



UMOJA WA WAWEZESHAJI
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KIGOMA, TANZANIA.



2024 KIOO ANNUAL REPORT

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Executive Director's Foreword

In 2024, Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO continued to uphold its mission of promoting inclusive development, dignity, and empowerment for all, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Amidst growing social and economic challenges in Tanzania, our six flagship projects not only created transformative impact but also demonstrated resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment to justice, equity, and opportunity.

1. Maendeleo Yetu Project This flagship initiative advanced community development through awareness campaigns, economic empowerment, and governance training across Kigoma, Katavi, and Tabora. The project empowered over 3,200 community members, of whom 67% were women, through capacity-building workshops on land rights, civic accountability, and small business skills. Collaborating with local governments, we facilitated 36 policy dialogues leading to improved access to services.

2. EmpowerHer: Breaking Barriers to women Leadership EmpowerHer focused on political inclusion through a baseline survey and advocacy targeting Kigoma, Katavi, and Tabora. The findings, drawn from 141 participants, revealed persistent gaps between the perceived democratic rights of women, youth, and persons with disabilities and their actual representation in political leadership. Despite 92.91% affirming equal rights in principle, representation in local government roles remained below 30%. Root causes identified included cultural stigma, limited economic means, and legal inconsistencies preventing full youth candidacy. The project recommended structural reforms, expanded voter education, and political mentorship for marginalized groups.

3. Inclusive Leadership for Disabilities: Voter Registration Observation This project assessed fairness and accessibility in the 2024 voter registration across 82 wards in four regions. KIOO trained and deployed 40 Long-Term Observers (LTOs), emphasizing gender, age, and disability inclusion. Observation showed progress in biometric registration and digital innovations (e.g., OVRs), but also highlighted gaps in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, limited availability of sign language interpreters, and inaccessible polling stations. Recommendations were presented to INEC to improve policy enforcement and physical accessibility.

4. Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Alternative Education Pathways through the New KIOO Open School Our KIOO Open School in Ilagala provided a safe educational haven for vulnerable girls and young mothers. 130 learners 70% female accessed VETA-accredited training in tailoring, carpentry, computing, and business skills. The school's flexible and holistic model helped reduce dropout rates and early marriages in the community. Partnerships with local artisans enhanced apprenticeship opportunities and job placements.

5. Inclusive Leadership through Local Government Election Observation Through structured observation of the 2024 Local Government Elections in 48 districts across 12 regions, KIOO documented trends, gaps, and best practices in political participation. Notable findings included underrepresentation of women (35% of candidates, mostly on special seats), youth (25%), and persons with disabilities (<5%). Observers flagged issues such as nomination irregularities, weak voter education outreach in rural areas, and minimal digital content for civic

education. Our analytical report proposed electoral reforms, quota enforcement, and inclusive training for electoral officials.

6. Girls Fast Food Academy (GFFA) Launched in May 2024, GFFA provides culinary, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy training to survivors of gender-based violence, early marriage, and forced labor. The first cohort of 50 girls completed hands-on training in a modern facility, with 40% already able to price and market products.

Organizational Learning and Future Directions This year marked a strategic pivot toward technology integration, data-driven advocacy, and regional partnerships. Across all projects, our studies emphasized the importance of:

- Strengthening systemic support for marginalized groups
- Combining vocational education with psychosocial support
- Investing in localized digital civic education tools

Our plans for 2025 include expanding VET access, digitizing civic content, scaling Girls Fast Food Academy, and deepening our presence in underserved districts. These priorities reflect our commitment to empowering marginalized groups, strengthening civic engagement, and promoting inclusive socio-economic development across Tanzania. Each strategic action is grounded in our experience, guided by community needs, and aligned with national development frameworks and the Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Expanding Vocational Education and Training (VET) Access

We will scale our Open School and VETA-accredited training programs to additional rural wards in Kigoma, Katavi, and Tabora. The aim is to reach at least 300 new learners, with a continued focus on girls, young mothers, and people with disabilities. We plan to introduce new trade areas such as renewable energy installation, digital marketing, and food processing, tailored to local economic opportunities. Community outreach campaigns will be intensified to identify out-of-school youth and enroll them into flexible, skills-based education pathways.

2. Digitizing Civic Content and Expanding Digital Access

In response to the digital divide and the need for inclusive civic participation, we will launch a Digital Civic Engagement Platform that hosts accessible content on democratic rights, electoral processes, and accountability tools. Materials will be translated into Kiswahili and adapted for youth, women, and persons with disabilities. This effort will complement our civic education activities during the lead-up to Tanzania's 2025 General Elections and support ongoing voter registration and observation efforts across multiple regions.

3. Scaling the Girls Fast Food Academy

Building on the success of our pilot in Ilagala, we plan to scale the Girls Fast Food Academy model to three new districts. The Academy provides vocational and entrepreneurial training in food preparation, catering, and hospitality for girls affected by early pregnancy, forced marriage, or child labor. In 2025, we will integrate a green innovation component, focusing on sustainable packaging, nutrition education, and agribusiness linkages. The goal is to reach 150 girls, provide startup capital to at least 50 graduates, and foster local food enterprises that contribute to food security and gender equality.

4. Deepening Our Presence in Underserved Districts

We will strengthen our institutional footprint in geographically and socially underserved areas, including new districts in Morogoro and expanded operations in Katavi and Simiyu. This includes deploying more Long-Term Observers (LTOs), establishing new community learning centers, and forming local advisory committees. These efforts aim to ensure our interventions are locally owned, culturally relevant, and sustainable. We also plan to enhance coordination with local governments, CSOs, and faith-based networks to multiply impact and ensure accountability.

5. Monitoring, Learning, and Partnerships

In 2025, we will invest in robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems to capture outcomes and document stories of change from our beneficiaries. Additionally, we aim to build new partnerships with local artisans, development partners, academic institutions, and innovation hubs. Our focus will be on evidence-based programming, scaling what works, and mobilizing new resources for long-term sustainability. 2025 will be a year of strategic growth and innovation for KIOO. As we expand programs, reach new communities, and amplify marginalized voices, we remain anchored in our mission: to promote the rights and dignity of the poor and excluded, especially women, girls, youth, and persons with disabilities. Through collective action and persistent advocacy, we will shape a more inclusive and empowered Tanzania.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Acknowledgements

On behalf of KIOO, I extend my deepest gratitude to all who contributed to the success of our 2024 projects, particularly the EmpowerHer: Breaking Barriers to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities Leadership project and the Local Government Election Observation initiative. These milestones were made possible through the unwavering support of our stakeholders. We are profoundly grateful to all our donors and partners for their generous commitment to inclusive leadership and democratic participation. Your investment reflects deep belief in the empowerment of women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This support enabled the execution of comprehensive voter registration surveys and observation exercises, which have laid the groundwork for stronger civic engagement in Tanzania.

I am immensely proud of the entire KIOO team. The relentless efforts, professionalism, and resilience of our staff, from project leads to enumerators and community facilitators, were the cornerstone of our success. Their ability to navigate complex field environments with integrity and dedication ensured the quality and reliability of our findings and interventions.

Special recognition goes to the village and ward leaders whose cooperation during fieldwork facilitated smooth and effective data collection. Your commitment to grassroots development was vital to achieving the goals of our surveys and observations. Similarly, the insights provided by community members through their candid feedback demonstrate a collective ambition for constructive progress.

We extend heartfelt thanks to the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) for their technical and strategic support in aligning our observation work with international standards. Your guidance, tools, and insight elevated the credibility of our reporting and empowered us to promote democratic accountability in new ways. Our appreciation also goes to The Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government (TAMISEMI), whose endorsement and facilitation of our observer accreditation enabled efficient, credible operations in every region we served. Your support was a vote of confidence in our mission.

To our Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and Regional Administrative Secretariats (RAS), we are grateful for your proactive collaboration. Your logistical support and openness to engaging with our Long-Term Observers (LTOs) made community-level monitoring possible and impactful. A special note of gratitude goes to the polling station personnel whose professionalism and transparency allowed us to fully observe and assess the integrity of the voting process. Your cooperation represents the true spirit of democratic service. Lastly, to our LTOs your tireless work, impartiality, and dedication in the field formed the backbone of our reports. Your commitment to inclusive democracy has set a powerful precedent for electoral engagement in Tanzania.

Together, we have laid a solid foundation for inclusive, transparent, and representative governance. We look forward to continuing our work alongside you all as we build a more equitable society.

Edward Saimon

Executive Director

Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO

CHAPTER THREE

3. REPORT STRUCTURE

1. Executive Director's Foreword

This opening chapter provides a high-level overview of KIOO's achievements, strategic direction, and reflections in 2024. It introduces the six flagship projects implemented across various regions, highlighting our mission, innovations, challenges addressed, and our vision for 2025.

2. Acknowledgements

Here, we recognize the invaluable contributions of our donors, partners, community members, staff, and government institutions. It reflects the spirit of collaboration that enabled us to deliver impactful programming in difficult environments.

3. The Maendeleo Yetu Project

This chapter outlines a governance and civic empowerment project that targeted women, youth, and persons with disabilities. It walks you through activities such as data collection, dialogue forums, corruption discussions, and civic engagement meetings. .

4. EmpowerHer: Breaking Barriers to Women Leadership

This section presents findings from our inclusive leadership project that assessed barriers to political participation. It explores community perceptions, challenges with voter education, and the achievements in mobilizing women, youth, and PWDs into democratic processes through surveys, forums, and evidence-based advocacy.

5. Vocational Education and Alternative Education Pathways

This chapter presents our Open School and VETA-accredited training programs for vulnerable girls and young mothers. It describes how we used education to combat early marriage and poverty, the skills taught, the outcomes achieved, and lessons learned through community partnerships and apprenticeships.

6. Inclusive Leadership through LGA Election Observation

This is the most data-intensive chapter, providing comprehensive findings from our 2024 Local Government Election observation across 12 regions. It covers every stage voter registration, nominations, campaigning, election day, and vote counting. It includes issues of accessibility, transparency, and participation of women, youth, and PWDs, as well as recommendations for electoral reform.

7. Girls' Fast-Food Academy (GFFA)

This chapter introduces our newest innovation aimed at economically empowering girls who have survived GBV, early marriage, or forced labor. It includes success stories, a digital transformation element, and a case study showing how entrepreneurship training is transforming lives and promoting independence.

8. Lessons Learned and recommendation

This brief chapter distills key takeaways from across all projects. It highlights what worked, what challenges we faced, and strategic shifts needed going forward especially regarding technology use, inclusive leadership, and grassroots mobilization. It provides action-oriented proposals based on our field data and observations to promote inclusivity, transparency, and sustainability in leadership, education, and economic empowerment.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. THE MAENDELEO YETU PROJECT

Maendeleo yetu project was implemented in collaboration with WAJIBU. This was initiated to address systemic challenges that hinder the active participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWD) in electoral and governance processes, particularly in Kigoma District Council. These challenges are underpinned by social, economic, and political inequalities prevalent across Tanzania. According to the 2022 National Census, women constitute 51.3% (30,713,709) of the population in mainland Tanzania, making their inclusion in governance crucial for equitable development. Despite this demographic majority, women remain significantly underrepresented in decision making positions. The 2020 general election saw only 26 women elected to parliament out of 264 seats, with most women accessing legislative roles through the special seats system. Furthermore, a report by the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) on 30 years of multiparty democracy highlights that women constitute only 9.8% of elected parliamentarians. Youth, comprising 34.4% (20,612,566) of Tanzania's mainland population, represent a significant demographic that is often excluded from governance processes. Their participation is critical to ensuring that policies reflect the aspirations and needs of the younger generation; yet systemic barriers persist, limiting their involvement.



Photo: Acting Kigoma DC Director during opening speech



Photo: group after meeting

Objectives

1. Empower women, people with disabilities, and youth to actively participate in demanding accountability in the elections.
2. Improve transparency, accountability, and the fight against corruption during elections for improved service delivery.

Outcomes

The project outcome was empowered citizens (women, people with disabilities, and youth) actively participating in election processes, including policy discussions and combating corruption and improved transparency and accountability through strengthened laws and regulations, alongside meaningful media engagement in the election process. The Project specifically targeted women, youth, and persons with disabilities, emphasizing their rights to participation as a cornerstone for inclusive development.

This focus stemmed from the recognition that these groups are often underrepresented in decision-making processes and disproportionately affected by systemic barriers, limiting their ability to contribute to and benefit from community development initiatives. The project aimed to empower these groups by creating spaces for their voices to be heard, building their capacities, and addressing societal and structural challenges that inhibit their full participation.

The scope of the Project was carefully defined to address critical challenges within three villages of Mahembe Ward. These areas were strategically selected due to their unique socio-economic dynamics and the pressing need to strengthen governance, promote participation, and build community resilience. The project anchored on a series of well-planned and interconnected activities aimed at fostering collaboration, encouraging participation, and ensuring the alignment of outcomes with community needs. These activities included a comprehensive inception meeting to introduce the project and build stakeholder buy-in, data collection to identify challenges and opportunities, validation exercises to refine strategies, dialogue conversations to engage the community on key issues, and civic engagement meetings to empower citizens to advocate for their rights and participate in governance.

4.1 Implemented activities

The introduction meeting held on September 6, 2024, served as a foundational step to build awareness, establish collaboration, and align local priorities. The event brought together Kigoma District Council officials and 34 other key stakeholders, ensuring diverse representation and inclusive participation. At the heart of the meeting there was the clear articulation of the project's goals, expected outcomes, and implementation strategies. This step was crucial in aligning the vision of the project with the needs and expectations of the community. Stakeholders were guided through the project's purpose of empowering women, youth, and persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making and governance while addressing systemic challenges.

Participants provided valuable insights and feedback, enhancing the project's relevance and promoting local ownership. The meeting emphasized inclusive dialogue as a core principle, welcoming input from local leaders, government representatives, and community members. This approach not only enriched the project with diverse perspectives but also strengthened its relevance by incorporating insights directly from those it seeks to serve. Stakeholders actively contributed feedback on pressing community issues, ensuring the project addressed real challenges rather than theoretical assumptions. Stakeholders expressed strong support for the

project and committed to active involvement, demonstrating a shared vision for its success. The meeting concluded with a resounding demonstration of commitment and shared vision.



Photo: Youth representative contributing during the meeting



Photo: women representative contributing during the meeting

All 34 Attendees expressed strong support for the project, provided valuable insights, and committed to active collaboration. The meeting successfully laid the foundation for partnership and joint implementation of the project's goals. This pivotal gathering illuminated critical lessons about fostering collaboration and achieving sustainable impact. Engaging stakeholders at the project's inception emerged as a non-negotiable strategy for securing community buy-in. This proactive approach created a foundation of trust and allowed the voices of all key actors to shape the project's trajectory, ensuring that their concerns and aspirations were incorporated from the outset. Open dialogue was a catalyst for clarity and cohesion. It addressed uncertainties, aligned expectations, and fostered a shared understanding of the project's vision. The active involvement of local leaders proved indispensable. Their participation not only enhanced credibility but also mobilized collective energy, inspiring the community to rally behind the project. These leaders became champions of change, bridging the gap between project goals and grassroots realities.

4.2 Data Collection

The data collection exercise was a cornerstone activity designed to ensure that the project's implementation would be grounded in the realities of the community. This phase was carefully structured to engage women, youth, and people with disabilities, the groups most affected by systemic barriers to participation. KIOO employed strategic and participatory mobilization approaches, working closely with local leaders, community representatives and existing networks to encourage active participation. These strategies not only facilitated broad participation but also fostered a sense of ownership among the targeted groups. The exercise's success in reaching 546 participants well beyond the target of 300 highlights the strong interest and enthusiasm among women, youth, and persons with disabilities to engage in community development initiatives. The data collected provides a detailed understanding of the community's needs, challenges, and aspirations, enabling the project to design tailored interventions that are both relevant and impactful. The exercise underscored the significance of inclusive decision-making, establishing a precedent for sustained participation by marginalized groups in governance and community planning.

Data collection activity involved gathering relevant information using Wajibu App tool, interviews, and field observations. This process was conducted to understand key variables related to our project objectives, ensuring comprehensive coverage of targeted populations and environments. Trained data collectors followed standardized protocols to ensure accuracy and consistency in data capture. Data was recorded digitally for real-time updates, reducing the risk of errors. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to, including obtaining informed consent where necessary and ensuring confidentiality. The data collected was then analyzed to inform decision-making and future interventions, aiming for improved program outcomes. Data collectors utilized the Wajibu App, a digital tool designed for efficient and accurate data capture in the field. Trained data collectors used the app on mobile devices to gather information through surveys, questionnaires, and real-time observations.



Photo: KIOO director facilitating during validation meeting

4.3 Validation of the data collected

Validation meeting brought together 38 M-16; F-22 key stakeholders, including 01-woman ward representative, 03 village Executive Officers (VEO), 02 district officials (Election Officer and Community Development office), 10 women representatives, 10 youth representatives and 8 people with disabilities representatives as well as KIOO staff members. The objective was to ensure the accuracy, relevance, and alignment of the data and findings gathered during the data collection phase with the realities and priorities of the target communities. This critical step aimed to foster community ownership by involving stakeholders' women, youth, persons with disabilities, local leaders, and other key actors in reviewing, verifying, and refining the insights derived from the initial data. The validation exercise had to confirm that the information collected was correct, representative and reflective of the experiences and perspectives of the community. It provided a platform for stakeholders to review, verify, and refine the data while fostering accountability, transparency and community ownership of the project outcomes. Below is a detailed discussion integrating the objectives, methodology, results, and lessons learned from this essential exercise. The goal was to confirm that the data collected reflected the realities and needs of the target groups women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Accurate data is the foundation for informed decision-making and impactful interventions. Without accurate data, project interventions risk being irrelevant or ineffective, as they may not address the actual challenges or aspirations of the community.



Photo: group photo after validation

The exercise sought to involve local leaders, community representatives, and district officials in reviewing data, ensuring accuracy, consistency, and completeness. Stakeholder involvement fosters a sense of ownership and ensures the data is reflective of multiple perspectives. It also promotes trust and accountability in the project's activities. Stakeholders participated in small group discussions and plenary sessions, where they provided feedback based on their local expertise and experiences. Their input helped identify gaps and validate findings. The inclusive approach used strengthened partnerships and enhanced the relevance of project outcomes, as stakeholders felt their voices were integral to the process. The meeting emphasized the importance of strengthening community understanding of electoral processes,

including verifying voter registries including approaches for addressing corruption and monitoring election expenses to promote transparent and fair electoral practices. Marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, often face systemic barriers to participation in electoral processes.

The participatory methodology used in the validation meeting to ensure inclusivity, transparency, and meaningful engagement. This approach actively involved stakeholders in reviewing and validating data, ensuring the process was collaborative and grounded in local realities. Each approach played a specific and complementary role in achieving the meeting's objectives to maximize inclusivity and effectiveness. Stakeholders engaged in group-based reviews to examine the data against their local knowledge and project experiences. These discussions provided a safe space to share observations and identify gaps or discrepancies. Participants were divided into small groups to review the data against their local knowledge and project experiences. These groups provided a safe and collaborative environment for stakeholders to share observations and identify gaps or inconsistencies in the data. This approach ensured inclusivity, especially for those who might hesitate to speak in larger settings. Plenary sessions encouraged collective decision-making and consensus-building, ensuring that all voices were heard and that the final outcomes reflected a broad range of perspectives.

The meeting emphasized educating participants on critical areas such as inclusive electoral participation and reducing corruption in election processes, aiming to empower marginalized groups. The meeting included a strong emphasis on educating participants on critical areas, such as inclusive electoral participation and combating corruption in election processes. This element of the methodology aimed to empower marginalized groups, especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Capacity building enhances participants' understanding of their roles and rights within the project and the broader governance processes. It ensures that the knowledge gained is applied in future community activities, fostering long-term impact. Real-life examples and interactive discussions made the content engaging and relatable. Participants left the meeting with increased confidence and a clearer understanding of how to actively engage in electoral and governance processes. Stakeholders actively reviewed and validated data for accuracy, consistency, and completeness, uncovering minor inconsistencies in reporting, particularly around youth engagement and disability inclusion. Participants gained deeper insights into the electoral process, with five attendees taking forms to run for local government positions three women and two young men with disabilities a clear sign of empowerment through the project.

4.4 Dialogue Conversations

This activity brought together 78 participants for a powerful and transformative dialogue session. Attendees included district officials, representatives of women, youth, people with disabilities, and KIOO staff, all united by a shared goal: to foster inclusivity in governance and promote exemplary leadership practices. Discussions underscored the critical need to involve marginalized groups women, youth, and people with disabilities in decision-making processes. Participants identified entrenched barriers, including limited awareness, societal prejudices, and systemic exclusion. To counteract these challenges, they proposed capacity-building initiatives, supportive policies, and heightened community education to empower these groups to actively engage in governance. The dialogue session revealed critical insights into the barriers faced by marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities, in participating meaningfully in decision making processes. Without active and equitable inclusion, governance systems risk being unrepresentative and ineffective in addressing community needs. Participants identified several entrenched challenges. Limited awareness was a recurring issue, with many

women and youth unaware of their rights to participate in governance or access decision-making bodies. Societal prejudices further compounded the problem, as cultural norms discouraged women and youth from speaking out in public forums.



Photo: Some participants pose for a group photo after dialogue conversation



Photo: People with disabilities were part of the dialogue meeting

One young woman recounted how her ideas were dismissed in a village assembly because of her age and gender. To address these challenges, participants proposed several strategies. Capacity-building initiatives were prioritized, with women and youth calling for targeted training programs to equip them with leadership and public speaking skills. For example, workshops on civic education were proposed to educate women and youth on their legal rights and the importance of governance participation. Youth groups also suggested forming peer-led mentorship networks where they could learn from experienced leaders within the community.

On the policy front, participants recommended the adoption of gender-sensitive measures, such as reserving specific leadership seats for women, youth, and people with disabilities in village councils. Ensuring that 30% of leadership roles are held by these groups could significantly boost representation.

Heightened community education emerged as a critical solution to challenge societal prejudices and promote inclusive leadership. Participants suggested awareness campaigns to showcase the value of diverse representation in governance. Community radio programs and theatre were highlighted as effective tools to disseminate these messages. For example, a proposed drama series could depict women and youth successfully leading community projects, inspiring others to follow suit. Such initiatives would help dismantle stereotypes and encourage greater participation from marginalized groups. Upendo women's group successfully advocated for the construction of a community well, demonstrating how women's involvement can address practical community needs. Similarly, a youth-led initiative to improve waste management significantly enhanced hygiene in the ward, showcasing the potential of youth leadership.

4.5 Corruption in Elections

The dialogue delved into the corrosive effects of corruption on electoral processes, fair representation, and public trust. Participants emphasized that tackling corruption requires both systemic reform and community-level interventions. Strategies proposed included reducing election expenses, promoting transparency through accountability mechanisms, and fostering ethical practices in campaigns and governance. The dialogue session extensively examined the detrimental impact of corruption on electoral processes, fair representation, and public trust. Participants shared how corrupt practices, such as vote-buying and favoritism in candidate selection, have eroded the community's confidence in elections. For instance, one participant recounted a previous election where a well-qualified female candidate was sidelined in favor of a less qualified individual due to financial incentives offered to local officials. To combat these challenges, participants proposed several strategies. One key recommendation was reducing election expenses to lower barriers for underrepresented groups, such as youth and women, to contest for leadership positions. For example, community members suggested limiting campaign spending through stricter regulations and providing public funding for candidates from marginalized groups. This would level the playing field and ensure that elections are more about ideas and vision than financial power. Transparency and accountability mechanisms were also emphasized. Participants proposed establishing independent election monitors, including representatives from the community, to oversee the process and report irregularities.

Fostering ethical practices in campaigns and governance was another critical recommendation. Participants advocated for community education initiatives to emphasize the importance of integrity and discourage vote-buying. Participants suggested using local radio programs and public gatherings to raise awareness about the long-term consequences of corruption on development and representation. Engaging religious and community leaders in anti-corruption efforts can leverage their influence to promote ethical behavior. Participants also stressed the need to cultivate ethical leadership by encouraging leaders to adhere to codes of conduct and publicly commit to transparency and accountability. During the last local elections, a youth-led monitoring group collaborated with community elders to educate voters on the importance of rejecting bribes and voting based on merit. This initiative saw a marked decrease in vote-buying incidents in several villages. These efforts not only restore public trust but also ensure that elections produce leaders who are committed to representing the collective interests of the community.

Ethical leadership was positioned as a cornerstone for sustainable development, capable of fostering trust and delivering tangible benefits for citizens. Participants agreed that integrity, vision, accountability and commitment to diverse community needs define great leadership. Integrity was highlighted as the foundation of ethical governance, ensuring that leaders uphold transparency and fairness in their decision-making processes. Participants mentioned a local councilor who earned widespread respect by consistently prioritizing the equitable distribution of community resources, thereby setting a commendable standard for others to emulate. Visionary leadership was also deemed critical, with participants emphasizing the need for leaders to articulate clear and achievable goals that address both immediate challenges and long-term community aspirations. Accountability emerged as another cornerstone of leadership excellence; with participants stressing the importance of leaders being answerable to the people they serve. Practical examples were shared, such as leaders who held regular town hall meetings in Mahembe Ward to update citizens on project progress and gather feedback. This practice not only built trust but also ensured that development initiatives aligned with the community's evolving needs. A participant recounted a case where a local leader intervened to ensure a young woman with a disability received vocational training, enabling her to contribute to the community's economic activities.

Participants committed to engaging in leadership development programs, mentoring young leaders, and holding their representatives accountable. As a step forward, a youth group in Mahembe Ward pledged to organize leadership workshops aimed at equipping aspiring leaders with the skills and values necessary to serve effectively. This commitment to fostering leadership excellence represents a transformative shift in the community's approach to governance, paving the way for a future defined by integrity, inclusivity, and sustainable growth. The dialogue addressed pressing challenges and opportunities in governance. Participants shared insights on the exclusion of marginalized groups, corruption's impact on elections, and the excessive costs that hinder accessibility and fairness. Strategies were proposed to build capacity, foster transparency, and redefine leadership standards; ensuring governance is truly reflective of and accountable to the community. Participants emphasized the need to enhance the engagement of women, youth, and people with disabilities in voting and decision-making processes.

To address these, participants proposed conducting civic education campaigns, providing capacity-building programs, and strengthening legal frameworks to support their inclusion in governance. The dialogue identified corruption as a major hindrance to free and fair elections. Issues such as vote-buying and manipulation of results were highlighted. Participants suggested community sensitization on the negative impacts of corruption, enforcement of stringent electoral laws, and establishment of independent monitoring mechanisms to promote transparency and accountability during elections. High election expenses were noted as a deterrent to equitable participation, particularly for marginalized groups. Participants proposed

introducing campaign financing limits, providing public funding for candidates from special groups, and creating awareness about affordable campaign strategies to ensure broader participation in elections.

4.6 Inclusive Participation Enhances Outcomes

The importance of involving diverse groups' women, youth, and people with disabilities was a resounding theme. Their inclusion not only enriched the discussions but also ensured that development initiatives addressed the unique needs of all community members. Participants shared how engaging youth representatives led to creative solutions for improving local

economic activities. The session emphasized the value of civic education and supportive policies to empower these groups, enabling them to actively contribute to governance and decision-making processes. Participants identified corruption as a critical barrier to fair representation and public trust. The dialogue underscored how unethical practices, particularly during elections, erode the democratic fabric of the community. Some attendees recounted instances where community projects stalled due to mismanagement of public funds. Strengthening accountability mechanisms and fostering transparency were highlighted as indispensable strategies for restoring integrity in electoral processes. Participants noted that high costs discourage women and youth from pursuing leadership, thereby perpetuating exclusion.

4.7 Civic Engagement Meetings

The civic engagement dialogue meetings focused on promoting transparency and accountability in the local election process. This initiative aimed to foster a well-informed community actively participating in governance and electoral processes, particularly among women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWD). Through these sessions, the project achieved its primary outcome of enhancing transparency and accountability, supported by strengthened laws and regulations to facilitate fair and transparent elections. These meetings reached 1,128 participants (623 women; 464 youth & 41 People with disabilities) equipping them with knowledge and skills on transparency, accountability, and civic engagement principles critical to the electoral process. The output of the initiative was notably impactful, resulting in an improved understanding among women, youth, and PWD on their roles and rights within elections and governance. The meetings underscored the importance of inclusivity in civic processes and promoted active community involvement as a foundation for democratic development. These civic engagement meetings aimed to empower community members especially women, youth, and people with disabilities (PWD) with knowledge and tools to actively participate in governance and electoral processes. The meetings aimed to enhance transparency, accountability and civic literacy, fostering inclusive community involvement and informed decision-making during elections.

The civic engagement meetings yielded significant insights into the current civic and electoral landscape. A primary outcome was an improved understanding among the 1,128 participants (particularly 623 women, 464 youth, and 41 people with disabilities (PWD) as direct beneficiaries as seen in the table below whereas indirect beneficiaries are all community members found in those villages) on the importance of transparency, accountability, and their roles in democratic processes. Participants expressed a heightened awareness of their civic rights and responsibilities, as well as increased motivation to engage actively in governance. However, several critical concerns surfaced during discussions. Many participants voiced dissatisfaction with the lack of financial support for local leaders, who are not given salaries or allowances like other political figures, leading to low morale and reduced motivation to serve effectively. This disparity was seen as a deterrent to local civic engagement, as community members feel disempowered by the limited recognition and support for grassroots leadership.

Participants criticized instances where influential parties seemed to control electoral outcomes by positioning preferred individuals in power, undermining fair competition. Corruption was identified as a pervasive issue, with some participants observing that bribery and dishonest practices are often regarded as “usual” during elections.



Photo: People with special needs were part of the process



Photo: A person with special needs (blind) were part of the process.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. EMPOWERHER: BREAKING BARRIERS TO WOMEN LEADERSHIP

The Breaking Barriers to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities Leadership project aims to address and overcome the significant obstacles faced by marginalized groups in political and social leadership roles. This initiative is particularly focused on enhancing the leadership capacities and democratic engagement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who often encounter substantial barriers to full participation in democratic processes. In Kigoma, Katavi and Tabora, women, youth, and persons with disabilities face several challenges hindering their effective leadership. Cultural and infrastructural barriers often restrict their access to leadership. Limited financial resources affect their ability to participate in campaigns, seek office, or engage in civic activities. Societal norms often undervalue the contributions of women, youth, and people with disabilities. These prejudices manifest in various ways, including reduced support for their leadership ambitions and limited opportunities for advancement and insufficient access to information about electoral processes, voter registration and the importance of political participation further compounds the challenges faced by these groups.

