



UMOJA WA WAWEZESHAJI  
PO.O.BOX 1369  
KIGOMA, TANZANIA.



Umoja wa Wawezeshaji KIOO  
**2ND VOTER  
INSPECTION**

# **OBSERVATION REPORT**



**OBSERVATION TEAM**



[info@kioo.or.tz](mailto:info@kioo.or.tz)



[www.kioo.or.tz](http://www.kioo.or.tz)



NASHELA HOTEL  
DODOMA

# **REGISTRATION OBSERVATION VOTER REPORT**

## Contents

<b>1. Executive Summary.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Acknowledgement.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Structure of the Report .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1 The social-political profile of the Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi and Mtwara regions .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.2 Unlocking Inclusive Political Participation Across Regions.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.3 Enumerators/observers training.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4.3.1 Training Goal and objectives.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.4 Training Content .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.5 Enumerator Roles and Responsibilities .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4.6 Observation Tools and Guidelines.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>4.7 Data Collection Protocols and Ethics .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.8 Practical Application and Reinforcement.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.9 Codes of Conduct during the Observation Period .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>4.10 Reporting and Troubleshooting in the Field .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>4.11 Packing and Preparedness .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5. Voter Registration, Voters' Roll Inspection Participation in Seven Regions.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5.1 Voter education .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>5.2 Providers (numbers and category) .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>5.3 Key Comparative Observations .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5.4 Lessons from Observation .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5.5 Participants consent age and gender of respondent.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>5.5.1 Disability Status in Electoral Processes .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>5.5.2 Education and occupational of respondents .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>5.5.3 Awareness about Voter Roll Inspection .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>5.5.4 Reasons for Non-Participation in Voter Registration/Inspection.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>5.6 Barriers to Participation Among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>5.7 Accuracy and accessibility of the Voter Roll .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>5.7.1 Feedback From Respondents.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>5.7.2 Key Takeaways and Implications .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>5.8 Accuracy Concerns in the Voter Roll: Insights from the Field.....</b>	<b>35</b>

5.9 Suggested Improvements for Future Voters’ Roll Inspection Exercises .....	36
5.10 Inclusiveness, Support Structures, and Public Confidence in the Voter Inspection .....	37
5.10.1 Implications to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) .....	38
5.11 Recommendations for Future Improvement.....	38
6. Voter Registration and Updating of Voter Information .....	39
6.1 Timeliness of Center Opening.....	40
6.2 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) .....	41
6.3 Availability of Registration Materials .....	42
6.4 Presence of Political Party Agents .....	44
6.5 Youth and women Participation .....	46
6.6 Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).....	47
6.7 Public Understanding of Registration Process .....	48
7. Information on Boundary Delimitation and Constituency Name Changes .....	50
7.1 Community Participation in Boundary Delimitation and Constituency Name Changes .....	51
7.2 Observed Challenges and Good Practices in Voter Registration and Roll Inspection .....	53
7.3 Community Awareness and Understanding of Boundary Changes .....	54
7.4 Information Dissemination Channels.....	56
7.4.1 Participation of Women, Youth, and PWDs.....	56
7.5 Community Awareness and Communication Approaches.....	57
8. Consolidated lesson learnt and Recommendations .....	58
8.1 Recommendation.....	59

## **1. Executive Summary**

This report presents the comprehensive findings from the second phase of voter registration and inspection observation conducted by Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO in seven regions of Tanzania: Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. The observation was implemented as part of an inclusive election observation initiative, in collaboration with the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), with a focus on promoting transparent, participatory, and inclusive electoral processes ahead of the 2025 General Elections.

The primary aim of the observation was to assess the accessibility, inclusiveness, professionalism, and effectiveness of the voter registration and voter roll inspection exercises particularly about the participation of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). Observers also documented community awareness of the boundary delimitation and constituency name changes, the visibility of political party agents, and the overall conduct of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials.

Findings from the field highlight both commendable efforts and notable gaps. Women and youth were well-represented in many areas, with over 80% visibility reported, showing the impact of civic awareness campaigns. However, participation from PWDs remained low 15.87%, and only 27.25% of observers reported the presence of political party agents raising concerns about transparency and representation. Physical accessibility remained a major challenge, with just 39.7% of centers deemed fully accessible. Additionally, signage and information about boundary changes were absent in more than 49% of centers, creating confusion among voters.

While most observers noted no major disruptions, several practical and environmental challenges were reported, including inadequate infrastructure, long distances to centers, lack of disability-friendly facilities, and poor signage. On a positive note, cooperation from INEC officials and community leaders was observed in many locations, including the prioritization of elders and PWDs, use of local languages, and positive reception of observers.

The observation concludes with lessons learned and concrete recommendations to improve future voter registration and boundary review processes. These include enhancing accessibility, strengthening communication and civic education, ensuring the presence of all political parties, and improving stakeholder coordination at all levels. By addressing these gaps, Tanzania can move closer to an electoral environment that is not only free and fair, but also inclusive and responsive to all citizens especially the most vulnerable.

## 2. Acknowledgement

At Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO, we extend our deepest gratitude to all those who made this voter registration and inspection observation exercise a success. This important endeavor would not have been possible without the tireless commitment, collaboration, and support of various individuals and institutions who share our vision for a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic Tanzania.

First and foremost, we acknowledge the generous technical and financial support provided by the **Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA)**. Their partnership has not only enabled the deployment of trained Long-Term Observers (LTOs) across seven key regions—Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara—but also reinforced the credibility and reach of our observation mission.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the **Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)**, whose cooperation and openness to civil society engagement laid the foundation for a constructive and meaningful observation process. The collaboration between KIOO's observers and INEC officials at the regional and district levels was vital in ensuring access to information and timely feedback throughout the exercise.

To our **enumerators and supervisors**, we offer special thanks for their professionalism, dedication, and resilience. From braving difficult terrains and unpredictable weather to working extended hours with limited resources, your unwavering commitment to ethical data collection and community engagement exemplifies the spirit of inclusive democracy. Your detailed reports and observations form the backbone of this document.

We also acknowledge the critical role played by **community leaders, CSOs, and local government representatives**, who supported awareness-raising activities, facilitated access to observation sites, and contributed to grassroots mobilization—especially in hard-to-reach communities.

To the **communities and citizens** who welcomed our teams, shared their experiences, and participated in the process—your voices are the heart of this report. Your willingness to engage, question, and reflect has illuminated both the progress and the challenges that remain in Tanzania's democratic journey.

Lastly, to the **KIOO internal team**—our Programs, Administration, Monitoring & Evaluation, and Finance departments—thank you for your seamless coordination, strategic oversight, and tireless behind-the-scenes work that ensured the successful execution of this initiative.

This report is not just a record of observations; it is a testament to the power of collective effort in safeguarding democracy. Together, we are building a future where every voice matters, and no one is left behind.

**Edward Saimon**

Executive Director

Umoja wa wawezeshaji – KIOO



### 3. Structure of the Report

#### **Executive Summary:**

This section provides a concise overview of the voter registration and voter roll inspection observation exercise conducted by KIOO across seven regions—Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. It captures the major findings, including the general accessibility of registration centers, the level of community awareness, the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, and the conduct of Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials. Key challenges observed included communication gaps, limited accessibility for people with disabilities, and low visibility of political party agents at several centers. Despite these, there were commendable efforts by INEC to deploy trained officials and ensure orderly conduct. The summary also highlights actionable recommendations to INEC, political parties, CSOs, development partners, and local leaders, focused on improving transparency, accessibility, civic education, and inclusive participation in future electoral processes.

**Introduction:** Sets the context for the observation exercise, explaining the background, purpose, and scope. The Introduction sets the foundation for understanding the purpose and scope of the voter registration and inspection observation exercise. It explains the background and context of the activity within Tanzania's broader democratic and electoral framework. The section outlines why observing these processes is critical particularly in ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and credibility ahead of the 2025 General Elections. It further describes how the observation aimed to assess the preparedness, conduct, and accessibility of the voter registration and inspection process across Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. The introduction emphasizes the significance of this exercise in promoting citizen trust, reducing electoral disputes, and strengthening accountability mechanisms within the electoral system. This section also introduces KIOO's role in civic engagement and electoral monitoring, establishing the report's relevance for stakeholders involved in democratic governance.

**Objectives of the Observation:** The Objectives of the Observation section outlines the core goals that guided the voter registration and inspection monitoring exercise across the seven regions—Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. This part of the report clearly defines what the observation team intended to achieve through its work in the field. Specifically, it highlights the aim to assess the inclusivity of the process whether groups such as women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and rural residents were able to meaningfully participate. It also focuses on evaluating the transparency and professionalism of the process, especially how well the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) adhered to electoral procedures and whether the public received timely and accurate information. Moreover, the section emphasizes measuring the accessibility of registration centers and the representation of political parties, which are both crucial to ensuring free and fair electoral processes. Overall, this section provides a framework for the report's analysis and recommendations by clarifying the key areas of inquiry.

**Methodology:** The Methodology section describes the systematic approach used to carry out the voter registration and inspection observation in the regions of Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. It explains how the observation areas were purposefully selected based on factors such as geographic diversity, historical political participation, and the presence of marginalized groups. The section details the recruitment and training process of observers, emphasizing the use of standardized guidelines to ensure quality and consistency. Observers received orientation on electoral laws, inclusivity principles, and data ethics. To

enhance accuracy and efficiency in data gathering, digital tools specifically the Kobo Collect platform were used. This allowed real-time data capture, geo-tagging of observations, and facilitated rapid data validation and analysis. Overall, the methodology ensures that the findings presented in the report are both credible and reflective of the ground realities across different regions, allowing stakeholders to confidently rely on the conclusions and recommendations provided.

**Legal Framework:** The Legal Framework section provides an overview of the key laws and regulations that govern the voter registration and boundary delimitation process in Tanzania. It outlines the constitutional and statutory mandates that ensure the conduct of free, fair, and inclusive elections. Central to this framework is the National Elections Act, which guides the procedures for voter registration, inspection, and the maintenance of the permanent voter register. The Political Parties Act is also referenced, particularly in ensuring that political agents are involved and represented throughout the process. Furthermore, the Electoral Commission Act defines the establishment, powers, and responsibilities of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) including its duty to manage voter registration, enforce legal compliance, and oversee boundary reviews. This section also highlights INEC's obligation to facilitate public awareness, ensure access to electoral processes for all eligible citizens including women, youth, and persons with disabilities and to provide timely communication about any changes affecting voter rights and representation.

**Key Observation Areas:** The Key Observation Areas section presents the critical themes and components assessed during the voter registration and inspection observation. It focuses on evaluating how effectively the process was implemented and how inclusive and accessible it was for all eligible citizens. This section discusses the level of public awareness and communication strategies used to inform citizens about the registration and boundary delimitation process. It assesses whether messages were timely, clear, and accessible to various population groups, including rural communities and those with disabilities. It also examines the physical and procedural accessibility of registration centers looking at whether locations were reachable and if facilities accommodated people with disabilities, the elderly, and others with special needs. Moreover, the section evaluates the extent of participation by marginalized groups, including youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), and the challenges they faced during the process. Additionally, observers assessed the conduct of INEC officials, particularly regarding their professionalism, availability of registration materials, and handling of complaints or concerns. Lastly, the section highlights the presence or absence of political party agents at registration centers, reflecting on the transparency and accountability of the process.

**Findings and Data Analysis:** The Findings and Data Analysis section provides a detailed presentation and interpretation of the data collected during the voter registration and inspection observation exercise. It combines both quantitative statistics and qualitative insights to offer a comprehensive picture of the process across the seven observed regions: Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara. This section highlights major trends such as the effectiveness of communication methods used, the participation levels of different demographic groups (women, youth, and persons with disabilities), and how accessible the registration centers were. It also reveals gaps and inconsistencies, for example, the limited availability of information in accessible formats (e.g., Braille or sign language), the physical inaccessibility of certain registration centers, and the underrepresentation of political party agents. Observer reports and community feedback are used to support statistical data, offering firsthand accounts of challenges like low turnout in remote areas, poor infrastructure, and lack of voter

education. By combining data and real experiences, this section paints a clear and evidence-based narrative of what worked well and what required urgent improvement in future voter registration processes.

**Lessons Learned:** The Lessons Learned section reflects on the valuable insights gained by KIOO and its stakeholders throughout the voter registration and inspection observation exercise. It highlights both the strengths and shortcomings of the process, providing critical reflections that can guide improvements in future electoral activities. On the positive side, the observation confirmed the growing participation of women and youth, the dedication of some INEC officials, and the usefulness of digital tools like Kobo Collect in capturing real-time data efficiently. These elements enhanced the credibility and coverage of the observation process. However, significant challenges also surfaced. One of the most pressing issues was the lack of accessible infrastructure and communication for people with disabilities (PWDs), which led to their exclusion in many areas. Moreover, many community members expressed confusion due to inadequate public information, especially around boundary delimitation and name changes. The absence of consistent political party representation at registration centers also weakened the transparency of the process. Overall, these lessons reinforce the need for more inclusive, participatory, and well-communicated electoral processes, with a focus on marginalized populations and stronger collaboration among all stakeholders.

**Recommendations:** The **Recommendations** section offers a summary of strategic actions directed at key stakeholders to enhance inclusivity, transparency, and effectiveness in future voter registration and boundary delimitation exercises. For the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the report emphasizes the need to improve transparency by providing timely and accessible information on voter registration and boundary changes. This includes using formats such as Braille, sign language, and simplified language, and expanding communication through mass media and community meetings in local languages. INEC is also advised to improve physical accessibility at registration centers by adding ramps, clear signage, and mobile registration units to reach people in remote areas, particularly persons with disabilities and the elderly.

Political parties are encouraged to play a more active role in deploying agents at registration and inspection centers to enhance transparency. They should also support civic education and ensure internal policies promote inclusive participation by youth, women, and other underrepresented groups. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are recommended to strengthen their role in monitoring registration processes, educating voters, advocating for the rights of marginalized populations, and ensuring accountability through community engagement. Development partners are urged to provide capacity-building support to INEC, CSOs, and community leaders, and invest in inclusive innovations such as digital tools and mobile registration kits. Long-term support for civic education and electoral reform is also recommended. Lastly, local leaders and grassroots stakeholders are encouraged to mobilize their communities by conducting outreach, supporting vulnerable groups, and ensuring community voices are represented in all stages of the electoral process. Collectively, these targeted recommendations aim to promote a democratic process in Tanzania that is more inclusive, accessible, and trusted by all citizens.



#### **4. Introduction**

Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO, in collaboration with the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), is currently implementing an inclusive election observation project focused on promoting democratic participation and inclusivity of women youth and persons with disability in Tanzania. KIOO is a non-governmental organization committed to empowering communities through civic engagement, inclusive governance, and socio-economic development. Established in 2004 and based in Tanzania, KIOO works to uplift marginalized groups particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities by promoting participation, accountability, and equal opportunity in all areas of life.

The KIOO mission is to empower individuals and communities, especially vulnerable groups, through capacity building, advocacy, and participatory development approaches that promote human rights, good governance, and sustainable livelihoods while its vision is a just, inclusive, and empowered society where all individuals enjoy equal rights, opportunities, and active participation in democratic and development processes. KIOO's mission and vision align closely with that of the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA), whose work is rooted in the promotion of credible elections, democratic governance, and inclusive political processes across the African continent. This initiative is part of broader efforts to strengthen electoral processes by ensuring that the voices of traditionally marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities are actively considered and represented in all stages of the electoral cycle. Through this partnership, both organizations aim to build a more inclusive and accountable democratic environment in Tanzania by supporting observation practices that reflect the voices and experiences of all citizens especially those who are often left behind.

##### **4.1 The social-political profile of the Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi and Mtwara regions**

The regions of Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara present diverse yet interconnected social and political characteristics that significantly influence civic engagement, electoral participation, and inclusive leadership in Tanzania. Singida, predominantly rural and inhabited by ethnic groups such as the Nyaturu and Nyiramba, remains economically dependent on subsistence farming and livestock. The region experiences low literacy rates, especially among women, and limited access to health and education services. Politically, it has long been a stronghold of the ruling party (CCM), with minimal opposition activity and low political competitiveness. Civic participation is modest, with youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) rarely represented in leadership.

Dodoma, the country's political capital, is undergoing rapid urbanization due to government relocation, spurring infrastructural development and socio-economic changes. While the city center shows progress in education, employment, and ICT, peripheral rural areas are still struggling with poverty and gender inequality. Dodoma's political significance is evident in its vibrant parliamentary presence and expanding civil society, making it a strategic region for election observation and political accountability. Youth and women are showing increased interest in public affairs, although challenges remain in actual political inclusion and leadership access. Morogoro serves as a transitional zone with both rural and urban traits. It benefits from fertile agricultural land and strong transport links, while educational institutions such as Sokoine University of Agriculture contribute to moderate literacy levels. Politically, Morogoro displays relative competitiveness, with instances of opposition gains at local levels. The presence of religious and civil society institutions enhances civic awareness, although rural communities still

lack comprehensive voter education. Opportunities for inclusive political participation exist but need strategic support to overcome persistent socio-cultural barriers.

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's commercial hub, is the most urbanized and politically dynamic region. With high literacy rates, diverse demographics, and strong digital connectivity, Dar es Salaam has a vibrant civic space and active youth participation. It has traditionally supported both ruling and opposition parties, making it a focal point for political dialogue and electoral tensions. The region hosts numerous NGOs, media houses, and advocacy groups promoting gender equality and rights for marginalized groups. Despite its progressive posture, issues of digital misinformation, political surveillance, and occasional restriction on assembly remain concerns. Tanga, a coastal region with rich Swahili culture and Islamic influence, exhibits moderate development with a blend of fishing, farming, and trade. Its political environment is largely dominated by CCM, although civic awareness is growing, particularly among youth in urban areas like Tanga City. Religious leaders often play a central role in community and political life. However, in rural districts, patriarchal norms continue to suppress the participation of women and PWDs, limiting inclusive governance despite ongoing awareness efforts.

Lindi, one of the least developed regions, faces structural challenges such as extreme poverty, poor infrastructure, low literacy, and weak social services. Its economy depends heavily on fishing and cashew farming. Politically, Lindi has a passive landscape with limited opposition and low voter turnout, influenced by geographic isolation and weak civic engagement. Traditional and patriarchal systems dominate, resulting in the exclusion of women and marginalized groups from political decision-making processes. Civil society actors are minimal, and the need for voter education and democratic sensitization is high. Mtwara, like Lindi in its economic base, has slightly more development due to natural gas investments and the Mtwara Development Corridor. Despite this, youth unemployment remains high, and rural communities still face significant socio-economic exclusion. Politically, Mtwara has experienced civic unrest and organized protests, particularly around natural resource governance. This indicates a politically conscious population with potential for increased civic engagement. However, the presence of security forces and political tensions underscores the need for sustained peacebuilding, dialogue, and inclusive participation. Like Lindi, the region struggles with gender disparities and limited representation of PWDs in political processes.

Across these seven regions, common trends include low levels of representation of women, youth, and PWDs in leadership structures, persistent patriarchal norms, and uneven civic literacy. While regions like Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, and Dodoma show greater openness to political competition and civic engagement, rural regions such as Lindi, Singida, and parts of Mtwara face substantial barriers to inclusivity. For KIOO and its partners, this profile emphasizes the urgent need for targeted voter education, capacity-building for underrepresented groups, and strengthening of local civil society actors to foster democratic accountability and inclusive governance across Tanzania.

## **4.2 Unlocking Inclusive Political Participation Across Regions**

An emerging trend across the seven regions is the deepening urban-rural political divide. While urban areas such as Dar es Salaam, Dodoma City, Morogoro Urban, and Tanga exhibit growing political awareness, digital activism, and multiparty competition, rural areas in Singida, Lindi, and Mtwara remain locked in low civic participation, single-party dominance, and limited political debate. This contrast highlights the urgent need for targeted, context-specific voter education strategies. Urban youth may benefit from campaigns addressing digital misinformation and voter apathy, while rural populations require localized, language-appropriate interventions through trusted platforms such as community radio, mobile caravans, and religious forums. Equally

important is the issue of internal democracy within political parties. Across the regions, political parties often serve as gatekeepers that reinforce patriarchal hierarchies and exclude youth, women, and persons with disabilities from meaningful leadership. Despite constitutional guarantees, the path to nomination and candidacy remains highly centralized and opaque. KIOO should consider convening dialogues with party leaders to promote inclusive leadership charters, internal reforms, and mentorship opportunities for emerging leaders, particularly young women and PWDs.

A powerful but underutilized force in shaping civic behavior lies in religious and traditional institutions. In culturally conservative regions like Tanga, Singida, Lindi, and Mtwara, religious leaders and local chiefs hold significant influence over societal norms, especially regarding gender roles and political trust. Rather than seeing them as barriers, these actors can become champions of inclusive governance when engaged respectfully. Faith-based civic education, intergenerational dialogue, and values-based messaging could prove transformative in shifting community mindsets on leadership and participation. The rise of digital tools has undoubtedly enhanced access to information, but it has also revealed a stark digital divide. Urban youth in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, and Dodoma benefit from internet access and civic tech innovations, while their rural counterparts remain digitally excluded, silenced by poor connectivity, low literacy, and limited exposure to civic platforms.

