



siasa
PLACE

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Siasa Talks Report

Samburu County





Samburu Siasa Talks

Held at Samburu guest house

Agenda

The overall objective of the training is to educate the youth on the greater importance and need for them to actively engage in public participation as a means of solving problems and playing a key role in decision-making on matters governance. Major immediate objectives are;

- To achieve greater awareness, understanding on public participation, particularly related to effective engagement of youth in governance.
- To achieve a greater understanding on their role as citizens and the need for them to hold the leadership to account.
- To achieve a greater understanding on the proper tools of public participation and the benefits thereof.

Participants

There were over 50 participants comprising of youth and women workshop. Towards the end of the session the facilitator and participants had a chance to ask questions, present the outcomes and suggest recommendations.

The Workshop

The training was opened with a word of prayer from one of the participants; Ms. Samwella

(the mobilizer) then opened the session by welcoming the participants, asking the participants and the trainer to introduce themselves.

The training-workshop commenced with the chief officer explaining what plans the county government had to facilitate public participation and involvement of the youth in decision making as far as county projects are concerned, he encouraged them to be proactive in engaging the county officials in seeking to know how they are governed, he also had an opportunity to explain to them in their native language what he understood as public participation and its importance thereof.

Challenges affecting youth on public participation:

- They are not involved in mobilization of those to be involved in the public participation exercise, instead the Village elders and Village administrators do the mobilization which makes them feel left out.
- Majority of the youth have no access to the information about public participation.
- Due to the high level of illiteracy in the County those in leadership have taken advantage of the situation to deny them access the relevant information they need.
- Due to societal norms in the County the Youth are looked down upon and are often dismissed whenever they try to Air out their opinion.

- The public participation forums are often conducted in a language that doesn't resonate with the youth.
- Goons are often hired to attack those who dare question how the County engages the youth to the extent that some are even insulted via social media.
- Reluctance by the County government to involve the youth.
- Lack of enough resources to reach out to all stakeholders.
- Lack of proper framework in the County government to deal with public participation
- Distrust between the leaders and citizens.
- Lack of transparency by the leadership.
- Expectation by the electorate especially the youth on being given handouts in order to engage in the public participation forums.
- Ignorance and lack of awareness of the need for public participation process has Led to lack of interest on the part of the youth who as a result view the exercise not worthy their effort.
- To address the above issues the participants suggested the following measures:
- There's need to build partnership with local community organizations to tackle resource issues.
- In order to avoid public cynicism towards the planning process the County government ought to be more open and transparent by making all their financial information and audits available for public review to demonstrate good practice.
- The County government ought to come up with structured public meetings that considers everyone's views.
- Due to limited English and Swahili proficiency as a result of high illiteracy levels an interpreter is needed to convey messages during the forums.
- They suggested that projects and planning efforts be undertaken by the County in a

collaborative fashion with the community.

- They asked what steps they ought to follow to safeguard their interest in land Since it's communally owned

Session summary:

- The landscape of public participation and community engagement is changing.
- Rapid developments in technology, rampant economic and political changes across the country, widespread use of social media, and a decline in public trust have created new challenges for government, organizations, and institutions.
- There is growing desire of citizens to participate in building the democratic architecture of their country and communities
- Framework for public participation is extremely essential in ensuring that communities engage as expected not just as stated by the constitution but also as required of them as a democratic right.
- People want and need to be engaged as decisions are made.
- Civil society organizations involved in community engagements main aim is to ensure that public participation processes happens in a respectful, positive, and effective way that creates the best possible outcomes for all concerned and in a language easy to understand.

Through Siasa Talks sessions we offer:

- Perspective on how public participation has been integrated into the overall governance system.
- We examine the benefits of public participation
- Discuss when and why it's important to involve the public in decision making
- Emphasize the importance of both the decision being made and the promise to the public about their involvement in that decision process.

- Overview of what the decision maker should know about their public participation role as a means of fostering accountability and strengthening devolution.
- Outcomes of the Training-Workshop:
- Participants asked if it was possible to have more Siasa talks in the county.
- They felt if possible they would be allowed to tag their friends along in an effort to involve more youth.
- They asked if similar sessions would be organized and have their elected leaders involved.
- Since some of them belonged to local organizations eg Bright future CBO and youth groups they asked if there was a possibility of future partnerships.
- Other concerns raised was the need to have another forum in the remote areas in order to involve the illiterate.
- We must establish and sustain partnerships with local organizations i.e. both women and youth groups and CBOs to enhance its reach to the grassroots.
- Campaign and advocate for legislation and policies that are favorable to youth empowerment
- Plan for more Siasa Talks forums involving both the leaders and citizens in the county.
- To create a mechanism and framework on how to access progress

Recommendations:

Based on a brief and informal assessment of the training, I present the following recommendations:

1. To find a way of engaging more youth as opposed to only 50 participants.
2. Consider at least involvement of more than one facilitator in the forums.
3. Consider use of flip charts and projectors.
4. Have a mechanism for follow-up on the outcomes of the Siasa Talks trainings.

Gallery





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