According to 2019 and 2020 voter registration and turnout statistics from Kigoma, Katavi and Tabora regions indicate that there was a moderate level of participation, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Specific challenges included limited awareness campaigns and logistical issues that disproportionately affected marginalized groups. Participation rates were low, with notable differences among various demographic groups, including minimal engagement from political parties and insufficient support for people with disabilities. 2020 general Elections efforts to improve inclusivity saw some progress, with increased voter registration among these groups. There was a notable increase in voter registration among women and youth, partly due to targeted awareness campaigns.

The project had a survey component that was designed to evaluate the extent to which women, youth, and persons with disabilities are participating in voter registration. Understanding the current levels of participation provides a baseline for measuring progress in future initiatives and helps identify which groups are underrepresented; to uncover the specific obstacles that prevents women, youth, and persons with disabilities from engaging in democratic processes and to explore the economic, educational, and social factors that influences the participation of these groups in democratic processes and to provide actionable data that can guide future programs and policies aimed at increasing the leadership and democratic engagement of underrepresented groups. Data-driven decision-making ensures that resources are allocated effectively and that interventions are designed to have the maximum impact.

5.1 Expected Outcomes

Stakeholders, including government bodies, CSOs and the public, will have a clearer understanding of the participation levels of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in voter registration and democratic processes; based on the survey findings, policies and programs will be developed or refined to specifically address the barriers these groups face, leading to more inclusive democratic practices and to empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities by ensuring that their voices are heard and their needs are addressed in future initiatives. A detailed report outlining the findings of the survey, including data on participation rates, barriers, and

influencing factors, a set of recommendations tailored to different stakeholders, including government agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations, to guide future actions and establishment of baseline data that can be used to measure the effectiveness of future interventions aimed at increasing participation and leadership among women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

During implementation of this project the following indicators were used to measure the success, percentage of women, youth, and persons with disabilities who are registered to vote compared to the total eligible population; number of specific barriers identified that hinder the participation of these groups in democratic processes; percentage of respondents who report active engagement in democratic activities, such as voting, campaigning, or attending civic events; number of policies revised based on the survey findings to enhance the participation of underrepresented groups and extent to which various stakeholders (government, CSOs, etc.) utilize the survey data to inform their initiatives. The project was designed to gather quantitative data on the participation and inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in voter registration processes. In terms of gender distribution, the survey revealed that 53.9% of respondents were female, while 46.1% were male. The age range spanned from 18 to over 61 years, with the majority falling within the 18 to 25-year age group, which constituted 36.17% of the sample. This demographic distribution highlights the engagement of a youthful population, reflecting a significant segment of the surveyed community.

Approximately 15% of the respondents, or about 75 individuals, were people with disabilities. This equitable distribution ensures that the data accurately represents the diverse regional contexts of the survey, enhancing the reliability and depth of the findings. 28.37% of respondents have completed primary education, while 22.7% have attained secondary education. Conversely, 14.89% of respondents had no formal education, and only a small fraction held higher qualifications 2.13% possessed a diploma, and a mere 0.71% held a university degree. This distribution of educational attainment may be indicative of varying levels of engagement in democratic processes. The respondents' limited higher education, with many having only primary education or none, indicates that educational background likely impacts their participation in leadership and decision-making roles. These findings highlight a pressing need to address educational disparities to foster more inclusive participation in governance. Enhanced educational opportunities and targeted programs could empower marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective engagement in leadership and decision-making processes.

Youth aged 18 to 25 years represent the largest demographic in the survey. Despite their prominence in the sample, their educational attainment is similarly constrained, with many having only completed primary or secondary education. This situation impacts their engagement in leadership roles and decision-making processes. People with disabilities, who make up approximately 15% of the respondents, face unique challenges. Educational attainment for this group is often lower due to barriers in accessing quality education and specialized support. 65.96% of respondents had registered in the permanent voter register, signaling a notable level of engagement with the democratic process. 34.04% had not registered, citing reasons such as age restrictions, lack of awareness, and prior commitments. The high registration rate among those who have already registered shows potential for increased voter engagement, but the 34.04% who remain unregistered are a critical gap that could affect overall turnout. First, awareness campaigns should be intensified, focusing not only on the importance of registration but also on the significance of actual voting in shaping the nation's future. Secondly, providing accessible registration opportunities, particularly in remote and marginalized areas, could help close the gap

for the unregistered 34.04%. 37.59%, identified as farmers, followed by 31.91% involved in private business. Other common occupations included small-scale sellers at 12.77% and casual laborers at 6.38%.

The implications for the participation of the target group and development are profound. If farmers, small-scale sellers, and casual laborers continue to be marginalized in democratic participation, policies and development initiatives may fail to address their specific needs. This can result in a widening gap between the economically advantaged and disadvantaged, stalling overall development efforts. To ensure sustainable development, it is essential to create mechanisms that facilitate the inclusion of these groups, such as flexible registration opportunities, awareness campaigns tailored to their schedules, and platforms that amplify their voices in decision-making processes. The situation where large segments of the population, particularly those engaged in labor-intensive occupations like farming, private business, and casual labor, struggle to participate fully in democratic processes can create an environment ripe for corruption during elections.

5.2 Perceptions of Democratic Rights Among young PWDs

According to the 2022 Population and Housing Census (PHC 2022), Tanzania Mainland has a total population of 59,851,347. Of this, youth account for 20,612,566, representing 34.4%, where 9,827,426 (16.4%) are male, and 10,785,140 (18.0%) are female. Additionally, 12,312,403 youth live in rural areas, while 8,300,163 reside in urban areas. The youth population in the country is a group with diverse needs determined by age, gender, marital status, education levels, living conditions, and other social and economic characteristics. An overwhelming majority **92.91%** of respondents believe that women, youth, and persons with disabilities in their communities have equal rights to participate in democratic processes, including voter registration. **7.09%** of respondents felt that these groups do not enjoy equal rights, indicating that there are still barriers to full inclusion.

Leadership and governance are among the essential foundations and tools for youth development and empowerment. To ensure that youth and other groups' issues are adequately addressed, it is crucial that youth themselves participate fully in decision-making processes and are given leadership opportunities instead of being mere observers. Therefore, various policies, legal, strategic, and guideline systems aimed at promoting youth leadership and governance have been implemented by the government in collaboration with stakeholders. However, these systems often regard youth as a minor segment of the population rather than primary beneficiaries requiring special attention, support, and services. Through policy the government in collaboration with stakeholders, will instill national values and principles of good governance in youth; promote youth participation in politics, leadership, and decision-making bodies at national and international levels; ensure the availability of an integrated information and data system on youth development at all levels; strengthen research and implement research findings in providing various services for youth development and well-being in the country; create an enabling environment for youth organizations and civil society organizations to participate in designing, implementing, and monitoring youth development plans; and strengthen the coordination system of youth development activities implemented in various sectors and institutions in the country.

There was a question aimed at assessing the awareness of women, youth, and persons with disabilities regarding the existence of policies, laws, regulations, guidelines, procedures, and regional and international agreements that protect and advocate for the rights of women, youth, and persons with disabilities to fully participate in decision-making processes. Based on

responses from 500 interviewees, 30% said they are aware, 25% said they are not aware, and 45% said they have no knowledge at all, meaning that this information is entirely new to them. The data reveals that a significant portion of the population, especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities, lack awareness of policies and legal frameworks designed to protect their rights. With 45% of respondents having no knowledge of these protections and 25% unaware, the majority are not equipped to engage in decision-making processes. Participants were asked about their awareness of the labor and employment relations law, which mandates that every institution with 20 or more employees must ensure that 3% of their workforce comprises people with disabilities. 15% of respondents acknowledged having heard of the law. 29% said they were completely unaware, and a striking 56% indicated they had no knowledge of it whatsoever. This stark finding reveals that the labor and employment relations law is largely unknown to most, making it a distant and unfamiliar concept. Public and private institutions may inadvertently neglect the 3% quota, simply due to ignorance or the absence of enforcement mechanisms.

The consequences of this lack of awareness and implementation are deeply felt in the daily lives of people with disabilities. Employment provides financial stability, independence, self-worth, and social inclusion. When laws that are meant to support their employment go unrecognized and unenforced, people with disabilities are left at a severe disadvantage. They face greater risks of poverty, social exclusion, and reliance on others, preventing them from fully contributing to society and improving their quality of life. Recommendations for Improving young people and Persons with Disabilities Participation:

1. Amend election laws to lower the age requirement for participation in decision-making bodies from 21 years, enabling younger youth to engage in leadership roles.
2. Expand access to quality education and vocational training, emphasizing bridging the skill gap in high-level and intermediate skills.
3. Implement policies to promote job creation, especially in rural areas, and for vulnerable groups such as young women and persons with disabilities.
4. Promote the inclusion of youth, particularly girls and people with disabilities, in governance structures at all levels.
5. Educate young individuals regarding their rights and responsibilities as per labor regulations and provide training on contract negotiation and financial management.

5.3 Barriers to Inclusive Leadership and Democratization

The survey results offer a nuanced understanding of the obstacles that women, youth, and persons with disabilities face in engaging with democratic processes and assuming leadership roles. These barriers are not merely challenges to individual participation, they also have broader implications for the democratization process and the creation of a truly inclusive society. Education is a cornerstone of active citizenship, providing the knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful participation in democracy. However, the survey reveals that 14.89% of respondents have no formal education, while 28.37% have only completed primary education. This lack of education limits individuals' understanding of their democratic rights and reduces their confidence in pursuing leadership roles. Without adequate education, marginalized groups may feel disempowered, perpetuating their exclusion from decision-making processes. The educational gap hinders the democratization process by creating an uneven playing field where only the educated can fully engage in political discourse and leadership. When large segments of the population are excluded from leadership due to educational disparities, democracy itself is compromised, as it fails to be truly representative and inclusive.

The survey highlights that a significant number of respondents are engaged in low-income, labor-intensive activities, such as farming 37.59% and small-scale business 31.91%. These economic constraints are a significant barrier to participation in both leadership and democratic processes. Individuals focused on economic survival often prioritize their immediate needs over civic engagement, which limits their ability to register as voters or pursue leadership opportunities. Women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who are often economically disadvantaged, may struggle to finance political campaigns, engage in political activities, or advocate for their rights. This economic difference results in a leadership structure predominantly composed of individuals with financial resources, which increases the representation gap and affects the progress toward a more inclusive democracy. The survey's finding that 92.91% of respondents believe in equal rights for women, youth, and persons with disabilities is encouraging. 7.09% who do not share this belief highlight the persistence of societal attitudes and cultural norms that discriminate against these groups.

5.4 Accessibility and Participation Challenges

Access to democratic processes, particularly voter registration, remains a significant barrier for marginalized groups. 34.04% of respondents who have not registered to vote underscores the difficulties that many face in accessing registration facilities. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where registration centers may be far away, information is limited, and the process itself can be cumbersome. These accessibility barriers disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who may face additional challenges related to mobility, financial constraints, and lack of information. If these groups are unable to register and participate in elections, their voices are excluded from the democratic process, undermining the goal of inclusive leadership and governance. When asked if they knew the qualifications for being registered in the permanent voter register, only 8% of respondents indicated that they were aware, while a staggering 92% admitted to having no knowledge of these requirements. This gap is alarming, especially given that voter registration occurs every five years. Widespread ignorance of registration criteria threatens electoral integrity. Observers noted that young individuals, who appeared to be under the eligible age for voter registration, were still being registered. Without requiring any identification documents during registration, the system becomes vulnerable to misuse.

Moreover, the lack of understanding extends to the removal of deceased people from the voter register. Only 28% of respondents were aware that a deceased person's name should be removed from the register, while 72% were unaware. This gap creates the potential for fraudulent activities. During discussions, it was revealed that voter identification cards are sometimes bought by candidates during elections, further highlighting the risks associated with a poorly managed voter register. The statistics paint a clear picture there is an urgent need for better education and stricter procedures around voter registration and disqualification. Without proper awareness and enforcement, the electoral process is vulnerable to manipulation and fraud. Institute a system that requires identification documents for first-time registrants and ensuring timely removal of deceased people from the voter register are critical steps in safeguarding the integrity of elections.

5.4.1 Voter education

In accordance with Article 334, Section 4C of the National Law on Elections, the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) is mandated to provide voter education, coordinate, and supervise institutions, organizations, and individuals involved in this critical function. The primary aim of voter education is to ensure that citizens understand the electoral process, their rights, and the criteria for selecting suitable candidates for leadership. The recent exercise to

improve the Permanent Register of Voters in the Kigoma, Katavi and Tabora regions brought to light a significant deficit in public awareness on voter registration. Observations from the field indicate that many citizens were not aware about various aspects of the registration process. Common misconceptions include confusion about the connection between voter registration and the next local government elections, the need for new identification cards for each election year and the erroneous belief that political party affiliation is necessary for registration. Misunderstanding is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where misinformation and limited access to accurate information have exacerbated confusion.



Photo: One of the observed voter education poster

During the voter registration and election observation period, accredited organizations encountered significant challenges that impacted their operations and effectiveness. Both organizations responsible for voter education and those accredited to act as observers faced a notably compressed timeline for preparation, which led to difficulties in organizing and executing their respective activities. Limited funding further compounded these challenges, as many organizations struggled to mobilize the necessary resources. This was particularly evident in reaching remote and rural areas where misinformation was most prevalent. The short preparation and execution timeline constrained the development and dissemination of educational materials, making it difficult to employ diverse and engaging methods to effectively reach the target audience. Voter education in these regions appears to be insufficiently supported by a variety of stakeholders. The primary providers of voter education typically include the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and political parties. However, the observations noted that the presence and activity of these organizations were inadequate. The improvement of the permanent register of voters was designed to enhance electoral participation. The plan included a multi-faceted approach to disseminate information through local media, community meetings and Informational and Communication materials (IC).

5.4.2 Community Meetings and Forums

While community meetings and forums are effective in engaging local communities, the public awareness deficit observed suggests that these methods were either underutilized or not

adequately executed. The confusion among citizens about the purpose of the registration and the misbeliefs regarding political party affiliation indicate that the face-to-face interactions were insufficient. However, observers observed INEC conducting series of community meetings and forums, including Bonanza at Kawawa ground, as part of public engagement strategy the efforts were largely focused on urban areas, where the population density is higher and logistical challenges are fewer. The lack of outreach likely caused a public awareness gap, as rural citizens had fewer face-to-face interactions and access to official information. This led to confusion about the registration process and misconceptions about political affiliations, with some mistakenly believing that registering to vote meant allegiance to a specific party. Media campaigns played a crucial role in disseminating information widely, but the significant public misunderstanding shows that these campaigns were either not widespread enough or not effectively communicated. Lack of clarity about registration process and eligibility age points to a gap in consistent and comprehensive media outreach, especially in rural areas where access to television and social media might be limited. INEC utilized community radio stations as a vital tool for mobilizing the community and disseminating information about the voter registration process.

The radio broadcasts included announcements about registration dates, locations of registration centers, and the importance of registering to vote. The programs were designed to reach a broad audience, including those who might not have access to other forms of media, thereby extending the campaign's reach to more remote and rural areas. The radio campaigns featured a variety of formats to engage listeners, including informative segments, interviews with INEC officials and local leaders. Challenges remained in ensuring consistent and inclusive outreach. While community radio stations were instrumental in reaching a significant portion of the population, gaps in coverage persisted, particularly in the most remote areas where even radio signals might be weak or inconsistent. Moreover, the complexity of the information, such as specific details about the registration process and age eligibility, may not have been fully comprehended by all listeners, indicating a need for repeated messaging and simpler explanations.

5.4.3 Printed Materials

Distributing printed materials is essential for reaching diverse literacy levels. However, the observed public confusion suggests that these materials were not distributed effectively to address all necessary information. To address the diverse and ensure comprehensive dissemination of voter registration information, INEC and accredited CSOs are advised to include flyers, posters, brochures and informational pamphlets, which are carefully crafted to provide clear and concise information about the voter registration process with essential details such as registration dates, locations, eligibility criteria, and the importance of participating in the electoral process. The distribution of these materials should be coordinated involving both INEC officials and CSO volunteers through visiting public places such as markets, bus stops, health centers, and community centers, where large numbers of people could be reached. In addition to distributing the materials, strategically they can be posted on walls, trees and notice boards in highly visible locations, such as government buildings, schools, religious institutions and local businesses. The local CSOs should play a crucial role in this outreach, leveraging their local networks and understanding of the community dynamics to effectively target different demographic groups.

5.5 Achievements of the project

The EmpowerHer: Breaking Barriers to Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities Leadership project achieved several significant milestones that contributed to enhancing the participation of marginalized groups in democratic processes.

One of the major achievements is the successful targeting and inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities, in voter registration and democratic leadership. This focus on inclusivity, despite the historical marginalization of these groups, ensured that their voices were heard and their challenges addressed in democratic processes. Another critical achievement is the generation of valuable insights that inform future strategies for promoting inclusive leadership. The project highlighted various barriers that prevent women, youth, and persons with disabilities from participating in voter registration and leadership, such as societal norms, economic constraints, and lack of awareness. Below is a detailed discussion of these achievements, supported by specific examples from the survey report.

5.5.1 Increased Awareness and Participation

One of the significant achievements of the EmpowerHer project is its success in raising awareness about voter registration and the importance of democratic participation among marginalized groups. The survey revealed that 65.96% of the respondents had registered in the permanent voter register, indicating a solid engagement with the democratic process. This increased awareness can be attributed to the project's outreach efforts, which involved educating women, youth, and persons with disabilities about their democratic rights and the importance of participation. For example, a notable portion of the survey respondents, particularly those aged between 18-25 years, demonstrated active engagement, which is a positive indicator of the project's impact on the younger demographic. The project successfully implemented targeted interventions that addressed the unique barriers faced by marginalized groups, particularly women and persons with disabilities. For example, the project highlighted the challenges that people with disabilities encounter, such as physical, informational, and societal barriers, and provided tailored solutions to enhance their participation.

5.5.2 Strengthened Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Another major achievement of the project was the successful collaboration with local communities and stakeholders. The active involvement of village and ward leaders, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs), played a crucial role in facilitating data collection and expanding the project's reach. This collaboration ensured that the project was well-received at the grassroots level, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes. The project also emphasized the importance of continuous monitoring and adaptation, which allowed it to remain responsive to the evolving challenges faced by the target groups.

CHAPTER SIX

6. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (VET) AND ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PATHWAYS THROUGH THE KIOO OPEN SCHOOL PROJECT

Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Alternative Education Pathways through the KIOO Open School was a bold and transformative initiative implemented in Ilagala to restore hope and opportunity for vulnerable girls and young mothers who had been pushed to the margins of society. With many forced to drop out of school due to early pregnancies, child marriage, or extreme poverty, the traditional education system simply left them behind. This project sought to rewrite their future by offering flexible, VETA-accredited vocational training in tailoring, carpentry, computing, and entrepreneurship right in the heart of their community.

The program was born out of a clear and urgent need: too many girls were being denied their right to learn, grow, and thrive. Early marriage and school dropout had become normalized, and young mothers had no second chance to reclaim their dreams. The KIOO Open School stepped in to change that narrative. By combining practical skills training with life skills, reproductive health education, and mentorship, the school offered more than just education it offered dignity, resilience, and a new beginning. Community partnerships with artisans and businesses unlocked real opportunities for apprenticeships and job placements, while awareness forums began to shift deep-rooted cultural norms. Through this initiative, education became not just a classroom experience, but a life-changing journey.

The project aimed to enhance access to quality vocational and alternative education pathways for vulnerable girls and young mothers, reducing school dropout rates and early marriages while increasing their socio-economic empowerment and employability." This goal responds to a critical socio-educational challenge in rural Tanzania, particularly in Kigoma region: the exclusion of vulnerable girls and young mothers from the formal education system. Many of these girls drop out of school due to factors such as early pregnancy, poverty, gender-based violence, and cultural norms that prioritize domestic roles over education. Without educational credentials or employable skills, they face a cycle of dependency, poverty, and exploitation. By establishing the KIOO Open School, this initiative aimed to break that cycle. The school became a *second chance* hub for education, life skills, and economic empowerment. The goal was not just to provide training, but to create transformative pathways, restoring dignity, unlocking potential, and preparing girls and young mothers for a productive and self-reliant life. This aligns with national and global development goals, especially SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

6.1 Objectives

Objective 1: Provide flexible, inclusive, and accredited vocational education opportunities to vulnerable youth, especially girls and young mothers. This objective recognizes that conventional school systems often fail to accommodate the complex realities faced by marginalized young women. Flexibility in scheduling, curriculum design, and support services is critical for re-engaging those who dropped out due to motherhood, household responsibilities, or stigma. The KIOO Open School's model was intentionally inclusive and adaptive, offering VETA-accredited courses in tailoring, carpentry, computing, and business skills that are relevant, practical, and aligned with local market demands. Inclusivity was at the heart of the implementation. From the enrollment process to the learning environment, efforts were made to

ensure that learners felt safe, respected, and supported. This included offering psychosocial support, childcare arrangements, and reproductive health education to address barriers beyond the classroom.

Objective 2: Equip learners with practical skills for employment, entrepreneurship, and income generation through partnerships with artisans and vocational institutions. This objective focused on the transition from training to livelihood. Training alone is not enough; learners must be able to apply their skills meaningfully in the real world. The project built strong links with local artisans, craftspeople, and vocational institutions to provide apprenticeship opportunities, mentorship, and job placements. By aligning training content with market needs and creating bridges to the informal and formal labor markets, the initiative aimed to improve employment outcomes. Graduates were also supported with startup kits and entrepreneurship coaching, enabling many to launch small businesses in tailoring, carpentry, or mobile computing services. This approach ensured that vocational training was a pathway to income generation and independence, not just a certificate.

Objective 3: Reduce early marriage and school dropout rates by offering a safe, community-supported educational environment that addresses social and gender barriers.

At the core of this objective is prevention and social transformation. The project did not only work with learners but also engaged the wider community parents, leaders, and influencers to challenge the norms and practices that perpetuate early marriage and deny girls their right to education. Through community forums, dialogues, and outreach, the initiative encouraged collective responsibility in protecting girls and promoting their education. The school itself was designed as a sanctuary, physically safe, emotionally supportive, and socially empowering. Learners not only gained technical skills but also built confidence, peer support networks, and awareness of their rights. As a result, the project contributed to a decline in reported early marriages and encouraged more families to send their daughters back to school. Together, the goal and objectives of the KIOO Open School reflect a holistic, rights-based, and community-driven approach to transforming the lives of vulnerable girls and young mothers. They emphasize not just access to education, but quality, relevance, safety, and empowerment. The results show that with the right approach, education becomes more than a classroom activity and it becomes a powerful tool for social and economic change.

6.2 Key Activities Implemented

1. Enrolled 130 learners (91 girls and young mothers – 70%) into the KIOO Open School

Enrollment in 2024 marked a significant milestone, with 130 learners, **70%** of whom were girls and young mothers gaining access to flexible and inclusive learning opportunities. This achievement was not merely about numbers; it was a powerful statement against systemic exclusion. These were individuals who, due to early pregnancy, poverty, and cultural norms, had once been written off by the formal education system. By opening its doors to them, the KIOO Open School offered a dignified second chance to reclaim their futures. The intentional prioritization of female learners also demonstrated a strong commitment to gender equity and the empowerment of marginalized youth.

2. VETA-accredited training offered in Tailoring, Carpentry, Computing, and Business

The school delivered a comprehensive **skills-based curriculum accredited by VETA**, tailored to the real needs of the community and the local labor market. Courses included:

- a) Empowering learners to produce, design, and sell garments, especially for local school uniforms and cultural wear.

- b) Opening opportunities in the construction and furniture-making sectors, areas often dominated by men thus also challenging gender stereotypes.
- c) Introducing learners to digital tools and enhancing their ability to participate in the modern economy.
- d) Equipping participants with the knowledge to launch and manage micro-enterprises, including record keeping, marketing, and customer service. This multi-disciplinary approach ensured that learners left with more than just technical skills acquired the confidence and readiness to navigate employment or start their own businesses.

3. Established 8 partnerships with local artisans and small businesses for apprenticeship placements. To bridge the gap between training and practical experience, the program established 8 strategic partnerships with local artisans and enterprises. These relationships enabled learners to gain hands-on exposure to real work environments, refine their skills, and build professional networks. Apprenticeships also created a natural pathway to job offers or long-term mentorships. These collaborations deepened community ownership of the program and emphasized that vocational training is not a standalone effort it thrives when linked to local ecosystems of opportunity.

4. Conducted life skills and reproductive health education sessions to support learners' psychosocial well-being. Recognizing that many learners had experienced trauma, isolation, or stigma due to early motherhood or poverty, the project integrated life skills training and reproductive health education into the curriculum. These sessions addressed topics such as emotional resilience, self-esteem, assertiveness, menstrual hygiene, and informed decision-making. The aim was to build holistic capacity not only to prepare learners for the job market but also nurturing their mental, emotional, and physical well-being. This support system helps learners stay motivated, focused, and hopeful about their future.

5. Held 3 community sensitization forums to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education and the risks of early marriage. The success of any intervention targeting girls and young women depends heavily on community attitudes. The project facilitated three sensitization forums that engaged parents, community leaders, and local influencers in dialogue about girls' rights, the value of education, and the harmful impacts of early marriage. These gatherings served to challenge harmful norms, reduce stigma against young mothers returning to school, and encourage collective responsibility in protecting girls' futures. Importantly, they fostered an enabling environment where education is seen as a shared priority, not just an individual pursuit.

6. Supported 20 learners with startup kits after graduation for self-employment

To catalyze economic empowerment, the project provided startup kits to 20 graduates, allowing them to immediately apply their skills in self-employment. These kits tailored to each learner's trade (e.g., sewing machines, carpentry tools, business calculators, or digital accessories) eliminated the initial capital barrier and jump-started their entrepreneurial journeys. This investment ensured that the impact of training translated into tangible income generation, household stability, and role modeling for other girls in the community. The activities implemented formed a robust, interconnected strategy that combined skill development, psychosocial support, community engagement, and practical livelihood transition. Together, they created an enabling ecosystem for vulnerable girls and young mothers not just to survive, but to thrive. The KIOO Open School became more than a center of learning; it became a symbol of possibility and transformation for the Ilagala community and beyond.

6.3 Outputs (Direct Deliverables)

130 learners (70% female) enrolled and trained in VET programs

The enrollment and training of 130 learners—of which 70% are female—stand as a significant direct deliverable of the project, illustrating both its reach and its responsiveness to the needs of marginalized youth. By prioritizing girls and young mothers, the program directly addresses gender disparities in access to vocational education and economic opportunities. This targeted inclusion not only aligns with broader gender equity goals but also empowers young women who often face heightened barriers due to poverty, early marriage, or lack of formal education.

Moreover, the strong female participation signals a shift in community perceptions toward the value of inclusive education. The fact that 91 girls and young mothers enrolled indicates growing confidence in KIOO Open School's approach to delivering safe, relevant, and skills-based training. It reflects the trust built through sustained engagement and the school's reputation as a transformative space for vulnerable youth. This output, therefore, is not just a quantitative achievement but a qualitative milestone in fostering inclusive development and laying a foundation for long-term impact in the lives of young women and their communities.

4 training courses successfully delivered

The successful delivery of four vocational training courses Tailoring, Carpentry, Basic Computer Literacy, and Business Management, demonstrates the project's commitment to offering a well-rounded and market-relevant skills package. These courses were carefully selected to balance traditional trades with emerging skills, ensuring that learners are not only grounded in income-generating crafts but are also prepared for modern opportunities in the digital and entrepreneurial landscape. This diversification enhances the learners' employability and adaptability, critical in a job market that increasingly values both manual skills and digital literacy. By combining practical, hands-on training with business and computer skills, the program has empowered youth to pursue multiple pathways, whether in self-employment, apprenticeships, or formal job placement. This holistic approach reflects an understanding of local economic contexts while also anticipating future trends. The relevance and variety of these courses also serve to boost learners' confidence and motivation, reinforcing the project's goal of building sustainable livelihoods through inclusive and applied vocational education.

8 Apprenticeship partnerships established

The establishment of eight apprenticeship partnerships with local artisans and businesses represents a vital bridge between classroom learning and real-world application. These collaborations created structured opportunities for learners to apply their acquired skills in actual work environments, deepening their technical know-how while fostering essential workplace habits such as time management, teamwork, and customer service. Through this exposure, learners gained firsthand insight into the demands and standards of their respective industries, helping them transition from training to meaningful employment or entrepreneurship. Importantly, these partnerships also strengthened community ownership and support for the vocational training initiative. By involving local businesses in the learners' development journey, the project not only expanded its impact but also nurtured local networks that can sustain and scale job opportunities beyond the life of the project. This output directly contributes to the goal of sustainable livelihoods by ensuring that skills are matched with experience, and that training is continuously informed by practical, market-driven feedback.

3 community forums conducted

The conduct of three community forums created essential spaces for dialogue, reflection, and collective problem-solving around girls' education and early marriage. By intentionally involving a broad cross-section of stakeholders including parents, elders, religious leaders, and youth the forums cultivated inclusive conversations that challenged harmful norms while affirming the value of investing in girls' futures. These interactions helped demystify the objectives of the vocational training program and fostered greater understanding and support within the community. Beyond awareness-raising, the forums played a strategic role in enhancing local accountability and encouraging shared responsibility for sustaining positive change. Participants were not only informed but empowered to act identifying barriers, proposing solutions, and endorsing local champions and gatekeepers who could advocate for girls' rights and education. As a result, these forums became more than information sessions; they evolved into platforms for mobilizing community ownership, reinforcing the project's long-term sustainability and social impact.

