



**IMARA
AFRICA**

*Investing in Africa's
future policy leaders*

EVALUATION REPORT FOR IMARA PROJECT PHASE III



LIST OF ABBREVIATION

- ADPs Annual Development Plans
- ALYF Africa Leadership Youth Forum
- CIDPs County Integrated Development Plans
- CFSP County Fiscal Strategy Paper
- CoK Constitution of Kenya
- COVID-19 Coronavirus disease 2019
- FGD Focus Group Discussions
- FM Frequency Modulation
- KII Key Informant Interviews
- KPI Key Performance Indicators
- MCAs Members of the County Assembly
- NGOs Non-governmental Organizations
- OH Outcome Harvesting
- PFM Public Financial Management
- PMC Project Management Committee
- PLWD People Living with Disability
- SAC Social Accountability Champions
- SP Siasa Place

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Siasa Place, Africa Youth Leadership Forum (ALYF), and Mark Appeal Group have been running the “Imara Fellowship Program,” a policy program funded by the Ford Foundation. This evaluation was to assess the achievement of the Phase 3 of Imara Fellowship program. The project sought to promote social accountability through development of community-based mechanisms. The evaluation sought to determine the prudent use of the resources, effectiveness of the project, successes and weaknesses. It also established gaps and opportunities including the approach used in execution.

The evaluation was conducted in Kericho, Kisumu, Busia, Mombasa and Nairobi counties targeting Imara Fellows, Social Accountability Champions (SAC), youth, general public and county officials. These were sample counties from the 10 target counties; Kisumu, Kericho, Busia, Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Mombasa, Homa Bay, Kakamega, and Bungoma. A total of 7 Focus group discussions and 6 Key informant interviews were conducted with selected evaluation participants. The qualitative data generated was thematically analyzed and findings used to write this report.

The evaluation established that three key outputs were achieved successfully as expected. They included the county enabling environment resulting from Imara Fellows’ good working relationship with county officials. The activities on social accountability also resulted in increased awareness of citizens of their rights and mechanisms to demand accountability from the county governments. The two outputs were achieved as a result of the empowered youth leaders (Imara Fellows, Social Accountability Champions and youth leaders of youth networks and groups) in the target counties. The youth leaders were critical in community organizing for collective actions to hold county officials to account. Leveraging on these key outputs and electoral activities, the project achieved the following key positive outcomes:

- Youth together with other citizens carried out collective actions to hold county officials to account on the uncompleted projects and quality of the work on many of the identified projects in the social audits.
- Increased youth and other citizen participation in county public participation forums. In these forums, they presented proposals, petitions and memoranda of the projects they wanted to be undertaken or completed.
- Increased influence on county conversations through mass media including social media in civic education of the citizens, sharing of the information and conducting digital advocacy. In Nairobi County, one of the youth was elected as MCA after sustained engagement in radio talks and social media with the rest of the youth.
- The county officials became more responsive to the accountability issues raised in the public forums, direct engagement with citizens and media. This was observed across the target counties.

Despite having these positive outcomes, two negative outcomes were observed. They were the emerging tension between local leadership and Imara Fellows/SAC due to their visibility and influence they gained from mobilizing, organizing and leading Social accountability forums. Some county officials also resulted to threats to the Imara Fellows and SAC because they created awareness on incomplete projects and poor work done on those projects exposing their

weaknesses in the county governance.

Despite the successes achieved by the project, some notable weaknesses were observed during the evaluation. They included lack of clear documented coordination among the three partners (Siasa Place, ALYF, and Mark Appeal) on their roles in the implementation of the project activities, lack of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework with Key Performance Indicators and means to track change, element of exclusion of the People Living with Disability and local leadership and over reliance of the Imara Fellows and SACs making them visible and powerful, creating tension with county political leaders who felt threatened by the work of Imara Fellows and SACs.

For purposes of the improvement of the next phase of the Imara Fellows program, the partners should take the following actions:

1. At the design stage, the roles of each of the partner should be clear tied to the key results areas and develop a Theory of Change coupled with clear monitoring and evaluation framework
2. Continue supporting the ward level public participation forums as an effective strategy to empower citizen and build advocacy and accountability movements in the target counties
3. Imara Fellows to be scaled up to other target counties because their work has been found effective going by the work achievements realized in Kericho, Kisumu and Busia counties.
4. Ensure inclusion of the women, PLWD, minority groups and local leadership in the public participation organized by the Imara Fellows and SAC.
5. Building on the achievement of social media advocacy, the partners can consider scaling up the use of social media as one of the digital advocacy strategies coupled with interactive dialogue to influence the county officials.
6. Need to give momentum to the Imara Fellowship Alumni to retain the members and make it more vibrant.
7. Create awareness on the Legal aid mobile application to the general public and develop mechanisms of how free legal aid services can be accessed when needed by the youth and general public.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief Background Information to Siasa Place

