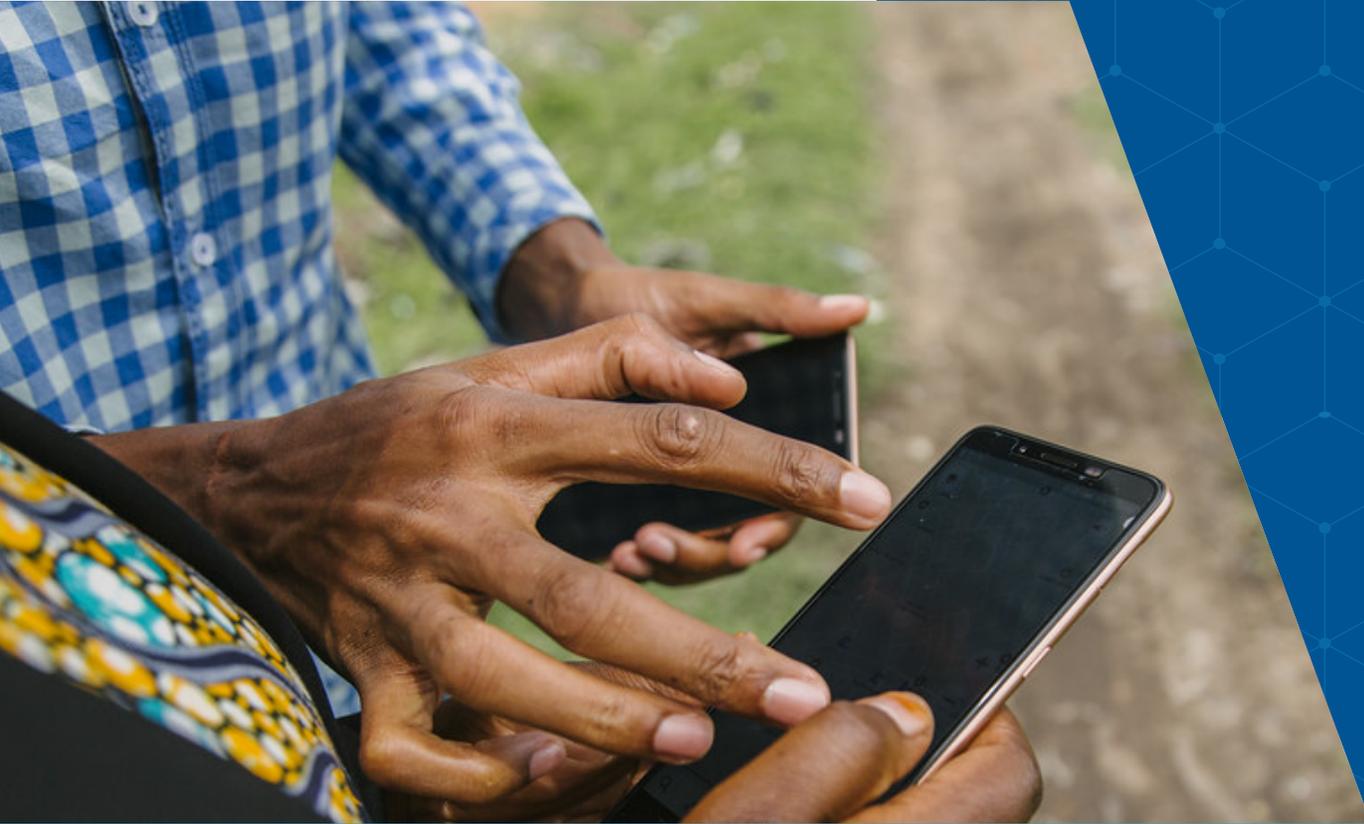




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# Citizen Participation in Local Government Elections in the Age of Crowdsourcing: Explorations and Considerations in Tanzania

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# **Citizen Participation in Local Government Elections in the Age of Crowdsourcing: Explorations and Considerations in Tanzania**

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### **About the Author**

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## Abstract

This study sought to explore crowdsourced monitoring of local government elections and the challenges hindering citizen participation in monitoring processes through digital tools. Non-governmental election monitoring organizations have embraced technology and crowdsourcing methods for generating election information. Digital tools have changed how election monitors and citizens connect, observe, create, and share political information. This study was influenced by the fact that, despite the existence of local election crowdsourced monitoring initiatives, none of the existing research explores crowdsourced election monitoring at the local level. This study explores and considers the 2014 local elections in Tanzania. We used document analysis, first to review types of crowdsourcing and their deployment in election monitoring, and key informant interviews to explore issues surrounding citizen participation in local election monitoring through crowdsourcing. We found that, while crowdsourcing monitoring is used in local elections, citizen participation faces various challenges. Our analysis shows that, among others, trust, costs, poor preparation and crowdsource planning, the digital divide, and poor infrastructure are critical challenges facing local crowdsourced monitoring. The findings shine a light on the emergence of local election crowdsourcing monitoring and the challenges facing citizen participation through digital technologies. To build effective, crowdsourced local election monitoring, we propose opportunities to shape crowdsourcing citizen participation through digital tools in forthcoming elections, *inter alia*, the use of mobile phones for free short message services, early planning, developing strategies, and building effective partnerships among government institutions, non-governmental election monitoring organizations, and the citizens.

**Keywords:** citizen participation, local election, local governance, crowdsourcing, technology, Tanzania

## 1. Introduction

In 2004, James Surowiecki released a book titled *The Wisdom of Crowds*, in which the author calls for crowd collective action to solve complex problems. *The Wisdom of Crowds* has something to tell us about monitoring local government elections through crowd participation to generate election information, rather than knowledge generated by and concentrated on a few elites. Rather, the crowd methods have the “potential to improve the quality of election monitoring by complementing existing approaches” (Fung, 2011, p. 193). Also, “under the right circumstances groups are remarkably intelligent, and often smarter than the smartest people in them” (Surowiecki, 2004, p. xiii) and the diversity of experience, opinion, and knowledge can render the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Digital technology is creating an environment for engaging “many” rather than a “talented few” because small groups of people, no matter how intelligent, will not be smarter than the larger group (the crowd) (Surowiecki, 2004).

Four years after the release of *The Wisdom of Crowds*, there was electoral violence in Kenya 2007/2008, mainly caused by electoral fraud and other executive abuses (Diamond, 2015). Kenyans protested what they believed to be a fraudulent presidential election. Some politicians and protesters spread hate speech, sparking increased inter-ethnic violence and deaths (Shayo, 2017). To address this critical problem, a group of technology innovators took the initiative to innovate a space for capturing and generating information related to hate speech from different locations. The generated information was shared in a Google map for members of the public to be made aware of what was going on in different localities. This was the inception of the 2008 crowdsourcing platform *Ushabidi* (meaning “witness”). The *Ushabidi* platform was created to map incidents of post-election violence occurring in the country, as shared by citizens via web and mobile phone text messages. The *Ushabidi* crowdsourcing platform aimed to inform the local and international community of what was happening on the ground while also alerting the authorities for rapid response and action (Shayo, 2017).

The success of the *Ushabidi* crowdsourcing platform revolutionized crowdsourcing citizen participation in monitoring electoral processes. The launch of the *Ushabidi* platform in the post-election violence in Kenya motivated various civil society election monitoring organizations to initiate similar online platforms (Shayo, 2020). As a result, in 2010, civil society organizations from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, together with the *Ushabidi* innovators, launched a dedicated platform for “Election Watch for East Africa” called *Uchaguzi* (“election”) (Shayo, 2017). The aim was to engage citizens in actively protecting the integrity of elections through technology. The *Uchaguzi* platform makes citizens with access to mobile phone and internet services collectively

observe and share information about positive and negative electoral process (Shayo & Kersting, 2017).