Across all regions, the political visibility of people with disabilities (PWDs) remains minimal. Even where physical polling access exists, there is little investment in nurturing PWDs as political actors party members, candidates, or election monitors. Changing this narrative requires more than accessibility; it demands inclusive leadership pipelines, advocacy for reserved seats, and the use of assistive technologies to enable active political engagement. PWD-focused civic forums and storytelling campaigns could help reshape societal perceptions and uplift role models from within PWD communities. In politically charged regions like Mtwara and Dar es Salaam, the risk of election-related conflict and youth unrest is palpable. In Mtwara, protests linked to natural resource governance have previously escalated, revealing the intersection of politics, economic exclusion, and civic frustration. KIOO should embed early warning mechanisms, youth-led peace dialogues, and community-based election security watch groups to mitigate tensions and ensure that electoral processes remain peaceful and inclusive. Finally, there is untapped potential for inter-regional learning and civic innovation transfer. Regions like Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, and Dodoma have developed commendable practices such as youth civic hubs, digital voter engagement platforms, and gender-focused political dialogues. These models can be adapted and scaled in low-performing regions like Lindi, Singida, and Mtwara through structured exchange visits, mentorship networks, and South-South collaboration.

### **4.3 Enumerators/observers training**

As part of this project, KIOO and EISA organized a two-day capacity-building training for enumerators and supervisors at Nashera Hotel in Dodoma. The main objective of this training was to prepare field data collectors for a comprehensive observation exercise scheduled to take place across seven regions of Tanzania: Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Mtwara and Lindi. This observation focuses on assessing the inclusiveness, accessibility, and public perception of the voter registration process, with specific attention to the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. In addition to assessing the inclusiveness and accessibility of the voter registration process, the observation exercise will also focus on reviewing and collecting information related to the voter's roll. Enumerators and supervisors will observe how the voter's roll is being updated, the procedures used to verify voter information, and whether all eligible

citizens especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities are being accurately captured in the roll.

This component is essential to ensuring transparency, credibility, and fairness in the electoral process. By evaluating the quality and accuracy of the voter's roll inspection, the observation will help identify potential gaps, such as the exclusion of certain groups, discrepancies in data, or procedural shortcomings that may hinder the integrity of future elections. This effort is in line with the shared goals of KIOO and EISA to promote democratic participation, build public trust in electoral systems, and support reforms that lead to more inclusive and accountable governance in Tanzania. The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of data collection tools, ethical guidelines, observation protocols, and reporting standards using digital tools such as the Kobo Toolbox. It was expected that by the end of the training, enumerators and supervisors would be fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and practical skills to objectively and accurately observe and report on the voter registration process. A total of 17 participants attended the training, including 14 enumerators and 3 regional supervisors, who will oversee data collection and ensure quality control in their respective regions. These individuals bring with them prior experience in community mobilization, civic education, and election observation, which added value to the depth of learning during the session.



*Participants' discussion and experiences sharing*

### 4.3.1 Training Goal and objectives

The overall goal of the training was to prepare and capacitate enumerators and supervisors with the knowledge, tools, and confidence required to effectively conduct an inclusive observation of the ongoing voter registration process, with a specific focus on the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, as well as the accuracy of the voter's roll in the seven targeted regions. The training was designed to ensure that observation exercise would be carried out professionally, ethically, and with methodological consistency across all regions. By the end of the two-day session, participants were expected to demonstrate a strong understanding of the observation tools, ethical practices, coordination roles, and the technical use of the Kobo Toolbox for structured data collection and timely reporting. Below are the key training objectives

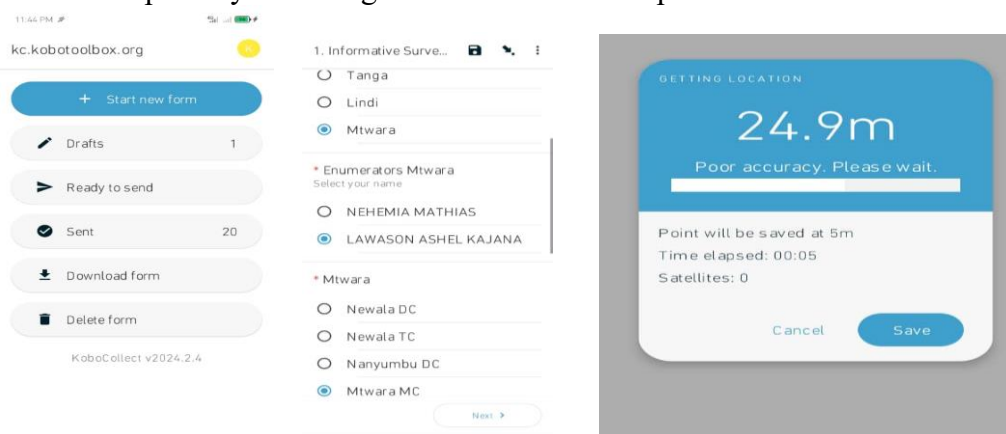
- a) The training aimed to ensure that all participants could effectively use standardized tools to collect data in a systematic and reliable way. Through practical demonstrations and group



- b) exercises, participants were introduced to the Kobo Toolbox, a digital platform that will be used to gather field data. They were guided through each step of the data collection form, practiced data entry using sample scenarios, and were given immediate feedback to reinforce their understanding. This helped build their competence and confidence in using digital tools to ensure high-quality data capture in the field.
- c) Participants were taken through the specific observation tools that will be used during the voter registration monitoring exercise. This included reviewing checklists, survey questions, and criteria for assessing the inclusiveness and accessibility of registration centers. Trainers explained the rationale behind each tool and emphasized the importance of objectivity and neutrality in observation. Role-plays and simulations were used to deepen understanding and enable participants to apply the tools in real-life scenarios, thus reinforcing their grasp of the methodologies.
- d)
- e) To reduce variations in how data is interpreted and recorded across different regions, the training focused on standardizing the approach to observation and reporting. Participants were taught how to interpret and respond to each question in the tool uniformly and how to avoid biases or misreporting. Supervisors were given additional responsibilities in reviewing submissions and ensuring data quality.
- f) Effective coordination between enumerators and supervisors is crucial for the success of the observation exercise. The training clarified the chain of commands, communication protocols, and reporting timelines.

#### 4.4 Training Content

This session served as the foundation of the entire training by introducing participants to the overarching purpose, scope, and expected outcomes of the voter registration observation exercise supported by EISA and implemented by KIOO. Participants were informed that the observation exercise is part of a broader effort to promote inclusive, credible and participatory democratic processes in Tanzania. The main purpose is to monitor and assess how the ongoing voter registration process is being conducted, especially focusing on inclusiveness of the process i.e., whether youth, women, and persons with disabilities are participating and being accommodated; accessibility of voter registration centers; accuracy and integrity of the voter's roll and the readiness and transparency of the registration officials and procedures in the field.



**Photo:** Enumerators participating in a practical session on voter registration observation tools including digital data collection using Kobo Toolbox.

The scope of the exercise spans seven regions in Tanzania, covering both urban and rural contexts, with a wide range of social, economic, and political settings. This variety highlights the importance



of standardized observation tools and training to ensure comparability and consistency in data collected from different regions. Participants walked through the specific objectives of the observation, such as identifying barriers to participation for marginalized groups; assessing the level of awareness and preparedness among citizens; gauging the professionalism and neutrality of electoral officials and monitoring the use and management of voter registration materials and technology. They were also introduced to some of the key questions their observations would help answer, such as are voter registration centers accessible to people with disabilities? Are young people being registered for the first time? Is there equal treatment of men and women during registration? And is the voter role being updated accurately and fairly?

Participants were told the exact dates of their assignments and the expectations regarding daily reporting, communication with supervisors, and submission deadlines. Special attention was given to the importance of neutrality, objectivity, and fact-based observation. Participants were reminded that they are not activists or campaigners during the exercise but trained observers whose role is to gather data without interference, bias, or assumptions. Accuracy in observation and data entry was highlighted as critical to ensuring credibility of the findings, which will be used not only for public reporting but also for influencing future electoral processes and programming interventions by KIOO, EISA, and development partners. Finally, the session underscored how the data collected through this observation will feed into national reports, policy briefs, and advocacy strategies aimed at strengthening democratic governance in Tanzania.

#### **4.5 Enumerator Roles and Responsibilities**

This session was critical in clearly defining the role of enumerators as the backbone of the observation exercise. Enumerators are the frontline actors responsible for collecting primary data that will inform national-level analysis and reporting. The session ensured that all enumerators understood their tasks, expectations, and the standards they must uphold throughout the exercise. Enumerators were trained to conduct on-the-ground observations where enumerators' main task is to visit designated voter registration centers and objectively observe the environment, processes, and interactions taking place. They are expected to document what they see without interfering or becoming involved in the process. Enumerators are responsible for using structured tools, mainly digital checklists and forms to collect data. Accuracy is vital, so they were trained to record observations as they happen, avoiding assumptions or memory-based entries. Maintaining a professional demeanor was emphasized throughout the session. Enumerators were expected to dress appropriately and carry identification letters or badges that introduce them as official observers, communicate respectfully with electoral officials and community members, avoid debates, arguments, or take sides on any political or registration issues and follow safety and security protocols, especially when working in remote or potentially sensitive environments.



*Enumerators training session*

Enumerators were clearly briefed on the need to maintain confidentiality, especially when interacting with individuals or observing sensitive processes. They must never disclose personal information about individuals encountered during observation, avoid sharing collected data or field experiences on social media or with unauthorized individuals and maintain strict political neutrality by not showing support or bias toward any political party, candidate, or electoral officer. Neutrality is a cornerstone of credible observation. Enumerators were reminded that even casual comments or gestures can be misinterpreted and damage the legitimacy of the entire exercise. To ensure a steady flow of data, enumerators were trained to report daily to their supervisors, submitting complete digital forms and flagging any unusual or critical incidents, be punctual in visiting observation sites and adhering to the agreed field schedule and communicating proactively in case of delays, access issues, or technical problems. Daily reporting is not just a procedural requirement, it helps supervisors monitor progress, provide support, and ensure data is being captured in real-time for quick intervention if needed, this session reinforced the understanding that enumerators are not just data collectors but guardians of the observation process's credibility.

#### **4.6 Observation Tools and Guidelines**

This session was a crucial technical component of the training, aimed at equipping enumerators and supervisors with a deep understanding of the data collection tools and protocols they will use in the voter registration observation exercise. The training focused on ensuring that every participant could confidently and accurately use the tools in real field environments while maintaining standardized procedures. Participants were introduced to three primary tools, each serving a specific purpose in gathering comprehensive, multi-perspective data from the field. The Introduction Survey Questionnaire, this tool was specifically designed for key informant interviews. It combines structured questions related to voter registration and boundary delimitation, enabling enumerators to capture insights from influential or knowledgeable stakeholders such as district election officers, registration supervisors, and local leaders. These informants provide contextual understanding and help interpret broader systemic or procedural issues. The Observation Instruction Tool on Voter Rolls inspection guided enumerators in conducting direct observations at registration centers. It included detailed instructions on how to observe and record issues related to the voters' roll, such as availability, accessibility, accuracy, and how it was displayed or used by officials. Enumerators were trained to document any irregularities, logistical challenges, or best practices observed in their respective districts. The FGD guide helped enumerators engage communities in structured dialogues to gather qualitative insights into their experiences, perceptions and challenges regarding the voter registration process. Each tool was thoroughly reviewed during the session to ensure enumerators understood what information the tool was designed to collect, who the target respondents were (e.g., officials, community members), how to administer each section correctly whether through observation, structured questions, or moderated discussion and how to interpret responses and observations objectively, without bias or speculation.

Enumerators were also guided by linking the tools together to build a coherent picture of what is happening on the ground. For instance, insights gathered from key informants could be compared with observations at centers and feedback from community groups to identify recurring issues or discrepancies. Given the diversity of locations ranging from urban centers to rural villages, training sessions emphasized the importance of flexibility while maintaining standards. Enumerators were trained on how to handle uncooperative respondents or incomplete records, use neutral language when conducting FGDs or key informant interviews, take discreet notes during observation without interfering with the process and ensure data is properly synced when using digital tools.

offline. To ensure that all collected data is valid, reliable and comparable, participants were repeatedly reminded to use tools exactly as designed, without unauthorized changes, follow ethical protocols, including confidentiality, informed consent, and neutrality and avoid assumptions or personal interpretation everything must be based on observable evidence or direct responses. Supervisors were also oriented on how to monitor tool usage, support enumerators in real-time, and verify data quality through random field checks and feedback sessions.

#### **4.7 Data Collection Protocols and Ethics**

This session formed a critical part of the training, focusing on the ethical standards and procedural safeguards that enumerators must uphold while collecting data in the field. Since the observation exercise involves interacting with people, observing sensitive processes, and collecting evidence that can influence electoral reform and public trust, maintaining integrity and ethical discipline was emphasized as non-negotiable. Enumerators were trained to uphold the following key ethical principles during data collection. Before engaging with any key informant or focus group participant, enumerators were instructed to clearly explain the purpose of the exercise, how the data would be used, and to obtain verbal or written consent. This ensured that participation was voluntary and that individuals had the right to refuse or withdraw at any point without consequence. Enumerators were taught how to collect and store data in a manner that protects the identity of participants. Their role is strictly observational and fact-based. They were instructed to avoid expressing personal opinions, wearing political colors, or making any statements that could be perceived as biased or influencing public opinion. During key informant interviews or focus group discussions, enumerators were cautioned against asking suggestive or emotionally loaded questions. In addition to ethical principles, the session also covered clear procedures to be followed throughout the observation exercise consistent Protocols across Locations enumerators were instructed to follow uniform procedures in all locations to ensure that data from one district can be compared reliably with another. This included observing the same set of indicators, using the same tools, and documenting observations in the same formats. Respect for Local Norms and Community Sensitivities as the exercise covers diverse regions and cultures, enumerators were reminded to approach every community with cultural humility and respect. Any cases of intimidation, harassment, or breach of protocol were to be reported immediately through proper channels.

#### **4.8 Practical Application and Reinforcement**

Role-play exercises and scenario-based discussions were conducted to help enumerate applying these ethical guidelines in real-life situations. For example, how to respond if a respondent becomes emotional or distressed during a discussion, what to do if local leaders insist on attending a private FGD and how to record observations when political tensions are high without exposing themselves or participants to risk. The trainers also emphasized the legal and reputational implications of ethical violations not only for the individual enumerator but also for the credibility of the entire exercise and the organizations involved; this session instilled a strong ethical foundation for the entire observation process. Enumerators and supervisors left with a clear understanding that data collection is not just about accuracy, but also about trust, respect, and responsibility. Their ability to uphold these ethical and procedural standards will directly impact on the quality, legitimacy and impact of the observation findings.

This session focused on equipping enumerators and supervisors with the technical competencies required to effectively use digital tools for real-time and accurate data collection during the observation exercise. In line with current trends in data-driven programming and digital transformation in election observation, the session emphasized both practical skill-building and

problem-solving techniques to ensure smooth implementation in the field. Enumerators were introduced to Kobo collect tool which is the mobile-based data collection application that will be used throughout the field exercise. The platform, designed to accommodate structured forms such as key informant questionnaires, voter roll observation checklists and focus group discussion guides, was pre-installed on smartphones or tablets. Key features of the application included user-friendly interface for easy navigation, offline data entry capability, allowing enumerators to collect data in areas with limited or no internet connectivity, GPS tagging for location verification of observed registration centers and automated syncing when internet connection is restored, ensuring secure and centralized data submission.

The session included live demonstrations and hands-on practice where participants learned how to log in and access specific forms assigned to them, practiced filling out different types of questions (multiple choice, open-ended, numeric fields, and time stamps), understood how to save, edit, and review entries before submission and simulated data syncing to observe how information is securely transmitted to the central database. Enumerators were guided through mock exercises that mirrored real field scenarios to help them apply their learning confidently. Trainers monitored each participant's interaction with the app and provided real-time support and feedback. To prepare enumerators for possible technical issues in the field, the training also covered troubleshooting common errors, such as application freezes, login failures, or failed data uploads, how to contact technical support, including communicating with supervisors as backup communication channels and manual backup procedures in case of complete device failure, including note-taking protocols and paper-based emergency forms.

Enumerators were also instructed on how to charge and maintain their devices, especially in areas with limited electricity supply, and advised to carry power banks or solar chargers where necessary. Trainers emphasized that digital efficiency must be matched by accuracy and integrity in data entry. Key guidelines included double-checking entries before submission, avoiding guesswork enumerators were told to leave a response blank if a required observation could not be made and to report why, immediate flagging of irregularities or unclear indicators through built-in comment sections or direct messages to supervisors. Enumerators were also taught how to observe data validation rules embedded within the system, such as required fields and logical skip patterns, which help reduce human error during entry.

#### **4.9 Codes of Conduct during the Observation Period**

This session played a vital role in reinforcing the behavioral and ethical expectations of both enumerators and supervisors throughout the observation period. While technical skills are essential for data collection, adherence to strong personal and professional conduct ensures the credibility, integrity and neutrality of the entire exercise especially in the context of observing electoral processes such as voter registration and voter roll assessments. The following key values were thoroughly discussed, with real-world examples and role-playing exercises to illustrate their practical application. Enumerators were reminded that their honesty in data reporting and conduct in the field directly affects the reliability of findings. Tampering with data, falsifying information, or concealing observations was strictly prohibited. Enumerators and supervisors were expected to always maintain a strictly neutral stance. They were instructed to refrain from engaging in political discussions, expressing support for any party or candidate, or wearing any attire that may be linked to political affiliations. Participants were trained to maintain respectful, calm, and focused behavior during all interactions with community members, electoral officials, and each other. Enumerators were encouraged to adapt to local customs such as greeting norms, gender dynamics, and community leadership structures while maintaining the standards and objectives of the



observation exercise. Enumerators were provided with practical strategies for navigating complex or sensitive scenarios, including responding to resistance or suspicion from community members or local officials, intervening appropriately if an irregularity is observed, such as underage registration or intimidation at a voter registration center and staying composed in high-tension or politically charged environments, particularly when observing events that may provoke strong reactions.

Scenarios were role-played to help participants rehearse their responses to intimidation, interference, or misinformation, with trainers providing constructive feedback and support. Enumerators were guided on the importance of avoiding any situations where their impartiality could be questioned. This included avoiding observation in areas where they have personal or political ties, declining offers of gifts, meals, or favors from political actors, registration officials, or community members and reporting any relationships or interactions that may create a perception of bias or compromise. Furthermore, supervisors were instructed to monitor field behavior, and a reporting mechanism was outlined for flagging potential ethical breaches. To uphold the highest standards of accountability, the session also introduced clear and confidential channels for reporting any observed electoral irregularities, violations of the code of conduct by fellow enumerators or supervisors and cases of harassment, bribery, or coercion in the field.

Enumerators were informed about their duty to report such incidents promptly and responsibly, and to document observations objectively without putting themselves or others at risk. In summary, this session was designed to ensure that enumerators and supervisors represent Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO and EISA with integrity and discipline, and that their conduct upholds public trust in the observation process. By internalizing these codes of conduct and ethical guidelines, participants are better prepared to carry out their duties professionally, impartially, and with a deep sense of responsibility to the communities and institutions they are observing.

#### **4.10 Reporting and Troubleshooting in the Field**

This session was essential for ensuring smooth coordination, timely feedback, and data reliability throughout the observation exercise. The training emphasized the importance of well-structured communication channels, proactive supervision, and responsive problem-solving in the field to uphold the overall quality and credibility of the observation process. Enumerators were trained in how to compile and submit daily field reports using standardized formats. These reports were designed to capture key observations and findings of the day, challenges encountered at voter registration centers or within the communities, feedback or concerns raised by community members or local officials and recommendations for immediate or long-term action. Enumerators were required to submit their reports on a set schedule, often at the end of each observation day, using either paper forms or digital tools depending on their location and access to internet connectivity. To ensure ongoing communication between enumerators and supervisors, the session introduced a structured chain of command, where enumerators report directly to their designated supervisors, designated communication channels, such as WhatsApp groups, direct phone calls, or SMS, to ensure rapid response to emerging issues and regular check-ins, both virtually or in person, where supervisors could review daily reports, offer guidance, and clarify expectations.