Siasa Place is a registered Non-governmental Organization (NGO), established in 2015 with the mandate of supporting young people (aged 18 to 34 years) to engage more effectively in public participation as envisaged in the 2010 Constitution. In its engagement and programming, Siasa Place has a focus on the People, Policy and Public participation. Siasa Place has 250 registered members. They lead social accountability champions in 10 counties. The primary role of the champions in the counties is to organize public participation forums among the youth, foster a culture of participation and collaborative partnership with the County government. Siasa Place through Social Accountability champions, builds the capacity of youth and citizens on legislative processes, opportunities for participation in county governance and service delivery, social audits and ways of youth participation. The capacity enables youth to take an active role in governance and decision making through civic education on public participation and accountability. Siasa Place also supports youth focused social audits and Siasa talks that provide youth platforms to voice their concerns and participate in county governance and development processes.

Siasa Place, Africa Youth Leadership Forum (ALYF), and Mark Appeal Group have been running the “Imara Fellowship Program,” a policy program funded by the Ford Foundation. By December 2022, the three phases were successfully completed. This evaluation assesses the achievements of Phase 3, which officially ended in December 2022 but has been extended at no cost until March 2023. The Imara Fellowship Phase 3 project was implemented in ten counties: Kisumu, Kericho, Busia, Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Mombasa, Homa Bay, Kakamega, and Bungoma. It sought to promote social accountability through development of community-based mechanisms that included:

- Imara Fellowship Network - a capacity development network of youth interested in policy advocacy.
- Formation of County Based Social Accountability Champions
- Development of shadow plans that guided the engagement of youth with their county

governments.

The expected outputs were:

- Developed community centered follow up mechanisms for social accountability informed by research, and linkage and collaboration with other stakeholders.
- Generated shadow plans to set standards of engaging leaders and guides for the community to exert pressure in demanding for service delivery.
- Community organized social accountability meetings informed by change of attitude of the community from being passive to active members of community demanding for information and accountability.

1.2 Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The objective and purpose of this evaluation is to generate information that will assist the project management team to determine the level of success, identify weakness and recommend improvement for project efficiency and effectiveness towards the achievement of its goals and objectives. Specifically, this evaluation:

- Determine the relevancy of the interventions, lessons learned, track key outcomes and impacts related to the different project components, assessing whether the objectives, aims and goals were achieved.
- Determine the prudence in resource utilization (Value for money)
- Demonstrate that programmer efforts have had a measurable impact on expected outcomes and have been implemented effectively.
- Assess gaps and opportunities including the approach used in execution.
- Assess the impact of the project to the beneficiary community.

After successful completion of Imara Fellowship program Phase 3, an evaluation was commissioned to generate evidence guided by the above evaluation objectives. This report contains the findings from this evaluation. The report has five sections. Introduction is the first section. It briefly describes the Imara Fellowship program and states the objective of the evaluation. The evaluation methodology (section 2) has described the target participants, methods of data collection and data analysis. The evaluation findings are comprehensively presented in section 3. The section has findings presented under the main themes that emerged from the evaluation data. They include project activities, project outcomes, lessons learnt and best practices, gaps and opportunities for future Imara Fellowship program phases. The report ends with section 4 that contains conclusions and recommendations. Annexes containing additional information related to evaluation are attached separately, accompanying this report.

2.0 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation adopted a lesson learnt and outcome harvesting approaches to guide the generation of the evaluation data. The approaches involved collecting the information to document experiences (positive or negative), new knowledge and ideas from the project implementation. The two approaches have been found to document sufficiently the changes brought about by interventions, demonstrate project contribution to observed change and generate lessons. The lessons learnt approach has an emphasis on new knowledge acquisition and use of it in the project. The Outcome harvesting (OH) approaches and changes stories were used to document changes observed from the Imara Fellowship program in the target counties.

2.1 Sampling Procedure and Data Collection

The data was collected from Busia, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kericho, Mombasa and Nairobi. The five counties constituted a purposive sample from the 10 target counties. This is because the target counties are widely distributed across the country and present a logistical challenge given the time constraint. In each of the sampled counties, the selected county officials Fellows/Social accountability champions and selected youth were engaged in focus group discussions and key informant interviews. In each county one or two Focus group discussion (FGD) and a number of key informant interviews (KII) were conducted. A total of 7 FGDs and 6 Key informant interviews were conducted across the 5 sample counties.