20 graduates equipped with starter kits

Equipping 20 graduates with customized starter kits marked a critical step in translating vocational skills into practical livelihood opportunities. Tailored to each graduate's fields such as sewing machines for tailoring, carpentry tools for woodwork, and laptops for digital or business management, these kits removed a key barrier to self-employment: lack of start-up capital. By enabling immediate application of skills, the kits ensured that training was not just theoretical but a launchpad for real economic activity and independence. This direct support mechanism also played a role in breaking cycles of dependency often experienced in vulnerable communities. Graduates were empowered to take the initiative, serve local markets, and even become job creators within their neighborhoods. The starter kits helped preserve the momentum gained through training by preventing skill decay and fostering a mindset of self-reliance. As such, this output represents both a practical intervention and a strategic investment in long-term community resilience.

6.4 Outcomes (Short-to-Medium-Term Changes)

1. Increased skills and self-confidence

The outcome of increased skills and self-confidence among participants is a powerful indicator of the program's transformative impact. With over 90% of learners reporting enhanced technical competence and personal confidence, the initiative clearly succeeded in building not just capabilities but also belief in one's potential. This personal growth was evident in end-of-training assessments and was further validated during focus group discussions, where learners articulated their readiness to apply their skills in real-world settings. What makes this outcome particularly significant is how it translated into broader community engagement. Many graduates began participating in local initiatives, mentoring their peers, and even voicing ambitions to take on leadership roles. This shift from passive recipients to active contributors highlights the ripple effect of empowering vulnerable youth, particularly girls and young mothers—with practical skills and psychological readiness. It demonstrates that vocational education, when delivered inclusively and supportively, can ignite lasting changes in individual trajectories and community dynamics.

2. Improved employability

The improved employability of graduates is a compelling short-to-medium-term outcome of the vocational training initiative. With 45 graduates about 35% of the total cohort—securing employment or internship placements with local businesses, the program showcases its capacity

to directly translate skills into economic opportunities. This achievement validates the curriculum's relevance and the careful alignment of KIOO's training program with current market needs. It demonstrates that when practical learning is combined with real-world partnerships, graduates are better positioned to meet the demands of evolving industries and secure meaningful work. Beyond job placements, this outcome reflects the success of integrating vocational training with apprenticeship linkages. The concrete employment results not only uplift individual learners but also serve as a model for how targeted skill development can drive broader community and economic benefits. By bridging the gap between education and the labor market, the program reinforces the value of investing in hands-on learning environments and strong local business collaborations. This approach contributes to building a more resilient and capable workforce, ultimately fostering sustained growth and economic independence within the community.

3. Increased retention in education

The outcome of increased retention in education, particularly among adolescent girls in Ilagala, underscores the effectiveness of a flexible and inclusive learning approach. The 40% reduction in dropout rates compared to 2023 is a notable achievement, signaling that the program responded to the specific barriers that often push girls out of the education system—such as early motherhood, poverty, and social stigma. By integrating psychosocial support with adaptable schedules, KIOO's Open School created a safe and responsive environment where vulnerable girls could re-engage with learning on their own terms. This improvement in retention is more than a statistical gain—it represents restored hope and agency for young women who might otherwise have been left behind. The Open School's ability to accommodate learners with complex needs helped foster a renewed sense of purpose and self-worth among participants. As a result, girls not only remained in school but also committed themselves to completing their training and pursuing further opportunities. This outcome reinforces the importance of holistic, girl-centered education models in breaking cycles of exclusion and advancing equitable access to learning and future livelihoods.

4. Reduced early marriages

The reported 30% decline in early marriage cases within the school's catchment area marks a significant social outcome driven by the project's integrated approach to education and community engagement. This reduction, confirmed through community monitoring reports and local leader interviews, points to more than just the impact of classroom instruction highlights the success of KIOO's consistent cultural advocacy and open dialogue with families, elders, and religious influencers. By addressing the root causes of early marriage through awareness, empowerment, and access to education, the initiative created a shift in how girls' futures are valued. This outcome demonstrates the strength of combining vocational training with community mobilization strategies. As families began to recognize the long-term benefits of educating girls, particularly through the lens of economic empowerment and personal growth attitudes toward early marriage started to change. The result is not only that fewer girls being married prematurely, but also stronger community ownership in protecting girls' rights and futures. It reinforces the importance of grassroots, culturally sensitive approaches in achieving sustainable change in gender norms and harmful practices

5. Community support strengthened

The strengthening of community support stands out as a foundational outcome that enhances the sustainability of the project's impact. Post-forum feedback and field observations revealed a positive shift in attitudes, with parents expressing pride in their daughters' progress and actively encouraging their continued education. Perhaps most notably, male community members often

gatekeepers of social norms began to openly support girls' participation in vocational training, a key indicator of changing mindsets around gender roles and the value of girls' education. This growing endorsement has elevated the status of KIOO Open School from a perceived external intervention to a recognized and valued community institution. As the school becomes more embedded in the social fabric of Ilagala and surrounding areas, it benefits from deeper trust, increased enrollment interest, and stronger local partnerships. This outcome highlights the critical role that community buy-in plays in ensuring project ownership, reducing resistance, and creating an enabling environment where girls and young mothers can thrive both socially and economically.

3.3 Impact (Long-Term Change)

1. Enhanced socio-economic resilience among vulnerable girls and young mothers

The enhanced socio-economic resilience observed among vulnerable girls and young mothers represents a profound long-term impact on the program. Graduates who have transitioned into employment or launched small businesses report not only increased household income but also a notable shift in their social standing and autonomy. With greater decision-making power and financial independence, many young women are now able to contribute meaningfully to their families' welfare marking a significant departure from the dependency and vulnerability that previously defined their lives. This transformation has also led to a decline in harmful coping strategies such as transactional sex or forced migration, which were often seen as survival options in the absence of economic opportunities. By equipping participants with relevant skills, linking them to real-world job pathways, and supporting their entrepreneurial potential, the program has fostered a more stable and self-reliant generation of young women. These gains ripple outward, contributing to broader goals of poverty reduction, community well-being, and intergenerational change, where girls and young mothers are not only surviving but shaping stronger futures for themselves and those around them.

2. Improved gender equity in education access

The program's contribution to improved gender equity in education access marks a significant long-term achievement, especially within the rural context of Ilagala. By prioritizing flexibility, inclusion, and psychosocial support, KIOO Open School has emerged as a model for gender-sensitive education that directly addresses the needs of marginalized girls and young mothers. This approach has proven that non-formal and alternative learning pathways can serve as powerful tools to bridge gender gaps where traditional systems have fallen short. The success of this model has not gone unnoticed. With growing recognition from government stakeholders and education partners, there is increasing interest in replicating the approach in other underserved areas. This institutional validation affirms the school's broader impact, shaping not only the lives of its direct beneficiaries but also influencing education policy and practice at regional and national levels. By proving that inclusive education is both feasible and effective, the initiative lays a foundation for systemic change in how Tanzania approaches learning for vulnerable and excluded populations.

3. Breakdown of traditional norms

The breakdown of traditional norms surrounding gender roles is one of the most transformative long-term impacts of the project. Through consistent community engagement, inclusive education, and visible success stories of empowered girls, the initiative has challenged and gradually dismantled deep-rooted beliefs that confined girls to domestic responsibilities. Where once the dominant narrative was "girls should stay home," communities are now embracing a new reality "girls can learn, earn, and lead." This cultural shift reflects not only changing perceptions but a growing recognition of girls' potential as active contributors to household and

community development. This ideological transformation is critical for achieving and sustaining broader gender equality. Changing mindsets is often more complex than delivering services, yet it is foundational to ensure that gains in education, economic empowerment, and leadership are protected and scaled. As communities begin to question long-standing gender biases and reimagine the role of girls and women, the door opens for more inclusive policies, greater female participation in decision-making, and a generational shift in attitudes. The project's influence in reshaping these social norms lays the groundwork for lasting social transformation rooted in equity and opportunity.

6.5 Lessons Learned

1. Flexible learning schedules and psychosocial support are critical to retaining young mothers and vulnerable girls in education

One of the most critical lessons from the project is that *flexible learning schedules and psychosocial support are indispensable for retaining young mothers and vulnerable girls in education*. Traditional educational systems, with their rigid timetables and limited emotional support structures, often exclude learners facing complex social and economic challenges, particularly girls dealing with early motherhood, gender-based violence, stigma, or poverty. KIOO Open School's decision to offer adaptable class schedules, integrate childcare support, and provide access to counseling and peer mentorship directly address these barriers. As a result, the program saw significant improvements in attendance, engagement, and retention—demonstrating that learning environments must be as responsive to emotional and social needs as they are to academic demands.

To ensure this approach is sustained and scaled, KIOO plans to formalize the flexible learning model as a core part of its education framework and advocate for its inclusion in broader education policies. This includes training staff and volunteers on trauma-informed care, developing a pool of local counselors or mentors, and mobilizing community members to support childcare arrangements for young mothers. Furthermore, by documenting and sharing best practices with local government education offices and other NGOs, KIOO aims to influence the replication of the model in similar rural or underserved settings. Partnerships with community leaders and parents will also remain crucial, as sustained buy-in from these stakeholders ensures ongoing support for vulnerable learners and integration of the model into the community's educational culture.

2. Partnerships with local artisans boost practical exposure and job readiness

A key lesson from the project is that *partnerships with local artisans and businesses significantly enhance learners' practical exposure and job readiness*. Classroom learning, while essential, is not sufficient to prepare youth—especially vulnerable girls—for the demands of the labor market. By integrating apprenticeships, hands-on field practice, and mentorships into the training structure, learners were able to experience the realities of the workplace, apply their skills in real-time, and build relationships that led to post-training employment or self-employment opportunities. These partnerships bridged the gap between theory and practice and validated the relevance of the training offered. The success of this model underscores the need for future vocational education programs to embed such partnerships from the outset rather than treating them as add-ons.

To sustain this approach, KIOO will continue cultivating relationships with artisans, entrepreneurs, and small business owners by formalizing apprenticeship agreements and co-developing workplace-based learning curricula. A local apprenticeship coordination team will be established to monitor quality, address challenges, and ensure a consistent pipeline between training and employment. Additionally, KIOO will advocate with local government and trade associations to institutionalize these partnerships as part of national youth employment strategies. The school will also document success stories and case studies to demonstrate the mutual benefits of such collaborations, encouraging more artisans and business leaders to participate. Over time, this will establish a locally driven ecosystem where skills development and job placement are interlinked and sustained.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP THROUGH LGA ELECTION OBSERVATION

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania of 1977, Articles 145 and 146, outlines the existence of Local Government Authorities and their objectives. One of the purposes of establishing Local Government Authorities is to decentralize power to the people. Additionally, the Local Government (District Authorities) Act, Chapter 287, and the Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act, Chapter 288, mandate the holding of local government elections. The aim is to ensure that Local Government Authorities are democratically governed. The last Local Government elections were held in November 2019, meaning the next elections are scheduled to take place in November 2024. These elections are governed by the Election Regulations for Leaders of Local Government Authorities at the village, hamlet, and street levels within District and Urban Authorities.

The 12 regions observed during the voter registration and election campaigns presented diverse in population demographics, socioeconomic indicators, and political dynamics that collectively influenced voter turnout and participation. Despite their unique characteristics, several similarities emerged regarding the factors shaping voter engagement in these regions. All 12 regions shared similarities in terms of population distribution, with large rural populations and varying literacy levels. Regions like Tabora, Kigoma, and Katavi testified to have lower literacy rates compared to urbanized regions such as Dar es Salaam and Mwanza. Low literacy rates in rural areas hindered many citizens from participating effectively in elections. This was compounded by a lack of voter education targeted toward marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), in rural areas.

Political dynamics also played a role in shaping voter participation. In regions like Kigoma and Katavi, there was a notable influence of opposition parties, particularly CHADEMA and ACT Wazalendo, which energized youth participation but also created tensions during voter registration. In contrast, regions like Dodoma and Mbeya, where the ruling party CCM maintains a stronghold, saw higher levels of voter registration but less competitive political dynamics. The perceived dominance of one party often led to voter apathy, with citizens feeling that their participation would not significantly influence election outcomes. Some regions, particularly Kigoma, Mwanza and Geita, have a history of political unrest during previous elections. These tensions often reduced voter turnout due to concerns about violence or intimidation during the election process.

7.1 Project background information

Despite Tanzania's vibrant democracy, the country faces significant challenges in ensuring widespread civic engagement and participation, particularly among women and youth. Historical data from previous elections indicates a persistent gap in civic knowledge and active involvement in the electoral process. This gap is exacerbated by limited access to reliable information, inadequate voter education, and socio-cultural barriers that hinder full participation in democratic processes. Voter apathy, especially among the youth, has been a recurring issue, with many feelings disconnected from the political process. Women face numerous barriers to political participation, including cultural norms, limited access to information, and lower levels of education. Over 60% of the population is youth; however, youth participation in elections remains low. Civic education in Tanzania is often insufficient, with many citizens lacking a basic understanding of the electoral process, government structure, and their civic rights.

The 2024 local government election followed the last elections in 2019; represent a critical opportunity to strengthen local democratic governance. The 2019 Local Government Elections in Tanzania were conducted amidst significant challenges, including restricted political space and concerns over transparency. Some opposition parties boycotted the elections, citing an uneven playing field. Voter turnout was reported to be around 30% in many regions, far lower than expected, due to inadequate civic education campaigns and barriers to registration, particularly in rural and marginalized areas. Women and youth representation in leadership roles remained minimal, with women occupying less than 20% of leadership positions, primarily due to socio-cultural norms and systemic issues. Civil society organizations (CSOs) had limited space to observe and report on the electoral process, and mechanisms to ensure participation of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, were largely absent.

KIOO had initiatives to enhance participation and conduct election observation across 12 regions covering 48 councils. The 2024 elections benefit from advancements in voter registration processes, digital transformation, and greater awareness of democratic principles, aimed at reducing exclusion and ensuring transparency. Early indications suggest improved outreach could lead to a higher voter turnout, particularly among youth and women. By comparing the two elections, 2024 shows significant progress in areas that were weaknesses in 2019. While political participation was hindered in 2019 by boycotts and barriers, the upcoming elections are set to witness broader engagement. In 2019, women and youth collectively accounted for less than 25% of elected local government positions, but targeted interventions in 2024 aim to significantly increase these figures. Election observation has also been enhanced, with organizations like KIOO deploying observers across 12 regions including Kigoma, Katavi, Tabora, Geita, Simiyu, Shinyanga, and Morogoro, among others, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of participation trends and transparency gaps.

7.1.1 Election requirements and Positions contested

Election requirements encompass the essential elements, processes, and criteria necessary for conducting free, fair, and credible elections. A robust legal framework is fundamental, outlining the rules governing the process, including voter and candidate eligibility, procedures for voter registration, voting, and results management, as well as the roles of electoral bodies. An impartial and transparent electoral management body (EMB) is vital for overseeing key tasks such as voter registration, polling station management, and training election officials while ensuring the availability and security of voting materials. Inclusivity and accessibility are equally critical, ensuring that all eligible citizens, including marginalized groups like women, youth, and persons with disabilities, can fully participate. Measures such as accessible polling stations, voter education, and addressing barriers like age confirmation or transportation challenges are essential. Furthermore, elections must prioritize security and fairness through mechanisms to prevent voter intimidation, fraud, and violence, alongside transparent vote counting and result announcements observed by independent observers and political agents.

The positions contested in the upcoming elections play a pivotal role in strengthening democracy by ensuring representation, inclusivity and accountability at the grassroots level. Each position represents a critical function in local governance and the empowerment of citizens to actively participate in decision-making processes that impact their communities. According to these regulations, the positions to be contested in this election include:

- (i) Village Chairperson, Members of the Village Council (mixed group of men and women), Members of the Village Council (women's group), and Hamlet Chairpersons in District Authorities. For these positions, the election will be conducted following the Election

Regulations for the Village Chairperson, Members of the Village Council, and Hamlet Chairperson in District Authorities of 2024 (Government Notice No. 571 of 2024). The Village Chairperson acts as the primary leader in village governance, responsible for coordinating development initiatives, resolving disputes, and representing the community in district-level forums. Their leadership ensures that the village's needs and priorities are addressed effectively, fostering participatory governance and accountability.

- (ii) Hamlet Chairperson of Township Authorities. The election for this position will follow the Election Regulations for Hamlet Chairperson in Township Authorities of 2024 (Government Notice No. 572 of 2024). The Hamlet Chairpersons in District and Township Authorities are crucial for addressing issues at the hamlet level, serving as a direct link between residents and higher levels of governance. These leaders ensure that even the smallest administrative units have a voice in governance, promoting inclusion and decentralization.
- (iii) Village Chairperson, Members of the Village Council (mixed group of men and women), Members of the Village Council (women's group) and Hamlet Chairpersons in Urban Authorities. For these positions, the election will adhere to the Election Regulations for Village Chairperson, Members of the Village Council, and Hamlet Chairperson in Urban Authorities of 2024 (Government Notice No. 573 of 2024).
- (iv) Street Chairperson and Members of the Street Committee (mixed group of men and women) and Members of the Street Committee (women's group) in Urban Authorities. These elections will follow the Election Regulations for Street Chairperson and Members of the Street Committee in Urban Authorities of 2024 (Government Notice No. 574 of 2024); the Street Chairperson and Members of the Street Committee (mixed group and women's group) in Urban Authorities are vital for urban governance. These leaders address street-level concerns such as safety, sanitation, and local disputes.

7.1.2 Boundaries of villages and hamlets and Nomination of voter registration officials

Under the Local Government Election (LGE) 2024 regulations, election supervisors have successfully fulfilled the requirement to announce the names and boundaries of villages and hamlets within 72 days before the election date. This significant step has been taken to ensure citizens are well-informed about the electoral areas involved in voter registration and voting processes, promoting transparency, preparedness and inclusivity in the electoral process. The early announcement, rooted in the principles of accessibility and credibility, has eliminated potential confusion or disputes surrounding electoral jurisdictions.

In compliance with the Local Government Election (LGE) 2024 regulations, election supervisors successfully appointed public servants as voter registration officials 52 days before the election date. This early nomination was a critical step in ensuring that the voter registration process was well-organized, efficient, and transparent. The process involved a systematic approach to identifying and appointing qualified public servants based on integrity, professionalism, and their understanding of electoral processes. These individuals were thoroughly vetted to meet regulatory standards, ensuring impartiality and adherence to legal guidelines. Upon their nomination, voter registration officials underwent comprehensive training to equip them with the knowledge and skills required to manage registration centers effectively. The training covered voter registration protocols, use of tools and equipment, and strategies for assisting voters, especially those with disabilities, women, and the elderly. Deployment of the officials was conducted strategically, with considerations for population density, geographic spread, and accessibility. High-density areas were allocated sufficient personnel to prevent overcrowding and reduce

delays, while officials in remote or marginalized areas were tasked with ensuring that registration services were accessible to all eligible voters.

The early nomination and subsequent training of voter registration officials have had multiple benefits. First, it has minimized errors during the voter registration process by ensuring officials are well-prepared and confident in managing procedures. Second, it has promoted transparency and public trust by demonstrating that registration is handled by impartial, qualified, and professional individuals. Lastly, it has fostered inclusivity, as officials were trained to address the unique needs of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, thereby encouraging broader participation. Furthermore, this process provided an opportunity for electoral stakeholders, including civil society organizations (CSOs), political parties and community leaders, to observe the appointment and deployment of registration officials.

7.1.3 Voter Registration

Registration primarily took place in public buildings, such as schools and government offices, which were chosen for their accessibility. In regions where public facilities were unavailable, alternative locations were identified through collaboration between Assistant Election Supervisors and political party leaders. This collaborative initiative was designed to promote inclusivity across all regions, particularly targeting rural and underserved areas. However, occasional disagreements over alternative locations caused minor delays in a few areas. Despite meticulous planning, the 10-day registration period presented significant logistical and operational challenges. High-density areas experienced resource strain as materials and personnel struggled to meet the high demand, resulting in long queues and delays. These challenges discouraged some eligible voters from completing their registration. In rural regions, the absence of public buildings delayed the setup of registration centers, further affecting voter turnout. While election supervisors and stakeholders made efforts to resolve these delays, the limited timeframe posed a challenge to efficient service delivery in some areas. However, gaps in outreach were noted, particularly in marginalized and remote communities, where turnout remained lower than anticipated. These gaps highlighted the need for improved communication strategies to ensure broader participation, especially among women, youth, and persons with disabilities who often faced additional barriers to access.

Despite this, the challenges encountered underscored the need for adjustments in future elections. Specifically, extending the registration period in areas affected by delays would provide more time for eligible voters to complete their registration. Similarly, addressing infrastructure gaps in rural and underserved regions would prevent delays in setting up registration centers and ensure smoother operations, the collaboration between election supervisors, political party leaders, and stakeholders ensured the process was conducted fairly and transparently, with challenges addressed wherever possible. However, the experience revealed key areas for improvement, including infrastructure investment, enhanced outreach strategies and flexibility in the registration timeframe.

To ensure efficient access and a streamlined election process, polling centers were strategically established across different administrative levels for the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024. In rural areas, District Authorities and Township Authorities set up polling centers at the hamlet level, allowing voters in remote locations to participate more easily. This initiative was particularly critical in addressing the geographical barriers faced by rural communities, where long distances to voting centers have often discouraged participation in previous elections. By bringing polling stations closer to the people, election authorities reduced logistical challenges and created opportunities for increased voter turnout in hard-to-reach areas. In urban areas,

Urban Authorities, including towns, municipalities and cities, implemented polling stations at the street level. This ensured that urban dwellers had direct access to voting facilities within their neighborhoods. The proximity of these stations not only improved accessibility but also reduced congestion and waiting times, creating smooth and efficient voting experience. This approach was particularly beneficial in densely populated urban areas, where high voter traffic often strains resources and infrastructure.

The establishment of polling centers at both the hamlet level in rural areas and the street level in urban areas underscored a deliberate effort to cater to the unique needs of diverse populations. By tailoring the setup of polling centers to the specific contexts of rural and urban communities, election authorities demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity and equity in the democratic process. This strategy helped ensure that no voters, whether from remote villages or urban streets, were excluded from participating due to barriers such as distance or lack of accessibility. Additionally, the deployment of polling stations at these levels addressed challenges faced by marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, women, and elderly voters. In rural areas, where transportation is often limited, the closer polling centers alleviated some of the difficulties experienced by these groups. In urban settings, clear communication and signage at street-level polling stations made it easier for all voters, including first-time participants, to navigate the voting process.

7.1.4 Nomination Process and Transparency for LGE 2024

In the lead-up to the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024, candidates were required to follow a structured nomination process to ensure proper vetting and transparency. Candidates intending to run for leadership positions collected their nomination forms at least 26 days before the election date, providing a reasonable window for them to meet all specified requirements. This timeline allowed candidates to gather necessary documentation, secure endorsements, and ensure compliance with electoral regulations, preventing undue pressure or last-minute submissions. Once collected, candidates were required to return their completed nomination forms within seven days from the first day of collection. This structured timeframe ensured that the process remained orderly and systematic, giving electoral supervisors ample time to verify candidate information and eligibility. The seven-day submission period also reduced the risk of rushed or incomplete nominations, which could compromise the integrity of the process.

The nomination process emphasized transparency and fairness, enabling thorough candidate vetting. Election supervisors reviewed the submitted forms to ensure compliance with legal and procedural requirements. This included verifying that candidates met the criteria for eligibility, such as age, residency, and any relevant qualifications. Instances of incomplete forms or missing documentation were addressed promptly, with supervisors allowing candidates time to rectify minor errors within the stipulated deadline. The process not only filtered out ineligible or unprepared candidates but also provided a level playing field for all aspirants. It served as a safeguard against rushed nominations, reducing opportunities for disputes or irregularities that could arise during the campaign period. Furthermore, the nomination process sets a standard for accountability. Candidates were expected to demonstrate a serious commitment to leadership by adhering to the timelines and requirements, fostering trust among voters. The process also encouraged political parties to be proactive in supporting their candidates and ensuring they complied with electoral rules, further promoting an environment of order and preparedness.

7.1.5 Candidates for leadership positions in LGE 2024

A critical element in maintaining the integrity of the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024 was ensuring that all candidates vying for leadership positions were legitimate and recognized by

their respective political parties. Candidates were required to be members and official nominees of political parties with permanent registration, reinforcing the legitimacy and credibility of political participation. This requirement safeguarded the electoral process by ensuring that only candidates with organized political backing could participate, promoting stability and strengthening the electoral structure. The submission of candidate nominations took place 19 days before the election date, with the window for submissions open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. Assistant Election Supervisors oversaw the process, ensuring that it was conducted in a fair, organized, and transparent manner. The clear timeline and structured approach allowed candidates sufficient time to gather and submit their documents, while election authorities focused on verifying the eligibility and authenticity of the submissions.

To ensure a smooth and credible nomination process, candidates were required to present complete documentation, including proof of membership and nomination letters from their political parties. The oversight provided by Assistant Election Supervisors minimized errors and inconsistencies, while also offering immediate support to candidates facing minor challenges during submission. In instances where irregularities were identified, candidates were given opportunities to rectify errors, ensuring fairness while upholding the electoral standards. This process highlighted the importance of structure and accountability in building trust in the electoral system. By ensuring that only properly vetted candidates with political support could contest, the process eliminated ambiguity, reduced the risk of disputes, and reassured voters about the integrity of their leaders. Additionally, the presence of election authorities overseeing submissions enhanced transparency and impartiality, reinforcing public confidence in the nomination phase of the elections, the structured nomination process for candidates in LGE 2024 played a significant role in strengthening the electoral system's credibility. The process not only guaranteed fairness and transparency but also set the foundation for a stable, organized, and representative electoral contest. This phase underscored the commitment of electoral authorities to ensuring a smooth democratic process, reflective of the principles of good governance and political accountability.

In the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024, provisions were made to address cases where only one eligible candidate was nominated for a position, such as village or street chairperson. Despite the absence of competition, the election process continued as scheduled, ensuring that no position was automatically filled without public validation. Even in uncontested positions, voters were given the opportunity to cast a vote by choosing "Yes" or "No" to confirm or reject the sole candidate. This approach ensured that the process remained democratic and transparent, preserving the electorate's right to express their approval or disapproval of the nominated individual. By conducting formal voting for uncontested positions, election authorities upheld the principles of democracy and inclusiveness. The process gave the electorate a critical role in decision-making, preventing the assumption that a lack of competition automatically equated to public acceptance. This measure allowed communities to exercise their agency, ensuring that leadership positions were legitimately earned through public endorsement. It also reinforced accountability by requiring candidates, even those uncontested, to gain formal approval from the electorate. The implications of this practice for inclusive governance were significant. It ensured that all voters, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, had a voice in the electoral process.

Furthermore, this process enhanced public trust and confidence in the electoral system. Allowing voters to decide even in uncontested scenarios signaled a commitment to fairness and transparency, avoiding perceptions of favoritism or undemocratic practices. It emphasized that every leadership position, regardless of competition, was subject to the will of the people,

aligning with the principles of representative democracy, the formal voting process for uncontested positions in the LGE 2024 demonstrated a proactive effort to maintain the integrity and inclusivity of the electoral system. By requiring candidates to secure public approval, the process reinforced democracy, ensured transparency, and promoted public trust. It also underscored the importance of inclusive participation in decision-making, ensuring that leadership at all levels reflected the voices and choices of the electorate.

7.1.6 Transparency and Fairness in the Nomination Process for LGE 2024

The nomination process for the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024 was designed to prioritize transparency, fairness, and accountability by incorporating mechanisms to address disputes and objections. Candidates or their representatives were granted the right to file written objections within two days of a nomination decision if they observed irregularities, perceived bias, or unfair disqualifications. This brief yet reasonable window ensured that grievances were handled promptly without compromising the electoral timeline. To further streamline the process, Assistant Election Supervisors were required to resolve any objections within an additional two-day period, providing a swift and transparent resolution process that emphasized impartiality and fairness. To reinforce accountability and trust, each district established Appeal Committees to address unresolved grievances related to candidate nominations. These committees, appointed seven days before the nomination process, were tasked with ensuring that decisions were subject to review, providing candidates with a legitimate platform to challenge perceived injustices. The committees played a pivotal role in safeguarding the integrity of the nomination process by preventing undue influence, manipulation, or unfair disqualifications. This mechanism demonstrated the electoral authorities' strong commitment to fostering public confidence and protecting candidates' rights, contributing to a transparent and democratic process.

The establishment of the Appeal Committees was met with mixed reactions from both community members and opposition parties. For community members, the committees represented an important platform for accountability and the protection of electoral integrity. They recognized the committee's role in addressing irregularities and ensuring fairness. However, concerns emerged about the lack of awareness regarding the committees' existence and operations, particularly in rural and remote areas. Limited access to information meant that many citizens were unaware of how to file objections within the stipulated timeframe. Additionally, some community members felt that while the committees resolved disputes fairly in certain cases, their processes could have been more inclusive by involving community representatives or neutral observers to ensure decisions reflected local realities. Opposition parties, on the other hand, expressed a more critical perspective. While acknowledging the committees as a necessary mechanism for addressing grievances, they raised concerns about partiality and delays in the resolution process. Some party representatives argued that committee members, often aligned with local administrative authorities, lacked independence, fueling skepticism about the transparency and fairness of the process. Delays in addressing disputes further heightened frustrations, as unresolved objections risked undermining the credibility of the nomination process. Opposition parties emphasized the need for independent oversight to ensure impartiality and equitable treatment for all candidates. The existence of the Appeal Committees marked a significant step toward enhancing accountability and transparency in the electoral process.

The appeal mechanism allowed these groups to seek redress without fear of exclusion, fostering a more inclusive political process. However, the challenges identified by both the community and opposition parties underscored the need for continuous improvement to ensure fairness and equity. Addressing these concerns is essential to building public trust and strengthening

democracy. Ensuring that all stakeholders have a voice in electoral processes not only enhances legitimacy but also encourages broader participation, empowering communities to hold leaders accountable. Based on feedback from community members and opposition parties, the following recommendations should be considered to improve the nomination and appeal processes:

1. Electoral authorities should prioritize public education campaigns to inform citizens, particularly in rural and marginalized areas, about the existence, role, and procedures of the Appeal Committees. This will ensure broader engagement and timely objection filing.
2. Appeal Committees should include community representatives or independent observers, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), to foster greater transparency and ensure decisions reflect diverse perspectives.
3. To address concerns about perceived bias, an independent body or neutral stakeholders should monitor the appeal process, ensuring impartial and transparent decision-making.
4. Efforts should be made to further reduce delays in resolving disputes. Establishing clear procedural timelines will strengthen confidence in the committee's ability to deliver fair and timely decisions.

