

Twaweza!

citizens making things happen



What is Twaweza?

“If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always got.”

– Anon.

“The first thing an organizer must bring is hope, a new sense of possibility.”

Gerald Taylor

Twaweza, meaning “we can make it happen” in Swahili, is a ten-year initiative (2009-2018) that seeks to enable people in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to improve their quality of life through a bold, citizen-centered approach to development and public accountability.

The Challenge

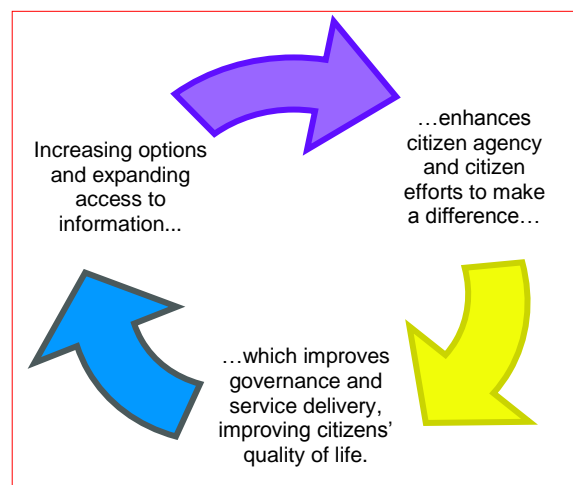
Throughout East Africa, states are failing to deliver the basic services that citizens need. Legal reforms have made some headway, but laws are poorly implemented. Government leaders and elite power brokers are falling prey to a capital-city mindset that leaves them divorced from the real lives of their constituents. The same is true of many NGOs and CSOs, whose work is often poorly coordinated, duplicative, and governed by short-term goals and shifting donor requirements. Nearly absent are the long-term strategies necessary for producing real change and the reflective, learning-oriented practices that can generate lessons about what works and what doesn't.

To address these failures, we need more than top-down reform – we need citizen involvement and oversight. Twaweza believes that informed and motivated citizens are the most powerful agents of sustainable change. For us, then, citizen agency is both a goal in itself and an effective means to improve service delivery and public resource management. Unfortunately, however, most citizens lack the information and skills they need to hold their governments accountable. This is where Twaweza comes in.

Twaweza's Response

Twaweza aims to enable millions of ordinary citizens in East Africa, particularly those who are very poor or otherwise marginalized, to:

- **exercise agency** – access information, express their views, take initiative to improve their lives, and hold government accountable, and
- **access better basic services** – (primary and secondary education, primary health care, and clean water), and exercise greater control over resources that affect those services.



To accomplish these ends, Twaweza will support large-scale partnerships and initiatives that create space for *direct engagement* with citizens. Instead of relying exclusively on NGOs, Twaweza will broker relationships across a range of institutions and networks that ordinary citizens already use to meet and share information. These institutions are likely to include mass media (radio, TV and newspapers), private businesses (such as mobile phone companies), commercial product distribution networks, religious organizations, trades unions, and other groups that aren't traditionally included in 'development' efforts.

Twaweza initiatives will promote three priorities, each with an eye to empowering citizens:

- Practical information for everyone: expanding broad access to information, particularly in rural areas;
- Quality independent media: strengthening media plurality, quality and reach, particularly investigative journalism; and
- Citizens monitoring public services: enabling citizens to track public resources, monitor service delivery, and use the information they collect to make a difference.

Goals and Objectives

1. Citizen Agency Outcomes (2013)

Over the next five years, Twaweza aims to facilitate significant improvements in media quality and diversity across East Africa. We also seek to increase citizen access to information about services and entitlements, amplify opportunities for citizens to express their views in public, and foster a culture in which citizens regularly monitor government, public resources, and service delivery. Through these efforts, we hope to see citizens gain a greater sense of their own ability to make change – which we call 'citizen agency'.

2. Service Delivery Outcomes (2018)

As citizens become more aware, active and empowered, they are better able to demand accountability and improved services. By 2018, Twaweza expects to see improved outcomes in basic education, health care, and water. In education, we aim to see more teachers showing up to teach classes, more funds reaching schools and being used well, and more children able to read and write well. In health, we aim to see more practitioners showing up to deliver care, greater availability of basic medicines, and more DPTHb3 immunization coverage, leading to a better sense of health. Regarding water, Twaweza aims to increase access to piped or covered water and reduce water insecurity and water-borne illnesses. For a full list of outcome targets, see Annex 2.

