AFRICAN CENTRE FOR MEDIA EXCELLENCE

CHARLES STEWART MOTT FOUNDATION

BASELINE REPORT ON MEDIA COVERAGE OF SOLAR ENERGY AND PRODUCTIVE USE OF SOLAR ENERGY IN AGRICULTURE IN EAST AFRICA

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgment ii
Introduction 1
Executive Summary 2
Background 3
Purpose and objective of the research 4
Specific objectives 4
Research questions 4
Methodology 5
Scope of the study 5
Methods of data collection 5
Findings on Solar Energy Coverage 7
Volume 7
Prominence of stories 10
Type of stories used in the coverage 11
Reporting format 12
The focus of solar energy stories 13
Findings on Coverage of Solar Energy Use in Agriculture 14
What themes do the stories address? 14
Productive use solutions addressed in the stories 15
Origin of the stories 16
Major actor/newsmaker in the story 17
Sourcing 18
Human sources in the stories 18
Gender of sources 19
Non-human sources 20
Number of sources per story 20
Conclusion 21
Recommendations 22

Acknowledgment

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We also recognise the contributions of other ACME staff, such as Elijah Wanyama Mangeni and Yusuf Ziraba.

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We appreciate the reporters and editors who participated in the key informant interviews.

Introduction

This report examines East African news media coverage of solar energy and the productive use of solar energy (PUSE) in agriculture, focusing on one of the leading daily newspapers and one television station in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.

The study explores the attention and the nature of coverage these newspapers and television stations paid to solar energy and the productive use of solar energy in agriculture from 1 January to 31 December 2023. The newspapers studied were *Daily Nation, Mwananchi,* and *New Vision,* while the television stations were *Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), and Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC).*

The study relied mainly on quantitative content analysis to explore the number of stories on solar energy and the productive use of solar energy services, the types of articles published, the reporting formats employed, the themes and productive use solutions in the coverage, and the voices in the stories.

The study also relies on responses from key informant interviews with reporters and editors to provide context and insights into the quantitative findings.

In June 2023, with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, ACME started implementing a project titled "Improving Strategic Communications and Public Engagement on Off-Grid Renewable Energy Solutions in East Africa". As part of the project, this baseline study was conducted to assess how the media report on solar energy issues to provide evidence that can inform interventions intended to improve media practitioners' coverage of productive use of solar energy.

Executive Summary

The study examines the coverage of solar energy in East African news media, specifically focusing on 63 stories from a leading daily newspaper and television station in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania from January to December 2023.

Reporters and editors have reported limited coverage of solar energy due to various factors, including:

- Lack of knowledge
- Budget constraints
- Market unattractiveness of solar energy stories
- Lack of knowledge among farmers, solar technology suppliers, and stakeholders, and
- Lack of reporters specialising in solar energy coverage.

The study found that solar energy stories were rarely featured on the front page of three publications over the 12 months monitored. Most stories in the three studied publications appeared on pages beyond page 5.

News stories dominated coverage of solar energy across the three countries, accounting for 8 out of every ten solar-related stories in newspapers and television. Conventional news reporting (he-said-she-said) made up most of the coverage.

Solar energy use in agriculture (Productive Use of Solar Energy in agriculture)

Findings reveal that out of the total coverage, 30 stories (representing 47.6%) focused on solar energy use in agriculture. The highest number out of these 30 stories addressed issues of financing off-grid solar solutions and community impact.

Stories on solar entrepreneurship and innovation came second, followed by PUSE stakeholder coordination and ecosystem support.

Majority of stories were about solar energy for irrigation, accounting for seven out of every 10 stories on solar energy use in agriculture.

Over nine out of 10 solar energy stories focusing on agriculture originated from events. The events that triggered the coverage included CSO/NGO activities, company events, and government activities.

The government, investors, and consumers were the most prominent newsmakers in solar energy stories focusing on agriculture, followed by CSOs/NGOs.

Solar energy consumers (25%), civil servants (21.4%), and CSO/NGO representatives (17.9%) were the most frequent sources.

Men dominated coverage, while women's voices were sidelined.

Introduction

Off-grid renewable energy[1] systems are decentralised energy solutions that generate electricity from renewable sources like solar, wind, biomass, and hydro. They are produced and consumed locally without relying on a centralised grid. These systems are often used in rural or isolated areas for reliable and sustainable electricity access.

These systems have gained traction as a promising pathway to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 7 of universal access to affordable and reliable energy.

From 2019 to 2022, 70 million more people worldwide gained access to electricity through off-grid solar power, bringing the global total of people accessing energy through off-grid solar solutions to 490 million,[2] Besides being cheaper, off-grid solar technologies are also good for both the environment and the climate.

Productive use of solar energy (PUSE) is the utilisation of solar energy for income generation in formal and informal enterprises for the production of goods or provision of services for job creation, improved livelihoods, food security and economic empowerment.[3] Specifically, PUSE offers enormous opportunities to address climate change and increase energy access.

In Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, an estimated 82 million residents lacked reliable electricity by 2018.[4] Here, PUSE holds the most potential in the agriculture sector, which employs 70% of East Africa's population and smallholder farmers account for 75% of the productivity.[5]

PUSE applications, which cut across the different value chains of the agriculture sector, can increase primary production and post-harvest processing. At the same time, solar-powered storage can unlock higher yields and aggregation opportunities, increase incomes, cut losses, and improve climate resilience.

However, despite the enormous benefits of solar energy services, for example, in agriculture, public understanding of, engagement with, and adoption of these services are low. Inadequate information and poor and inconsistent messaging undermine interest in and consumption of solar energy services.

The media's role is crucial in advancing solar energy by raising awareness, shaping public opinion, influencing policy decisions, and facilitating public engagement.

Lyytimäki J. et al. (2018) state that media coverage of energy is essential because it can inform and help energy producers to address the needs of consumers and also because it can influence consumption patterns, for example, by increasing consumer awareness of available choices[6].

Ochieng, E.A. (2019), in her study on print media coverage of geothermal energy in Kenya, found that geothermal energy stories attracted less coverage in newspapers and were given limited prominence.[7]

ACME's 2020 research report on Ugandan media coverage of public affairs[8] found that 'energy' as a topic (including all forms, such as hydro, solar, biomass, etc.) received just 1.3% of total coverage in newspapers and 0.8% on television.

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[1] The International Energy Agency (IEA) defines renewable energy resources as those "derived from natural processes" and "replenished at a faster rate than they are consumed".