The implementation of five-year term limits for all contested positions ensures that there is regular turnover of leadership, promoting new ideas, accountability, and leadership development. Incumbents are required to vacate their positions seven days before the nomination forms are issued, which ensures that outgoing leaders do not unduly influence the nomination process. Term limits serve to rejuvenate the political landscape, offering voters the opportunity to select fresh leadership and reducing the risk of entrenched power dynamics that can erode democracy.

7.1.7 Voting

The voting process in the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024 was conducted confidentially, ensuring that each voter's choice remained private and protected. Special ballots were issued to voters and securely deposited in designated ballot boxes, a measure that safeguarded the integrity of the election. By prioritizing secrecy, the electoral process provided an environment where voters could make decisions freely and without fear of intimidation, coercion, or undue influence. The confidentiality of the voting process was particularly significant in promoting voter confidence and strengthening the principles of democracy. For many voters, particularly those in rural areas or marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, the assurance of a private ballot empowered them to express their preferences and values without external pressure. This measure effectively mitigated the risk of voter manipulation, ensuring that the final election outcomes reflected the true will of the people. Polling officials were trained to assist voters in maintaining confidentiality, particularly for individuals with special needs, such as elderly voters and people with disabilities. Measures were also taken to prevent unauthorized access to polling stations, further reinforcing the security of the election environment. The implications of confidential voting extended beyond individual empowerment; it fostered a sense of trust and legitimacy in the electoral process. When voters believed their choices were truly protected, they were more likely to participate actively and express their opinions without fear of retribution. This was especially critical in regions where political tensions or power dynamics had previously deterred open participation.

The accreditation process for domestic observers during the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024 was a critical component in ensuring transparency, accountability, and public trust in the electoral process. Observers were required to obtain official approval from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for Local Government. Applications for observer accreditation had to be submitted within 21 days of the election announcement. The process emphasized rigorous screening and vetting of observer organizations to ensure that only credible

and impartial groups were allowed to participate. Observers had to demonstrate a clear understanding of electoral processes, neutrality, and professionalism to qualify for accreditation. Approved organizations were granted the right to observe every aspect of the election, including polling station setup, voting, ballot counting, and result announcements. Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO, a leading organization committed to promoting transparent, inclusive, and accountable elections, successfully applied for accreditation and was granted permission to observe the election. KIOO's accreditation extended across 12 regions in Tanzania, with its teams strategically deployed to observe elections in four districts within each region.

KIOO's team of trained observers played a pivotal role in monitoring the election process, ensuring compliance with legal guidelines, and identifying any irregularities or barriers that could compromise the fairness of the elections. Their presence served as a deterrent to malpractice, as electoral officials and other stakeholders recognized the importance of conducting the process with integrity. KIOO observers also focused on assessing the inclusivity of the process, particularly in relation to the participation of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the accreditation of domestic observers like KIOO highlighted the commitment of electoral authorities to fostering open and accountable elections. By allowing independent oversight, authorities demonstrated a willingness to be held accountable, further enhancing public confidence in the electoral system. The observation reports produced by KIOO and other accredited organizations served as valuable tools for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the election process, paving the way for future improvements. The process had several strengths that contributed to its overall success:

1. The 21-day application window provided a clear and organized structure. Organizations like Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO were able to meet the deadline, secure accreditation, and prepare their teams for deployment. This streamlined approach avoided delays that could have undermined the process.
2. Observer organizations underwent strict screening and vetting to ensure they were credible, neutral, and professional. This helped maintain the integrity of the election by preventing partisan or inexperienced groups from influencing the process.
3. Accredited observers, particularly KIOO, ensured broad coverage across 12 regions and multiple districts, including urban and rural areas. This extensive deployment provided a diverse, holistic picture of the electoral environment and challenges.
4. Allowing independent observation fosters public confidence in the electoral process. Observers acted as a deterrent to irregularities, holding electoral officials accountable and reducing opportunities for malpractice.
5. Observers prioritized monitoring the inclusivity of the election process, ensuring the participation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities were properly assessed. This focus reflected the growing emphasis on equity and representation in Tanzania's elections.

7.1.8 Challenges during the Accreditation

Despite its successes, the accreditation process faced significant challenges that limited its full potential:

1. Many smaller organizations, especially grassroots and community-based groups, were unaware of the application process, deadlines, and requirements. This gap led to **missed opportunities** for broader observer participation and reduced local representation.
2. While the 21-day timeline ensured timeliness, it posed challenges for organizations that required more time to gather necessary documentation or meet eligibility criteria. Smaller organizations with limited administrative capacity struggled the most.

3. Observers, including KIOO, faced **logistical and financial challenges** in deploying teams, particularly in remote areas with poor infrastructure. Limited resources impacted observer training, transportation, and the ability to comprehensively cover all polling stations.
4. Concerns arose among opposition parties and some stakeholders about the **impartiality** of the accreditation process. Instances of delayed approvals or unexplained rejections fueled skepticism about whether all organizations were treated equitably.
5. Coordination between electoral authorities and observer organizations was not always smooth. Observers reported challenges in gaining access to certain polling stations and receiving clear instructions, particularly during sensitive phases like ballot counting.

7.1.9 Recommendations for Improving the Accreditation Process

To enhance the accreditation process in future elections, the following steps are recommended:

1. Electoral authorities should launch **public education campaigns** to ensure all eligible organizations, including smaller, grassroots entities, are informed about the accreditation process, deadlines, and criteria.
2. Increasing the submission period from **21 days to a full year** would provide observer organizations, particularly those with limited resources, with ample time to prepare and submit their applications.
3. Development partners, civil society networks, and the government should collaborate to provide **financial and logistical support** to observer organizations. This includes funding for training, transportation, and tools necessary for effective monitoring, particularly in remote areas.
4. Electoral authorities should **publish the list of accredited observers** and provide clear explanations for any rejections. This would address perceptions of bias and enhance public trust in the process.
5. Establish a **dedicated liaison desk** to improve coordination between electoral authorities and observers. This desk would clarify access rights, observer roles, and address logistical issues promptly during Election Day operations.

7.1.10 Provision of voter education

Any institution intending to provide voter education must apply for permission from the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for Local Government, adhering to the Voter Education Guidelines prepared by the President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government (TAMISEMI). Campaigns will take place seven days before the election date. Each participating political party must submit its campaign schedule to the election supervisor at least seven days before campaigns begin. In accordance with the Local Government Election Regulations of 2024 (Government Notices Nos. 571, 572, 573, and 574), the public and all permanently registered political parties are hereby informed that the Local Government Elections in Mainland Tanzania will be held on November 27, 2024. Voting will commence at 8:00 a.m. and end at 4:00 p.m.



Photo: Attachements: Voter education and Awareness using Short Message

The observation process used a survey that was methodically structured to ensure comprehensive and reliable data collection. It was conducted across 48 district councils spanning twelve regions, with one observer assigned to each district council. Observers underwent specialized training to maintain consistency and accuracy in their work. This training focused on understanding each question, effectively using the data collection tool, and conducting field observations in a systematic manner. The survey utilized five distinct questionnaires tailored to specific stages of the electoral process: Introduction Checklist, Daily Campaigning Checklist, and Election -Day Checklist, Voting at Polling Station, and Counting at Polling Station. These questionnaires were uploaded into the Kobo Collect system for digital data collection, streamlining the process and ensuring accessibility in the field. Data cleaning was carried out using STATA software to enhance data quality. To address missing data, two methods were applied: replacing values with the nearest available data or calculating averages based on adjacent data points. For data analysis, tools like Excel and SPSS were employed, focusing on identifying relationships between the questions and the observers. This rigorous methodology ensured the survey's findings were both reliable and meaningful.

7.2 Training of LTOs before working

The training program successfully prepared 51 observers, of whom 48 were deployed as Long-Term Observers (LTOs) across 48 districts to observe the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024. The training focused on equipping observers with the necessary protocols, ethical frameworks, and tools for effective electoral observation. The overarching goal was to align their roles with the mission of promoting inclusivity, fairness, and transparency in the electoral process. Participants were trained on observation protocols, emphasizing the importance of neutrality, professionalism, and adherence to ethical standards. Observers were guided to avoid interfering in electoral processes and to document findings impartially. They were reminded of their responsibility to observe and report inclusively, particularly on the participation of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). This emphasis directly supported the mission's objective to promote accountability and inclusivity.



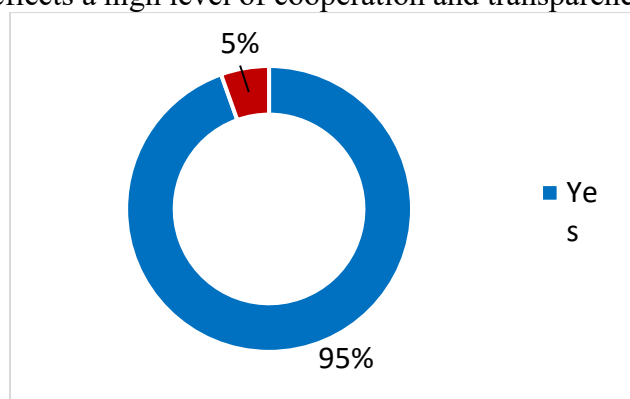
Photo: Observation training for LTOs (long term observers)

A key component of the training was the introduction of standardized observation checklists. These tools enabled observers to observe inclusivity, fairness, and accessibility consistently across districts. The checklists ensured comprehensive data collection, focusing on barriers faced by marginalized groups, ethical compliance by electoral officials and inclusive measures at all stages of the electoral process. Observers practiced using these tools to capture quantitative and qualitative data, enhancing the mission's ability to produce actionable insights. The training also included practical, hands-on exercises, such as role-playing scenarios that simulated real-world challenges. These sessions allowed observers to practice documenting findings objectively and respond effectively to potential issues in the field. Supervisors provided guidance on navigating complex situations, such as accessibility challenges at polling centers or disputes at observation sites.

7.3 Permission to meet and talk to the responsible election officials

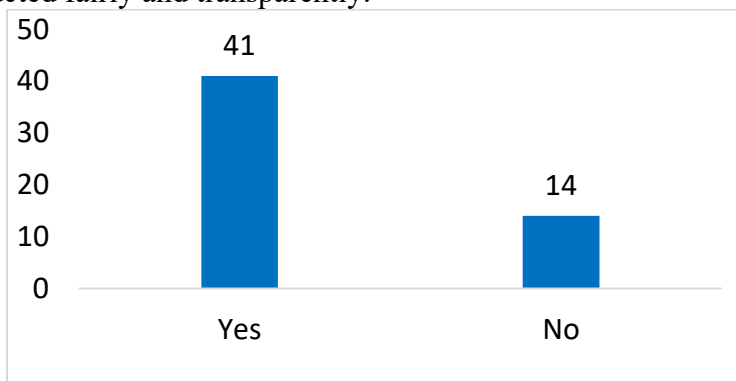
The question was aimed at assessing the level of access that election observers had to engage directly with responsible election officials during the Local Government Elections (LGE) 2024 voter registration process. The goal of asking this question was to understand whether observers were able to interact with election officials, which is crucial for ensuring transparency, accountability, and the integrity of the process. Such interactions allow observers to verify that election procedures are being followed correctly and provide an opportunity for any issues or concerns to be addressed in real-time. Based on the data from the figure, it was revealed that 95% of the observers were allowed to meet and talk with election officials, while only 5% were not granted this access. This is a positive indicator of the openness and transparency of the election process, as it suggests that most election officials were willing to cooperate with observers, allowing them to observe the registration process effectively. The ability to meet and discuss directly with election officials is essential for fostering trust in the electoral process, as it enables observers to ensure that proper procedures are being followed and that any irregularities are reported promptly.

However, the fact that 5% of observers were not allowed to meet or talk with election officials raises some concerns. This limited access could be a result of various factors, such as communication breakdowns, logistical challenges, or, in rare cases, potential resistance from election officials. The absence of full access for all observers may point to areas where further improvements in transparency and accountability are needed in future elections. Addressing these gaps would help strengthen the electoral process and ensure that all observers can freely perform their duties in observing the election. Majority of our observers are engaged with election officials that reflects a high level of cooperation and transparency.



Permission to meet election stakeholders

The question was designed to assess whether election observers were provided with the campaign timetable within their respective districts. This was crucial to determine if they had the necessary information to observe and report on campaign activities in a timely and organized manner. By asking this question, the goal was to understand the level of communication and organization during the election campaign period. Knowing the campaign schedule enables observers to plan their visits to events, track adherence to timelines, and ensure that campaign activities are conducted fairly and transparently.



Access to election campaigns

From the figures, it was clear that 41 observers received the campaign timetable, while 14 did not. Most observers were knowledgeable and ready to monitor campaign activities. Having access to a schedule allows them to be present during key events and observe the progress of the election campaign. Providing the campaign timetable ensures transparency, allowing observers to track campaign events and verify that all candidates or political parties have equal opportunities to engage voters. Observers who received the timetable were better prepared to observe the campaign and ensure no irregularities or violations occurred. Timely access to the campaign schedule holds political candidates accountable for sticking to agreed-upon timelines and helps prevent campaign misconduct. The fact that 41 observers received the campaign timetable indicates a strong communication effort in most areas, ensuring observers could effectively perform their duties.

The question aimed to assess the availability of other channels for obtaining campaign schedules when direct access was unavailable. Its intention was to evaluate the transparency and accessibility of critical campaign information, as well as to identify gaps in dissemination and understand how these gaps were addressed. The findings revealed that most observers on 13 observers out of the total successfully accessed campaign schedules through alternative means, even when the schedules were not directly provided. The results highlight several important aspects. First, they underscore the accessibility of information through alternative means, ensuring that most observers were not left uninformed. Second, the findings point to the role of informal networks or digital platforms, such as social media, community announcements, or direct contact with campaign representatives, in bridging gaps in information dissemination. However, this reliance on alternative channels also exposes the need to strengthen primary mechanisms to ensure equitable access for all stakeholders; while the adaptability shown by observers is commendable, the findings emphasize the importance of establishing reliable and inclusive primary systems for sharing campaign schedules. Strengthening these mechanisms could eliminate the need for alternatives, ensuring that accurate and timely information is directly accessible to everyone involved.

7.4 Number of polling stations and Meetings with leaders of political parties

The question was asked to determine the total number of polling stations and assess whether they are sufficient to accommodate the district's voting population. By comparing the figures with those from 2019, the intention was to identify trends in electoral infrastructure development, such as whether the number of polling stations had increased to support population growth or remained unchanged, potentially leading to overcrowding or inefficiencies during voting. Understanding these dynamics is critical for evaluating the preparedness of districts and addressing any gaps in accessibility and voter convenience. Additionally, the comparison highlighted disparities across districts and drew attention to regions where no officials were available to provide this information. Some officials suggested asking the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government (TAMISEMI) for the data, claiming they lacked the authority to disclose it. This lack of transparency poses a significant threat to the integrity of the election process and undermines public trust. It underscores the urgent need for improved coordination and commitment from all stakeholders to promote openness and accountability in electoral operations.

The question was asked to assess the level of openness and accessibility of political leaders during the election process. This is important as it reflects the transparency, freedom of communication, and inclusiveness of the electoral environment. In democratic settings, it is essential for citizens to have access to political leaders to express their concerns, engage in dialogue, and participate in the political process. The observers of this question reveal a highly positive outcome in terms of political accessibility. 96% of our observers met with political party leaders during the main election. This suggests a relatively open political atmosphere where leaders were available to interact with the public, potentially fostering an inclusive electoral process and promoting democratic participation. 4% of our observers were not able to meet and talk to these important people and this could be due to various factors, such as restrictions on specific areas or constituencies, logistical barriers, or political dynamics that limited interactions. It is essential to examine the specific conditions or districts where these barriers occurred to understand the underlying causes, while the overwhelming majority had the opportunity to meet political leaders, the small percentage of individuals who did not could point to potential areas for improvement in ensuring equal political engagement opportunities for all citizens.

This was a follow-up question, aiming to examine any reasons given for the restrictions," revealed two key barriers preventing observers from meeting with political leaders. Firstly, some observers indicated that political leaders were simply too busy with their campaign schedules to meet, which, while understandable, poses a challenge to democratic engagement. If political leaders are too preoccupied with their campaigns, it limits their availability to listen to the concerns of the electorate, reducing opportunities for meaningful interaction and public dialogue. Secondly, other observers cited a delay in receiving an introduction letter from the local council, which was required for political leaders to agree to meet. This bureaucratic delay created unnecessary obstacles and reflected a procedural barrier that hindered timely communication.

These barriers have serious implications for both democracy and transparency. When political leaders are inaccessible whether due to busy schedules or reliance on formalities it restricts citizens' ability to actively participate in the political process, undermining the inclusive nature of democracy. Furthermore, transparency in governance is compromised when leaders are reluctant to engage directly with the public, raising questions about their commitment to openness and responsiveness. If citizens feel excluded or unheard, it erodes trust in both the leaders and the electoral process. For democracy to thrive, political leaders must prioritize

accessibility and engagement, ensuring that all citizens can voice their concerns, hold leaders accountable, and contribute meaningfully to the democratic process.

7.5 Access to party meetings, campaigns or key election issues

This was the follow-up question from those who answered 'Yes,' the previous question; access provided, such as whether they attended party meetings, observe campaigns, or discuss key election issues. It aimed to gauge the level of responsiveness and engagement political leaders offered to the electorate. The results revealed that most observers, 56.6%, experienced a "Moderate" level of access to political parties, with 39.6% reporting a "High" level of access. This suggests that, for the most part, citizens were able to participate in political processes to a moderate or high degree, including attending party meetings, observing campaigns, and discussing key election issues. 3.8% felt they had "Low" access, indicating limited engagement opportunities.



Photo: ccm campaigns

This level of access has both positive and negative implications for democracy. On the positive side, a significant portion of the electorate had the opportunity to engage directly with political parties, fostering a more participatory political environment. High access allows citizens to observe campaigns firsthand, attend important meetings, and discuss the issues that matter most to them. This can lead to a better-informed electorate, stronger civic participation, and a sense of empowerment among citizens as they are more directly involved in the political process. It also enhances accountability, as leaders are more likely to respond to the concerns of an active and engaged electorate. On the downside, the fact that 3.8% reported having "Low" access highlights potential barriers to full democratic participation. If certain individuals or groups are excluded from engaging with political parties, it can result in disenfranchisement and a lack of representation for those voices. Limited access can also undermine the transparency of the political process, as it may suggest that political leaders are not equally open to all citizens or that there are unequal opportunities for engagement. In a healthy democracy, every citizen should have the ability to participate in political discourse, attend meetings, and contribute to the decision-making process. Therefore, even though the majority experienced moderate to high

levels of access, the existence of barriers for a minority calls for improvements to ensure inclusive and equal opportunities for all citizens to engage in the political process.

7.6 Women candidates within the respective district

The table presents data on the representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) as candidates across various districts in Tanzanian regions. The data reveals significant disparities among regions and districts in candidate inclusivity. For instance, Dodoma's Chamwino DC and Geita's Chato have the highest number of women candidates (962 and 1159, respectively), while districts like Ubungo in Dar es Salaam and Karagwe in Kagera show no representation across all categories. Youth representation is highest in Misenyi (5378) and Chato (1126), while PWD representation remains minimal overall, with Chamwino DC (66) leading in this category. This figure below highlights the uneven progress in fostering diverse political participation across districts. One of the challenges we encountered is the difficulty of obtaining information on candidates' age or disability status, as the nomination forms lack section to capture such details. Additionally, political parties do not have clear guidelines or frameworks that promote or enforce the inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making positions. This gap in documentation and lack of institutional directives significantly hinders efforts to promote inclusion. Without data on age and disability, it becomes challenging to assess and advocate for equitable representation. Furthermore, the absence of party-level inclusion policies reflects a broader systemic barrier, limiting opportunities for marginalized groups to participate meaningfully in leadership and decision-making. To address this, nomination forms should be redesigned to capture key demographic details, and political parties must adopt clear and actionable inclusion policies. These steps are crucial in creating a more inclusive political landscape that values and reflects the diversity of society.

7.6.1 Candidates came from which party

The table highlights the representation of youth, women, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) across various political parties in Tanzania. CCM leads in all categories, with the highest number of youth (38), women (42), and PWDs (14). CHADEMA follows closely, particularly in PWD representation (16). While ACT WAZALENDU and CUF show moderate youth and women inclusion, smaller parties have minimal or no representation, especially for PWDs. This disparity underscores the need for more inclusive political participation across all demographic groups.

Political Party	# of Youth	# of Women	# of PWDs
CCM	38	42	14
CHADEMA	33	35	16
ACT WAZALENDU	23	23	2
CUF	13	12	0
NCCR-M	7	9	0
TLP	4	6	0
SAU	3	4	0
UDP	3	4	0
ADC	2	5	0
CCK	2	3	0
NRA	2	3	0
AFP	1	3	0
CHAUMMA	1	3	1

DP	1	3	0
MAKINI	1	2	0
PPT-MAENDELEO	1	3	0
TADEA	1	2	0
UMD	1	6	0
UPDP	1	4	0
NLD	0	2	0

The data presented sheds light on the representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) within the Tanzanian political landscape, both in terms of candidates running for office and their party affiliation. The numbers reflect significant disparities across regions, districts, and political parties, which have direct implications for inclusive leadership, democracy, and the political empowerment of marginalized groups. Women candidates show a wide range of representation across districts. For instance, Dodoma's Chamwino DC and Geita's Chato stand out with the highest number of women candidates (962 and 1159, respectively), signaling a strong push for female political participation in those areas. In contrast, some districts like Karagwe and Ubungu show no women candidates at all, which highlights the uneven progress in promoting gender equality in political participation. This variation reflects the need for more focused efforts to encourage women to run for office in regions with low representation, as women's inclusion is vital for a fully functioning democracy.

The youth demographic also demonstrates varied levels of participation across districts. Misenyi leads with a high number of youth candidates (5378), while other districts such as Bukombe and Karagwe report minimal or no youth participation. This lack of youth candidates in certain areas may signal barriers to entry for young individuals in politics, possibly due to factors such as limited resources, education, or institutionalized political exclusion. High youth representation is crucial for ensuring that young people's voices are heard in decision-making, making their inclusion essential for a vibrant and forward-thinking political environment. People with disabilities (PWDs) have minimal representation overall. Chamwino DC leads in this category with 66 PWDs candidates, yet other districts like Karagwe and Kibondo show no PWDs candidates. This underrepresentation highlights the persistent barriers that PWDs face in entering the political sphere, including societal stigmas, physical accessibility challenges, and a lack of policy frameworks that encourage their participation. Promoting PWDs representation is vital to achieving a truly inclusive political system, where the needs and rights of all citizens, regardless of their abilities, are represented.

When it comes to political party representation, CCM stands out as the leader in all categories, with 38 youth, 42 women, and 14 PWDs candidates. This indicates that CCM is making some progress in fostering inclusivity within its ranks. CHADEMA also shows strong representation, particularly for PWDs, with 16 candidates in this category. However, smaller parties, such as CUF, NCCR-M, and others, exhibit minimal or no representation, especially for PWDs. The lack of inclusivity in these smaller parties suggests that more work is needed to ensure that all parties actively promote the participation of women, youth, and PWDs in their candidate selection processes. The data reveals that while there is progress in certain regions and political parties, there is still much to be done to achieve full inclusivity in Tanzanian politics. The underrepresentation of women, youth, and PWDs in various districts and parties signifies that there are systemic barriers that hinder the political participation of these groups. Inclusivity in leadership is essential for fostering a truly democratic society, as it ensures that all voices are heard and that policies reflect the diverse needs of the population. The disparities in

representation also reflect broader social issues such as gender inequality, youth disenfranchisement, and the marginalization of PWDs.

7.7 Efforts/policies to promote inclusivity

The question of whether there have been efforts or policies to promote inclusivity in Tanzanian politics addresses the extent to which the political system, through its institutions, parties, and processes, has worked to ensure the active participation of marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs). The aim of the question is to assess the impact of existing efforts or policies designed to promote political inclusivity and to understand the barriers that hinder the active participation of marginalized groups. By evaluating the extent of inclusivity, the question seeks to identify areas for improvement and suggest strategies that can help level the playing field for underrepresented groups. Inclusivity in politics is fundamental for fostering a representative democracy, ensuring that all voices particularly those from traditionally underrepresented groups is heard in decision-making processes. The data on the representation of women, youth, and PWDs in elections and political parties highlights the existing gaps and the varying degrees of progress across different regions and political parties.

The data reveals that although there are significant regional disparities in the representation of women, youth, and PWDs, some political entities and districts have made efforts to promote more inclusive participation. For instance, the Districts of Chamwino in Dodoma and Chato in Geita demonstrate relatively higher representation of women candidates (962 and 1159, respectively), signaling a commitment to gender inclusivity in these areas. Similarly, youth representation is particularly high in Misenyi and Chato, showing that these districts have adopted measures to involve younger individuals in the political process. However, the absence of women and youth candidates in districts like Ubungu (Dar es Salaam) and Karagwe (Kagera), as well as the low representation of PWDs in almost all regions, indicates a significant gap in political inclusivity. These gaps suggest that while there may be local initiatives or informal efforts to increase inclusivity, there is no uniform or systematic policy approach that addresses the needs of these groups nationwide. Recommendations for Promoting Inclusivity

1. To ensure that women, youth, and PWDs have fair opportunities to participate in political leadership, the government and political parties should implement or strengthen quota systems.
2. Investing in the political empowerment of marginalized groups through leadership training, workshops, and mentorship programs can help build their capacity to run for office. Training programs could focus on political campaigning, public speaking, and understanding the political system to make politics more accessible and approachable.
3. Political parties should adopt inclusive policies by diversifying their candidate selection processes. This can involve setting clear guidelines for increasing the representation of women, youth, and PWDs within party ranks. Parties that demonstrate stronger inclusivity, like CCM and CHADEMA, could serve as models for others.
4. Awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of political participation by marginalized groups can shift public perceptions and encourage greater inclusivity in elections. Media outlets, community groups, and civil society organizations can play a pivotal role in promoting this awareness.
5. Electoral systems must be accessible to all, especially PWDs. This includes ensuring polling stations are physically accessible, providing voting materials in Braille or sign language, and ensuring election-related information is available in accessible formats for those with disabilities.
6. Civil society organizations (CSOs) and electoral bodies should observe the representation of marginalized groups in elections and hold political parties accountable for failing to promote

inclusivity. Regular assessments and reporting can ensure that policies promoting inclusivity are being effectively implemented.

7.8 Provision of voter education

Voter education is a vital component of the electoral process, aimed at ensuring that citizens are well-informed about their rights, the electoral process, and how to cast their votes effectively. It is crucial for enhancing democracy, as it promotes informed voting, encourages greater participation, and prevents electoral malpractices. Educated voters are more likely to engage in the electoral process, make decisions that reflect their interests, and contribute to the legitimacy of election outcomes. Moreover, voter education is integral in promoting transparency, fairness and accountability in the electoral system. The findings from the survey reveal that TAMISEMI has played the most significant role in providing voter education in Tanzania, with 80% of observers identifying it as the primary source of information. This reflects the government's dominant role in shaping and disseminating electoral information. Given its reach and infrastructure, TAMISEMI is well-positioned to deliver voter education across the country, even in remote and underserved areas. However, the data also indicates that political parties 14.5% and civil society organizations (CSOs) 3.6% have had a much smaller influence on voter education. A small percentage of observers, 1.8%, reported receiving no voter education from any of the listed sources, highlighting gaps in the overall outreach efforts. The limited role of political parties and CSOs is concerning, as it suggests that these groups may not be sufficiently engaging with the electorate to provide comprehensive and diverse perspectives on the electoral process. This is particularly important in a democratic society where all stakeholders, including political parties and civil society, should contribute to an informed electorate.

TAMISEMI's leading role in voter education has been beneficial in ensuring that a significant portion of the population is informed about the electoral process. The government's involvement guarantees that voter education reaches most citizens, contributing to higher voter turnout and fostering a more informed electorate. Furthermore, government-run initiatives often have the resources and infrastructure to engage large sections of the population, including marginalized and rural communities, ensuring that even those in remote areas can access critical information about elections. While TAMISEMI's efforts are commendable, the limited involvement of political parties and CSOs is a major drawback. Political parties should actively educate constituents about their platforms, policies, and voting procedures. Their involvement ensures that voters receive balanced and diverse information that can help them make informed choices. Additionally, the minimal involvement of CSOs in voter education is problematic, especially for marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), who often face barriers in accessing electoral information. The absence of diverse viewpoints can limit the breadth of voter education and may result in an electorate that is only exposed to one-sided or incomplete information. Recommendations for Improvement

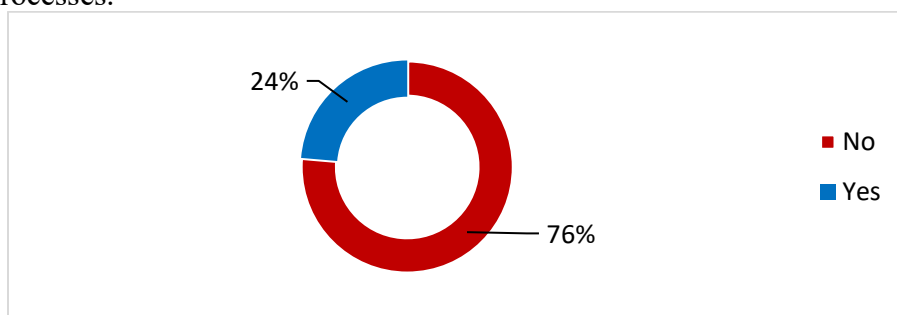
1. Political parties must be mandated to play a more active and visible role in voter education. They should be required to engage in campaigns that inform voters about their policies, platforms, and the candidates they are supporting.
2. Civil society organizations, particularly those working with marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, should be given more resources and support to conduct targeted voter education campaigns. CSOs have unique access to communities that may not be reached through mainstream government channels, making them essential partners in ensuring that all citizens are informed and able to participate.
3. Voter education should not rely solely on one method of communication. A combination of digital platforms, radio, television, print media, and community workshops should be utilized

to reach different segments of the population. Special attention should be given to ensuring that people with disabilities have access to voter education materials in accessible formats.

