

Strengthening Tanzania’s subnational data ecosystem

As authority over planning and implementation of development efforts transitions to local governments, subnational actors build their data literacy to achieve their objectives.

BACKGROUND

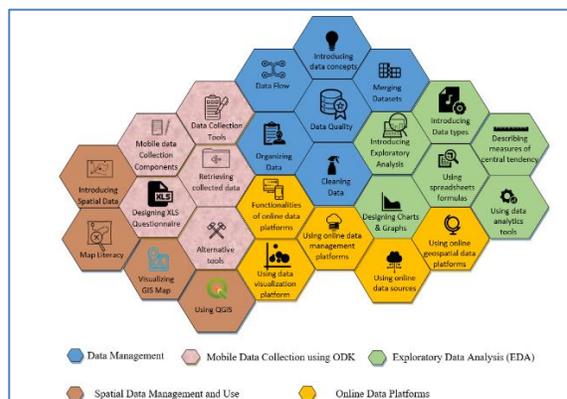
Tanzania established its local government authorities (LGAs), and the President’s Office for Regional and Local Governments (PO-RALG) which supports them, to improve the provision of quality life and services to the community, and to bring planning and implementation of development efforts close to the people they serve.

Increasingly, the effectiveness of these LGAs depends on how well they can use data for evidence-based decision making. When LGAs are resourced with the skills, tools, and networks they need to collect, manage, and share data—and when they value that information enough to inform their decisions—they are better equipped to address community problems.

PROBLEM

Despite the importance of using evidence to inform decisions, data literacy and familiarity at the LGA level are low, resulting in missed opportunities, delayed reporting, and poor-quality data. Local officials and CSOs told us:

- *“When I asked about certain data to my employees, they always take time to respond and if you look carefully sometimes those data differ every time I asked even though they are of the same period.”* –Kyela Executive Director
- *“It is unfortunate: When my boss asked me about data, I was not sure what he really meant.”* –Fisheries officer of Local Kyela Local Government
- *“It takes me more than two weeks to clean students’ data and update the system.”* Education officers, Mbeya City and Kyela District Offices
- *“We just collect the data and send them to our donor who worked on it. We don’t do anything with it.”* M&E officer at KIWOHEDE, a women’s health organization.



A new curriculum, developed with the dLab, includes training on data collection and location data tools.

SOLUTION

As authority over planning and implementation of development efforts transitions to local governments, subnational actors build their data literacy to achieve their objectives. Data Zetu partnered with the Tanzania Data Lab ([dLab](#)) to design and implement data management training with LGA officials and stakeholders in three districts across Tanzania. Data Zetu also encouraged these trainees to continue sharing their data use products over Whatsapp, cultivating a network of subnational data ambassadors that includes local government officials.

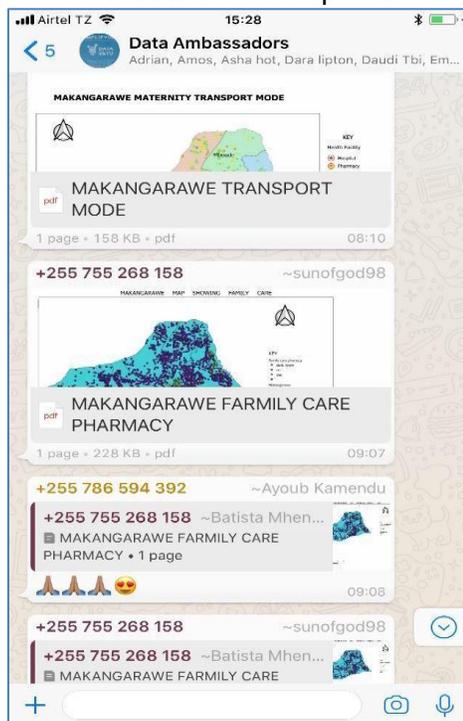
PROCESS

Data Zetu gathered details about the skills gap that exists at the LGA level through its engagements throughout 2017 and 2018. This information informed the dLab’s subnational data training curriculum, which was based off of the dLab’s existing curriculum but customized together with Data Zetu’s Data Fellows. The curriculum is published openly [here](#).

This curriculum was delivered to over 100 people—74% of which were local government employees—over two phases in each of Data Zetu’s three priority districts (Kyela, Temeke and Mbeya City).

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- *Improved efficiency within local governments.* As Theckla, an education officer with Kyela District Council responsible for education statistics and logistics, told us: “I used to take almost two weeks to clean and merge different schools’ data before I upload in the main system. **Now I can do that in two days—it is amazing.**”
- *Knock-on effects of data literacy training.* 86% of participants shared skills and knowledge gained from the training to 717 people (an average of **9 people per participant**).
- *Network of local government employees discussing data use.* Participants continue to engage with each other over a Whatsapp group of over 150 people. The trainers are also in the group to encourage the discussion and prompt practice; for example, when challenged to produce a map using location data about maternal health issues produced by Data Zetu, 75% of participants were able to do so. To date, over 600 on-topic messages have been shared on this Whatsapp group.
- *Unplanned LGA meetups.* Kyela’s local government members have held physical meetings among themselves—without Data Zetu’s support—just to continue learn and share experience and successes regarding data use among themselves.



A Whatsapp group hosts a thriving discussion among trainees—including local government officials—where they showcase their data products.

KEY COLLABORATORS