The development of the *Uchaguzi* crowdsourcing platform amplified the opportunity for the crowd to be part of election monitoring. However, given the new wave of crowdsourcing election monitoring through technology, research in Tanzania has primarily focused on the national level, that is, presidential and parliamentary elections (Shayo & Kersting, 2017; Shayo, 2020). As a result, little is known about citizen participation in local government election through crowd monitoring. This paper focuses on crowd types, types of crowd deployed in monitoring local elections, and challenges to citizen participation in monitoring local elections through crowdsourcing methods.

Analysis of crowdsourced citizen participation in local government election monitoring is highly relevant for developing democracies for three reasons. First, most analyses related to crowdsourced citizen participation monitoring are conducted at a national level for presidential and parliamentary elections (Bock 2012; Bader, 2013; Bailard & Livingston, 2014; Hellström, 2015; Shayo & Kersting, 2017; Shayo, 2020), comparing traditional and crowdsourced election monitoring (Grömping, 2012) and an overview of the academic literature on domestic monitoring (Grömping, 2017). Second, mobile phones and internet access have become relatively widespread and constitute new, important resources for decentralized crowdsourced election monitoring. For example, the latest data indicated that about 89% of the Tanzanian population have mobile phones, while 49% have internet services (TCRA, 2020). Third, a literature search shows that no studies have yet analyzed crowdsourced citizen participation in local government election monitoring in developing democracies or Tanzania in particular. In this case, this paper used the 2014 local government elections in mainland Tanzania to explore and consider citizen participation in local government election monitoring through crowdsourcing methods.

This paper has three objectives: the first objective focuses on outlining types of crowdsourcing in a local election monitoring context. The second objective examines the crowd types deployed to monitor the 2014 local government elections. Finally, the third objective explores challenges to citizen participation in monitoring local elections through crowdsourcing.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section Two offers an overview of Tanzania's electoral history and recent changes to the democratic system. Section Three offers an overview of the literature, especially related to local government elections. Section Four discusses the types of crowdsourcing

– bounded<sup>1</sup>, unbounded<sup>2</sup> and passive<sup>3</sup> - and the history of crowdsourcing citizen participation in election monitoring. Section Five discusses citizen participation in local election monitoring through technology. Section Six is devoted to the data methods used to understand the challenges and opportunities of citizen participation in local election monitoring. Section Seven presents results from the use of social media in crowdsourced local election monitoring. Finally, Sections Eight and Nine address the challenges and opportunities for citizen participation in local election monitoring.

## 2. Local Government Elections

The United Republic of Tanzania is a multi-party state. In 1992, multipartyism was legalized, and Tanzania became a democratic pluralist state with a multi-party system to accommodate competition, diversity, and participation. However, since then, *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) has dominated Tanzania's political landscape, holding the presidency and the majority of seats at both the local and national levels. The failure to change the legal and constitutional framework since 1992 has meant that the single-party dominance has never been addressed institutionally, despite political pronouncements favouring pluralism (TACCEO, 2015).

Local government elections in mainland Tanzania are used to elect village chairpersons, hamlet leaders and village council members in the rural areas, and *Mtaa*<sup>4</sup> chairpersons and members of the *Mtaa* committees in the urban areas. It is worth noting ward councillors are elected during national elections.<sup>5</sup> Local government elections are usually conducted every five years – one year before national elections.

The first local government elections conducted after the re-introduction of multi-party politics were held in 1994. This election was held per the Local Authorities Elections Act of 1979, as amended in 1992, 1993, and 1994. The local government elections are governed by the constitution, the principal laws, subsidiary legislation, government circulars, and guidelines issued by the Minister responsible for regional administration and local government authorities. The legal framework governing Tanzanian elections provides the regulations governing voter and candidate

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<sup>1</sup> Bounded crowdsourcing means recruitment, selection and training of few citizens to participate in generating trusted election monitoring data.

<sup>2</sup> Unbounded crowdsourcing means engagement of large group of people (the crowd) through open-call to participate in sharing electoral incidents, but their reports are processed for verification.

<sup>3</sup> Passive crowdsourcing means listen to social networks and generate election reports (through data mining) shared by platform users within their own networks.

<sup>4</sup> Swahili for “urban neighbourhood”

<sup>5</sup> While ward councillors serve at the local level, it is not known or documented why they are elected during national level elections.

qualifications, registration, campaigns, voting, tallying, and result declaration (TACCEO, 2015). For example, all citizens 18 years and above are eligible to register as voters. As for the candidates, the laws state they must be affiliated and sponsored by a fully registered political party (TACCEO, 2015), meaning independent candidates cannot enter local elections.

Local government elections used to be coordinated and supervised by the Prime Minister's Office for Regional Administration and Local Government. However, under the current regime, local elections are coordinated by the Presidents' Office through the Minister responsible for Regional Administration and Local Government – a presidentially appointed position. In this system, the Executive Directors (City, Municipal, Township and District) are the principal Returning Officers, while ward, village, *Mtaa*, and other government officials serve as assistant Returning Officers. The minister takes total control of the coordination and management of the local government elections, leading to concerns over a lack of independence from the ruling party and government (TACCEO, 2015). The main laws that govern local government elections are the: Local Government (Elections) Act of 1979, Local Government (Urban Authorities) Act of 1982, and Local Government (District Authorities) Act of 1982. There are also several regulations and guidelines under these laws for the management of local government elections.

The local level is the closest to the citizens and the space where they experience democracy daily by interacting with democratic institutions and processes (IDEA, 2014). Citizen participation in local level elections is necessary to improve the quality of democratic processes as, in today's world, there are growing concerns surrounding the quality of democracy at the local level. Tanzania has since conducted six local government elections in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014 and 2019. In 1994, no local election monitoring organizations were present to promote election integrity in Tanzania's local government multi-party elections. The first local election observer participated in 2009 and concluded observed that Tanzania respects the right of citizens' participation in the governance of the state (TACCEO, 2015). But in the 2019 local government elections, citizen participation in crowdsourcing-based election monitoring was denied. This is because the well-established non-governmental organizations that used crowdsourcing technology to monitor local elections were denied accreditation, including TACCEO (The Citizen, 2019). The government's refusal to provide accreditation for local election monitoring to the credible and experienced organizations further eroded confidence in promoting fair electoral process (U.S. Embassy Dar es Salaam, 2019). TACCEO initiated citizen participation in crowdsourced electoral incident monitoring; they were the only organization that had invested in local government election monitoring for the 2009 and 2014 elections, but were not accredited for the 2019 elections. This is why this paper's exploration

of citizen participation in crowdsourced election monitoring focuses on the 2014 local elections and not the more recent 2019 ones.

### **3. Crowdsourcing citizen participation in a monitoring context**

The ideas of citizen participation and the use of technology in the democratic process are not new, but an increased emphasis on crowdsourcing citizen participation in election monitoring through technology. The “wisdom of crowds” method and application of digital tools may facilitate participation, increase electoral incident identification, and improve interventions in real-time. In this, it can be argued that the “crowd is wise” (Surowiecki, 2004) and capable of solving complex problems of monitoring representative democracy at local levels.

The current concept of “crowdsourcing” can be traced back to Jeff Howe in 2006 in *Wired* magazine. Howe (2006) described crowdsourcing as the process by which many people can come together to accomplish tasks once performed by a few individuals. Crowdsourcing also represents a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call (Howe, 2006). This description of crowdsourcing focuses on a large, undefined group of people brought together to collaborate and solve complex problems. The initial engagement is done through digital technologies to facilitate the participation of undefined groups and to promote the open call. The term crowdsourcing changes depending on the application context, medium of communication, and engagement (Shayo, 2017). But at the core of the term is the idea that a large group will actively engage through an open call to solve complex problems.