Enumerators were encouraged to report challenges promptly rather than waiting until the end of the day, especially in cases where data accuracy, safety, or access were at risk. Supervisors were equipped with specific skills and tools to effectively support field teams, including: conducting routine spot checks and field visits to assess whether enumerators were collecting data in alignment with the training and ethical standards, providing on-the-spot guidance or refresher instructions to



enumerators who encounter difficulties in understanding tools or interacting with stakeholders and reviewing submitted reports to identify patterns, gaps, or inconsistencies in the data. Supervisors also served as the first point of escalation for any major logistical, ethical, or operational issues encountered in the field. Participants were also trained on practical strategies to handle common technical or operational problems, such as digital tool malfunctions (e.g., data not syncing, app crashes); difficulty accessing remote registration centers; hostility or non-cooperation from local actors and sudden changes in schedules or environmental disruptions (e.g., heavy rains, political events). Troubleshooting guides and a direct line to the central coordination team were shared to support quick interventions when necessary. The emphasis was on real-time problem-solving to minimize downtime and ensure continuous data collection. In conclusion, one can say that this session reinforced that accurate reporting, effective supervision, and responsive troubleshooting are central to the success of the voter registration observation.

The training ensured that enumerators and supervisors were not only capable of collecting high-quality data but also equipped to safeguard their health, security, and well-being throughout the observation period. Enumerators were trained to take proactive measures to protect their health during fieldwork. Key guidance included carrying personal protective equipment (PPE) and first aid kits. Ensuring proper hydration and nutrition, especially when working in remote areas with limited access to food or clean water, recognizing signs of fatigue, dehydration, or illness, and knowing when to take a break or seek medical attention and observing hygiene practices, particularly in high-contact environments like voter registration centers. Enumerators were informed about health facilities near their assigned locations and the procedures for seeking emergency assistance if needed. Again, enumerators were emphasized on detailed planning for transportation and movement, particularly in areas with poor road infrastructure or long distances between observation sites. Enumerators were advised on planning daily travel routes in advance to ensure efficient time management, carrying fully charged phones and backup power banks to maintain communication throughout the day, working in pairs or groups in hard-to-reach or insecure areas for increased safety and keeping essential documents, ID cards, and observation kits in waterproof or dustproof containers.

#### **4.11 Packing and Preparedness**

To ensure readiness, enumerators were guided on what to carry to the field each day, including observation tools and digital devices, copies of fieldwork instructions and contact sheets and contact sheets, IDs, INEC accreditation, adequate supplies of water, snacks, and weather-appropriate clothing (e.g., raincoats or hats) and notebooks or backup recording materials in case of technical failure. This session ensured that all enumerators and supervisors were well-prepared to operate safely, efficiently, and responsibly in the field. By addressing both health and logistical needs, the training supported the successful and secure implementation of the voter registration observation across Tanzania, in alignment with KIOO and EISA's commitment to quality, safety, and professionalism. The selection of training topics was based on the need to ensure that all enumerators and supervisors are fully equipped to conduct a standardized, ethical, and inclusive voter registration observation exercise across the seven target regions. Each topic was directly linked to the key responsibilities the participants would be expected to carry out in the field. The curriculum was structured to progressively build participants' knowledge from understanding the purpose of the observation, to mastering tools and ethical practices, to preparing for real-world challenges in the field.

## **5. Voter Registration, Voters' Roll Inspection Participation in Seven Regions**

Over the past three electoral cycles in Tanzania, the Biometric Voter Registration (BVR) system, introduced in 2015, marked a significant shift in the credibility of the electoral process. While technology aimed to enhance transparency, its uptake and the community's active participation in voter registration, inspection, and boundary delimitation have been uneven across regions. For instance, Dar es Salaam consistently ranks among the highest in registration turnout, recording approximately 90% of eligible voters registered in the 2020 General Elections. This high rate is linked to strong civic engagement, urban mobility, and intense party competition. In contrast, Lindi and Singida recorded much lower registration figures, averaging just above 60%, largely due to poor infrastructure, limited awareness, and long distances to registration centers. In Dodoma, voter registration performance has improved over time, particularly following the relocation of government institutions.

The 2020 update exercise showed increased participation in Dodoma Urban, where youth and students from UDOM actively registered, while rural districts like Bahi and Chemba continued to lag due to logistical barriers and seasonal migration. Voters' roll inspection, however, remains a weak point even in urban Dodoma; despite announcements through local media and NEC platforms, less than 30% of registered voters in rural Dodoma reportedly checked their registration details during the inspection window in 2020. Morogoro has had a mixed historical record. In the 2015 voter registration update, the region reported around 85% registration coverage, especially in districts close to urban centers like Morogoro Municipal and Kilosa. However, civic participation in voters' roll inspections remained low (estimated under 25%), largely because many citizens saw no direct benefit in verifying their data unless errors caused them to be turned away during elections. Additionally, the inspection process was rarely accompanied by community-level sensitization in remote areas such as Gairo and Ulanga.

Tanga's registration history has remained relatively stable, with consistent turnout around 75–80%, especially in Tanga City and Muheza. Yet, like other coastal and rural regions, voters' roll inspection is often sidelined. Awareness campaigns are limited, and cultural attitudes such as deferring electoral matters to elders or religious leaders play a role in low participation. Moreover, youth and women in districts like Handeni and Kilindi have limited involvement, further suppressing inclusive verification of the voter register. When it comes to boundary delimitation, public involvement across all seven regions has historically been minimal. The National Electoral Commission often undertakes constituency adjustments with limited grassroots consultation, and boundary changes are typically contested only by political parties, not by citizens. In Dar es Salaam, there have been public debates during previous cycles (notably in 2010 and 2015) about gerrymandering, especially in Ilala and Kinondoni, where rapid population growth led to calls for constituency rebalancing. In contrast, in Lindi and Mtwara, most communities are unaware that constituency boundaries even change, and therefore no public input or feedback is ever recorded.

Mtwara, due to its history of political unrest tied to natural gas extraction and regional marginalization, experienced a higher-than-average voter registration turnout in 2015 (around 82%) as youth mobilized around political change. However, the 2020 inspection phase saw significant drop-offs, with less than 20% engagement in districts like Masasi and Nanyamba. Civic education fatigue and mistrust in government responsiveness played a role. Similar patterns were observed in Singida, where early enthusiasm during registration phases in 2010 and 2015 dropped sharply during inspection due to inadequate follow-up and poor communication of timelines.

Overall, the historical pattern reveals a national trend of stronger registration turnout compared to very weak engagement in roll inspection and zero participation in boundary delimitation across most regions. Urban areas such as Dar es Salaam, parts of Dodoma, and Morogoro show greater engagement, driven by education levels, proximity to NEC offices, and media reach. Meanwhile, coastal and inland rural regions, including Tanga, Lindi, Singida, and Mtwara, struggle with structural exclusion, limited civic space, and logistical challenges. The disparity is further widened by gender, age, and disability status, with youth, women, and PWDs systematically underrepresented in both inspection and boundary discussions. To enhance democratic participation, future voter registration and boundary delimitation exercises must prioritize inclusive and decentralized civic education, provide mobile registration and inspection units, and adopt participatory boundary consultations. Without these reforms, regional disparities will continue to threaten the equity and credibility of Tanzania's electoral processes.

### **5.1 Voter education**

Voter education is a critical component of the electoral process, helping citizens understand their rights and responsibilities, how to register and vote, and the value of inclusive participation. KIOO's voter education observation across the seven regions revealed regional disparities in reach, effectiveness, and inclusivity with urban areas showing better coverage and responsiveness, while rural and marginalized communities remained underserved. In Dar es Salaam, voter education was the most visible and accessible, driven by a high concentration of civil society organizations, vibrant media, and strong digital engagement. KIOO observed that community radio stations, youth forums, and faith-based institutions actively disseminated messages around voter registration, inspection, and peaceful participation. The presence of university students and political pluralism contributed to dynamic civic engagement, especially among youth and first-time voters. Dodoma, being the seat of government, also demonstrated good voter education practices, especially in urban areas. Public institutions, political parties, and CSOs such as KIOO and others conducted dialogues and town hall-style awareness events. In schools and colleges, civic clubs helped disseminate information about electoral rights and processes. Mobile loudspeakers and printed IEC materials were also utilized effectively in semi-urban wards.

In Morogoro, KIOO noted collaborative voter education efforts between NEC officials, religious leaders, and local government authorities, particularly in urban and peri-urban settings. Youth clubs and community-based organizations provided door-to-door awareness, and social media campaigns by youth influences had some impact on digital-savvy populations. There were also effective uses of community theatre and storytelling, which resonated well in areas such as Kilosa and Morogoro Rural. In Tanga, religious and cultural leaders played a significant role in civic sensitization, especially in urban Muslim-majority areas. Friday mosque sermons and community gatherings were used to encourage voter registration and inspection. IEC materials were translated into Swahili and used effectively in some wards. Engagement among women and older voters was notable in areas like Pangani and Tanga City.

Despite these positive practices, challenges persisted across most regions, particularly in Singida, Lindi, and Mtwara, where KIOO observed limited voter education reach. In Singida, language barriers, low literacy, and traditional norms restricted women's and youth participation. IEC materials were not adequately localized, and announcements were rarely repeated enough to drive behavior change. Most community members were unaware of the inspection phase, and some confused it with a re-registration exercise. Lindi faced multiple structural challenges. KIOO observed that rural and coastal communities lacked access to radio signals, printed IEC materials, or active civil society presence. The low penetration of mobile networks further complicated

efforts to use SMS or mobile-based voter alerts. Additionally, due to high poverty and low literacy, many citizens were more concerned with daily survival than elections, which they viewed as elite-dominated and disconnected from local issues. In Mtwara, despite relatively high political consciousness, KIOO noted deep-rooted mistrust in the system due to past resource-related grievances. As a result, many youths and women were reluctant to engage in voter education activities unless linked with economic empowerment. There was also a gender gap: fewer women were reached by civic messages due to their domestic burdens and cultural restrictions on public gatherings.

Voters with disabilities across all regions were largely left out of voter education efforts. IEC materials were not adapted into braille, sign language interpretation was rare in public announcements, and polling procedures for PWDs were not clearly communicated. This led to uncertainty and discouragement among PWDs regarding their ability to vote independently and securely. Even in Dar es Salaam and Dodoma, digital voter education excluded rural or elderly populations without smartphones. While youth were often reached, older voters expressed confusion about new procedures such as biometric registration, voters' roll inspection timelines, and required documents for first-time registration.

## **5.2 Providers (numbers and category)**

During the voter registration and inspection observation exercise, KIOO recorded the presence of four main categories of voter education providers across seven regions. The extent, consistency, and reach of these providers varied significantly between urban and rural areas, with Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and urban Morogoro recording the highest number and visibility of voter education actors. INEC was the primary official provider of voter education during the observed period. It deployed electoral officers and regional/district electoral coordinators to supervise civic education through public announcements (mainly via local government offices and schools), posters and banners placed in ward offices and public spaces and occasional loudspeaker announcements using mobile vans. Across the seven regions, KIOO recorded INEC-led voter education activities in 32 out of 52 observed districts. However, INEC's engagement was more visible in urban centers and often limited in depth, especially in remote wards. In Lindi, Mtwara Rural, and Singida Rural, NEC's voter education was minimal or limited to placing a few posters.

CSOs and CBOs played a crucial role in complementing NEC's efforts, especially in areas where government messaging was weak or inaccessible. KIOO observed at least 65 CSOs and CBOs actively involved in voter education across the seven regions. Their efforts included door-to-door voter sensitization, public forums and debates, leaflet distribution and SMS and social media campaigns (especially in Dar and Morogoro). Dar es Salaam had the highest number of active CSOs (25+), followed by Dodoma (10+), Morogoro (9), Tanga (8), and lower presence in Lindi, Mtwara and Singida (each under 5). During the recent voter roll inspection exercise across Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) continued to play a crucial role in supplementing the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) particularly in regions where official government messaging was weak, delayed, or failed to reach grassroots communities. KIOO documented the active participation of at least 65 CSOs and CBOs across the seven regions, although the level of engagement varied significantly by location. Dar es Salaam recorded the highest concentration of voter education activity by CSOs, with over 25 organizations engaged in awareness efforts. These organizations leveraged urban infrastructure and digital connectivity to roll out campaigns that included door-to-door outreach, community dialogues, leaflet distribution, SMS blasts, and social media posts targeting youth and first-time voters.

Morogoro and Dodoma followed with 9 and 10 CSOs respectively, conducting similar interventions, mostly in urban and peri-urban settings. In Tanga, around 8 CSOs were active, using community radio and religious platforms to disseminate messages. However, in more rural and marginalized regions such as Lindi, Mtwara, and Singida, the presence of CSOs involved in voter education was significantly lower each with fewer than 5 organizations. These regions, already constrained by infrastructural and digital limitations, relied heavily on traditional communication networks, and the lack of robust CSO engagement only further widened the information gap for communities there.

While these initiatives were commendable, KIOO observed a clear difference in intensity, visibility, and coordination compared to the first phase of the voter registration exercise. Unlike the initial phase where INEC had formally engaged with civil society through planning meetings, shared timelines, and clear messaging guidelines, the voter roll inspection phase lacked official communication or coordination mechanisms from INEC to key stakeholders. As a result, many CSOs and CBOs did not receive timely information, were unsure of their role, or had no funding to roll out second-phase interventions. This lack of structured engagement from INEC may have led some organizations to adopt a wait-and-see approach, assuming that the exercise was not as critical as the initial registration. Others who did have the will to participate lacked up-to-date IEC materials, official schedules, and public endorsement, which reduced their credibility in the eyes of community members. In short, while the presence of civil society actors remained evident, their impact was fragmented and less systematic than in earlier phases of the voter registration process. This experience reveals a key lesson: for voter education to be effective across all phases of the electoral cycle, INEC must ensure early and inclusive communication with non-state actors, provide clear roles and expectations, and, where possible, facilitate access to resources or tools. Without this coordination, even the most experienced CSOs and CBOs will face operational and credibility challenges that limit their reach and effectiveness, especially in underserved regions.

In culturally conservative and rural areas such as Tanga, Singida, and Lindi, religious and traditional leaders were among the most trusted and visible sources of voter education. KIOO documented over 70 instances where imams, pastors, sheikhs, or village elders incorporated voter education messages in sermons, village meetings (barazas) and local celebrations or funerals. In Tanga and Singida, Friday prayers and Sunday services served as key channels to reach women and the elderly, who might not attend public rallies or CSO-led meetings. However, the lack of coordination with INEC or CSOs meant that these messages were often informal, unstructured, and based on general encouragement rather than procedural accuracy. Media outlets, particularly community radio stations, were instrumental in disseminating voter education, especially in areas with low literacy and limited internet access. KIOO recorded that more than 20 radio stations aired civic messages, panel discussions, and jingles across the seven regions. These included Radio Maria, Tanga FM, Sibuka FM, and Dodoma FM, National stations like TBC and Clouds FM with local branches and independent journalists and local influencers in Dar es Salaam using Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram to reach youth. Radio coverage was most effective in Morogoro, Dodoma, Tanga, and Dar, while in Lindi and Mtwara, geographic terrain and weak signal strength limited reach. In rural Singida, few residents had consistent access to radio, and there were no locally based civic talk shows during the observation period.

Community meetings and forums are traditionally seen as effective platforms for interactive voter education, especially where literacy levels are low. In Dar es Salaam, Dodoma (urban), and parts of Morogoro, these forums were more structured and moderately effective. They provided citizens with opportunities to ask questions and engage with electoral officers. KIOO noted that in



Dodoma's urban wards, these meetings were integrated into local government assemblies and attracted relatively diverse audiences. However, in Lindi, Mtwara (rural), and Singida, community forums were underutilized or poorly executed. Many sessions were hastily arranged, sparsely attended, or dominated by political figures rather than neutral facilitators. In areas like Ruangwa (Lindi) and Manyoni (Singida), KIOO found that many citizens were unaware of the forums or confused voter registration with party registration. This suggests a failure to use forums as tools for clarifying misconceptions and building trust, especially among women and the elderly. Mass media campaigns are powerful in raising awareness quickly and broadly. In Dar es Salaam and Morogoro urban, KIOO observed the most effective use of media, especially FM radio stations, community talk shows, and social media platforms. Youth-targeted messaging through influencers and WhatsApp groups helped boost awareness in urban neighborhoods like Kinondoni and Morogoro Mjini. In Tanga, regional radio stations like Tanga FM aired voter registration jingles, although frequency and depth varied. In contrast, media campaigns were weak in Lindi, Mtwara (rural), and Singida. These regions lacked access to consistent radio signals, and television ownership was low. In Nachingwea and Newala (Mtwara), for instance, voter education messages aired too late or not at all.

Printed information materials (e.g., posters, leaflets, banners) were present in all regions but not effectively utilized in several rural settings. In Dodoma, Dar es Salaam, and Morogoro, KIOO found that materials were better designed and strategically posted in busy locations such as bus stations, market centers, and local offices. However, in Lindi, Singida, and Tanga rural, printed materials were often placed in administrative offices rather than public gathering areas, limiting their visibility. Additionally, content was not always tailored to local contexts often printed in standard Swahili without visual aids, making it inaccessible for semi-literate or elderly voters. KIOO observers noted that materials failed to address key areas of confusion, such as the difference between registration and inspection, and lacked information for first-time voters. Training sessions for registration officers, ward-level facilitators, and community champions were a cornerstone of the voter education strategy, but their execution was uneven. In Dar es Salaam and urban Dodoma, training was better coordinated, and electoral officers were generally more prepared to use biometric tools and respond to citizens' questions. In Singida, Lindi, and Mtwara, KIOO observed that training was rushed (2 days or less) and did not equip officers to manage biometric registration challenges or engage in basic civic education. As a result, many officers had to rely on district-level IT support, leading to delays and discouraging turnout. Moreover, there was little or no cascading of training to local leaders, youth groups, or PWD associations, meaning the broader community lacked peer educators to support awareness efforts.

Mobile voter education units, including vans with loudspeakers and IEC materials, are essential for reaching dispersed or underserved populations. In Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, and parts of Tanga, mobile units were deployed and helped attract public attention especially in urban streets and market areas. They were effective in alerting people to registration center locations and timelines. Yet in rural Lindi, Mtwara, and Singida, KIOO noted that mobile units were either absent, under-resourced, or poorly scheduled. Some villages were missing entirely, while in others, the units arrived after key registration days had passed. In rural Mtwara, observers reported that many citizens only became aware of the exercise late in the period. Furthermore, mobile announcements were not synchronized with community event calendars (e.g., market days or religious gatherings), limiting their impact.

### 5.3 Key Comparative Observations

Best Performing Regions in Voter Education: Dar es Salaam, Morogoro (Urban), Dodoma (Urban). These urban areas demonstrated higher levels of voter education effectiveness due to a combination of strong infrastructure, high media penetration, diverse civic actors, and better access to information. In Dar es Salaam, the combination of active civil society organizations, digital literacy, and multi-party competition fueled widespread voter education. Local NGOs leveraged social media, youth forums, and community radio to reach various demographic groups, including students and working-class youth. Similarly, Morogoro (urban districts) benefitted from the presence of universities and strong CSO-government collaboration. Awareness efforts included community theatre, street campaigns, and school civic clubs. In Dodoma (urban), the proximity to national institutions and government ministries encouraged greater public interest in democratic processes. Public meetings, print materials, and mobile sensitization vehicles were visible and timely, especially in the build-up to registration deadlines.

In contrast, Lindi, Mtwara (rural districts), and Singida (rural areas) were among the lowest performers in terms of voter education reach and impact. These regions suffer from persistent infrastructural and communication challenges, including poor road networks, low access to radio or mobile networks, and limited civil society presence. In Lindi, KIOO observed widespread lack of awareness about voter registration and roll inspection deadlines. Many citizens had never heard of these processes or were unaware of their rights to participate. Similarly, rural Mtwara, despite higher political consciousness, showed civic fatigue and mistrust in government-led processes due to historical grievances. Singida's rural population, especially in districts like Manyoni and Ikungi, faced language barriers, low literacy, and a passive civic culture where electoral processes are viewed as distant and disconnected from daily survival struggles. KIOO's observation revealed that people with disabilities (PWDs) were systematically left out of voter education efforts. Most IEC materials lacked braille or simplified formats, and announcements were rarely interpreted into sign language. As a result, many PWDs felt unsure about how to participate and whether polling stations would accommodate their needs. Rural women, particularly in Lindi, Singida, and Mtwara, were excluded due to cultural norms that limit their participation in public gatherings, heavy domestic workloads, and lack of access to information platforms like radio or mobile phones.

The most impactful voter education tools were those that aligned with the local context and leveraged trusted messengers. Community radio emerged as a powerful medium in both rural and urban areas due to its wide reach and use of local languages. In regions like Tanga and Morogoro Rural, radio talk shows and voter education jingles had tangible impact. Religious gatherings, especially Friday prayers and Sunday services, were used successfully in Dodoma, Tanga, and Singida, where religious leaders integrated civic messages into their teachings. Mobile caravans equipped with loudspeakers, drama groups, and voter registration reminders were effective in catching the attention of dispersed rural populations. In urban areas like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, social media influencers, youth digital activists and WhatsApp community groups played a key role in disseminating deadlines, procedural updates, and messages about peaceful participation.