[2] Lighting Global et al, Off-Grid Solar Market Trends Report 2022: State of the Sector. Washington, DC: World Bank. Accessed August 5, 2023. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099235110062231022/pdf/P175150063801e0860928f00e7131b132de.pdf

[3] https://www.gogla.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Gogla_PURE-Roadmap-Report-Uganda.pdf

[4] Lecaros et al, "For the Millions of East Africans Who Need Electricity Most, Data Shows Renewable Energy Is a Viable – and Affordable – Solution 2019." World Resources Institute, September 4, 2019. Accessed August 4, 2023.https://www.wri.org/insights/millions-east-africans-who-need-electricity-most-data-shows-renewable-energy-viable-and

[5] https://www.creec.or.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Agrivoltaics2020_conference_paper_Randle-Boggis.pdf

[6] Lyytimäki, J. et al. (2018): Energy transition looming behind the headlines? Newspaper coverage of biogas production in Finland

[7] Ochieng, E.A (2019): Print Media Coverage of Geothermal Energy in Kenya- a Case of the Nation and the Standard Newspapers.

[8] https://acme-ug.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-Annual-Report-on-Coverage-of-Covid-19-and-Other-Public-Affairs-1.pdf

Purpose and objective of the research

The main objective of this research is to assess how the media report on solar energy issues, providing evidence that can inform interventions intended to improve media practitioners' coverage of productive use of solar energy.

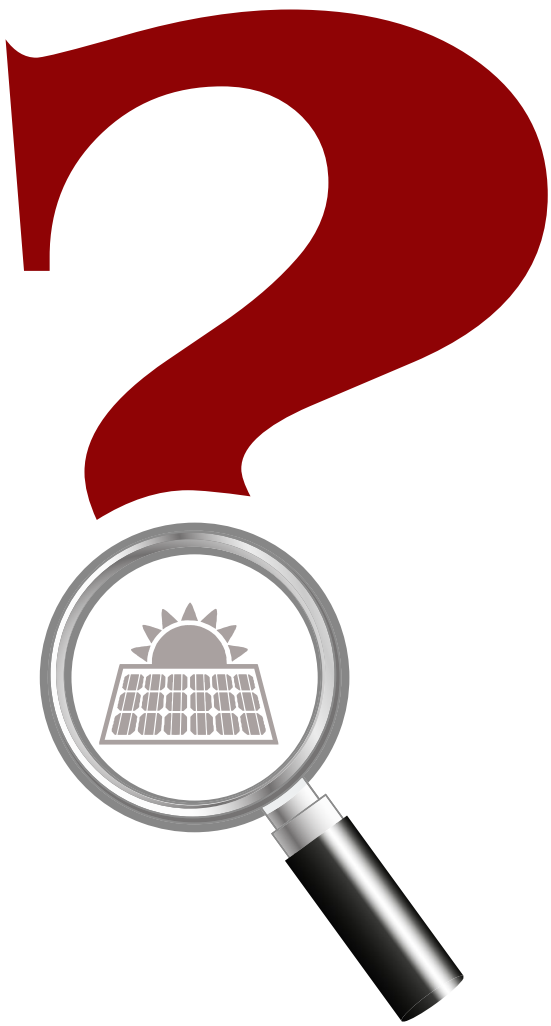
Specific objectives

1. To gather empirical evidence of the quantity, quality and nature of solar energy and productive use of solar energy coverage by the East African media.
2. To explore what media coverage reveals about the broader solar energy and productive use of solar energy discourse in East Africa.
3. To use the data analysed to offer recommendations on how the productive use of solar energy can be improved in quantity and quality.

Research questions

The results of this report were based on the following research questions.

1. What was the volume or quantity of stories on solar energy and PUSE in agriculture?
2. What was the prominence of solar energy stories? What was the frequency of solar energy stories on newspaper front pages? How were solar energy stories placed on other pages?
3. What types of stories were used to tell the solar energy story?
4. What reporting formats were employed to cover solar energy?
5. What was the origin of the stories on PUSE in agriculture?
6. What themes did stories about PUSE in agriculture focus on?
7. How was human sourcing used to cover PUSE in agriculture?
8. Which voices (categories of human sources and their gender) dominated the coverage of PUSE in agriculture?
9. What explains the nature of coverage?



Methodology

Scope of the study

The study focused on East African newspapers and television coverage of solar energy and the productive use of solar energy in agriculture. The study was designed to cover all articles related to solar energy published in Daily Nation, Mwananchi, and New Vision from 1 January to 31 December 2023. These included all stories that fell under news and current affairs, commentary/opinion, features and long-form, and letters. A total of 29 newspaper articles were analysed. Another 34 stories from the three television stations, namely KBC, TBC, and UBC, were analysed along the exact dimensions.

Daily Nation, Mwananchi, and New Vision were selected because they are East Africa's major dailies and are considered to have significant influence on the national conversation in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, respectively.

The Daily Nation was chosen because it is the most widely read local newspaper in Kenya according to a 2020 Status of the Media survey report by the Media Council of Kenya[9]. The New Vision was selected in Uganda because, according to South African Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) reports, it is the most widely circulating English-language newspaper in Uganda, selling 16,573 copies daily.

In Tanzania, Mwananchi was chosen because, according to the Media Ownership Monitor, the Tanzania print market is concentrated around Mwananchi Communication Ltd, which is by far the most dominant market player in terms of readership in the country.[10].

KBC, TBC, and UBC were selected for television because they are national broadcasters in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, respectively. They are expected to offer comprehensive news and diversity programming without paying as much attention to profit as private television stations.

Methods of data collection

The study relied mainly on quantitative content analysis of solar energy coverage by the selected publications and television stations.

Content analysis

We analysed manifest content. "Manifest content refers to what is explicitly stated and draws on the objective and replicable qualities of quantitative methods" (Hilton and Hunt (2010).[11] However, we qualitatively analysed latent content where appropriate and necessary.[12]

Content analysis was used to get an all-around sense of the nature of coverage in quantity and quality. Stories were coded and analysed based on a detailed coding sheet containing several variables necessary to answer the set research questions.

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[9] Media Council of Kenya Status of the Media Survey Report 2020. https://mediacouncil.or.ke/sites/default/files/downloads/2021-STATUS%20OF%20THE%20MEDIA%20REPORT.pdf

[10] https://www.mom-gmr.org/en/countries/tanzania/

[11] Hilton, S. & Hunt, K. (2010). UK newspaper representations of the 2009-10 outbreak of swine flue: one health scare not over-hyped by the media?" Research Report, J Epidemiol, *Community Health*

[12] See, Krippendorf, K. (2004). *Content analysis: an introduction to its methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

The variables included:

1. Publication [name]
2. Volume of solar energy stories
3. Prominence/placement of solar energy stories on the front page and other pages
4. Type of solar energy stories published.
5. Story prompts or origins
6. Reporting formats employed.
7. Themes in the coverage
8. Productive use solutions covered in the stories.
9. Number of sources
10. Human sources cited in the stories.
11. Gender of sources
12. Non-human sources used in the stories.

Three research assistants conducted the content analysis after attending a training workshop. They coded the data, and samples of the preliminary data entered were analysed to test intercoder reliability (or the level of agreement between the different assistants doing the coding). The reliability test showed high agreement on how other variables were coded.

