progress.

- *Collaboration & Co-Creation: establishing shared objectives and joint actions to achieve them.* This involves nurturing empathy and building trusting relationships with and between citizens, civil society and government officials.
- *Tools and Skills: strengthening the capacity to critically analyse problems, set priorities, and plan effectively.* This involves growing citizens' technical skills to identify and solve problems while enhancing civil society legitimacy, efficiency and impact; and government officials' willingness and ability to effectively engage citizens.
- *Spaces and Narratives: Protecting and advancing conditions that enable active citizen agency and responsive governance.* This involves shaping the norms, attitudes and approaches that shape how civil servants and politicians, influencers and elites, civil society and communities believe the world works and how they approach, process and respond to citizen agency and government accountability.

To achieve our ambitious outcome, we structure our work into three mission areas. This report presents progress, impact and lessons from our implementation in 2024. Updates under the strategy-level outcome are presented first, after which, under each mission area, we restate briefly the overall aim and main strategy followed by specific updates organised per country. Finally, we present progress on organisational learning and strategy, and on governance, operations and finance.

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### **Strategy Outcome:**

#### ***Supporting Institutions of Local Governments to Embody Inclusion, Transparency and Accountability***

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*Our overall objective is to contribute in helping local governments improve their relations with citizens by supporting them in becoming more inclusive, transparent and accountable (i.e., systems change) in order to improve the lives of 10 million ordinary East African citizens, especially women and youth (i.e., impact at scale).*

*Our empathetic relationships, the rigour of our evidence, the depth of our experience in communities, the demonstrable success of our approach and our willingness to support the officials in this process will be our assets and offers to these institutions through direct engagement with government, mobilizing and channelling external voices of committed and influential advocates and catalysing peer internal pressure and inspiration.*

*Through these engagement strategies and tactics, Twaweza and partners aim for the following institutional level outcomes:*

- ***Proactive National Institutions:*** *Enabling relevant ministries responsible for local governance to leverage their political, financial, and legal powers to promote meaningful public participation at all levels.*
- ***Inclusive Local Government Planning:*** *Encouraging higher local government authorities—districts in Tanzania and Uganda, and counties in Kenya—to be more responsive to citizen concerns and align plans with public priorities.*
- ***Transparent and Engaging Village Meetings:*** *Strengthening lower local government structures to enhance transparency, inclusivity, and citizen participation.*



## Progress during January-December, 2024

### Tanzania: The Emerging Partnership Between TAMISEMI and Twaweza East Africa

In July 2024, we at Twaweza East Africa took a significant step in strengthening our collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government (PO-RALG). Our goal remains the same: fostering better relations between citizens and their governments to enhance trust and improve public service delivery.

For nearly six years, we have successfully implemented the participatory action research (*PAR*) program to foster citizen-government collaboration in solving development challenges and improving public service delivery in five districts: Kigoma-Ujiji MC, Mbogwe DC, Maswa DC, Pangani DC, and Mtama DC. This initiative, carried out in partnership with community-based organizations, has empowered citizens to take an active role in development. Given our success in over 60 villages, our current strategy seeks closer collaboration with PO-RALG to scale up the *PAR* approach nationwide through the Government's improved Opportunities and Obstacles to Development (O&OD) framework.

Since 2009, PO-RALG has been implementing the improved O&OD methodology to promote community empowerment and improve government-community collaboration for better service delivery. By 2019, PO-RALG had developed guidelines and two manuals, scaling up the approach to 26 regions and 184 local government authorities (LGAs). To support this work, Council Task Forces (CTFs) were established in all 184 LGAs, with Ward Facilitators (WFs) trained in select LGAs. To ensure effective monitoring, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework was developed, incorporating relevant indicators into the national system. In 2024, PO-RALG was seeking partnerships with both state and non-state actors to strengthen the implementation of the improved O&OD methodology.

Our meeting in July 25, was timely. The O&OD Unit within PO-RALG was in the midst of planning two critical tasks: reviewing the O&OD Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation System (IMES) that had been piloted for two years and revising the O&OD guidelines. The first task was set for August to October 2024, and the second from October 2024 to February 2025. It was a fortunate coincidence that we met them just as they were seeking support in these efforts. We were both excited by the synergy between our programs. What was initially planned as a one-hour meeting stretched into three, leading us to extend our stay in Dodoma for three more days to further solidify our collaborative plans.

Following these discussions, we committed to providing both financial and technical support to the IMES and O&OD guideline review processes. We also invited two PO-RALG officials to present on the improved O&OD design and implementation progress to all Twaweza staff. Together, we reviewed the identified objectives, outcomes, outputs, inputs, and indicators to assess their relevance and applicability.

Between August and December 2024, we organized three five-day working retreats in Morogoro, bringing together our teams. Twaweza covered conference costs, while PO-RALG handled travel and lodging expenses for their O&OD team. To ensure a holistic approach, PO-RALG involved representatives from the Homboro Local Government Training Institute (HLGTI), which trains local government officers

at various levels on the O&OD framework. As part of our emerging collaboration, we have been invited to deliver training modules at HLGTI, integrating principles and insights from our PAR approach. This arrangement allows us to leverage government initiatives to train community and ward facilitators in a cost-effective way. The government will deploy these trained facilitators in more local government authorities with the aim of reaching the entire country in five years. The Government has agreed to increase the facilitators from one to two facilitators per community following Twaweza's experience and ensuring gender representation to ensure effective participation of women and men in the communities.

This emerging partnership is built on past collaboration between Twaweza and PO-RALG. In 2019 and 2020, we supported PO-RALG in coordinating civil society participation in seven zonal consultations to gather input for the draft national decentralization policy and the Regional and Local Government Strengthening Program. In collaboration with FCS, LHRC, and PF, we facilitated the participation of over 90 civil society representatives from all mainland regions. Our ongoing collaboration with PO-RALG has also included facilitating introductions to over 20 Regional Administrative Secretaries to support research and engagement activities since 2018. We have consistently provided updates through written reports and presentations to PO-RALG teams.

Since July 2024, our partnership with PO-RALG has deepened, particularly in reviewing the improved O&OD Monitoring and Evaluation framework and the O&OD guidelines. We have provided technical and financial support for these processes, ensuring that our shared commitment to enhancing citizen participation remains strong.

Through this growing collaboration, we reaffirm our dedication to sustainable and equitable development, leveraging our strengths to build stronger connections between citizens and their government. As we continue to work together, we are confident that our efforts will lead to lasting improvements in public service delivery and governance across Tanzania.

- **Collaboration with other institutions**

*PO-RALG Communications Unit:* In August 2024, we supported the TAMISEMI Communication Unit to create a Communication Strategy for the Local Government Elections that happened in November 2024. This strategy helped them share information and engage with citizens effectively during the elections, ensuring transparency and participation. We are also supporting capacities for 185 Local Government Communication Officers through TAGCO (Tanzania Association of Government Communications Officers) monthly webinars. These trainings focus on improving their skills in strategic communication, advocacy, citizen engagement, and media engagement. Building these skills, we aim to support the implementation of the Access to Information (ATI) Act of 2016, a law we helped create.

*Other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies:* We have supported drafting & reviewing of the communication strategies, policies, media and stakeholders' engagement strategies for National Bureau of Statistics, Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, Planning commission, Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements, Tanzania Rural and Urban Roads Agency and Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau. Providing this support to different government institutions helps maintain good relations that we will use in engaging with them to influence them in embracing important values of inclusion, transparency and accountability.

*Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA):* We supported PPRA and the World Bank in convening two forums for civil society organizations (CSOs) in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma to provide feedback on

the PPRA Act and the NeST (Online Public Procurement System). Additionally, Twaweza worked with Wajibu and Nukta to support PPRA staff during a Data Hackathon focused on the NeST System, exploring ways to increase public awareness using available data. Furthermore, Twaweza is partnering with Wajibu, with support from the Open Contracting Partnership (OCP), to build the capacities of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from five regions in Tanzania to use the NeST system effectively. These initiatives contribute in enhancing transparency, fairness and efficiency in public procurement systems thus improve timeliness, access and quality of public services.

## Kenya: Collaboration with State Department of Devolution and Laikipia County

- **The State Department for Devolution**

The State Department for Devolution was established in 2013 with a fundamental role of overseeing the implementation of devolution policies, coordinating intergovernmental relations, and providing technical support to county governments.

Following the successful 2023 launch of the state devolution report where the PS officiated the launch, we are continuing to work with SDD, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and KIPPRA to design a national large-scale survey on the state of devolution across the Country. We have been offering technical expertise to carry out the research through several meetings throughout 2024. We also presented our findings on the climate change crisis to their team.

- **County government of Laikipia**

On March 22, Laikipia County hosted a significant World Water Day celebration, echoing the powerful message "Water is Peace". In collaboration with Twaweza, Habitat for Humanity, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Fauna and Flora, Kenya Red Cross and other civil society organizations, the celebrations brought together over 500 participants at the Naibor Grounds under the theme "Leveraging Water for Peace" and aimed to raise awareness of water's pivotal role in fostering peace, cooperation, and sustainable development. It served as a platform for dialogue, contemplation, and action towards tackling water challenges and advancing peace among the pastoral communities and other communities in the region.

Twaweza met the Governor of Laikipia, Jonathan Irungu, for a conversation on county processes, structures, and priorities for his final term in office. During this meeting, we were also handed the opportunity to talk about our work to an audience of the County's cabinet secretaries of the county, and other senior officials, who had met for a performance appraisal discussion. It was testament to the county's leadership openness to collaboration with civil society.

Twaweza in partnership with Laikipia County government, Pathways Policy Institute and Uraia Trust, brought together 170 Mashinani Development Committee members from Igwamiti Ward in Laikipia. The 4-day capacity building training in December last year covered the constitution, improving public participation processes in the county, and emphasis on what attributes the MDCs should embrace – active listening and observers of community needs. The event facilitated a meeting between the MDCs and the Governor of Laikipia and other senior county officials, where the MDCs openly raised their concerns. Notably, Uasin Gishu Governor, Jonathan Bii, briefly attended the session and expressed interest in learning about the MDCs' role and how Uasin Gishu could benefit from similar structures.

## **Collaboration with other relevant Actors**

- **County Assemblies Forum (CAF):**

CAF plays a vital role in Kenya's devolution by providing a platform for collaboration, advocating for the interests of county assemblies, and supporting capacity building and good governance. It aims to ensure that the vision of devolution is fully realized, with county assemblies functioning effectively as pillars of local governance. In August last year, we met CAF at their offices to familiarize with each other's work, including processes and structures, and identify areas of collaboration. The meeting was attended by the CEO of CAF, and other administrative and legal staff. During this meeting we agreed on formalizing our partnership through an MoU – since then CAF has signed the MoU and we are in the process of internal approval. We also held a follow up online meeting on our involvement in the just concluded legislative summit. However, we did not participate in the summit due to the tight timelines.

- **Council of Ward Administrators of Kenya (COWAK):**

COWAK was started in 2015 under what they termed “abnormal circumstances”. Ward administrators came together to defend themselves against a proposed bill that wanted to see them serve for a maximum of 5 years. They successfully lobbied senators to vote against it. They then registered in 2017 as an association that brings together all ward administrators across the country to represent their interests in county affairs. The organization has a national council with 13 members and 9 regional representatives. We invited COWAK's regional representatives to Nairobi for a half day discussion to better understand each other's areas of work. They describe what pushed their formation and what their interests are. Given their informal structures, and yet having managed to achieve more, we will explore how to engage with them including a possibility of signing an MoU should it be required.

## **Uganda: Laying the ground for collaboration with Ministry of Local Governments and Office of the Prime Minister**

The Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for coordinating and implementing Government Policies across Ministries, Departments and Institutions. Since 2017, we have worked with the monitoring and evaluation department, providing data on citizens' data on opinions, aspirations, and lived experiences of accessing public services. OPM is the custodian of the Local Government Assessment Framework and every year assesses the performance of the LGs on functionality and public service delivery. In the LG Assessment Framework, local governments are assessed on whether their decision-making has been inclusive. That is holding consultative meetings during the preparation of the annual plans, providing information to citizens implementation of projects and creating platforms for feedback like the baraza's and the district integrity platforms.

Over the years, we have provided data that OPM has acknowledged using in some of the monitoring reports. Also, OPM has severally invited us to present relevant data when Baraza's are convened. With changes in the regulation, NGOs are now required to work with MDAs upon signing MoUs that are reviewed with guidance provided by the Office of the Attorney General.

We had three interfaces with the OPM, first, we attended the 4th release of the Local Government Management of Service Delivery Report. This event provided us with information we used to refine the PDM study and the Local Government Systems and Structures. In October we held a meeting with the

Commissioner M& E Local Governments to introduce our work in the new strategy and express our desire to collaborate on the LG assessment framework activities. During the meeting, OPM was invited to the evidence-informed policy-making (EIPM) workshop to which they confirmed attendance and the Commissioner M&E Local Government officiated when it was convened in November in Mbale District.

We initiated a similar process with the Ministry of Local Government. We held a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner in the department of Department of Local Economic Development in the MoLG. During the meeting the following areas were discussed as potential for collaborations; 1) Sharing the PAR tool kit- the MoLG requested that access to the tool kit would help them understand how we do our work, a transparent foundation upon which to build a trusting relationship. 2) Co-creating data collection under SzW platform and/or designing surveys to help the Ministry understand the people in Local Government. 3) Strategy Development: MOLG is currently finalizing the development of the LG strategy in which Twaweza can participate. This provides a platform to contribute and shape the focus of MOLG integrating citizen voices to spread the use of evidence generated by Twaweza. And 4) Support PDM regional training and orientation to infuse the principles of PAR among the local development and investment committees as planned for under the program of the MOLG.

The next step after this meeting was to prepare a concept note that is yet to be presented to the commissioner for further engagement. Being new to Twaweza, they emphasized that working together was only possible after reviewing our concept note and seeking counsel from the Auditor General. Also, during the discussion, the relationship with the local government was critical. Last year we focused on working with the PAR districts and by the end of 2024, two MoUs for Rubanda and Kamuli had been signed with the hope to conclude the process in 2025.

**Collaboration with other relevant institutions:**

In addition, we collaborated with the National Planning Authority during the drafting of the NDP IV Uganda’s medium-term framework paper under Vision 2040. Twaweza participated in three activities aimed at ensuring that citizen voices and participation are reflected and considered in prioritisation of the Development Programs. The activities were 1) National CSO Stakeholders consultative meeting organised by National Planning Authority where findings from the mid-term evaluation of the NDP III were shared and discussed for lessons to inform NDP IV, 2) Drafting workshops with peer CSOs where CSOs analysed issues under each development programs and provided alternative views for prioritisation, 3) the actual drafting of CSO fundamental issues paper submitted and considered by NPA. Additionally, Twaweza East Africa chaired the discussions of 5 of the 18 development programs on Human Capital Development, Public Sector Transformation, Legislature, Oversight and Representation, Administration of Justice and Governance and Security.