Several voter education strategies failed to create meaningful impact due to their non-contextualized design and lack of consistency. One-off sensitization meetings were observed in several districts often organized just to meet donor expectations or fulfill a checklist. These sessions had little long-term effect as they lacked reinforcement, did not involve the right local champions, and were poorly attended. Generic IEC materials, often printed in English or standard

Swahili without visual aids, failed to resonate with low-literacy or indigenous-language-speaking communities. Furthermore, formal government messaging, which relied heavily on state radio or posters in government offices, often came across as top-down, unrelatable, and bureaucratic, especially in regions where trust in authority is low or where the electorate is disengaged. These comparative observations highlight the urgent need for tailored, inclusive, and repeated voter education efforts that center on accessibility, local culture, and two-way engagement. For future elections, regions that underperform require capacity-building of local CSOs, stronger engagement with traditional and faith-based leaders and diversified communication strategies to ensure no one is left behind in the democratic process.

#### **5.4 Lessons from Observation**

Voter education must be contextualized to reflect local languages, cultural norms, and preferred communication channels especially for women, PWDs, and youth in rural areas. One of the strongest lessons from KIOO's observation across Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara is that voter education cannot be one-size-fits-all. Each region and even each community within a region has its own linguistic preferences, cultural values, and communication habits. For instance, in Lindi and Mtwara, Swahili radio programs were more effective than printed flyers, while in Dar es Salaam, social media played a key role among youth. For women and PWDs, especially in rural areas, trusted local influencers and simple oral communication were more impactful than official pamphlets. Therefore, voter education campaigns must be localized, inclusive, and culturally relevant to reach those often left behind.

Information should be repeated consistently across platforms. Single interventions are insufficient to change behavior or encourage inspection of the voters' roll. One-off messages whether on the radio, in community forums, or via social media proved insufficient to motivate consistent voter participation or inspection. KIOO observed that people are more likely to act when messages are heard repeatedly, from multiple sources, and over time. For instance, in Dodoma and Morogoro, where community announcements were repeated through religious leaders, local government, and CSOs, participation rates were higher. Behavioral change requires reinforcement; thus, NEC and partners must embrace a multi-touchpoint approach to voter education that includes repeated, timed messaging through TV, radio, mobile vans, SMS alerts, and public forums.

Religious and traditional leaders should be engaged as voter education champions, especially in regions where civic trust is low. In communities with low civic engagement or political skepticism notably in parts of Lindi, Singida, and rural Tanga, religious and traditional leaders remain the most respected and trusted sources of information. KIOO observed that when such leaders speak about electoral processes during prayers, ceremonies, or clan gatherings, communities listen and act. These leaders should not be sidelined but rather trained and included as strategic partners in national voter education campaigns. Their endorsement can lend credibility to the process and help dismantle misinformation, fear, or apathy. Materials and messages should be accessible to PWDs and include gender-sensitive and youth-relevant content. Inclusivity is not just about inviting participation it is about removing barriers. KIOO's observation revealed that materials for PWDs were limited in both format and delivery. Very few centers had braille, sign language interpreters, or visually accessible posters. Similarly, messages rarely reflected the lived realities of women or addressed the specific interests of youth. For instance, many young people said the process felt irrelevant to their daily lives. To address this, future voter education must include accessible formats (audio, visual, braille), and content that is gender-aware and age-relevant, using storytelling, relatable case studies, and direct appeals to rights, identity, and future opportunities.

Voter education should be linked with economic, social, and governance outcomes to make it more relevant to everyday life especially in marginalized regions like Lindi and Mtwara. In economically underserved regions, people often prioritize survival over civic duty. KIOO observed that many in Lindi and Mtwara questioned the relevance of voter roll inspection or elections because they did not see a connection to food, jobs, or healthcare. To overcome this, disconnect, voter education must make explicit links between voting and service delivery. When citizens understand how their vote affects access to development projects, infrastructure, or social support, they are more motivated to participate. This means that civic education should frame democracy as a development tool, not just a political obligation. The findings and lessons from KIOO's observation make it clear: effective voter education must be inclusive, locally tailored, repeated, and relevant. Building an engaged electorate especially among women, youth, and PWDs requires more than just information; it requires strategic communication, community ownership, and evidence-based adaptation. These recommendations, if adopted by INEC and its partners, will enhance both the integrity and inclusivity of Tanzania's electoral process.

### **5.5 Participants consent age and gender of respondent**

An extraordinary 99.6% of respondents agreed to participate in the survey and almost universal acceptance that reflects a strong public appetite for civic engagement. This exceptionally high response rate suggests that communities are not only open to dialogue but are willing to share their voices and opinions on electoral processes. In a context where civic space is often constrained or misunderstood, this overwhelming consent affirms the trust that people have in KIOO and its role as a neutral, community-centered organization. It also reinforces the legitimacy and credibility of the data collected, allowing for robust, community-rooted insights to inform future electoral reforms. The survey was dominated by youth and young adults, with 51.3% of respondents aged 18–35 years and 30.3% aged 36–45 years. This is highly significant, as it mirrors Tanzania's demographic reality a predominantly youthful population. The active participation of this age group in the survey highlights both their presence and potential as drivers of democratic change. However, it also implies that voter education strategies must be designed with youth in mind, utilizing platforms and messages that resonate with their values, digital behavior, and learning styles. This demographic insight should guide all future outreach youth are not only the majority but the momentum of electoral engagement.

The survey achieved near-perfect gender parity, with 51.3% female and 48.7% male respondents. This balance confirms that KIOO's data collection methods were inclusive and gender-sensitive, ensuring that both women's and men's perspectives are equally reflected in the findings. It also provides a reliable base for gender-disaggregated analysis, which is essential for understanding the unique barriers and experiences faced by women in political participation and voter access. With this foundation, targeted strategies can now be developed to address gender-specific challenges, such as those related to caregiving burdens, mobility, or social norms around leadership and decision-making. A closer look at marital status shows that 53.3% of respondents were married, while 34.3% were single. The remaining respondents included widowed, divorced, or separated individuals. This social context provides valuable layers of how people engage with civic responsibilities. For example, married respondents may be more influenced by family or household dynamics, while single individuals particularly youth may be more flexible but also more disconnected from traditional information sources. Tailoring voter education to reach across marital statuses is therefore critical; for instance, forums in marketplaces may reach married women better, while social media might be more effective for single youth.

### **5.5.1 Disability Status in Electoral Processes**

The inclusion of 11.7% of respondents identifying as people with disabilities (PWDs) is a significant achievement for this observation exercise. It not only exceeds the national target of 10% but also reflects KIOO's deliberate strategy to engage a group that is too often excluded from electoral participation and decision-making processes. However, regional analysis reveals sharp contrasts in experiences and challenges faced by PWDs, offering valuable insights for shaping more inclusive future interventions. In Singida, while PWDs were present in the observation sample, the environment remained largely unfriendly to disability inclusion. Most voter inspection centers lacked basic accessibility features such as ramps or seating arrangements that cater to physical impairments. Furthermore, there was no targeted messaging for PWDs. KIOO observed that most election officers lacked training on how to communicate with people with hearing or speech impairments. As a result, PWDs in Singida not only faced logistical exclusion but also social and attitudinal barriers rooted in long-standing stigma.

As the political capital, Dodoma has seen increased visibility of PWDs in civic spaces. A few PWDs were observed serving as volunteers or mobilizers, which is a promising step. However, structural issues remained: many registration centers were in buildings without accessibility infrastructure, and there was no system to prioritize or assist PWDs in queues. Although the region benefits from a concentration of NGOs and national institutions, KIOO found that disability inclusion is still not embedded into the electoral planning or operational protocols at the ward level. In Morogoro, there were signs of positive intent toward disability inclusion, especially in urban areas where community-based organizations advocate for disability rights. A few inspection centers had volunteers available to assist voters with special needs, and some election officials demonstrated awareness of disability-related protocols. However, in rural parts of Kilosa and Gairo, PWDs still struggled with long distances, poor communication, and lack of adapted materials such as braille or sign language support. This reflects a regional divide where urban inclusion initiatives fail to reach remote communities.

Dar es Salaam stood out as a region with relatively better practices in terms of including PWDs in the electoral process. There was higher representation of PWDs as respondents, and in some cases, they were also involved in community mobilization and civil society voter education efforts. KIOO observed that public centers in Ilala and Temeke had more disability-friendly infrastructure, and CSOs working in the region actively pushed for inclusive messaging. Still, digital-only platforms and limited outreach in informal settlements meant that many PWDs with limited mobility or technology access were left behind. In Tanga, cultural respect for elders and PWDs offers a strong community support system, but institutional inclusion was limited. Most polling or registration stations were not adapted to accommodate physical disabilities, and there was no formal mechanism to ensure assistance for the visually impaired or those with intellectual disabilities. While the community may treat PWDs with compassion, electoral authorities still lack the training and tools needed to support their active participation as voters or officials.

In Lindi, PWD inclusion was particularly low. While 11.7% were represented in the overall dataset, KIOO observed that very few of these voices came from Lindi. This reflects systemic neglect, where neither civil society nor electoral officials had plans for inclusive engagement. PWDs in Lindi often lacked basic access to voter information, faced isolation, and in many cases were unaware of their right to inspect the voter roll. The absence of outreach mechanisms specifically tailored for PWDs made this region one of the most exclusionary. In Mtwara, the challenges were not just infrastructural, but also economic and geographic. Many PWDs live in scattered fishing and farming communities, far from registration centers. One respondent noted



that traveling to a center would cost 12,000 shillings by boda-boda, a cost well beyond their means. In addition, election officers were not trained on how to accommodate or support PWDs, and there were no assistive devices or priority systems in place. While communities expressed a willingness to help PWDs informally, the formal system offered little support or dignity to their participation. The data shows that while KIOO successfully met and exceeded its target for engaging PWDs in the observation process, true electoral inclusion is about more than participation in a survey. It requires systemic planning, resource allocation, and attitudinal change. Regions like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro offer promising starting points, but regions such as Lindi, Singida, and Mtwara urgently need tailored strategies to ensure that PWDs are not only counted, but respected, assisted, and empowered as voters and as officials. The 11.7% inclusion rate proves what's possible when intentional effort is made: now, it's time to scale that intent into action across all regions.

### **5.5.2 Education and occupational of respondents**

The educational profile of respondents provides a revealing snapshot of the communities engaged in the voter registration and inspection process. A significant 49% of all respondents had attained only primary education, while 32% had completed secondary school. Worryingly, just 3% held university degrees, and an alarming 6.3% reported having never attended school at all. This reality points to the urgent need for voter education initiatives that are inclusive, visual, and simple in language. In communities where literacy is low, particularly in rural areas, messages packed with legal jargon or presented in English risk alienating large portions of the electorate. These findings underscore the importance of oral storytelling, community theatre, radio broadcasts and illustrative posters as core tools in any voter education strategy going forward. The positive side of this educational landscape lies in the presence of basic literacy among those with primary and secondary education, which enables them to grasp civic procedures if delivered appropriately. Some among the more educated even served as informal peer educators during the exercise, helping their neighbors understand timelines and procedures. However, those with no formal education often rely solely on verbal information from trusted community members, making word-of-mouth communication, faith leaders, and local leaders' essential conduits for electoral messages.

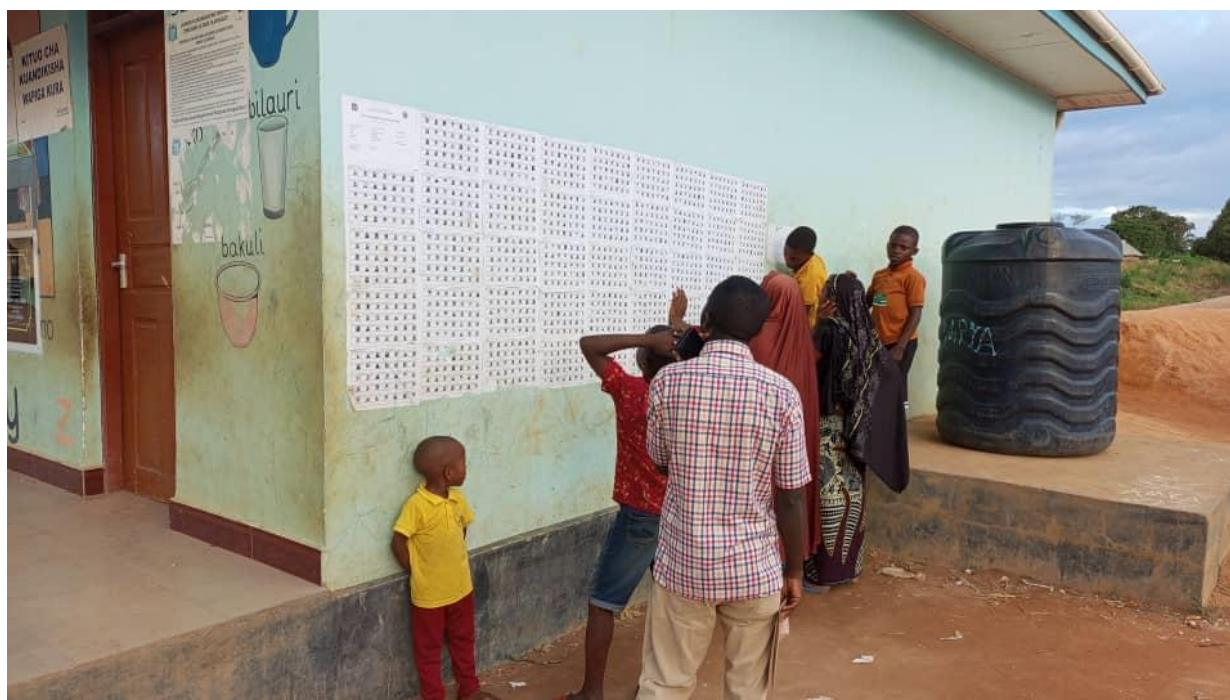
The occupational distribution of respondents paints an equally vivid picture of Tanzanian socio-economic dynamics. A majority, 51.9%, were engaged in small businesses, crafts, or service industries, while 34.2% were farmers and only 7.3% identified as professionals. This mirrors Tanzania's heavily informal economy, where self-employment and agriculture dominate daily life. For these groups, the rhythm of the day revolves around survival and economic productivity, not civic events scheduled at inconvenient times or distant locations. This dynamic imposes a practical barrier: even if a voter wants to inspect their details, they may simply not afford the time or cost of traveling to a center, especially if they perceive no immediate benefit. Yet this occupational structure also offers unique opportunities. Small business owners often operate in communal spaces like markets or transport hubs, making them accessible through mobile voter caravans and street campaigns. Farmers can be reached during cooperative meetings or agricultural training events, particularly if messaging is integrated into livelihood programming. Professionals, while fewer in number, often have better access to information and could be tapped as local voter education ambassadors.

Taken together, these educational and occupational patterns offer critical insights into the design and delivery of future electoral interventions. They tell a story of a resilient, resourceful citizenry that is willing to participate if only the system meets them where they are. For many, voter

registration and inspection are not top priorities because the processes are either misunderstood, miscommunicated, or misaligned with daily realities. Therefore, it is not enough to educate it must be done strategically, repeatedly and accessibly. Outreach must go to the village, to the market, to the street, and to the farm. Posters must speak to the eye as much as the mind. Radio must explain as much as they announce. And civic engagement must be grounded in the lives of the people not the procedures of the system. This rich and inclusive demographic breakdown shows that the survey was not only statistically robust but socially reflective of the communities it represents. By understanding the age, gender, marital status, disability, education, and occupational realities of respondents, KIOO and its partners can design future civic engagement strategies that are data-informed, inclusive, and contextual relevant. This baseline also sets the stage for targeted interventions that recognize and respond to the real lives and limitations of Tanzania's diverse electorate.

### 5.5.3 Awareness about Voter Roll Inspection

KIOO's observation across the seven regions revealed a relatively high level of awareness regarding the voter roll inspection exercise, with 86.6% of respondents confirming they were aware of the process. This demonstrates that outreach and communication efforts, whether formal or informal, were largely successful in spreading the message to the public. However, the remaining 13.4%, who were not aware, highlight a critical inclusiveness gap that needs attention. In democratic processes, a 13% awareness deficit is not insignificant, especially when it likely includes individuals from remote rural areas, marginalized populations, and low-literacy groups. Respondents reported receiving information through a mix of traditional, community-based, and digital channels. The most effective method was community announcements, which reached 32.4% of respondents. These included megaphone campaigns, word-of-mouth messaging in village meetings, and informal gatherings such as religious congregations and market days. This underscores the power of proximity-based communication, particularly in rural districts in Singida, Lindi, Mtwara, and Tanga, where access to digital or mass media remains limited.



**Photo:** Community members reading the posted voter roll during the inspection period, highlighting levels of public awareness and access to electoral information

Traditional media, including radio and television, informed 18.5% of respondents. This method proved particularly impactful in Dodoma, Morogoro, and Tanga, where regional FM stations and Swahili-language broadcasts remain trusted sources of public information. The timing and language of these broadcasts were essential messages aired during peak hours and delivered in accessible Swahili had greater reach. Social networks family and friends accounted for 18.1%, a strong indicator of the role of peer-to-peer information sharing, especially among youth and women. In several regions, this informal channel proved critical in reaching individuals who may not have direct access to radio or social media, especially in female-headed households or communities with lower schooling levels. Social media accounted for 13%, with higher influence in urban centers like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, particularly among young voters aged 18–35. Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram played a role in circulating INEC announcements and voter reminders, especially among digitally literate youth. However, this mode was less effective in rural regions like Singida and Lindi, where smartphone and internet access remain low. Political parties and local leaders each contributed modestly, informing 9.2% and 8.5% of respondents, respectively. While these actors have strategic reach within communities, their role in civic education was somewhat subdued possibly due to the lack of official directives from INEC encouraging their structured participation in the voter inspection phase. This highlights the underutilization of grassroots leadership structures, particularly in Lindi and Mtwara where local leaders could play a greater role in sensitization. Encouragingly, only 0.3% of respondents said they received no information at all a testament to the strength of multi-channel communication. However, even this small percentage represents voices at the very margins of inclusion, often people with disabilities, older citizens, or those living in geographically isolated areas.

While awareness was high, actual participation in the voter roll inspection was noticeably lower. Among those who were aware of the exercise, only 75% said they participated, 21% did not, and 4% tried but were unable to due to various challenges. This reveals a critical gap between knowledge and action, driven by structural, logistical, and motivational barriers. In Singida, Lindi, and Mtwara, many women reported being unable to leave their homes due to domestic responsibilities, while others misunderstood the purpose of inspection, assuming it was only for men or those contesting in elections. In areas like Tanga and Dodoma, however, better engagement through religious leaders and women's savings groups helped close this gap, leading to higher female participation. Youth participation was stronger in urban areas like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, where they were both informed and mobilized through social media and youth forums. However, in more rural regions like Katavi and parts of Singida, youth tended to disengage either due to skepticism about electoral processes or the misconception that only older voters should check the register. For people with disabilities (PWDs), despite reaching the 11.7% inclusion mark in the survey, participation was disproportionately lower. Many faced physical inaccessibility at registration centers, while others lacked assistive support or proper guidance on what the inspection process entailed. In Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, PWDs were slightly better served due to urban infrastructure and CSO support, but in Lindi, Mtwara, and Singida, participation was often hindered by distance, isolation, and stigma.

The high level of awareness (86.6%) is a positive indicator of the effectiveness of outreach efforts but the 13.4% who were unaware, and the 25% who did not participate or face barriers, signal that knowledge does not always translate into action. Women, youth, and PWDs continue to experience contextual limitations that require localized, inclusive, and multi-channel voter education strategies. To bridge the awareness-to-participation gap, future exercises should focus on strengthening local leader and community influencer roles, enhancing physical accessibility and

support at centers, using targeted outreach campaigns for marginalized groups and investing in repeated, simplified messaging in local dialects. When properly informed and empowered, communities are willing to engage. But for inclusive democracy to be a reality, electoral processes must be made not only visible but reachable, understandable, and actionable for all.

#### **5.5.4 Reasons for Non-Participation in Voter Registration/Inspection**

The most dominant reason cited by respondents for not participating in the voter roll inspection exercise was lack of time or busy schedules, with 25 responses falling under this category. Many individuals indicated they were occupied with work, family duties, or other responsibilities and could not find time to attend. Statements such as "I don't have much time," "I was working in the office," or "I have no time to go" suggest that although some intended to participate, the timing and scheduling of the exercise did not align well with their daily routines. This was particularly evident in agricultural regions and informal sector communities where people work long hours with minimal flexibility. Moreover, the assumption by some respondents that there was still time left before the deadline (e.g., "Still 6 days to go") indicates that while time constraints were a real barrier, they were also influenced by perceived urgency and planning behavior. Another notable group of respondents, 8 in total, expressed their intention to participate later. They had not yet acted but made it clear that they were planning to inspect before the deadline. This shows delayed participation rather than apathy and such responses highlight the need for sustained voter education and reminder systems throughout the inspection period. These participants were likely aware of the process but required further encouragement, better timing, or logistical support.