4. It is crucial that voter education efforts are independent of any political party influence. Non-partisan organizations and media outlets should be encouraged to contribute to electoral education, ensuring that information is presented in an impartial and balanced manner.

7.9 Focus on marginalized groups

The primary objective of this inquiry was to determine whether any organizations are dedicated to supporting marginalized groups within the electoral process, and to examine how their involvement may enhance inclusivity in leadership and democracy. Marginalized groups, including women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other vulnerable communities, often face unique barriers that hinder their participation in the electoral process. These barriers can include lack of access to information, physical or systemic obstacles, and social discrimination. Therefore, organizations dedicated to these groups play a crucial role in ensuring that all citizens, regardless of their background, are empowered to participate in leadership and democratic processes.



The data indicates that 76% of observers were aware of organizations that focused on marginalized groups, while 24% reported that no such organizations were present in their areas or that they were unaware of them. This finding reveals both positive and negative implications for the inclusion of marginalized groups in leadership and democracy. The fact that 76% of observers acknowledged the existence of organizations dedicated to marginalized groups is an encouraging sign. It suggests that efforts are being made to ensure that these groups are not excluded from the electoral process. These organizations may provide vital support, including voter education, advocacy for the rights of marginalized groups, assistance with registration and voting, and efforts to address specific challenges such as physical accessibility for PWDs or addressing gender-based barriers that women face.

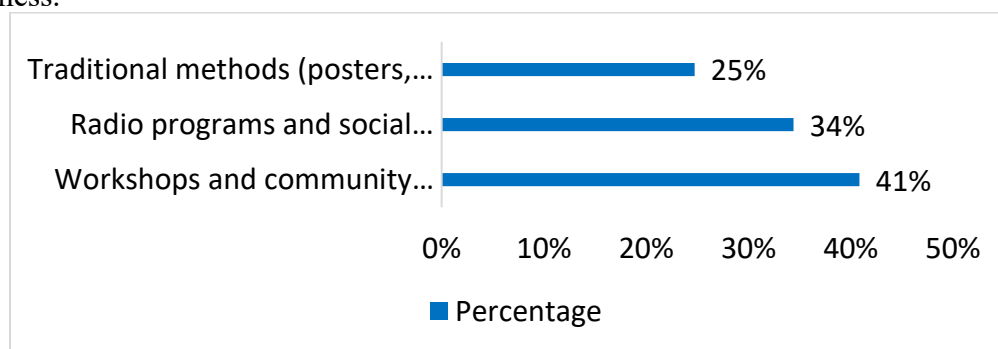
The presence of such organizations also contributes to the strengthening of democratic practices by broadening participation in leadership. When marginalized groups are included in the electoral process, it enhances the legitimacy of the elections and ensures that all voices are heard in decision-making processes. In turn, this helps create a more inclusive society where leadership truly represents the diversity of the population. Nevertheless, 24% of respondents reported an absence of awareness or presence of such organizations highlights a substantial shortfall in inclusivity. This could suggest that despite the presence of some organizations, they may not have reached all areas or communities in need. The absence of these organizations in certain regions could hinder marginalized groups from accessing the resources and support they need to fully participate in elections. Without adequate outreach and support, marginalized groups may remain excluded from the political process, weakening democratic engagement and potentially reinforcing social divides. Recommendations for Improvement:

1. Efforts should be made to increase the visibility and accessibility of organizations that focus on marginalized groups. This can be achieved through collaboration with local governments,

civil society organizations, and media to ensure these groups are aware of the available support and resources.

2. More targeted initiatives are needed to address the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups, such as PWDs, youth, and women. Organizations working in these areas should receive additional resources to implement inclusive programs that cater to the diverse needs of these communities, providing materials in accessible formats (e.g., braille, sign language, or audio) for people with disabilities would enhance their participation in voter education.
3. Stronger partnerships between these organizations and electoral bodies such as TAMISEMI and the Independent National Electoral Commission (NEC) should be fostered to ensure a more integrated approach to voter education and electoral participation.

The primary objective of this question was to explore the strategies used for delivering voter education in various areas and assess how well these strategies align with the needs of the population and the demands of the current electoral environment. Effective voter education is key to ensuring informed participation in elections, particularly among marginalized and underserved groups. Understanding the strategies used to deliver voter education can highlight areas of success, as well as those needing improvement to ensure broader inclusivity and effectiveness.



The data indicates that a variety of strategies have been used to deliver voter education. The most used methods include workshops and community meetings 41%, radio programs and social media campaigns 34% and traditional methods such as posters and flyers combined with digital campaigns 25%. Workshops and Community Meetings were identified as the most widely used strategies for voter education. These methods offer direct, face-to-face interaction, allowing community members to engage in discussions, ask questions, and receive clear explanations about the electoral process. Radio programs and social media campaigns follow closely as important strategies, accounting for 34% of voter education efforts. Radio is a powerful medium in Tanzania, reaching remote areas where internet access may be low. Social media campaigns, on the other hand, target younger, more urban voters who are more digitally connected. Traditional Methods such as Posters and Flyers continue to be used, although they account for 25% of the overall voter education strategies. These methods are particularly useful in areas where literacy rates may be lower, as they convey important electoral information in a simple, visual format.

The data reveals a positive trend toward using diverse strategies to deliver voter education. The wide range of approaches ensures that different segments of the population are reached, from rural to urban areas and from literate to less literate individuals. Workshops and community meetings, while most effective for localized, direct engagement, ensure that communities are informed through in-person interaction. Radio programs and social media campaigns have the advantage of reaching large audiences across geographical divides, providing mass communication with the potential for high engagement. Despite these positive aspects, several challenges remain in the delivery of voter education. The growing digital divide is a significant

barrier to equitable voter education, as many rural areas still lack consistent access to the internet and mobile devices. Furthermore, while workshops and community meetings are effective in many areas, they may not always be inclusive of marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities or individuals with limited mobility. Accessibility to these events needs to be enhanced to ensure that all populations can fully engage with voter education initiatives. The strategies used for delivering voter education in Tanzania are generally positive in terms of inclusivity and outreach. The variety of methods employed suggests an effort to reach a broad spectrum of the population, particularly those in rural areas and less digitally connected regions.

The workshops and community meetings play a crucial role in fostering inclusive engagement, particularly in rural and remote areas, where face-to-face communication is often the most effective. However, it is essential to ensure that these events are accessible to everyone, including marginalized groups, to avoid excluding those who are most in need of voter education. From the data above it is recommended: -

1. While digital campaigns, such as social media and online programs, have the potential to engage large audiences, it is crucial to address the digital divide in Tanzania. Efforts should be made to increase access to technology in rural areas. This can be achieved by providing free internet access in community centers or collaborating with mobile service providers to offer affordable data packages for electoral-related content.
2. Workshops and community meetings should be designed to be more inclusive of marginalized groups. This could include providing sign language interpreters for people with disabilities, ensuring that venues are accessible, and offering materials in different formats, such as braille or audio, for those with visual impairments.
3. Civil society organizations that work closely with marginalized communities should be more actively involved in voter education. These organizations have established relationships with hard-to-reach populations and can help tailor voter education efforts to address the specific needs of these groups.
4. While digital and radio programs are valuable, traditional methods like posters and flyers should not be neglected. These methods can be combined with digital campaigns to ensure a more comprehensive and accessible voter education effort, especially in areas where literacy levels are low.
5. It is essential to continuously assess the effectiveness of the voter education strategies being used. Regular feedback should be collected from various community members, particularly from marginalized groups, to ensure that voter education programs are meeting their needs and to identify areas where improvements can be made.

7.10 Digital platforms to reach different demographics

The question aimed to explore whether digital platforms were utilized to reach different demographics in Tanzania, particularly in relation to voter education. With 90% of observers answering "No," meaning there was not much utilization; it suggests that there was a limited use of digital platforms for engaging the broader electorate. This is particularly concerning the growing youth population and internet penetration in the country. Tanzania has seen a steady increase in internet access and digital platform usage, especially among the youth. According to recent data, Tanzania has experienced a rapid expansion in mobile and internet connectivity, with internet penetration growing significantly in both urban and rural areas. With a population of over 60% youth under the age of 25, digital platforms offer an untapped opportunity to engage young voters and increase their participation in the democratic process. The youth are tech-savvy and often more connected to social media platforms, where they engage with content and share information.

However, 90% of observers reported that digital platforms were not utilized for voter education indicates a missed opportunity to engage this demographic. In a context where young people are increasingly consuming information through smartphones, social media, and the internet, failing to utilize these platforms for voter education risks excluding a significant portion of the electorate from crucial electoral information. This gap in digital voter education could potentially lead to lower voter turnout among the youth, as they may be less likely to participate in elections if they are not effectively reached by voter education campaigns. Additionally, growth of internet access has been concentrated in urban areas, which means rural youth may not be as well-served by digital platforms, exacerbating existing disparities. For young people in rural areas, relying on traditional methods like posters, radio, or community meetings may not be sufficient to inform and mobilize them for elections.

The limited use of digital platforms for voter education has a direct impact on youth voter turnout. Young people in Tanzania, who are the most active users of mobile phones and social media, are increasingly relying on digital platforms for information, communication, and engagement. However, without targeted voter education on these platforms, youth may remain disengaged or uninformed about the electoral process, leading to lower participation rates. Moreover, the growth of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram presents a unique opportunity to reach young voters. These platforms offer a two-way communication channel that can be used to engage, educate, and motivate young people to register and vote. Digital platforms also allow for real-time updates, reminders, and interactive discussions, which can foster a sense of participation and empowerment among youth. Without leveraging these tools, the government, political parties, and other stakeholders risk alienating the youth demographic, it is recommended: -

1. The government must prioritize the integration of digital platforms into voter education campaigns.
2. CSOs play a crucial role in reaching marginalized communities, including youth. They should partner with digital platforms, influencers, and media organizations to create engaging, relatable, and youth-friendly content.
3. CSOs should also advocate for policies that support digital voter education, focusing on young people in rural areas who may be excluded from mainstream media campaigns.
4. Political parties should recognize the importance of digital platforms in reaching younger voters and invest in creating digital strategies for voter engagement.
5. Political parties should also collaborate with digital influencers and youth-led organizations to ensure that their messages resonate with young people and are effectively communicated through the channels they frequent.
6. Development partners should provide technical support and funding to enable the use of digital platforms in civic and voter education.
7. Development partners can also facilitate the creation of digital campaigns that promote youth participation, focusing on topics such as the importance of voting, civic responsibility, and how to register to vote.

7.11 Effectiveness of voter education in reaching underserved communities

The purpose was to assess the effectiveness of voter education programs in reaching remote or underserved communities, particularly those in rural or marginalized areas. These communities often face significant challenges in accessing information about the electoral process due to geographical isolation, limited infrastructure, and lack of digital resources. The question sought to evaluate how well the existing voter education initiatives addressed these challenges and ensured that all citizens, regardless of location, were adequately informed about the voting process, their rights and the importance of their participation in elections. There were indicatives

of the varying degrees of effectiveness in reaching remote communities. A significant portion of observers expressed concerns about the limitations of existing voter education programs in reaching these underserved areas. Specifically, many observers pointed out that while there were efforts to conduct voter education, these initiatives were often not widespread or frequent enough in rural areas. A notable number of observers indicated that rural communities had limited access to the main channels of voter education, such as community meetings, workshops, and media campaigns. These limitations were particularly felt in areas where transportation infrastructure is poor or where there is a lack of access to digital platforms. Additionally, some observers highlighted that even where voter education programs were implemented, they were not always tailored to the unique needs of rural or marginalized populations. The observers suggest that while there have been efforts to include underserved communities in voter education, the effectiveness of these initiatives has been limited by various factors. Rural areas, in particular, lack of infrastructure necessary to support the widespread distribution of voter education materials, whether through print, digital, or face-to-face channels.

Another issue that emerged from the observers is that voter education efforts have not always considered by the socio-economic realities of rural and underserved communities. For instance, many of these areas struggle with low literacy rates, and therefore, voter education programs that rely on written materials or complex language may not be as effective. There is also the issue of digital exclusion where many remote areas still lack access to the internet, which means that digital voter education campaigns cannot reach large segments of the population. The effectiveness of voter education programs in reaching remote and underserved communities in Tanzania appears to be limited. To improve the reach of voter education programs in remote and underserved communities, the following recommendations are made:

1. Voter education should be adapted to the specific needs of rural and marginalized communities.
2. The government and other stakeholders should invest in mobile-based voter education programs. Many people in rural areas own mobile phones, and text messages, voice messages, or simple mobile apps could be effective ways to provide information about voting.
3. More community-driven approaches, such as village-level workshops, local leaders as facilitators, and peer-to-peer education, should be employed to ensure that information reaches people where they are.
4. Collaboration with local civil society organizations, religious groups, and community networks can help to bridge the gap in voter education outreach.
5. Efforts should be made to improve infrastructure, such as the setting up mobile voter education units in remote areas.
6. Expanding radio coverage and utilizing audio-visual platforms could help reach wider audiences, including those with limited literacy.

7.12 Accessibility of voter education to people with disabilities

The survey results indicate that an impressive 93% of observers felt that voter education programs were not accessible to people with disabilities, with most categorizing their access as "somehow." This suggests that a significant portion of individuals with disabilities were unable to participate in these programs, reflecting negative strides towards inclusivity in the electoral process. However, the remaining 7% who responded that programs were accessible indicate that there was full accessibility for some individuals with disabilities. The use of the term "somehow" implies that while access was available, it may not have been optimal for all. It suggests that, while some people with disabilities could access voter education programs, the methods or formats used may not have fully met their specific needs.

The positive aspect of the finding lies in the fact that individuals with disabilities reported some level of access to voter education. This is a critical step forward in promoting their inclusion in the democratic process. Voter education plays a key role in empowering individuals to exercise their rights and make informed choices in the election process. Despite progress, it indicates that people with disabilities still face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in the electoral process. These obstacles could be physical (such as inaccessible locations or buildings) or informational (such as lack of materials in accessible formats). This gap in accessibility signifies that while efforts have been made, they are not yet universally effective, and as such, some individuals with disabilities remain disenfranchised, undermining the inclusivity of the process. Accessibility in voter education is not just about providing information; it's about ensuring that it's delivered in ways that address the diverse needs of people with disabilities. This includes not only physical accessibility such as ensuring that event locations are wheelchair-friendly but also providing information in formats that can be easily understood by people with different impairments, such as those who are blind or deaf. Inadequate accessibility could mean that even though voter education is available, it is not equitably delivered, and therefore, some groups may still be left out.

Ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their abilities, have equal access to the information necessary to participate in elections is crucial for strengthening democracy. The challenges faced by people with disabilities must be addressed comprehensively to ensure that the right to vote is a right that is universally accessible. To enhance the accessibility of voter education programs and ensure that they fully cater to the needs of people with disabilities, the following measures should be considered:

1. Voter education programs should be designed to meet the needs of people with different types of disabilities, ensuring that materials are available in braille, sign language interpretation is provided, and audio versions of printed materials are accessible.
2. All venues used for voter education should be physically accessible to individuals with mobility impairments, including the provision of ramps, elevators, and accessible transportation options.
3. Those responsible for delivering voter education should undergo training to understand the specific needs of people with disabilities. This will help them deliver more inclusive and effective programs.
4. Expanding the use of digital platforms can help make voter education more accessible.
5. Voter education campaigns should include targeted outreach to disability organizations, advocacy groups, and local communities.
6. Collaborating with disability advocacy organizations will provide insights into how voter education programs can be made more inclusive.

7.13 Nominations and rejection of candidates

Transparency is the cornerstone of any credible electoral process, shaping public confidence in the fairness and integrity of elections. To assess the transparency of the nomination process managed by the Election Management Body (EMB), observers were asked about the clarity and accessibility of the process's guidelines and criteria. The findings revealed a split perception: 60.4% of observers believed the process was "somewhat transparent," noting gaps in public accessibility to critical information, while 54.2% described it as "very transparent," commending the EMB's efforts to provide clear, publicly available guidelines. These observers underscore the need for consistent, proactive communication to ensure every voter feels informed and included, thereby reinforcing trust in the democratic process. When observers were asked whether unusual delays occurred, 62.5% noted "minor delays" that did not disrupt the process, while 45.8%

confirmed that the nominations proceeded smoothly without issues. 6.3% reported "significant delays" that had tangible impacts on the process.

The findings from these questions reveal a dual narrative. On the one hand, the EMB appears to be making strides in maintaining transparency and efficiency, which are essential for a credible nomination process. On the other hand, gaps in accessible information and minor delays, while not catastrophic, can lead to perceptions of inefficiency and unequal access, potentially eroding public trust. These issues have broader implications for democratic governance, as even small lapses can amplify voter skepticism and diminish participation. Ensuring transparency and efficiency in nominations is not just a technical requirement but a moral imperative to uphold democracy's principles.

To build on successes and address the identified challenges, the following steps are recommended:

1. The EMB should prioritize real-time dissemination of clear, accessible guidelines through diverse channels, including radio, social media, and grassroots community outreach, to bridge information gaps.
2. Governments should provide the EMB with adequate resources to prevent delays and ensure seamless operations.
3. CSOs should act as watchdogs, advocating for transparent practices while fostering civic awareness about the nomination process while development partners can play a crucial role in funding innovations, such as digital platforms, that streamline operations and increase transparency.

The nomination of candidates is a pivotal step in the electoral process, serving as a litmus test for the integrity and inclusivity of elections. Observers across 48 districts provided critical insights into the cases of rejected candidates, shedding light on the Election Management Body's (EMB) decision-making process. The most cited reason for rejection, according to 89.6% of observers, was lack of required documentation or qualifications. This underscores the importance of meeting procedural requirements to ensure fairness and adherence to established rules. Issues related to the candidates' age or citizenship status were reported by 22.9% of observers, highlighting areas where clarity in eligibility criteria could be further emphasized. 2.1% noted "other reasons" for rejection, though these were not publicly elaborated, pointing to a potential gap in transparency.

The stringent adherence to documentation and eligibility requirements reflects the EMB's commitment to maintaining a fair and credible nomination process. This approach can bolster public confidence in the electoral process, signaling that rules are applied uniformly and without favoritism. This suggests that potential candidates, especially those from marginalized or underserved communities, may face barriers in understanding and fulfilling the nomination requirements. It is recommended that:

1. The EMB should implement widespread voter and candidate education campaigns before the nomination period, focusing on documentation and qualification requirements.
2. The EMB, in collaboration with policymakers, should consider streamlining nomination requirements to make them more accessible, particularly for candidates from marginalized groups or rural areas.
3. Any decisions regarding candidate rejection should be publicly detailed to enhance accountability and minimize perceptions of bias.
4. The EMB can establish a portal or report mechanism for real-time updates on rejections and their justifications.

5. Civil society organizations and political parties should offer guidance and resources to potential candidates, ensuring they understand the requirements and have the means to fulfill them.
6. The EMB and development partners can collaborate to develop user-friendly digital platforms that provide step-by-step guidance on nominations and flag incomplete documentation early in the process.

7.14 Handling of rejection of candidates

The handling of candidate rejections in the electoral process is a critical aspect of maintaining fairness, transparency, and inclusivity in a democratic system. According to the data, the observers 45.5% believed that all candidates were treated equally and consistently during the rejection process. The electorate largely believed the system was fair, with candidates having a fair chance to meet the EMB's qualifications and documentation requirements. Such consistency in handling candidate rejections contributes positively to the integrity of the electoral process, ensuring that no one is unfairly excluded or discriminated against based on bias or arbitrary criteria. 45.5% of observers noted inconsistencies in the rejection process, they felt these did not impact overall fairness significantly. This response highlights the potential gaps in the process where there may have been room for improvement, such as unclear guidelines or a lack of full transparency in the criteria used for rejections. The perception of inconsistency in how rejections were handled could undermine public confidence in the electoral system, especially if it is seen as a tool for exclusion. 9.1% of our observers reported significant inconsistencies in how rejections were handled, indicating a more serious concern that may have affected the credibility of the election process. This suggests candidates from specific political affiliations or demographic groups may have been scrutinized more or unfairly excluded.

In terms of its impact on inclusion, democracy, and leadership, the rejection process must be transparent, equitable, and based on clear and publicly available criteria to ensure that all individuals, regardless of background, have an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Inconsistent rejection practices can alienate certain groups, erode trust in democratic institutions, and limit the diversity of candidates running for leadership positions. To safeguard the principles of democracy, it is essential that the rejection process is not only fair but is perceived as fair by all stakeholders. Recommendations for Improvement:

- a) The EMB should ensure that the criteria for candidate rejection are publicly available and clearly articulated. This transparency will help mitigate any perceived biases and ensure that all candidates, regardless of their background, are judged by the same standards.
- b) Election officials and supervisors should receive regular training on handling rejections fairly and consistently, with particular attention to addressing any unconscious biases that may affect their decision-making.
- c) A formal feedback mechanism should be put in place for candidates who are rejected, giving them an opportunity to understand the reasons behind the rejection and to appeal if necessary. This would foster greater transparency and accountability in the rejection process, the electoral system can improve its inclusivity and fairness, helping to build greater trust among voters and ensuring that all qualified candidates, regardless of their background, have a fair chance at participating in leadership roles.

7.15 Objections and appeals process

The question regarding whether candidates were given sufficient opportunity to appeal their rejection was asked to evaluate the fairness, transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral process. The objections and appeals mechanisms are a critical element of any democratic election, as it provides candidates with a chance to rectify perceived injustices or errors in the

nomination process. We wanted to examine this aspect. The analysis seeks to determine whether the electoral system ensures equal treatment for all candidates and whether barriers exist that might undermine participation, particularly for marginalized groups as objections and appeals process is a vital component of any electoral system, as it ensures that candidates have a fair opportunity to challenge decisions they perceive as unjust.

According to the data, 64.6% of our observers affirmed that candidates were given sufficient time and opportunity to appeal their rejection. This is a promising indication that the system, in most cases, provided avenues for rejected candidates to seek redress, reflecting a commitment to fairness and due process. 45.8% of our observers noted that some candidates encountered difficulties during the appeals process, primarily due to unclear procedures or restrictive time constraints. This response highlights a significant challenge in the process: while the opportunity to appeal existed, the mechanisms and guidelines may not have been accessible or transparent enough for all candidates to navigate effectively. 6.3% reported that the appeals process was inadequate and limited, providing little to no opportunity for candidates to challenge their rejection. When candidates are given a genuine opportunity to contest rejections, it not only strengthens the legitimacy of elections but also ensures that diverse voices are represented in leadership. Therefore, recommendations for future improvements include: -

1. The Election Management Body (EMB) should develop and disseminate clear, user-friendly guidelines for filing objections and appeals.
2. The timeframe for filing and resolving appeals should be reviewed and extended to accommodate candidates who may face logistical or informational barriers.
3. Training programs for election officials should emphasize the importance of handling objections and appeals fairly and transparently.
4. Officials should be equipped to guide candidates through the process, minimizing confusion and delays.
5. Establishing an independent body to oversee the objections and appeals process can enhance accountability and ensure that all candidates are treated equally.
6. A formal mechanism should be introduced to provide candidates with detailed feedback on the reasons for rejection and the outcomes of their appeals.

7.16 Impartiality and time in handling objections and appeals

Addressing whether the objections and appeals process was handled promptly and impartially is essential for evaluating the integrity of the electoral system. This question highlights the importance of ensuring fair alternatives for candidates who believe they have been unjustly treated, thereby reinforcing democratic values of inclusivity and equity. Data reveals a mixed but largely positive assessment of the process. Nearly half of the observers, 47.3%, affirmed that objections and appeals were handled promptly and impartially, showcasing the Election Management Body's (EMB) commitment to maintaining a fair and efficient system. Another 45.5% acknowledged minor delays or biases in the process but emphasized that these issues did not significantly undermine their credibility. However, a small but concerning proportion, 7.3% reported substantial delays and biases, indicating localized or systemic shortcomings that must be addressed. The EMB should consider implementing digital systems for tracking and resolving objections and appeals to minimize delays and provide transparency. Election officials involved in the process must undergo rigorous training to ensure they operate without bias, while independent observer bodies can enhance accountability. Improved communication with candidates, providing clear and timely updates on the status of their appeals, would also reduce frustration. Finally, standardized reporting mechanisms for handling objections would enable consistent evaluation and improvement of the process in future elections, while the data suggests that the objections and appeals process was largely fair and efficient, addressing the highlighted

gaps is vital to bolster trust in the electoral system. A focus on timeliness and impartiality will not only enhance the credibility of future elections but also promote a more inclusive and equitable democratic environment.

7.17 Reactions from supporters/Party followers

Understanding the reaction of party supporters to candidate nominations provides valuable insights into the broader electoral atmosphere and its impact on inclusion and democratization. This question sheds light on the public's perception of the nomination process and the extent to which they trust the mechanisms of the Election Management Body (EMB). The reaction of party supporters to candidate nominations offers a glimpse into the inclusivity and transparency of the electoral process. This question was pivotal in assessing how the public perceived the fairness and legitimacy of the Election Management Body's (EMB) actions. The data collected paints a varied picture of the public's response. 64.6% of observers reported mixed reactions among supporters, with some expressing dissatisfaction with the nomination outcomes. Meanwhile, 47.9% noted largely supportive and positive reactions, suggesting that most supporters were satisfied with the process. However, a small fraction of 2.1% witnessed strong opposition or protests from party supporters regarding specific candidates. These instances of resistance, though limited, highlight potential challenges in achieving widespread trust and satisfaction in the nomination process. Mixed reactions underscore the complexities of inclusivity in a competitive political environment. Dissatisfaction often arises from perceptions of favoritism, lack of transparency or insufficient communication regarding nomination criteria.

On the positive side, the widespread supportive reactions reported in many cases signal public approval of the EMB's efforts to conduct a fair process. This acceptance strengthens trust in electoral institutions and fosters a culture of political engagement. However, the isolated instances of protests and dissatisfaction indicate a need for improvement to ensure that the process is perceived as equitable by all stakeholders. Reactions to nominations play a crucial role in shaping public confidence in the electoral system and influencing the participation of diverse groups. When supporters perceive the process as fair and inclusive, it encourages participation from a broad spectrum of candidates and voters. On the other hand, dissatisfaction or perceptions of bias can deter marginalized groups, undermining efforts to achieve representative leadership. Transparent and inclusive nomination processes are essential for fostering a democratic system that mirrors the diversity of the population.

To address public concerns and enhance the inclusivity and transparency of the nomination process, several actions are recommended. First, the Election Management Body (EMB) should prioritize improved transparency by clearly communicating the criteria and decisions for nominations. This can be achieved through public announcements, accessible guidelines, and open forums to ensure stakeholders fully understand the process. Transparent communication can significantly reduce dissatisfaction and build trust among supporters. Second, collaboration between political parties and civil society organizations is essential to address public concerns and educate supporters about the nomination process. Joint efforts can foster greater awareness and understanding, minimizing misinformation and promoting confidence in the system. In addition, election officials should receive targeted training on inclusive practices and conflict resolution to address grievances effectively and ensure marginalized groups feel represented and valued in the process. Finally, independent oversight mechanisms must be strengthened to ensure fairness and accountability in the nomination process.

7.18 Violence or disruptions during the nomination process

The data reveals that the nomination process was largely peaceful, with 70.9% of observers reporting no incidents of violence or disruptions from party followers. This indicates a high level of civility and cooperation among stakeholders, reflecting positively on the overall conduct of the nomination process. Such an environment is crucial for fostering trust and legitimacy in electoral systems, as it demonstrates a commitment to democratic principles. However, 29.1% of observers noted minor incidents of disruption or confrontation. While these incidents were not widespread, their occurrence highlights the need for continued efforts to address tensions and improve conflict resolution mechanisms within the electoral framework. The reported 29.1% of minor incidents of disruption or confrontation during the nomination process may seem relatively small but can carry significant implications for inclusion and the broader democratic landscape. Such incidents, even when not widespread, can create an atmosphere of tension and insecurity that disproportionately affects marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. These groups often face systemic barriers to political participation, and the presence of confrontations or disruptions may further discourage their involvement, undermining efforts toward inclusive leadership.

7.19 Defections of candidates

Defections of candidates during the nomination process can significantly influence election dynamics and public perceptions of political stability. The data reveals that while most observers (66.7%) reported a few defections that did not significantly impact the nominations, a notable 2.1% observed several defections that had the potential to shift electoral dynamics. On the other hand, 31.3% stated that no defections occurred, with candidates remaining loyal to their original parties. The primary reasons cited for these defections provide valuable insights into the underlying challenges within party structures. The most common reason was disagreements with party policies or leadership decisions, accounting for 49.1% of observers. Another significant reason was the perceived lack of fair nomination processes within parties, making up 32.7%. This suggests that internal processes perceived as biased or opaque discourage candidates, leading to their exit in search of fairer opportunities. Strategic considerations also played a role, with 14.5% of candidates defecting to gain increased support opportunities by aligning with other parties. Such defections can reshape local election dynamics, especially in competitive regions. Lastly, 3.6% of defections were attributed to other personal or political reasons, reflecting individual aspirations or circumstances influencing decisions.

While the data does not explicitly name the parties most affected by defects, anecdotal evidence suggests that parties with centralized or top-down nomination processes are more susceptible. In contrast, those fostering transparency and inclusivity tend to retain candidates more effectively. Defections can weaken public confidence in political parties and disrupt efforts to build cohesive political systems. For marginalized groups, such as women, PWDs and youth, frequent defections can signal instability, discouraging their participation in political leadership. Furthermore, the perception of unfair internal nomination processes particularly affects efforts to promote inclusion, as marginalized candidates may feel doubly disadvantaged. To address the causes of defections and reduce their negative impact, political parties should implement several strategies including transparent and participatory nomination processes. This will help create a sense of fairness and inclusion, reducing candidates' frustration with the system. Second, parties need to strengthen communication of policies to ensure that their leadership decisions align with the interests and expectations of their members, minimizing internal conflicts and disagreements. Third, political parties should establish supporting systems, including mentorship programs and

dialogue platforms, where candidates can voice concerns, resolve conflicts, and feel more engaged within the party.