Crowdsourcing is the “mobilization of the general public -the crowd- to perform what are usually small, incremental tasks that, taken together, accomplish significant goals” (Bailard & Livingston, 2014, p. 355). Crowdsourcing citizen participation involves obtaining necessary services, ideas, or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people – especially an online community – rather than from traditional supply sources (NDI, 2013). In election monitoring, the term crowdsourcing has been modified to fit the context of citizen participation in electoral events. Crowdsourced election monitoring is defined as a system in which:

Any individual can register an observation about an election, and that observation is pooled with other individuals’ observations to create a public depiction of the reality of the election that is offered back to the public and to election officials in real-time on election day (Fung, 2011, pp. 194-195).

Non-governmental election monitoring organizations register as many participants as possible to create avenues for the crowd to observe and quickly share data once the incident is verified (Shayo, 2017).

LHRC and TACCEO (2016) observed the objectives of citizen participation in election monitoring are as follows:

- To establish a single-point election information access hub where citizens can access information about the electoral process through partnerships with other information sources, such as media houses and citizens themselves.
- To empower citizens to observe their elections and establish platforms to amplify their voices when they report on election issues happening in their communities.
- To provide a platform to forward issues to the responsible authorities for action in a timely manner.
- To establish a virtual space where citizens can meet and discuss the going-on election, airing their views, demands, satisfactions, and dissatisfactions, and share what is currently going on in their areas and how they think the process can be improved to ensure a free and fair election.

In this regard, existing literature on crowdsourcing citizen participation in monitoring processes focuses on national-level elections. Little has been documented regarding citizen participation and crowdsourcing methods in local government elections. For example, Bailard and Livingston (2014) explored how new information and communication technologies (ICTs) facilitated crowdsourced accountability monitoring in the 2011 Nigerian national election. Bailard and Livingston (2014, p.350) found that “crowdsourced information led to the reallocation of resources to specific polling stations (those found to be in some way defective by information provided by crowdsourced information) in preparation for the presidential election”. Their study showed how citizen participation and technology could share actionable election information to inform relevant authorities. Bader (2013) assessed the collective ability of citizen contributors and the overall effectiveness of crowdsourcing as a tool for collecting credible information about fraud in the 2011-2012 Russian elections. Evidence collected from election observations generated on the crowdsourcing platform showed that “when properly analyzed, [observations] enhance[s] our insight into how elections in Russia are manipulated” (Bader, 2013, p. 1). In this case, citizen participation was effective in detecting fraud incidents in polling stations on election day.

Hellström (2015) examined under what conditions access to ICT tools and citizen monitoring platforms can be useful for political participation in Uganda. Analysis showed that technologies and crowdsourcing platforms, like UgandaWatch, advanced efforts to increase citizen participation in electoral procedures. Similarly, Bock (2012) found georeferencing crowdsourced citizen-generated data in the 2008 Kenyan post-election violence created the potential to identify violence at specific locations and provide an early warning to citizens. In a similar vein, Trujillo et al. (2014) explored how technology helped mitigate election-related violence in the 2013 Kenya elections. They observed that Kenyan 2013 elections, PeaceTXT, Umati and Kenya Elections Hub used digital technologies and crowdsourcing citizen monitoring to detect and share threats of violence related to the electoral processes.

Shayo and Kersting (2017) analyzed the ability of trained crowdmonitors to generate information about mobilizing women, youth, and people with disabilities in the 2015 Tanzanian election. Analysis showed that technology usage and citizen monitoring generated pre-election information beyond that of traditional international election observation groups in generating pre-election information. In a similar vein, Shayo (2020) analyzed generated observation data on voter education and campaign rallies in the 2015 presidential and parliamentary election in Tanzania. Analysis from this period showed that civil society organizations deployed bounded citizen monitors through digital technologies to generate voter education programs and campaign rally data.

#### **4. Types of crowdsourcing citizen participation**

Crowdsourcing election monitoring can either be carried out through unbounded crowdsourcing, which is more informal and where participation is non-discriminatory; in principle, anyone is allowed to participate and share election data. Bounded crowdsourcing is a more systematic and organized method that recruits and trains volunteers, workers, or observers to undertake the monitoring exercise. Finally, passive crowdsourcing is a form of data mining, focusing on electoral process conduct from social networks or combining unbounded and bounded crowdsourcing (Hellström, 2015). These three types of crowdsourcing monitoring methods – bounded, open/unbounded, and passive – are used by non-governmental election monitoring organizations to engage ordinary citizens to observe and assess the quality of electoral processes (Hellström, 2015; Shayo, 2017). The non-governmental election monitoring organizations may engage all crowdsourcing types in their systems or may opt for a combination thereof, depending on the organization's capacity to handle and process the large volume of incoming election monitoring data from the citizen monitors.

### ***Bounded (closed / trained / trusted) crowdsourcing***

Bounded crowdsourcing involves citizen selection and training to participate in monitoring and generating electoral incidents, and usually involves the recruitment of a few citizens as “trusted” or “trained” monitors from the crowdsourcing partner network (Shayo, 2020). For example, in the 2014 Tanzanian local election, a group of bounded citizen monitors were recruited, trained, and engaged by TACCEO to generate election observation information through ICTs. To engage bounded crowd observers, TACCEO established communication channels to generate monitoring information, including through social media, short message services (SMS), and the Whatsapp instant messaging application. It is worth mentioning that bounded crowdsourcing as a method for recruiting a trusted network of citizen monitors is cheaper than conventional recruitment as participants are recommended by those within their already established network (Meier, 2009).

According to TACCEO (2015), in the 2014 local government elections, the crowdsourcer managed to train and deploy a total of 25 regional monitors in 25 regions of Tanzania’s Mainland. Regional monitors were also responsible for training district monitors before being deployed to their districts to keep an eye on the entire exercise. All 165 trained district citizen monitors were deployed in wards and polling stations. In this process of recruiting citizen monitors, TACCEO selected poll watchers familiar with the geographical areas, who were experienced and dedicated enough to work under minimal supervision. Bounded citizens monitors were also trained to use ICT systems like SMS syntax with specified report codes specifically designed for the 2014 local government elections.

### ***Unbounded (open / untrusted) crowdsourcing***

Unbounded crowdsourcing simply means that anonymous individuals can use digital technologies to monitor and share electoral incidents through established channels (Shayo, 2020). Unbounded crowdsourced information is treated as “untrusted” and requires authentication to determine the validity of the incidents before publicly sharing (Shayo, 2017). This type of crowdsourcing is also better known as untrained, undefined, open, or untrusted. Unbounded groups of citizens are invited to generate monitoring data through social media accounts, emails, web-based forms, SMS, and Whatsapp, but their election-related monitoring information is processed for verification by trained citizen data verifiers (Shayo, 2017). In the 2014 local government elections, unbounded crowd citizen monitors were engaged through an open call by TACCEO. They used digital tools, such as social media accounts – mostly Facebook and Twitter, SMS, and mobile shortcodes to share observed incidents.

### *Passive crowdsourcing*

Passive citizen monitors share election incidents on online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. However, passive monitors do not report incidents directly to the crowdsourcing initiators through the suggested channels. Instead, the group complains in their own online networks, especially about illicit acts in the electoral process (Shayo, 2017). In this process, digital volunteers trained by crowdsourcers can capture shared information by passive groups through data mining from online forums or social networking sites. Therefore, passive citizen monitors are indirectly engaged through digital ICTs – specifically social media platforms – by having their data mined by crowdsourcing systems. Here, the crowd-initiator’s role is to generate and verify information shared on the platforms and share that data with the larger public through other channels accessible by the intended group of voters.

