



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

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**A KNOWLEDGE-SHARING REPORT ON  
MAKUENI PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MODEL**



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## Abbreviations/Acronyms

AHADI	Agile Harmonised Assistance for Devolved Institutions
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
CoG	Council of Governors
CPRM	County Peer Review Mechanism
ECDE	Early Childhood Development and Education
GIS	Geographic Information System
IGRA	Intergovernmental Relations Act
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PMC	Project Management Committee
RRI	Rapid Results Initiative
SDGs	Social Development Goals
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UKAID	United Kingdom Agency for International Development



# Foreword

I am pleased to present this knowledge sharing report of the First Governors' Peer Learning Mission, which covered the Makueni County Public Participation Model.

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn.”

The Mission was a true reflection of these words by Benjamin Franklin, an American scientist and one of the founding fathers of the United States of America. Importantly, peer learning mission was a confirmation that the Council of Governors (CoG) was serious about fulfilling its mandate as per the Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2012 Section 20 (b). The section requires that the Council provides a platform for “Sharing of information on the performance of the counties in the execution of their functions, with the objective of learning and promotion of best practice and where necessary, initiating preventive or corrective action.”

Counties have been constantly learning from each other. Examples include Taita Taveta going to Makueni County and Makueni going to Lamu County to learn the process of developing county spatial plans. Such inter-county learning trips have proven that if the process is well-coordinated, counties will be better placed to share more innovations, initiatives and best practices among themselves.

The key thing that happened during the Makueni mission was experiential learning, which was led by the Excellency Governors. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the Excellency Governors and Deputy Governors who took part in this high-level experience sharing forum – the first in a series to follow.

What was even more amazing was the angle that the Peer Learning Mission took place in Makueni County. Public Participation is for the people and about the people, hence having the mwananchi-led Project Management Committees (PMC) take control in articulating the roles they play in ensuring the success of projects.

The Peer Learning Mission also confirmed the seriousness with which the CoG takes Devolution Conference resolutions. The Fourth Annual Devolution Conference in 2017, had resolved that counties should set up peer review mechanisms and partner with the civil society to ensure vibrant structures are put in place. In this regard, counties have initiated consultations with NEPAD/APRM to explore ways of domesticating the concept of Country Peer Review Mechanism to County Peer Review Mechanism to enhance county performance.

The peer learning approach integrates feedback and critiques of the models of public participation that have been adopted in our respective counties.

This report will, therefore, go a long way in helping county governments identify strategies and plans that will improve public participation. In this regard, I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Governor of Makueni County, H.E Prof Kivutha Kibwana, and the entire Makueni County fraternity for hosting the inaugural County Peer Learning Mission.

I also appreciate the partners, who have supported the initiative and the ongoing efforts in counties to improve public participation.

“Change is the result of all true learning.”

**CHAIRPERSON, COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**





# Preface

The objective of the County Peer Learning Mission in Makueni County was two-fold: -

- (i) To learn and share experience in mobilising effective participation of citizens in devolution-related activities in the counties.
- (ii) To improve knowledge on public participation, identify what works, what does not work and apply the lessons in other counties.

The Council of Governor's learning agenda is anchored in Section 20 of the Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2012. Part b of this section prescribes, "sharing of information on the performance of counties in the execution of their functions" to promote learning and best practice.

As a Council, we aspire to be an active learning organisation. Our overall strategy for implementing Section 20(b) of the IGRA 2012 was the establishment of Maarifa Centre to support all sector committees by coordinating systematic learning, documentation and sharing of good practices across all counties.

The theme of public participation is important for us for two strategic reasons: -

- i. Despite the progress made by all counties, the last five Devolution Conferences and a recent Governance Summit underscored the need to strengthen public participation. We must, therefore, reflect together, challenge ourselves and take action.
- ii. The Fourth Annual Devolution Conference 2017 resolved that counties should set up peer review mechanisms and partner with civil society to ensure vibrant structures are put in place. Hence, we counties have initiated consultations with NEPAD/APRM to develop a County Peer Review Mechanism (CPRM) model for enhancing county performance.

Following this mission, each County Government is expected to develop a plan for implementing priority actions for improving public participation mechanisms, structures and practices for effective delivery of services. Each Excellency Governor will identify one priority to be implemented and delivered within 100 days based on the Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) framework. This will enable us to share and celebrate the results of the implementation process in each subsequent peer learning mission.

With the support of the CoG sector teams and Maarifa Centre, county technical teams will have a separate session to process these priorities into crisp action plans. Counties will then implement, demonstrate and share results with Maarifa Centre. It is worth noting that the actions will also support the realisation of County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), the Big Four Agenda and SDGs, which we all admit cannot be attained without the effective engagement of citizens.

The next learning theme and host county shall be decided by the Excellency Governors themselves. Some areas of interest that have so far emerged include Increasing County Revenue Base; Accelerating the Big Four Agenda through Public-Private Partnerships; Solid Waste Management Models for Counties; Creating Employment for Youth and Women through Agribusiness; Transformation of ECDE and Vocational Training in Counties; and Climate Change Adaptation and Financing, among others.

I wish all governors speedy implementation of their priority areas of improvement.

**DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**





## Organisation of the Report

**T**his report is organised into six chapters. These are preceded by an Executive Summary of the knowledge arising from the Governors' Peer Learning Mission on public participation in Makueni County.

Chapter one presents the state of public participation in Kenya, highlighting the constitutional provisions and putting into perspective the extent of its implementation countrywide. The chapter points out the common challenges that need to be resolved to entrench public participation across counties, thereby justifying the importance of learning from Makueni County, which has registered impressive success in this area.

Chapter two explains the Governors' Peer Learning Mission concept. It puts it into context and provides a background on how the decision to initiate a county peer review mechanism arose.

Chapter three introduces the peer review mission in Makueni, detailing how it was planned and thereafter executed. It is in this chapter that the peer visit to Makueni and arising observations are detailed. This, together with Chapter four, form the core of this knowledge report as they contain the thrust of the peer learning mission in Makueni County. Chapter four explains the Makueni County public participation model to provide insights into the salient features that have made it a success. It offers key learning points for other Governors and county officials. Chapter five summarises these into "Makueni takeaways and recommendations".

The Last Word is carried in Chapter six, which is a compilation of observations and commitments by partner organisations that are keen to support counties towards entrenching public participation as a critical ingredient for strengthening devolution.



# Executive Summary

**T**he Council of Governors (CoG) recognises that that county governments can learn a lot from each other. It shows that peer missions are an important step in strengthening the foundation of devolution and building confidence in sharing solutions to challenges.

Peer-learning supports the implementation of the Performance Management Framework for County Governments. It is also significant for the successful realisation of the National Government's Big 4 Agenda, whose implementation will be done through the Counties.

On August 26-27, CoG, AHADI, the World Bank, Makueni County Government and other partners hosted a Governors' Peer Learning Mission in Makueni. The engaging visit was attended by a host of governors, deputy governors and other county leaders.

This inaugural mission marked the first important step towards institutionalising structured peer-to-peer learning, with Governors leading the process. The specific objectives of the mission were:

1. For visiting county officials to learn and share experiences in mobilizing effective participation of citizens in devolution-related activities.
2. For visiting county officials to improve knowledge on public participation and, using the Makueni County model, identify what would work for them and apply the lessons in their counties.
3. For Makueni County to receive feedback through peer reviews, critiques, and apply plausible ideas shared to improve its public participation approach.

The Governors Peer Learning Mission in Makueni involved discussions, exchanges of experiences, ideas and feedback, project visits and a public rally. Importantly, the visits to three key development projects – a fruit processing plant, a dam and a universal health care program – as initiated and overseen by the public in Makueni County, offered practical demonstrations of what an organised and structured public participation model could achieve.

The mission's overarching aim was to serve as an eye-opener for improving the implementation of public participation across the country. Makueni has an elaborate public participation structure and practice that offered important learning points.

## Makueni County Public Participation Model

The public participation model in Makueni County is an inclusive bottom-up system that involves the public from the village level to county headquarters. The public engages through elected development committee members representing villages, a cluster of villages, sub-wards, wards, sub-counties and the county.

The development committee members at every level are custodians of progress within their respective areas. Each committee comprises 11 members made up of men, women, youths, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups. They lead the development agenda and work in liaison with the County Government. Below is the structure:







## Makueni County Public Participation Structure

This structure has provided Makueni County with a solid foundation for comprehensively involving the public at inception, budgeting, implementation and oversight of development projects. Several activities go on through the structure to ensure they are functional. Following are some of the most insightful:

- The committees sit and deliberate together, and prioritise opportunities for development and the desires of the people. This guarantees that the projects desired by the people are the ones that get implemented.
- The lifespan of each development committee is three years. The committee members are selected based on integrity and leadership. Members are not political appointees. It is the citizens, who vote them in to support oversight in development projects.
- Youths and women are elaborately involved to incorporate their needs.
- The inclusion of the 'People's President' in high profile meetings with leaders in-charge of every sector and relevant authorities helps the public to actively participate in the entire project implementation.
- The peoples' attitude on public participation is so deeply entrenched that it is unlikely to change even with a new County administration.
- County Government officials go to the citizens to listen to their needs. That way, it is easier to let the public decide what the government does for them. The government also gets information in a more precise way to enable them to serve the public better.



- Public participation in Makueni County also involves the people in the diaspora, who put across their interests and priorities.

The witnessing of the Makueni model resulted in the following key observations: -

- Putting in place a strong structure from the village level to the county headquarters involving all segments of society in a bottom-up approach gives maximum recognition to what the people say and what they want.
- People become part and parcel of the process through committees on the ground approving all development projects conceived for implementation.
- It is important to establish ways to enable project committees to also participate in the implementation and to additionally empower them to source for funding from government and external development partners.
- Elimination of and overcoming challenges, including national government delays in financing, corruption and limited information, would help the country make up for the loss of progress since independence. More importantly, peer-to-peer learning should secure the future of devolution and the country to bring about the transformation, redemptive justice, development and unity that have been sought for decades.

In general, the Makueni peer review mission provided insights that resulted in the following outline being proposed for enhancing public participation in the counties:-

**Participatory Structures:** Counties should generate and work with local structures because contexts differ.

**Participatory Planning:** Meaningful participation requires all community members – men, women and youths – to be involved in project planning.