Findings on Solar Energy Coverage

Volume

The six media platforms monitored from January to December 2023 produced only 63 stories related to solar energy.

- Uganda recorded the highest volume with 30 stories.
- Kenya came second with 23 stories.
- Tanzania ranked third place with 10 stories.

Overall, the three television stations monitored aired more stories (34 representing 54%) than those published by the three newspapers (29 representing 46%).

Reporters and editors interviewed attributed the limited coverage to the following:

a) A lack of knowledge and skills to report the subject,
b) Budget constraints to facilitate reporters,
c) Solar energy stories not attracting sales in the market,
d) Lack of knowledge among farmers, solar suppliers, and other stakeholders to use media to promote solar energy.
e) Lack of reporters specialising in coverage of solar energy as a beat.

> "The understanding of the subject by journalists is limited. Solar energy is a new subject area that most journalists are not conversant with."
>
> **Senior editor at the New Vision.**

> "I don't remember when we were ever trained on reporting solar energy for more than 17 years that I have worked at Mwananchi newspaper."
>
> **Editor at Mwananchi.**

An editor at the New Vision said: "Media houses are guided by audience/public interests. If they feel something is not appealing [selling] to the audience, most editors will give it secondary treatment, unlike the other subjects. Most media houses struggle with circulation, so they opt for high-selling subjects."

A Tanzania Editors' Forum member noted: "Solar energy-related stories do not perform better [well] in the market." A reporter from Mwananchi shared similar sentiments, stating: "The stories on solar energy use are not attracting customers [readers], that is why our editors are not assigning us to cover them."

A reporter from UBC noted that "there is a lack of journalists specialising in reporting about solar energy. This, therefore, means there are no dedicated reporters on this subject."

Fig 1: Frequency of stories on solar energy by country

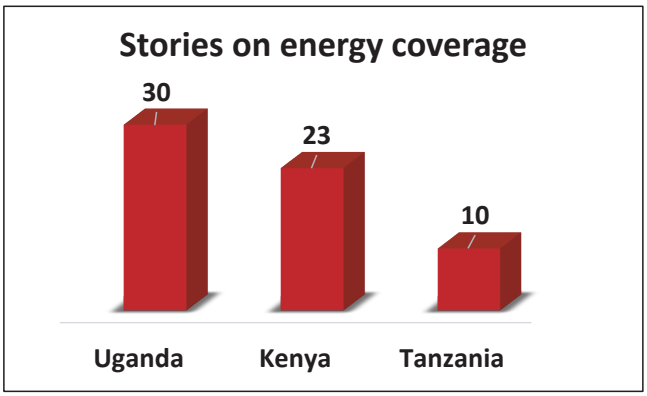
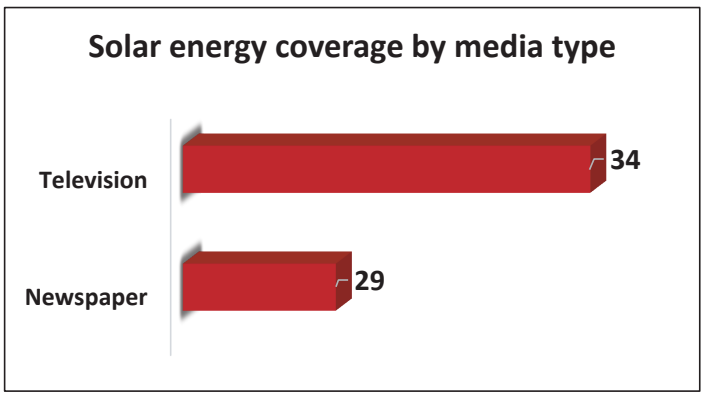


Fig 2: Frequency of stories on solar energy by media type



In Uganda and Kenya, the national broadcasters UBC and KBC produced more stories about solar energy than their print counterparts, New Vision and Daily Nation. In Tanzania, the newspaper Mwananchi took the lion's share of the coverage.

In Uganda and Tanzania, the difference in volume between newspaper and television was significantly higher compared to Kenya, where it was almost evenly spread.

Table 1: Frequency of stories on solar energy by media house

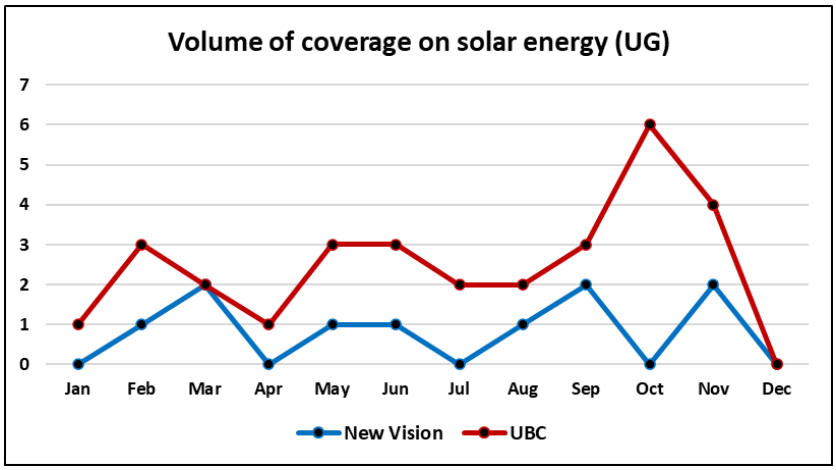
	Uganda			Kenya			Tanzania	
Media House	Freq	%	Media House	Freq	%	Media House	Freq	%
New Vision	10	33.3	Daily Nation	11	47.8	Mwananchi	8	80.0
UBC	20	66.7	KBC	12	52.2	TBC	2	20.0
Total	30	100.0	Total	23	100.0	Total	10	100.0

The trend over the months

On UBC, the highest volume of stories was recorded in October, followed by November, and no stories were registered in December.

New Vision saw its highest number of articles in March, September, and November. No stories were registered in January, April, July, October, and December.