## **5. Citizen participation in local government elections through technology**

Citizen participation in modern liberal democracy began in the period of transition from one-party politics to a multi-party electoral system. In this form of representative democracy, citizens can participate in voting. But with advancements in technology, citizens also are invited to participate in monitoring elections on crowdsourcing platforms (Shayo, 2020). Technology represents the “dawning of a new age for democracy, offering new opportunities for citizens to participate in local through to global public spheres and grassroots movements” (Smith, 2009, p.142). Elections provide frameworks for citizens to participate in decision-making and to choose individuals with specific qualities and qualifications to hold public office on their behalf. That is why Article 21(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states that: “everyone has the right to take part in the governance of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.”

The Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), for the first time in Tanzania’s democratic history, participated as an observer in the October 2009 local government elections.<sup>6</sup> This move was complemented by the organization’s efforts to enhance civic awareness and citizen participation in the country’s democratic process (TACCEO, 2015). In this, LHRC became the first Civil Society Organisation (CSO) in Tanzania to monitor local government elections. That spirit encouraged the LHRC and 16 other CSOs in 2010 to form the Tanzania Civil Societies Consortium on Election Observation (TACCEO). This consortium is a loose non-governmental, non-partisan

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<sup>6</sup> Interview with Anonymous B, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [6<sup>th</sup> October 2020].

and non-profit organization of 16 election-observing NGOs in Tanzania (TACCEO, 2015). The NGOs have since started initiatives to engage citizens in monitoring through ICTs.

We live in the digital age, where citizen participation in local government election monitoring through crowdsourcing and digital technology tools is vital for promoting inclusivity and integrity of democratic processes. Digital technology tools are central in the coordination of citizen participation in election monitoring and sharing positive and negative electoral incidents. Non-governmental election monitoring organizations can play a role in launching a medium to engage large groups of citizen observers and receiving and verifying incoming reports. These organizations are the main locus for citizen participants to make collective decisions and promote local election integrity (Shayo, 2020). Here crowdsourcing harnesses the power of today's communication technologies to liberate the potential that exists in a large group of people (Howe, 2008). The widespread nature of digital technologies, especially mobile phones in developing democracies, has contributed to crowdsourcing and facilitates citizen participation in election monitoring.<sup>7</sup>

### ***Technology and citizen participation in the 2014 local government elections***

In 2014, TACCEO introduced ICTs in monitoring local government elections through crowdsourcing for the first time in Tanzania. The strategy meant to provide space for citizens to use ICT devices – primarily their cell phones – to effectively engage in election monitoring throughout its cycle (TACCEO, 2015). The process of citizen participation in monitoring through ICTs was not only interactive but also cost-effective. The mobile phone penetration levels in Tanzania are substantial; 89% of Tanzanians have mobile phone subscriptions, and 49% have access to internet services (TCRA, 2020). Despite the urban/rural digital divide, this mobile phone penetration covers a lot of the country, providing Tanzanians the means to provide election feedback using ICTs.

ICTs assist in creating a more rapid reporting and early warning system and add citizen's voices to the electoral monitoring process (TACCEO, 2015). Crowdsourcing used multiple channels that apply open-source principles, such as SMS and social media networks, to easily gather information from a large group of people. The use of ICTs and crowdsourcing methods enables citizens to become part of the monitoring exercise to protect the integrity of their local elections. In the 2014 local election, ICTs were leveraged to bring together citizens, non-governmental election

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Anonymous D, academic [19<sup>th</sup> August 2020].

monitoring organizations, the media, and other partners into a truly citizen-oriented process of electoral cycle monitoring before, during, and after the election period.<sup>8</sup>

TACCEO considered the use of technology as a golden opportunity to ensure maximum public participation to provide effective monitoring at an affordable cost (TACCEO, 2015). The use of ICT devices ensured that citizen-generated election monitoring reports are promptly reported and responded to. ICTs were used as a mechanism to observing the election, with a central hub mounted at the TACCEO office in Dar es Salaam to which citizen observers could send messages regarding the local elections (TACCEO, 2015). In the 2014 local elections, social media networks were deployed to generate crowdsourced monitoring reports for the elections of Village, *Mtaa*, and Hamlet leaders. It is worth noting that, for the first time in Tanzania, local government election monitoring employed mobile, wireless, and web-based technologies to report electoral incidents.<sup>9</sup> Figure 1 is a presentation of the ICT hub during the 2014 local government election. Local election monitoring was done through 165 TACCEO monitors deployed in 165 local authorities, but the lack of sufficient funds and the geographical size of the constituencies limited the deployment of more observers (TACCEO, 2015).

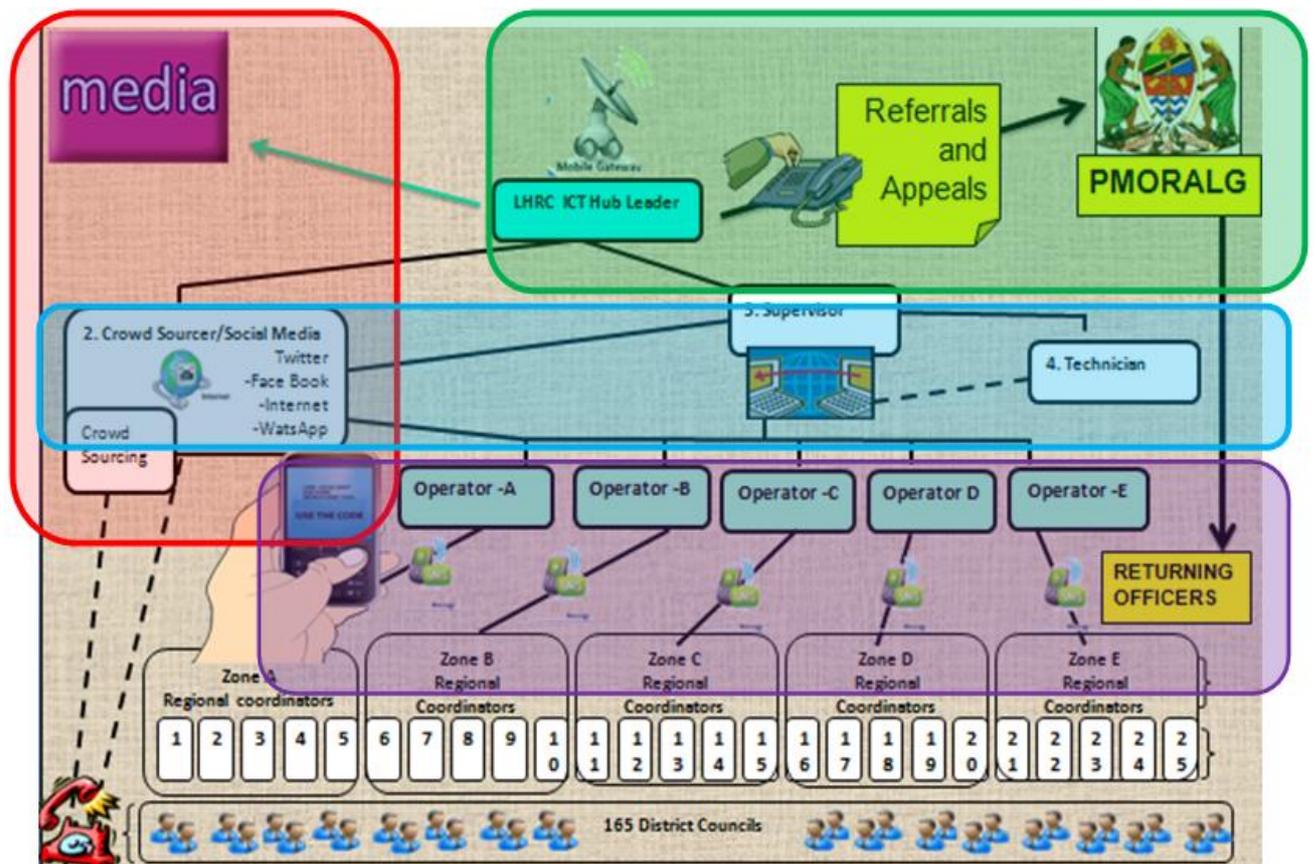
The selection of TACCEO's election observers was based on several factors including, familiarity with the geographical areas, election monitoring experience, educational background, and the ability to use digital tools and ICT systems that TACCEO designed for the 2014 local elections (TACCEO, 2015). In this process, there were 25 coordinators or field observers called "district observers." The role of the district observers was to inform the ICT administrators of what was going on the ground. The ICT hub was there to record, verify, and post information on social media pages for public consumption, while the coordinators ensured that all administrative and technical issues were properly handled (TACCEO, 2015).