**Participatory Budgeting:** When all groups of people are involved in budgeting, they get to know what it entails. They thereafter become vigilant and play an effective oversight role.

**Participatory Management:** When wananchi are involved in the management of projects and initiatives, they develop a sense of ownership.

**Participatory Evaluation:** The public should be involved in project evaluation. They should give their approvals before contractors are paid.

**Continuous Empowerment of the People:** Participation must also involve giving people information, training and knowledge regularly for better performance.

**Integration of Technology:** Use of technologies such as GIS (Geographic Information System), Bulk SMS, PP/e Portal, Project Management System, Complaint Management System and more help to promote efficiency and enhance public participation.

*“Citizens engagement is the way to go. Makueni has become a benchmark ”*





## Situational Overview on Public Participation in Kenya

Participation of the people in development processes is critical for the sustainability of projects. Among other things, the participation of people, especially by involving them in decision making and in contributing time, ideas, materials and other resources, results in them identifying with the development initiatives. They can build capacities for their development and sustain initiatives that are in line with their aspirations.

Therefore, citizen participation at the county level, if well implemented, will strengthen democracy, governance, increase accountability, inclusivity and ownership.

Public participation is recognised in Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya as one of the country's national values and principles of governance. Further, Article 174 (c) provides that the object of devolution is to “enhance the participation of people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them.”

The Constitution further identifies sustainable development as a national value and principle of governance. Devolution and sharing of power are also identified therein as important governance values. All these imply that public participation is central in the operations of County Governments and must be upheld and promoted.

The County Governments Act (2012), Public Finance Management Act (2012) and Urban Areas and Cities Act (2011) are among laws that give prominence to public participation.

Therefore, relevant state institutions have to ensure that the citizens are engaged in all the public governance processes.

However, the actualisation of the constitutional promise and expectations on public participation has faced diverse challenges, some arising from inadequate skills and experience among County Governments. The challenges on how to effectively manage the processes, and others relating to limited appreciation of its usefulness or sheer apathy by members of the public. It has also been noted that in some regions, members of the public expect to be paid allowances to attend meetings, failure to which they stay away.

These challenges have hindered the realisation of meaningful engagement of the citizens in public governance processes in many counties.

Stakeholders involved in the implementation of devolution continue to emphasise the need to improve public participation in the Counties. The annual devolution conferences and the governance summits have repeatedly reviewed the state of public participation and noted the need to strengthen its basic foundation for greater realisation of its benefits beyond what is presently witnessed.

***“Public participation is not dependent on generosity.  
It is a constitutional requirement in Kenya.”***





## About the Governors' Peer Learning Mission

### Context and Background

In March 2018, the Council of Governors (CoG), with support from USAID-AHADI, convened a Governance Summit at Safari Park hotel in Nairobi.

During this forum, the leaders expressed both best practices and frustration with public participation. Most of the governors indicated that they were committed to actively engage the citizens, but their intention was hampered by diverse challenges. Top of these was that citizens were asking for money to turn up for public participation. Hence, low attendance marked the events. The governors further pointed out the poor representation of middle-income groups as another challenge.

On the other hand, some counties reported having registered remarkable developments in public participation. The Makueni County Governor, for instance, indicated that his county had overcome the challenges outlined above by creating structures for public participation from the grassroots level. He has ensured the needs and priorities of the citizens were included in the budget and implemented through citizen-led mechanisms.

From the meeting, it emerged that some best practices largely remained internal to the counties, where they happened, even as the country generally struggled with innovations on how to improve public participation.

AHADI saw this as an opportunity for counties to learn and share experiences on public participation and successfully influenced the Council of Governors to seize the moment and plan for joint learning to enable them to share and learn from one another.

This led to the decision to initiate a Governors Peer Learning Mission.

Also, CoG had established Maarifa Centre, a knowledge sharing and learning platform for capturing lessons, experiences and best practices among the 47 counties.

Moreover, CoG's Strategic Plan 2017-2022, under the Fourth Pillar, emphasizes "Knowledge-driven Performance". The Strategic Plan identifies peer learning as one of the strategies to implement knowledge sharing and realise improved performance.

This had been influenced by resolutions in the annual devolution conferences, which had repeatedly highlighted low levels of public participation as a serious challenge facing devolution. The national conferences recommended the need to improve the framework for civic education and public participation in county planning and development matters. They had further recommended conducting peer review and learning with the help of NEPAD, for the various County Governments to pick out best practices from others and ensure effective participation in devolution and service delivery.

These commitments had placed an obligation on governors as leaders of county governments to put in place effective mechanisms for meaningful engagement of citizens in the governance





of the counties. Peer learning is now one of the strategies that will enable county governments to deliver on this mandate.

The CoG consequently conducted the first peer-learning and experience-sharing mission on public participation in Makueni County. The two-day pilot mission took place on August 26-27, 2018. The overall objective was to launch and institutionalise structured peer-to-peer learning among counties, with Excellency Governors leading the learning process.

Steps leading to the Governors' Peer Learning Mission:-

- Annual devolution conference recommendations
- Conceptual meeting at Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi
- Forming interagency planning committee
- Regular meetings to develop program
- Concurrence with governors.