The question was asked to assess the effectiveness and quality of the working relationship between the key stakeholders in the election process, namely election officials and political parties. The aim was to gauge how well these two entities worked together to ensure the smooth running of the election, maintain transparency and address potential challenges during the nomination and voting process. In terms of the data collected, the results reveal that 60% of observers rated the collaboration as fair, indicating that the interaction between election officials and political parties met basic expectations but may have room for improvement. This suggests that while the collaboration was functional, there may have been areas where it lacked the level of consistency, clarity, or efficiency that could have enhanced the overall election experience. On the positive side, 14.5% of observers rated the collaboration as very fair, indicating that in certain instances, the coordination between officials and parties was exemplary, and it contributed positively to the election process. 23.6% rated the collaboration as neutral, suggesting that while the collaboration did not stand out as problematic, it also did not exceed expectations.

This could point to a lack of noticeable effort or visible outcomes in some regions, where the collaboration may have been more passive or limited to procedural requirements without actively fostering a collaborative and supportive environment. However, 1.8% rated the collaboration as unfair, which highlights that in certain instances, the relationship between election officials and political parties may have been strained, or not cooperative enough, potentially hindering the overall process and raising concerns about transparency or fairness. The data suggests that while most observers were satisfied with the collaboration, there is room for improvement. Strengthening communication, addressing concerns more promptly, and fostering greater transparency and cooperation would enhance the election process, creating a more inclusive and democratic environment.

The daily campaigning checklist serves as a crucial tool for systematically observing and documenting campaign activities during election periods. Its importance lies in ensuring transparency, accountability, and fairness in the democratic process. Campaigning is a critical phase in any election, as it reflects the political parties' engagement with voters, their ability to communicate their agendas, and the inclusiveness of their approaches. Observing daily campaigning activities helps to assess whether political parties and candidates adhere to the legal and ethical guidelines set by the election management bodies. It provides insights into how campaigns impact voter turnout, particularly among marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Moreover, the checklist allows for real-time documentation of any irregularities, such as hate speech, misuse of public resources, or voter intimidation, which could undermine the democratic process. This, in turn, contributes to building trust in the electoral process, fostering a level playing field for all candidates, and promoting informed participation among voters.

Key Findings

- Most of the campaign venues (55%) were NOT accessible to people with disabilities.
- 98% of the campaign usually ends within the required time.
- Most campaign methods used were public rallies method followed by the door-to-door method.
- 80% the campaign schedule observed as planned and agreed upon by the participating parties
- 12% of the campaigns did more than one party campaign in the same area at the same time
- Six percent of the campaigns were not decent (free from hate speech, defamatory language, etc.)?
- 68% of the campaigns had adequate protection.
- Few observers (seven percent) noticed unrealistic or misleading promises.

7.20 Election Campaigning

The reason for having a daily campaign checklist during the election process was to ensure that all activities are systematically tracked, executed on time, and effectively observed. A checklist is an invaluable tool that helps maintain transparency, accountability, and fairness by providing a clear record of what has been completed and what remains to be done. It aids in managing campaigns efficiently, ensuring that all tasks are achieved without oversight or delays, which is vital for a smooth and orderly election process. The first question on the checklist sought to determine whether campaign activities followed a structured plan. The fact that 60% of observers confirmed that campaign activities were planned is a positive indicator that most candidates or parties adopted a well-organized approach. This reflects an understanding of the importance of preparation and a commitment to following a systematic agenda. 23.6% reported a neutral response suggesting that some campaigns may not have been as rigorously organized, which could have led to inefficiencies or missed opportunities. 1.8% found the activities unplanned, a sign concerning that some candidates or parties were inadequately prepared, which may have undermined the election process and reduced voter engagement.

The second question examined whether there was sufficient coordination between campaign teams and local authorities. 60% of observers rated the coordination as fair to good, indicating that while local authorities were engaged in the process, the cooperation may not have been entirely seamless. 14.5% rated the collaboration as very fair, enhancing the electoral process. 23.6% of observers pointed out that it was less proactive or less robust interaction in some regions. 1.8% rated the collaboration as unfair; suggesting that in some cases, the relationship between local authorities and campaign teams was not effective, potentially resulting in disruptions or delays. The third question assessed the inclusivity of campaigns, particularly in engaging marginalized groups such as women, youth, and people with disabilities. While 60% of observers found the campaigns inclusive, there is still room for improvement in empowering and engaging these groups. 14.5% felt the inclusivity was very fair, suggesting that some campaigns actively ensured that marginalized groups had a voice. 23.6% rated inclusivity neutrally, implying that these groups were either not adequately represented or lacked substantial involvement. 1.8% indicated that inclusivity was lacking, highlighting a significant area for improvement. For future elections, there is a need for campaigns to ensure that marginalized groups are not just included but empowered to participate meaningfully in the process.

The last question focused on the timeliness of campaign actions. 60% of observers believed that activities were conducted on schedule, ensuring that campaigns adhered to critical timelines necessary for proper preparation. This is a positive reflection of effective time management. 23.6% felt neutral about the timeliness, which suggests that some campaigns experienced delays

or rushed activities, potentially affecting their overall effectiveness. 1.8% reported untimely campaigns, which could have led to issues such as poor voter outreach or insufficient preparation.



Photo: Political Party Members during Election Campaign

The data shows that most campaigns were well-organized and inclusive, but there are areas for improvement. Particularly, there needs to be better communication, more inclusive engagement with marginalized groups, and enhanced timeliness in execution. Campaigns should focus on structured planning, ensuring that no area is left unaddressed, especially the empowerment of underrepresented communities. The collaboration between political parties, local authorities, and election teams must be further strengthened to ensure all stakeholders work cohesively. Most importantly, a stronger focus on time management will contribute to smoother, more effective elections. Having a daily campaign checklist is essential for the effective management of election activities. It not only helps organize campaigns but also provides insight into areas that need improvement. Ensuring that all campaign activities are well-planned, coordinated, inclusive, and timely will pave the way for a more transparent, accountable and democratic election process. The checklist thus serves both as a tool for immediate management and as a valuable resource for continuous improvement in future campaigns.

7.20.1 Accessibility of campaign venues for people with disabilities

Ensuring that election campaign venues are accessible to individuals with disabilities is not merely a matter of compliance; it is a fundamental right that underscores the inclusivity and fairness of the entire election process. According to the data, 53.64% of observers reported that campaign venues were fully accessible to people with disabilities, a commendable outcome that demonstrates significant progress in promoting inclusive spaces. Efforts to integrate disability-friendly infrastructure like ramps, elevators, and suitable seating were implemented in many venues, enabling individuals with disabilities to participate in the campaign process. Data also reveals a substantial gap in accessibility that cannot be ignored. 29.09% of observers reported that the campaign venues were not accessible at all to people with disabilities. The absence of basic accommodation shows that individuals with disabilities are not prioritized in the democratic process. 17.27% of observers noted that the venues were only partially accessible, suggesting that accommodation was insufficient for all individuals with disabilities.

7.20.2 Campaign irregularities (violence, intimidation or bribery)

The question regarding campaign irregularities was asked to assess the integrity of the election process and ensure that it aligns with established election laws and regulations designed to uphold fairness, transparency, and inclusivity. Election laws are in place to create an environment where all candidates can compete on an equal footing, free from undue influence, intimidation or fraud. These laws and regulations aim to protect the rights of voters, prevent the manipulation of the electoral process, and promote a democratic system where the results reflect

the true will of the people. 95% of observers reported no irregularities in the campaign process is generally positive and suggests that most campaigns adhered to the required legal standards. However, the 5% who reported instances of violence, intimidation, or bribery signal a breach of these essential democratic principles. According to election laws, these practices are illegal and undermine the core values of a free and fair election. They can discourage participation, particularly among marginalized groups, and contribute to a lack of confidence in the electoral system. To ensure compliance with election laws and safeguard the inclusivity of the process, it is vital to address these irregularities swiftly and decisively.

The question about the specific types of campaign irregularities was crucial for identifying the nature and scope of violations during the election process. Understanding these irregularities is essential for pinpointing areas that may need stricter enforcement of laws, targeted interventions, or preventive measures. Election laws are designed to protect the integrity of the voting process, and identifying specific issues helps authorities address them effectively. Among the reported irregularities, violence was the most frequently cited, with 57% of observers mentioning it. While it occurred at a relatively low rate, violence remains a significant concern for the election process. Violence during campaigns directly threatens the safety of participants, undermines the peace that is vital for a democratic election, and intimidates voters. It particularly affects marginalized groups, such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, who may already face barriers to full participation. The fear of violence can discourage these groups from engaging in the electoral process, further entrenching existing disparities and limiting their ability to influence the outcome of the election.

Bribery (29%) and intimidation (14%) were less frequently reported but still pose critical threats to the integrity of elections. Bribery distorts the democratic process by offering financial incentives to sway votes, undermining the fairness of the election. It disproportionately affects economically vulnerable individuals, including women and persons with disabilities, who may be coerced or influenced by financial promises. Intimidation, which can involve threats or coercion, undermines the safety and autonomy of voters. Those who are targeted, particularly from marginalized groups, may feel pressured to vote in a certain way or avoid voting altogether. This not only limits their ability to participate freely but also restricts the diversity of representation in the democratic process.

Even though these irregularities were not widespread, they are significant enough to undermine the principles of inclusion and democratization. When violence, bribery, and intimidation are present, they erode trust in the electoral process, discourage participation, and ultimately undermine the legitimacy of the election results. The most vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, are the ones who suffer the most from these irregularities, as they are more susceptible to coercion, exclusion, and intimidation. To safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and ensure that elections are inclusive, it is critical to strengthen both preventive and responsive measures. Election observers should be trained and empowered to report any irregularities, including violence, bribery, or intimidation. Law enforcement and election bodies must act swiftly to investigate these incidents and hold perpetrators accountable. Public awareness campaigns that emphasize the importance of peaceful, fair, and inclusive elections, along with stronger protections for vulnerable groups, can help prevent such irregularities.

7.20.3 Irregularities and the areas where they occurred

During the election campaigns, several irregularities were reported, highlighting concerns about fairness and inclusivity in the process. In one instance, during the CHADEMA campaign rallies, the district publicity secretary referred to the ruling party, CCM, as "Nzi wa kijani" (Green Fly), a term meant to demean opposition. There were also allegations that certain candidates were distributing money in the streets to bribe voters into supporting them. Additionally, the CHADEMA candidate for Mpanda Town accused the Member of Parliament of swindling his relatives over inheritance, although these accusations lacked sufficient evidence. In Shinyanga Municipal Council, specifically in the Masekelo, Kambarage, Ndala, and Ngokelo Wards, similar irregularities were observed. The ruling party distributed between Tsh 5,000 to 10,000 to mobilize voters, with women being excluded from promoting their manifestos. The electoral process also faced challenges, including unclear policies and procedures and a general lack of interest from voters, who preferred to continue with their daily activities rather than engage in the campaign.

In a separate incident, the opposition party ACT-WAZALENDU attempted to hold a meeting in the same area where CHADEMA had planned their rally, leading to a conflict between the parties. In another case, CCM initially planned to campaign in a deserted location and subsequently ordered people from the Kilimahewa market to relocate to their campaign venue. This market, which was old and abandoned, had its residents forced to leave. The CHADEMA candidate later discouraged citizens from attending the CCM rally, accusing the party of causing the displacement. The police eventually intervened, advising CCM to reach their supporters rather than forcing people to follow their campaign. These examples illustrate how irregularities such as bribery, intimidation, and campaign interference can undermine the fairness of elections, particularly affecting marginalized groups, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities. These actions disrupt the democratic process and hinder the inclusivity that is crucial for a free and fair election.

7.20.4 Campaign timing

The question about the start times of campaign events is crucial for understanding how the management of campaign schedules can influence voter engagement and the overall election process. Election laws and regulations emphasize the need for transparency, accessibility, and fairness in the electoral process. Campaign timing plays a significant role in ensuring that all voters, especially those from marginalized communities such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities, have a fair opportunity to participate in the election activities. The timing of campaign events is directly linked to the effective mobilization of voters, allowing them to engage without disrupting their daily activities or facing accessibility barriers. The data on the start times of campaigns reveal interesting insights into the scheduling preferences and challenges within the election process. Most campaign events (42%) were observed to begin between 1 PM and 4 PM. This time frame suggests that campaigns were often scheduled for the afternoon, possibly to accommodate the availability of a larger number of voters, particularly those who are engaged in work or other commitments during the morning. 27% of observers noted that campaigns began before 10 AM, while 21% observed campaigns starting between 10 AM and 1 PM. The variation in campaign times highlights the challenges that voters, especially those with limited flexibility, may face in attending these events. Campaigns starting after 4 PM were relatively uncommon, which could indicate that political parties are aware of the time constraints and the need to avoid late-night events that might limit voter participation.

Most campaigns, 84.5%, ended between 5 PM and 6 PM, with a smaller portion 13.6% concluding before 5 PM, and only 1.8% extending beyond 6 PM. The preference for ending campaigns between 5 PM and 6 PM reflects a practical choice, likely designed to accommodate the daily schedules of voters. This time frame aligns with the end of the typical workday, allowing people to attend campaign events after their work commitments. Additionally, concluding activities in the early evening helps avoid the logistical challenges and potential safety concerns associated with late-night events. Ending campaigns before 5 PM were less common but still observed, likely due to the need to accommodate different community schedules or to avoid competing with other evening events. However, campaigns extending beyond 6 PM were rare, possibly due to factors like limited voter availability, the challenges of hosting late events, and the recognition that holding campaign activities too late could limit participation, particularly for individuals with family responsibilities or other constraints.

7.20.5 Adherence to the Shared Campaign Schedule

A significant portion of observers (62%) indicated that campaigns were mostly conducted according to the shared schedule. 27% of observers reported that campaigns always adhered to the schedule, while seven percent observed that campaigns were rarely conducted as scheduled and 4% stated that campaigns never followed the schedule. Generally, data shows that campaigns followed the shared schedule, with nearly 90% of observers stating they were always on track. There were some instances of significant deviation, as indicated by the seven percent who reported rare adherence and the 4% who observed no adherence at all. The campaign methods used during the election played a significant role in voter engagement and turnout. Public rallies, which were the most widely employed campaign method, emerged as the most effective in reaching voters, as 77% of observers perceived them as highly impactful. These rallies allowed for direct engagement with large groups, fostering a sense of community and excitement around the election. However, while public rallies were effective for broad outreach, they may not have always been the most inclusive for marginalized groups, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. These groups may face barriers such as physical accessibility issues, gender-based social norms, or time constraints that limit their ability to attend rallies, which are typically held in open public spaces at fixed times.

Door-to-door campaigns were the second most common method, considered effective by 15.45% of observers. This approach had the advantage of personal engagement, allowing candidates to directly reach individuals, including marginalized groups, in their homes or local communities. Door-to-door campaigns could offer a more personalized and inclusive approach, particularly for people with mobility challenges, those in remote areas, or those who could not attend larger rallies. However, their effectiveness was still limited by factors such as the time it takes to visit every household and the resources available to carry out such campaigns on a large scale. Other methods, such as distributing flyers or posters, social media campaigns, and media advertisements, were less effective in terms of voter outreach. Flyers and posters were only considered effective by 2.73%, and social media and media ads by even fewer, at 3.64% and 5.9% respectively. While these methods had the potential to reach a wider audience, they were often less personal and could have limited effectiveness in engaging marginalized groups.

Door-to-door campaigning has become the second most popular method for several key reasons, particularly its personalized and targeted approach. Unlike public rallies, which can only engage those who are able to attend in large, centralized locations, door-to-door campaigns allow candidates and their teams to reach voters in their homes or local neighborhoods, creating a more personal connection. This method enables candidates to speak directly with potential voters, address their specific concerns, and provide tailored information about their policies. It also

allows for deeper engagement with communities, especially in rural areas where people may be less likely to travel to public events. Additionally, door-to-door campaigns can engage voters who might not participate in larger events due to physical constraints, cultural norms, or time limitations. This includes women who may face social or family pressures preventing them from attending public rallies, elderly people, and persons with disabilities. The ability to meet people where they live makes door-to-door campaigning more inclusive, particularly for those in marginalized communities. However, the close and personal nature of door-to-door campaigns also opens the door for potential unethical practices, including bribery. The possibility of bribery during this kind of campaign arises when candidates or their representatives offer financial incentives, gifts, or promises of benefits in exchange for votes.

The risk of bribery is particularly concerning in regions with high poverty rates or among marginalized communities, where individuals may be more susceptible to offers of financial help. Bribery distorts the fairness of the electoral process, undermining the principle of free and fair elections. It compromises the ability of voters to make independent and informed choices, as decisions may be swayed by material incentives rather than the candidate's policies or qualifications. This can further deepen existing inequalities and disenfranchise vulnerable groups. To mitigate the risk of bribery during door-to-door campaigns, election monitoring bodies and law enforcement agencies must ensure strict enforcement of anti-bribery laws. Voter education campaigns should emphasize the importance of voting independently and without influence from material incentives. The result of these methods on voter turnout was significant, but their impact on marginalized groups was uneven. While public rallies may have increased turnout overall, those unable to attend these events were excluded from this surge. Similarly, door-to-door campaigns could reach more marginalized groups but were not as widespread as public rallies.

7.20.6 Campaign regulations

Campaign schedules are a critical component of ensuring an orderly and fair election process, as they provide structure and predictability for all parties involved. The data from this survey reveals that a significant majority, 80%, confirmed that the campaign schedule was followed as planned. This demonstrates strong organizational coordination among the participating political parties, suggesting that most of the campaigns ran smoothly and adhered to the expectations set in advance. However, the 14.55% of observers who reported that the schedule was followed only sometimes, along with the 5.45% who noted that it was not followed at all raise important concerns. These deviations, while relatively small in proportion, reflect potential challenges in campaign management. Whether due to logistical issues, last-minute changes, or unexpected obstacles, the instances of schedule mismanagement could have disrupted the planned flow of campaign activities and even led to confusion among voters, campaigners, or election observers.

The possibility of schedule disruptions also introduces room for manipulation. Late campaign events, rushed speeches, or unplanned adjustments could disadvantage certain candidates, especially those with less flexible resources. In such cases, the timing of key campaign moments may skew the democratic process, affecting voter turnout and engagement, particularly among marginalized groups who may rely on consistent and well-communicated schedules to make their participation decisions. In essence, while most campaigns adhered to their schedules, the relatively small fraction of irregularities serves as a reminder of the delicate balance needed to maintain a fair and organized election. Tight adherence to schedules ensures that all parties can participate on equal footing, and any lapses should be carefully monitored to prevent potential disruptions or inequalities from emerging during critical campaign moments.

Several notable deviations were observed during the campaign schedule, showcasing challenges in adherence to the planned timelines. One significant example was in a rural area, where the campaign schedule indicated a start time between 2 AM and 12 PM. However, the local citizens, after finishing their farm work, began attending the campaigns around 7 PM. Despite reminders about the official schedule, the citizens continued to follow their own timing, clearly reflecting a disconnect between the planned and actual campaign timelines. Another striking example involved delays in both the start and end times of the campaigns. Political leaders and local citizens were late arriving at the campaign venues, which led to the events starting late and finishing beyond the intended time. This disrupted the schedule and left little room for proper organization. Lack of punctuality demonstrated not only logistical challenges but also a lack of coordination among campaign organizers and participants. Financial constraints also played a significant role in the deviation of campaign activities. In Shinyanga Municipal Council, CCM was the only party that managed to follow the campaign schedule, as they had the necessary budget to carry out their planned activities. In contrast, other political parties struggled with insufficient funds, leading to an inability to campaign effectively. This financial disparity limited the opportunities for other parties to connect with voters, significantly affecting the fairness of the campaign process. Moreover, some political supporters took actions that further disrupted the campaign process.

The results indicate that most observers (86%) reported that no more than one party campaigned in the same area at the same time. This suggests that the campaigns were well-organized, with clear boundaries for each party's activities, minimizing the potential for overlap and confusion. However, a smaller portion of observers (12%) noted that multiple parties did campaign in the same area at the same time. This could suggest some competition for voter attention or the possibility of conflicts between parties in certain areas. Two percent were unsure about whether multiple parties campaigned in the same area simultaneously. The question of what happened when more than one party campaigned in the same area was raised to assess how political parties navigate shared spaces and whether their interactions align with democratic principles. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for evaluating the level of political tolerance, the preparedness of parties to coexist peacefully and the potential risks to public order during elections. It also provides insights into areas where interventions may be needed to foster an inclusive and harmonious democratic process.

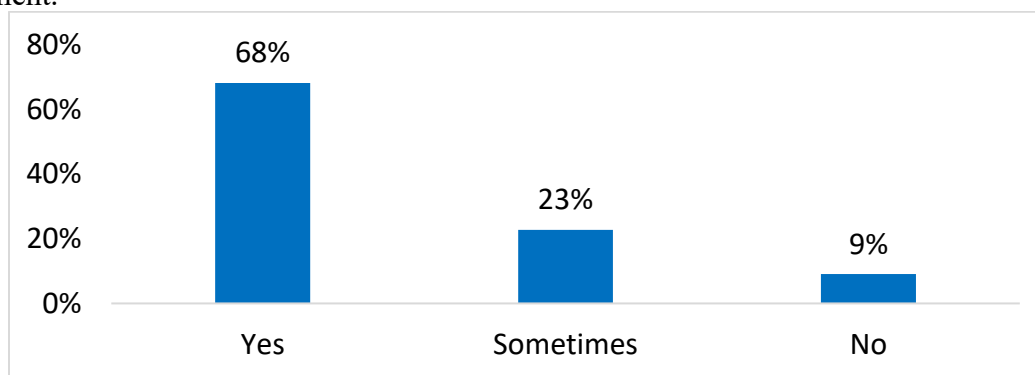
The results show that while 5.45% of such encounters were peaceful, indicating that coexistence is possible, 4.55% reported verbal confrontations, reflecting underlying tensions between parties. Rare instances of interventions by authorities (0.91%) and physical confrontations (0.91%) further highlight the potential for competition to escalate. These findings suggest that while peaceful interaction is achievable, safeguards are necessary to prevent conflicts from undermining the democratic process. To promote peaceful campaigns and enhance democratization, structured scheduling of campaign activities is essential. Allocating specific time slots and areas for each party will minimize overlaps and reduce the likelihood of confrontation. Political parties should commit to a code of conduct emphasizing respect, tolerance, and non-violence. Civic education programs targeting both candidates and communities can further instill democratic values and promote peaceful coexistence.

Decent campaigns, free from hate speech and defamatory language, are critical to fostering a political environment where ideas can be debated constructively and inclusively. Most observers 73.64% reported that campaigns were conducted decently, free from hate speech and defamatory language. This suggests that most political actors adhered to respectful and constructive

campaign standards, which is a promising sign for fostering a culture of democracy and inclusion in Tanzania. 20.91% of observers noted occasional lapses, indicating that while most campaigns were appropriate, some instances of questionable tone or content occurred. 5.45% felt the campaigns were outright indecent, with evidence of hate speech or defamatory language, signaling areas for improvement in promoting mutual respect during campaigns. Examples of inappropriate language highlight the areas where such concerns arise. Abusive phrases like "nzi wa kijani" (green flies) or threats from party leaders such as "our youths will deal with male vote thieves so badly they'll lose interest in their wives" reflect a tone of hostility and intimidation.

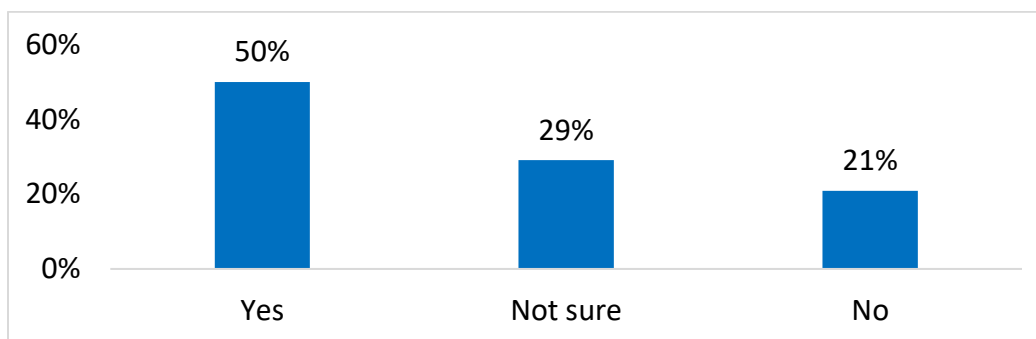
7.20.7 Security and Protection

Security is a critical component of any democratic process, especially during election campaigns. The question of whether there was adequate protection during the campaigns was asked to understand how well the safety of candidates, voters, and campaign activities were safeguarded. A secure environment is essential for the free and fair expression of political ideas, as it ensures that people can participate in the democratic process without fear of violence, intimidation, or harassment.



The results reveal that many observers, 68%, felt that the campaigns were adequately protected, indicating that safety measures were generally in place and well-executed. This is a positive sign, suggesting that efforts were made to maintain a safe environment for the political discourse to take place. 23% of observers pointed out that protection was sometimes lacking, signaling potential gaps or inconsistencies in the implementation of security measures. Additionally, 9% expressed concerns about inadequate protection, highlighting areas where security improvements are necessary. These findings hold significant meaning for Tanzania's democracy and national security. Adequate protection during campaigns is essential not only for the safety of candidates and voters but also for the credibility of the election process.

The question of whether candidates from all participating parties received the same level of protection was asked to evaluate the fairness and consistency of security measures during the campaigns. It is crucial in a democratic process that all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, feel equally protected and secure to engage freely in their political activities. Any perception of unequal treatment or bias in security allocation can undermine public trust in the electoral process and raise concerns about fairness and inclusiveness.



The data reveals that half of the observers (50%) felt that candidates from all parties were equally protected, indicating that, for the most part, security measures were applied consistently across the board. This suggests that the authorities make efforts to ensure a fair and equal level of protection for all political actors, which is essential for a peaceful and trustworthy election environment. However, 29% of observers were unsure, which may point to a lack of transparency or communication regarding the security arrangements. This uncertainty could raise questions about whether all parties were truly treated equally or if some candidates received more attention than others. 21% of observers reported discrepancies in protection levels, signaling potential issues with unequal treatment or bias in the allocation of security resources. These concerns are significant, as they highlight areas where the election process could be seen as unfair or where some candidates might feel disadvantaged or unsafe compared to others. This could lead to distrust in the electoral process, affecting not only the candidates' participation but also voter confidence in the overall fairness of the elections.

7.20.8 Discrepancies in Protection

The issue of unequal protection during political campaigns is critical to evaluating the fairness and transparency of the electoral process. The provision—or lack—of security services to political parties directly affects the level playing field essential for credible democratic competition. According to the data, **CHADEMA was identified by the highest proportion of observers (17.27%)** as receiving less protection compared to other parties. This was followed by **ACT Wazalendo (9.09%)** and **CUF (5.45%)**, with smaller percentages indicating similar concerns for parties like NCCR-Mageuzi, NRA, TLP, SAU, and ADC. These figures suggest a perceived bias in the provision of security services, particularly disadvantaging opposition parties. This can have multiple consequences when opposition parties are less protected, their candidates, supporters, and campaign events may face threats, intimidation, or disruption, curtailing their right to campaign freely. Unequal security reinforces public suspicion of political favoritism and erodes trust in institutions meant to uphold neutrality, such as the police and electoral bodies. Fear of violence or harassment may deter not only opposition candidates but also voters from participating in the process, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups. Such disparities are not just logistical oversights they are systemic vulnerabilities that threaten the credibility and inclusiveness of the electoral process. Addressing them requires a clear, enforceable framework where security is allocated fairly, transparently, and based on need, not political affiliation.

The issue of candidates using gifts or money to influence voters is central to assessing the ethical integrity of electoral campaigns. Encouragingly, data shows that 97.27% of observers reported no incidents of such behavior during the campaign period, suggesting a strong adherence to democratic norms and ethical campaigning. This outcome is a positive reflection of maturing democratic practices in Tanzania, possibly influenced by civic education efforts, legal reforms,

increased media oversight, and growing public awareness. It also indicates that most candidates respected the principle of voluntary and informed voting, without resorting to manipulation through material incentives. However, the remaining 2.73% of observers did report incidents where candidates gave items such as drinking water, fuel, transport, allowances to youth and women's groups, and refreshments during campaign events. These forms of provision, while sometimes viewed as logistical support to facilitate participation, raise critical concerns about the intent behind them. In economically disadvantaged settings, such items can hold substantial value and may be interpreted as indirect inducements to gain favor with voters. The challenge lies in discerning whether these actions were genuine efforts to increase accessibility or strategic attempts to sway voter behavior under the guise of assistance.

Many observers, 93%, did not notice any other forms of voter bribery during the campaigns, which is a reassuring indicator that, for the most part, electoral candidates and their supporters adhered to ethical campaigning practices. The absence of widespread bribery is essential for safeguarding the democratic process as such actions would undermine free choice and equality in voting. Voter bribery distorts the legitimacy of elections, often leading to a situation where votes are bought rather than freely cast, thus skewing the results in favor of those who can afford to bribe voters, 7% of uncertain observers indicate that there may have been some ambiguity in identifying bribery or unethical practices during the campaigns. This ambiguity suggests a need for more thorough monitoring and reporting systems during elections. In future elections, clearer guidelines should be established to define what constitutes bribery or unethical campaign practices, and stronger mechanisms should be put in place to ensure compliance.

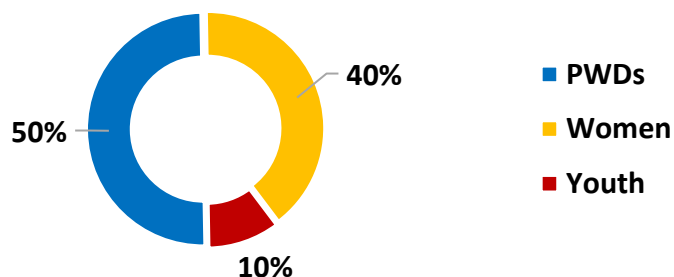
This ambiguity underscores the need for clearer regulatory guidance from electoral bodies such as INEC. There must be well-defined boundaries between acceptable facilitation (e.g., transport for rural attendees) and unethical practices that could amount to vote-buying. Candidates, campaign teams, and observers alike should be trained to recognize and adhere to these boundaries. Furthermore, sustained voter education is vital to help communities identify and resist subtle forms of electoral manipulation disguised as support or hospitality. The types of gifts reported include items like drinking water at campaign meetings, fuel for vehicles and motorcycles, allowances to youth and women's groups, provision of public transport for citizens attending campaigns, and refreshments during campaign events. While some of these may seem like simple provisions to make campaigning more accessible or comfortable for attendees, they can blur the lines between genuine assistance and attempts to sway voters. Providing essential services like transportation or refreshments could, in certain contexts, be seen as an attempt to influence voter behavior by creating goodwill or incentivizing participation. In this case, the challenge lies in determining the intent behind such actions whether they were purely logistical or strategically aimed at garnering votes.