2.2 Data Collection Process

Three data collection methods were used. A comprehensive desk review was carried out on the project documents provided generating the preliminary findings. It also made the consultants identify information gaps that needed attention during the field data collection process. After the desk review, the consultant visited Busia, Kakamega, Kisumu and Kericho counties where they conducted Focus group discussions with project beneficiaries, most of the youth. The consultant also conducted key informant interviews with county officials and other stakeholders involved in the project implementation. Additionally, virtual interviews were conducted with Fellows and Social Accountability Champions from Nairobi and Mombasa County and the staff of the project-implementing partners (Siasa Place, Mark Appeal and AYLF).

2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretations

In data analysis and interpretation of the qualitative data collected, thematic analysis (TA) was used. Thematic analysis was done to identify emerging themes from the transcripts, documented outcomes, and change stories. The themes have been broadly discussed in Section 3 of the report while presenting the key evaluation findings. The findings have been discussed giving examples per county. The outcomes documented during the evaluation have been used in supporting the findings under the themes. The outcomes serve as the evidence of behavior change of the fellows/ social accountability champions and county government actors/officials. The change stories were also identified, documented, and used to support the findings under different themes. The lessons learnt, gaps and opportunities have been derived from key evaluation findings.

2.4 Limitation of the Evaluation

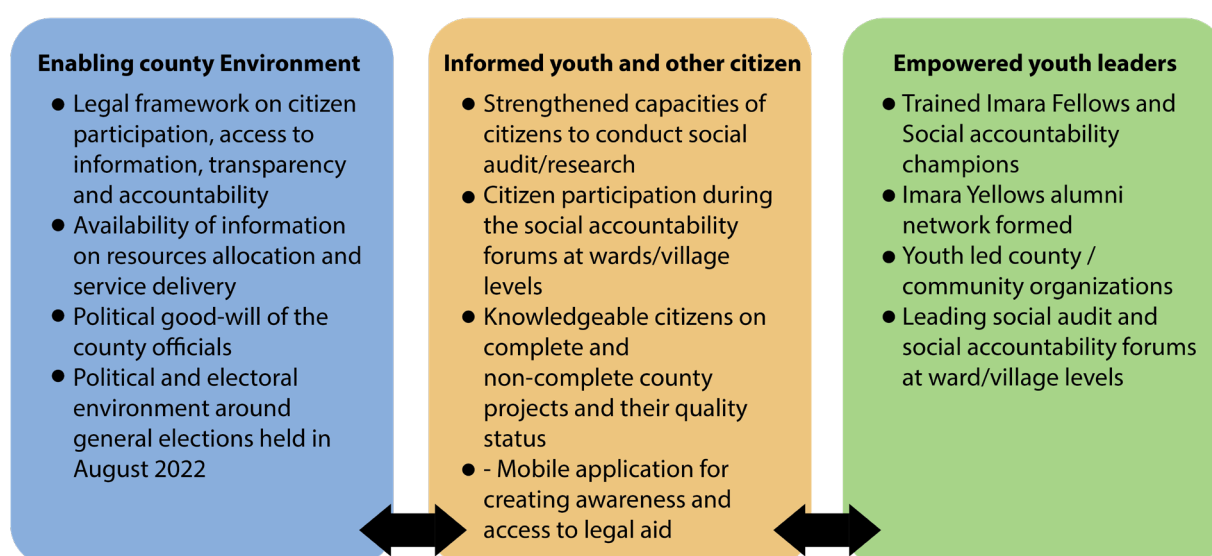
The following were key methodological limitations the consultant felt had an impact on the evaluation findings. However, they have no effects on the integrity and credibility of the evaluation.

- Not able to engage Imara Fellowship Alumni officials/members, and representatives from the universities. These could have given more information on the project and how Phase 3 relates with previous Phases.
- The counties having unique contexts, the data collection could have been conducted from the rest to give some of the context specific information on the project. This information could have been useful to future design of Imara Fellowship program.
- Less key informant interviews conducted than expected due to unavailability of the county officials to participate in the interviews. They could have provided more feedback on the Imara Fellowship program performance in their counties.
- Apart from the activity reports and donor progress reports, the project lacked monitoring reports and baseline survey information. In particular, the project did not have a Theory of Change, Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and results tracking mechanism. This information could have been a reference point for the evaluation findings.

3.0 EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Project Achievements

From the analysis, it was observed that the Imara Fellow Program had three main activities which were interlinked. The recruitment and empowerment of 30 Imara Fellows and Social Accountability Champions (SAC) from 10 counties, linkage with the Imara Fellows and SAC with Kericho, Kisumu and Busia County governments and support of youth participation forums facilitated by Social Accountability Champions across 10 target counties. From these project activities, the evaluation established three key outputs as shown in Figure 1.