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***MISSION 1: Demonstrating Citizen Agency and Government Responsiveness to Build Trust***

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*We aim to demonstrate the power of citizen agency and government responsiveness in action to foster collaboration and trust between citizens and their governments.*

*By the end of the strategy in 2027, in select communities in up to seven districts in Tanzania and Uganda and up to two counties in Kenya, we aim to achieve the following outcomes:*

- Community members, particularly young people and women, improve their ability to negotiate with local government, and analyse their problems*
- Communities and local leaders solve problems together and jointly escalate them to higher levels of government as relevant*
- Budget and expenditure reports are shared at local meetings, and local leaders invite citizen feedback especially from women and youth*

Since 2018, we have used the participatory action research (PAR) approach to drive change in five districts in Tanzania and Uganda. In our current strategy, we aim to expand to two additional districts in each country and introduce the approach in two Kenyan counties to cover previously unaddressed socio-economic contexts.

Our long-term goal is to scale this approach beyond our direct implementation areas. To achieve this, we are collaborating with local change agents, civil society organizations, and local governments to reach neighbouring communities and districts.

In 2024, we focused on laying the groundwork for this expansion. Specifically, we achieved the following:

### **1. Setting up for the new strategy:**

As we embark on implementing our new strategic plan (2024-2027), there are some adjustments we have made in applying the PAR approach. These include more emphasis on linking change agents in different districts, increasing the number of change agents per village to ensure continuity of work, spreading the approach in neighbouring villages and districts and continued collaboration with local governments. As we continue partnering with the ten civil society organizations in the ten districts (five in Tanzania and five in Uganda) in implementing the PAR approach, we discussed with them these new aspects of our strategic plan and expected adjustments in our partnership.

Therefore, in April, 2024 we organized two sessions with our implementing partners to introduce them to the new elements of the partnership. In Tanzania, the workshop was held in Dar es salaam and was attended by 15 representatives (9 men, 6 women) from five district partners: Pangani (PACOPA), Maswa (KASODEFO), Mbogwe (MBODANET), Mtama (LANGO), and Kigoma (UWAMKU). In Uganda, 17 partner staff members (10 men, 7 women) from Kamuli (AEGY), Rubanda (LADA), Namutumba (NDNF), Kole (AMACOD), and Kyenjojo (RIDE AFRICA) attended the workshop held in Kampala. Participants included organization heads, finance officers, programme officers working on PAR, and a monitoring and evaluation officer. Notably, in Maswa, the program manager was represented by another staff member and a change agent. During the two-day event, participants reflected on the PAR process, practiced the tools, reviewed and refined the reporting tools, and agreed on key deliverables. Convening the partners in Dar es salaam and Kampala, respectively provided an opportunity to exchange experience and enhance the bonds between them necessary for improved implementation in their respective communities.

### **2. Partner Efficiency Audit:**

We conducted efficiency audits in five districts in Tanzania and Uganda. In Tanzania, the audits took place in Maswa (KASODEFO), Mbogwe (MBODANET), Pangani (PACOPA), Kigoma (UWAMKU) and

Mtama (LANGO). In Uganda, the audits were conducted in Kamuli (AEGY), Namutumba (NDNGOF), Kole (AMACOD), Kyenjojo (RIDE-Africa), and Rubanda (LADA).

These audits aimed to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of our partners' operations, processes, and activities. We also reviewed progress towards improving their internal systems, identified areas of intervention to be integrated into the new partner contracts, and provided feedback as part of the exit process.

In Tanzania, several issues were identified:

- Partners are not filing monthly returns or submitting quarterly reports through the NGO Information System, risking legal and financial penalties.
- The lack of proper accounting systems compromises financial management, tracking, and reporting, leading to potential inaccuracies and fund mismanagement.
- Inability to perform regular bank reconciliation can result in undetected discrepancies and potential fraud, compromising the accuracy of financial records.

In Uganda, the audits revealed different challenges:

- Although partners have procurement policies in place, they do not adhere to the processes.
- There are no proper asset management policies; asset registers are either non-existent or not updated, and proper asset reconciliation is not performed.
- AMACOD, in particular, struggles with bank reconciliation.
- All partners lack proper accounting systems.

In Uganda partners received technical support on finance management, ensuring compliance and a training on developing a fixed asset register in October. As result, they have updated established fixed asset registers, established clear procurement thresholds and have procurement checklists, revised are revising the procurement policies. 2 of 5 partner are using quick books while the feedback will inform how we work with the partners in 2025. In These findings highlight the need for continued support and capacity-building to ensure our partners can meet the necessary standards for efficient and effective operations.

### 3. Collaboration in Tanzania:

In Tanzania, Twaweza, in collaboration with the Kigoma Municipal's planning and community development departments, convened a sharing, reflection, and training session for Community Animators (CAs) and Community Facilitators (CFCs) on the local government planning and budgeting process in Kigoma. The workshop included 82 participants (44 men, 38 women), comprising UWAMKU members, CAs, CFCs, and two district officials (the Community Development Officer and the Planning Officer from Kigoma Municipal). During the exercise, action plans for ten streets were reviewed. As a result, Kigoma district officials have gained a better awareness of the activities implemented by change agents. Conversely, the change agents and CFCs are now better informed about the district planning and budgeting process, creating better interaction between the citizens and public officials.

Spreading the PAR Approach: In Uganda, in March we introduced the PAR approach to stakeholders during a week's workshop to develop the social behaviour change (SBC) curriculum, organized by the Makerere University Department of Social Sciences, the Social Norms Gender and Agency Learning Collaborative, the University of Witwatersrand, and USAID. This culminated in a series of events including a webinar in July where we collaborated with Impact and Innovations Development Centre

(IIDC) to present PAR model for building collective agency. The webinar was attended by 125 participants from 21 countries across the world like Kenya, Tanzania, Madagascar Ethiopia, Lesotho, Gambia, Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Peru, Canada, USA, France, United Kingdom; LAC, Philippines, Bangladesh, India and Italy. We co-authored the technical brief on Indigenous and Community-Led Approaches for decolonizing Agency Social and Gender Norms Work. In November, we collaborated with the Editors Guild to share five PAR stories at Golden Tulip for Coverage and Media Focus on Africa during the Media Week.

Between September and November, we convened three PAR dissemination events attended by 108 participants from 68 CSOs spread across 12 districts of Rubanda, Kisoro, Kanungu, Kabale, Kabarole, Fortportal City, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kagadi, Bugiri, Kamuli, Namutumba, Jinja to disseminate the PAR model across the country. In 2025, we will follow up with CSOs who expressed the desire to take forward PAR in their work. Our role will be conducting a comprehensive orientation programme and supporting them develop action-able rollout plan.

In Tanzania, we have presented the PAR approach to different audiences through media engagement, including a Twitter Space in May titled "Je, ushiriki wa wananchi katika masuala ya kidemokrasia upo vipi? Hai au hoi?" which was attended by over 100 participants. Internationally, our Executive Director has shared insights about our PAR work in numerous meetings with donors, media, and other stakeholders in Europe and North America.