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Anonymous B, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [6<sup>th</sup> October 2020].

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Anonymous B, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [6<sup>th</sup> October 2020].

Figure 1: TACCEO ICT hub in the 2014 local government elections



Source: TACCEO (2015, p. 32).

The hub was in operation for fourteen days and received anonymized data from the 25 regions of Tanzania’s Mainland. According to TACCEO (2015), the structure of the ICT hub included an operator or technical section that ensured all ICT devices and channels were working properly and created a solid backup of all information. Twenty-five zonal regional coordinators reported to the hub continuously with reports from monitors in the field and suggestions for action. Verification processes dealt with crowdsourced monitoring information, generated through social media networking sites – mostly Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp. TACCEO verified information through regional coordinators and communicated that information back to the public through various media channels (TACCEO, 2015). There was also an appeals and referrals section to ensure that crowdsourced information was communicated to the relevant authorities to sort out irregularities and challenges before sharing the generated data with the public.

## 6. Data and Methods

This paper collected data through semi-structured key informant interviews and document analysis, such as consultation of election observation reports and training manuals of citizen

monitors. Using a purposive approach, semi-structured key informant interviews were conducted with researchers and academic members at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), the University of Dodoma (UDOM), Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE), and Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE). These universities have Political Science departments, in which research on local governance and local democracy is conducted by researchers and academic members of the department. Non-governmental election monitoring organizations members like TACCEO were also interviewed. About 13 respondents were purposively selected for key informant interviews. For the respondent to be included in the list (see Table 1), they must meet at least one of the following criteria: i) have participated in monitoring local or national level elections; ii) published about local or national level elections; iii) were members of Non-Government Election Monitoring Organizations that participated in local or national level election monitoring.

**Table 1: List of key informant interviews**

Interviewee	Role	Method	Date
Anonymous A	Researcher	Phone	05.08.2020
Anonymous B	NGEMO <sup>10</sup> official	Face to face	06.10.2020
Anonymous C	Researcher	Face to face	14.08.2020
Anonymous D	Academic	Face to face	19.08.2020
Anonymous E	NGEMO official	Face to face	09.09.2020
Anonymous F	NGEMO official	Phone	10.09.2020
Anonymous G	Academic	Face to face	24.09.2020
Anonymous H	Researcher	Face to face	05.11.2020
Anonymous I	Academic	Phone	11.11.2020
Anonymous J	NGEMO official	Phone	07.11.2020
Anonymous K	NGEMO official	Phone	24.11.2020
Anonymous L	Researcher	Face to face	17.11.2020
Anonymous M	Academic	Face to face	19.11.2020

To explore the research objectives on crowdsourcing processes, typology, and challenges, interviews were conducted face-to-face and online in Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Arusha. These semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' permission, with requests for anonymity duly respected. Dar es Salaam and Dodoma were selected because UDSM, DUCE, TACCEO and UDOM offices are all in those cities. Arusha was selected because TACCEO's key partners and informants are located there.

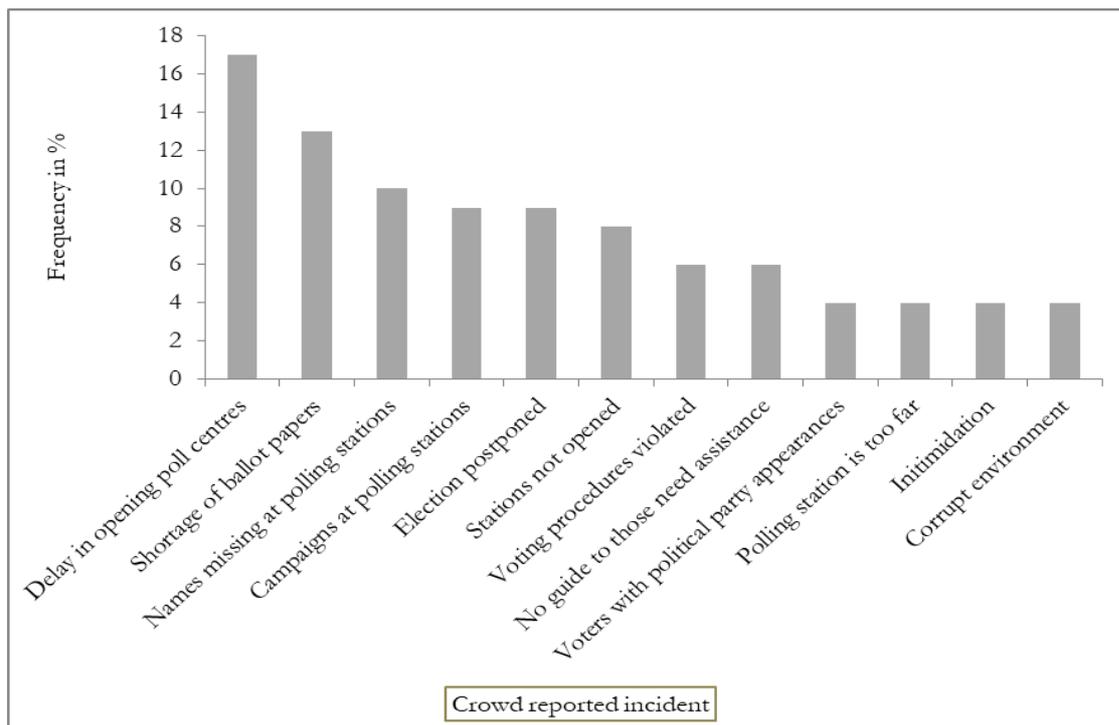
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<sup>10</sup> Means official from Non-Governmental Election Monitoring Organisation.

## 7. Social media and crowdsourced monitoring of local elections

Citizen-sourced election monitoring data are presented in this section, focusing on the most frequently reported incidents and the degree of citizen participation on Facebook. Through crowdsourced election monitoring in the 2014 local government elections, TACCEO was able to generate several negative reports through digital tools. Figure 2 presents the monitoring data reported most by the crowd observers through digital channels. The most frequently occurring events observed during the election period were delays in opening poll centers, shortages of ballot papers, and names missing at polling stations. Moreover, there was serious campaigning at polling stations, contrary to election regulations and voting violations at polling stations. Finally, social media data on Election Day showed some disappointment that the Ministry responsible for the local government elections had failed to organize and coordinate the election as required by the law (TACCEO, 2015).

**Figure 2: Most frequently reported incidents by the crowd**



Source: TACCEO (2015).