Capacity Building

The project registered progress in building the capacity of the youth in two levels:

- I. Imara Fellows who were recruited to be trained in policy making process in partnership with the county government in various fields of their interest and careers. Notable cases include the promotion of Ms. Gladys Ndanu (Imara fellow) based on her improved ability to relate with clients on the Universal Health Care in Muranga County thus facilitating her promotion following the involvement of her supervisor in a panel discussion on Universal Health Care during the youth baraza held at the University of Nairobi Parklands campus and Mr. Shadrack Osero (Imara Fellow) was also admitted to the DAAD Helmut Schmidt Program to study Masters in Public Management (MPM) with a specialization in Environment, Sustainability, and Geosciences at the University of Potsdam. His application was based on the work done in partnership between Imara Africa and the county government of Kericho to identify policy gaps and recommend solutions within the Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) sector.

The interrelationship between the three key outputs, was established and strengthened through the following factors as reported by the evaluation participants:

- The skills gained from two capacity building courses by Fellows and Social Accountability Champions and leadership they offered to youth engagement at county level made them more visible and recognized by the county governments as they addressed the governance issues.
- The Fellows and SAC leveraged on the other youth-led organizations and youth leaders at the county levels. The project supported joint activities increasing influence on the county governments.
- Public participation held at ward/village levels including social audits forums gave the opportunity for youth, general public, ward and village administrators and members of the county Assembly (MCA) to interact and find solutions of the issues together. Their participation also gave the process legitimacy, triggering immediate response from the county officials to the findings of the social audits.
- Electoral activities including public forums gave the youth and citizens an opportunity to hold county officials to account as they sought for re-elections.
- The existence of constitutional and legal framework for citizen participation in governance enshrined in the Constitution Article 1 on sovereign powers and Article 210 on PFM, Public Finance Management Act, 2012, County Governance Act, 2012, and Constitutional provision on access to information and Access to Information Act, 2016 among other legal frameworks contributed to the achievement of the key outputs. The fellows and SAC made reference to these legal tools when conducting dialogue with county officials and creating awareness to youth and other citizens.
- Existing constitutional and legal framework for citizen participation provided content for training and empowering youth who were influential at the county level.

Despite the successful implementation of the project activities, the following were observed by the evaluation participants as some of the factors that posed a challenge to the project implementation.

- The electoral activities, especially holding public forums were sometimes mistaken to be

campaign forums attracting attention from the public and politicians. Some of the Fellows and SAC were also directly involved in campaigns teams of some county and national level aspirants making it impossible for them to be neutral while conducting the Siasa Place activities.

- The transition period made the social accountability work challenging because the change of old to new county government regimes. The citizens could not hold in coming county governments accountable for uncompleted projects done by the previous regime. Neither could they challenge the new government because it was settling down in the office.
- The COVID 19 pandemic also limited the number of people the activities could accommodate especially during the social accountability forums at the ward levels.

3.2 Key Project Successes

From the analysis, the outcomes were more documented in Kericho, Kisumu and Busia County than other seven counties. This could be attributed to synergy between Fellows and SAC and the fact that Fellows were working closely with county officials. This created an open communication between the fellows, SAC and youth on one side (duty holders) and county officials (duty bearers). The other seven counties benefited from the social accountability forums supported by the project.

The five key positive outcomes and one negative outcome were established from this evaluation. As described below, the positive outcomes include collective actions by the youth accountable to service delivery, county officials responding to the youth /citizen grievances, Youth participating in the county public forums using the petition and memorandum and Influence of community conversations through mainstream and new media.

3.2.1 Positive Outcomes

3.2.1.1 Collective actions taken by youth to hold the county officials accountable to service delivery.

Through the efforts of Fellows, SAC and the target communities, evidence was obtained from credible sources such as social audit reports supported by the project and County assembly projects reports. The social audits findings were used by the youth and citizens in two ways as reported by the evaluation participants. One, the findings informed development of the proposals of uncompleted and new projects and submitted at county public participation forums (for County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP), Annual Development Plan (ADP), County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP) and county budget making processes). Two, they used the findings to engage the county officials over the quality of the service delivery and uncompleted projects. As observed in the two change stories, the citizens led by Fellows and SAC organized themselves and sought for dialogue with the relevant county officials.