#### 4. Baseline assessment for expanding the PAR program in Kigoma, Tanzania:

We also conducted a baseline study following our plans to expand the PAR program in the district. We successfully completed across 13 streets, involving 522 households and 27 focus group discussions (FGDs). Moreover, in collaboration with the Kigoma Municipal's planning and community development departments, convened a workshop for Change Agents (CAs) and Community Feedback Committees (CFCs) on local government planning and budgeting processes in Kigoma. The workshop included 82 participants (44 men, 38 women), comprising UWAMKU members, CAs, CFCs, and two district officials (a Community Development Officer and a Planning Officer from Kigoma Municipal). During the workshop, action plans for 10 streets were reviewed. As a result, Kigoma district officials gained better awareness of the activities implemented by change agents, while the change agents and CFCs became more informed about the district's planning and budgeting processes, fostering better interaction between citizens and public officials.

#### 5. Midline Evaluation in Mtama, Kyenjojo and Rubanda

Between August and September 2024, we conducted a midline evaluation of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) initiative in Mtama, Rubanda, and Kyenjojo to assess implementation progress, challenges, and achievements. The process involved interviews with village leaders, partner staff, and Change Agents, as well as focus group discussions and site visits. Relevant documents, including program reports, were also reviewed.

The findings reveal mixed levels of citizen participation. While some communities actively embraced the initiative, others remained sceptical of Change Agents' roles. Nevertheless, village meetings increased, and Change Agents effectively prioritized community concerns, leading to tangible actions. Independent citizen committees played a crucial role in bridging the gap between citizens and local leaders, fostering service delivery improvements and transparency. However, some local leaders resisted engagement, fearing the initiative challenged their authority, which led to implementation delays.



The initiative has contributed to infrastructure development, including health centres, schools, markets, water access, and road networks. However, financial limitations hindered progress, increasing reliance on citizen contributions. Capacity-building efforts provided training for Change Agents, but gaps persisted. In Mtama, refresher training was requested, while in Rubanda and Kyenjojo, Change Agents required further guidance on leadership engagement. Challenges included financial constraints limiting field visits and refresher training, low citizen trust – particularly in Mtama – and persistent underrepresentation of youth and women in decision-making. Additionally, misconceptions about Change Agents led to resistance in some areas. Addressing these gaps through strengthened training, enhanced financial support, and digital communication could improve coordination and impact. Cross-district learning sessions and refresher courses are also recommended. Despite these challenges, the initiative has strengthened community engagement and service delivery. Continued investment in capacity-building, outreach, and partnerships will be essential to sustaining and scaling its impact.

## 6. Reflections/Review Sessions in Uganda and Tanzania

Last year, in Tanzania, we visited 10 villages across all five PAR districts to assess the status and progress of action plan implementations, understand committee functioning, and gather insights from village leaders about their experiences working with change agents. We found that change agents and committees remain active, regularly meeting – some monthly, some biweekly, or as needed – while documenting their activities. Change agents have collaborated with citizens to enhance social service delivery, including health centres, school construction, and water systems. In some villages, they have initiated small income-generating activities, such as poultry farming and crop preservation, to support committees financially and promote collective empowerment. They have also improved transparency and accountability by encouraging leaders to engage in open discussions about financial matters. Since the visits were conducted jointly with partners, we collectively learned and agreed on ways to further support change agents and committees in working more effectively.

We convened 2.5-day workshops in all five PAR districts in Tanzania bringing together 193 male and 198 female members of the change agent committees and in Uganda elected village chairpersons attended resulting in 532 males and 175 females. The workshops achieved three key outcomes. First, each village shared its experiences, successes, challenges, and lessons in implementation, allowing participants to engage and learn from one another. Challenges were collected, jointly reflected upon, and discussed to develop solutions. Second, district government officials conducted training sessions on local government structures, budgeting, citizen engagement, service delivery, and legal procedures for gender-based violence, which participants found valuable, particularly during the Q&A sessions where they could ask practical questions. Lastly, on the final half-day, participants worked in village groups to apply their learnings and refine their action plans, leaving the workshop with concrete and innovative strategies for implementation.

## 7. Engagement and participation in local government decision making spaces

In Uganda, the implementing partners, CFCs and Change Agents were invited to participate in local government meetings. They attended 10 district and 25 subcounty budget meetings. There included; budget conferences, council meetings and consultative planning meetings. These meetings were attended by 2328 people (1130 females including 219 youth and 1614 males including 119 youth and 23 people with disability). As result 10 communities had their issues solved while an additional 14 had their issues adopted into annual plans and budgets 2025/2026 financial year.

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## **Mission 2: Generating evidence to enhance insight, prompt debate and amplify voices for better decisions and actions**

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*We generate evidence to enhance insight, prompt debate and amplify voices for better decisions and actions by citizens and government.*

*We harness our rigorous approach to research and creative communications capacity to further promote the value of evidence in decision making. Our flagship program in this area continues to be Sauti za Wananchi which is an important nexus point for our emphasis on scientific research and our promotion of citizen-driven governance.*

*We will continue to use Sauti za Wananchi as a platform to collect representative citizen views on democratic freedoms and how local government works, the issues unearthed through our work in communities including critical service delivery challenges and government mandated entitlements and standards as well as Sustainable Development Goals.*

*Sauti za Wananchi provides an important entry point for government officials to appreciate the insight provided by citizen perspectives. By the end of the strategic plan in 2027, we aim to achieve these outcomes:*

- Targeted government institutions and officials seek poll feedback from citizens and support the inclusion of citizens' voices and inputs*
- Greater use of Sauti za Wananchi data and other evidence, ideas and insights by diverse civil society actors and coalitions and by officials in targeted institutions*
- National problems, as identified in numerous communities and validated through national data, are acknowledged and discussed by a range of national government stakeholders including legislators, ministries and agencies who collectively plan for solutions*

Below, we summarize our achievements in 2024 in each country.

## **TANZANIA**

- Amplifying Citizens' Voices Through the 'Stories of Change' Writing Competition**

Unlike traditional research methods that may fail to capture people's emotions and lived experiences, storytelling offers an alternative yet powerful way of gathering evidence on citizens' perspectives on government policies. Recognizing this, Twaweza partnered with JamiiForums to host the fourth edition of the *Stories of Change* Writing Competition in 2024.

Themed *Tanzania Tuitakayo (The Tanzania We Want)*, the competition invited citizens to share their creative visions and innovative ideas for shaping the country's future over the next 5 to 25 years. The competition, which ran between August and September attracted 1,893 entries on the JamiiForums.com platform. Judges selected 10 winners, some of whose stories even caught the attention of government officials.

This collaboration has demonstrated the power of storytelling as a tool for civic engagement, and Twaweza plans to continue working with JamiiForums to amplify citizens' voices and inspire change.

- **Facilitating Regional Dialogue Through Cross Country Analysis of Sauti za Wananchi Data.**

In August 2024, Twaweza launched the *East African Compendium*, a cross-country comparative analysis of citizens' views on the economy, governance, public services, and other key topics. Drawing on ten years of data from the *Sauti za Wananchi* initiative, the report provided valuable insights into the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of citizens in Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda.

The launch, held in a hybrid format, attracted 90 in-person attendees, 40+ virtual participants, 330+ YouTube views and extensive media coverage, including 22 media reports and six TV discussions. The compendium was also presented at the *East African PR Week* in Arusha, further amplifying its impact.

By engaging government offices, civil society organizations, media, and the private sector, the compendium fostered cross-country dialogue, allowing stakeholders to exchange knowledge and ideas. This initiative reinforced the importance of citizen perspectives in shaping policies and improving governance across the region.