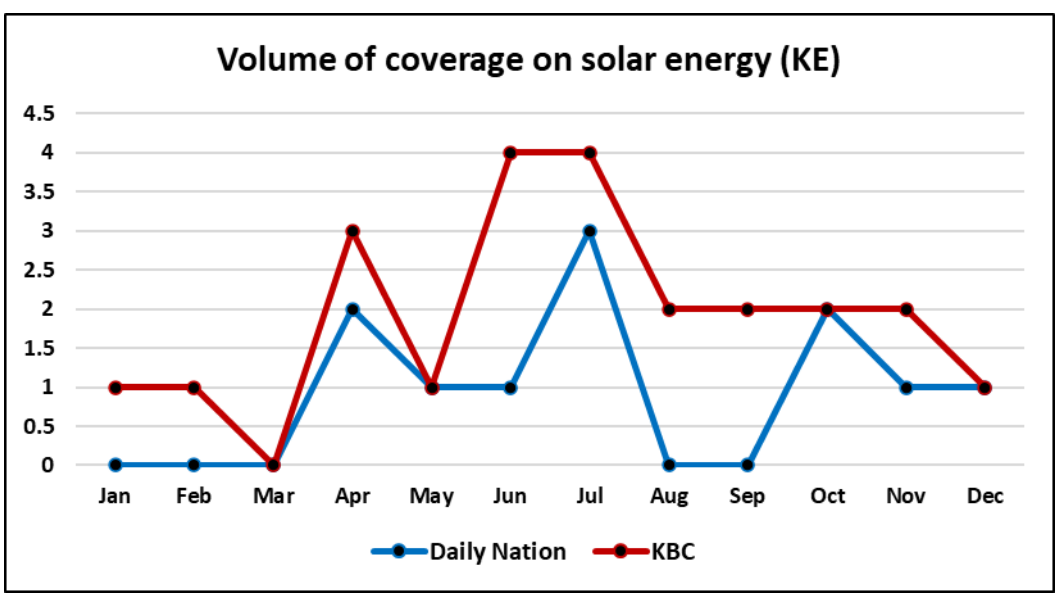
Fig 3: Trend in coverage of solar energy issues in Uganda by month



On KBC, the highest volume of stories was recorded in June and July, while the lowest number was registered in January, February, May, and December.

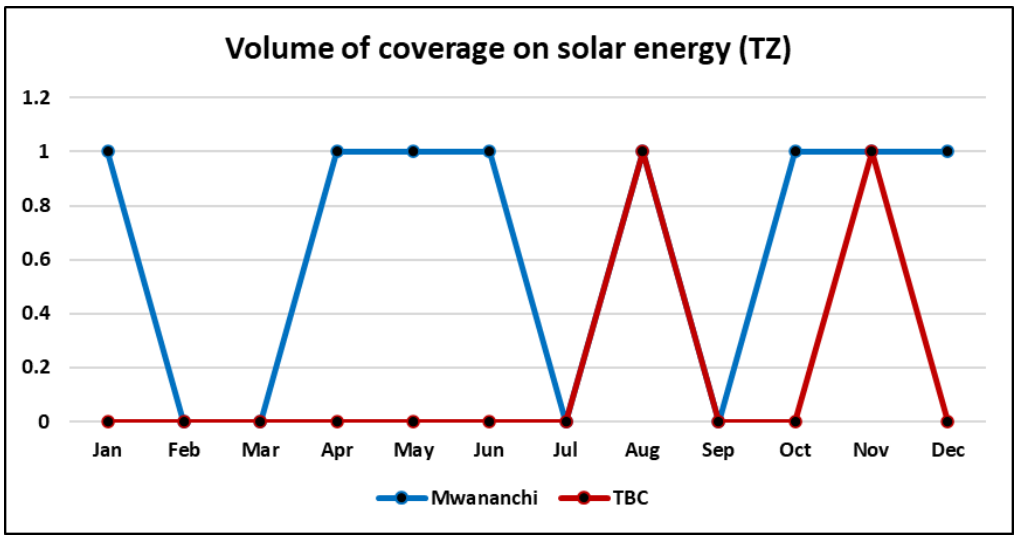
Daily Nation saw its highest number of articles in July. No stories were registered in January, February, March, August and September.

Fig 4: Trend in coverage of solar energy issues in Kenya by month



On *TBC*, solar energy coverage was only recorded in August and November, while Mwananchi registered coverage in January, April, May, June, October, and December.

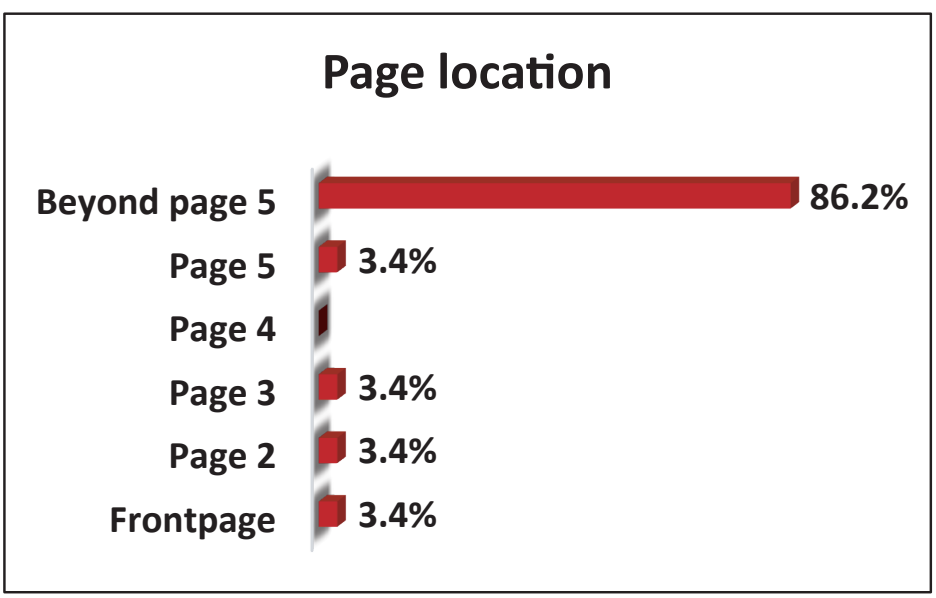
Fig 5: Trend in coverage of solar energy issues in Tanzania by month



Prominence of stories

Only one story on solar energy was on the front page in the 12 months monitored. This story was published by the New Vision on August 17, 2023, under the headline: MUSEVENI MEETS SOLAR INVESTORS. Most solar energy stories across the three countries (86%) appeared on pages beyond page 5.

Fig 6: Page location of solar energy stories



The only page two story identified in the study was also published by the New Vision while the only page three and page five stories recorded appeared in Daily Nation and Mwananchi respectively.
The majority of stories across the three publications appeared on pages beyond page 5.

Table 2: Page location of solar energy stories by publication

Page	New Vision (n=10)	Daily Nation (n=11)	Mwananchi (n=8)
Frontpage	10.0	0.0	0.0
Page 2	10.0	0.0	0.0
Page 3	0.0	9.1	0.0
Page 4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Page 5	0.0	0.0	12.5
Beyond page 5	80.0	90.9	87.5

Type of stories used in the coverage.

News stories dominated solar energy coverage in the three countries, accounting for eight of every 10 solar-related stories in newspapers and television. This is consistent with ACME's research report on Ugandan media coverage of COVID-19 and public affairs in 2020[13] where the traditional news story comprised 68.8% and 89.4% of all public affairs coverage in newspapers and television respectively.

Among the Kenyan media platforms monitored, letters to the editor were the second most frequent story type used in the coverage of solar energy, followed by commentary or opinion.

In Ugandan media, features were the second most common story type, followed by letters to the editor and commentary or opinion.

Among the Tanzanian media platforms studied, features and commentary or opinions took second place as the dominant story types used to tell the solar energy story.