A significant number of individuals cited a lack of interest or motivation. Responses such as "There is no need," "I don't see the importance," and "Sion umuhimu wake" reflect a deeper civic disengagement and possibly political disillusionment. These views are often rooted in a lack of trust in political systems or the belief that one's vote does not make a difference. This trend was especially concerning areas where civic education is weak or where past experiences with elections have been viewed as unresponsive to public concerns. Equally concerning was the lack of accurate information or awareness, which was mentioned by 7 respondents. Statements like "I didn't get information," "I don't know that I must inspect," and "I am not understanding the process" indicate that voter education efforts failed to effectively reach some segments of the population, particularly those with low literacy, language barriers, or limited media access. This suggests a gap in communication strategies, especially in rural and hard-to-reach areas where voters may not interact regularly with formal information channels. About 6 respondents indicated they were not qualified or not registered, citing reasons such as "I did not have the qualifications" or "Not registered for the first time." This suggests that some members of the population either misunderstood eligibility criteria or were genuinely ineligible to inspect their details, possibly due to failing to register during the earlier phase. This also reflects systemic exclusion or poor awareness about the voter registration process.

Another group of 6 respondents explained that they did not live in the area or were absent during the registration period. This includes those who had relocated, were temporarily away, or had moved since their last registration. This highlights the mobility and migration dynamics that affect voter participation, particularly in urbanizing or pastoralist regions where people frequently change residences. Five respondents expressed confidence that their voter information was already accurate, stating that they "knew their name was there" or had "no doubt" in the system. While this suggests a level of trust in NEC's process, it also reflects a lack of understanding of the importance of verification, especially in ensuring that details are correct before election day. This assumption can become problematic if errors remain undetected and later disenfranchise voters.



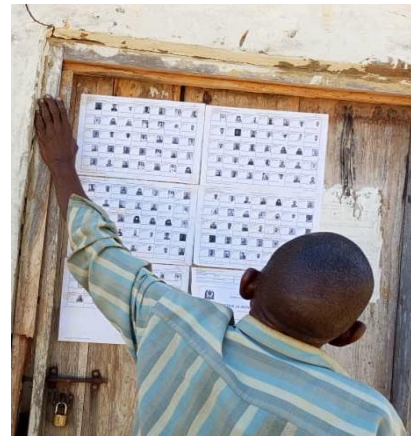
Another group of five respondents were first-time registrants who had not yet fully understood the process or were still new to it. Statements such as “This is my first time registering” show that these individuals may not have been sufficiently targeted with messages tailored to new voters. This signals a missed opportunity to incorporate onboarding or beginner-focused civic education during the registration and inspection period.

Distance and accessibility barriers were cited by 3 respondents, including people who noted that the registration centers were too far, or the transport costs were unaffordable. One respondent mentioned being disabled and unable to reach the center. These responses reinforce the need for decentralized or mobile voter services, especially in remote and underserved areas. Some individuals (2) reported literacy challenges, such as not knowing how to read or understand instructions. This is a reminder that voter education must go beyond written materials and utilize oral, visual, and inclusive communication tools, particularly in regions with high illiteracy rates or among elderly voters. Lastly, a variety of unique or unspecified reasons emerged, totaling 8 responses. These included sickness, farming activities, loss of ID, perceived unfairness of the process, and other personal or emotional decisions. While each of these is individual in nature, they collectively illustrate that personal, social, and systemic factors intersect to shape voter behavior. This analysis shows that time constraints, lack of interest, information gaps, and logistical barriers are the dominant reasons behind non-participation in voter roll inspection. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged voter education strategy that includes better timing, simplified messages, improved access, and trust-building. Tailoring outreach to first-time voters, women, rural dwellers, and persons with disabilities will be crucial to achieving equitable participation in future electoral processes.

### **5.6 Barriers to Participation Among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)**

Only 4.0% of the respondents reported facing challenges during the inspection process. The most common barriers included long distances to the center, poor communication, and physical inaccessibility, the latter particularly affecting people with disabilities. These issues highlight the need for inclusive planning in future exercises. Despite efforts to promote inclusive electoral processes, the recent observation revealed that Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) continue to face multiple and layered challenges that hinder their full participation. From the 21 recorded responses gathered by KIOO, six major themes emerged. These responses reflect both structural exclusion and communication breakdowns that must be addressed to ensure meaningful participation. 38% cited the barrier as the long distance to voter registration or inspection centers, making up 38% of the responses. PWDs, especially those with mobility impairments, reported that reaching the centers was physically and financially burdensome. One participant noted that the nearest center was 15 kilometers away, with boda-boda transport costing 12,000 Tanzanian Shillings an amount unaffordable to many. This underscores a critical need for mobile registration units, home-based services, or center decentralization to serve hard-to-reach or immobile voters. Another 24% of PWD respondents said they were unaware of the inspection exercise due to poor communication. This included a lack of targeted information in accessible formats such as braille, sign language, or easy-to-read flyers. Many relied on word of mouth or local leaders who themselves were not well-informed. This reflects a systemic gap in outreach and highlights the importance of inclusive voter education campaigns that are tailored specifically for PWD communities, using trusted disability networks and accessible media.





**Photo:** “A person with a disability encountering accessibility challenges at a voter registration center, highlighting the physical and systemic barriers that hinder inclusive electoral participation.”

About 14% of the responses fell under miscellaneous “other reasons.” These included personal health issues, caregiving responsibilities, or general disinterest. While not all of these are systemic in nature, they still point to vulnerability-specific needs that require more empathetic support, such as flexible registration schedules and personalized assistance. A significant 10% of respondents cited physical barriers at the registration centers themselves. These included lack of ramps, overcrowded spaces, or inaccessible furniture, which made it difficult for wheelchair users or visually impaired individuals to participate. This issue speaks directly to the need for the National Electoral Commission and local authorities to enforce universal design standards and disability-sensitive training for electoral officials. Another 10% of PWDs reported facing discrimination or unwelcoming environments at the centers. These cases ranged from being ignored by staff to being told to “come another day.” Such treatment discourages civic participation and erodes trust in electoral institutions. It also reflects broader societal stigma and underscores the urgency of training polling staff in disability and respectful engagement.

Finally, 5% of the respondents noted that they lacked a national ID or required documentation to register or inspect. This seemingly simple issue can become a major roadblock for PWDs, especially those living in rural areas or lacking birth certificates. Solutions may include mobile NIDA services, simplified ID recovery processes, or temporary documentation provisions during voter exercises. This analysis shows that for PWDs, participation in electoral processes is not merely about awareness, it is about access, dignity, and support. With 38% citing distance and 24% citing poor communication, the evidence is clear: voter registration systems are still not designed with the most vulnerable in mind. Addressing these barriers requires policy changes, logistical innovations, and attitude shifts at every level of the electoral framework. KIOO recommends stronger coordination between INEC, CSOs and disability organizations to co-design solutions that leave no one behind.

### **5.7 Accuracy and accessibility of the Voter Roll**

KIOO’s observation found that 76.3% of respondents confirmed their personal information was correctly recorded in the voter roll during the inspection exercise. This is a relatively high level of accuracy, suggesting that the data integrity of the voter register is generally reliable for most citizens. It also reflects well on NEC’s efforts in maintaining a consistent and updated database for eligible voters. However, 17.5% of respondents did not inspect the roll, often due to reasons ranging from time constraints to lack of awareness or mobility issues. In addition, 6.2% reported

finding errors in their information errors which, if uncorrected, could lead to disenfranchisement on election day. These findings highlight that even when a voter registry is broadly functional, its credibility hinges on consistent public verification, robust complaint mechanisms, and accessible correction channels. If citizens do not inspect, errors persist unnoticed. In areas like Lindi and Mtwara, logistical difficulties such as long distances and inaccessible roads made it difficult for people to verify their details. In Dar es Salaam, where digital access is higher, some citizens suggested the use of online verification portals an idea worth exploring to supplement physical inspection and promote proactive participation.

When respondents were asked about the accessibility of voter roll inspection centers for women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), the results revealed significant challenges only 46.2% said the centers were very accessible, 34.5% said centers were somehow accessible, 5.8% believed centers were not accessible at all. This data signals that nearly half the population experienced some degree of difficulty accessing inspection points, which raises concerns about equality in democratic participation. Accessibility is not just about the physical location but also about environmental design, communication tools, transport availability, and support services for PWDs, elderly people, and pregnant women. In Singida and Tanga, some centers were in buildings with stairs and lacked ramps or guiding lines for the visually impaired. In Dodoma, a few venues had slightly improved accessibility, such as ramps, but still required assistance for PWDs to enter or view posted names especially those who are blind or with low vision.

### **5.7.1 Feedback From Respondents**

During the voter roll inspection exercise, various respondents across the seven regions (Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara) shared their real-life experiences regarding accessibility challenges. Their feedback, once translated from Kiswahili to English, paints a vivid picture of the persistent structural and environmental barriers that limit inclusive participation. One respondent explained, *“Very far. There is only one center,”* emphasizing that the voter inspection venue was located at a considerable distance from their residence. This statement reflects the geographic exclusion experienced especially in rural areas like Lindi and Mtwara, where communities often had to walk or travel long distances to reach the only available center. Another elderly respondent noted, *“Too much mud and slippery roads due to rains, rough road and swamps. I’m old and my back is weak. I can’t go without a car.”* This response underlines the intersection of age, poor infrastructure, and seasonal weather conditions, which render inspection centers physically unreachable during the rainy season, especially for senior citizens and those with mobility impairments. A simple yet powerful comment, *“Stair,”* highlights a fundamental design flaw some inspection centers were in buildings that had stairs but no ramps, making them inaccessible to wheelchair users and persons with physical disabilities. Similarly, another respondent mentioned, *“Water damps and bad road,”* reiterating that natural terrain and poorly maintained roads were substantial barriers, particularly in remote or semi-rural areas of Tanga and Mtwara.

One participant offered a more nuanced observation *“The environment was relatively accessible as the building had a slight ramp; however, it was not fully disability friendly. It required assistance to access the venue.”* This reflects that even where some accessibility features were present, they were not sufficient to allow independent participation, revealing a lack of adherence to universal design standards. Another shared, *“Stations were not open to be seen by all people,”* pointing to issues of poor visibility and signage. If the venue is not clearly marked or easy to locate, even physically accessible spaces can become practically inaccessible due to confusion or lack of direction, especially for first-time voters or people with visual impairments.

One respondent added a unique dimension: *“Distance from people's settlement, as many people here were shifted to other areas to leave the places for investors.”* This reflects a socio-economic displacement issue, where development or investment projects have relocated communities, leaving them without direct access to voter inspection centers, and effectively cutting them off from electoral participation. These lived experiences, drawn directly from respondents, highlight that accessibility is a multidimensional challenge affected not only by physical infrastructure but also by location planning, weather, signage, and social displacement. To truly ensure inclusive electoral processes, voter inspection centers must be universally designed, locally placed, well-communicated, and equitably distributed with particular attention to the needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, and those living in geographically marginalized areas.

### **5.7.2 Key Takeaways and Implications**

1. In rural regions like Lindi, Singida, and Mtwara, long distances and poor infrastructure are major deterrents. Increasing the number of centers and placing them closer to community hubs is crucial.
2. Many centers, particularly in older buildings or school compounds, were not equipped with ramps, signage, or assistive technologies. This poses a significant challenge for PWDs and the elderly.
3. Even in relatively accessible venues, the absence of clear instructions, inclusive signage, or support staff limits participation.
4. While online solutions may help urban youth in Dar es Salaam or Morogoro, they are not yet a viable substitute in rural communities with limited internet access.
5. Accessibility must be treated as a core design feature, not a postscript. Planning must involve PWDs and community representatives to ensure facilities meet real-world needs.

While most respondents were able to confirm the accuracy of their voter information, the integrity of the process cannot be separated from its accessibility. A credible voter roll inspection must not only be accurate but must also be verifiable by all citizens regardless of gender, age, ability, or location. The current accessibility gap threatens the inclusiveness and fairness of electoral processes and must be urgently addressed through policy, infrastructure, and intentional planning.

### **5.8 Accuracy Concerns in the Voter Roll: Insights from the Field**

While overall trust in the voter roll appeared strong, a closer look reveals important lessons on awareness, accuracy, and citizen reporting. Only 7.9% of respondents reported witnessing or hearing about ineligible individuals being listed on the voter roll pointing either to a high level of roll integrity or, more likely, a widespread lack of public awareness about who qualifies as a voter. A striking 91.8% said they either hadn't heard of any issues or didn't know, indicating the need for clearer civic education on what constitutes voter ineligibility. Among the 41 respondents who did report concerns, the most frequently cited issue was the continued listing of deceased persons 56%, followed by reports of underage individuals 17.1%, outsiders from other constituencies 14.6% and those lacking valid identification 4.9%. A small number 2.4% even reported seeing non-citizens or foreigners on the roll, although such cases were rare.

However, the most revealing challenge was not just the inclusion of ineligible names but the lack of reporting mechanisms and accountability. Only 6.3% of those who noticed issues reported them to the electoral authorities, while a staggering 82.7% were unaware if any action had been taken, underscoring a serious gap in electoral feedback loops. Without effective channels for citizens to flag irregularities and without responses from the institutions involved, community vigilance is muted. Even more telling, of the few who reported concerns, 60.6% said action was taken, such as removing names or verifying details. Yet a combined 36.3% either received no response or didn't

know what followed, exposing a breakdown in communication that could erode public confidence. These findings point to an urgent need to educate the public on how to identify and report ineligible entries, and to strengthen verification processes through regular updates, especially in areas with weak civil registration systems. The presence of deceased individuals and underage voters is not only a technical flaw that reflects deeper systemic gaps in how population data is shared and acted upon. Moreover, voter trust is not built on silence, it is built on responsive, transparent action. For Tanzania to uphold an inclusive and credible democratic process, it must ensure that communities are not only aware but also empowered to act and heard when they do.

### **5.9 Suggested Improvements for Future Voters' Roll Inspection Exercises**

A significant portion of respondents, over half of all participants 52%, did not suggest any improvements. Specifically, 41 individuals responded with "Nothing," and an additional 55 respondents gave related answers such as "I don't know," "None," "No comment," "No," or other non-committal replies. This large number reflects either a lack of engagement or satisfaction with the current process, but it may also signal low civic literacy or limited understanding of what improvements could be made, especially in rural or underserved areas. It underscores the importance of strengthening public education not just about the registration itself, but about civic engagement and rights-based participation. The second most frequent category of suggestions related to the need for stronger voter education, timely information, and public awareness campaigns. This category made up 21% of total responses and reflects a widespread belief that many community members are not sufficiently informed about the purpose, timing, and benefits of voter registration and inspection. Respondents emphasized the importance of using diverse platforms including religious institutions (churches/mosques), local leaders, and digital tools to reach different audiences. Suggestions also called for early mobilization and repeated announcements using local languages and accessible formats. This clearly shows that information gaps are a major barrier, especially for youth and marginalized groups.

About 9% of respondents suggested improvements specifically targeting inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). These recommendations included making inspection centers physically accessible, providing assistive technologies, and involving PWDs early in the planning process. There were also calls for priority services at registration centers and training of officers to offer disability-friendly support. This reflects growing awareness that PWDs are still excluded or marginalized in electoral processes, and that inclusive planning is not just a benefit but a necessity for equity. Approximately 3% of respondents felt that the inspection period was too short and called for an extension. Specific suggestions included running the process for at least 14 days or increasing the number of days to allow greater flexibility, especially for those with busy schedules or rural commitments. In regions where information arrives late, such extensions can make the difference between participation and exclusion. About 5% of respondents recommended that inspection centers be increased or placed in more accessible and open locations. Respondents in remote areas said they had to travel long distances or "search" for hidden centers located inside schools or government buildings. Suggestions include ensuring each street or village has its own center and using open, visible spaces to avoid confusion. This issue reflects geographic inequality in access and improving it would directly enhance participation in rural areas. This group of suggestions focused on how information is delivered, not just that it is delivered. Respondents highlighted the need for clearer, more consistent communication, better use of local leaders, and the need to repeat announcements often, so they are not missed. One respondent noted, "Most young people aren't informed," pointing to a lack of targeted youth messaging.



Around 3% of responses suggested leveraging technology and digital platforms to improve inspection and information dissemination. These suggestions included the creation of online voter inspection platforms, social media mobilization, and mobile phone-based alerts which are especially relevant to youth and urban populations. If implemented, these ideas could modernize voter management and reach an underserved tech-savvy audience. A small but vocal group raised concerns around election integrity and fairness. Suggestions included the need for a more independent electoral commission, addressing vote-buying, and controlling political party interference. While limited in number, these views reflect distrust in the process, which if unaddressed, can lead to voter apathy. Most respondents either had no suggestions or lacked awareness to propose improvements, which signal an urgent need for enhanced civic education. However, among those who did provide ideas, there was a strong call to improve voter awareness, inclusivity for people with disabilities, accessibility to centers, and the use of technology. These insights should guide NEC, CSOs, and development partners in designing future voter registration and inspection processes that are more inclusive, well-communicated, and community driven.

### **5.10 Inclusiveness, Support Structures, and Public Confidence in the Voter Inspection**

While most citizens perceived the voter inspection process as open and welcoming, a deeper analysis reveals layers of exclusion and inconsistency. An encouraging 76.7% of respondents believed the exercise was inclusive, which speaks to growing public engagement and confidence in the democratic process. However, the remaining 23.3%, nearly one in every four citizens, felt excluded. This is a significant portion of the electorate whose voices signal a need for improved outreach, inclusive messaging, and accessible environments. If left unaddressed, this perception of exclusion could undermine future participation, particularly among marginalized populations. This concern is substantiated by the fact that 30.4% of respondents directly acknowledged that women, youth, or persons with disabilities (PWDs) faced challenges accessing voter services. These challenges ranged from inaccessible infrastructure and poor communication to stigma and a lack of assistive tools. Such feedback aligns with KIOO's earlier observations and reinforces the call for deliberate, equity-focused interventions including the provision of mobile support services, universal design in registration centers, and awareness campaigns tailored to vulnerable groups. Inclusiveness should not be assumed to be intentionally built.

Support systems for citizens during the inspection period were present but inconsistent. Just over half 55.4% of respondents reported receiving help from local leaders, civil society organizations (CSOs), or political agents. The remaining 44.6% said they received no such support, pointing to an uneven distribution of civic assistance and coordination. This gap suggests a missed opportunity to harness the influence of community gatekeepers and grassroots actors who could have enhanced reach, trust, and effectiveness particularly in rural or underserved regions like Lindi, Mtwara, and parts of Singida. On the critical question of trust in the process, respondents rated the fairness and transparency of the voter inspection at an average of 3.33 out of 5, with both the media and mode at 3.0. A standard deviation of 1.18 indicates notable variations in individual experiences. This moderate rating signals cautious optimism, but it also highlights pockets of doubt or dissatisfaction. In a healthy democracy, trust is not static; it is earned and sustained through consistency, communication, and accountability. Electoral bodies and stakeholders must take these nuanced perceptions seriously and invest in strengthening both integrity and the perception of fairness in every stage of the electoral cycle.



#### **5.10.1 Implications to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)**

The findings from KIOO's observation highlight serious implications for inclusive democratic engagement. While it is encouraging that 76.7% of respondents considered the voter inspection process inclusive, the remaining 23.3% who disagreed represent a substantial segment of the population who perceive exclusion. This is particularly critical for marginalized groups like rural women, out-of-school youth, and persons with disabilities, whose historical disenfranchisement continues to manifest through lack of representation and participation. For example, in rural parts of Lindi and Singida, women reported having to walk long distances to the only registration center, while elderly PWDs cited impassable roads and unfriendly infrastructure as key deterrents. Additionally, 30.4% of respondents acknowledged that women, youth, and PWDs faced challenges in accessing voter services confirming that systemic and structural barriers remain entrenched. This aligns with field observations in Mtwara and Tanga, where individuals with visual impairments found it nearly impossible to inspect posted voter names due to the absence of braille or audio options. Youth participants in Dodoma's peri-urban wards expressed confusion over registration timelines due to conflicting information on social media and lack of school-based civic sensitization.

