

Siasa Talks Report

Samburu County
Follow up meeting





The Background

Siasa Place and Bright Future Foundation through the funding of Heinrich Boll Foundation held Siasa Talk Forum on Public Participation on 20/07/2018 in Maralal Samburu County. Several issues that are affecting youth in Samburu were identified these include; unemployment, lack of free and safe spaces for dialogue with the leaders, poor representation in the county assembly, lack of good will from the county government on meaningful youth engagement, underrepresentation in key government boards.

In order to address these challenges, Bright Future Foundation saw the need to begin a process of having a youth policy in Samburu County. A policy that involves creating advocacy channels, safe spaces and opportunities for meaningful youth engagement. The process began with youth forums meant to collect their views in all the three constituencies; Samburu North (Baragoi), Samburu West (Suguta) and Samburu East (Wamba).

These forums became a great opportunity where candid conversations ensued on issues affecting youth in Samburu, which necessitated a session on Meaningful Youth Engagement, Public Participation and Policy Cycle. It will be followed by a roundtable meeting with the county assembly youth caucus where a memorandum will be presented to them and a meeting with the Technical Working Group (TWG), drafting the gender policy. Because Gender and Youth affairs are under the same department in the County Government of Samburu, we hope to have the TWG include a chapter on youth in the policy.

Introduction

The forums took place from 10th to 13th November 2018; Baragoi 10th, Suguta 12th and Wamba 13th. A total of 120 youth attended the forums. All the sessions started with introductions, followed by Grayson Marwa from Siasa Place who took the participants through a session on Meaningful Youth Engagement and Policy Cycle. In Baragoi and Wamba the youth requested to briefly talk about Public Participation, they argued that they needed to know best ways of engaging their County Government. Samwella Lerno from Bright Future divided the participants into groups according to the wards they come from, they discussed four key thematic areas that will inform a youth policy formulation;

- I. Challenges affecting the youth
- II. Strengths within them
- III. Opportunities available to them and
- IV. Areas that should be prioritized

Meaningful Youth Engagement

By Grayson Marwa, Siasa Place

For youth engagement to be considered meaningful, Grayson noted that young people have to play their part in the process. Youth need to have clear roles and responsibilities in the development initiative, have a sense of belonging with it and be able to either partner in or lead development. Development actors in this case the County Government, have to open up or create spaces for youth to be engaged. Through capacity building and individual support, the development actors can make sure that rather than bringing a development initiative or opportunity down to the young person's level, they are upskilling, motivating and supporting the young people.

He asked the youth to be concerned and proactively engage their County Government, noting that a lot of opportunities might pass them without knowing. Mr. Marwa encouraged the young people to take advantage of the existing regulations in the County Government's policies to demand for services and opportunities.

Policy Development Cycle

By Grayson Marwa, Siasa Place

Mr. Marwa started the session by asking the participants to define the term policy and if they are aware of any County policies in existence. Most participants did not know the definition of policy nor are they aware of existence of any either in the County or National Government. He noted that a thorough understanding of public policy development process is crucial for the youth to understand, he further explained the five steps of policy cycle as follows.

Stage 1 – Problem identification and agenda setting

This stage involves performing a community risk assessment and developing a problem statement. Intervention strategies are developed

Stage 2 – Policy development

This stage centres on forming relationships and producing a draft of the proposed policy. Ideally, this is done by a planning team who negotiates on contents to develop a draft. It is then distributed to stakeholders for comment. The policy is refined and officially submitted for adoption.

Stage 3 – Issue resolution and policy adoption

In this stage the policy first enters the public arena where it is debated, and it is either approved or denied by the authority having jurisdiction.

Stage 4 – Policy implementation and application

This stage covers the time period between adoption and enforcement. Education occurs for those by the policy about how to apply the policy.

Stage 5 – Policy evaluation

This stage measures the policy for effectiveness. This helps justify the need for policy, guides the process and determines which goals are being met and to what degree. Decision makers allocate or redirect resources based on evaluation. Evaluation continues throughout the life cycle of a policy.

Group Discussion

By Samwella Lerno, Bright Future Foundation

Samwella Lerno informed the participants about a Technical Working Group (TWG) that is at stage 2 – Policy Development, drafting a Gender Policy in Samburu County. She noted that since the department includes the directorate of youth affairs it would be prudent to request the TWG to include a chapter on youth. Samwella divided the youth into groups according to their wards, they discussed four points that would inform a memorandum to be presented to the TWG and the concerned sectoral committee in the county assembly. Below is a summary of the youth concerns from the three (3) constituencies.

Youth Challenges, Strengths and Opportunities

1. Challenges facing the Youths in Samburu County

- Limited Sports and Recreational Facilities
- Retrogressive Cultural Practises
- Low Literacy Levels
- Drug and Substance Abuse
- Lack of Specialized Skills
- Cattle Rustling and Involvement in Crimes
- Lack of Access to Financial Resources

2. Opportunities and strengths of the youth in Samburu County

- Specialized Skill Gap in the County
- An Old Workforce
- Affirmative Action both at the National and County Level
- Innovation
- Sports and talents

3. Priority Areas

The following are comprehensive and multi-sectoral programmes at the county level that were suggested by the youths

1. Samburu Youth Community Service Program

To enhance youth employability through quality skills, transfer and exposure to the work environment

2. **Access to Youth Empowerment services and youth friendly Resource Centre**
To create a youth friendly space for meaningful youth engagement through information service provision, guiding and counselling
3. **Improved access to education opportunities.**
To enhance access to higher education in designated fields at recognized institutions of higher learning
4. **Access to affordable and market relevant vocational courses and training centers.**
To expand and enhance training in artisanal skills to meet the growing demand of blue-collar jobs and to offer alternative job opportunities
5. **Art, talent search and development of Sports and sporting facilities.**
To identify and nurture artistic and sporting talents in the county.
6. **Improved support to youth Enterprise and business Development.**
To enhance youth engagement in business through strict implementation existing support services and expanding support to include training and instituting other support services
7. **Post-Training Guidance and Support**
To support and creation of a conducive transition environment for youths in technical vocational training centers into sound job and business environment
8. **Cross cutting challenges**
Promote an integrated approach to address crosscutting and emerging issues including gender disparities, people with disabilities, cultural barriers, alcohol and substance abuse, HIV and AIDS, weak governance and value systems, radicalization, betting amongst others.

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