Table 3a: Frequency of different types of solar energy stories

	Kenya		Uganda		Tanzania	
Type of story	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
News & current affairs	20	87.0	26	86.7	8	80.0
Letter to the Editor	2	8.7	1	3.3	0	0.0
Commentary or opinion	1	4.3	1	3.3	1	10.0
Feature & long form	0	0.0	2	6.7	1	10.0
Total	23	100.0	30	100.0	10	100.0

A look at the story types used by individual media platforms shows that all three national broadcasters, KBC, UBC, and TBC, used only the traditional news story to cover solar energy.

Newspapers in the three countries employed various forms to cover solar energy.

Table 3b: Frequency of different types of solar energy stories by media house

	Kenya		Uganda		Tanzania	
Type of story	Daily Nation (n=11)	KBC (n=12)	New Vision (n=10)	UBC (n=20)	Mwananchi (n=8)	TBC (n=2)
News & current affairs	72.7	100.0	60.0	100.0	75.0	100
Letter to the Editor	18.2	0.0	10.0	0.0	0	0
Commentary or opinion	9.1	0.0	10.0	0.0	12.5	0
Feature & long form	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	12.5	0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100

[13] https://acme-ug.org/2022/02/28/research-report-on-ugandan-media-coverage-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-other-public-affairs-2020/

Reporting format

Assessing reporting formats is crucial as it provides insights into how information is presented, and the depth of analysis offered to audiences.

Different formats offer varying depths of coverage. Investigative, enterprise, and interpretive formats often delve deeper into issues, providing in-depth analysis and context, whereas conventional reporting tends to give a more straightforward, factual presentation. Assessing formats helps understand whether audiences receive comprehensive coverage or only surface-level information.

Across the three countries, conventional hard news reporting (he-said-she-said) dominated the coverage of solar energy.

Conventional reporting accounted for at least eight of every 10 solar energy-related stories.

Ugandan and Tanzanian media platforms were more likely to carry enterprise and interpretive stories on solar energy than their Kenyan counterparts.

Table 4a: Reporting formats used in solar energy stories

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Format	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Conventional	26	92.9	20	100	8	80.0
Enterprise and interpretive	2	7.1	0	0	2	20.0
Investigative	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	28	100.0	20	100	10	100.0

Top seven characteristics of conventional reporting

- Spot or hard news that tends to focus on events.
- Neutral and often uncritical transmission of facts.
- Tendency to assign equal weight to all positions.
- Faithful recording of the observed event or issue.
- Suppression of the journalist's prior knowledge of the subject.
- Depends largely or entirely on material provided by others and
- Tends to be event centred.

Under the enterprise or interpretive reporting format, the story usually depends on the journalist's initiative and effort. The coverage follows more leads than the usual straight news story and depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's independent efforts. Enterprise stories explore issues in greater depth, usually through narrative or literary techniques.

These stories are traditionally presented as features. Instead of breaking news, enterprise stories focus on the forces that shape the events that may or may not be in the news.

Exposition is the dominant posture under the investigative reporting format, with shared characteristics such as:

- The story is the journalist's original initiative.
- Reporting depends on material gathered or generated through the reporter's effort.
- Reporting uncovers information that an individual or entity may have tried to conceal from public scrutiny or information that an individual or entity may have been interested in keeping out of the public domain.
- Resources and evidence the journalist uses are discernible; there is evidence of solid documentation (the paper trail) and sourcing.

All three national broadcasters and Daily Nation only used the conventional format to cover solar energy. New Vision, at 25%, had the highest proportion of stories that used the enterprise format, followed by Mwananchi, at 14.3%.

Table 4b: Reporting formats used in solar energy stories by media house

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Format	New Vision (n=8)	UBC (n=20)	Daily Nation (n=8)	KBC (n=12)	Mwananchi (n=7)	TBC (n=2)
Conventional	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	85.7	100.0
Enterprise and interpretive	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0
Investigative	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The focus of solar energy stories

Findings indicate that only 30 stories (representing 47.6% of the coverage) on solar energy focused on solar energy use in agriculture. The other proportion of the stories centred around solar energy for different uses, such as health, education, etc.

Tanzanian media platforms (60%) recorded the highest proportion of stories on solar energy use in agriculture, followed by Kenyan media platforms (47.8%).

Table 5a: Focus of solar energy stories

	Kenya		Uganda		Tanzania		Overall	
Focus	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Other use	12	52.2	17	56.7	4	40.0	33	52.4
Agricultural use	11	47.8	13	43.3	6	60.0	30	47.6
Total	23	100.0	30	100.0	10	100.0	63	100.0

In terms of individual media platforms, TBC (100%) registered the highest percentage of solar energy stories focused on agriculture, followed by KBC (58.3%) in second place. New Vision and Mwananchi, each at 50%, came in third place, while UBC (40%) recorded the lowest proportion of stories that focused on solar energy in agriculture.

Table 5b: Focus of solar energy stories by media house

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Solar energy	New Vision (n=10)	UBC (n=20)	Daily Nation (n=11)	KBC (n=12)	Mwananchi (n=8)	TBC (n=2)
Other use	50.0	60.0	63.6	41.7	50	0
Agricultural use	50.0	40.0	36.4	58.3	50	100
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100	100

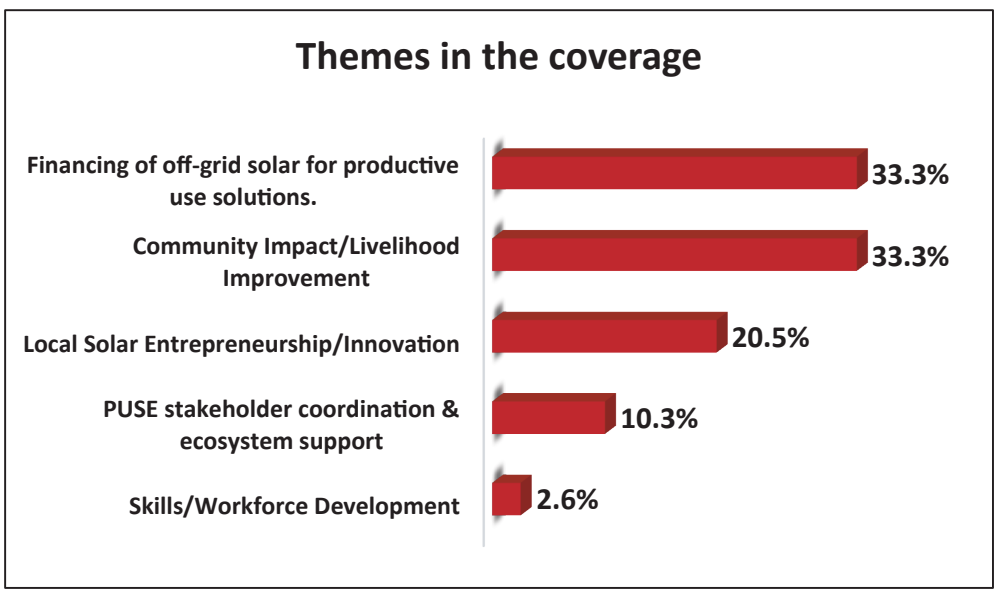
Findings on Coverage of Solar Energy Use in Agriculture

What themes do the stories address?

