Sauti za Wananchi
The Peoples’ Voices
Bringing citizen’s views to policy debates
@Twaweza_NiSisi
Twaweza & OGP...
Sauti za Wananchi (SzW) & OGP…

- OGP Vision: “more transparent, accountable, and responsive government to their citizens with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of governance, as well as the quality of services that citizens receive.

- SzW and OGP: a critical channel by which representative citizen views are fed back to government; an opportunity for citizens to have input into policy decisions; a mechanism by which citizens support government monitoring of whether policies are being properly implemented.
What matters most to people?

1. Education
2. Health
3. Jobs
4. Honest, accountable government

Source: UN My World Survey of 10 million citizens

SzW collects data on these issues (and more) from citizens with the aim of supporting government to improve based on citizen feedback.
More specifically, the program assesses:

- **Public views on important topics of national conversation:**
  - **Civic space**: Should government be allowed to close down newspapers?
  - **Taxation**: Do you support the new mobile phone tax?
  - **Governance**: What should the country’s constitution cover?

- **People’s real lives and experiences:**
  - **Water**: Where did I collect water from today?
  - **Schooling**: Is the teacher present in my child’s class?
  - **Safety**: Have you witnessed any mob violence?
Sauti za Wananchi programme set-up
Sauti za Wananchi
(Voices of the people)

- Africa’s first nationally-representative mobile phone survey
- Rapid and responsive
  - Monthly survey rounds
  - Concept to report: 2 months
  - Can be done in 2 weeks
- Tanzania since 2013
  - 2 panels, 50 rounds
- Kenya since 2016
  - 1 panel, 10 rounds
- Uganda starting in 2017
Methodology

- **Stage 1** – baseline survey
  - Similar to a traditional household survey
  - Panel: 1 adult in each of 2,000 randomly selected households
  - All selected households given a simple mobile phone and solar charger

- **Stage 2** – survey rounds
  - Panel members called and interviewed through a call centre
  - One round per month
  - Some “community-level” data
  - Data cleaned, analysed, report written

- **Stage 3** – launch and engagement
But most importantly, what has this achieved?
Government responds: Tanzania’s SIM card tax

- June 2013: new tax included in Tz budget
  - Tshs 1,000/- monthly levy on each mobile phone SIM card (approx. $0.50)
- Citizen’s views on sim card tax collected in July; brief published September, finding:
  - new tax represented one week’s worth of airtime for the poor would are already financial excluded
  - 83% did not support the tax
- Extensive media coverage of the brief
- Findings picked up by other CSO actors – e.g. #ChangeTanzania
- Government scrapped the tax 4 months later
Policy is enforced: Tanzania’s health poll

- **Stated policy directive:**
  - public health facilities to provide **free healthcare to key groups**
  - obtain police report (PF3) **before** receiving treatment for injuries

- **Sauti findings:**
  - Up to 40% reported that key groups still pay for health services
  - 80% want accident patients to receive treatment **without** PF3 form

- **Government responds with public statement:**
  - Those demanding any payment from key groups to be **disciplined**
  - Treatment to be received with or **without** PF3
Police forces seek insight: Security in Kenya

- Citizen’s views on security & radicalization:
  - 2/3 of Kenyan citizens fear violence in 2017 elections
  - 20% of citizens report having been a victim of violence/insecurity

- Extensive media coverage of the brief
- Findings picked up by Independent Police Oversight Authority (IPOA) in Kenya
- IPOA now using SzW infrastructure to track citizen’s perceptions on security & violence as we approach 2017 general elections
Citizens debate: A new constitution for Tanzania?

- Key political issue in Tanzania since 2010
  - Another planned for early 2017
- Wide range of questions including participation in process, views on specific clauses and ongoing tracking of yes/no votes
- Findings directly referenced by politicians/Constituent Assembly
- Soon after the launch of the third survey round, referendum was scrapped, despite earlier govt insistence that it would go ahead (SzW contribution?)
Engaged citizens: Political polls in Tanzania

- Poll released 1 month before TZ 2015 election
- Blanket media coverage – balanced and partisan
- **Poll prompted changes in some campaign messaging**
- Polls captured public imagination
From stakeholder feedback

- **MPs**: always try to get hold of the latest brief, the information provided enables them to **formulate concrete arguments**.

- Briefs reportedly used by **TV and radio** discussion program hosts as **background/reference** for shows.

- Ministries of **Education**, **Justice** and others now requesting Sauti survey findings and to make **use of infrastructure**.
From reviews and evaluations

- 19% of Tanzanians have heard of Sauti za Wananchi
- 15% recalled the 2015 pre-election political poll
  - 29% thought the poll was biased towards one party
  - 79% saw the poll as credible
    - 74% said it presented the real opinion of citizens
- High response rate / low attrition
  - Overall response rate between 87%-95% on each poll
    (compared to 9% response rate in some US telephone polls)
  - Around 82% of first Tanzania panel still active after two years
  - Average 15 panel members drop off each month
Some challenges

- Media largely wants headlines not subtlety
  - A lot of rich, subtle information gets ignored

- Credibility – does polling ‘work’ as a predictor?
  - Brexit, Colombian Peace Agreement, US elections

- “Panel fatigue”:
  - Does participating in a survey panel monthly for 2 years affect how you think and act?
You are invited to...

- **Visit** [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org) for raw data (Excel / Stata), questionnaires, and more detailed information on methodology.

- **Check out** our Mobile Phone Panel Survey Handbook – out now!
  - World Bank and Twaweza
  - [https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24595](https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/24595)

- **Seek** technical support from Twaweza for similar initiatives elsewhere in Africa.
And finally, two questions:

- Can public opinion surveys fight back – in defence of evidence and by giving citizens a stronger voice – in a “post-truth” world?

- Can surveys complement other forms of citizen engagement (e.g., participatory budgets), and other feedback mechanisms (e.g., citizen score cards)?
Asante – Merci – Thank you