



Press Release

Minister, there are 2000 citizens on the line: Twaweza presents Africa's first national mobile phone survey

14 February 2013, Dar es Salaam: Sauti za Wananchi (Voices of Citizens) is a new initiative that uses mobile phones to regularly collect information from a broad cross-section of Tanzanian citizens. The initiative will allow survey data to be gathered quickly and efficiently, at low cost.

Policy makers regularly make decisions for the whole country, but with poor access to the experiences and realities of a large majority of citizens. It is also difficult for them to know whether policies are properly implemented or actually working. Citizens equally do not have an easy way to know what is going on around the country, and to compare their situation with others'.

Until now, the only types of data that have been available to provide insight into national realities are administrative or survey data. Administrative data often suffer from quality issues and survey data are costly in terms of resources and time. Sauti za Wananchi provides new infrastructure to address these challenges. A nationally representative sample of citizens can be contacted regularly through mobile phones, to provide opinions and report on local realities.

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, said *"Sauti za Wananchi offers a powerful new way to shape policies and know whether they are working on the ground, rapidly, reliably and at a fraction of the cost of conventional national surveys. It will also provide citizens with an effective tool to speak back to their leaders."*

Sauti za Wananchi consists of two major phases: the first was a baseline survey with household interviews, implemented in October – December 2012. During the household visits of the first phase, mobile phones and solar chargers were distributed to those who agreed to become Sauti za Wananchi respondents. During the second phase, starting February 2013, these respondents will be contacted monthly through a call centre.

Mobile phones and solar chargers were distributed to ensure representation of respondents from all income classes. Although the Sauti za Wananchi baseline showed that, nationally, most Tanzanian households have at least one mobile phone, ownership is much lower among low-income households. The distribution of mobile phones as part of Sauti za Wananchi therefore allows citizens who would not have been able to participate in a standard mobile phone survey to speak out. Only households in areas with non-existent or insufficient network coverage were excluded.

One member of each household, 18 years old or above, was randomly selected to participate (be a respondent) in Sauti za Wananchi. The size of the sample is in line with accepted levels of statistical confidence and random sampling was used to ensure that the findings represent the average situation or views in mainland Tanzania. The 2000 households selected comprise of 9960 household members. Out of these 9960 citizens in the households sampled:

- 4973 are male and 4987 are female
- Ages run from 0 to 120 years old
- Most report Grade 7 (primary school) as their highest level of schooling (32 percent)
- About nine percent have not been to school at all

- Most report farming or keeping livestock (44 percent of sample household members above seven years old) and studying (31 percent) as their main occupation

The baseline survey also found:

- A majority of Tanzanians (63 percent) own a mobile phone
- One in four Tanzanians have never owned a phone
- Nationally, just over half the population in rural and urban areas makes use of text messages
- Nearly half of the urban population uses mobile phones for sending, receiving and storing money.
- Only a small portion of Tanzanians access the internet on mobile phones; even in urban areas this is only nine percent.

Elvis Mushi, Researcher at Twaweza, said *“The baseline phase of Sauti za Wananchi has already provided new insights into access to, and use of, mobile phones in Tanzania. Moving forward we will continue to regularly publish new findings about a range of issues, amplifying the views and voices of citizens.”*

These findings offer a small preview of the wealth of data that Sauti za Wananchi will make available. Data will be put in the public domain and findings, with a focus on public service delivery, citizen engagement and current affairs, will be published regularly. Twaweza welcomes suggestions for topics or specific questions to be included in future phone-based survey rounds so that this new model of data collection can provide insights for all stakeholders.

Twaweza hopes that the rigorous and high frequency nature of Sauti za Wananchi will provide a powerful new way for citizens to inspire public imagination and inform policy decisions in Tanzania. As Sauti za Wananchi is the first national mobile phone survey of its kind in Africa, it also provides an opportunity for global learning and sharing of experiences with similar initiatives across the continent.

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Notes to Editors

1. Data for Sauti za Wananchi and information about the project are available at www.twaweza.org/sauti
2. Twaweza is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action, and seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account.
3. You can follow Twaweza’s work

Web: www.twaweza.org **Facebook:** Twaweza Tanzania **Twitter:** @Twaweza_NiSisi