***“Cross-learning by County Governments is better and more cost-effective than spending millions of shillings overseas in benchmarking trips. This is a chance we should not squander”***





## Governor's Learning Mission in Makueni County

### Summary

The Governors' Peer Learning Mission on Public Participation in Makueni County was organised by the Council of Governors with support of USAID and UKaid through AHADI (Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions), the World Bank, and NEPAD. Its key objectives were: -

- To have counties learn and share experience in mobilizing effective participation of citizens in devolution-related activities in the counties.
- For visiting counties to improve knowledge on public participation and, using the Makueni County model, identify what works and what does not work; and apply the lessons in other counties.
- For Makueni County to learn from the good practices in public participation in other counties and apply them to improve its public participation approach.

The two-day event took place on August 26-27, 2018. It involved briefings, presentations, plenary discussions and exchange of ideas, project visits and a public rally at the end.

Makueni County officials and technical teams participated in all the stages. They played an instrumental role in guiding the mission and particularly the project visits. They helped put public participation into context, separating practice from theory and showing how it had worked for them. They helped clarify various dimensions of public participation as practised in different projects in the county.

The event was a success because the planning and the organisation had been meticulous.

### Planning the Mission

Officials from Makueni, the host county for the inaugural Governors' Peer Learning Mission on Public Participation, played a central role in conceptualising the event and in planning and hosting it.

Planners of the mission representing the CoG, AHADI, World Bank and NEPAD, held a series of consultations ahead of the visit to Makueni. They developed a structured programme to guide the mission and identified the projects to witness. The projects, it was agreed, would have a linkage to the Big 4 Agenda and bear evidence on the real value of public participation.

On the eve of the event, the team again collectively discussed the topic at hand – public participation – and put things into perspective by discussing the development projects that Makueni County had successfully implemented through involvement of the people.





The consultations helped to ensure that the mission would be enriched with interactions with local people, project committee members, and relevant county government officials.

### **Executing the Mission**

On August 27, 2018, attending governors, deputy governors, other county officials and representatives of a host of development partners gathered at Kusyombunguo Hotel in Wote town for plenary discussions on Makueni County Public Participation.

The discussions were preceded with two short videos: One by the World Bank on participatory planning, budgeting and monitoring for improved development and project implementation and the other, titled Makueni Rising: The Epic Journey, capturing participatory project prioritisation, planning, budgeting, implementation and oversight.

These set the tone for plenary deliberations in, which participants voiced diverse views around public participation, devolution and governance, having been briefed on the Makueni County Public Participation Model.

The learning team then set off to witness three projects that had been identified as models for use in illustrating the success of Makueni's public participation system: The Fruit Processing Plant in Kalamba; the Kwa Mbila Water Dam; and the Universal Health Care (Makueni Care) system in Wote.

The learning mission concluded with a public rally at the Wote Bus Park.

## **KEY OBSERVATIONS ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MAKUENI**

### **Voicing the benefits**

The two-day Governors Peer Learning Mission in Makueni County saw governors, deputy governors, senators, other county leaders and technical team members come together to observe, critique and discuss the Makueni County approach to public participation and the achievements it had realised, plus the challenges that deserved attention. It was also a learning opportunity for participants, including Makueni County officials through honest feedback from other county leaders.

The deliberations in this First Peer Learning Mission meeting largely focused on strengthening public participation and its influence in service delivery.

Notably, it was stressed that public participation encouraged communities to identify projects that were aligned to their needs and which fell within budget. Public participation further encouraged communities to get involved in project implementation, own the developments and witness or experience their benefits.

Furthermore, public participation has the effect of reducing project expenditure because people monitor project implementation on their own. They also demand the use of local resources and remain vigilant on how these are used.

Secondly, it became evident that Makueni had motivated people to participate in different projects without people demanding payments to attend meetings. This was viewed as an



important finding because demands for fees to participate in meetings are reported as a major challenge in many counties: People do not actively participate if they are not paid to do so.

Thirdly, public participation helps in identifying priorities for county development projects as envisioned by the voters and the citizens in general. It was pointed out that in Makueni, the prioritisation and implementation of universal health, fruit processing, and provision of water services had stood out as immediate needs. How they were implemented through public participation became practical peer learning opportunities for other counties.

Fourthly, the peer learning mission, structured for learning and sharing of information, exposed participating county representatives to both theoretical processes of public participation in projects and practical examples of how successful participation evolved.

Finally, it was noted that counties approach to peer learning would allow for wider inter-governmental learning. Counties would learn from one another, and so would the National and County governments share information on best practices for budgeting, conceptualizing, funding, and implementing projects.

These observations motivated participating counties to request to view all the projects that had been planned for field visits, rather than be made to choose one of them. They agreed it was necessary to learn from all the three projects, namely, the water dam, fruit processing, and universal health care. Thus, by visiting all the projects, all the participants got the opportunity to gain better perspectives on public participation in different aspects of development and service delivery under devolution.

### Observing the Benefits

Three County Government projects stand out in Makueni as notable examples of the successes of Makueni County public participation structure and approach. They are: -

1. Fruit Processing Plant, Kalamba.
2. Kwa Mbila Water Dam.
3. Universal Health Care (Makueni Care) – Wote.

#### Project 1: Fruit Processing Plant, Kalamba

The idea to start a fruit processing plant came from the people of Kalamba area, where fruits, especially mangoes, grow. The plan was to commercialise fruit processing and begin value addition to gain a competitive advantage.