### *The use of social media in the 2014 local election*

ICTs have enabled digital citizens to amplify their voices and participate in election monitoring, primarily through social media. For example, the Social Media section on the TACCEO election

monitoring hub initiated a Facebook page titled “*Taarifa za Uchaguzi Tanzania*”<sup>11</sup> and the Twitter account “@Chaguzi Tanzania”<sup>12</sup> to promote citizen monitoring. These accounts on Facebook and Twitter, together with Whatsapp, were initiated to generate and share information during the election process. The TACCEO election monitoring hub also developed a special system for monitors to report what was observed in the field through SMS syntax, with specified reporting codes (TACCEO, 2015).

According to TACCEO (2015), social media communication was done in two ways: first, communication between the public and the ICT election hub. This type of communication was instigated to give and receive election information tips. The information received from the public was then communicated to trained TACCEO observers and authorities in the field for verification. Verified information was posted back on social media platforms to increase public knowledge and awareness of the ongoing election process. Second, social media was meant to be a communication tool between citizen observers in the field and the ICT hub. Citizen monitors used social media accounts to send videos and pictures, and their stories were then shared on Facebook and Twitter account for public consumption. It is reported that, up to December 15 2014, the Facebook page set for election observation had attracted about 682,142 people worldwide, and 12,751 Facebook users sent or received election reports (TACCEO, 2015).

The content shared on the social media pages were mainly pictures and videos of election incidents in the field. For example, pictures of a voting ballot left with a child under a tree and video taken in the Sumbawanga district where voters burnt down a voting poll station that happened to be an office for the Ward Executive Officer (TACCEO, 2015). In other incidents, citizen observers managed to capture a video interview in Dar es Salaam with a voter who was forbidden to vote because another person used his name to cast a vote (TACCEO 2015). This video was shared on Facebook, and users were able to interact with the content and increase their awareness of situations in voting places. Thus, social media, and Facebook in particular, was used to showcase evidence-based incidents in the local election processes.

In order to generate more observation data at the grassroots levels, the general public was considered an immediate source of information as they can collect information, but in most cases, they do not have the proper infrastructure to share it. Therefore, social media accounts were created like the Facebook page *Taarifa Za Uchaguzi Tanzania* (see Figure 3) to give their election observations greater a platform. The content communicated was strictly based on the election

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<sup>11</sup> Swahili for “Tanzania election observation reports.”

<sup>12</sup> Swahili for “Tanzania elections.”

events and was divided into three categories: campaign period, voting or election period, and post-election period (TACCEO, 2015).

During the pre-election period, the public could send and receive information on the campaign in their local areas. Based on the videos and pictures generated, analysis showed a new type of election campaign – mobile campaigning. Campaigners were seen going door-to-door to mobilize people to vote for them. The citizen observers showed women, men, and children to have taken an active part in the mobile campaign process. However, reports generated through social media platforms show concern about the way these campaigns were conducted. Most mobile campaigning was observed after the normal campaign time had concluded and occurred without proper authority supervision. Children were also involved in the campaigns (TACCEO, 2015).

**Figure 3: Facebook page created for election monitoring reports**

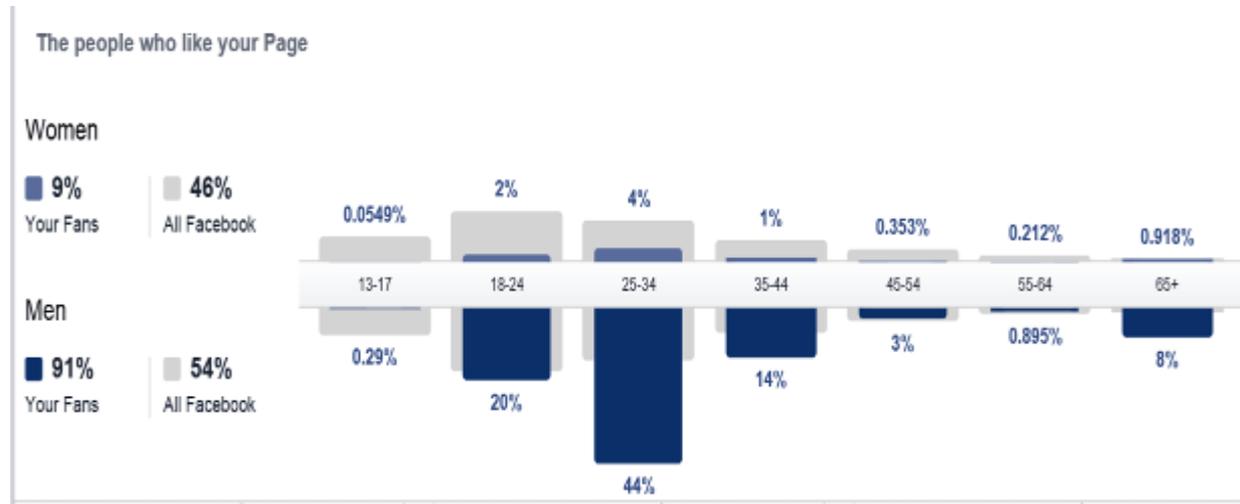


Source: TACCEO (2015, p. 36).

According to TACCEO (2015), the Facebook page was used to assess the coverage and outreach of the election content from and to the public (see Figure 4). About 12,751 Facebook users used this page; 9% were women, while 91% were men. This data shows that women participated less in election monitoring and generating information through ICTs. For both women and men, the most engaged age bracket was between 25 -34. In this group, male engagement was 44%, and female engagement was 4%. The 13-17 age group was the least engaged. However, it can be argued

that they are not potential voters, as the law requires voters to be 18 years and older to qualify for registration and voting.

**Figure 4: Citizen participation on the Facebook page**



Source: TACCEO (2015, p. 43).

## 8. Challenges of citizen participation in monitoring through crowdsourcing

The key informant interviews and document reviews revealed several challenges related to crowdsourced participation in local election monitoring. These challenges include: the digital divide and lack of motivation to participate, communication costs and poor connections, poor preparation and planning for crowdsourced election monitoring, as well as political parties, election management organizations, and the question of trust.

### *Digital divide and lack of motivation to participate*

The degree of internet use, mobile phone network coverage, and internet/phone subscriptions can predict the likelihood that a citizen will participate in crowdsourced election monitoring. The question of network accessibility and internet connectivity, as well as the knowledge of how to use the technology itself, are the most critical issues facing crowdsourced election monitoring programs (Ye & Yang, 2020). In Tanzania, with many people living in rural areas, the digital divide is one of the key challenges inhibiting citizen participation in election monitoring through crowdsourcing methods (Sodeyeka, 2012). The digital divide was also one of the respondents' greatest concerns. As one key informant argued, one of the major limitations is that many people

still think mobile phones are only meant for calling relatives and friends.<sup>13</sup> Even SMS is still considered only of use when one does not have enough credit to call.<sup>14</sup>

There are challenges to citizen participation in crowdsourced election monitoring in both mastery and social perceptions of technology (Iwuoha, 2018). Technology use requires motivation. Subscribing or owning an internet supporting mobile phone does not automatically mean it will be used. Most probably, as the respondent above noted, people will still limit the use of their mobile phone to basic usage – just for calling. Here, another respondent testimony notes how technology is used depends on people’s motivation to actively participate in election monitoring. This respondent argues that:

What I see is not the problem of the technology, but rather the peoples’ lack of interests in using the technology available to enhance their political activism. In addition, given the number of people living in the rural areas, such participation could be considered as a form of luxury, something that not many rural people may have time to enjoy. In that respect, technology deployment such as the use of mobile phones in elections may not end up being a very good and thoughtful decision as technology can only simplify things but not initiate. Because of this, the use of the very gadgets in political mobilization is not reliant on the utility of technology but rather on whether one is interested in participation. Therefore, I think there is a need for raising civic awareness first before the expectation that technology can change things.<sup>15</sup>

The question of participation motivation emanates from the citizens’ limited civic literacy in terms of understanding their responsibilities beyond voting (Aitamurto, 2012). Civic education is not only imperative to election monitoring participation, but also to the broader context of active participation in democratic processes. The nature and degree of people’s political apathy and their tendencies towards the apolitical may hinder citizen participation. The trend for suppressing opposition parties decreased people’s enthusiasm for participating in electoral processes, as they found the space-constrained and were unsure if their vote would be respected (Collord, 2021; Cheeseman et al., 2021). Some voters decided to abstain from electoral participation because of protests and arrests by the police (Collord, 2021). Mismanagement of the electoral process also manifested in the Tanzanian local government elections. As a result, in 2014, the ruling party

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Anonymous A, researcher [5<sup>th</sup> August 2020].