Moreover, while 55.4% of respondents received support from local leaders, CSOs, or political agents, the remaining 44.6% received no such support, raising concerns over coordination and coverage. In urban centers like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, youth-led organizations and community radio stations played a visible role in mobilizing voters. However, in remote areas of Singida and Mtwara, residents said they had no knowledge of any sensitization efforts suggesting that support structures are unevenly distributed, especially in hard-to-reach communities. Without consistent and localized mobilization, many eligible voters risk remaining uninformed or excluded from the process. Public confidence in the process also showed only moderate trust, with an average fairness rating of 3.33 out of 5. While this reflects cautious optimism, the significant standard deviation in responses indicates that experiences varied widely across regions and communities. A young woman in Morogoro Urban shared that while her process was smooth and staff were helpful, her cousin in a rural Tanga village found the center closed and inaccessible due to muddy conditions. Such disparity in service delivery weakens trust and underscores the need for standardization and accountability.

#### **5.11 Recommendations for Future Improvement**

To bridge the observed gaps, voter education and inspection processes must be intentionally inclusive and context sensitive. First, electoral education should be developed in local languages and dialects, avoiding technical jargon, and utilizing culturally relevant formats. In areas like Kigamboni and Lushoto, KIOO found that storytelling and community theatre were more effective in conveying messages than printed leaflets. For youth, digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp should be harnessed, particularly in urban areas like Dar es Salaam and Morogoro, where smartphone penetration is higher. Secondly, support systems at the grassroots level must be reinforced. NEC should formally invite and train CSOs, faith-based groups, and traditional leaders to act as voter education champions in both rural and urban areas. For example, in Dodoma's urban wards, churches and mosques that made announcements about voter roll inspection saw increased turnout, proving the power of trusted voices. However, in regions like Lindi Rural, the absence of coordinated local support meant many citizens were unaware or skeptical of the process.

Physical accessibility remains a major barrier. All voter inspection and registration centers should comply with universal design standards, ensuring ramps, signage, shaded waiting areas, and trained personnel for people with disabilities. In Tanga, an elderly man with limited mobility explained how he was forced to wait in the rain due to the lack of shelter at his inspection point. Investing in mobile units and outreach caravans, especially for remote or flood-prone areas like Mtwara during the rainy season, is essential for equitable access. Equally important is the need for transparent feedback mechanisms. Citizens should have clear avenues such as toll-free numbers, SMS platforms, or local complaints desks to report issues like the inclusion of ineligible names or inaccessible centers. Feedback loops must be closed: those who report must receive confirmation and updates on actions taken, as this builds trust and reinforces civic responsibility.

Finally, NEC should incorporate inclusive benchmarks into its monitoring frameworks, disaggregating data by gender, age, and disability. This will enable evidence-based adjustments to the design and implementation of future voter exercises. Inclusion should not be a one-off achievement; it must be monitored, evaluated, and refined continuously. The inclusiveness of a democratic process is not measured solely by turnout numbers but by how meaningfully all groups, especially the historically excluded, are reached, supported, and respected. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities must not be afterthoughts in electoral processes they must be central actors. The evidence from KIOO's observation presents a powerful call for responsive, community-driven, and equity-focused reforms that will ensure Tanzania's democratic future is truly inclusive.

## **6. Voter Registration and Updating of Voter Information**

KIOO's observation across seven regions Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara yielded critical insights into the logistical, administrative, and inclusive dimensions of the voter registration and roll inspection process. The presence of observers was strongest in Tanga 20.37%, with coverage spanning Tanga Urban, Korogwe, and Muheza districts, where high community responsiveness and effective coordination with local leaders were evident. This was followed by Dar es Salaam 18.52%, where KIOO observers were deployed in Temeke, Ilala, and Kinondoni, benefiting from urban infrastructure and a dense civic network that enabled access to multiple inspection centers. Dodoma 15.87% and Singida 15.61% also demonstrated robust engagement. In Dodoma, coverage includes Dodoma Urban, Bahi, and Chamwino districts, areas with a mix of urban and peri-urban populations. In Singida, observers reached Ikungi, Singida Urban, and Manyoni, offering insights into accessibility issues in rural and semi-arid zones. Morogoro and Mtwara, each contributing 12.43%, ensured strong representation from both the eastern and southern corridors. In Morogoro, districts such as Morogoro Urban, Kilosa, and Mvomero were covered, where the diversity of population dynamics provided a varied snapshot of civic participation. In Mtwara, observers reached Mtwara Urban, Masasi, and Newala, which revealed important lessons around rural outreach, especially in coastal and border communities.

However, Lindi was notably underrepresented, contributing only 4.76% of the total observer data. The few observers deployed operated in Lindi Urban and Ruangwa, facing evident challenges such as poor road conditions, dispersed populations, and limited digital infrastructure. These factors likely contributed to the limited data from the region and underlined the broader logistical barriers that hinder voter roll inspection activities in hard-to-reach areas. This low turnout of observers from Lindi highlights a critical lesson: achieving equitable national coverage in civic processes demands early planning, improved infrastructure access, and tailored mobilization strategies, especially in regions with historical underrepresentation. The district-level approach used by KIOO in this observation not only ensured a wider reach but also enabled disaggregated data

collection that is instrumental in informing targeted voter education campaigns and structural reforms. The variation in performance and accessibility across districts serves as a call to action for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and stakeholders to invest in region-specific strategies that address local barriers while scaling up best practices observed in well-performing districts such as Temeke, Kinondoni, and Tanga Urban.

One of the most encouraging observations made by KIOO during the voter registration and roll inspection exercise was the welcoming and cooperative spirit demonstrated by Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) officials at the district level. In almost all the districts visited across the seven regions Tanga, Dodoma, Singida, Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Lindi, and Mtwara KIOO observers were warmly received upon introducing themselves and explaining the purpose of their mission. District INEC officers showed professionalism and a genuine interest in collaborative engagement. They provided observers with access to registration and inspection centers, willingly answered procedural questions, and in some cases, facilitated introductions to ward and center-level officials. This openness not only reflects a growing institutional maturity within INEC's decentralized operations but also demonstrates an understanding of the important role civil society organizations play in strengthening transparency and public trust. In Tanga and Morogoro, for example, INEC officers even requested post-observation feedback to understand how their teams could improve future exercises. In contrast, a few isolated incidents in rural Lindi and Singida revealed limited awareness among local officials about civil society observer protocols, but once clarification was provided, cooperation followed smoothly. Overall, the hospitality shown by INEC officials significantly enhanced KIOO's ability to collect comprehensive and credible data. It also reinforced the principle of civic partnership in electoral processes, an essential ingredient for inclusive democracy. Going forward, this positive experience underscores the importance of formalizing CSO observer recognition at all levels through pre-inspection orientation and joint coordination mechanisms between INEC and civil society groups.

### 6.1 Timeliness of Center Opening

KIOO's voter registration and roll inspection observation across districts in Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara revealed strong operational discipline in the opening of voter registration centers. An impressive 96.5% of all observed centers opened on time, showcasing INEC's solid logistical coordination and readiness at the local level. This punctuality reflects well on the planning and oversight capacities of district electoral officials and underpins public confidence in the integrity of the process particularly important in regions with historically low trust in electoral institutions. However, 3.5% of centers experienced delays, with specific instances of late opening times recorded at 9:36 AM, 10:00 AM, and 8:45 AM. While these delays were relatively minimal, their impact is magnified in remote or rural districts, where citizens often travel long distances under difficult terrain to access services. For example, observers in Ruangwa (Lindi) and **Newala (Mtwara)** reported that some centers were either non-operational or temporarily closed due to being scheduled over the weekend. Comments such as *"This is just a display center"* and *"Office always closes on Sunday"* illustrate how a lack of consistent communication and scheduling clarity can frustrate and deter citizens, particularly those who can only make a single trip.

Such administrative inconsistencies, though limited in number, risk eroding citizen trust in the process especially among marginalized groups like rural women, youth, and persons with disabilities who already face mobility and information barriers. This finding signals an opportunity for INEC to issue clear, standardized operational schedules for all centers and ensure that communities are informed well in advance of the distinction between inspection centers and

display-only sites, while the high percentage of timely openings is commendable and reflects institutional growth, attention to isolated failures is essential. Small oversights can have a disproportionately large impact on participation, especially in underserved regions. Moving forward, INEC and its district officials should institutionalize real-time operational monitoring tools and maintain clear communication channels with both observers and the public to reinforce confidence and enhance participation across all demographics.

## 6.2 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Despite Tanzania's strong legal and policy commitments to inclusive democratic participation, accessibility remains a critical shortcoming in the voter registration and inspection process. According to KIOO's observation across all seven regions Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara only 41.6% of centers were reported to be fully accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). A further 49.3% were only partially accessible, and 9.1% were not accessible at all. This means that over 58% of the inspected centers failed to meet full accessibility standards, thereby undermining the constitutional rights of PWDs and contravening Tanzania's commitment under both national laws and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The implications of this finding are profound. Physical access to voter services is a prerequisite for political inclusion. Observers across multiple rural districts in Lindi, Mtwara, and parts of Singida noted barriers such as steep stairs with no ramps, uneven or muddy pathways, and the lack of disability-friendly signage or assistance. In one case in Newala (Mtwara), a visually impaired participant could not inspect the roll independently due to the absence of large-print or audio guidance tools. In Chamwino (Dodoma) and Kilosa (Morogoro), observers reported that the only accessible centers were those located in government buildings, while temporary outdoor setups in villages offered no accessibility features. These barriers create multiple layers of exclusion. For PWDs, physical inaccessibility is not just a mobility issue, it is a denial of agency and civic identity. It limits their ability to verify their voter details, challenge inaccuracies, or even feel part of the electoral conversation.



**Photo:** shows some centers accessibility during the voter roll inspection and registration

Moreover, in rural communities where stigma against disability persists, the lack of infrastructural accommodation sends a message that PWDs are not expected or encouraged to participate. This exclusion extends beyond PWDs. Elderly voters, pregnant women, and persons with temporary



mobility issues also suffer when inspection centers are inaccessible. In Muheza (Tanga) and Ikungi (Singida), for example, elderly participants had to rely on family members to climb stairs or navigate slippery paths, often abandoning the attempt altogether. The implication is clear: accessibility is not optional it is foundational to credible and inclusive elections. Without universal design and targeted infrastructure upgrades, voter registration exercises will continue to marginalize key segments of the population. The upcoming electoral cycles present a vital opportunity for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to lead on this issue by standardizing accessibility checklists for all centers; incorporating ramps, tactile signage, and mobile support teams for hard-to-reach areas and training registration staff to assist voters with different types of disabilities as by making accessibility a core requirement rather than an afterthought, INEC can help ensure that no voter is left behind not in policy, and certainly not in practice.

### **6.3 Availability of Registration Materials**

KIOO's observation across registration and inspection centers in Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara revealed a generally positive performance regarding the availability and quality of materials used during the voter registration and roll updating process. A strong 87.1% of observers confirmed that all required materials were available and in good condition, suggesting a high level of logistical preparedness on the part of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). This readiness is a vital pillar of any successful registration exercise, as it ensures efficiency, reduces waiting times, and fosters public trust in the process. However, 8.3% of observers reported missing materials, while 4.6% experienced partial shortages, painting a more complex picture. While these figures may seem small, the consequences of even minor logistical failures are magnified in the electoral context especially in rural or underserved districts. For example, in Kilwa (Lindi) and Masasi (Mtwara), observers reported delays resulting from missing ID card laminates and intermittent printer failures. One observer remarked, *"Registration machine and printer are in order,"* while another reported a troubling technical glitch: *"Machines sometimes print ID with different pictures of a targeted person."* This kind of error could undermine individual trust in the process and trigger allegations of manipulation or data mismatch.

In urban centers like Ilala (Dar es Salaam) and Morogoro Urban, the material supply was more consistent, thanks to proximity to INEC offices and stronger infrastructure. However, in remote wards like Manyoni (Singida) and Handeni (Tanga), transportation delays and communication gaps contributed to incomplete setup, frustrating both registration staff and citizens. The implications for inclusive participation are significant. Delays due to material shortages tend to disproportionately affect persons with disabilities, elderly voters, women with caregiving responsibilities, and economically active youth, all of whom may not have the flexibility to wait in long queues or return another day. When registration centers are slow or dysfunctional, these groups are often the first to give up and walk away unregistered, unrepresented, and unheard. To prevent recurrence, INEC must ensure contingency planning at all levels, including backup equipment deployment, especially in remote districts, and real-time reporting systems for center staff to flag shortages early. Technical support teams stationed at the district level to address issues like ID mismatches immediately.





**Photo:** *"BVR expert captures voter details and ensures accuracy through instant photo preview building trust in every step of the registration process."*

Ensuring consistent quality and availability of registration materials is more than an operational concern. It is a prerequisite for trust, efficiency, and full citizen inclusion in the democratic process.

KIOO's observers, deployed across all seven regions Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara reported an overwhelmingly positive assessment of the professionalism and presence of registration officers. A remarkable 94.9% of centers had officers who were not only present but actively and professionally conducting their duties, signaling that the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had largely succeeded in staff recruitment, deployment, and preliminary training. This level of consistency in human resource performance is crucial for maintaining public trust and facilitating smooth voter registration and roll inspection exercises. However, as with any large-scale operation, isolated yet significant challenges emerged, revealing areas for urgent improvement. In several locations, particularly rural Dodoma and Tanga observers, reported instances of machine malfunctions and inadequate staffing levels. One alarming case described a situation where a single officer was performing all duties, including biometric data handling and form verification. This not only creates bottlenecks but raises concerns over service quality and stress-induced errors. In Singida, an observer noted that the officer lacked sufficient knowledge about the role of political party agents and oversight that could undermine electoral transparency.

Perhaps most concerning were instances where primary school children were observed assisting their parents in navigating registration information. While this may have been driven by good intentions, it reflects deeper systemic gaps, either signage was unclear, or registration officials failed to guide citizens adequately. Such occurrences suggest lapses in center readiness and public information strategies. "The center had no banner with directions." This omission, while seemingly minor, can significantly frustrate first-time registrants or individuals with low literacy, and even discourage participation altogether. The implication for inclusive democratic engagement is significant. While the high level of professionalism reported is commendable, these isolated yet telling incidents reveal cracks in the system that if left unaddressed could alienate vulnerable groups such as the elderly, PWDs, and women with limited access to information. Furthermore, the lack of clarity on political party representation may affect perceptions of fairness and compromise transparency.

To strengthen future exercises, KIOO recommends enhanced refresher training for officers, especially on inclusive service delivery and electoral stakeholder roles, deployment of support staff or volunteers, particularly in high-turnout or hard-to-reach areas and clear signage and banners at every center, in local languages and accessible formats. Professionalism is the face of the electoral process, and every voter deserves to encounter a well-informed, respectful, and supportive officer.

#### **6.4 Presence of Political Party Agents**

One of the most telling observations from KIOO's observing voter registration was the uneven and often inadequate presence of political party agents at registration and inspection centers, a situation that directly undermines transparency and trust in the electoral process. Only 7.2% of the centers observed had representation from all major political parties, signifying a critically low level of comprehensive political oversight. The majority, 63.7%, had only some party representations, and a significant 29.1% of centers had no political party agents present at all. These figures expose a troubling deficit in the implementation of multi-party engagement, especially in processes as sensitive as voter registration and roll verification. This situation was particularly evident in Singida and Mtwara, where several centers reportedly had no political monitors present whatsoever. In one center, observers described the environment as completely devoid of partisan scrutiny, effectively turning the registration process into a state-managed affair without the checks and balances that multiparty agents are meant to provide. This vacuum of political accountability can inadvertently create space for misconduct—whether administrative or partisan and foster community suspicion, particularly in politically competitive constituencies or where voter confidence is already fragile. The absence of agents could be attributed to several factors lacking resources within political parties to deploy observers across all centers, insufficient communication from INEC regarding center schedules, or a lack of formal invitations or accreditation mechanisms for agents to participate. Regardless of the cause, the effect is clear: citizens may perceive the process as less credible when neutral or opposition-party agents are visibly absent.

Transparency suffers when political pluralism is not visible at the grassroots level. In communities where trust in institutions is already low, the presence of diverse party agents helps legitimize the process. The visibility of political party agents at registration and inspection centers is a cornerstone of transparency in any democratic process. When grassroots communities do not see diverse party representations, especially from both ruling and opposition parties, it creates a vacuum of oversight. In areas where institutional trust is already low due to historical grievances, poor service delivery, or political marginalization, this absence can intensify public skepticism. Citizens may begin to perceive the voter registration process as one-sided or manipulated, even if it is technically well-administered. The presence of multiple party agents acts as a confidence-building mechanism, signaling that the process is being observed and scrutinized fairly. Without it, the legitimacy of the exercise may be questioned, and voter turnout in future phases could decline as a result.

Security, political pressure, or logistical costs may limit participation of smaller or opposition parties calling for support mechanisms, such as transportation facilitation or token allowances. While larger or ruling parties often have the resources to deploy agents widely, smaller or opposition parties frequently face practical barriers that hinder their participation in election-related activities. These challenges include high transport costs, lack of funds for per diems, and in some cases, threats or intimidation that discourage open monitoring. In rural areas especially, the cost of reaching remote centers can be prohibitive, and without institutional support or external

funding, parties may fail to send agents altogether. This imbalance undermines the principle of a level playing field. To address this, there is a need for support mechanisms such as facilitation from INEC, modest travel allowances, or coordination through civil society to ensure that every party, regardless of size, has a fair chance to contribute to electoral integrity at the local level.

Low party agent participation may disproportionately impact marginalized regions, like Lindi and Mtwara, where oversight is already minimal and civic literacy lower. In regions such as Lindi and Mtwara, where civic literacy levels are relatively low and civil society's presence is thinner, the absence of political party agents further deepens vulnerability to exclusion or manipulation. These areas are already under-observed and under-served in terms of voter education, media reach, and infrastructure. When party agents are not deployed here, it means that local communities lose an essential layer of checks and balances. Furthermore, without political observers, issues such as ghost voters, underage registration, or the exclusion of certain groups may go undetected and unchallenged. This contributes to a vicious cycle: limited oversight leads to flawed processes, which in turn alienate citizens and reduce their willingness to participate. It is critical that INEC, development partners, and political actors prioritize targeted investment and logistical planning in these regions to close the participation and oversight gap. These lessons show that inclusive political monitoring is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Political pluralism at the registration level gives voters a sense of choice, fairness, and accountability. Addressing the barriers that prevent equal party representation, especially in remote or politically tense regions, must be part of any serious electoral reform agenda and it is recommended that:

INEC should proactively coordinate with political parties in advance, issuing official invitations and clear deployment guidelines for agent participation.

- ❖ Support should be provided for political parties to mobilize agents, especially in rural or hard-to-reach areas, through partnerships with CSOs or development actors.
- ❖ Civic education must clarify the role of party agents, so community members expect and value their presence as part of a transparent democratic process.
- ❖ Electoral regulations should mandate political agent access and publish real-time statistics on their deployment for public scrutiny.

In essence, political party agents are not just watchdogs, they are ambassadors of trust. Their presence assures voters that every voice matters, and every detail is monitored. Strengthening their participation is not a partisan issue; it is a democratic imperative.

Despite these challenges, the observation exercise itself was largely unhindered. 93.8% of observers reported they were able to monitor the process freely, with only 1.6% experiencing restrictions. This signals a strong commitment to civic oversight, reinforcing democratic accountability. Such openness must be celebrated and institutionalized, ensuring future exercises remain transparent and welcoming to independent scrutiny. From these insights, it's clear that while technical execution and professionalism were strong across many regions, gaps in *infrastructure, inclusivity, and political engagement* remain. Timely openings and material readiness created a strong foundation for public participation. However, PWD accessibility, political agent presence, and material consistency are areas that require urgent improvement. For future electoral cycles, INEC and stakeholders must invest in accessible infrastructure tailored to PWDs, clear center signage and community notice, consistent presence of political agents for legitimacy and reliable machines and trained staff to manage operations smoothly. These reforms will ensure not only higher turnout but also greater public trust and equity in Tanzania's democratic processes.

## 6.5 Youth and women Participation

KIOO's observers reported encouraging levels of youth and women participation in the voter registration and inspection exercise, yet regional and logistical disparities remain apparent. Among youth aged 18–35, 43.92% of observers noted high participation, 46.83% reported moderate turnout, and 8.47% indicated low turnout. This suggests that while engagement among young people was generally robust, it fluctuated significantly depending on timing, weather conditions, and region-specific factors. Where participation was low, reasons varied. Some cited the fact that many youths had already registered in previous phases *“Most of them registered during the first phase”* while others pointed to external challenges such as rainfall, long distances to registration centers, and poor information dissemination. As one observer noted, *“Because today is the first day, that is why people are not coming in big numbers,”* highlighting the temporal influence on turnout. Others added, *“There is no information of the exercise,”* reflecting a persistent gap in targeted voter education for youth. Additionally, some young individuals reportedly arrived late at centers or misunderstood the registration schedule, suggesting gaps in real-time mobilization and local announcement mechanisms.