- **Twaweza's Engaging X-Spaces in 2024: Amplifying Citizen Voices Across East Africa**

In 2024, Twaweza hosted six highly engaging X-Spaces (formerly Twitter Spaces) that reached over 10,000 replays across Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. These discussions focused on critical topics like press freedom, climate change, citizen participation, and healthcare reforms, using Twaweza's rich *Sauti za Wananchi* data to add depth and value to the conversations. Twaweza's *Sauti za Wananchi* data added immense value to these discussions. By sharing real insights from citizens, we were able to ground the conversations in the lived experiences of ordinary people. This made the sessions more relatable and actionable, inspiring participants to think about how they can contribute to positive change in their communities.

- **Participation at the Annual Africa Evidence Summit held in Dar es Salaam in July 2024.**

In July 2024, Twaweza participated in the Annual Africa Evidence Summit held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This year's summit focused on finding new ways to use evidence in decision-making, amplifying the voices of African researchers, and involving a wide range of stakeholders in the process.

The event was organized by the Center for Effective Global Action (CEGA) and the Network of Impact Evaluation Researchers in Africa (NIERA), in collaboration with Twaweza, the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), and other partners like the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), the Mawazo Institute, and the Global Poverty Research Lab (GPRL). It brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners from East and West Africa to discuss the latest findings on economic development and poverty reduction.

Twaweza supported in coordinating the poster session including selection of posters and providing logistical support to poster presenters. We also got a chance to deliver one plenary presentation on our participatory action research in Uganda and Tanzania and three posters: *Sauti za Wananchi*, *Research and Evaluation and Kiufunza*. This approach, which is central to Twaweza's work, has shown great success in empowering citizens to drive their own development. A key highlight of the summit was the presentation of findings from the Collaboration for Inclusive Development Research (CIDR) study. This study looked at the challenges and opportunities for African scholars in areas like higher education,

mentorship, publishing, and influencing policy. The presentation led to important discussions on how to make development research more inclusive across Africa.

- **Launching Sauti za Waandishi**

In late 2023, we surveyed over 1,200 journalists in Tanzania about the media sector. In early 2024, we held a public event to present the findings, attended by about 100 people in person and more online via Zoom and livestreamed through the Chanzo. We recorded over 30 media coverages. Following the launch, we engaged with students at the University of Dar Es Salaam's School of Journalism and Mass Communication, presenting the data and answering questions about their future careers. The Media Council of Tanzania joined us in this engagement.

We collaborated with four CSOs—TAMWA, MISA-TAN, Jamii Forums, and the Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC)—on the Sauti za Waandishi project. We reprinted 400 copies of the research for their engagements. UTPC presented the findings to students at the University of Dodoma.

We also shared the data at various platforms, including World Press Freedom Day, TAGCO Annual Forum, Public Relations Society of Tanzania, and the National Forum for Press Freedom and Free Expression, organized by the American Bar Association and Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition. Additionally, we provided the data to different government agencies to aid in developing or reviewing their communication and media engagement strategies.

- **Sauti za Wananchi for Tanzania Vision 20250**

We partnered with the Ministry of Planning to survey citizens' views on Tanzania Vision 2050. Unlike previous Sauti panels, this panel included 7,500 respondents, compared to the usual 3,000, and covered both mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar. This provided a comprehensive and timely understanding of Tanzanians' current views and their aspirations for 2050. The data was presented to the Tanzania Development Vision Planning Commission Secretariat and was well received. Plans are underway for a national launch, marking the official return of Sauti za Wananchi in Tanzania.

- **Other engagement using Twaweza research findings**

We conducted over 30 interviews with national TV and radio, sharing data and insights on topics such as re-entry policy, women's leadership, the Media Services Act, journalism careers, election laws, teacher motivation, youth engagement in democratic processes, research and development, livelihoods, and media futures. We co-organized the annual media stakeholder forum with the Coalition of the Right to Information and the Ministry of Information, where we presented findings and recommendations from our program supporting community radios in 8 constituencies. We also supported the Tanzania Association of Government Communications Officers (TAGCO) annual forum in Arusha, presenting #SautiZaWaandishi data and participating in a keynote panel on thought leadership, crisis communication, and access to information

## UGANDA

- **Sauti call round and launch on climate change in Uganda**

We successfully conducted a second Sauti call round on the topic of climate change in Uganda and launched the findings in June 2024. Members of Parliament and the shadow minister who attended the event appreciated the findings confirming that it reflects reality on the ground and informs the decisions and actions they will take in addressing the issue. MAAIF (Ministry of Agriculture) used this space to

highlight that there is so much that the ministry of agriculture is doing on climate action but that citizens are not aware of it. Beyond the launch, we have used the findings from the climate change call round to engage with different stakeholders. For instance, we gave a keynote presentation using the climate change data at the World Press Freedom Day, which was well aligned to the 2024 Press Freedom Day theme: “A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of Environmental Crisis”. We actively contributed to the process by enhancing civil society organisations’ (CSOs) advocacy efforts through the use of SzW data on climate change and citizen participation as the country prepared its Voluntary National Review (VNR) report. We committed to providing data on SDG Goal 13, focusing on climate action, which led to forming a climate change cluster. This group supported in reviewing Twaweza's climate change brief and one member, a climate change activist, has since become an “ambassador” for SzW data.

- **Making the case for Citizen Generated data**

We partnered with The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) and with TRAC FM champion the agenda of integrating citizen-generated data into decision-making. Under this coalition we organise an ideation forum of key stakeholders in October under the theme Leaving no one behind: Harnessing Citizen-Generated Data for Peace, Justice and Human Rights. Our role at the convening was to facilitate and share Twaweza experiences and lessons in using evidence with policy makers.

As a result, we were invited by United Nations Association Uganda (UNAU) to speak at a two-day workshop on importance of citizen generated data at a meeting organised. This workshop was organised by UNA in collaboration with Statistics Finland, SDG Forum Kenya, UN Pulse and United Nations Association Tanzania. The workshop was about Utilizing Statistics in the implementation of SDGs and Twaweza led a session on inputting non-state actors’ data into the National Data Process. The insights shared at these workshops were also presented at the Africa Evidence Summit in the form of a poster, providing an opportunity for Twaweza to engage with other stakeholders and advocate for the importance of civil society in evidence-informed policy discussions. This also enabled Twaweza to showcase its ability as a knowledge broker. We also powerfully showcased the value of citizen generated data at the Uganda Evaluation Week convened by the Evaluation Association of Uganda and OPM/Clear AA. Our strong presence at the Uganda Evaluation Week emphasised the value of evidence, including presenting the Twaweza poster presentation from the Africa Evidence Summit 2024 to members in the Utafiti-Wetu webinar session on invitation of the Economic Social Research Foundation

We participated at meeting of national statistical institutions organised by Mastercard Foundation in m December. Our role at this meeting was to champion the importance of citizen generated data and urge the head of the statistics offices to embrace the practice through sharing the experience of how we work with statistical offices in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Kenya and Zambia had made a lot of progress in integrating citizen generated data into the National Statistics Database.