Through the efforts of Fellows, SAC, and target communities, evidence was obtained from credible sources such as social audit reports supported by the project and County Assembly project reports. The social audit findings were used by youth and other citizens in two ways, as reported by the evaluation participants. Firstly, the findings informed the development of proposals for uncompleted and new projects, which were then submitted at County public participation forums (such as County Integrated Development Plans, Annual Development Plans,

Box 1: Construction of Obunga Dispensary after Community Protest

The construction of the dispensary was supposed to be built at the central place where the people across the ward could access the health services. However, the former MCA Railway ward unilaterally decided for construction of the dispensary at Kamakowa location. When the community became aware of the plans, they protested the decision on the grounds that 1) there was no citizen participation on choice of location and that Kamakowa was at the periphery of the Ward yet the dispensary was meant to serve the whole ward, 2) the citizen were not involved in the purchase of the land and 3) the citizen were not aware of the Bill of Quantities (BQs) and members of the Project Implementation Committee (PMC).

Led by the Fellow and SAC, the community protested against the MCA decision. The protest made the MCA change his mind and allowed the dispensary to be constructed at the center of the ward. The materials that were already at Kamakowa were removed from site the same day of the protest and taken to the new location (Obunga Trading Centre) perceived to be central. The community was further furnished with details on Bill of Quantity (BQ) and members of the Project Management Committee (PMC) before the project construction started. The MCA further wanted to give the dispensary his name, the community resisted that move and now the dispensary is now clearly labeled "OBUNGA DISPENSARY".

Box 2: The Governor rapid response to community cry

The Fellows and SAC held a public forum with citizens in Buchenge – Tedwtet /Buchege sub location, in Kericho County. During this social accountability forum, the community raised an issue with a number of many uncompleted and poorly done projects. One of the projects being undertaken by the Kericho County government was Kap-Reuben – Binyiny road that the contractor did a poor work.

Led by Fellow and SAC, the community petitioned the county government on poor state of the road. Armed with evidence, the governor could not deny the indeed the road was poorly done. The acknowledged that the road need to be re-constructed. The governor asked the contractor to repeat the work. By the time evaluation was being conducted, the governor had officially commissioned the road and work was still going on.

3.2.1.1 Collective actions taken by youth to hold the county officials accountable to service delivery.

An interesting finding from this evaluation is that the county officials especially MCA, senior administrators, Ward administrators and village administrators were actively involved in public forums and social audits. The participation of these county officials gave legitimacy to the advocacy work by Fellows, SAC, youth and other citizens in the target counties. The youth and citizens raised their issues through public petitions, memoranda, demand letters and demonstration/protest as described in the outcome 3.2.1. This was a result of increased citizens' awareness on governance, planning and budgeting processes and tracking the plans and budgets. As a response, the county officials responded to the issues in different ways as stated below.

- The county politicians (for example MCAs) aspirants became more transparent and issue

based in political campaigns and avoided misinformation on the roles as it was the case in the past when they openly misinformed the members of the public on roles in development projects.

- The county officials especially from relevant departments cooperated with Imara Fellows and SAC to offer information on some of the projects, county progress reports and budgets. For example, in Busia County as described in the change story in Box 3, through the senior administration officer, the health staff shared the information needed by the Fellows and the communities.
- The county officials established channels of citizen participation during the year 2021/22 as compared to the years of 2020/21 and shared the information through the media for dates of the public participation. The citizens who participated in the Focus group discussions in Busia, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kericho, Nairobi and Mombasa confirmed this was the case across all the target counties.
- During the social accountability forums with the public, the county officials also explained the existence of devolved county governance and administrative structures including Ward Administrators, Village Administrators and the Village Committees and how the citizens can present their issues any time and seek for redress.

Box 3: Access Information for Social Audit of Health Service in Busia

In Busia County, despite the existence of a legal framework that facilitates access to information, the cooperation of the county government official is very crucial in giving relevant information. From the evaluation interviews of the Key informant (Senior Administrative officers, Ward Administrators and Imara Fellows in Busia County), it was attested that the cooperation of members of staff of the health department at the county and health facilities was crucial to get information for social audit. At first, the county official in the health department were apprehensive on giving access to information. It took the intervention of Senior Administrative officer who understood why the Imara Fellows were conducting the social audit, for the staff at the health department opened up and shared information. The Social Audit report contributed to contribute to provision of basic protective gears like gloves for the health facility staff, health facilities started giving food to inpatients after being facilitate by county government, improved services as attested by the interviewees in the FGD in Adugosi Ward and health facilities have developed and publicly displayed service charters.

3.2.1.3 Increased youth participation in the county public forums using the petition and memorandum.

The Siasa Place approach to engage youth and citizens at the ward and village level was effective in mobilizing and ensuring more youth and citizens participated meaningfully not only for project support forums but also during county public forums. Through this approach there was an increase in the number of youth/members of the public actively and meaningfully engaging the duty bearers (county government officials and members of the county assembly) in planning, budgeting and accountability in various target counties. As mentioned by both FGD participants and Key informants, public participation has been a challenge for government accountability and transparency. The awareness creation by the Imara Fellows and SAC in the target communities encouraged the youth and citizens to participate in county planning processes, budgeting processes and tracking the implementation of county government project plans.