The highest number of stories on solar energy in agriculture addressed issues of financing off-grid solar for productive use solutions and community impact or livelihood improvement.

Stories on solar entrepreneurship and innovation featured in second place, followed by coverage of PUSE stakeholder coordination and ecosystem support.

Fig 7: Themes in solar energy stories that are focused on agriculture



In Uganda, financing off-grid solar for productive use solutions was the highest theme identified in the solar energy stories focused on agriculture. It was followed by community impact/livelihood improvement and PUSE stakeholder coordination & ecosystem support in second and third place, respectively.

In Kenya, local solar entrepreneurship/innovation was the most frequent theme identified in the solar energy stories focused on agriculture, followed by financing off-grid solar for productive solutions and community impact/livelihood improvement.

In Tanzania, community impact/livelihood improvement was the most frequently cited theme in stories focusing on solar energy use in agriculture, followed by local solar entrepreneurship/innovation and PUSE stakeholder coordination & ecosystem support.

Table 6: Themes in solar energy stories that are focused on agriculture by media house

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Themes in the coverage	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Financing of off-grid solar for productive use solutions.	8	47.1	5	33.3	0	0.0
Community Impact/Livelihood Improvement	6	35.3	2	13.3	5	71.4

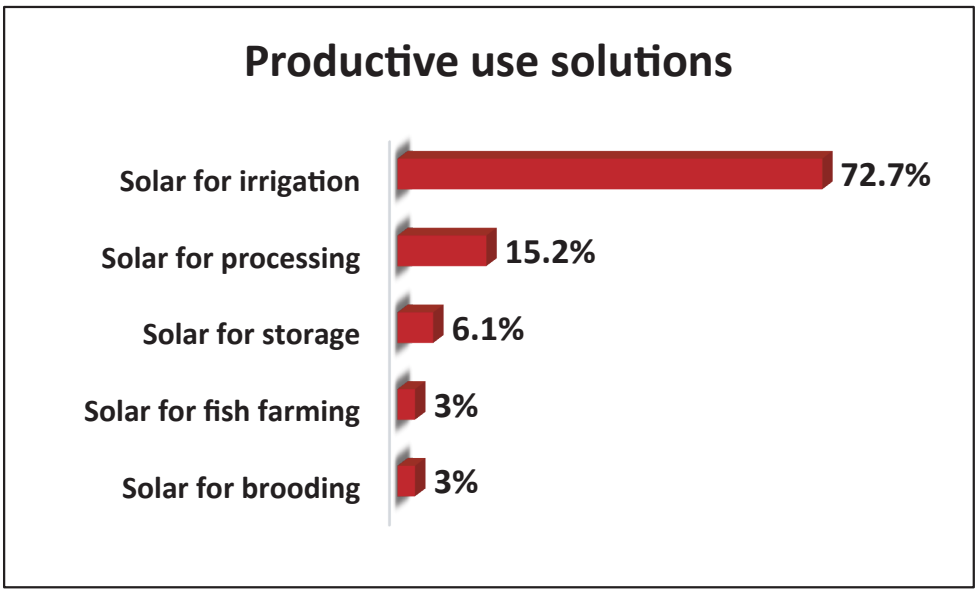
Local Solar Entrepreneurship/Innovation	1	5.9	6	40.0	1	14.3
PUSE stakeholder coordination & ecosystem support	2	11.8	1	6.7	1	14.3
Skills/Workforce Development	0	0.0	1	6.7	0	0.0
Total	17	100.0	15	100.0	7	100.0

Productive use solutions addressed in the stories.

The majority of stories that focused on agriculture were about solar irrigation. These accounted for seven out of every 10 stories on solar energy use in agriculture. Solar for processing came in second at 15.2%, followed by solar for storage in third place.

The other productive use solutions identified in the coverage included solar for fish farming and brooding in poultry farming.

Fig 8: Productive use solutions discussed in solar energy stories focused on agriculture



Ugandan and Kenyan media platforms covered a wider variety of productive use solutions in their stories compared to Tanzanian media.

In Tanzanian media, the only productive use solution identified in agriculture-related stories was solar for irrigation. Ugandan media recorded the highest volume of stories about solar energy for irrigation, while Kenyan media platforms registered the highest proportion of stories highlighting solar energy for processing.

Table 7: Productive use solutions discussed in solar energy stories focused on agriculture by media house

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Productive use solutions	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Solar for irrigation	11	73.3	7	58.3	6	100.0
Solar for processing	2	13.3	3	25.0	0	0.0
Solar for storage, e.g. refrigeration	1	6.7	1	8.3	0	0.0
Solar for fish farming	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Solar for brooding	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0
Total	15	100.0	12	100.0	6	100.0

Origin of the stories

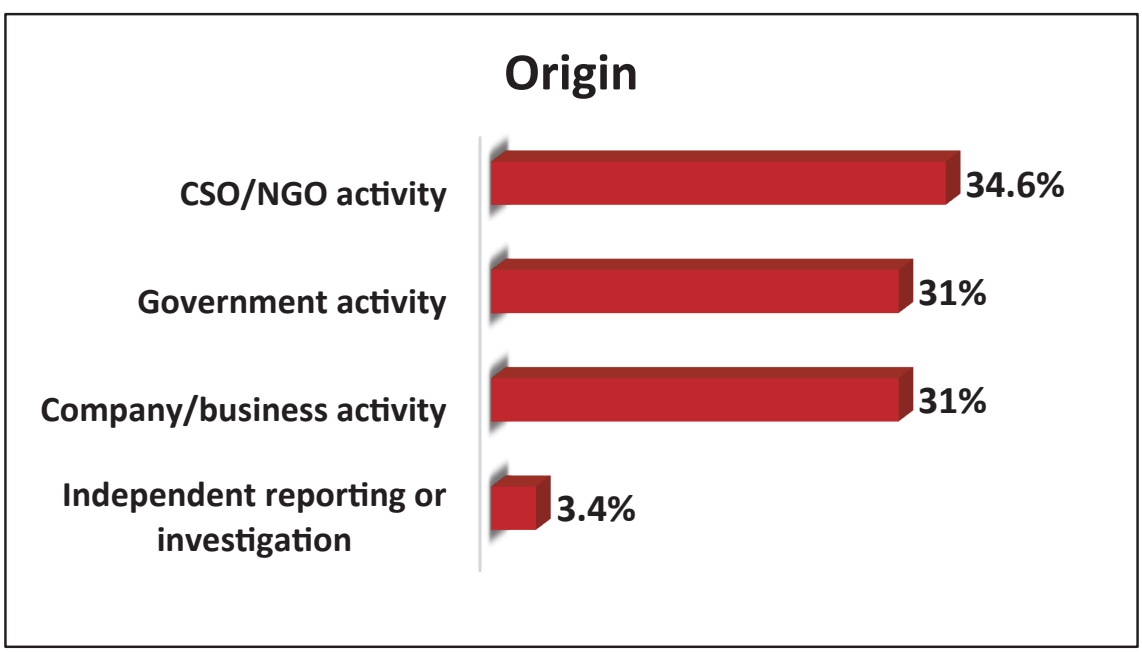
Over nine out of 10 solar energy stories focusing on agriculture originated from events. These included CSO/NGO activities, company events, and government activities.