In terms of women's participation, an overwhelming 91.7% of observers confirmed good female turnout, affirming that women were visibly present and actively participating in most regions. However, the remaining 8.3% cited barriers such as lack of awareness, long distances, or previous registration. One poignant observation stated, *“Women's turnout is notably low, and many feel left out or undervalued in the process,”* revealing that while physical presence may be high in some areas, emotional and social inclusion still lags. In rural districts of Lindi and Singida, women faced compounded obstacles ranging from poor transportation infrastructure to limited control over their time due to caregiving roles hindering their full participation. In a few centers, observers commented *“They are not at the center,”* or *“They are absent from the station,”* signaling areas where community mobilization may have failed.

The implication is clear: both youth and women are willing to engage in the democratic process, but enabling environments must be created and sustained. High turnout where outreach was consistent (like in urban Dodoma or Dar es Salaam) reinforces the importance of reliable, localized, and youth/women-centered voter education strategies. Conversely, low turnout in underserved or rural areas points to the need for mobile registration units, improved transportation solutions, and collaboration with women's and youth groups at community level.

### Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- Segmented mobilization: First-time youth voters require different messages than those verifying past registration. Communication must reflect this nuance.
- Invest in women-specific outreach, including working through village women's groups, health clinics, and marketplaces.
- Use weather-adaptive scheduling and contingency planning, particularly during rainy seasons that affect turnout.
- Enhance early announcement strategies through radio, SMS, and community champions to prevent last-minute confusion.
- Include women and youth as mobilizers themselves to foster peer-led engagement and build long-term democratic participation habits.

When youth and women are meaningfully involved, democracy becomes not just an event, but a movement. Yet that movement needs infrastructure, intention, and inclusion to thrive.



## 6.6 Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Despite the emphasis on inclusive electoral processes, the field data revealed a troubling reality: 83.7% of observers reported that no persons with disabilities (PWDs) were seen registering or inspecting their voter information, while only 16% noted the presence of at least one PWD. This low visibility of PWDs suggests structural exclusion, whether physical (e.g., inaccessible terrain, buildings without ramps), informational (e.g., lack of disability-friendly announcements), or social (e.g., stigma or lack of targeted mobilization). The few who were observed were small and spread thinly across the seven regions. For example, 20 observers reported seeing only one PWD, and very few centers recorded between 2 to 6 individuals with disabilities. A handful of cases mentioned group participation, such as three centers where 10 PWDs were seen attempting to register, one case with 8 PWDs, and another with 7 or 9 PWDs respectively. These numbers, while encouraging in isolated cases, underscore the urgent need for deliberate outreach efforts. This includes using disability organizations in mobilization, deploying mobile units to reach immobile individuals, and ensuring centers are built or retrofitted to comply with universal accessibility standards. Without these reforms, PWDs will continue to be disproportionately excluded from democratic participation.

While 75.66% of respondents believed that community members understood the voter registration and inspection process, 18.25% disagreed and several examples provided show that this understanding was often superficial or misunderstood. A major confusion stemmed from mixing up (verification) and (registration). Several respondents noted that citizens didn't understand who should attend this phase of the process. For instance, people who had previously registered assumed there was no need to inspect their names again, especially if they had their voter ID cards. Others did not understand the distinction between the recent registration and earlier ones conducted during local government elections, leading to misinformation and apathy. Common phrases from observers included *"Uneducated people did not understand what was going on."* This statement reflects a significant literacy and awareness gap among sections of the population, especially in rural and underserved areas. Many citizens, particularly those with little or no formal education, may lack the ability to interpret complex electoral messages, legal terminology, or procedural instructions. This highlights the need for simplified and inclusive voter education materials such as pictorial guides, community theater, oral storytelling, and use of local dialects to ensure that messages resonate across all literacy levels. Failure to do so risks alienating a substantial portion of the electorate, thus undermining the goal of full democratic participation.

*"They don't know the importance of being registered."* This observation points to a deeper issue: civic apathy and disconnection from democratic institutions. When citizens are not educated about the power of their vote or how registration influences their rights and representation, they are unlikely to see the need to participate. This is especially true among youth, women, and marginalized communities. It reveals a gap not just in voter education, but in broader civic empowerment. Future programming must therefore emphasize why registration matters, linking it to access to services, inclusion in decision-making, and accountability of leaders. *"People thought if you registered last time, you didn't need to inspect again."* This misconception is very common and reveals a lack of understanding about the purpose of the voter roll inspection exercise. Many people mistakenly believe that once registered, no further action is needed unless they are first-time voters. However, inspection is crucial to confirm names, correct errors, update details, or remove ineligible entries. This points to the failure of messaging to clarify what the inspection phase entails, who it is for, and why it matters. Moving forward, voter education should not just promote the event but must explain each step and its importance.



*"No specific information on who should attend registration."* This phrase underscores a communication failure in outreach strategy. If people are unclear on eligibility criteria such as whether the exercise is for new voters, people needing to update information, or then everyone will suffer. This lack of clarity leads to confusion, misinformation, and inconsistent turnout. It emphasizes the need for precise, repetitive, and multi-channel communication, using both formal (radio, TV, posters) and informal (word-of-mouth, religious and local leaders) methods to guide the public effectively. *"Many people don't understand the importance of verifying names, and the station closed prematurely."* This phrase illustrates two issues simultaneously poor civic knowledge and operational mismanagement. Firstly, without understanding the significance of verifying names, especially in preventing fraud or exclusion many citizens may not see the urgency of participating. Secondly, the early closure of stations adds to the confusion and discouragement. Together, these factors contribute to missed opportunities for voter engagement. It suggests the need for both stronger civic education and stricter supervision of registration officers to ensure centers remain open and accessible during all scheduled hours.

*"Some didn't see their names at the center"* "This situation can undermine trust in the system. When individuals make the effort to inspect and fail to find their names, it creates frustration, suspicion, and discouragement. For some, it may signal a technical or administrative error; for others, it may be interpreted as deliberate exclusion. Either way, it highlights the importance of having accurate, updated voter rolls, clear guidance on what to do if your name is missing, and supportive staff on-site to resolve such issues. Otherwise, these experiences erode public confidence and deter future participation. Each of these commonly reported phrase's points to deeper systemic issues from inadequate civic education to poor communication strategies and logistical weaknesses. To build a truly inclusive electoral process, authorities and civil society must invest in continuous, community-based education, clear and targeted messaging, improved administrative planning, and inclusive infrastructure. Without these interventions, misinformation, confusion, and disenfranchisement will continue to hinder democratic participation in Tanzania.

Even logistical issues like long distances, one registration station per ward, or overcrowded centers were cited as adding to the confusion and frustration. This analysis highlights a critical gap: general awareness may exist, but specific procedural understanding is lacking, especially among low-literacy populations or those with limited access to civic education. It points to a need for consistent, clear, and repetitive voter education, possibly delivered through radio, community leaders, drama, and peer education, and explained in local languages. Both findings show that the low participation of PWDs and misunderstanding of the registration process highlight a systemic gap in inclusive civic engagement. While overall processes may appear smooth on paper, they are not reaching or resonating with every group. To address this there should be targeted disability-friendly awareness campaigns should be rolled out before and during the registration period, multiple channels of communication, especially radio, community forums, and religious leaders, should be used to clarify eligibility and processes, clear signage, audio aids, and trained volunteers should be placed at centers to help those with visual, hearing, and cognitive impairments and authorities must ensure that every citizen not only hears about the process but understands what is required of them and feels empowered to act. These improvements will help Tanzania move closer to the principle of "No one left behind" in its democratic processes.

## **6.7 Public Understanding of Registration Process**

The observation by KIOO across seven regions revealed encouraging levels of awareness among citizens regarding the voter registration and roll inspection exercise. According to data collected

from all visited centers, 75.66% of respondents believed that community members understood the process, suggesting that outreach efforts had a relatively positive impact. However, 18.25% of respondents disagreed, citing confusion, misinformation, and lack of clarity in communication as major hurdles. A closer analysis of qualitative responses sheds light on the nature of this confusion. This overlap in understanding led some to believe that once registered in a prior exercise, there was no need to verify their names or return to the centers. For instance, one respondent observed, *“People thought if you registered last time, you didn’t need to inspect again,”* while another noted, *“Many people don’t understand the importance of verifying names.”*

In some areas, logistical issues compounded the misunderstanding. Reports like *“only one registration station for the entire ward”* or *“the process is not clear on who should attend the exercise”* demonstrate that poor communication and center placement limited accessibility and comprehension. Additionally, the term “not seeing their names at the center) appeared frequently, reflecting both physical and psychological barriers that discouraged participation. These findings underscore the need for localized voter education campaigns, utilizing simplified language, community meetings, religious platforms, and clear signage to bridge the awareness gap. Empowering local leaders and civic educators to explain procedures in contextually relevant ways would greatly improve understanding and participation, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Despite the general smoothness of the process, 9.6% of respondents reported complaints or irregularities, a small but significant number that reveals specific pain points needing attention. Issues ranged from technical failures to misinformation, name mismatches, and unequal political representation. Notably, malfunctioning registration machines and printers were cited multiple times. One respondent reported, *“The machine prints ID with different pictures of the targeted person,”* suggesting serious flaws that could compromise voter identity. Others observed that some machines simply failed but were later fixed. While these are isolated, such disruptions risk delays, long queues, and loss of public trust.

Political imbalance was another concern. In several centers, only the ruling party’s (CCM) agents were present. Comments such as *“Other political party agents didn’t appear except CCM only,”* or *“No political party agents at the center,”* raise red flags about the integrity and transparency of the process, especially in regions where political competition is high. There were also cases of ineligible individuals being on the roll, including underage people or deceased individuals whose names had not been removed. A participant shared, *“I know a young girl who is registered but is below 18 years,”* and others reported the continued presence of deceased persons on the register. This weakens the credibility of the voter roll and opens doors to potential electoral fraud. Finally, lack of awareness emerged as a structural challenge. Phrases like *“Community members did not understand the process,”* and *“Confusion between local government election and national registration exercise”* highlight a need for clearer, consistent voter messaging.

### **Implications and Lessons Learned**

The analysis reveals several critical implications:

1. Awareness alone is not enough correct understanding must follow. Communities must be educated not only about what to do but why it's important.
2. Technical preparation must match logistical reliability, registration machines should be tested, staff fully trained, and centers properly equipped to handle rural terrain and crowds.
3. Political transparency must be visible—the absence of opposition agents erodes public trust and undermines the credibility of democratic institutions.

4. Registration centers must be more accessible and equitably distributed, especially in rural wards where citizens walk long distances only to find limited services or incomplete instructions.

### **Recommendations for Future Exercises**

- Simplify communication by using oral announcements, pictorial posters, and community radio, especially in low-literacy areas, enhance training for registration officers and ensure backup equipment to prevent machine-related delays.
- Strengthen multi-party oversight by supporting the presence of all political agents, possibly through modest facilitation, ensure regular voter roll updates to remove deceased individuals and enforce age verification strictly.
- Deploy mobile registration units in hard-to-reach areas and use digital tools (e.g., SMS alerts or mobile apps) to inform citizens of their roles and eligibility. The findings presented offer a holistic picture of both the strengths and shortcomings of Tanzania's voter registration and roll inspection efforts. While progress has been made, particularly in community awareness and logistical execution, targeted improvements in education, inclusiveness, and oversight are essential to ensure a truly democratic and transparent process.

### **7. Information on Boundary Delimitation and Constituency Name Changes**

Boundary delimitation and constituency name changes are critical electoral components that determine where citizens vote and who represents them. They can affect the allocation of polling centers, the list of eligible candidates, and the composition of voting populations. Yet, according to KIOO's observers, only 25.13% of registration centers had clear signage or information about boundary changes, while a concerning 49.21% lacked any such information. This significant gap in communication implies that many citizens were left unaware of important administrative shifts that could directly impact their voting rights and representation. In regions where boundaries have been altered such as the merging or splitting of wards or constituencies—voters may find their names missing, be redirected to unfamiliar centers, or be unsure of who their new representatives are. In effect, this lack of signage disenfranchises citizens not by design, but through information failure. For example, in areas such as rural Lindi and remote parts of Tanga, some observers noted voter confusion about which center applied to them. Without proper public notice, boundary changes risk alienating voters, especially those with limited mobility or digital access. Going forward, clear, visible, and multilingual signage should be made mandatory at all registration centers, and changes should be communicated using local leaders, religious institutions, and community radios well ahead of time.

Boundary delimitation and the renaming of constituencies are critical components of ensuring equitable representation in electoral processes. These changes often stem from population shifts, administrative restructuring, or political reforms intended to improve governance and access to representation. However, findings from KIOO's observation across the seven regions Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara reveal a significant communication gap regarding these developments at the grassroots level. Despite the importance of such changes, only 25.13% of observers reported seeing clear signage or information about boundary delimitation or constituency name changes at registration or voter inspection centers. Conversely, staggering 49.21% reported no visible information, while the remaining were either unsure or did not respond. This lack of public-facing communication undermines the transparency and inclusiveness of the process, especially for rural or marginalized communities who may already face challenges in accessing political and electoral information.

The implications of this are far-reaching. In areas such as Kilwa (Lindi), Newala (Mtwara), and Manyoni (Singida), residents may have been unaware that their ward or constituency boundaries had changed, affecting where they should vote or whether their representatives had shifted. This confusion can lead to voter apathy, mistrust in the electoral process, or even disenfranchisement if voters show up at the wrong centers on election day. It also makes it difficult for political parties, CSOs, and local leaders to plan effective voter mobilization, as constituents themselves are unsure of their updated political geography.

Moreover, the lack of information contributes to misunderstandings during voter registration and roll inspection. KIOO observers noted that some voters in Dodoma Urban and Handeni Rural (Tanga) expressed surprise when told their constituencies had changed or were asked to verify details under a new administrative name. In Morogoro District, voters questioned the legitimacy of the process due to the absence of maps or official notices explaining the boundary changes. These observations point to the urgent need for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance communication efforts around boundary delimitation. Future exercises must ensure that information is prominently displayed at all centers and disseminated through local languages, radio announcements, community meetings, and digital platforms. Visual aids, such as updated constituency maps, should be made available and explained by trained staff or volunteers.

Lessons learned from this gap show that legal and administrative reforms are only as effective as the public's understanding and trust in them. Lack of awareness regarding boundary and constituency changes could inadvertently suppress voter turnout and fuel misinformation. Ensuring that the electorate is fully informed about where and how their votes count is not only a logistical necessity, but also a democratic imperative. To close these gaps, INEC and its partners must prioritize timely, clear, and multi-channel communication about boundary adjustments. Civil society organizations like KIOO can support by conducting targeted civic education in districts with observed confusion or low signage visibility. Ultimately, a well-informed voter base is essential to strengthening trust and participation in Tanzania's electoral democracy.

### **7.1 Community Participation in Boundary Delimitation and Constituency Name Changes**

The process of boundary delimitation and constituency name changes holds significant weight in shaping democratic representation. However, KIOO's observation across seven Tanzanian regions Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara reveals that while some population segments, such as women and youth, have shown encouraging levels of engagement, the general community awareness of these boundary changes remains alarmingly low. A majority of voters were unaware of the changes in constituency names or boundary adjustments. Observers found that only 25.13% of registration or inspection centers had visible signage or materials informing citizens about boundary changes, while 49.21% had none. In regions like Singida and Mtwara, where political sensitivity is high, such information gaps are not merely administrative oversights; they risk eroding public trust and sparking confusion about voter eligibility and representation. The absence of clear boundary communication likely contributed to poor public understanding, where citizens, particularly those from rural communities, were unable to determine whether they were voting under the same ward, division, or representative. This confusion was particularly pronounced in districts where significant population movement or displacement had occurred due to infrastructure projects or investor-related relocations—such as parts of Lindi.



On a positive note, over 80% of KIOO observers reported visible participation of women and youth in the voter registration and roll inspection process. This is a commendable outcome and demonstrates the cumulative effect of long-term civic education and inclusion strategies that have targeted these demographics. Their growing presence signifies increasing political awareness and engagement, especially in semi-urban and peri-urban areas like Dodoma Urban and Morogoro Municipality. However, this participation was not uniform. In rural zones like Kilwa (Lindi) or Masasi (Mtwara), long travel distances, poor road infrastructure, and a lack of real-time information—such as unclear notices about which centers were operating or what boundary changes had occurred—hindered youth and women’s ability to participate meaningfully. Women who are caregivers or those balancing economic responsibilities were particularly disadvantaged when long queues or unclear service centers caused delays.

#### People with Disabilities (PWDs): Systemic Barriers Remain

While inclusive policies aim to bring PWDs into the electoral fold, reality shows a different picture. Only 15.87% of observers reported seeing PWDs participate in the process—despite the effort to include them in awareness and mobilization campaigns. The major challenge was physical accessibility: only 39.7% of centers were fully accessible, while 43.7% were only partially accessible, and the rest not at all. Basic obstacles such as stairs without ramps, narrow entryways, and the absence of Braille or tactile signage were common. Field reports from districts like Ruangwa (Lindi) and Nanyumbu (Mtwara) echoed similar sentiments: “Too much mud and slippery roads due to rains; rough road and swamps. I’m old and my back is weak. I can’t go without a car.” This kind of terrain, compounded by inadequate infrastructure planning, makes access nearly impossible for the elderly and physically impaired. Even in areas where slight ramps were added, they were often too steep or lacked handrails, requiring assistance to enter. Transparency is at risk when oversight weakens. KIOO’s observation found that only 27.25% of centers had political party agents present. Worse, Singida and Mtwara recorded several instances where no agents from opposition parties were seen, leading to concerns about biased reporting, unchecked irregularities, or manipulation. The lack of financial support, transportation difficulties, and weak coordination with INEC were noted as contributing factors.

The absence of political agents undermines one of the core tenets of democratic elections pluralism. Without the presence of diverse party monitors, voters, especially in marginalized or politically contested regions—may feel intimidated or question the fairness of the process. In areas where boundary delimitation has altered electoral zones, this lack of presence can also result in low accountability or manipulation of voter data without scrutiny.

KIOO’s findings offer a stark reminder that boundary delimitation and constituency changes must not remain elite discussions or mere administrative exercises. For a process to be democratic, it must be understood, accessible, and inclusive. Despite positive signs in youth and women’s participation, the process still leaves many behind PWDs, opposition parties, and rural dwellers. Without strong, clear communication around boundary changes and inclusive infrastructure design, these groups will continue to face barriers in exercising their full civic rights.

#### Recommendations

1. INEC should ensure that each center, particularly in rural areas, has visible signage and maps showing any constituency or ward changes, in local languages and accessible formats.
2. Partner with Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) to raise awareness and support registration efforts. INEC must also audit centers to ensure compliance with universal accessibility standards.
3. Facilitate transport or provide small stipends for party agents, particularly in underserved regions, to level the playing field for all political actors.

4. Build and upgrade inspection centers to be accessible during all weather conditions, including mobile registration caravans for hard-to-reach districts like Kilwa and Nanyumbu.
5. Focus on demystifying boundary changes and clarify voter rolls. Use community radio, religious leaders, and youth influencers to bridge the gap between policy and understanding.

## **7.2 Observed Challenges and Good Practices in Voter Registration and Roll Inspection**

KIOO's observers across seven regions of Tanzania Singida, Dodoma, Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Lindi, and Mtwara reported a mix of smooth operations and persistent challenges during the voter registration and voter roll inspection exercise. While 56.8% of respondents stated that there were no major challenges observed, the remaining data paints a compelling picture of operational hurdles that undermine inclusivity, especially for persons with disabilities (PWDs), the elderly, women, and youth. Key logistical issues included long distances to centers, lack of signage, and lack of security or seating arrangements, especially in rural or underserved areas. Specific phrases like "lack of assistants to read names for those who are illiterate," indicating accessibility challenges not only physical but also informational. This was especially observed in wards like Wailesi and villages in Lindi and Mtwara. In some centers, stairs were observed as the only access route ("*stairs observed at the center*") with no ramps, rendering them unusable for wheelchair users.

Other concerning behaviors included political imbalances and procedural irregularities. Observers noted the absence of opposition party agents, with only ruling party (CCM) agents visible in some areas. In several cases, students assisted parents in finding their names, suggesting poor signage and lack of staff orientation. Some observers also reported closed centers during operating hours and even missing registration materials. Environmental challenges were frequent, particularly in areas like Mtwara and Lindi, where rainy weather and mud hindered movement. A respondent in Mazoezi Village reported that the center was closed before time, denying citizens access to key services.

Despite these challenges, notable good practices were observed that can be scaled nationally. Many centers prioritized elderly and PWDs, showcasing a spirit of inclusion. "*People living with disabilities were given priorities,*" noted one observer, while another said, "*Women were given priorities.*" Centers also displayed good coordination and community engagement, with some INEC officials using local languages to educate participants, a method praised for fostering broader understanding and comfort. The hospitality of INEC officials was widely appreciated. Observers were warmly welcomed and cooperated with fully. For example, in Gairo District, the District Commissioner's office supported observers with transport, acknowledging the rough terrain and scattered locations of registration centers. Observers appreciated that INEC officials were courteous, proactive, and provided timely assistance, fostering trust and enhancing public confidence. Some innovations and good conduct included:

- Use of numbering systems to avoid congestion
- Shelter and seating for voters and agents
- Polite and inclusive behavior from registration officers, including asking if voters had disabilities or required special assistance
- Timely service delivery with minimal waiting times
- Community announcements via loudspeakers, aiding in last-mile awareness

While over half of the observers noted a smooth process, the qualitative feedback from the rest reflects serious gaps in infrastructure, civic education, and political representation. These issues can disenfranchise entire segments of the population—especially PWDs and rural women.