3.2.1.4 Influence of community conversations through mainstream and new media

The capacity of the Imara Fellows and SAC to mobilize and effectively use both mainstream (radio-local FM Station in Emuria FM in Busia, Kwa Reuben FM in Nairobi etc) and social media to create awareness in the community and influence accountability by the duty bearers (county government), was noted during the evaluation as effective strategy. This played a critical role in increasing the levels of legitimacy and representation of Imara Fellows and SAC who acted in the best interest of their communities. From the observation made, the use of social media to raise accountability issues generated some impacts by making the county officials to rapidly respond to the incidents shared in the social media. For example in Kericho County, a photograph of the poor state of toilets at Sinendet primary school was taken and shared on social media. As described in the change story in Box 4, the story received traction and made the governor act quickly on the issues. The second incident was observed in Kisumu County.

Box 3: Incidents that went Viral in Social media

Pathetic Toilets of Sinendet Primary School incident in Kericho County

The pit latrine used by pre-primary in the mentioned school was at a verge of collapsing as children continued to use it despite the condition. The social accountability champion from Kericho County took photos and posted in Facebook seeking for help from the public to construct the toilets. The pictures attracted attention from the public started to contribute to building of the new toilets for the school. The story went viral attracting attention of county government who reacted immediately by constructing a decent latrine in the school. The story was republished by other social media actors elucidating debates from the public on the role of area leaders including MCA, MP and Governor in the health and development of the school.

Migosi Town Hall Debate- Kisumu County

The debate opened a forum to vet the MCA aspirants and creating awareness on importance electing the right leaders. The use of social media increased the visibility of the activity, attracting meaningful conversation especially among the youth. It had a wider reach, in creating awareness on the importance and role of citizens in electing the right leaders in 2023 general elections

Other than influencing county government decisions through social media, the radio as mainstream media was also used. For instance in Nairobi-Embakasi South-Mukuru Kwa Reuben, the SACs used Kwa Reuben FM and social media (Facebook-Kwa Reuben Ndio Mtaa and established WhatsApp groups) to influence community conversations on elections. The sustained conversations on leadership and role of community to elect responsible leaders lead to elections of the current young MCA in Kwa Reuben Ward. According to SACs, the MCA was given an opportunity in the radio and social media to articulate the agenda for the ward.

3.2.1.5 Fellows and SAC got into gainful employment

As reported by the evaluation participants, some of the Fellows and SAC got employed or were being involved as consultants. For instance, a fellow from Busia County has been receiving the invitation to facilitate discussions on the public participation in other counties such as Bungoma and Kakamega. In Bungoma County, the Fellow has been employed as Gender officer in the county government. The employment can be associated with visibility of the fellows as they conducted county engagement and social accountability forums at the village levels.

3.2.2 Negative Outcomes

From the evaluation, two negative outcomes were observed that need attention in the next phase of Imara Fellowship project as described below:

3.2.2.1 County Politicians and leaders issuing threats to the Fellows and Social accountability champions.

From the interviews with Fellows and SAC, it was reported that the county officials and politicians who felt threatened by the influence of Fellows and SAC had resulted in threats and intimidation. The Fellows and SAC across the target counties reported they fear for their lives due to tension between them and county officials as they follow up the uncompleted work. A case in point is where the Kericho governor in a public meeting, singled out the Imara Fellow who led most of the social accountability forums at ward level and was vocal in raising accountability issues. The governor warned the fellow in public to stop “attacking” him, while the Imara Fellow was rightfully creating awareness and seeking accountability of the county government on project implementation that were either abandoned, did not follow due processes of awarding tenders or poor workmanship of the projects.

3.2.2.2 Reported tension between Local leaders and Fellow and SAC

Public participation at ward /village level created awareness among the youth and general public. These forums made the Fellows and SAC popular among the youth and communities and perceived as the young leaders to help the communities face the county and national government. This popularity had a negative effect on the local leadership, especially local government administration who felt the Fellows and SAC had gained power to influence people more than them. This created tension between Fellows/SAC and local leaders.



4.0 LESSONS LEARNT AND BEST PRACTICES

From the project implementation at national, county and ward/village levels, the following were lessons learnt and best practices that can be used to improve the next phase of Imara Fellowship program.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

Double oversight role by the citizens: Empowered citizens can influence government decisions to act responsively. The beneficiaries of the project were empowered with civic knowledge on planning, budgeting and public participation. This made them raise the critical questions on county plans and county budget and implementation of the projects. By doing so, the members of the public played a double oversight role by oversighting the county executive and as well as the county assembly, which ought to oversight the county executive. This accelerated services delivery, improved accountability and transparency as demonstrated in the case of Obunga Dispensary in Railway Ward-Kisumu County.

