



Press Release
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3 out of 4 Kenyans report that all children in their communities with disabilities are not in secondary school

Most Kenyans do not think that there are accessible services and facilities in the country

20 July 2016, Nairobi: Significant portions of Kenyans report that all the children who have disabilities in their communities are not in school: at primary level, 3 out of 10 citizens (31%) report this while at secondary level, an overwhelming 73% of citizens say that all the children with disabilities in their communities are not in school.

In order to attend school, and participate in other aspects of political, social and cultural life, people with disabilities may need particular infrastructure or facilities. Most Kenyans do not believe that these are available. When it comes to health services in their local facility, 47% of Kenyans think that these are accessible to people with disabilities, 45% think there are accessible public transport options and 36% believe that there are accessible buildings and houses.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief *Pity versus power: citizens' views on people with disabilities*. 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 1,763 respondents between 21 April and 23 May 2016.

The 2008 Kenyan census found that 4.6% of Kenyans have a disability. 3% of respondents for Sauti za Wananchi similarly reported that they are living with a disability. At the household level however, the findings are stark. One in five households (19%) report having a member with a disability. Among these, almost half (44%) report that the disability involves restricted mobility (difficulty walking or climbing steps).

Kenyans appear to have conflicting attitudes about people with disabilities. On the one hand 80% report that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone to equal opportunities. On the other hand, 75% report that people with disabilities need special care, 36% see them as a financial burden, and 22% consider people with disabilities as less productive. Even more concerning is that 11% of Kenyans see people with disabilities as getting in the way and 10% see them as a source of discomfort.

Despite these challenging attitudes, Kenyans are positive that people with disabilities can overcome the constraints of poor infrastructure and being treated as a burden to achieving anything they want. Most citizens think that people with disabilities can be religious leaders (95%), successful business owners (94%), teachers (94%), community leaders (92%) and MPs (86%). 85% of Kenyans also report thinking that they could marry a person with a disability.

John Mugo, Director of Data and Voice at Twaweza, said *“These Sauti za Wananchi data provide insight into three critical pillars of assessing the services and environment in place for people with disabilities. Prevalence, attitude and infrastructure. In terms of prevalence, a significant portion of households are affected. Facilitative infrastructure is not in place according to citizen reports. However, attitudes seem to be the most mixed. Kenyans alternate between pity and respect by thinking that people with disabilities at once need care while being fully capable of becoming MPs.”*

Aidan Eyakuze, Executive Director of Twaweza added *“People with disabilities can contribute fully to all aspects of life in Kenya. While government must provide the social and physical infrastructure for them to function independently, the harder and more important responsibility falls on every citizen – that of shifting our attitudes. Let us drop the pity that robs them of their full human dignity and replace it with recognition and respect for the power that they have to shape their own lives and to enrich everyone else’s”*

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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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