3. Learning Outcomes

In addition to expanding citizen agency and improving service delivery, Twaweza seeks to develop a culture of learning throughout its work and partnerships, and to produce new knowledge. We will facilitate mentoring and coaching relationships to assist and encourage our partners as they reflect on – and refine – their work. An independent entity will be recruited to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and track change from the outset. We will study our initiatives closely, document lessons about what works and what doesn't, generate a body of evidence and new knowledge, and share our findings widely, adding value within and beyond Twaweza.

The Twaweza Approach

1. Citizens making a difference

In every village and urban neighborhood, ordinary citizens analyze, organize, and act on issues that matter to them. In many cases, they make important changes, but their efforts are hampered by a lack of access to practical information about their government and their community. As a consequence, many citizens have difficulty organizing a meaningful response when government and other entities fail to deliver services or use resources well.

When citizens have access to information, media, and other resources, they are better able to secure improved services and advance their interests. By organizing partnerships that can deliver these tools and resources, Twaweza will support partners to amplify existing efforts and help new initiatives get off the ground. Ultimately, doing so will create more empowered citizens, stronger communities, and more responsive governments.

Twaweza will support three kinds of initiatives throughout East Africa:

Practical information for everyone

Information is power, but only if it's relevant, practical, and user-friendly. Twaweza will enable ordinary people to find the information they need quickly, reliably and affordably, and use it to make a difference. That doesn't mean arcane reports on government policy in English; but practical stuff on how citizens can engage with a school committee to improve schools, use SMS to learn which supplies should reach the local clinic, or use laws to get rid of a corrupt leader, in local languages.

Quality independent media

Mass media – including newspapers, TV, and particularly radio – can convey information, create space for citizen views to be heard and debated, and hold governments to account. For media to achieve these ends, however, it needs to reflect a diverse range of voices, provide real quality and reach, and function independently of undue state or commercial interests. Twaweza will support initiatives that strengthen media to fulfill its full potential, particularly in relation to women, and young and poor people in rural areas. In Tanzania, this work will be implemented in conjunction with the recently-established Tanzania Media Fund.

Citizens monitoring services

Governments are meant to work for and on behalf of the people, but most people have little way of knowing or tracking what their government is actually doing. Improved access to information and independent media will help, but citizens also need practical tools that will allow them to track services and public resources, and take action when public authorities fall short. Examples include following up on the money sent to schools or for repairing water pumps, monitoring whether teachers and health workers are showing up to work on time and being paid on time, and whether policy commitments and basic rights are respected on the ground. Twaweza will expand practical options for citizens to monitor and use their findings to follow up and bring change. At local levels, findings will spur community action. When findings are compiled at the national level, they will inform policy actors, Parliament and the public of trends and inequities and create pressure for action.

Twaweza will also create a one-stop information shop that will analyze and communicate this information and serve as an authoritative source of information and debate.

While these three kinds of initiatives are analytically distinct, in practice they will often work together, reinforcing actions that add up to a powerful whole. See box below – Asha and Juma’s story – for a concrete example. The next section explains how partnerships will be constructed to enable these sorts of changes.

Asha and Juma’s Story

Asha and Juma are pleased that their three children attend school, and the couple works hard to provide for uniforms and extra tutoring. One day, they hear a radio announcer ask, “Do you know what your children are learning in school? Why don’t you visit their classes and find out?” Asha and Juma decide to do just that. When they do, they are shocked to learn that their eldest son – a student in grade 4 – cannot read. How can this be?

The next day, Asha and Juma are watching TV when they see an advertisement from a national CSO, HakiElimu. The ad encourages them to send an SMS to learn more about the government’s education plan. They do so, and a few weeks later, the couple receives an envelope full of information through the bus service. Asha and Juma read avidly about what the government’s plan is meant to achieve, the amount of money that is supposed to reach each school, and how everyone has a right to be involved in their children’s education through the local school committee.