Interactive Dialogue: The open conversations held between the county officials and citizens due to the Fellows' good working relationship with county officials yielded to better results as compared to combative and confrontational approach. For example, in Busia County, the senior administrator intervened for the Imara Fellows and SACs when the health staff had refused to give access information to Fellows and SACs because he understood the work of Imara Fellows on Social accountability.

Sufficient legal framework at county level: The Kenya constitution and legal framework has elaborately provided for accountability and transparency of governance processes. The law gives the citizen powers to oversight his/her governments (national and county) since all sovereign powers belong to the people of Kenya (Article 1 of the Constitution 2010) and can be exercised directly or through their elected representative (Article 1 of the Constitution 2010). Social Accountability engagement depends on existing context, legal framework, and goodwill of the county officials. Using the existing county laws in creating awareness made the community realize their rights and decide to collectively seek accountability and transparency of governance processes.

Upcoming general elections: The context of elections provided a platform for the target community to audit the county government performance and their elected representative. To some extent, since most of them were seeking re-elections or not seeking to be re-elected they cooperated with the social audits for their own political mileage.

Unique leadership skills by Fellows and SAC: As reported by the evaluation participation at county level, there was observable difference between Fellow and SAC from other youth leaders in the county. This shows the Imara fellowship program provided unique tools for social audits, leadership and engagement to the graduates.

4.3 Best Practices

The following were identified as the best practices that can be scaled up or replicated in the next phase of the Imara Fellowship program.

Timely initiative on training of Imara Fellows and SAC: The project was well timed within the electioneering, county planning and budgeting period. This prepared the target population to be aware of electoral and governance processes including planning, budgeting and how to track the plans and budget allocation. They were empowered to be critical and ask the right questions in the public debates for MCA aspirants but most important prepare and submit petitions and memoranda in public participation forums for planning (development of CIDPs, ADPs, CFSP etc) and in the county budgeting processes.

Use of Mass and social media for Social Accountability: The project beneficiaries used both mass media (Radio) and Social Media platforms (Facebook and WhatsApp) to create awareness and demand for accountability. This practice enabled the Imara Fellows and SAC to reach a wider section of their constituents effectively at a minimal cost. For example, the SAC in Kwa Reuben used both Kwa Reuben FM, Facebook and WhatsApp to pass information e.g. on planned public participation forums or trigger debates on elections, accountability and transparency of the county government.

Direct targeting and investing in people at Ward and county Level: The decision to implement activities at ward and county level was appreciated by the beneficiaries as the best way to reach out to the target population. The discussions for example Public Baraza were contextualized and were relevant to the people who attended the forums, since most of the issues discussed were emanating from the community. This also helped in cutting costs which are incurred when activities are organized outside the areas of the target population or within a hotel facility.

Youth and women involvement: In most cases governance projects and especially those that seek to antagonize the governance systems, leave the youth and women out. But this initiative was designed to address the challenges facing youth in public participation and their knowledge gap on the role of MCAs and the Ward Representative and on how county government works. Looking at the composition of the Imara Fellows Graduation Lists and activity participants lists implemented in phase, one can conclude that there was a deliberate effort to target the youth and balance between both gender-men and women.

Mixed advocacy strategy was effective: It was observed that the Imara Fellows and Social Accountability Champions used different strategies to engage the duty bearers and create awareness on social accountability issues. They used social audits, petition, and submission of memoranda, demand letters, dialogue and use of social platforms to create awareness or amplify an issue. This multifaceted approach contributed to the duty bearers' responsiveness, transparency and accountability since the public was able to track their contribution in planning and budgeting processes.

5.0 STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS ANALYSIS

The Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis was done to identify them from the evaluation findings. Box 4 contains those identified and need attention by the project team.