Conclusion In summary, two major vulnerabilities emerge from the electoral process: unequal protection of political parties by security forces and blurred ethical lines regarding the use of gifts during campaigns. Both issues can significantly undermine the fairness, transparency, and credibility of elections. To build public trust and protect the integrity of the democratic process, all actors—including electoral institutions, law enforcement, civil society, and political parties—must commit to impartiality, clear ethical standards, and the equitable treatment of all candidates, regardless of political affiliation

7.21 Recommendations for future elections

To ensure a future where elections are conducted fairly, ethically, and transparently, several steps can be taken. First, clear regulations need to be established about what constitutes permissible campaign behavior, particularly regarding the distribution of gifts or benefits to voters. Authorities should also strengthen oversight mechanisms to monitor campaign activities, ensuring that all parties adhere to ethical standards. Enhanced training for election observers would help identify even subtle forms of bribery or unethical influence, allowing for timely intervention. Additionally, candidates should be educated on the importance of running campaigns based on policy and values rather than financial incentives. Transparency in campaign financing and activities is key to maintaining voter trust and fostering an environment where democracy can flourish. The question of whether candidates made unrealistic or misleading promises during campaigns is essential to understanding the credibility of electoral campaigns and ensuring that voters are not misled. Promises that cannot be realistically fulfilled undermine public trust in political leaders and the democratic process. According to the data, 76.4% believed that candidates generally avoided making unrealistic or misleading promises. This suggests that most political campaigns focused on credible and achievable pledges, which is a positive sign for the integrity of the electoral process. When promises are grounded, voters are more likely to trust that candidates can deliver on their commitments, fostering a more engaged and informed electorate. 16.4% noted occasional instances of candidates making unrealistic promises. Such instances can diminish the public's confidence in political campaigns and create cynicism, particularly if voters feel that candidates are making promises they cannot or do not intend to keep. This is why it is important for candidates to ensure that their promises are realistic and aligned with what they can achieve within their political and institutional capacities. 7.3% reported clear examples of unrealistic or misleading statements.

To improve the quality of campaign promises and ensure greater accountability in both local and general elections, it is essential that candidates provide clear and detailed plans on how they intend to fulfill their promises. This would allow voters to understand the resources, timeframes, and strategies behind the pledges made during the campaign, fostering informed decision-making. Candidates must also ensure that their promises are feasible, considering the available resources and within the capacities of the political office they are running for. This approach not only builds trust but also sets realistic expectations for the electorate. The questions probing discriminatory behavior, exclusion and overall fairness during election campaigns are essential for assessing the inclusiveness and integrity of democratic practices. They evaluate whether marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities have equitable access to participation and representation, highlighting societal commitments to fairness and justice. By addressing these areas, we gain insights into systemic barriers that undermine democracy's ability to reflect the diversity it serves.



The findings paint a concerning picture of exclusion, with persons with disabilities emerging as the most marginalized group (50%), followed by women (40%). These statistics emphasize

persistent systemic barriers, ranging from physical inaccessibility to cultural biases, which hinder the full participation of people with disabilities. Similarly, women's underrepresentation reflects enduring gender inequalities and a lack of proactive measures to support their leadership and civic engagement. While youth experienced relatively less exclusion (10%), this still signals a missed opportunity to harness the energy and innovative potential of young voices in the democratic process. Most observers, 68.18%, viewed the campaign process as fair, signifying commendable efforts by stakeholders to maintain equity and transparency. However, the neutral observers (25.45%) suggest there are areas where fairness was inconsistent or underwhelming, calling for targeted interventions to build greater confidence in the process. The polarized perspectives of those who rated the process as very fair, 3.64% or unfair 2.73% reflect varying regional or situational experiences, underscoring the need to address localized discrepancies. A fair campaign process fosters trust and encourages broader participation, which is essential for sustaining democracy's credibility. Ensuring fairness across all regions and demographics would strengthen this trust and encourage more active civic engagement. These findings reveal critical gaps in inclusiveness and fairness that must be addressed to uphold democratic values.

Election Day

Election Day is the culmination of extensive preparations, with multiple moving parts that need to come together seamlessly to ensure a smooth, transparent, and credible process. Election Day Checklist provides a structured framework designed to guide observers, electoral staff, and other stakeholders through the critical tasks and procedures that must be followed during this pivotal day. It serves as a practical tool to ensure consistency and accuracy across all polling stations, helping to minimize errors and address potential challenges. It was developed to reinforce accountability, enhance efficiency, and uphold the principles of fairness and inclusivity throughout the voting process. Readers will find detailed guidance on important Election Day protocols, including verifying voter rolls, ensuring accessibility for marginalized groups, monitoring ballot security, and addressing grievances in real time. Whether you are an observer, poll worker, or stakeholder, this chapter equips you with the insights and tools needed to contribute effectively to a credible electoral process.

Key Findings

- Most polling stations (84.7%) began voting between 8:00 AM and 8:30 AM
- A small percentage (0.71%) reported the absence of any security officers.
- Most polling stations (74%) did not have election observers from other organizations.
- A significant proportion (41%) reported the presence of steps or stairs, which could pose accessibility challenges for some voters.
- A vast majority of polling stations (95.7%) lacked a sign language interpreter

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. POLLING OFFICIALS' ARRIVAL

Punctuality of polling officials is critical to the smooth operation of Election Day. We sought to assess whether polling officials were present at their assigned polling stations by 6:30 AM as required. Their timely arrival ensures that voting preparations, such as setting up materials, verifying security measures, and ensuring the accessibility of the station, are completed before the voting process begins. Delays in their arrival could disrupt the process, inconvenience voters, and compromise the credibility of the election. The findings reveal that 60.5% of observers confirmed that polling officials arrived at their stations on time. This majority indicates a commendable level of preparedness. However, 28.47% reported uncertainty, which may point to communication issues or insufficient monitoring. Alarming, 11.03% stated that no polling officials were present at the required time, highlighting gaps in coordination that could disrupt operations at those stations.

8.1 Voter registration for electoral preparedness

Voter registration figures provide critical insights into the level of preparedness and inclusivity within the electoral process. Understanding these numbers allows electoral stakeholders to allocate resources efficiently and address potential challenges in facilitating fair and accessible voting. The data on voter registration across various regions provides an overview of the number of registered individuals at assigned polling stations, offering insights into regional voter participation. The largest number of registered voters was recorded in Dar es Salaam, with 577,716 individuals, followed by Mwanza at 62,944, highlighting their significant voter base. Regions such as Geita (24,616), Kigoma (28,468), and Singida (21,650) also showed notable registration figures. Smaller registration numbers were observed in regions like Shinyanga (14,217), Tabora (13,442), and Mbeya (16,144), which may reflect regional population dynamics or voter registration outreach. However, data collection was hindered by bureaucratic challenges in regions not mentioned, emphasizing the need for improved coordination and streamlined access to voter registration information in future processes. These barriers underscore the importance of addressing systemic inefficiencies to ensure that comprehensive and accurate data is readily available for all regions. Understanding how many people are registered at polling stations helps to gauge voter engagement, resource allocation needs, and the overall capacity of electoral management.

The distribution of polling officials across regions reflects disparities in staffing levels, with Dar es Salaam having the highest number of officials (421) and regions like Kagera and Shinyanga having significantly fewer (59 each). These numbers suggest varying levels of resource allocation, which could impact the efficiency of polling station operations and voter experiences. Regions with fewer officials may face challenges in handling voter turnout, potentially leading to longer waiting times and reduced accessibility. The participation of women among polling officials highlights gender inclusion in the electoral process. Dar es Salaam again leads with 174 female polling officials, while regions like Morogoro (31) and Shinyanga (34) report lower female representation. These disparities underscore ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in key electoral roles. Ensuring equitable gender representation is critical to fostering an inclusive democratic environment that values diverse perspectives in election management.

8.2 Youth and PWDs presentation among polling officials

The representation of youth in polling roles is an encouraging sign of growing civic engagement among young people in Tanzania. Regions like Mwanza (110 youth officials) and Tabora (103) demonstrated strong youth involvement, suggesting that in these areas, young people are being actively included in electoral processes and trusted with responsibilities that contribute to democratic governance. In contrast, regions such as Shinyanga (28) and Kigoma (38) reported significantly lower youth participation. This uneven distribution points to a need for targeted outreach and capacity-building in regions where youth involvement remains limited. Engaging young people is critical, not only because they represent a large portion of the population, but also because they bring innovative ideas, adaptability, and long-term commitment to democratic development. However, the data also reveals a serious concern: the underrepresentation of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) among polling officials. In most regions, only 1–5 individuals with disabilities were included, and alarmingly, Dar es Salaam reported none. This lack of inclusion reflects persistent structural and attitudinal barriers that prevent PWDs from serving as facilitators in the electoral process. Such exclusion not only denies PWDs the opportunity to contribute to democratic systems but also perpetuates social marginalization and questions the equity of the electoral process.

Ultimately, the composition of polling officials serves as a mirror of how inclusive and democratic the electoral environment truly is. Regions that exhibit balanced representation across youth, gender, and disability inclusion are more likely to uphold principles of fairness, equity, and effectiveness in electoral administration. Strengthening these dimensions is essential for building public trust and ensuring that all citizens, regardless of age or ability, can meaningfully participate in shaping their governance.

The presence of political party agents during polling station openings is a critical indicator of party engagement and organizational capacity in the electoral process. The bar chart reveals the dominant presence of CCM agents, with 277 representatives, followed by CHADEMA with 193 and ACT WAZALENDU with 59. This strong showing by CCM and CHADEMA underscores their extensive reach and robust mobilization strategies. In contrast, parties like CUF, CHAUMMA and SAU exhibit significantly lower agents' representation, while UPDP and AFP report the least presence, with only 2 agents each. These disparities highlight differences in campaign strategies, resource availability, and regional focus among political parties. The minimal presence of smaller parties at polling station openings could limit their ability to monitor the voting process effectively, potentially influencing perceptions of fairness and inclusivity in the elections. This data draws attention to the uneven playing field in Tanzania's political landscape, where dominant parties are better positioned to safeguard their interests and oversee the electoral process. Strengthening the capacity and presence of smaller parties is essential to enhancing democratic participation and ensuring a more balanced and inclusive election environment.

8.2.1 Security Officer at polling stations and Accessibility to polling stations

The data on the presence of security officers at polling stations reveals important trends related to safety and inclusion during the election process. Many polling stations 61.21% had male security officers present, with female security officers observed at 21.71% of the stations. Additionally, 16.37% of polling stations had both male and female security officers on site, while 0.71% reported no security officers at all. This distribution indicates a significant gender imbalance, with male officers outnumbering female officers at polling stations. The presence of female security officers at only 21.71% of the stations could suggest a missed opportunity for gender-inclusive representation in a crucial role. Ideally, a balanced presence of male and female

security officers would contribute to an inclusive environment, ensuring that all voters feel safe and represented, particularly women, who may feel more comfortable interacting with female officers.

The accessibility of polling stations is a critical factor in ensuring that all voters, regardless of their physical abilities, can participate in the democratic process. The data reveals that 59% of polling stations were accessible without the need to climb steps or stairs, which is a positive indicator of inclusion. However, the remaining 41% of polling stations had steps or stairs, posing significant barriers for people with disabilities, elderly voters, and parents with young children. This issue highlights a major area for improvement, as it directly impacts the inclusivity of the electoral process. To enhance accessibility in future elections, polling stations should be designed or adapted to ensure barrier-free access for all. This could involve installing ramps, ensuring wider doorways, or selecting more accessible venues to minimize physical barriers. The implementation of such measures would ensure that no voter is excluded due to physical obstacles, fostering a more inclusive democracy.

The vast majority 94% of polling stations reported having a voters' register, while 6% of stations lacked it. The presence of a voters' register at polling stations is crucial for ensuring transparency and preventing voter fraud. A register allows election officials to verify voters' identities and eligibility, ensuring that only registered voters cast their ballots. The absence of a voters' register at any polling station raises concerns about the integrity of the election process. To improve future elections, it is essential that all polling stations are equipped with up-to-date and accurate voters' registers. Additionally, measures to prevent and address the absence of such crucial documents should be established to protect the legitimacy of the voting process. Indelible markers are used to mark voters' thumbs or fingers to prevent multiple voting. The data shows that 99% of polling stations had the necessary markers, with only 1% lacking them. This indicates that most polling stations adhered to the protocol of preventing voter fraud. In future elections, it is critical to ensure that every polling station is equipped with indelible markers.

Official stamps or marks are an essential feature for verifying the authenticity of election materials. The data shows that 86% of polling stations had official stamps or marks available, while 14% reported missing them. This missing element could potentially raise doubts about the legitimacy of the voting process at these stations. To improve the credibility of elections, all polling stations should be fully equipped with official stamps and marks. Ensuring that these items are available at every station would enhance the transparency and legitimacy of the electoral process. The transparency of the ballot box is critical to ensure that votes are cast securely and fairly. A majority (90%) of polling stations demonstrated that their ballot boxes were empty before being sealed, following the correct protocol. However, 10% of polling stations did not adhere to this step, which could raise concerns about vote tampering or fraud.

8.2.2 Accessibility for Blind Voters

The availability of tactile ballot papers is vital to ensuring that blind voters can cast their ballots independently. The data shows that 87.9% of polling stations did not provide tactile ballot papers, with only 12% offering them. This limited provision of tactile ballots indicates a significant accessibility gap for voters with visual impairments. To improve future elections, the availability of tactile ballot papers should be expanded, and polling stations should be equipped with the necessary tools to accommodate blind voters. This would ensure that individuals with visual impairments can participate fully in the election process, contributing to a more inclusive democracy. Sign language interpreters are essential for ensuring that deaf and hard-of-hearing voters can understand the voting process and participate fully. However, the data shows that

95.7% of polling stations did not provide sign language interpreters, with only 4.3% reporting their presence. This represents a significant gap in accessibility for voters with hearing impairments. In future elections, efforts should be made to ensure the availability of sign language interpreters at all polling stations.

The rights of people with disabilities were glaringly overlooked during the election process, as evidenced by the lack of essential accommodation such as tactile ballot papers and sign language interpreters at polling stations. These shortcomings highlight systemic gaps in accessibility that hinder the active participation of people with disabilities in democratic processes. When 87.9% of polling stations fail to provide tactile ballot papers, it leaves blind voters reliant on others to cast their votes, compromising their right to a secret ballot and undermining their dignity and autonomy. Similarly, the absence of sign language interpreters at 95.7% of polling stations isolates deaf and hard-of-hearing voters, effectively excluding them from understanding and engaging in the voting process. Such barriers send a clear message that the electoral system is not designed to include all citizens, which is a fundamental threat to the principles of democratization. This failure to ensure accessibility impedes the inclusion of people with disabilities, reinforcing their marginalization in civic and political life.

8.2.3 Voting At Polling Station

Voting at Polling Station refers to the procedure where eligible voters cast their ballots during an election at designated locations called polling stations. This chapter outlines the steps involved in the voting process, the roles of election officials, and what is expected from voters to ensure a fair, transparent, and accessible election for everyone. The chapter explains how voters can confirm their registration (the official process where individuals are listed as eligible to vote) and the identification (official documents required to prove voter eligibility) needed at the polling station. It further outlines the process of casting a vote, including how voters are guided to the ballot box, how they should mark their ballots correctly, and the available voting options. The polling station setup (the arrangement of the voting area, including voting booths and ballot boxes) is also described, focusing on the role of election officers (officials responsible for overseeing the election process) and the availability of assistance for those who may need help, such as persons with disabilities (individuals with physical, mental, or sensory impairments) or first-time voters.

Key Findings

- A small percentage (6.03%) indicated that some individuals were allowed to vote despite not being on the register.
- A smaller proportion (27.3%) indicated that able-bodied women were assisted to vote by a man.
- A smaller proportion (12%) indicated that unauthorized persons were present at their polling station at some point.
- 51% (144 observers) reported that not everyone in the queue at 16:00 was allowed to vote.

The key findings from the observation exercise highlight several procedural and ethical concerns that could affect the integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process. One notable issue is that 6.03% of observers reported individuals being allowed to vote despite not appearing on the official voter register. Although this percentage is relatively small, it points to a serious lapse in the enforcement of voter verification procedures. Such incidents undermine the credibility of the election process and open the door to potential manipulation, including multiple voting or impersonation. It indicates the need for tighter registration controls and better training for polling officials to strictly follow verification protocols. Another concern is that 27.3% of observers reported instances where able-bodied women were assisted to vote by men. While voter assistance is permissible for individuals with disabilities or literacy challenges, the assistance of

able-bodied women raises concerns about autonomy and potential coercion. This practice may reflect deeper patriarchal attitudes that limit women's independent participation in political processes. It also indicates a lack of enforcement or understanding of assistance rules among polling officials, which could compromise the principle of free and independent voting.

Furthermore, 12% of observers noted the presence of unauthorized people at polling stations, which poses a risk to the transparency and orderliness of the voting process. Unauthorized individuals may include party agents, local influencers, or even non-accredited security personnel, whose presence could intimidate voters or interfere with the operations of polling officials. This highlights the need for improved security protocols and clearer guidelines on who is permitted within polling stations during elections. The most concerning finding is that 51% of observers reported voters in the queue at the official closing time (16:00) were not allowed to vote. Denying eligible voters, the right to vote simply because they were still in line violates a core electoral principle that everyone in the queue at closing time must be allowed to cast their vote. This failure can disenfranchise a significant number of voters, particularly in areas with high turnout or slow processing. Overall, these findings suggest critical areas for improvement, including stricter enforcement of registration rules, protection of voter autonomy (especially for women), controlled access to polling areas, and assurance that all eligible voters are allowed to vote. Addressing these gaps is essential for promoting fairness, transparency, and public trust in Tanzania's electoral system.

8.3 Front of the queue for PWDs, pregnant women and nursing mothers

The observation that 89% of polling stations prioritized persons with disabilities (PWDs), pregnant women, and nursing mothers by allowing them to go to the front of the queue is a strong indicator of progress toward inclusive and equitable electoral participation. This gesture goes beyond mere convenience it represents the application of democratic values in real, visible ways. Giving priority to these groups not only reduces physical strain and health risks but also affirms their dignity and reinforces the principle that every citizen, regardless of physical condition or life circumstance, deserves equal access to vote. It reflects Tanzania's growing commitment to inclusive democracy, where the right to participate is not hindered by disability, pregnancy, or caregiving responsibilities. However, the 11% of polling stations where such priority was not observed reveals an important gap that must be addressed. This inconsistency undermines the integrity and fairness of the process and risks re-marginalizing groups that electoral laws and human rights frameworks aim to protect. In such instances, PWDs or mothers with infants may have been forced to endure long waiting times, discouraging future participation and reinforcing systemic exclusion. This lapse is not just an operational oversight; it is a denial of equal treatment under the law and a barrier to full civic engagement.



Photo: Person with Disabilities during Election Day

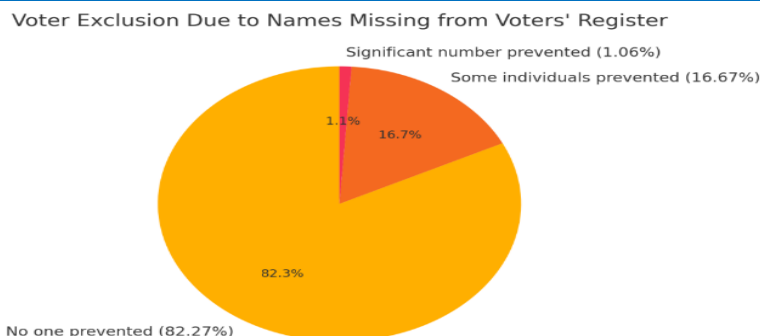
To improve the situation, several practical steps must be taken. First, polling officials should receive mandatory training on voter prioritization policies, with emphasis on the rights of PWDs,

pregnant women, and nursing mothers. This should be integrated into the standard electoral procedure manual. Second, visual cues and signage at polling stations such as designated priority lanes or clearly marked instructions can serve as reminders to both voters and officials. Third, community sensitization campaigns through radio, social media, and local meetings should be carried out before elections to reinforce the importance of supporting vulnerable voters. Finally, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should deploy inclusion monitors to ensure these provisions are being observed in practice, not just in policy. Inclusion at the ballot box is a foundational test of a democracy's health. When vulnerable groups are respected and prioritized, it sends a clear message: everyone counts, and no one is left behind.

8.4 Voters that were not allowed to vote due to missed names

A large majority of observers, 82.27%, reported that no one was prevented from voting because their name did not appear on the Voters' Register. This is a positive indicator, showing that most eligible citizens were able to cast their votes, which reflects the success of the voter registration process. An inclusive and accurate register ensures that citizens are not unjustly disenfranchised and affirms their right to participate in shaping national and local governance. It also demonstrates growing public confidence in the registration process and may be a sign of improved coordination between citizens, electoral officers, and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). However, 16.67% of observers reported that some individuals were turned away due to missing names on the register. This figure is significant because it suggests that administrative flaws, outdated data, or technical issues persist in some areas. It reveals that despite overall progress, there are still gaps that could result in the exclusion of eligible voters, especially in remote or under-resourced areas. 1.06% of observers reported that a significant number of people were affected, pointing to the need for further system improvements such as continuous voter registration, better data verification, and public education on the registration process.

On the other hand, when looking at who was allowed to vote without being on the register, a majority, 93.62% confirmed that no such cases occurred, indicating strong compliance with the rules. This is crucial for maintaining the legitimacy of elections and public trust, as allowing unregistered individuals to vote could be seen as a breach of the rule of law and electoral fairness. However, 6.03% noted some cases where voting was allowed despite missing names, and 0.35% indicated that most unregistered individuals at their stations were allowed to vote a red flag for possible irregularities or procedural bypasses. In summary, while the data highlights a broadly functional and inclusive registration system, it also draws attention to vulnerabilities that must be addressed. To improve the situation, INEC should ensure regular audits and updates of the voter register; Strengthen training for polling officials on registration protocols; Improve communication with voters about checking their registration status in advance; and implement real-time complaint resolution systems during voting to handle discrepancies fairly and transparently. These steps will help ensure that no eligible voter is left out, and no ineligible person is allowed in, thereby striking the right balance between inclusion and integrity in Tanzania's democratic process.



8.4.1 Assistance to vote by people with special needs

A significant number of observers (63.12%) reported that people with special needs requested assistance to vote. This reflects an inclusive approach, acknowledging that individuals with special needs may require additional support to fully participate in the democratic process. Providing such assistance aligns with the principles of accessibility and equality, key components of a democratic society. However, 30.5% reported that no individuals with special needs requested assistance, which could suggest that some voters may not have been aware of available help or may have felt reluctant to ask. The small percentages of those who observed that most (4.96%) or all (1.42%) of the individuals with special needs required help indicates the extent to which support was needed for their participation. The vast majority (98%) of observers reported that indelible ink was applied to the finger of every person who was permitted to vote. This is a standard procedure to prevent multiple voting, ensuring the integrity of the election and upholding the rule of law. The application of indelible ink helps maintain transparency and prevents electoral fraud, which is critical for ensuring a free and fair election. 2% who reported that indelible ink was not applied indicated a minor deviation from standard electoral procedures, which could potentially undermine trust in the electoral process if not addressed.

8.4.2 Stamp on the back of every ballot paper

A large majority (90.78%) of observers reported that the back of every ballot paper was stamped by a polling official with an Official Mark/Stamp. This practice is essential for ensuring the authenticity of the ballots and maintaining transparency in the election process. The stamp serves as a safeguard to prevent fraudulent ballots and guarantees that votes are counted in accordance with the law. However, the 9.22% who reported that the back of the ballot papers was not stamped suggests the need for closer supervision and stricter enforcement of electoral procedures to protect the credibility of the election. The majority (72.7%) of observers reported that no able-bodied women were assisted to vote by a man, reflecting the idea that voting should be an independent and equal right for all. Though, 27.3% indicated that able-bodied women were assisted to vote by a man, which may raise questions about gender dynamics at the polling stations. While assistance is crucial for some voters, such as those with disabilities, able-bodied women may not require help to vote, and this may inadvertently reflect patriarchal attitudes or gender inequality. In the context of democracy and inclusion, it is essential that both men and women are treated equally, and assistance should be provided only when necessary, ensuring that voting remains an independent process for all individuals, regardless of gender. The majority, 88%, reported that there were no unauthorized people in their assigned polling station. A smaller proportion, 12% indicated that unauthorized persons were present at their polling station at some point.

8.5 Attempts to Influence or Intimidate voters and Voting outside the booth

The data assessed whether voters were subjected to coercion or undue influence during the electoral process. An overwhelming 99% of observers reported no attempts to influence or intimidate voters, highlighting a predominantly impartial voting environment. However, 1% of cases where such attempts occurred underscore critical concern. Even limited instances of voter intimidation can undermine the democratic process by compromising freedom of choice and trust in the system. These isolated incidents must be thoroughly investigated to reinforce voter confidence and prevent recurrence. Media presence at polling stations was evaluated to determine the level of external oversight and transparency during the election. The findings show that 91.49% of polling stations lacked media presence, a significant gap that raises concerns about accountability. Merely 8.51% of polling stations reported having media coverage, which is insufficient to ensure widespread visibility or public trust. The absence of the media may hinder efforts to document and report irregularities, potentially weakening the credibility of the election. The observation of voting outside designated booths aimed to ensure the integrity and privacy of the voting process. The data reveals that 96% of observers did not witness voters casting their ballots outside the booths, indicating strong adherence to procedural norms. Nevertheless, 4% of observers reported such incidents, raising concerns about potential privacy breaches or procedural lapses. Even isolated cases of this nature can erode voter trust and expose individuals to undue influence. Addressing these occurrences requires stricter enforcement of voting protocols and comprehensive training for election officials to ensure a secure and private voting environment. The inclusion of voters still in the queue at 16:00 was assessed to gauge the efficiency and fairness of the voting process. The observers show a nearly even split, with 51% of observers reporting that not all voters in the queue were allowed to vote, while 48.94% confirmed otherwise. This highlights challenges such as time constraints, insufficient polling staff, or high voter turnout that hindered the accommodation of all voters. Denying eligible voters, the chance to cast their ballots undermines inclusivity and fairness.

8.6 Counting At Polling Station

Observing the counting process at polling stations is essential for ensuring the credibility, transparency, and accuracy of the election results. This critical stage directly impacts public confidence in the electoral system, as it determines whether the will of the voters is accurately reflected in the final outcomes. First, on-site observation of the counting process helps detect and prevent any potential errors or irregularities. By having independent observers, the integrity of the process is safeguarded, ensuring that votes are tallied correctly without tampering or manipulation. Observers act as impartial witnesses who can validate the fairness and accuracy of the counting, promoting trust among voters and political stakeholders. Second, public confidence in elections hinges on transparency. When counting occurs in a visible and accountable manner, it reinforces the perception that the process is free from bias or misconduct. This openness is a key component of democratic governance, fostering acceptance of election results even among those preferred candidates or parties who do not win. Finally, observing the counting process also ensures compliance with legal and procedural standards. Election observers verify that election officials adhere to the established guidelines, creating a layer of accountability that minimizes disputes and enhances the legitimacy of the electoral outcome, observing the vote count at polling stations serves as a vital mechanism to uphold democratic values.

Key Findings

- 22% of observers noted that there were instances where the counting process had to be repeated.
- Most observers (87.04%) confirmed that there was sufficient light during the counting of the ballot papers.
- (96%) reported that polling officials showed the ballot papers, ensuring that all party representatives and observers present could see how each ballot paper was marked



Photo: Vote counting at Polling station

The observation that 22% of observers reported instances where the counting process had to be repeated points to both a strength and a potential weakness in the electoral process. On one hand, it demonstrates a willingness among polling officials to correct errors and ensure accuracy in the final vote tally. This commitment to transparency is commendable and reflects procedural integrity. However, the fact that such a significant proportion of stations required recounts may also suggest gaps in training, procedural clarity, or pressure from party agents during the count. Repeating the count should be a safeguard rather than a routine occurrence, and this finding signals a need for improved preparation and capacity-building for polling officials to enhance efficiency and reduce avoidable mistakes. On a positive note, 87.04% of observers confirmed that there was sufficient lighting during the counting process, which is essential for both the accuracy and credibility of the results. Adequate lighting ensures that ballot papers can be clearly seen and verified by polling officials, party agents, and observers. It also contributes to the safety and security of the materials and individuals involved. However, the remaining 13% of stations where lighting may have been inadequate raises concerns about preparedness. Poor lighting can create an environment ripe with miscounts, disputes, or even allegations of misconduct, and therefore needs to be addressed in future elections through better logistical planning and equipment provision.

Most notably, 96% of observers reported that polling officials showed each ballot paper clearly during the counting process, allowing all party representatives and observers to see how each vote was marked. This is a strong indicator of transparency and procedural compliance, which are critical for maintaining trust in the electoral outcome. By ensuring that all stakeholders can witness and agree on how each ballot is interpreted, the process becomes more accountable and less prone to dispute. This finding suggests that, overall, polling officials were well-trained in this aspect of the process and upheld one of the most visible symbols of electoral fairness. In summary, while the findings show encouraging levels of transparency and proper conduct, they also reveal operational areas—such as lighting and counting accuracy that must be improved to strengthen electoral integrity. Addressing these issues will not only enhance the credibility of the results but also foster greater public confidence in Tanzania's democratic processes.

