In 2010/11 Twaweza collected survey data in some 250 locations throughout Tanzania’s rural and urban areas. The survey focused on education, health, and water, as well as the actions ordinary citizens take to engage with these sectors. Information was collected from households, but also from communities, schools and health clinics.

The data provide a valuable snapshot of the state of the services, and, perhaps even more importantly, a snapshot of what “wananchi” do (or do not do) to make services work for them.

Moreover, the will be used as a baseline in an assessment of Twaweza’s effectiveness, as a follow-up study is planned for 2014. Key highlights are presented herein; a more detailed report is also available.

Two stark findings in terms of information transmission and citizen agency cut across the three service delivery areas.
- For most people the most significant source of information is word of mouth. All other sources, including radio and mobile phones, feature only marginally.
- Citizens do not take action to improve service delivery. With a few highlighted exceptions citizens are either too afraid to act, do not consider it their responsibility or do not know what to do.
About half of urban households (45 percent) have access to piped water in their dwelling, plot or a neighbour’s house, but this is true for less than 10 percent of rural households.

Among rural households, 35 percent use an unimproved source (well, spring, or surface water) as their main source for drinking water. Surprisingly, the same is true for 33 percent of urban households.

Fetching water takes a long time, for 27 percent of rural households more than one hour per trip, partly as a result of long queues. On average, it takes an urban household 34 minutes to get water, and a rural household 51 minutes.

The top two problems related to water sources as reported by households are long queues, and cleanliness of water.

Non-functioning water sources often are not repaired for very long times, sometimes more than a year.

citizen agency

85 percent of households (both rural and urban) never take any action related to water problems. Most report that they would take action if necessary, but 90 percent would not know how to do that.

More rural than urban households report having water committees in their community (48 percent versus 18 percent). Where they do exist, they are perceived to function well, although 28 percent are reported to function very poorly.

Somewhat in contrast to the education and health sectors, the majority of respondents (90 percent rural, 70 percent urban) believed that if a water point breaks down, citizens have a role in ensuring that it gets repaired.

Of those that received any information about the functionality of water points, 45 percent (urban and rural) was by word of mouth. As in education and health, other sources were mentioned very rarely.
Health clinics are used remarkably often: by 38 percent of urban and 26 percent of rural households in the past two weeks.

Respondents’ experiences are generally positive, notably in terms of being treated by trained staff.

The key problems are lack of medicine and waiting times; as a result people often decide not to seek treatment at the nearest facility.

Data from facility-based interviews reveal that the top two problems as perceived by health staff are lack of trained professionals, and lack of medicines.

The vast majority of people (90 percent urban, 87 percent rural) have never taken any action to improve the functioning of health clinics. Of those that would consider taking action, again the vast majority would not know what to do.

Over half (57 percent rural and urban) respondents did not know if there was a committee at their health care facility where citizens and health providers work together to improve care.

Only 2-3 percent of respondents (rural and urban areas) think that citizens are responsible for improving the quality of care delivered at health facilities.

The most common source of information about problems in health services, such as absent health workers or unavailability of medicines, is word of mouth (between 30-50 percent). Other sources of information (radio, mobile phone, etc.) features only marginally.
education

70 percent of rural schools have no clean water, 40 percent have no adequate toilets.

Classrooms are very crowded: in rural areas there are over 60 children per classroom.

Where double shifts are practiced school days are very short: just over three hours in the second shift.

Homework is rare: in rural areas over 70 percent of the parents report that the teacher never gives homework; for urban schools this is 55 percent.

Among students who do get homework, 56 percent of parents (both rural and urban areas) say they never help with their child’s homework.

Parents know that their kids learn little, particularly in rural areas: according to their assessment at age nine, only 34 percent of rural children can read a story in Kiswahili (34 percent in urban areas), 6 percent can read a story in English (23 percent in urban areas), and 22 percent can do a simple multiplication (40 percent in urban areas).

Parents identify four key problems: the number of teachers, the quality of teaching, the number of books and the lack of water at schools.

From the school survey, the top problems identified in education by school officials were inadequate books/tools, not enough teachers, housing for teachers, and parents not understanding the importance of education.

citizen agency

While 60 percent of parents describe themselves as “very involved” in the quality of their children’s education, they rarely take any action that involves teachers or schools in part because they fear possible repercussions. Only 11 percent say they would know how to take action on any given issue.

Even the a relatively simple action, such as talking to teachers, is an exception: in rural areas only 17 percent of parents talked to teachers in the past year. This is consistent with what the schools report: people do not contact them often to discuss the quality of teaching; close to half of the schools say that this happens only sporadically.

The main source of information about problems at school, such as an absent teacher, was reported to be word of mouth (40 percent urban and rural). Other channels of information, such as mobile phones or radio, were mentioned in less than 3 percent of the cases.

One of key government contributions to improve schooling is a capitation grant, which is TZS 10,000 per pupil per year (to be used for textbooks and other materials). Only 9 percent of parents in rural, and 7 percent in urban, areas knew about the capitation grant for schools.

Among school respondents 57 percent knew of the capitation grant, but only 30 percent knew the correct amount in shillings.