



## Transparency and Accountability in Local Governance in Tanzania

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### Overview

Democracy can only grow and thrive where citizens perceive their government to be transparent and accountable to them. Citizens will support and complement government efforts if the government informs them of how decisions that affect them are taken. Most importantly, citizens like to be informed of how much taxes are collected and how the taxes they pay are spent. Such a government can be trusted, and a government has to be trusted if it is to remain legitimate in the eyes of its citizens.

Accountability is the management of relationships between state officials and citizens by disclosing vital and valuable information about government actions to the citizens. Government officials must feel obliged to give and receive feedback regarding any action that is likely to cause change in the welfare of society. Hence, without transparency, accountability will not be achievable. Government officials can inform citizens through the media (public notice boards, public meetings, newspapers, radio, television, the internet etc.).

Citizens have the right to know how the government is implementing the election campaign promises made by politicians as well as those made by government bureaucrats. Citizens have the right to find out which decisions are being implemented and to what extent programme execution is on course.

Transparency and accountability of public officials is also possible if key information about government decisions is given to the public through the media, or is physically posted in a public place accessible by citizens. Such information can also be announced verbally in public meetings at the hamlet, village/neighbourhood (mtaa), or ward levels.

Therefore, the extent to which local governments in Tanzania are transparent and accountable to their citizens is a policy concern. The question then is, to what extent are citizens in their localities informed by their local authorities about how public services are financed?

Results from the Citizen Survey should shed some light and inform policy makers on what can be done.

## Results from the 2013 Citizen Survey

To gauge the extent of transparency and accountability at the local government level, citizens were asked, “Have you in the last two years seen or received any information in a public place, for example, district council office, ward office, village office, primary school, government health facility, public notice boards, or newspapers?”

### Citizens Who Have Seen or Received Information in a Public Place

levels. Of those who received some information on local government budgets, 14.5 per cent said the information was posted in a public place while 14.3 per cent said the information was announced verbally in public.

Information on taxes and fees collected is even more limited. Only about one quarter (26.5 per cent) said they had seen or received information on local government taxes. More than seven out of every ten citizens (73.5 per cent) had never received or seen any information on local

		Yes %	No %	Posted in a public place %	Announced verbally in public %
1.	Local government budgets	28.8	71.2	14.5	14.2
2.	Taxes and fees collected in this area	26.5	73.5	8.6	17.9
3.	Audited statement of council expenditure	15.9	84.1	6.5	9.3
4.	Financial allocations to key sectors (e.g. health, education, water, roads etc.)	23.0	77.0	10.6	12.4
5.	Posters on HIV/AIDS prevention	84.7	15.3	75.1	9.6
6.	Guidance on how to report corruption/make an official complaint	33.6	66.4	18.6	15.0
7.	Village or ward allocations of Capital Development Grants	27.1	72.9	11.5	15.6
8.	Village or ward allocations of recurrent grants	24.6	75.4	9.9	14.8
9.	Allocation to schools in your locality	23.3	76.7	10.4	12.9
10.	Allocations to health facilities in your locality	16.5	83.5	7.1	9.5
11.	Constituency Development Catalyst Fund allocations and expenditures	6.7	93.3	2.4	4.2

Source: Citizen Survey 2013

Results from the citizen survey indicate that transparency in local government budgets is limited, as less than a third of the surveyed citizens, only 28.8 per cent, reported seeing or receiving information on local government in the last two years. The majority (71.2 per cent) never received information on local government budgets. More women (36.6 per cent) than men (34.6 per cent) have never received any information on local government budgets, whether at the council, ward, or village/mtaa

government taxes in the last two years. This opinion was shared almost equally by men (36.2 per cent) and women (37.3 per cent). Of those who reported seeing information on local government taxes, 8.6 per cent had read tax information posted in a public place, while 17.9 per cent said the information was disclosed verbally in public announcements.

Information on audited records is crucial for accountability. However, only 15.9 per cent said they had seen or received such information,

while a large majority (84.1 per cent) reported never seeing or receiving information on audited local government accounts in the past two years. For those who heard or received audited local government accounts, 6.5 per cent found the information posted in a public place, while 9.3 per cent heard it from verbal public announcements. Accountability in the use of public funds at the local level is constrained by a lack of transparency. More than three quarters (77 per cent) of the respondents reported never seeing or receiving information regarding financial allocations to key sectors (e.g. health, education, water, roads, etc.). Only 23 per cent affirmed to seeing such information: 10.6 per cent said they had read posted information while 12.4 per cent heard such information from public announcements.

There is more transparency in HIV/AIDS prevention than on how to report corruption or make an official complaint. A large majority (87.4 per cent) had seen or received information on HIV/AIDS, compared to only 33.6 per cent who received information on how to report corruption. Furthermore, about two thirds (66.4 per cent) reported never receiving information on how to report corruption, as opposed to only 15.3 per cent who said they had never received or seen information on HIV/AIDS. This is a policy challenge for good governance when the majority of citizens do not know how to fight corruption.

Good governance is also undermined by a lack of transparency in the allocation of both recurrent and Capital Development Grants. Less than a third (27.1 per cent) said they had

seen or received information on village/ward capitation grants, while more than two thirds of the villagers (72.9 per cent) reported never seeing or receiving such information. Also, less than a quarter (24.6 per cent) said they had seen or received information on village/ward allocation of recurrent grants, while the majority (75.4 per cent) had never seen such information. Both men (37.8 per cent) and women (37.6 per cent) shared these sentiments equally.

Transparency is also lacking in the allocation of school funds. Only 23.3 per cent said they had seen or received such information, while a majority (76.7 per cent) reported never having access to such information. Misuse (lack of accountability) is possible under such conditions. Another policy concern is the lack of transparency in the allocation of funds to public health facilities. A large majority (83.5 per cent) never had access to such information. Only 16.5 per cent had accessed such information in the past two years. Furthermore, nine out of ten respondents (93.3 per cent) said they had never seen or received information on constituency development funds. Only 6.7 per cent said they had seen such information.

## Policy Challenges

Results from the 2013 Citizen Survey point to a lack of transparency in the allocation and use of public funds in all tiers of local government, whether at the council, ward, or village/*mtaa*, levels. Without transparency, public confidence in local governments will continue to wither.



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