



## Press Release

**Young Kenyans care about politics, but they don't trust politicians, study finds - but web apps can help rebuild democracy.**

**Nairobi, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017** – A Mzalendo online baseline survey of Kenyan regular Facebook users revealed most of them are youthful and very interested in politics. In the survey conducted in November 2016, the average respondent's age was 26. Two-thirds (69%) were male. In addition, 68% attended university, 41% own a TV, 68% owned a smart phone and 14% own a bike. The survey sought to find out how to recruit people to use social media and new technology, to access their leaders and the effect of the use of ICTs on their efficacy and future political behaviour.

The research findings show the over 8300 respondents had a great understanding of the current political system. They were aware of the next election, their local constituency and Parliamentarians name, which went a long way to dispel recent claims that youth online are disinterested in politics. In fact, most – 77% - of the participants were actually registered to vote.

From the results, it was clear the current crop of elected leaders are generally perceived as self-interested in pursuing the vote and don't care about public opinions on issues. As a result, the respondents were reluctant to engage their politicians especially Members of Parliament.

Even so, over 55% of the survey participants were confident that they can influence legislation. Despite their self-confidence, the research however revealed a general lack of understanding on what the oversight function of the Executive, Parliament and Governors entails.

Speaking at the research launch event, Mzalendo's Executive Director Jessica Musila said 'The survey findings clearly reveal a highly educated youth that are greatly disillusioned with the current crop of elected leaders. On the other hand, the respondents are actually open interested in meaningful participation to drive proactive change. Will our next crop of leaders rise to the occasion and harness this power and voice? What kind of engagement should it be?'

The launch held the Sarova Panafric Hotel brought together civil society representatives, communication and political researchers, government agencies and donors. Since Mzalendo.com's birth more than 10 years ago, the website has remained focused on encouraging citizen accountability. Mzalendo is a non-partisan organisation that keeps an eye on Kenyan Parliament with a mission to *facilitate public participation in Parliamentary processes through Information Sharing, Research and Networking*.

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