



Press Release
16 July 2015

Most Tanzanian parents want children to be taught in English throughout school 9 out of 10 say children face difficulties changing languages between primary and secondary

16 July 2015, Dar es Salaam: Six out of ten parents (63%) want children to be taught in English in both primary and secondary school. This is at odds with the new Education and Training Policy (2015) which enshrines Kiswahili as the language of instruction for both primary and secondary school. Both parents and the policy are responding to the same challenge, as nine out of ten parents (89%) report that children do face difficulties switching from Kiswahili to English between primary and secondary.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *The key to life? Citizens' views on education*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey. The findings are based on data collected from 1,381 respondents across Mainland Tanzania (Zanzibar is not covered in these results) in November 2014. These data were collected in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training as they sought feedback on the new Education and Training Policy (2015).

The data also tell the story of increasing access to education in a new way. While one out of ten citizens (11%) report having completed secondary school to O-levels, one out of four (26%) report having a son or daughter in secondary school. The implication is that more young people have access to secondary school.

Beyond just attending school, children need to learn while they are there for the education system to have real value. If children are not picking up skills in school, it is easy to question why they are there. But parents' expectations are modest: half (49%) think reading and writing are the most important skills for a Form 4 graduate to have. These relatively low expectations from parents could be a driver for poor performance: parents are not holding the school accountable for much in the way of performance so standards continue to be low.

But parents' expectations for their children are high: three out of ten want their children to be doctors (29%) or teachers (27%).

Despite the perceived challenges in the education sector, overall parents believe that primary school adequately prepares children for secondary school; six out of ten believe so (62%). Among Form 4 graduates however, those who have been through the system themselves, this number dropped to 50%.

"We are delighted to see the space for public engagement in the implementation of the new Education and Training Policy," said Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza. *"Our data show that parents' expectations of school are modest and we know that this is one of the key factors in keeping performance low. When the shareholders of a community asset like a school don't expect good performance, no one is motivated or incentivized to make change. We encourage school communities around the country to seize the opportunities offered by the new policy to engage in a national*

conversation about what we can all do to ensure quality education for our children. And we urge the Government to take stock of the feedback and use it to enrich the new policy and help reform our failing education system.”

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Notes to Editors

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at www.twaweza.org, or www.twaweza.org/sauti
- Twaweza works on enabling children to learn, citizens to exercise agency and governments to be more open and responsive in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. We have programs, staff and offices across all three countries, and a globally respected practice of learning, monitoring and evaluation. Our flagship programs include *Uwezo*, Africa’s largest annual citizen assessment to assess children’s learning levels across hundreds of thousands of households, and *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa’s first nationally representative mobile phone survey. We undertake effective public and policy engagement, through powerful media partnerships and global leadership of initiatives such as the Open Government Partnership
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