The total funding for the project was Ksh800 million, implemented over five years from 2013/2014 to 2017/2018. The plant has an installed capacity of 5 metric tons per hour. Currently, it produces mango puree only, realising a total turnover of Ksh344,700,049 against a total cost of production of Ksh294,915,844.

Under the Makueni Fruit Development and Marketing Authority, the plant is benefitting over 100,000 households that grow mangoes in Makueni, and many more that are beginning to produce the same as a result of the expanding market.



The plant has seen the employment of 64 youth, with the figure expected to increase. It is additionally processing clean drinking water.

### Observations by the visiting team

The visit to the plant was an important learning point for especially governors from other fruit-growing regions. Some saw it as an inspiration to initiate similar factories. Others saw an opportunity to consider trade conversations with Makueni County concerning the additional supply of fruit during low harvest seasons in Makueni. The following two observations aptly captured these views:-

“We are trying to build a mango processing plant. In the meantime, we can sign an MoU with Makueni since I have so many mangoes.”

“This plant is a very grand project and valuable to boosting agriculture. Unfortunately, sometimes it doesn’t operate because of the lack of fruits.... We will talk to Makueni about offering a market to fruit farmers from other regions where the fruit is grown. Cross-county trade can greatly benefit from such economic ventures.”

### Project 2: Kwa Mbila Water Dam

Kwa Mbila earth dam is a development project identified at village level forums, prioritised at the sub-ward level and validated at ward level. The project is managed at the ward development committee unit, with a project management committee of the benefitting three wards.

The first phase of the program focused on providing water for domestic use and small scale irrigation, while the second phase included fencing off the dam, establishing water treatment centres and constructing water troughs for livestock.

The dam was constructed at a cost of Ksh7 million.

The peer learning team visited Kwa Mbila earth dam and interacted with leaders and members of the community that conceptualized, budgeted and implemented the project, and who continue to oversight its operations.

The participants heard from the public how the idea to have the dam came about. The public explained that the dam was created to resolve the challenges of accessing water in the area and a desire to engage in agriculture.

This site visit offered a practical experience on the workings and impact of public participation as had earlier been described during the panel discussions, as well as the benefits of the dam to the community. Importantly, the visit turned out to be a good opportunity to appreciate the role and value of public participation in minimising the costs of community projects. The project had been implemented at a relatively low cost because the people supervised its construction and insisted on the use of local resources.



## Observations by the visiting team

The striking lesson from this visit concerned the cost of its implementation concerning its importance and indeed impact on the local community. The following quotes ably capture this lesson:-

“Having learnt that this dam was constructed with only Ksh7 million as the result of public participation, yet similar projects in other parts of the country cost up to Ksh5 billion, I wish to commit that I will borrow the Makueni model and establish projects management committees from the village level to take charge of development projects in my county.”

“I am from a county with more than 13 natural dams, but which does very little agriculture. My immediate action is to bring agriculture officers and even youths to Makueni County to learn how to properly utilise such resources...”

“Having learnt that this dam was constructed with only Ksh7 million, I wish to state that there is a problem with costing of dams in the country since most of them cost more than ten times this one. The National Government, therefore, needs to continue learning the Makueni County public participation model as it is a better way for solving the theft of water resources.”

## Project 3: Universal Health Care (Makueni Care) – Wote

The setting up of a Universal Health Care (UHC) hospital in Makueni County was conceptualised and prioritised from the village level in 2015/16. Thereafter, it remained a priority at the cluster, sub-ward, ward, sub-county and the annual people’s forum. It was later on validated as a headquarters project and its implementation started in 2016/17. The project is up-scaled annually and reviewed under the Universal Health Care policy and concept.

### The objectives of the project are: -

1. To provide a health benefits package that includes inpatient and outpatient services to 200,000 households, besides some exempt services.
2. To invest in infrastructure, including ward health centres, mother and child hospital, trauma centre, oxygen plants and theatres across the sub-counties.

2018 is the second year of funding the UHC program received Ksh200,406,000 per year, with a 10 per cent annual increase.

## Outstanding Lessons from the Project

- Hospitals can be built in a shorter **time** than they usually take.
- Hospitals can be built for comprehensively **cheaper** than they are valued.
- Hospitals can be equipped through less **procurement bureaucracy**.
- Hospitals can be built within the **framework of devolution** and not just national government budgets and frameworks.
- Public engagement ensures oversight from planning, budgeting and on to implementation.



## Observations by the visiting team

To the visiting team, this project demonstrated how a combination of political goodwill and commitment, and involvement of the people provided a solid foundation for ably executing large scale and impactful projects at reasonable costs. Following are quotes expressing the common takeaways from the visiting team:-

*“Why haven’t we done this all these years, to at least help a poor woman deliver safely and with comfort, even at the national level?”*

*“I have learnt from Makueni County that we can procure commodities cheaper and faster through the National Government body, Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA). This is what I am taking home.”*

*“Makueni has launched an effective Universal Health Care program. We need to come and spend more time and learn about it. Is there a way all the 47 governors can meet together with the President, NHIF, and pool all resources to ensure all citizens access universal health care?”*

*“Public participation in Makueni is very structured and has been able to deliver universal health care. In my county, public participation is a challenge.”*

## Going back to the People: Wote Public Rally

The decision by the participants of the Makueni peer learning mission to hold a rally at the Bus Park in Wote was to provide direct feedback to the people to what the visitors had learnt of Makueni residents’ direct involvement in development. It also served as a moment of general engagement with the people as part of the learning mission.