As part of championing the advocacy for recognizing citizen generated data by national statics body and drawing on the lessons from our Kenya office, we embarked on a process to have UBOS critically examine and review Sauti data for integration into the national database starting with the review of the SzW draft brief on livelihoods. In a sustained engagement they asked to review our methodology and invited us to present our methodology in August, to the Outreach and Quality Assurance department, provided feedback and tasked us to compare sauti data with the National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS) Report 2021; Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) 2022, Uganda National Household Survey (UNHS) 2019/2020 and National Labour Force Survey (NLFS) 2021. We have since responded to their comments and will continue to pursue to process in 2025.

We continued to strengthen relationship with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and initiated a new relationship with Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in line with our strategy when we invited them to attend the launch on citizen participation and both institutions attended. During which they urged civil servants to utilise evidence and proactively share information on government programmes with citizens. Throughout the year, we utilised multiple channels to amplify citizens' perspectives, contributing to dialogues on key issues such as Uganda's economic situation, the effects of climate change, and the role of Members of Parliament as experienced by the people.

- **Sustaining co-creation for better health care and knowledge generation**

We continued to engage and respond to the data need of duty bearers during various engagements. A notable example was the renewed conversation on emergency medical services (EMS), which provided the Ministry of Health (MoH) with a platform to share progress on EMS developments. This engagement further highlighted information gaps in the EMS sector, leading to a collaborative effort between Twaweza and the MoH to co-create a dedicated EMS section in the latest Call Round. Furthering our commitment to knowledge generation, we pursued a co-creation initiative with Drexel University, on safety and wellbeing on gender-based violence reinforcing our dedication to expanding the body of evidence through SzW.

Together with Christian Life ministries, we organised the Evidence Informed Policy Making Workshop which was by 60 participants comprising local government officials and CSOs in November. National government representative from OPM and MoLG were officiated and presented at the training. The workshop's central theme revolved around "building and fostering trust between citizens and their government by effectively bridging the gap between evidence and policy". We were the main facilitators, and we aimed to address the challenges that hinder public officers from using data when making decisions at local level as part of fostering more responsive, transparent, and policies are aligned with the needs and priorities of the communities they serve.

## KENYA

- **Sauti za Wananchi launch in Laikipia**

In collaboration with the Laikipia County government, we launched water and sanitation findings in March, officiated by the governor. The event, attended by over 550 residents, received more than 18 pieces of media coverage, including features on the County's website and the governor's social media. The County Executive Committee Member (CECM) Leah Njeri stated that her department would use the data to inform water governance and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) frameworks, and it would be referenced during the drafting of the County WASH Bill.

- **Shift from NHIF to SHIF launch**

In June, we launched data on the shift to the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). This event, attended by both state and non-state actors, provided key insights on the new scheme and strategies for successful rollout. NHIF and Ministry of Health (MoH) representatives were present, and the chair of the Departmental Committee on Health at the National Assembly announced that the findings would be shared with the National Assembly. Kisumu East MP, Hon. Shakeel Shabbir, recommended that the CSOs

draft a petition to amend contentious clauses in the act. Over 100 participants attended the event, which garnered more than 9 pieces of media coverage.

- **Sauti za Wananchi data on taxation**

The National Taxpayers Association (NTA) used SzW data on taxation in their presentation to CSOs, highlighting that citizens are concerned with tax utilization. This was emphasized during the multi-stakeholder engagement on the Finance Bill, 2024. Furthermore, we are working with the Centre for Fiscal Affairs (CFA) as part of the Okoa Uchumi Coalition, Twaweza's data from the 2023 Finance Bill also played a big role in guiding advocacy efforts for the Finance Bill 2024. The coalition used this data to prepare a joint letter with recommendations, which they submitted to the Committee on Finance and National Planning.

To keep citizens involved, Twaweza and CFA also created a SurveyMonkey questionnaire to collect public views on taxes, government revenue, and budgeting. The feedback went in to help shape future advocacy work for the Finance Bill 2025, ensuring that the public's concerns are heard.

- **Advocating for fair taxation and accountable public spending**

On the fiscal front; our research continues helping shape important conversations about taxes and how public money is spent: During CSOs the multistakeholder engagement on Finance Bill 2024 early in the year, The National Taxpayers Association (NTA) used Twaweza's data to show that most Kenyans don't mind paying taxes — their real concern is how the money is used. The final goal was for relevant stakeholders to come together to push for better transparency and accountability.

- **Participation at the 2024 People's Dialogue Festival**

We engaged with over 60 attendees at our booth to showcase Twaweza's work and organized an inter-generational dialogue with over 68 participants on youth engagement in governance. This dialogue, in collaboration with Bunge Mashinani, utilised the futures thinking methodology to encourage proactive youth participation in governance.

- **Supporting Citizen Generated Data (CGD)**

Strengthening citizen generated Data, Governance, and Media Freedoms we were invited by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) to help test and refine citizen data for stakeholders visiting from Colombia and Ghana. This collaboration shows our growing role in making sure citizen generated data (CGDs) is used for official policies and decisions globally. We have also participated in high level meetings involving different technical experts to design frameworks to manage and promote the use of citizens generated data and get to see how more CSOs their data can be used for national reporting and help fill in data gaps in SDG indicator list.

- **Other engagements using data**

We presented findings on youth priorities in governance during the Youth Cafe 2023 Youth Elections audit report launch. UNICEF requested raw data from the state of devolution survey for further analysis and potential future collaboration. We are finalizing an MoU with the State Department for Devolution (SDD) to co-create a large-scale state of devolution survey, including technical expertise provision. Additionally, we are reviewing a draft MoU with the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) to co-create a survey with journalists and contextualize the World Press Freedom Index for Kenya.

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### **Mission 3: Strengthening civil society to enhance legitimacy and impact**

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*We support and strengthen selected civil society organizations and partners to enhance individual and collective effectiveness, legitimacy and impact. We will support individual mission-driven CSOs to enhance their strategic clarity, improve operational efficiency and achieve stronger impact. We will convene and participate in national and regional coalitions to protect and expand the space for collective civic action. We will use our global profile to shape global standards and norms, and to advocate specifically for better resourcing mechanisms for “local” civil society actors.*

## **TANZANIA**

- **Advocacy on electoral laws**

In November 2023, bills to amend four electoral laws were read in parliament: The Election Expenses Act, the Elections Bill, the National Electoral Commission Bill, and the Political Parties Affairs Bill, all from 2023. Participation in local and general elections is crucial for citizens to exercise their agency by voting in or out their leaders. While working to galvanize citizen agency at the local level in five districts, it is imperative to engage national-level stakeholders to create an enabling environment for free, fair, and credible elections. Baseline data from these districts revealed that many citizens boycotted meetings and mobilizations by village council leaders, whom they viewed as illegitimate due to questionable local government elections in 2019. Therefore, influencing a legislative environment for free and fair elections is vital for restoring trust between citizens and their government.

In January 2024, the national parliament invited public recommendations on the proposed amendments. Twaweza collaborated with the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanganyika Law Society (TLS), Tanzania Constitution Forum (JUKATA), Centre for Strategic Litigation (CSL), and Jamii Forums to jointly analyse the bills and make submissions to the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Governance, Constitution, and Legal Affairs. We submitted our analysis and recommendations in January and subsequently engaged the public through radio, TV, and print media.

While some of our recommendations were considered, most were not, and the amended laws will not ensure free and fair elections.

- **Advocacy on media law**

We partnered with TCD, NaCoNGO, TANGO, CSL, LHRC, IFES and CoRI in analyzing and providing recommendations on the Media Services Act and the Tanzania Information and Broadcasting Policy. We have witnessed a political will to include CSOs in decision making platforms and we will keep using this opportunity to influence/persuade the institutions.