The envelope also includes a simple monitoring form that will help Asha and Juma track what is going on at their children’s school, along with a contact person in a nearby town who will show the couple how to use it.

After consulting the contact, Asha and Juma get together with two other parents and a teacher to plan ways to use the tool. At first, the head teacher is reluctant to allow the parents to keep tabs on the school. After Asha and Juma explain how the tool has been used in the next ward (and after they share a newspaper article in which President Kikwete encourages people to monitor basic social services), the head teacher relents.

As Asha and Juma begin to use the tool, they make some startling discoveries: the school has received only one quarter of its allocated funding; teachers are often not in the classroom; there is no library; and the few books in the school are often locked up in cupboards for safekeeping. It becomes clearer why their son is having difficulty learning to read.

Asha and Juma ask the school committee if they can attend its next meeting. At the meeting, the couple’s concerns are discussed. A number of teachers speak up and argue that it is difficult to teach without proper materials; others sympathize but say that some teachers are lazy and use their poor working conditions as an excuse. There is a lively debate, but the group is uncertain about how to solve its challenges. Eventually, the group agrees to form a team to develop solutions. The team includes Asha, the head teacher, the leader of the local chapter of the teachers’ trade union, and an influential local entrepreneur.

Borrowing ideas from a handbook and local public service announcements, and drawing on lessons from their own experience, the team does several things. They ask a local FM station to broadcast a story on the issues and then organize a public forum where people can call in or SMS to discuss their views. They help the head teacher write to the district education officer (DEO) about the funding shortfall. The union leader gets his union to pass a resolution asking all teachers to monitor the funds that the school receives. And the entrepreneur helps the school’s administrators to organize the school’s accounts.

As a result of the team’s efforts, local parents become much more aware of what’s going on at their children’s school. The head teacher’s letter results in additional funds, which enable the school to purchase more books and send a teacher to training. And the head of the teacher’s union becomes a bit of a local hero. Teachers from across the country ask him to come to their districts to teach them how to undertake monitoring efforts. At the national level, the teacher’s union uses this success to pressure the government into taking action, and the prime minister promises to fix problems in the distribution of school funds.

Asha and Juma feel good about what they have accomplished. But their son is still struggling to read, and they know that the quality of teaching at their children’s school is inadequate. They work with their new allies in the school and the community to recruit a retired teacher from a neighboring village to come and mentor the school’s younger teachers for several weeks. Asha and Juma don’t know if this will solve the problem, but they do know that they won’t stop trying. They’ve experienced the power of making change, and now there’s no stopping them.

2. Partnerships that get things done

Neither government alone nor disparate projects ‘here and there’ bring lasting change. Many well-meaning efforts have failed to achieve their goals, reach poor citizens across the country, or prove sustainable over time. Twaweza’s approach is to begin with citizens and the networks that are already important to them, and to create practical ways in which millions of ordinary people can take steps to make change happen.

To this end, in the first 5 years, Twaweza will organize a small number (~15) of strategic partnerships and support an additional number (~10) of initiatives to catalyze countrywide change. Twaweza will not be an implementer, or simply a re-granter to interesting projects. Rather, we will foster the development of new ideas and experimentation, broker strategic partnerships that can catalyze big change countrywide, and monitor progress.

Each partnership will be built around achieving a focused goal that has real meaning for ordinary citizens – such as increasing availability of basic medical supplies at local clinics, improving functionality of water points, or making sure that funds arrive at schools and are used well.

The partnerships will involve actors that are significant to people’s lives and have wide reach across communities, including media, mobile phone companies, commercial distribution networks, religious organizations, and trades unions. Rather than appealing for charity or attempting to create our own distribution networks to reach people, Twaweza will work with these organizations to identify and work on shared goals. Building on what partners are good at, we will make the case that the partnership serves our partners’ self-interest at limited cost, all while achieving a public good. For instance, a mobile phone company that offers free bandwidth to inform citizens via SMS can achieve a public image boost and foster increased business, for instance. Or a religious body that uses its network to monitor public services will be viewed by its members as caring for their needs and interests.

By pooling partners’ strengths into connected initiatives, Twaweza partnerships will reach millions of citizens across the region, enabling citizens to create impact. For a concrete example of how a partnership might operate, see the box below.