While generally commending the Makueni residents for being at the centre of the development of the county, speakers at the rally made several useful observations. Key among them are captured in the following quotes:

*“This has been a practical learning experience for governors and national government on how to make projects work for the people who need them. We will ask our officers and technical experts to also visit Makueni on a learning tour to make it possible to implement the project, budgeting and oversight.”*

*“Because of the prudence of Makueni processes, we have learnt that open theft is happening in our counties, especially in purchasing of resources... We have also learnt that water dams, hospitals and fruit factories are ideal examples to emulate and that counties must promote cross-cultural and socio-economic integration of residents to realize full development.”*

*“This event is a valuable lesson in seeking advisers from among regular wananchi to support appropriate implementation of projects. The partnership between political leaders, including Members of Parliament, MCAs, Governors, Senators, Women Representatives, as in Makueni, is necessary for devolution to succeed.”*

*“Makueni is a good model and the reason for the World Bank to continue offering resources, including monies for public participation.”*

*“Makueni has taught us that it is possible to build a big dam (Kwa Mbila) with Ksh7 million. We are motivated and we will ensure that the Thwake multipurpose dam, which is underway, is completed so that it may provide people in Wote and the wider Ukambani with water.*





## Makueni's Public Participation Model

### People + Government = Development

**T**he public participation success that has been realised in Makueni County is the result of an elaborate model with practical structures that involve the people from village level to county headquarters.

The County Government trained 900 people through 30 civic education trainers. The 900 conducted massive training of citizens on the Constitution of Kenya, County Government and service delivery, and public finance management. The civic education prepared the communities for public participation. They came up with the mantra, “People + Government = Development”, stressing that they had seen development done by leaders but which did not mean anything to them because they had not been involved.

The people of Makueni, therefore, resolved that for development to be real and genuine, the government must work with them. Today in Makueni, the County Government employs technical expertise and resources to get the projects done. The underlying fact is that the development is driven by the people who say: ‘This wants we want, and this is how we want it done.’

In Makueni's public participation model, the village is the focal point of interaction of citizens. This is because village members tend to meet more regularly irrespective of whether the meeting is convened by the government or not.

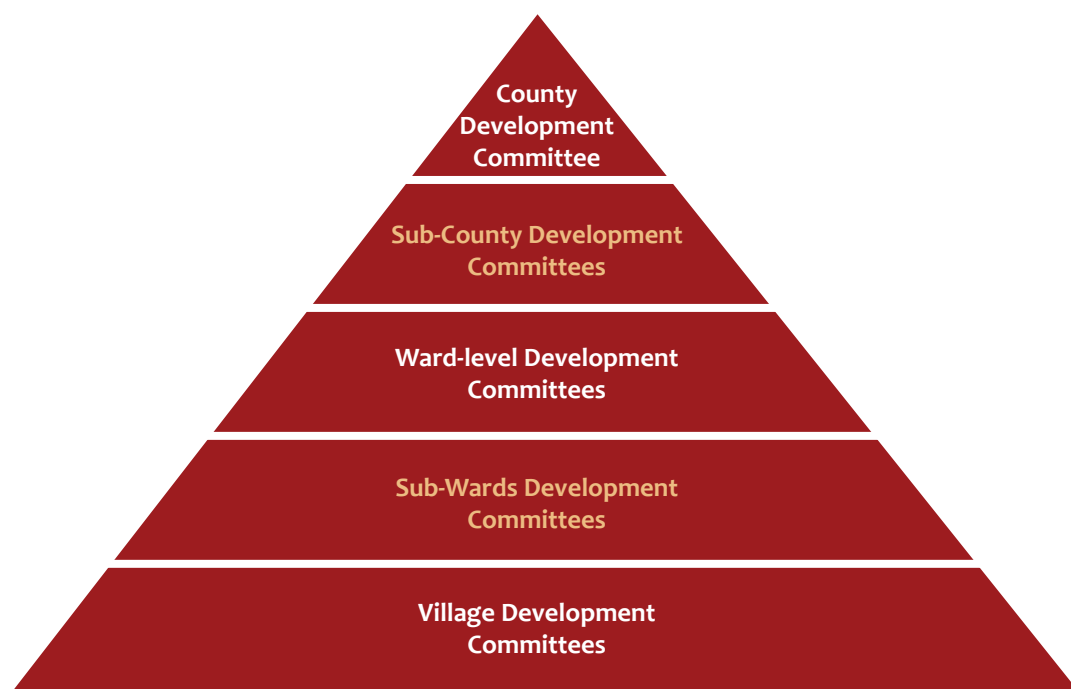
It was practical, therefore, to identify the village as the main entry point for public participation to infuse the ideals of good governance right from the grassroots level.