Stories that originated from independent reporting or research by journalists/media comprised only 3.4% of solar coverage that focused on agriculture.

Journalists attributed the dominance of event-based reporting to limited knowledge of the subject among journalists and limited sources to speak to.

> Limited knowledge on the subject by the journalists. At these events, we try to gain information about solar, " said a reporter from Uganda. "Lack of sources limits us from going beyond the events. We don't know people to speak to outside of these events",
>
> **television editor from Uganda.**

Fig 9: Origin of solar energy stories focused on agriculture.



In Uganda, government activities, followed by company events and CSO/NGO activities in second and third place, were the most frequent triggers of stories on solar energy focused on agriculture.

In Kenya, the stories mainly originated from company activities, followed by government events in second place and CSO/NGO activities in third position.

However, Tanzania recorded the lion's share of stories originating from CSO/NGO activities. They accounted for eight out of every 10 stories on agriculture.

Table 8: Origin of solar energy stories focused on agriculture by country.

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Origin	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
CSO/NGO activity	3	23.1	2	20.0	5	83.3
Company/business activity	4	30.8	5	50.0	0	0.0
Government activity (both central and local govt)	5	38.5	3	30.0	1	16.7
Independent reporting or investigation	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	13	100.0	10	100.0	6	100.0

Major actor/newsmaker in the story

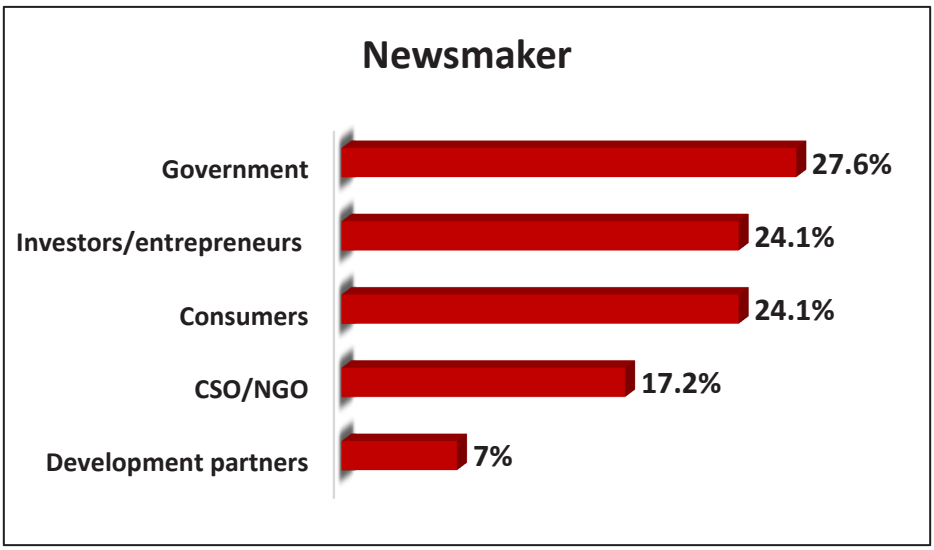
A newsmaker is an individual or entity that generates news or becomes the subject of news coverage due to their actions, statements, events, or significance in society.

They are the driving force behind news stories, shaping public discourse and influencing the audience's information. Newsmakers are the catalysts behind news stories, driving the narrative through their actions, influence, or event involvement.

Analysing data on newsmakers is essential as it provides insights into the key influencers of solar energy coverage in agriculture.

Overall, the government (27.6%) was the most prominent newsmaker in solar energy stories that focused on agriculture. Investors/entrepreneurs (24.1%) and consumers (24.1%) came closely in second place, followed by CSO/NGOs (17.2%) in third place.

Fig 10: Newsmakers in solar energy stories focused on agriculture



A look at newsmakers disaggregated by country shows that Tanzania unlike the overall trend, registered CSO/NGOs (50%) as the most prominent newsmakers in coverage of solar energy in agriculture. The most frequent newsmakers in Kenyan media were investors while government dominated coverage in Ugandan media.

Table 9: Newsmakers in solar energy stories focused on agriculture by country

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Newsmaker	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Government	4	30.8	3	30.0	1	16.7
Investors/entrepreneurs (local & foreign)	3	23.1	4	40.0	0	0.0
Consumers (e.g. producers, processors, distributors, consumers)	3	23.1	3	30.0	1	16.7
CSO/NGOs	2	15.4	0	0.0	3	50.0
Development partners	1	7.7	0	0	1	16.7
Total	13	100.0	10	100.0	6	100.0

Sourcing

Human sources in the stories

Human sources are the individuals who provide information, quotes or insights to journalists to help construct news stories.

Overall, solar energy consumers (25%) were the most frequent sources cited in solar energy coverage focused on agriculture. They were closely followed by civil servants (21.4%) and CSO/NGO representatives (17.9%). Solar energy suppliers/dealers also featured prominently in fourth place at 15.5%.

Table 10a: Frequency of human sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture.

Human sources	Frequency	Per cent
Solar energy Consumers e.g. producer, processor, distributor	21	25.0
Civil servants of central or local gov't organ	18	21.4
CSO/NGO representatives	15	17.9
Solar energy supplier/dealer	13	15.5
Development partners	5	6.0
Members of cabinet e.g. ministers	4	4.8
Technical expert who is independent with specialised knowledge e.g Researcher	4	4.8
Elected or unelected political actors e.g. MPs	4	4.8
Total	84	100.0

In Uganda, civil servants were the most frequent sources of information on solar in agriculture, followed by solar energy consumers and suppliers/dealers in second and third place, respectively. CSO representatives also featured prominently in fourth place.

In Kenya, solar energy suppliers/dealers were the most cited sources of information on solar in agriculture, followed by solar energy consumers in second place. Civil servants and CSO/NGO representatives were both featured in the third position.

Conversely, Tanzania had CSO/NGO representatives as the most frequent sources of information, followed by solar energy consumers.

