



The iHub Research team has completed their literature review and exploratory survey with some interesting findings outlined below.

After a comprehensive literature review and an informative workshop conducted last month (October 2011), the iHub Research team ventured into the field to find out whether *wananchi's* (Swahili for *citizens*) reality on the ground matched the theory and rhetoric. The team conducted a brief exploratory survey from November 1st – 4th, 2011. The survey was conducted to better understand Nairobi citizens' point of view on governance in Kenya and to have a clearer picture of avenues of service delivery and government-citizen interactions that are currently occurring.

This initial information will help to formulate the indicators to be studied as part of the larger M-Governance field research that is scheduled to begin January 2012.

Four locations in Nairobi were chosen for the exploratory survey based on factors such as sampling variety, ease of access, and targeted respondents: the Bishop Magua Building, the Central Business District (CBD), the Kibera slum and the University of Nairobi main campus. Two members of the team visited the sites on each of the four days with a minimum target of 15 respondents per location.

The brief questionnaire contained seven open-ended questions on perceptions of governance and service delivery as well as existing and preferred channels of communication between the government and citizens. One interesting feature of the survey was that the team piloted Open Data Kit (ODK) mobile data collection software. ODK allowed the field researchers to input the questionnaire responses while in the field using a mobile phone running on Android. As soon as the phones were on Internet, the field team was then able to send the data back to a cloud server, which is accessible in real time from the office using a laptop computer. Therefore, researchers in the office were able to begin seeing and analyzing the results while the field team sent the data from various locations around Nairobi!





Figure 2: Word Cloud based on frequency of the words used to describe governance

Initial Findings

Thirty per cent (33%) (n=20) of the respondents defined governance as government and leadership. Out of these, some qualified further as leadership to bring development, unity and security to different people. 12% (n=7) of the respondents defined governance as administration, ruling and structures of law and order to implement government policy. 5% (n=3) of the respondents believed that governance is the involvement of all people, both government and the citizens in decision-making.

Three per cent (3%) (n=2) define governance to be proper and equitable appropriation of resources in the society. Other individuals (13%; n=8) understood governance to be about service to the people, i.e honest, trust worthy and ready to serve leaders as well as how elected leaders use their position. Democracy and being accountable in one's elected positions or rank and how well one manages that position were also definitions given of governance. The remaining 33% (n=20) could not define governance and skipped answering the question.

The fact that 20 respondents had a hard time defining governance could be attributed to language issues. Most of the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili, although questionnaires were originally written in English. Some terms in English, such as "governance," are difficult to accurately translate without losing the original or intended English meaning. This challenge revealed the fact that "governance" as we know it does not exist in the

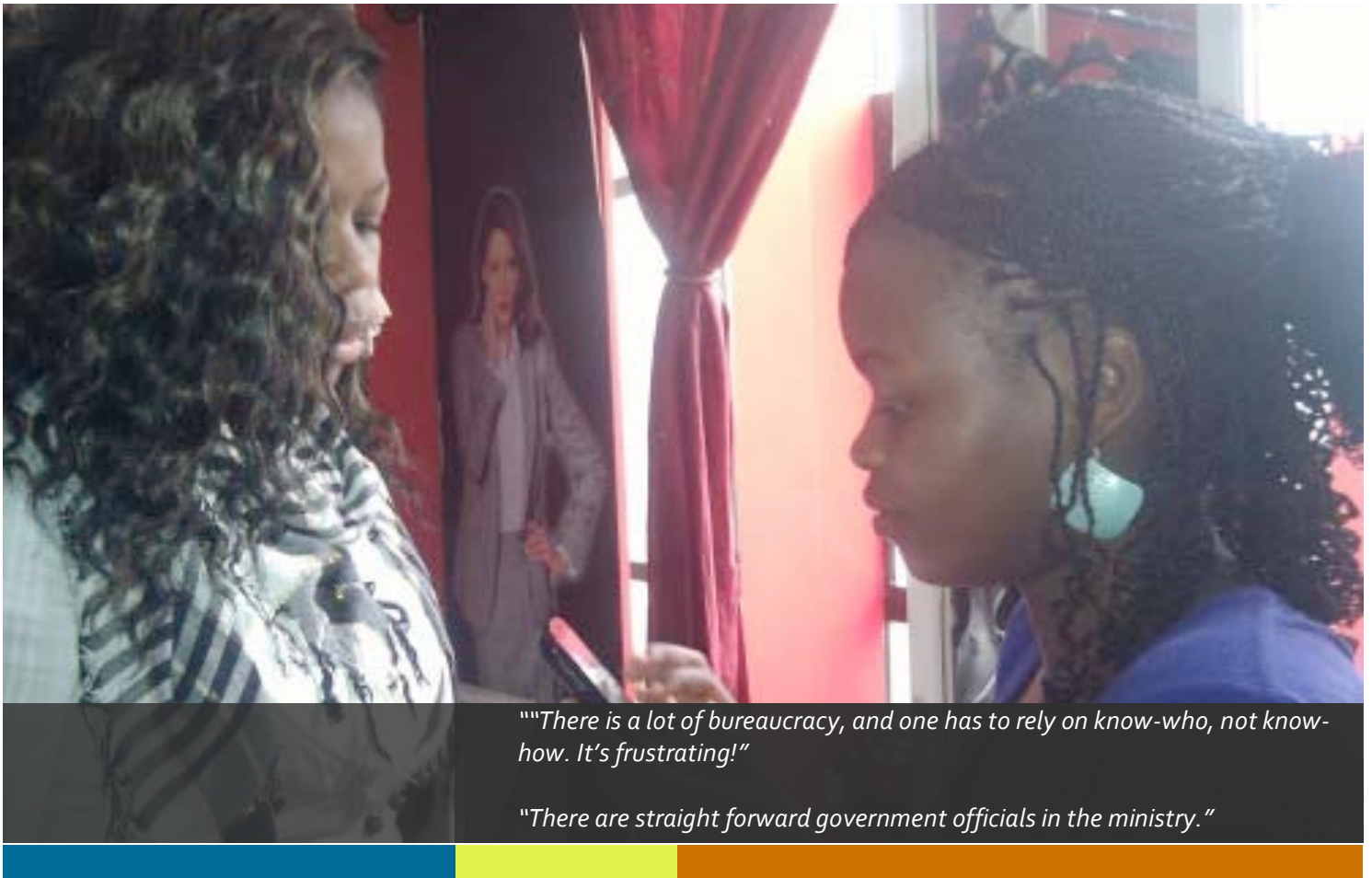
culture and lingo of most Kenyan people. The closest Swahili word to "governance," is more closely translated to "rule", "leadership", or "government." This translation also corresponds with the most common words used by Kenyans to explain their understanding of governance, as explained earlier.