- **Strategic partnerships**



We continue to contribute in strengthening the civil society sector through strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations.

- Collaborating with the Tanzania Centre for Democracy (TCD) and the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP) to organize three national multi-stakeholder conferences on electoral laws reforms and promoting free and fair elections in Tanzania. Through these joint initiatives, we contributed in enhancing TCD's organizational capacity in engaging stakeholders and tracking impact of various initiatives.
- Providing technical support to our strategic partners including: training on organizational financial management systems, program reporting and monitoring, evaluation and learning for Equality for Growth (EfG), Tanzania Bora Initiative, Wajibu and The Chanzo.
- Organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> national Civil Society Week in September 2024 in Arusha, which attracted over one thousand participants from across the country. Also contributed to the organization of World Press Freedom Day, attended by over 500 participants in May 2024 in Dodoma.
- Collaborating with International Media Support (IMS) Tanzania office to convene a group of 24 diverse media stakeholders to analyze the current media situation in Tanzania, develop plausible scenarios of the Tanzanian media in 2050 and apply the causal layered approach (CLA) to identify strategies and tactics that media actors can undertake to achieve media freedom and independence in the future in Tanzania.
- In October 2024, the American Bar Association (ABA) approached us to support their grantees in three key areas: media engagement, government engagement, and citizen engagement. In response, we conducted two webinars to build their capacity in these areas. These sessions focused on equipping grantees with practical skills and strategies to effectively engage with the media, government, and citizens.

- **Collaborating in organizing the CSO Week in Arusha**

Twaweza played a key role in the 2024 Civil Society Week in Arusha, aligning with its mission to strengthen civil society. Under the theme "*Vision, Voice, and Value*," Twaweza contributed to critical discussions on Tanzania's future.

A highlight was the interactive keynote conversation featuring **Prof. Kitila Mkumbo**, Minister for Planning and Investment, and **Dr. Stigmata Tenga**, Executive Director of the Africa Philanthropy Network. Moderated by **Dr. Baruani Mshale**, the discussion explored government-civil society collaboration and Tanzania's Vision 2050.

Twaweza also led *The Great Youth Debate*, sparking dialogue on youth contributions to development. The session's impact extended beyond CSO Week, earning invitations to judge international youth debates.

A futures-thinking session co-led by Aidan Eyakuze introduced scenario-building as a strategic planning tool. Another session, *Amplifying Youth Voices*, demonstrated innovative ways to integrate young people's perspectives into decision-making.

Twaweza also co-hosted discussions on influencing government behavior and youth engagement through creative expression. The week reinforced the power of inclusive dialogue and evidence-based advocacy in shaping Tanzania's future, reaffirming Twaweza's commitment to collaboration and impact.

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## **Organisational Learning and Strategy**

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*Learning has always been central to Twaweza's work. It involves understanding and analysing the contexts in which we operate, critically questioning the effectiveness of our initiatives, learning from others in governance fields, and contributing to a collective body of knowledge. As our operating environment becomes increasingly complex and uncertain, learning grows even more essential. What works well in one context or moment may not be effective in another.*

*Twaweza remains as committed to learning as it is to implementing impactful programs. Our learning strategy fosters a culture of critical inquiry, reflection, and adaptation within the organization. We continually ask: What works? Why and how? How do we measure success? How can we improve? Twaweza seeks to stay ahead of the curve as a thoughtful, learning-oriented organization that actively collaborates with other entities to enrich our work and contribute to global governance knowledge. Learning together has become an integral part of our approach and identity.*

Below, we summarize some of our notable learning outcomes from 2024. Through these efforts, Twaweza continues to refine its strategies, ensuring our interventions remain relevant, responsive, and impactful in the ever-evolving governance landscape.

- **Articulating Clear, Inspiring, and Challenging Goals**

Following the completion of our new strategic plan (2024-2027) in 2023, we began implementation in January 2024. To translate our strategy into actionable steps, we developed a results framework that defines clear, inspiring, and ambitious goals, summarized on the first page of this report. From this high-level framework, we crafted specific outcome and output indicators for all major initiatives, ensuring every action aligns with our strategic objectives.

We adopted a participatory approach in developing the results framework to enhance staff understanding and engagement. This approach simplified application and built enthusiasm across the organization. The framework was reviewed and approved by our board during the July board meeting and later informed our mid-year review process. During this review, teams across the three countries assessed their plans, prioritizing initiatives based on their direct contributions to our results rather than defaulting to business-as-usual implementation. The framework also guided the development of our 2025 annual plans, allowing us to phase out certain initiatives, retain impactful ones, and introduce new efforts aligned with our strategic goals.

- **Enhancing Staff Understanding, Engagement, and Capacity for Strategy Implementation**

Our current strategic plan builds on past successes and lessons while introducing new elements. These include scaling up PAR principles within local governance systems, rebuilding citizen-government relations, and strengthening civil society for greater legitimacy and impact. Implementing these strategic shifts required us to ensure all staff had a thorough understanding of the new direction, felt motivated by it, and were equipped to execute it effectively.

To this end, we organized a series of learning sessions throughout the year. In total, we conducted 34 learning sessions, four skills lab sessions, three reading club sessions, and three food-for-thought sessions. These covered topics such as rebuilding citizen-government relations, empathetic engagement with government officials, and understanding the structures and processes of local governments. We also facilitated sessions on staff well-being, covering areas like retirement planning, healthy lifestyle choices, and work-life balance. Additional sessions focused on technical topics such as climate change science and policy, communication and presentation skills, and receiving critical feedback from key stakeholders. Collectively, these sessions enhanced our understanding of the challenges we address, the methods we employ, and the strategies for influencing governmental systems at scale.

- **Understanding Local Government Systems in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda**

To deepen our understanding of local governance, we conducted studies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda on local government structures, processes, and citizen participation practices. These studies provided insights into how local governments operate, with an emphasis on identifying entry points for advocacy and engagement. Findings from these studies also serve as baseline situations on the extent to which local government structures in the three countries embrace (or not) important values of inclusion, participation, accountability and transparency: principles that underpin meaningful citizen-government engagements.

In Uganda, the study was conducted in the districts of Kyenjojo, Masaka, Namutumba, Kole, Nakapiripirit and Yumbe. In Tanzania, research took place in Mtama, Pangani, Maswa, Mbogwe, Kigoma, Lushoto, Mafinga, and Dodoma. In Kenya, we collected fresh data from Laikipia and used findings from a similar study we conducted recently in Kilifi, Makueni, Elgeyo Marakwet and Vihiga. In all countries we interviewed relevant state and non-state actors at the national and local level.

Additionally, in Kenya, we also completed a study on civil servants' experiences and perceptions of access to information. And in Uganda, research on the implementation of the Parish Development Model (PDM) yielded insights into how civil society can contribute and how to enhance meaningful community involvement in local development initiatives.

- **KiuFunza**

Summary of what we have done: In 2024, we have successfully implemented all elements of our annual implementation cycle. In February, we paid the 2023 performance rewards of KiuFunza 4, the scaled-up version of our teacher incentives program. In March we revisited the KiuFunza schools, to enlist this year's early grade teachers and reconfirm our bonus promise. In November, we measured students' skills in the program schools to determine the size of each teacher's performance reward.

In addition, as part of our M&E effort we implemented surprise visits to study effects on teacher attendance and teaching effort. We have also started systematic research and engagement for fundraising, aiming to enlarge the scope of our implementation.