From this village level, the Makueni communities ultimately organised themselves and elected development committee members representing villages, the cluster of villages, sub-wards, wards, sub-counties and to the larger county level.

The development committee members at every level are custodians of progress within their respective areas. Each committee comprises 11 members made up of men, women, youths, people with disabilities, and other marginalised groups. They lead the development agenda and work in liaison with the County Government.







### Makueni County Public Participation Structure

This structure has provided Makueni County with a solid foundation for comprehensively involving the public at inception, budgeting, implementation and oversight of development projects. Several activities go on through the structure to ensure they are functional. Following are some of the most insightful:-

- With the frameworks from village to county level in place, the committees sit and deliberate together, and look at opportunities for development and the desires of the people. They prioritise and itemise projects and agree on what is possible within an implementation year. This helps to manage community expectations.
- Through this structure, citizens determine what they get as development and they control the process. They do not rely on individuals or County Government officials to determine and prioritise projects for them.
- The development committees and the mechanism set by the citizens guarantee that the projects desired by the people are the ones that get implemented. Should there be some misappropriation or political interference, the people of Makueni disown the project.
- Citizens interact with NGOs, advising them on projects that have not been funded. No one can influence projects chosen by mwananchi. They have the upper hand.
- Youth participation in projects is a product of county government sensitisation program for youth since 2014/2015 when public participation began. There have been improvements by the county to support the needs of the youth. The County



Government is sensitive to youth programs and projects in both budgetary and resource allocations.

- Women too are actively involved and included in County Government projects, especially those that directly concern them. Such examples include distribution of water tanks through merry-go-rounds to reduce the distances covered by women in search of water. Women are also engaged in civic and leadership activities.
- Most important about women and youth participation is that nobody gets paid any allowances to be involved in county forums. They are confident that if they participate, they get to own the project.
- There is a 30 per cent representation of women in the project management committees (PMC).
- The inclusion of the 'People's President' in high profile meetings with leaders in-charge of every sector and relevant authorities helps the public to actively participate in the entire project implementation. The citizens decide on who their leader should be and allow him/her to make key decisions on community projects, consistent with what the committee has prioritized.
- County Assembly members have an oversight role but cannot alter the trajectory of any development projects in the ward. They are also answerable to the public and conform to the desires of the people, ensuring that the projects prioritized are implemented to the letter. They know the community is the boss.
- Citizen participation and government relations in Makueni are pegged on the Constitution, with emphasis on Chapter one, which states that the power is derived from the people.
- The lifespan of each development committee is three years. The committee members are selected based on integrity and leadership. Members are not political appointees. It is the citizens who vote them in to support oversight in development projects.
- The peoples' attitude on public participation is so deeply entrenched that it is unlikely to change even with a new County administration.
- The sub-county development committee manages sub-county development matters. It is mandated to handle any grievances that arise from the abuse of resources, failed projects or corruption in project implementation. It can recommend actions to be taken against offenders, including stern decisions for prosecution.
- County Government officials go to the citizens to listen to their needs. That way, it is easier to let the public decide what the government does for them. The government also gets information in a more precise way to enable them to serve the public better.



- Public participation in Makueni County is all-inclusive and involves the people in the diaspora, who also put across their interests and priorities. Technology has made it easier for Makueni County diaspora to present their ideas on development through a public and professional portal within the County website.
- The public in Makueni is outspoken and articulate. They are happy to share their experiences.

*“Here in Makueni, people treat leaders as their employees. We summon them to meetings to discuss ideas. The decisions of the people cannot be changed. It is the community that is in charge of all the development.”*



# 5

## Makueni Takeaways and Recommendations

One of the general closing observations at the Governors' Peer Learning Mission in Makueni was the appreciation of public participation for its impact in providing room for accountability across the board while anchoring leaders' attention on development issues.

Governors, deputy governors and other county representatives expressed their perspectives on best practices in public participation, and also shared challenges and successes in varying contexts as summarised below:-

### Eye Openers

- The realisation of County Integrated Development Plans, the Big Four Agenda and SDGs cannot be attained without the effective engagement of citizens.
- Structured public participation models will ensure involvement at all levels and deepen devolution.
- Public participation is an avenue for access to more resources through inspiration from the successes scored in development program implementation.
- Public participation from project conceptualisation, budgeting, implementation through to oversight will ensure proper utilisation of funds and see to it that projects are completed at much lower costs than otherwise.
- With public participation comes ownership. With ownership, there will be no expectations for allowances upon attending public meetings.
- Active engagement of youths and women in setting the development agenda is a big plus.
- It is important too to integrate technology to manage data, expand information sharing and enable the contribution of ideas.
- There is a need to identify and document best practices on public participation and citizen engagement through Maarifa Center and share with all counties.

### Hindrances

- Nomadic movement, especially among pastoralist communities.
- Demands for sitting/listening allowances by public participants.
- Political conflicts among county leaders.
- Lack of a structured public participation system that is understood by all players.