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Anonymous H, researcher [5<sup>th</sup> November 2020].

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Anonymous L, researcher [17<sup>th</sup> November 2020].

*Chama Cha Mapinduzi* won three-quarters of the seats but won 99% of seats in 2019 (Africa news, 2019).

The United Nations policy brief observed that:

...individuals who engaged in face-to-face civic education were significantly more participatory at the local level, more knowledgeable about politics, more aware of how to defend their rights, and more informed about constitutional issues and the desirability of public involvement in the constitutional review process (UNU–WIDER, 2014).

This hints at the imperative of civic education as the basis for citizens' active participation in politics, of which election monitoring is part. If people are motivated and know the role of elections in democratic governance, it would make it easier for them to utilize the available technology to protect their votes.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, crowdsourcing methods have the ability to go beyond election monitoring to ensure and control other issues related to transparency and accountability (Bader, 2013).

### ***Communication costs and poor connection***

Connected to the digital divide is the question of communication cost, largely caused by the lack of reliable and affordable internet. These two issues make it hard for some citizens to participate in crowdsourced election monitoring in local elections. One of the respondents<sup>17</sup> reported that:

Assume that I am not wealthy, so when I buy a weekly package consisting of some minutes and messages, I cannot just use them for something like politics since I will get nothing in return. So, for me, once I cast a vote, I am through; things of election monitoring are not my responsibilities. Therefore, if non-governmental election monitoring organizations really want ordinary citizens to participate in local election monitoring processes, why do they not give them airtime to do so or just create a number for tall free services to generate the reports? To be frank, ordinary citizens cannot use the little package for political matters, which does not give me any material return.

As reported in other sectors (Mfaume, 2019), the cost of internet bundles and other packages inhibits free participation. Once people become cautious of communication costs, it is

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Anonymous L, researcher [17<sup>th</sup> November 2020].

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Anonymous I, academic [11<sup>th</sup> November 2020].

understandable that it can influence their communication behaviours – i.e., not using available airtime in fear of running out. Nevertheless, the cost of communication is linked to the larger problem of poor infrastructure. Most mobile phone signals in Tanzania still depend on satellite connections through a series of transmission towers, which contributes to the high cost compared to connections provided by broadband cable. Furthermore, although Tanzania's cost per gigabyte is still the lowest in the East African region at US\$ 0.73 – compared to \$ 1.02, 1.48, 1.62 and 2.12 in Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, respectively (Statista, 2020) – the cost is still higher if compared to the individual income ratio. The cost is still not affordable to many, especially in rural areas where poverty levels are high (World Bank, 2020). In Tanzania, statistics from the World Bank show 49.4% of people live on less than \$1.90 per day (World Bank, 2017)<sup>18</sup>.

The view on the issues of poor connection was hinted at by a respondent<sup>19</sup> who noted:

When it comes to costs of communication, I think there two challenges: first price of mobile handsets, and second means of internet or mobile network connection. With regard to the first challenge, the cost of buying a mobile handset that can support participation in the platforms for elections monitoring information is expensive. As we might be aware, the phone which supports bulk messaging is not that cheap, and hence though the number of mobile subscribers has increased, it is not in itself equal to using the internet as the most preferred means of crowdsourcing methods. Second emanates from the poor infrastructure since most of the internet providers still depend on transmission towers instead of using the already laid the optical fibre network connecting all the regions and most districts in Tanzania, which would have reduced the cost of the internet access. These two makes it hard for the internet provision in terms of having reliable connection and affordable cost.

Citizen participation through crowdsourcing largely depends on having a reliable network to allow instant communication for information sending, receiving, and verification. Unfortunately, limited network coverage, especially in the most rural areas, hinders citizen participation in election monitoring and information sharing. And as the respondent above noted, one wonders why it is taking so much time for mobile internet network and connection providers to use the existing optical fibre cables. This would have done two things at once: improve internet connectivity and reduce the cost. However, because of the cost, very few citizens are willing to use their available credits SMS services to participate, which challenged the effectiveness of crowdsourcing in the

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<sup>18</sup> See <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY?locations=TZ> [accessed 25 April 2021].

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Anonymous C, researcher [14<sup>th</sup> August 2020].

local elections. Also, election monitoring ought to find out how to use SMS as a more reliable communication. It is readily available to almost anyone with a basic mobile phone and avoids using social media networks that may not be available to many citizens.

### ***Poor preparation and planning for crowdsourcing election monitoring***

Another challenge concerns the election monitoring organizations and how they involve citizens in planning, training, and education or advocacy. Many deploy election-monitoring personnel on-sites, but sometimes there are not well-equipped with adequate information about their role. As one respondent<sup>20</sup> put it:

We see people who call themselves election monitors. Even others used to send messages encouraging ordinary citizens to give them information about observed incidences in the conduct of elections in their localities. The question is: how can someone just begin sending messages about elections relates issues to a number that s/he not sure who is the owner? Why do they need these monitoring reports? How can the sender be assured if they will not twist the information sent to them? How about the privacy issue of the sender? In fact, most of these messages are ignored.

This indicates a lack of understanding of the importance of election monitoring and why citizens should take part in ensuring elections are conducted as per set laws and standards. Voters think that the duty is just to vote (Fieldhouse et al. 2020) because citizens associate voting in elections with public services and may be rewarded with collective goods (Rosenzweig, n.d.). This may be the result of a lack of voting education, as well as poor coordination between election management bodies. Citizens seem unaware of the necessity of election monitoring to promote election integrity. As Shayo and Kersting (2017) argue, in general, there seems to have been no proper coordination among key stakeholders about voter education and the role of citizens in monitoring the integrity of elections. It looks as if, in the 2014 local elections, ordinary citizens were ambushed with little preparation for crowdsourcing monitoring. It was, therefore, difficult for them to accept their roles and act accordingly.<sup>21</sup> Also, it seems they hardly see how such activities may contribute towards making elections more transparent and credible.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, the reasons behind the use of crowdsourcing for election monitoring ICTs should be very clear. As Sumner et al. (2020) warned, collecting data for election monitoring through

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Anonymous G, academic [24<sup>th</sup> September 2020].

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Anonymous E, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [9<sup>th</sup> September 2020].

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Anonymous M, academic [19<sup>th</sup> November 2020].

crowdsourcing should not happen because it is cheap but rather because it is the most effective tool for monitoring elections. To overcome this, election monitoring organizations must consider proper planning. As Seltzer and Mahmoudi (2013) argue, this planning need to involve the participants themselves to build their confidence and familiarity with the technology deployed. All these points need to be addressed when planning to use crowdsourcing methods for election monitoring.