What we have achieved: From our 2024 data we obtained three important lessons, confirming that KiuFunza is continuing to have a remarkable impact for both teachers and students. First, from our surprise visits, we have evidence that teachers in KiuFunza schools are 23 percent more likely to be teaching actively than those in control schools, which helps explain the learning improvements. Second, we find a strong positive effect of 22-24 percent on student learning outcomes across all grades, subjects and skills. Third, the learning effect is larger in 2024 than in 2023, meaning that teachers are

updating their beliefs and actions over time. This is consistent with findings from earlier phases of KiuFunza.

Insights: The main insights that we have gained this year are (a) that KiuFunza's impact remains positive and is large by global standards; (b) that KiuFunza's per student costs are very low. This means that our cost-effectiveness is large relative to other learning interventions, a key finding that will support our fundraising and growth strategy.

Three priorities for 2025: This year we will focus on (a) implementing year 3 of this phase of KiuFunza, while continuing to measure our impact; (b) learning about branding and formulating a "visibility strategy"; (c) fundraising to grow KiuFunza's reach and finances and implementing the transition plan.

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## ***Governance, Operations and Finance***

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### ***Governance: Resourcing, Profiling, and Strengthening Governance across the organization.***

To broaden our reach into the US and European private foundation spaces, we partnered with a US-based fundraising expert, with support from the Hewlett Foundation who provided \$50,000 to cover consultancy costs. With her support, we laid a strong foundation for funding our new strategy by conducting extensive prospect research, identifying over 35 potential global funders, and shortlisting them for immediate and long-term engagement.

Highlights of our achievements this year include:

- Renewing funding for *Sauti za Wananchi* (SzW) in Uganda through the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund.
- Securing a nomination for the Ford Foundation Build Grant 2.0 - a potential \$2 million commitment over five years, starting in 2025.
- Receiving an additional \$1 million from SIDA for the years 2024 and 2025.
- Receiving a commitment from the Hewlett Foundation for \$1.25 million per year starting in 2025.
- Submitting proposals to new prospective funders previously unknown to us, with some currently considering our applications for funding.
- Developing a comprehensive fundraising development plan to guide and strengthen our resource mobilization efforts.

We continued to grow our influence and partnerships through several high-impact initiatives, including. An invitation to the Ford Foundation Trustees Meeting; Collaborations with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data; A special project with the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General; Active participation in global data governance through the Open Government Partnership and the Open Contracting Partnership.

Our thought leadership remained strong, particularly in contributing to Tanzania’s Development Vision 2050 and supporting governance initiatives in Kenya through the OGP Local program. These efforts are helping us expand our footprint and influence across local and global platforms.

Additionally, we finalized our NGO Bureau registration in Uganda, strengthened our governance structures by initiating the board refresh process for the Twaweza East Africa Board, which remains ongoing. We strengthened our commitment to personal data protection and compliance, including successful registration with the Personal Data Compliance Registry in both Tanzania and Kenya, and continue to align with personal data privacy laws across all three countries of operation.

### ***Operations: Enhancing Operational Efficiency and Workplace Environment in 2024***

In early 2024, the Operations team launched a strategic initiative to enhance efficiency by strengthening policies, systems, and procedures. These efforts focused on creating a thriving workplace while ensuring cost-effectiveness in Twaweza’s operations. By year-end, these measures led to streamlined internal processes, improved compliance, and strengthened staff welfare.

A key milestone was the development of a Youth & Disabilities Policy, drafted on March 12th after consultations with SHIVYAWATA (TZ) and NUDIPU (UG). Staff feedback was incorporated, and a director with expertise in youth affairs provided additional input before finalization. In April, a Data Protection awareness session was conducted in collaboration with GovMan unit at Twaweza, followed by the appointment of a consultant as Twaweza’s Data Protection Officer (DPO) for Tanzania. Additionally, a comprehensive review of policies was undertaken to standardize content and format. Three policy clauses on internships, retirement, and staff separation due to death were drafted, approved on an interim basis, and scheduled for board approval in 2025.

Cost-saving measures were introduced and monitored throughout the year, resulting in optimized resource utilization. Fifteen key policies were refined to align with best practices, ensuring they effectively supported Twaweza’s evolving needs and improved operational efficiency. Compliance efforts included the timely return of work permits, ensuring adherence to relevant regulations.

Staff capacity and well-being were also prioritized. In February, an awareness session on digital security was facilitated by auditors as part of the IT initiative. To enhance financial management, an automated petty cash system was developed and launched with staff training in March. Additionally, recruitment efforts saw the onboarding of four consultants and six interns (five male, one female), while two staff transitions—one due to retirement and another for further studies—were successfully managed. A retirement session provided valuable feedback for future planning.

Employee engagement remained a priority, with at least one in-house team-building activity conducted in each country, achieving a 90% participation rate. Weekly aerobic sessions were introduced to promote staff well-being, though attendance challenges are being addressed. Health awareness talks, organized in collaboration with insurance providers, ensured staff remained informed on critical health matters.

The annual performance appraisal process was successfully completed for all 35 long-term staff, with timely communication of outcomes to support individual and organizational growth.

Technology infrastructure was also upgraded to enhance security and efficiency. In May Fortigate firewalls replaced Sophos firewalls in Kenya and Uganda, improving cybersecurity. To boost performance, SSD drives were installed on ten desktops (two in Uganda, eight in Tanzania). Additionally, the migration from Salesforce Classic to Salesforce Lightning was completed, accompanied by staff training. DocuSign was integrated within Salesforce, with ongoing refinements.

IT governance was strengthened by consolidating 14 IT policies into a structured document covering security, usage, compliance, and system requests. This reorganization improved clarity, consistency, and accessibility, reinforcing data protection and regulatory compliance.

Overall, these operational advancements have positioned Twaweza for greater efficiency, regulatory adherence, and a stronger workplace culture in the years ahead.

### ***Finance: Strengthening Financial Efficiency and Compliance***

We have consistently ensured that all payments were executed promptly. Our accounting system reflects timely and accurate records of income and expenditures.

We've streamlined our functional codes from 26 to 14, improving financial reporting accuracy and enabling expenditure reporting by both nature and function for better decision-making. To further enhance budget control, we've added a functional code-specific budget layer to our 2025 budget, allowing budget vs. actual reports by activity as well as by expenditure type (e.g., partners, consultants, travel). This system flexibility will also enable us to generate diverse financial reports, meeting varied donor requirements.

Across the three countries of operation, we have diligently maintained the timeliness of all monthly statutory payments. For the fiscal year 2024, tax estimates have been filled, while tax returns for 2023 have been duly filed and paid.

Our monthly cash flow forecast tool enabled proactive planning and review of activities, especially during periods of low cash inflows. By anticipating monthly cash positions, we ensured smooth operations and avoided disruptions due to funding shortages.

In terms of banking operations, all accounts were replenished and conversion to local currency continued to be in small portions to ensure that we do not incur huge losses as a result of maintaining shillings. We continued to successfully negotiate for more favourable exchange rates with our banking partners for the conversion of local currencies.

The Twaweza East Africa 2023 statutory audit was timely concluded and we were able to get a clean audit opinion with zero management letter comment, reflecting our commitment to compliance and transparency.

In our ongoing support to other program units, we conducted an efficiency audit of our 10 PAR partners in Tanzania and Uganda respectively. The insights gained from this audit are very crucial, informing us of our partners' operational status and guiding the planning of targeted capacity-building sessions.