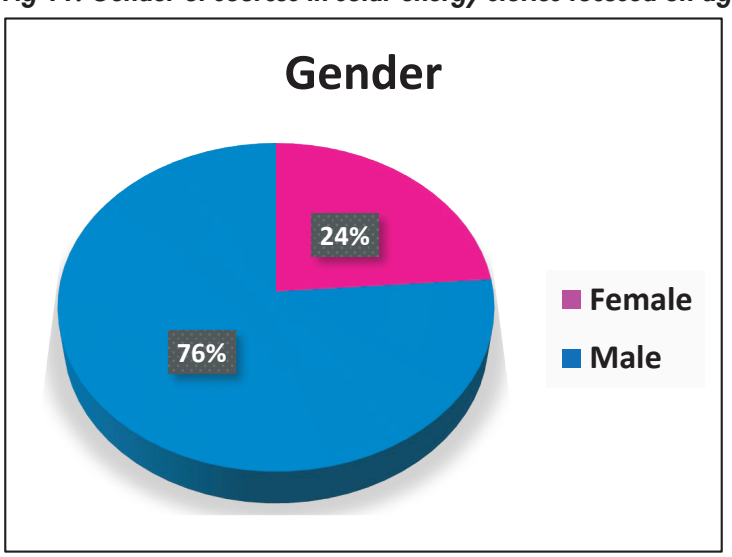
Table 10b: Frequency of human sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture by country

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Human sources	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Solar energy Consumer e.g. producer, processor, distributor	11	23.4	5	26.3	5	27.8
Civil servants of central or local gov't organ	14	29.8	2	10.5	2	11.1
CSO/NGO representatives	6	12.8	2	10.5	7	38.9
Solar energy supplier/dealer	7	14.9	6	31.6	0	0.0
Development partners	2	4.3	1	5.3	2	11.1
Members of cabinet e.g. ministers	3	6.4	1	5.3	0	0.0
Technical expert who is independent with specialised knowledge e.g Researcher	2	4.3	1	5.3	1	5.6
Elected or unelected political actors e.g. MPs	2	4.3	1	5.3	1	5.6
Total	47	100.0	19	100.0	18	100.0

Gender of sources

Men dominated coverage of solar energy in agriculture, a pattern similar to that observed in ACME's previous media monitoring reports in Uganda and Kenya. The figures have tended to fall in their 70s.

Fig 11: Gender of sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture.



Tanzanian media platforms cited more women as sources of information than their Kenyan and Ugandan counterparts. Ugandan media performed the poorest in using women as sources of information in solar energy and agriculture.

Table 11: Gender of sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture by country.

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Gender	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Female	8	17.0	5	26.3	7	38.9
Male	39	83.0	14	73.7	11	61.1
Total	47	100.0	19	100.0	18	100.0

Non-human sources

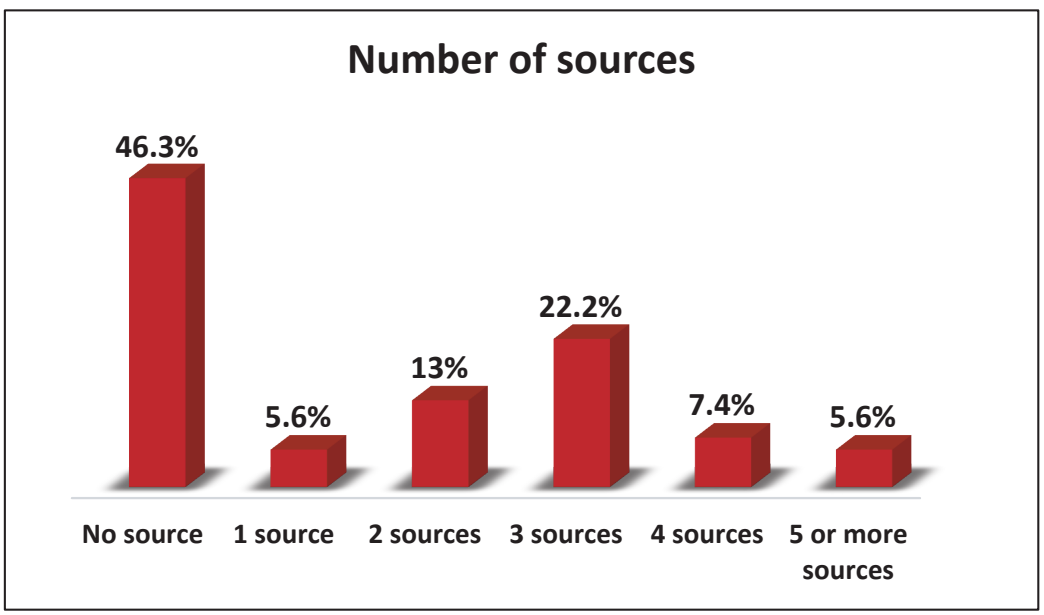
Only two non-human sources were used in the coverage. These were documentary sources quoted in the Daily Nation (a company statement) and Mwananchi (an article).

Multiplicity of sources

Number of sources per story

A significant proportion (46.3%) of solar-related stories focused on agriculture did not carry sources. Only 35.2% of the stories cited at least three sources.

Fig 12: Number of sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture



At least half of the stories produced by Ugandan and Kenyan media on solar energy use in agriculture did not cite any sources of information. Tanzanian media had the highest proportion of stories that used at least three sources.

Table 12: Number of sources in solar energy stories focused on agriculture by country

	Uganda		Kenya		Tanzania	
Number of sources	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
No source	15	53.6	10	50.0	0	0.0
1 source	0	0.0	3	15.0	0	0.0
2 sources	3	10.7	4	20.0	0	0.0
3 sources	4	14.3	3	15.0	5	83.3
4 sources	3	10.7	0	0.0	1	16.7
5 or more sources	3	10.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	28	100.0	20	100.0	6	100.0

Conclusion

This report has revealed the challenges of journalism in East Africa, such as the dominance of conventional, event-based reporting and gender-imbalanced sourcing. In more specific terms, the report has highlighted that the media in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda does not treat solar energy and solar energy use in agriculture as a serious public issue, as evidenced by the limited coverage.

Many stories about solar energy are either relegated to pages beyond page five in newspapers or sometimes unreported.

The lack of enterprise stories also means that solar energy issues only become newsworthy when an event is organized by CSOs/NGOs, companies like those dealing in solar energy, or the government.

As we indicated in the background, solar energy services have benefits, for example, in agriculture. This requires that this subject receive the attention it deserves in the media to raise awareness, shape public opinion, influence policy decisions, and facilitate public engagement.

Recommendations

1. Journalists, editors, and media organisations should intergrate solar energy and its productive use in agriculture as an important beat in their editorial plan.

2. Provide journalists with on-the-job professional training to understand solar energy issues, because university curricula do not focus on solar energy training.

3. Boost media coverage of solar energy issues through improved resources, such as giving journalists more time to conduct thematic news coverage.

4. Journalists and media houses should include female sources in their stories for a balanced perspective of solar energy issues.

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