In terms of service provision, respondents interviewed have interacted with the government through various means in order to receive services. These services vary from basic amenities like water and electricity services, to immigration documents like ID and passport, to other major services such as education and health services. In these interactions, respondents had different experiences.

Health, Education and Immigration services were among the most popular services that these respondents had received. While a few had positive comments on the service delivery, there were also a number of negative comments. These services could, therefore be possible key indicators to study on how ICTs can promote governance.



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The majority of interviewed respondents did not think it was possible to raise complaints with the government or service providers in general, either due to lack of means to do so or no confidence in the existing media to raise complaints.

Only 40% (n=24) of those interviewed in the exploratory survey believed that there are communication channels at their disposal to do so. Of these, ten respondents had actually tried to contact the government/service providers to raise issues, mainly by visiting the concerned offices/departments, online using websites, calling in to the offices and radio stations, or writing a complaint letter. The remaining 60% (n=36) of respondents did not believe there are any channels of communication available or did not know of such channels to raise complaints

about service delivery. These respondents were skeptical about raising complaints; some people said that they had tried raising issues before and no one had responded while others said that they had to bribe officials before their issues were resolved. Further, some respondents were afraid of being victimized should they raise any issues with the government. One person did not see any need to raise complaints as he thought it was normal to receive poor service.



This exploratory work sought to understand how Kenyan citizens view the term governance, interact with government service providers, and which communication methods they believe to be most effective to voice their concerns to government.

The initial findings reveal that Kenyans believe governance is all about the government. This suggests a perception that governance is top-down and originates from government. Only 5% (n=3) of the respondents stated that governance involves both government and citizens in decision-making. This popular mind-set that governance is something that is done by the government and others in leadership needs to be amended if a more participatory role is to be taken by citizen stakeholders. Civic education and other programs to inform citizens of their rights and responsibilities may help to alter the view that governance is something implemented by government leaders.

Data on citizen interactions with government service providers reveals that the respondents on the whole had more negative experiences than positive experiences. This indicates that there is room for improvement in Kenyan service delivery. Further investigation using a larger sample size should be done to understand which specific sectors Kenyans believe would benefit most from technology applications.

One of the most important findings from this research came out of citizens' opinion on the most effective communication methods for engaging government. While the mobile telephone was still considered one viable method, it was not the most popular. In fact, the feedback from citizens revealed the limitation of using the mobile phone to call, SMS, or USSD. Further research must be done to test the viability of mobile phone applications. Also important to note is that the exploratory study was limited to residents of the capital city, Nairobi where it is much easier to have face-to-face interactions with Ministries and service providers. In contrast, it is much less viable for citizens in rural communities that can be over nine hours away from Nairobi to meet face-to-face with Ministries. It will be important to include these rural communities in the larger sample study to be conducted in 2012.