Recommendations:

1. Design all centers using universal access principles, ensuring ramps, signage, seating, and navigable paths.
2. Train officers on inclusive communication and proactive assistance.
3. Equip centers with sufficient materials and backup tools (e.g., portable ramps, extra signage).
4. Deploy observers and support INEC to ensure equal political agent presence, particularly in competitive or remote zones.
5. Enhance voter education, particularly in Kiswahili and local dialects, emphasizing the difference between voter roll inspection and registration.
6. Institutionalize best practices, such as prioritizing vulnerable groups, and reward registration officers who demonstrate excellence in service delivery.

KIOO's findings clearly show that when inclusion and professionalism are prioritized, community trust and democratic participation rise significantly. Scaling these lessons could significantly strengthen Tanzania's electoral integrity and inclusiveness.

### **7.3 Community Awareness and Understanding of Boundary Changes**

Community feedback from seven regions indicated that while voter roll inspection was moderately understood, awareness of boundary delimitation and constituency name changes was remarkably low. Most citizens stated they had not heard about the boundary changes or were unsure of what they involved. Many confused voter registrations with boundary reform, indicating that public communication did not adequately distinguish the two. For example, one respondent said, "I understand the voter roll inspection, but I do not know anything about boundary name changes." Another shared, "We were invited to verify our names, but no one mentioned changes to the constituencies." This confusion underscores a clear need for targeted civic education that addresses both voter registration and electoral boundary reforms distinctly.

Although participation in the voter roll inspection was relatively high with many citizens confirming they checked their details, participation related to boundary changes was virtually absent. Several community members reported that they did not participate because they were unaware of the boundary reform process or did not understand its importance. Some stated they were unable to reach the centers due to long distances or poor infrastructure. Others expressed disinterest, saying they did not see the need to engage because they already had their identification or had registered previously. These insights reveal that information campaigns did not sufficiently explain why participating in the new boundary demarcation mattered.

Participation from women and youth was strong, with over 80% visibility during the registration and inspection exercises. This signals progress in civic engagement for these groups, likely driven by sustained outreach efforts. However, participation of people with disabilities was low, with only 15.87% of observers reporting their presence. Challenges included poor physical access to centers, lack of transport, and absence of disability-friendly infrastructure. Many voters mentioned issues such as stairs at entrances, narrow doorways, and lack of signage. These obstacles excluded people with mobility and visual impairment from full participation. Furthermore, political party agents were seen in only 27.25% of centers, weakening transparency and accountability during the

process. A significant number of responses referred to poor physical access to registration and inspection venues. Many centers were far from communities or located in schools and buildings without ramps or seating for elderly or disabled persons. For instance, one elderly respondent said, “The registration center is too far; I can’t afford the transport.” Another shared, “There are stairs at the entrance and no support for people with disabilities.” Such challenges were more severe in remote or rural areas, especially in regions with muddy roads and difficult terrain. These conditions discouraged participation and revealed the need for strategic site selection and better infrastructure planning in future exercises.

Community reactions were mixed. Positive comments praised the friendliness of officers, the organization of the process, and the professionalism observed at many centers. Some citizens appreciated the opportunity to update their information and expressed satisfaction with the exercise, saying, “We are happy with how the process was handled.” Others called for improvements, including earlier opening hours, better signage, and more voter education. Criticism centered around the lack of information, inaccessible venues, and low outreach. A notable concern was that some people felt excluded from the process due to poor advertising or absence of community meetings. A woman noted, “Most people here don’t know the importance of verification, so they don’t show up.” When asked about observed changes in their areas, most respondents said they saw no difference or did not notice any boundary name change. Some highlighted updates to voter lists or administrative adjustments in local offices, but these were not connected in their understanding to constituency boundary changes. In rare cases, individuals mentioned the creation of new constituencies or subdivisions, such as the splitting of Dodoma Urban into Dodoma Urban and Mtumba, but this level of awareness was exceptional. One respondent said, “I heard about voter list verification, but I do not know anything about boundaries. Can you explain it to us?”

The feedback collected clearly reveals that communication about boundary delimitation and constituency name changes was insufficient and unevenly distributed across communities. While the voter roll inspection process showed improvement in women and youth participation, persons with disabilities remained largely excluded, and awareness of boundary changes was minimal. To address these issues, the following recommendations are made:

1. Launch community-wide civic education campaigns that explain boundary name changes and their implications in local languages using multiple platforms—radio, schools, churches, mosques, and public meetings.
2. Improve physical accessibility of registration and inspection centers by ensuring ramps, seats, and signage are available and functional.
3. Train local leaders and registration officers to inform citizens effectively and offer timely guidance on voter eligibility and boundary updates.
4. Facilitate the participation of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities and rural communities, through transport support and mobile registration units.
5. Strengthening accountability by ensuring all major political parties are represented at registration centers and encouraging public oversight.

Bridging the gap between policy and practice requires intentional communication, inclusive planning, and community-centered implementation. If done well, this can foster a stronger sense of trust, fairness, and participation in Tanzania’s democratic processes.



## **7.4 Information Dissemination Channels**

According to KIOO's observation data, the primary channels used to communicate information about voter roll inspection and boundary delimitation processes were community-based and traditional media. Specifically, 16.7% of community members cited local leaders as the main source of information, followed by radio 16.2% and television 15.2%. Political parties also played a significant role in awareness creation 15.2%, while 12.4% of respondents mentioned community meetings as their source. Social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, accounted for 11.4%, signaling a growing shift toward digital engagement though still secondary in influence. Less utilized channels included religious institutions 5.2%, public posters or notices 4.3% and church announcements. A small portion of the population, 2.9%, reported that they had not heard about the process at all. This underscores the importance of multi-platform communication strategies, especially those rooted in local and trusted networks to maximize reach and relevance.

While most respondents confirmed receiving some form of information, there were widespread concerns about clarity and accessibility. Several individuals noted that the messages were either vague or not tailored to all community segments. People with disabilities (PWDs) especially those who are blind or deaf, were frequently mentioned as having been excluded due to lack of accessible communication formats such as braille, sign language interpretation, or visual aids. Rural residents and elderly citizens were also commonly left out, particularly in areas where announcements did not penetrate deeply into villages. One respondent shared that "the announcer was mostly moving around nearby areas," which excluded distant hamlets. Other marginalized groups included women with limited mobility, youth with low political interest, and individuals with low literacy. These insights suggest a gap between the intention of inclusive communication and its real-world execution.

Several logistical and structural barriers hindered meaningful participation. The most common were long distances to registration centers, poor infrastructure (e.g., rough roads, stairs, lack of signage), and the absence of support services for PWDs. There were also reports of insufficient awareness campaigns in some villages and limited information dissemination by local leaders. In some areas, no public announcements were made at all, further alienating marginalized populations. In addition to physical challenges, technological and educational barriers also affected participation. A lack of braille materials and accessible formats for the visually impaired, as well as the absence of interpreters for the deaf, created communication gaps. Many respondents also cited low civic education and unclear instructions on what the exercise involved particularly regarding boundary name changes.

### **7.4.1 Participation of Women, Youth, and PWDs**

Data shows that women and youth were present in significant numbers at registration centers and actively engaged in verifying their information. However, participation by people with disabilities remained disproportionately low. While some were supported by caregivers or family members, others stayed home due to lack of accessible transportation or unfriendly infrastructure. One observer noted, "Some came with supporters from home, while others didn't come at all due to lack of communication or assistance." Despite several claims that the process was inclusive, multiple accounts pointed out that the needs of PWDs were not adequately considered in communication or access. In many centers, stairs, narrow pathways, or distant locations posed major challenges. Some respondents said they had not seen any PWDs at all at their centers, reinforcing the call for disability-friendly planning in electoral processes.

Community perceptions of transparency varied. While many respondents felt that the process was generally fair and smooth, others raised concerns about limited transparency, political bias, or poor communication. Specific issues included registration centers located near ruling party offices, reports of underage voters being registered (especially students), and the absence of opposition party agents. There were also mentions of ghost voters and allegations of coercion. Trust in the process was moderate. Although many community members said they trusted the process, others remained skeptical, citing poor awareness and weak community engagement. Some emphasized that trust could not be built without proper understanding, stating, “How can people trust a thing they don’t know?” Concerns raised by the community focused on several themes challenges for PWDs and the elderly due to distance or poor infrastructure, particularly around boundary name changes, the perceived absence of opposition oversight and complaints about registration centers closing early or being operational during the rainy season.

Some of these concerns were reportedly addressed through additional awareness campaigns or adjustments by INEC and CSOs. However, most feedback suggests that more systematic, inclusive, and participatory approaches are still needed. The communication strategy for voter roll inspection and boundary delimitation processes shows both strengths and critical gaps. While traditional media and community leaders played key roles, marginalized groups, especially PWDs, rural residents, and the elderly were often excluded due to inaccessible information, infrastructure challenges, and lack of targeted outreach. Recommendations include using inclusive communication formats such as sign language, braille, and pictorial guides, deploy mobile outreach teams to reach rural and hard-to-access areas, ensure disability-friendly infrastructure at all registration and inspection centers, facilitate political neutrality by ensuring representation of multiple parties at each center and use community-based feedback loops to continuously improve transparency and trust in electoral processes. By strengthening both communication and infrastructure, future voter engagement efforts can become more equitable, inclusive, and trustworthy thereby reinforcing the legitimacy of Tanzania’s democratic processes.

### **7.5 Community Awareness and Communication Approaches**

Data from KIOO’s observation across seven regions indicates that awareness about the boundary delimitation and constituency name changes was primarily communicated through local leaders (16.7%), radio (16.2%), television (15.2%), and political parties (15.2%). This shows that traditional communication channels remain the backbone of civic engagement in rural and semi-urban areas. Community meetings (12.4%) and social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook (11.4%) played a supplementary role, demonstrating an emerging but still limited reach of digital tools. However, a small proportion of respondents (2.9%) had not heard about the process at all, and very few cited alternative sources such as churches or posters. This suggests that communication gaps persisted, particularly in remote or underserved areas. The clarity of messages was also inconsistent; many respondents noted that persons with disabilities (PWDs), especially the blind and deaf, were left out due to a lack of accessible formats such as braille or sign language interpreters. Rural residents and the elderly were frequently mentioned as having limited access to the messages, reinforcing the need for more inclusive and diversified outreach strategies.

There was strong participation from women and youth, with visibility rates exceeding 80%, demonstrating the positive impact of targeted civic education initiatives. However, only 27.25% of observers reported seeing political party agents, and only 15.87% observed people with disabilities participating. The absence of political agents raises concerns about the transparency

and neutrality of the process, especially in regions such as Singida and Mtwara. The low turnout of PWDs signals that infrastructural barriers, lack of support, and inaccessible information continue to hinder their participation, despite their legal and civic rights. Furthermore, some respondents expressed uncertainty about whether these groups were truly engaged, pointing to broader issues of awareness, lack of follow-up, and inadequate support structures at the grassroots level. Accessibility remains a persistent challenge. Only 39.7% of voter registration and inspection centers were fully accessible, with another 43.7% classified as partially accessible. Many centers had stairs without ramps, narrow entrances, or were located far from communities posing serious limitations for PWDs, the elderly, pregnant women, and other mobility-challenged groups. One elderly respondent described their experience: “Too much mud and slippery roads... my back is weak; I can’t go without a car.” Such testimonies reveal the intersection between poor infrastructure and social exclusion.

While some community leaders, INEC officials, and CSOs made efforts to respond, the response was often limited, reactive, or only partial. A few CSOs conducted voter education campaigns or advocated for better inclusion, and some community leaders facilitated local meetings. However, only 6 affirmative responses out of over 50 comments acknowledged stakeholder intervention, while the majority either saw no response or were unaware of any action taken. This implies that community-level engagement by stakeholders was insufficient, particularly in addressing concerns related to PWD inclusion, distance to centers, and boundary-related confusion.

There was a mixed perception of whether issues raised were resolved. Some respondents said minor issues like voter information corrections were addressed, while key concerns—such as lack of accessible infrastructure, PWD support, or transparency—were largely ignored or inadequately handled. There were also mentions of unresolved complaints, voter education gaps, and political bias, including underage registrations and lack of multi-party representation at centers. Despite this, many respondents said they trusted the process, especially where no irregularities were observed. However, skepticism existed among those who felt the process lacked transparency, inclusivity, and timely communication. For example, one community member noted, “How can people trust a thing they don’t know?”

## **8. Consolidated lesson learnt and Recommendations**

The observation exercise conducted across seven regions offered valuable insights into the strengths and gaps within Tanzania’s voter registration, voter roll inspection, and boundary delimitation processes. Several key lessons were drawn:

### **1. Communication Gaps Undermine Participation**

One of the clearest lessons was that effective civic engagement requires clear, timely, and inclusive communication. Despite efforts made, many citizens, particularly those in rural areas and people with disabilities (PWDs) reported not receiving or understanding information about boundary changes and voter roll inspections. Reliance on traditional channels like village leaders and radio remains strong, but these must be complemented by targeted outreach using accessible formats, such as sign language interpretation, braille, and visual aids for the blind.

### **2. Inclusivity Remains Uneven**

While participation among women and youth was commendably high, the visibility and involvement of persons with disabilities and political party agents were significantly lower. This gap highlights that inclusivity must go beyond presence to address structural and communication

barriers that limit effective participation such as inaccessible centers, lack of transport, or absence of interpreters and assistive materials.

### **3. Community Ownership and Early Engagement Are Critical**

In areas where local leaders, INEC officials, and CSOs actively engaged with citizens especially through community meetings and outreach, the process enjoyed higher levels of trust and participation. This demonstrates the importance of early and meaningful stakeholder involvement in fostering transparency, building credibility, and responding swiftly to community concerns.

### **4. Infrastructure Challenges Impact Access**

Many observation teams reported that distance, poor roads, and inaccessible venues discouraged or excluded participants, especially PWDs and elderly residents. This reinforces the need for deliberate planning around venue location and physical accessibility if electoral processes are to be truly democratic and inclusive.

### **5. Collaboration Strengthens the Process**

The coordination between KIOO, EISA, and local observers proved that joint efforts among civil society and electoral bodies can enrich the process by enhancing accountability, promoting dialogue, and sharing real-time solutions to field challenges. Such collaboration should be formalized and expanded in future electoral cycles. This exercise taught us that achieving inclusive and trusted electoral processes requires deliberate, structured, and community-centered approaches that address not only logistical issues but also perceptions, legal awareness, and physical access. Future interventions must be more proactive, data-driven, and responsive to the realities on the ground if democratic participation is to be equitable and impactful.

## **8.1 Recommendation**

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

### **1. Enhance Transparency and Communication**

A recurring challenge noted during the observation was the lack of timely, accurate, and accessible information regarding boundary changes and voter roll inspection. This created confusion, especially among marginalized populations. Therefore, INEC is strongly urged to:

1. Ensure proactive communication of all processes, particularly boundary delimitation and voter roll inspection—by providing information early, consistently, and in user-friendly formats such as simplified language, Braille, and sign language.
2. Increase the use of community meetings, local radio, and television, particularly in rural areas, and deliver messages in local languages. This will ensure women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) are not excluded due to communication barriers.
3. Establish feedback mechanisms that allow the community to ask questions or seek clarification on boundary changes and inspection procedures. This builds public trust and accountability.
4. The physical inaccessibility of many registration and inspection centers was one of the most cited barriers, especially for people with disabilities and the elderly.
5. Upgrade all registration and inspection venues to meet universal access standards, including the installation of ramps, handrails, clear signage, and seating areas for the elderly and people with mobility challenges.
6. Encourage to deploy mobile registration and inspection units to reach remote or underserved communities, especially those more than 10 km from the nearest ward center. These mobile units can significantly reduce travel burdens for PWDs, women with domestic responsibilities, and elderly citizens.



7. Accessibility should not only be physical—assistive services such as sign language interpreters and large-print materials must be made available at centers.

To promote transparency, accountability, and public trust in the electoral process, it is recommended that:

1. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and relevant authorities should consider allocating a dedicated budget to facilitate the presence of political party agents at all voter registration and polling centers. This will help ensure effective monitoring of the electoral process, minimize disputes, and reduce political tensions stemming from perceived bias or irregularities.
2. Key legal frameworks governing elections namely the Election Act, the Political Parties Act, and the INEC Act should be translated into simplified and accessible formats (such as brochures, visual posters, radio messages, and community dialogues) and widely disseminated to local leaders, community members, and political stakeholders. Improved public awareness and understanding of these laws will enhance compliance, reduce procedural errors, and foster a more informed and peaceful electoral environment.

## 2. Government of Tanzania

To strengthen the credibility, inclusivity and efficiency of the voter registration and inspection process, it is recommended that the Government of Tanzania:

1. Allocate adequate resources to upgrade and maintain road infrastructure, particularly in rural and swampy areas. Improved accessibility will ensure timely and equitable access to voter registration and inspection centers, especially for hard-to-reach and underserved populations.
2. Institutionalize the involvement of local communities particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities in the design, planning, and implementation of voter-related processes. This participatory approach enhances transparency, builds trust, and fosters a sense of ownership at the grassroots level.
3. Support the development and scaling of user-friendly digital platforms to facilitate voter information updates, especially in areas with a high concentration of youth. Digital solutions can reduce congestion at physical centers, increase convenience, and improve data accuracy in the voter registry.

## 3. Political Parties

To enhance transparency, inclusiveness, and voter participation, it is recommended that political parties:

1. Ensure that well-trained party agents are present and active at all voter registration and inspection centers. Their presence enhances oversight, promotes transparency, and fosters public confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.
2. Intensify internal efforts to mobilize and educate party members especially youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) on the importance of voter registration and participation.
3. Targeted civic education campaigns through party structures can significantly improve turnout and strengthen democratic representation.

## 4. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

To promote informed participation, transparency, and accountability in the electoral process, it is recommended that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):

1. Scale up targeted civic education campaigns focusing on voter rights, constituency boundary changes, and the importance of participation. Special attention should be given to reaching marginalized and remote communities through culturally appropriate and accessible methods.
2. Continue to independently observe and report on voter registration and inspection processes, while advocating for inclusive practices. Emphasis should be placed on monitoring the participation and treatment of underrepresented groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
3. Organize regular multi-stakeholder forums that bring together government, electoral bodies, political parties, and communities to reflect on challenges, share lessons learned, and collaboratively develop solutions to strengthen future electoral cycles.
4. Intensify campaigns targeting hard-to-reach groups and areas, focusing on voter rights, boundary changes, and the importance of participation.
5. Continue to observe, report and advocate for inclusive practices, especially for underrepresented groups, using independent platforms.
6. Facilitate regular multi-stakeholder forums to reflect on lessons learned and propose joint improvements for upcoming electoral cycles.

#### 5. Development Partners

To strengthen democratic processes and promote inclusive participation in Tanzania's electoral cycle, it is recommended that Development Partners:

1. Provide financial and technical support for voter education initiatives, electoral observer training, and monitoring efforts—particularly those that emphasize the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities.
2. Backing inclusive programs enhances equity and ensures that no group is left behind in the democratic process.
3. Fund and promote the use of creative and context-sensitive tools such as mobile education units, community radio, and digital platforms to extend voter education to remote and marginalized communities. These innovations can bridge information gaps and improve civic engagement in hard-to-reach areas.

#### 6. Local Communities

To build a more participatory and accountable electoral process, it is recommended that local communities:

1. Community members—particularly youth and women—should continue to lead by example in fulfilling civic duties such as voter registration, inspection, and education. They should also support others, especially people with disabilities (PWDs) and the elderly, in overcoming access challenges to ensure full participation.
2. Organize and participate in local meetings, door-to-door campaigns, and neighborhood discussions to encourage widespread awareness and engagement. These community-driven efforts help ensure that no eligible voter is left behind.
3. Strengthen and support community-based organizations to collect, document, and escalate grassroots-level concerns—such as accessibility barriers or misinformation—to relevant authorities and national platforms for timely response and accountability.
4. Foster a culture of tolerance, unity, and civic responsibility across all groups by promoting respectful dialogue and peaceful engagement throughout the electoral process.

Promote peaceful and inclusive participation across all community groups by modeling civic responsibility and engagement. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can significantly enhance the credibility, inclusiveness, and efficiency of Tanzania's voter registration and boundary delimitation processes, ensuring that no citizen is left behind.