Table 3: SWOT analysis of Facilitation for Social Accountability Activities	
Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The creation of linkage between Imara fellows and county government was an innovation to reduce tensions when county officials are held accountable. • Empowered the community directly in planning and executing their plans on relevant accountability issues affecting them. • Reduced cost of funding for social accountability activities. They activities were planned and executed at Ward and Village levels and facilitated by Imara Fellow or Social Accountability Champions • Removed the tasks of financial and reporting from Imara Fellows and Social Accountability Champions • Use of social media as real time advocacy strategy that generated rapid response from the county government 	Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the partners (Siasa Place, ALYF and Mark Appeal) not clear in the project implementation • The coordination among the project team and activities was not visible understood how it was done. • Lack of monitoring and evaluation framework making it impossible to do adequate assessment of the project contribution to the outcomes. • Some beneficiaries observed that Siasa Place over-relied on and over-empowered the Imara Fellows at the expense of the larger groups of youth who benefitted from the project. • There was no special arrangement to facilitate People with Disability (PwDs), hence their limited participation in Imara Program activities. • Local leaders felt excluded from mobilisation and facilitation of the public forums
Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing social accountability champion groups and youth networks can strengthened for sustainability of the Imara initiative. • The existing healthy collaboration between county governments and assemblies on social accountability • Many civic education initiatives, advocacy groups and accountability networks by other organisations at county levels 	Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imara Fellows and SAC moving out of their counties/wards for studies or employment. • Tensions between the Fellows and SAC over influence at the community level • Threats by the county officials who feels targeted by the Fellow and SAC during the social accountability forums. • This will have an impact on sustainability of the initiative Likelihood of mistrust coming up, hence injuring the relationships that is critical in social audits and social accountability.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Building on the previous phases of the Imara Fellowship program, the current Phase was successfully implemented by Siasa Place, ALYF and Mark Appeal. The joint venture saw capacity building of additional 30 Fellows and SAC to the previous 250. This is a team of young leaders drawn from youth networks, youth groups and youth led organizations involved in organizing and engaging youth in governance and development initiatives. Use of the Imara Fellows and SAC through their local youth groups and networks contributed to the success of this project. Through the efforts of Imara Fellows and SAC, community-based engagement mechanisms were formed. The mechanisms include social accountability forums held at ward level, development of petition and memoranda to ensure they meaningfully participate in the county public forums and creating sustainable linkages between the Imara fellows, SAC and county officials especially ward administrators and village administrators. These mechanisms provided platforms for generating and sharing information on county governance and development processes, feedback and follow up of the county projects implementation and holding the county officials accountable. It is envisaged that through Imara Fellows and SAC and their groups and network, the community-based mechanisms will remain sustainable to continue engaging the citizens and county governments.

Through the social accountability mechanisms, the project achieved significant changes. They included citizens collectively taking actions to hold the county governments accountable especially on uncompleted projects and poor workmanship. The citizens engaged the county officials through petitions, memoranda and protesting. The citizens' actions were also amplified by social media and through the social accountability forums held at the ward levels. The evaluation also established that ward level public participation encouraged youth, women and other citizens to participate. The attendants of the ward administrators, village administrators and MCAs gave legitimacy to these public forums. In response, the county officials had to respond to the accountability issues raised. This phenomenon was observed across all the target counties. However, it was more pronounced in Busia, Kericho and Kisumu counties where social audits were conducted supported by the project.

Despite the successes achieved by the project, the project had some weaknesses that needed attention. One of the weaknesses was the weak coordination of the three partners. The evaluation findings show that it was not clear the role played by AYLD and Mark Appeal. Siasa Place was visible in all the project activities. The project also lacked a clear monitoring and evaluation framework that could have assisted the project in tracking changes. The evaluation also indicated that there was an element of exclusion of the People Living with Disability and local leadership. The over reliance of the Imara Fellows and SAC made them visible at community and county level creating tensions between them and local leadership.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are commendations for Siasa Place, ALYF and Mark Appeal to improve the next phase of the Imara Fellowship program.

- At the design stage, the roles of each of the partners should be clearly tied to the key results areas. This will facilitate effective coordination of the project team among the three partners.
- Developing a Theory of Change coupled with a clear monitoring and evaluation framework will enable effective tracking of change based on key performance indicators.
- Continue supporting the ward level public participation forums as an effective strategy to empower citizen and build advocacy and accountability movement in the target counties
- Imara Fellows to scale up to the rest of the target counties because their work has been found effective going by the work done in Kericho, Kisumu and Busia counties.
- Ensure inclusion of the women, PLWD, minority groups and local leadership in the public participation organized by the Imara Fellows and SAC.
- Siasa Place and partners to identify key county structures such as County Budget and Economic forum and county Budget and economic board where communities are represented and ensure Imara fellows either become members or channel the youth concerns.
- Intensive training of more Imara Fellows and SAC to continue engaging the county governments as a way of replacing those who have dropped out and move to other places to seek for employment.
- Use of social media as one of the digital advocacy strategies coupled with interactive dialogue to influence the county officials
- Need to give momentum to the Imara Fellowship Alumni to retain the members and make it more vibrant.
- Create awareness on the Legal aid mobile application to the general public and develop mechanisms of how free legal aid services can be accessed when needed by the youth and general public.

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