



Press Release
26 September 2018

**Almost all Kenyans (95%) say the gap between rich and poor is too big
And 9 out of 10 (85%) believe that it is the government's responsibility to address it**

26 September 2018, Nairobi: An overwhelming majority of Kenyans (95%) think that the gap between rich and poor is too big, and a similar number feel it is the government's job to reduce this gap (85%). But only 2 out of 10 (19%) think that the government is showing sufficient urgency in addressing the problem.

At the same time, the most cited reason given for people being poor is the lack of employment (48%); followed by social injustice (23%); and a lack of education (18%). Similarly most Kenyans think the best way to get ahead in life is to work hard (58%); many more than those that emphasize education (17%) or connections with powerful people (10%).

On the part of the state, citizens clearly call for their government to create an environment that enables them to thrive, citing an increase in benefits and social safety nets (40%), provision of free quality health and education services (36%) and increasing the minimum wage (23%) as the best things for government to do to reduce inequality.

These findings were released by Twaweza in a research brief titled *A fair slice? Kenyans' opinions on poverty, fairness, and inequality*. 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 1,672 respondents across Kenya between 18 April and 15 May 2018.

Despite many Kenyans calling for increased social benefits, 4 out of 10 citizens (37%) believe it is shameful to receive them without working and that they make people lazy. In a similar vein 3 out of 4 Kenyans (76%) say it is easy to increase your wealth through hard work and 6 out of 10 think that inequality motivates people to work hard (58%).

In terms of specific inequalities, a significant minority of Kenyans (42%) believe that wealthy people are unlikely to be punished according to the law for committing a crime. And 3 out of 10 (28%) believe that when jobs/income sources/resources are scarce, men should be given priority over women, while 4 out of 10 (38%) believe that it is better for families if women are the main guardians of home and children. Kenyans are, however, more balanced with their perspectives on education, 8 out of 10 (79%) do not think that boys' education should be prioritized when resources are scarce.

Victor Rateng of *Sauti za Wananchi* at Twaweza, said: *"Kenyans continue to perceive and perpetuate certain inequalities in terms of gender and wealth. But, they do believe that the issue of inequality is urgent and are not convinced their leaders see their perspective. Here, they have clearly laid out a four point agenda for reducing inequality: they call for more jobs/income opportunities, personal efforts/hard work, free high quality education and health services, and more safety nets. Given the serious*

nature of the problem, government must act urgently, seeking innovative ideas and new perspectives to address inequality. The time is ripe for a public conversation on addressing inequality in our society.”

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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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