In addition, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Knight Foundation (2010) offer some recommendations as to the next steps for citizen participation in election monitoring through crowdsourcing methods. These recommendations include:

- Plan early: One resounding challenge is aiming to achieve many objectives in such a short time. Planning early, from 6 to 12 months prior to an election, is strongly and widely recommended.
- Build effective partnerships: Defining and agreeing on roles, responsibilities, and expectations will help partners implement a successful project.
- Develop strategies (for example, feedback to action, security, and privacy) that should aim to: (i) improve the filtering and verifying large volumes of information; (ii) strengthen feedback loops and actions by building an urgent response team; (iii) provide any necessary security and privacy plans for the project and its users.
- Use simulation exercises to identify obstacles, test new technology, and improve workflows and communication approaches.

### ***Political parties, election management bodies and the question of trust***

Political parties encourage citizens to hover around the voting station within the distance allowed by laws. Conversely, electoral management bodies call for citizens to avoid breaching the laws and, if possible, to return home after casting their votes. This approach creates confusion for citizens. Confusion and lack of trust between these two stakeholders can inhibit citizens' participation in election monitoring. As one of the respondents<sup>23</sup> said:

One of the things that reduce citizens' readiness to participate in online election monitoring emanates from what politicians tell them. In campaigns and internal party elections organizations, some of the parties urge their supporters to guard the votes at the voting station until the results are officially declared by the relevant authorities.

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Anonymous K, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [24<sup>th</sup> October 2020].

This is different from what most election management bodies encourage and advocate. This, as I see, demonstrates how political parties do not trust what election bodies do and also how monitors do not support what political parties advocate as part of monitoring in order to make sure their votes are safe and not rigged. This division confuses many citizens who find themselves unclear of which way to go in terms of election monitoring and what information should share with political parties and election monitoring organization.

This impedes election monitoring organizations, particularly in their initiative to engage citizen groups in generating observation data. Some scholars have posited the work of election monitoring organizations contribute to increased election credibility (Bush & Prather, 2017). But the consequence is citizen mistrust, leading to citizens refraining from participating in any activity related to election monitoring.<sup>24</sup> At times, the election monitoring organizations are labeled as puppets of the ruling party, as reported by an election monitoring representative.<sup>25</sup>

Lack of trust, especially among politicians over what election monitoring organizations do, affect and reduce the motivation of citizen in sharing what they see related to elections. As a result, there are sometimes elections monitors who get false information whose origin is from a particular candidate who, after seeing that s/he has no possibility of winning or when one wants to safeguard himself or herself. They sometimes create fake information about other candidates or political parties in order to draw attention to election monitoring organizations to be on their guard.

In this context, ordinary citizens need to be handled with care. A conflict of interests among political parties, electoral management organizations, politicians, and individual election monitors is detrimental to citizens' motivation to participate in politics, elections, and especially election monitoring. When political parties and election monitors do not trust each other, it sends a bad signal, encouraging citizen apathy and ultimately leading to people doing the bare minimum – voting – or withdrawing from political participation altogether.<sup>26</sup> The consequence is the decline of election integrity, furthering citizens' lack of political trust (Mauk, 2020). This is detrimental, not only to election monitoring processes but to the wellbeing of democracy as a whole. As has been argued elsewhere (Kavakli & Kuhn, 2020), there is a need for election monitoring bodies to establish cordial relationships with political parties and election management authorities if they

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<sup>24</sup> Interview with Anonymous B, academic [5<sup>th</sup> August 2020].

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Anonymous J, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [7<sup>th</sup> October 2020].

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Anonymous B, academic [5<sup>th</sup> August 2020]

want to be legitimate and be trusted. Failure to this will affect their present and future work, as they will lack citizen support. Without political trust, the whole question of good governance and accountability will suffer.

## **9. Opportunities for citizen participation in crowdsourcing**

Regardless of the challenges that crowdsourcing faces, there are opportunities available to deploy it as one of the most appropriate, accessible, and affordable methods for election monitoring. Election monitoring agencies should seize available opportunities by devising more attractive campaigns and systems to allow for easy instant communication and reporting. This is likely to increase election monitoring credibility while meeting other consequential benefits, including increased transparency and reduced corruption. Recalling the crowdsourcing experience, one informant<sup>27</sup> was of the view that:

Although there are a number of challenges associated with the use of crowdsourcing in election monitoring activities, still there are more opportunities for this method and tool for election monitoring. There has been an increase in the number of mobile users, expansion of mobile network coverage and an increase in the degree of mobile phone services uptake in rural and urban areas. All these make the proper utilization of mobile technology in election monitoring a rich and untapped resource to reduce cost and provide information on election in real-time.

Mobile phone users are currently transitioning from feature phones to smartphones that provide new and more efficient information sharing platforms at affordable rates (Shayo, 2020). There is now a paradigm shift from using mobile phones to mobile social media applications. Mobile users now use more data to chat, internet call, and share pictures and videos on social media and microblogging platforms. A lot of new digital communication tools are emerging and becoming the preferred communication options – surpassing phone calling and short message services (Shayo, 2017). Shayo (2017, p. 305) reported that:

Now short message services are sometimes more expensive than buying an internet data bundle as long as users have smartphones, laptops, or tablets. It is easier to maintain a smartphone at a lower cost than normal mobile phones with no access to the internet. The costs of buying mobile internet data which can be used for communicating and chatting information with a lot of messages and exchange of

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Anonymous F, non-governmental election monitoring organisation official [10<sup>th</sup> September 2020]

information, as well as pictures is relatively cheaper than buying a bundle of normal SMS where the sender and recipients may not share the common channel and cost of communication. With smartphones, people can make even internet calls with groups of people using applications such as Facebook Messenger, Whatsapp, Skype or Google Hangouts and even sharing texts information and pictures. But mobile SMS is only limited to texts and calls.

This opportunity needs to be utilized. As the government continues with its rural electrification implementation, the challenge of mobile phone charging will be soon forgotten. What needs to be done now is for election monitoring organizations to focus on the most accessible aspects of mobile phones and ensure citizens are aware of how the technology can be used (Schuler, 2008). One way to tap into this resource is by ensuring the numbers used are toll-free so that anyone, even those who have no credit or messages in their mobile handset, may easily share electoral incidents with the relevant crowdsourcing organizations.

Local government elections, as the name suggests, entail elections at the grassroots level. Crowdsourcing provides another level of access to active political and democratic processes (Sasseti, 2019). However, this form of participation also has to reflect the nature of elections being monitored. To enhance citizen participation, crowdsourcing activities have to be somehow decentralized, allowing for more people on the ground in various locations for ease of information verification and better reporting.

Citizen participation in local election monitoring also has the opportunity to increase election credibility, information reliability, real-time and space reporting, and enhance transparency (Bush & Prather, 2017; Hellström, 2015). These are indispensable values in any democratic society, which all come cheaper with technology. The citizens, election management authorities, election monitoring organizations, and political parties all should work together to achieve this, as it serves the interests of each stakeholder. Crowdsourcing provides one of the most affordable means to monitor elections, coupling reduced cost with greater precision and immediate reporting, not things within the ambit of traditional election monitoring methods. It also provides an expanded avenue for citizen engagement in the electoral process, which may not be available in other forms of election monitoring.

Therefore, the idea behind crowdsourcing monitoring is the timely detection and near real-time provision of electoral incident information and response (Bader, 2013). Omnipresent digital ICTs and crowdsourcing methods have crucial importance to various global changes. ICTs have had a

great impact on political changes in Tanzania. This is because elections are usually rigged, the opposition is often repressed, freedom of expression is restricted, citizens are suppressed, and human rights are violated (Madar, 2017). Citizen participation through digital tools can be used to expose rigging and election irregularities on online platforms through social media networking sites, texting, and open-source platforms (Shayo, 2017). Though there is still the challenge of the internet being shut down during campaigning and voting processes, the widespread use of and access to ICTs can open up more opportunities and innovative spaces for electoral stakeholders to participate, observe, detect, and generate election monitoring information.

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