## Propositions

The Governors' Peer Learning Mission in Makueni County saw the following suggestions being offered towards improving the initiative:

- Adopting different themes for successive peer learning missions. Possible themes include Increasing County Revenue Base; Accelerating the Big Four through Public-Private Partnerships; Solid Waste Management Models for Counties; Creating Employment for Youth and Women through Agribusiness; Transformation of ECDE and Vocational Training in Counties; and Climate Change Adaptation and Financing, among others.
- Counties to conclude consultations with NEPAD/APRM to develop a County Peer Review Mechanism (CPRM) and partner with civil society in establishing vibrant structures as resolved at the Fourth Annual Devolution Conference in 2017.
- It will be helpful for Governors and their technical representatives to visit development projects and spend more time learning best practices in other counties.
- Counties to involve the participation of the public in regional economic blocks to speed up development in the rural areas by leveraging on various resources such as tourism, agriculture, fishing, sports, infrastructure and many more.
- Subsequent peer learning missions should be for a longer duration to give ample time to visiting governors and other county representatives, including technical teams, to visit more development projects.

## Common Realities to be Aware of

**Gatekeepers:** There are many political campaigners in the villages. They filter information and set the agenda for political rhetoric and development projects. It is therefore important to protect 'people' participation processes from these 'gatekeepers'. Failure to keep off them has a danger of leading to the implementation of projects that do not address the needs of the ordinary person.

**External Controls:** People do not trust processes controlled from outside or imposed from above. The leadership must ensure that the community controls the results of development processes in a way that guarantees the fulfilment of the promises made.

**Abuse of Resources:** Resources for mobilising participation are affordable, but sometimes in disrepute because of misuse by either individuals or community groups. When abused, the extent of participation becomes limited; and the depth of involvement is low. All this negates the entire object of public participation.

**Inadequate resources to generate thoughts:** Although communities might have ideas for the projects they want, they may not have adequate resources to concretise the ideas. They may need technical experts to help crystalise their needs. Failure to provide experts in good time may lead to the desired project not being implemented to the expectations of the public, or even not going beyond the conceptualisation stage.



**Organ Institutionalisation:** When the process of public participation is not institutionalised, it may be personalised. And once the person in charge is unavailable in such a situation, the process is compromised or abandoned. Makueni County has learnt that institutionalising the process sustains public interest.

**Managing Expectations:** The process of public participation sometimes suffers the danger of high public expectations. For this reason, the process has to guard against unrealistic expectations by the community. The public must be guided on actual participatory realities without offering false hope, and with very feasible action plans, budgets and timelines.

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## Framework for enhanced public participation

### Insights from Makueni

**Participatory Structures:** Counties should generate and work with local structures because contexts differ.

**Participatory Planning:** Meaningful participation requires all community members – men, women and youths – to be involved in project planning.

**Participatory Budgeting:** When all groups of people are involved in budgeting, they get to know what it entails. They thereafter become vigilant and play an effective oversight role.

**Participatory Management:** When wananchi are involved in the management of projects and initiatives, they develop a sense of ownership.

**Participatory Evaluation:** The public should be involved in project evaluation. They should give their approvals before contractors are paid.

**Continuous Empowerment of the People:** Participation must also involve giving people information, training and knowledge on a regular basis for better performance.

**Integration of Technology:** Use of technologies such as GIS (Geographic Information System), Bulk SMS, PP/e Portal, Project Management System, Complaint Management System and more help to promote efficiency and enhance public participation.



# 6

## Last Word: Partner Observations and Commitments

Observations and recommendations coming from representatives of development partners included commitments to support peer learning, public participation and other processes aimed at realising the desired results of devolution. Following are excerpts that stood out:-

- **A different way of doing business:** Public participation was a way to do business differently and get better results, and that it was a good idea for Governors to learn from one another.
- **Participation Improves Delivery:** Participation in government development decisions would spur better results. Statistics now show a steady reduction in poverty. There is also an acknowledgement of improvement in service delivery in health and other sectors because of devolution.
- **Pro-people Development:** All organs of government must engage in programs informed by what the citizens want. Makueni's model is worth learning from because it provides opportunities for information dissemination to the residents.
- **Empowerment and Accountability:** Public participation is about empowering the citizens and letting them spearhead the process of devolution. It is not only about empowering them to make the right choices, but also enabling them to demand accountability.

*"Many Governors like appeasing MCAs and implement their priorities at the expense of the citizens. However, the best situation is that development projects should be implemented by the people and not the Governors" "Many Governors like appeasing MCAs and implement their priorities at the expense of the citizens. However, the best situation is that development projects should be implemented by the people and not the Governors"*

- **The growing role of Maarifa Center:** The World Bank will support Maarifa Center at the Council of Governors to document outstanding development initiatives under devolution so that counties can learn from each other.
- **More Resources for Well Performing Counties:** Public participation is an avenue for accessing more resources. Counties with good performance records will get support from partners such as the World Bank to improve on their effectiveness in service delivery.



- **Solidifying Legitimacy:** Participation of the people solidifies the legitimacy of the office of politicians, especially because citizens initially resist to take on certain issues, but as they learn the difficulties themselves, they appreciate the challenges their leaders sometimes encounter.
- **Self-reliance:** The capacity for counties to achieve self-reliance is going to be difficult until devolution disputes are mediated and addressed.
- **Economic Blocs:** The establishment of economic blocs helps counties to integrate their development agenda to improve livelihoods, especially where decision-making is data-driven. The USAID will support County Governments in managing data.







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