8.7 Party Agents' during vote counting

Political party agents play a crucial role during the vote-counting process, acting as representatives of their parties or candidates to safeguard the integrity and transparency of elections. Their presence ensures that the counting process adheres to electoral laws and regulations, deterring fraud and fostering trust among all stakeholders. By observing the process, agents confirm the accuracy of the tally and raise concerns if irregularities occur, contributing to a fair and credible electoral outcome. The question about whether political party agents were allowed to observe the counting of ballot papers seeks to evaluate compliance with election laws and regulations. Most election frameworks mandate that representatives of political parties or candidates have the right to be present during vote counting. This ensures a system of checks and balances, upholding the principles of transparency and accountability. Excluding agents from observing the process could signify procedural violations, potentially undermining public trust in the results. Data indicates that political party agents were permitted to observe the counting of ballot papers in 96% of polling stations. This demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency and compliance with electoral laws, as the presence of political agents ensures oversight and fosters trust in the process. However, a small percentage (4%) of polling stations reported that political agents were not allowed to observe the counting process. This raises concerns about procedural inconsistencies as such restrictions could undermine confidence in the electoral outcome.

Most polling stations (94.44%) had representatives of political parties or candidates present during the counting of ballot papers. This high level of representation reinforces the inclusivity and credibility of the election process. Nonetheless, the absence of political party representatives in 5.56% of polling stations signals gaps in oversight, which could lead to questions regarding the integrity of the process in these isolated cases. Data reveals an overall positive trend in ensuring transparency and adherence to election regulations during the counting process. The overwhelming presence of political agents and representatives highlights the dedication to fair practices and accountability. However, the few reported cases where agents were excluded or representatives were absent underline the importance of strict and uniform enforcement of electoral procedures. These findings suggest that the vote-counting process was largely inclusive and transparent, aligning with legal standards. Nevertheless, the few instances where political agents were excluded or absent emphasize the need for stricter adherence to electoral regulations. Strengthening oversight mechanisms, such as ensuring uniform implementation of policies across all polling stations, can eliminate these discrepancies and bolster confidence in future elections.

To ensure full transparency and adherence to electoral laws, standardized oversight measures should be implemented across all polling stations, guaranteeing that political agents and representatives are allowed to observe the counting process without exception. This would eliminate discrepancies and ensure consistency in electoral practices nationwide. Additionally, comprehensive training programs for election officials are essential to reinforce the importance of allowing political agents and representatives to participate in the counting process. Such training would emphasize the role of these individuals in promoting transparency and accountability. Furthermore, establishing a robust mechanism for incident reporting and resolution is crucial. This mechanism would enable immediate identification and correction of any instances where political agents or representatives are restricted from observing the counting process. The data reveals varying levels of political party agent presence during the ballot counting process. The ruling party, CCM, had the highest representation, with 94.44% of observers reporting their agents were present. Opposition parties such as CHADEMA (66.67%) and ACT WAZALENDO (18.52%) followed, while smaller parties like NCCR-M, CUF, and DP

had agents at 5.56% of polling stations. Other parties, including CHAUMMA, NLD, and NRA, had minimal representation, each at 3.7%. This diversity in agent presence illustrates the uneven ability of political parties to participate in monitoring this critical phase of the electoral process.

The disparities in agent presence can largely be attributed to financial and logistical constraints faced by smaller parties. During interviews, some political leaders disclosed to observers that they were unable to deploy agents to all polling stations due to inadequate financial resources. This lack of funding affects their ability to ensure widespread oversight and participation in the electoral process. Other contributing factors include organizational limitations, where smaller parties may lack the infrastructure or trained personnel to mobilize agents effectively. Strategic decisions, such as prioritizing strongholds or areas of significant voter support, may also influence where parties choose to deploy agents. The inability of smaller parties to field agents widely during the vote-counting process undermines the inclusivity and fairness of the democratic process. Without adequate representation, these parties may find it challenging to validate electoral results, potentially leading to questions about the credibility of the outcomes. This disparity also perpetuates an uneven playing field, where larger parties have a greater capacity to monitor and safeguard the election process. To address these challenges, the following measures should be considered:

1. Electoral bodies or donor organizations could provide subsidies or stipends to ensure all political parties can deploy agents during the counting process. This could include allocating a portion of the election budget to support agent training and deployment for smaller parties.
2. Training programs aimed at enhancing smaller parties' organizational and logistical capacity should be introduced. These programs can help them better prepare for election monitoring and agent deployment.

8.8 Smaller political parties in deploying Agents

Understanding why some political parties cannot fully participate in the monitoring process is crucial for creating solutions that promote inclusivity and fairness. Addressing these challenges strengthens the electoral process and levels the playing field for all parties. Other parties face significant financial and logistical barriers in deploying agents. Interviews with political leaders revealed that inadequate funding prevents many parties from sending agents to all polling stations. Organizational limitations, such as a lack of infrastructure and trained personnel, exacerbate these challenges. Additionally, strategic decisions to focus on specific strongholds further limit their representation. The inability of smaller parties to field agents across polling stations highlights systemic inequalities that favor well-resourced parties. This diminishes the inclusiveness of the electoral process and reduces smaller parties' ability to monitor and challenge election outcomes, potentially eroding the fairness of democracy.

Evaluating the implications of unequal agent presence is critical to safeguarding the integrity of elections. A transparent and inclusive monitoring process strengthens public trust and legitimizes electoral outcomes. The disparity in agent representation undermines the credibility of the electoral process. Without adequate monitoring from all parties, there is a higher risk of errors or manipulation going unchallenged. This uneven field compromises the inclusivity and transparency that are fundamental to democratic principles.

To ensure a fair and inclusive electoral process, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Electoral bodies or donor organizations should establish a fund to assist smaller parties in deploying agents. These funds could cover training, logistics, and stipends, enabling broader representation during ballot counting.
2. Smaller parties should receive support in building organizational and logistical capacity. Training programs can equip them with the skills and resources needed to manage agents effectively.
3. Election regulations should mandate equitable conditions for all parties to field agents, ensuring no party is disadvantaged due to financial constraints. Implementing these measures will foster an inclusive and transparent electoral process, bolstering public trust and reinforcing democratic values.

9. POST –ELECTION OBSERVATION

The recent Local Government Elections in Tanzania revealed both strides and significant setbacks in the democratic process, underscoring the urgent need for electoral reform and robust institutional neutrality. While some areas showed promise, a series of troubling incidents cast a shadow over the integrity of the electoral process, raising questions about inclusivity, transparency, and fairness. In Hai District, Kilimanjaro Region, the unexpected declaration of Wilfred Ritte, a Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA) candidate, as the winner of the Useri Village chairperson race despite his disqualification earlier in the process highlights severe lapses in procedural adherence. According to CHADEMA officials, Ritte had neither campaigned nor deployed polling agents due to his disqualification, yet he secured 428 votes against 408 for his Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) rival. This anomaly, confirmed by the Election Supervisor and Executive Director of Hai District Council, Dionis Myinga, reflects a lack of procedural consistency and transparency. Such incidents undermine trust in the electoral process, suggesting systemic flaws in the management of objections and appeals.

9.1 Loss of Life and the Tragedy of Political Intolerance

The tragic death of Justine Kiatu, a CCM member from Tabora Region, after the announcement of a CHADEMA candidate's victory in the Ikomwa Mlimani Hamlet race, exposes the grave emotional toll of political competition. Consuming a pesticide after the results were declared, Kiatu's death serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for promoting political tolerance. Tabora Regional Commissioner Paul Chacha's plea for citizens to prioritize human life over politics underscores the devastating consequences of excessive partisan loyalty. Even more disturbing is the death of a CHADEMA candidate in Manyoni District, Singida Region, allegedly killed during election-related violence. The opposition accused rival factions of orchestrating the attack to intimidate and suppress dissent. Similarly, the assault on Nondo a member of ACT Wazalendo, further underscores the dangerous polarization and hostility that threaten Tanzania's democratic fabric. Such incidents not only rob families of loved ones but also erode the very foundation of democratic engagement, replacing healthy political discourse with fear and violence.

9.2 Electoral boycotts and rejection of results

ACT Wazalendo's categorical rejection of the election results and call for their annulment reflects growing disillusionment with the electoral system. The party accused the government of using state apparatus to suppress democratic competition and demanded an Independent Electoral Commission to oversee future elections. Party leader Dorothy Semu emphasized that without an impartial electoral body, trust in Tanzania's democracy will continue to wane. The refusal of ACT Wazalendo members to cooperate with newly elected leaders underscores the depth of the mistrust, further straining democratic governance at the local level. People with disabilities also raised concerns about the lack of accessible voting infrastructure. Reports from Shinyanga and other regions revealed that many polling stations lacked ramps, tactile voting materials, or sign language interpreters, marginalizing voters with disabilities. This exclusion violates the principle of universal suffrage and demands urgent reforms to ensure that future elections are inclusive. Rehema Joshua, Chairperson of the Federation of Persons with Disabilities in Shinyanga, stressed the importance of systemic changes, arguing that temporary accommodation is insufficient.

Retired Prime Minister Judge Joseph Sinde Warioba highlighted another grave concern: the politicization of the police force. He warned that involving the police in political matters risks dividing citizens and eroding trust in one of the nation's most vital institutions. Judge Warioba's call for depoliticizing the police reflects broader concerns about the impartiality of state institutions during elections. Instances where the police appeared to favor certain parties only deepen public skepticism and weaken democratic principles. Incidents of violence, irregularities, and institutional bias during elections severely undermine Tanzania's democracy. They discourage voter participation, foster political apathy, and fuel distrust in electoral outcomes. The loss of life, as seen in Tabora and Manyoni, and acts of political intimidation create an environment of fear, deterring citizens from exercising their democratic rights. When opposition parties boycott or reject election results, it signals a breakdown of democratic consensus, further polarizing the political landscape. Additionally, the exclusion of marginalized groups such as people with disabilities and the elderly perpetuates systemic inequality, while the politicization of the police compromises their ability to maintain public safety impartially.

To restore public trust and strengthen Tanzania's democracy, the following reforms are critical for addressing systemic challenges and fostering a democratic process that is inclusive, transparent, and fair. Establishing a truly independent electoral commission is fundamental to restoring fairness and impartiality in election management. Such a body must be free from political interference, with commissioners appointed based on merit, integrity, and neutrality. Key reforms should include:

- a) Ensuring commissioners are selected through a non-partisan and transparent process, perhaps with oversight by civil society and international observers, to minimize biases.
- b) Granting the commission the authority to oversee all aspects of elections, including voter registration, campaign monitoring, and result declarations, while holding other stakeholders accountable.

9.3 Accountability for Violence

Ensuring credible, inclusive, and peaceful elections requires a dual commitment to accountability for election-related violence and investment in accessible voting infrastructure. These two pillars are fundamental to building trust in the democratic process and ensuring that all citizens regardless of background or ability can participate safely and meaningfully. Accountability for violence is essential to deter future incidents and uphold justice for victims. To reinforce this, law enforcement agencies must be proactive and impartial in investigating all reported cases of electoral violence, such as the killing of CHADEMA candidates in Manyoni and the assault on Nondo Abduri of ACT-Wazalendo. Ensuring that perpetrators are brought to justice will send a strong signal that political violence will not be tolerated. In addition, the introduction of strict legal penalties for acts such as hate speech, voter intimidation, and physical attacks will serve as a deterrent and help maintain order. Victims and their families must also receive comprehensive legal, medical, and psychological support to promote healing and reaffirm the state's commitment to their safety and dignity. Collectively, these measures will help foster a culture of accountability and restore public confidence in the rule of law and electoral institutions.

At the same time, investing in accessible voting infrastructure is critical for achieving full electoral inclusion. All polling stations should be equipped with ramps, handrails, and wide entryways in accordance with the PWDs Act, making it possible for people with disabilities and the elderly to access voting areas with dignity. To further ensure inclusiveness, tactile ballots, Braille voting materials, and sign language interpreters must be provided to accommodate visually and hearing-impaired voters. In remote or hard-to-reach areas, mobile polling stations

should be deployed to eliminate geographical barriers and ensure no citizen is left behind. These infrastructure improvements will not only enhance physical accessibility but also demonstrate a commitment to equity and democratic participation for all. By combining strong accountability mechanisms with inclusive infrastructure development, Tanzania can take meaningful strides toward more peaceful, fair, and universally accessible elections.

10. THE GIRLS' FAST-FOOD ACADEMY (GFFA)

The Girls' Fast-Food Academy (GFFA) addresses critical social challenges, including sexual exploitation, forced labor and forced marriage, by providing financial literacy, vocational skills, and reintegration support to empower girls and young women with culinary and entrepreneurial skills, creating pathways for self-reliance and economic independence. This holistic approach combines theoretical knowledge and practical training to equip participants with the tools to achieve financial independence and reclaim their dignity in society. The project has two main components namely: **Training Component:** A structured curriculum that includes cooking, baking, food processing, customer care, and marketing, delivered through interactive lessons and hands-on training by experienced professionals. **Social Empowerment Component:** Building participants' confidence and resilience through financial literacy support, enabling them to start small businesses and reintegrate into their communities. Phase 1 focused on establishing a training facility, equipping it with necessary resources, and implementing the first part of the curriculum. This phase laid the foundation for achieving the project's long-term goals of economic empowerment, reduced gender disparities, and community transformation. Below are the details of the implementation and key results achieved.

Activity 1: Establishing Training Facility and Equipping It with Necessary Resources

Objective: To set up an environment conducive to hands-on learning and skill-building for participants. A central location was identified and leased for the training facility, ensuring accessibility for participants. The facility includes a classroom for theoretical lessons and a modern kitchen for practical sessions. The project team collaborated with local suppliers to procure high-quality equipment and supplies. Renovation and setup were managed by local fundis under close supervision to ensure timely completion. The community was engaged to create awareness about the facility and its purpose here are the results:

- a) Participants now have access to a professional training facility that mimics real-world culinary settings.
- b) The facility's accessibility and quality attracted 50 girls and young women for the first cohort, exceeding initial enrollment targets.
- c) The modern facility created excitement in the community, encouraging families to support their daughters in the program.

Procurement of Equipment and Supplies:

- a) Essential tools and appliances, such as ovens, stoves, and blenders, were procured to support the diverse curriculum activities, including baking, fruit processing, and cooking.
- b) Utilities (electricity, water) were ensured to maintain uninterrupted training sessions, and regular cleaning and maintenance ensured a safe and hygienic environment.
- c) Cleaning supplies were provided, and minor repairs to the facility were completed to ensure safety and functionality. The facility is now a fully operational and safe training center, serving 50 girls and young women in its first cohort. Participants expressed excitement about the professional environment and its resemblance to real-world culinary workplaces.

Activity 2: Development and Implementation of Training Curriculum

Objective: To provide a structured and comprehensive educational program to equip participants with culinary skills and entrepreneurial knowledge.

- a) A curriculum was developed in collaboration with culinary experts and trainers, focusing on technical cooking skills, food safety, hygiene, and entrepreneurial training (e.g., pricing, customer service, and small business management).
- b) Practical modules include creating fast food recipes and understanding market trends.
- c) Training handouts, manuals, and recipe booklets were designed to be interactive and visually engaging.
- d) All materials have been printed and are waiting for participants at the start of the program.
- e) In testing our facilities and curriculum we have started the first training cohort with theoretical and practical sessions that are conducted weekly. Sessions also included group discussions, peer feedback, and real-time practice under the guidance of trainers.

The Girls' Fast-Food Academy has successfully laid the foundation for empowering vulnerable girls and addressing social issues like sexual exploitation, forced labor, and forced marriage. Through its holistic approach, the academy has shown an ability to transform participants into skilled, confident individuals ready to achieve financial independence and contribute positively to their communities. As we continue to deliver on this mission, the need for sustained and expanded support is more critical than ever. While the training equips participants with essential vocational and entrepreneurial skills, many still require support to transition from training to establishing small businesses. This includes mentorship, access to start-up capital, and market linkages to ensure their ventures thrive. To understand the long-term impact of the program on participants' livelihoods, systematic monitoring and evaluation are needed. This will help us refine our approach, identify gaps, and demonstrate the program's transformative effects to stakeholders. The current facility has reached its capacity, and the demand for such training exceeds available resources. Expanding the facility and reaching more girls in vulnerable communities is essential to maximize the program's impact and address the widespread issues it seeks to combat.

Success Story

Digital Dreams and Expanding Horizons for Girls' Fast-Food Academy

Umoja wa wawezeshaji KIOO has reached a transformative milestone with its flagship initiative, the Girls' Fast-Food Academy (GFFA). Born from a vision to empower marginalized girls and young women, GFFA has evolved into a beacon of hope, inspiring communities and earning recognition from global organizations. The Rukwa Foundation and MasterCard Foundation were captivated by the academy's holistic approach, which equips participants with culinary skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial expertise. What set the academy apart was its ability to address systemic issues like sexual exploitation, forced labor, and economic disenfranchisement while empowering participants to reclaim their dignity. Success stories, such as Aisha's journey from a survivor of forced marriage to a thriving entrepreneur, became powerful testaments to GFFA's impact.

The Digital Leap

KIOO's vision for digital transformation resonated deeply with funders. The plan includes:

- a) Expanding access to training through online modules, ensuring girls in remote areas can benefit from the program.
- b) Enabling graduates to market and sell their culinary creations online, connecting them to customers beyond their local communities.
- c) Providing participants with mobile tools to manage their businesses, track finances, and access mentorship on demand.

These innovations not only make the program more inclusive but also empower participants to embrace the digital economy, aligning with the foundations' commitment to youth-led and technology-driven solutions.

Case Study: Neema's Journey from Vulnerability to Vibrant Entrepreneurship

When Neema, a 19-year-old from the outskirts of Kigoma, first heard about the *Girls' Fast-Food Academy* (GFFA), she was a school dropout struggling with the stigma of an early forced marriage and economic hardship. Like many girls in her community, Neema faced limited opportunities, and her future seemed predetermined one of dependence and vulnerability. But everything changed when she joined the first cohort of 50 girls supported through the £5,000 grant from the Hilden Charitable Fund. At GFFA, Neema received hands-on training in fast food preparation, fruit processing, hygiene, and business management. Through the academy's structured curriculum and mentorship, she learned not only how to cook professionally but also how to price her services, engage customers, and plan business. Financial literacy modules helped her understand budgeting and saving skills she had never been exposed to.

What stood out most for Neema was the confidence she gained. Encouraged by her trainers and supported by peers, she began to dream beyond survival. Upon completing the program, Neema started a small catering service offering samosas, pilau, and fruit juices at community weddings and school events. With just a charcoal stove and ingredients sourced from local markets, Neema transformed her training into income. Within three months, she was earning enough to support her younger siblings and became a respected contributor to her household. Today, she employs two other young women from her village and is saving toward renting a larger space for her food business. Neema's story has rippled through her community. Parents now point her as proof that girls can thrive when given a chance. Local leaders invited her to speak at youth forums, and the District Commissioner publicly praised her success as an example of "real development from within." Thanks to this funding, Neema didn't just gain a skill, she gained a voice, a business, and a future. Her story is a living testament to the power of investing in girls. She is now not only feeding her community but also fueling change one plate, one dream, one girl at a time.

The 2024 Local Government Elections provided critical insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the electoral process. Observations highlighted significant strides in inclusivity, transparency, and accessibility, but also revealed systemic barriers that continue to hinder equitable participation. These insights form a foundation for reforms that aim to create a fairer and more transparent electoral process. One of the major successes was the transparency of the vote-counting process. Most polling stations allowed party agents and observers to verify results in real-time, fostering public confidence. The presence of security personnel at polling stations also contributed to a peaceful environment, ensuring the integrity of the election. Encouraging voter turnout across regions further indicated growing civic engagement, driven by effective

mobilization efforts. Approximately 41% of polling stations lacked the infrastructure necessary to accommodate people with disabilities (PWDs).

The challenges identified during the elections, such as barriers to physical access and gaps in voter education, mirror broader systemic issues observed during voter registration. For example, the absence of accessible infrastructure at registration centers discouraged PWDs from registering to vote. Similarly, delays in result announcements and inconsistencies in tallying during the elections reflected logistical inefficiencies previously noted in voter registration processes. Efforts to address these challenges must be interconnected and comprehensive. For instance, ensuring the presence of political party agents at registration centers enhances oversight and trust in the process, which carries over to Election Day. Strengthening grassroots engagement strategies and providing mobile registration units in underserved areas can further reduce logistical challenges and increase participation. Drawing inspiration from international best practices can strengthen Tanzania's electoral framework. For example, Rwanda's implementation of a 30% quota for women in decision-making positions has increased gender representation. Kenya's introduction of mobile polling stations and tactile ballots for PWDs has enhanced accessibility, particularly in remote areas. Adopting similar measures in Tanzania will ensure that the electoral process becomes a model for inclusivity and transparency.

1.1 Recommendations

To build on successes and address the challenges observed during the elections, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. The government must prioritize enhancing the accessibility of polling stations and registration centers by investing in infrastructure, including ramps, handrails, tactile ballots, and Braille guides. Increased funding for voter education campaigns should focus on using diverse communication channels such as social media, community workshops, and local radio to reach marginalized groups effectively. Campaign regulations must also be strengthened to address hate speech, misinformation, and negative campaigning. Enforcing these measures will ensure a fair electoral environment that fosters trust and inclusiveness.
2. CSOs should take a proactive role in advocating for the rights of marginalized groups, including women, youth, and PWDs, by partnering with electoral bodies. Training election observers and polling staff on inclusiveness and ethics will improve oversight and the quality of election management. CSOs can also monitor and report on campaign violations to ensure adherence to electoral regulations, thereby maintaining the credibility of the process.
3. Political parties should adopt transparent candidate recruitment processes and implement quotas for youth, women, and PWDs to increase representation. Ethical campaign training for party representatives will reduce misconduct and foster a culture of accountability. Parties should also develop inclusive manifestos that address localized concerns, engaging voters meaningfully and strengthening public trust in their leadership.
4. Electoral bodies must modernize equipment and improve logistics to prevent delays in result announcements. Strengthening security protocols for transporting results and ensuring that polling stations are equipped with assistive devices are critical steps toward fostering inclusivity. Training electoral staff on accessibility and logistical efficiency will ensure smoother operations and greater public confidence in the process.
5. Grassroots engagement is crucial for increasing voter registration and participation. Community forums and workshops can help tailor voter education to local needs, ensuring that marginalized populations, including PWDs and the elderly, have equal opportunities to participate. Establishing local oversight committees to monitor elections and report irregularities will also enhance transparency and accountability.

11. LESSON LEARNED

Across all six flagship projects implemented by KIOO in 2024—Maendeleo Yetu Project, EmpowerHer, Inclusive Leadership and Election Observation, Girls Fast Food Academy (GFFA), Vocational Education & Training through KIOO Open School, and the Voter Registration Observation for Persons with Disabilities—a powerful, unifying lesson has emerged: sustainable development and democratic inclusion can only be achieved when interventions are holistic, data-informed, intersectional, and rooted in the lived realities of the communities they serve.

Community Ownership and Trust are the Bedrock of Success. Projects that began with broad stakeholder engagement (e.g., inception meetings for *Maendeleo Yetu* and validation sessions) were more successful in achieving lasting impact. The willingness of community leaders, women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) to participate increased significantly when they were involved from the very beginning. We learned that program success hinges on building trust, nurturing local champions, and respecting local wisdom—not simply delivering services. Each project revealed that women, youth, and PWDs face overlapping forms of exclusion. For example, the *EmpowerHer* survey data showed that educational gaps, economic burdens, and legal constraints disproportionately hinder political participation. Likewise, the *GFFA* demonstrated that survivors of gender-based violence flourish best when given vocational skills and psychosocial support. Therefore, our lesson is clear: one-size-fits-all approaches are insufficient. Interventions must be deliberately intersectional, addressing the unique combinations of barriers people face.

Data Drives Accountability, but Dialogue Drives Change. KIOO's expanded use of digital tools (e.g., Wajibu App, OVRs system monitoring) improved the credibility and utility of our data. But it was the dialogue sessions, civic engagement forums, and storytelling platforms that transformed data into action. These spaces enabled citizens to see themselves as co-creators of solutions. For instance, communities formed mentorship groups, elected new youth and PWD leaders, and demanded policy reforms—not because they were told to, but because they were heard. Ethical and Visionary Leadership Starts with Values, Not Just Elections. Election observations and voter education activities highlighted that merely increasing turnout is not enough. Communities are demanding transparent, visionary, and ethical leaders—and they want to be part of shaping that leadership. Training youth, women, and PWDs in leadership values, not just campaign tactics, is key to nurturing a generation of inclusive leaders who inspire trust and drive equitable development.

Digital and Vocational Pathways Accelerate Empowerment When Anchored in Local Realities. From the success stories at the Girls Fast Food Academy to the re-enrollment of young mothers at KIOO Open School, we observed that combining market-driven skills, entrepreneurship, and access to digital tools leads to tangible transformation. However, scaling these models requires adapting them to local conditions be it limited infrastructure, cultural expectations, or seasonal income patterns. Our collective 2024 experience has taught us that inclusive development is not a product of isolated projects, it is a movement built through synergy, shared learning, and structural commitment to equity. Whether combating voter exclusion, training young entrepreneurs, or observing elections, every KIOO initiative reaffirmed the same truth: lasting change begins when people are not only reached but respected, represented, and resourced.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS

To promote inclusive leadership, deepen democratic engagement, and build sustainable civic participation in Tanzania, a coordinated and multi-stakeholder approach is essential. The lessons drawn from KIOO's 2024 program implementation highlight systemic, structural, and cultural barriers that disproportionately affect women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Addressing these challenges requires tailored action from government entities, political parties, civil society organizations, development partners, and communities themselves.

The Government of Tanzania is urged to prioritize inclusive civic and leadership education at all levels. This includes investment in both formal and non-formal education systems that build civic knowledge, leadership skills, and democratic awareness of marginalized groups. A national strategy should include widespread civic education campaigns, particularly in rural and underserved communities, and the development of curricula that promote active citizenship. To improve electoral participation, government should also establish mobile voter registration units, extend registration timelines, and ensure full accessibility for people with disabilities. These reforms would help overcome physical and socio-economic barriers that hinder participation, especially among those in remote and economically challenged areas. Furthermore, the government should enforce and expand policies mandating the inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in decision-making roles through quotas and affirmative action. These legal and policy frameworks would help correct long-standing exclusion and build more representative and inclusive governance institutions.

Political parties, as primary vehicles for leadership emergence, must take deliberate steps to diversify their candidate polls. Parties should actively recruit women, young people, and persons with disabilities, providing them with mentorship, campaign financing, and visibility in party structures. Dedicated internal wings or caucuses for these groups should be established to ensure their voices are integrated into party policy and strategy development. Inclusive nomination procedures and transparent internal governance will increase confidence in the political system and improve trust among marginalized populations. Political parties that lead in this area will not only diversify leadership but also increase their relevance and legitimacy among a broader electorate.

Civil society organizations (CSOs) have a critical role to play in shaping public discourse and strengthening democratic culture. They should lead sustained advocacy campaigns to challenge cultural and societal norms that restrict the participation of marginalized groups in governance. These campaigns should be community-driven and use storytelling, local media, and culturally relevant platforms such as theater and music to influence attitudes. CSOs should also continue offering training and capacity-building for women, youth, and persons with disabilities to prepare them for leadership and civic responsibilities. Establishing mentorship programs, networks, and safe spaces for dialogue can accelerate the emergence of confident, competent leaders from historically excluded communities.

Development partners are encouraged to continue and expand their support for locally led initiatives that promote democratic inclusion. This includes providing both financial and technical assistance to projects that empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities in civic and leadership spaces. Donor support should focus on long-term investment in leadership development programs, voter registration campaigns, inclusive electoral reforms, and civic technology innovations. Additionally, development partners should collaborate with

governments and CSOs to institutionalize inclusive policies and conduct regular monitoring and evaluation to assess their effectiveness. Strategic partnerships should prioritize knowledge sharing, co-creation of scalable models, and build the capacity of local organizations to lead transformational work.

The community at large plays a foundational role in democratization and inclusive governance. Community members should challenge entrenched cultural norms that discourage women and youth from participating in public life and instead promote practices that value equality, representation, and integrity. Families, religious leaders, elders, and youth influencers must all act as agents of change, advocating for diverse leadership within their villages and wards. Community participation in civic education forums, local policy dialogues, and elections is essential for sustaining grassroots democracy. As more citizens become informed about their rights and responsibilities, voter turnout, community engagement, and demand for accountable leadership will increase. Empowered communities can drive progress from the ground up by holding leaders accountable, reporting misconduct, and ensuring that governance is inclusive and reflective of all voices.

In addition to stakeholder-specific actions, KIOO proposes several cross-cutting recommendations to enhance the impact and sustainability of its projects. First, inclusive participation must be institutionalized across all project cycles by mainstreaming gender, youth, and disability considerations into planning, implementation, and monitoring frameworks. Leadership and mentorship programs should be developed specifically for young women, persons with disabilities, and grassroots leaders to prepare them for future political and civic roles. Second, vocational training opportunities must be expanded and diversified through the replication of successful models like the KIOO Open School and Girls Fast Food Academy. New trade areas such as renewable energy, green innovation, and digital marketing should be integrated, while post-training support should include startup capital, business incubation, and alumni networks.

Third, civic and voter education must be improved through the development of digital, inclusive, and localized materials, particularly ahead of the 2025 General Elections. These efforts should be carried out in partnership with INEC and CSOs to ensure outreach to youth, rural communities, and people with disabilities. Fourth, KIOO recommends promoting data-driven accountability and legal reform by using its survey and observation findings to advocate for policy changes, such as lowering the minimum age for candidacy and enforcing campaign finance laws. A centralized knowledge hub should be established to monitor trends and support evidence-based programming.

Fifth, community engagement and ownership must be deepened through structured dialogue forums, stakeholder validation meetings, and partnerships with local influencers. Creative media such as radio, theatre, and mobile caravans can be used to amplify messages and stimulate behavior change. Sixth, investment in Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems and strategic partnerships should be prioritized to track progress, facilitate adaptive learning, and mobilize new resources. Lastly, KIOO calls for increased institutional support and resource allocation by lobbying for public budgets that support women, youth councils, and disability-inclusive platforms, and by encouraging donor flexibility for long-term funding and organizational development.

Together, these recommendations form a comprehensive roadmap for inclusive governance, civic engagement, and socio-economic empowerment. They are grounded in community realities and informed by the insights of stakeholders at all levels. If adopted and implemented collaboratively, they will help build a more equitable, participatory, and democratic Tanzania.