Enhancing access to safe water: An example of how it can work

Over 40 years after independence, most East Africans do not have access to safe water, and there is a lack of comprehensive information about who has water and who doesn’t. Because water has little in the way of an organized political constituency, this problem receives scant attention. In response, a Twaweza strategic partnership could involve:

- a) **FM radio stations** recruiting volunteers to monitor local water-points, investigating and reporting on water access issues; and facilitating debate through call-in programs and talk shows;
- b) **faith-based organizations** recruiting volunteers to monitor the situation and taking local action either to improve the situation themselves or to exert pressure on government;
- c) **college and secondary school students** recording data and taking photos of each data point and transmitting their findings over mobile phones and other means;
- d) **a software company** developing easy-to-use software to allow volunteers to upload data (including digital photographs of water-points) and produce simple comparative reports;
- e) **the government statistics bureau** integrating citizens’ data with other information from household or census surveys and making it publicly available;
- f) **a CSO** providing input on the service delivery/local governance/CSO interface, documenting outcomes and lessons learned, and sharing these findings across the region.

In just a few years, such a partnership could develop an easily accessible database of water access across much of the country. This information could then be used at the national level by media, politicians, and citizen activists to push for better and more equitable services.

3. Learning lessons, generating knowledge

In the last several years, the importance of access to information and citizen agency has achieved renewed recognition in the literature of both democracy and development. What we need now is solid evidence on how it can make a lasting difference in the lives of real people. As much as it is about doing, then, Twaweza is also about learning. While our initiatives will build on experience around the world, we will also try out new approaches, experiment with unorthodox ideas, and craft unusual partnerships.

Innovation, learning, monitoring and evaluation, and communicating lessons are key pillars of the Twaweza approach. Organizationally this work will be led by a senior manager, supported by a dedicated staff person in each country. To that end:

- Twaweza will support partners to reflect on practice, engage in honest self-criticism, and develop cultures of learning. When something works well, we will focus on understanding why. And when something fails, we will see it as an opportunity to learn lessons and shape something different.
- Instead of formal courses or classroom-based seminars and workshops, Twaweza will emphasize learning by doing and long-term monitoring and coaching. We will establish a team of creative and experienced mentors across East Africa to serve as advisers and resource persons to partners on concepts, program development, implementation and evaluation. In addition, Twaweza will facilitate placement of both East African and international university students among partners, particularly to document and communicate lessons.
- An independent entity (most likely a collaboration between international and local actors) will be appointed to develop a robust yet flexible monitoring and evaluation framework, and to undertake measurement of progress. A baseline will be conducted in the first 15 months, and outcomes will be tracked at key moments. A fuller outline of the proposed metrics frame is provided in the Annex to this document.
- Lessons learned and evidence generated can only provide value when they are shared and used. From the outset, therefore, Twaweza will communicate lessons widely in clear, lucid and innovative formats, both among its partners and globally. Some documents will be directed toward specialists and scholars; others will be popular and seek to foster broader public awareness and debate, through media, for instance.



Who will run Twaweza?

Twaweza's main base will be in Dar es Salaam. In addition, small country teams will be established in Nairobi (in 2009) and Kampala (in 2010). Twaweza will 'work lean,' with a total staff of 18 across all three countries. A strong network of experienced program officers, mentors, and consultants will support core staff.

Twaweza's top leadership and most of its staff will be East African.

For the first five years, Twaweza will be managed through Hivos, a Dutch agency with 40 years of experience supporting civic action, human rights, and freedom of expression. Hivos has rich networks in East Africa and a strong track record in quality programming and grant management.

By 2013, Twaweza will establish itself as an independent East African organization.

Twaweza will report to a Supervisory Board, which will include local and international experts and (initially) representatives of Twaweza main donors.

Twaweza's budget for the first five years (2008/9-13) is estimated at USD 68 million. Donors will likely include The Hewlett Foundation, Hivos, Sida, SNV, DFID and Google.org.

For more information, please contact

Twaweza!
1124 Chole Road, Msasani Peninsula
P. O. Box 38266, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
T: +255 22 2601022, F: +255 22 2601096
rrajani@post.harvard.edu
www.twaweza.org or www.twaweza.com

Twaweza! Metrics Framework 2008/9-2018

