

CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DEVOLVED SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA

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Abstract

Developing countries and mainly those found in Africa like Kenya have no concrete outcome in as far a sustainable development is concerned. The usage of public participation has not come out clearly to illustrate how it has led to sustainability of projects. The study assesses challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance in Kenya. The study was conducted in Kericho, Bomet and Narok Counties. Analytical survey approach was used in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data which was subject to descriptive statistics. From the findings, it emerged that application of public participation faces some challenges, such as negative attitude towards it, lack of willingness of the public to participate, lack of political goodwill, lack of capacity to participate, political interference influence the extent and quality of participation, demand for incentives and lack of time by the citizens. The study recommends that, there is need to change the mindset of the general public and the leadership; so as to improve their attitudes towards public participation and increase their willingness to participate.

Keywords: Public Participation, Challenges of Participation, Devolution, Devolved Governance, Project Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has been on the international agenda for decades, yet difficulties persist in developing an effective regime to address it. Problems with developing an effective legal regime to address sustainable development began in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (NESC, 2009). The outcome of the conference was a document entitled “The Future We Want” (The WWF and Global Footprint Network, 2010). In 2002, the United Nations convened the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. WSSD’s main contribution to the sustainable development regime was adding a third pillar to the concept of sustainable development. Along with environmental protection and economic development, social development became a recognized element of sustainable development (Trócaire, 2009).

According to Bullock, Kretch & Candon (2008) and Forfás (2010) developing countries view sustainable development as a means of socio-economic upward mobility that will help solve their problems with poverty. Developing countries approach sustainable development from the viewpoint of a need within their countries for socioeconomic upward mobility, (OECD, 2010). Poverty eradication and efficient delivery of public services in Kenya and other developing countries has for long been hindered by highly centralized governments. Recognizing the need to achieve high economic growth and reduce poverty-related inequalities, Kenyans persistently pushed for enhanced decentralization of governance and development (Wanjohi, 2003). The Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (2003-2007) outlined interventions and strategies for reducing poverty aimed at enhancing access to benefits of economic growth by the most disadvantaged members of the society. This has resulted in disbursement of financial resources directly to Districts, Constituencies and Local authorities (Republic of Kenya, 2003). However, in a study by Mapesa and Kibua (2006) it was observed that though well intentioned, the fund(s) lacked proper direction and a system-based mechanism for implementation. The programme was initiated and implemented without adequate preparedness in terms of sensitization and creation of organizational structures and capacities, and development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This led to devolution, which is devolvement of functions and resources to the local county government. Devolved governance in Kenya was anchored in the new constitution which was adopted in the year 2010.

White defines public participation as an active involvement of the local population in decision-making concerning development projects and their implementation, White (1992). In development planning and implementation, people as citizens and consumers of the services are the most valuable resource, since they know and understand their needs and how such needs can be met. This definition is supported by the United Nations Department of Economic

and Social Affairs (UNDESA) which further highlights that in public participation, people themselves are afforded an opportunity to improve their conditions of living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative, Davids (2005). Public participation is a useful tool to promote the involvement of the public in governance. The World Development Report (2000), states that governments at all levels have begun to understand the importance of inclusive, participatory and consensual models of public participation. As a result, various strategies are applied to consult and engage with members of the public in progressive nations across the globe.

While the global drive towards promoting public participation holds considerable promise and benefits for sustainable development, the implementation of public participation approaches is not without challenges. For example, the more sensitive the issue, the less likely that consensus will be reached. According to Sisk (2001), the World Bank study on participation in practice identified the following key challenges to effective public participation in planning, Sisk (2001):

- Lack of governments' commitment to adopting a participatory approach: Public participation is often seen as a time consuming process.
- Unwillingness of the project officials to give up control over project activities and directions: Officials are often not receptive and do not acknowledge the importance of citizens' views. This is because officials consider themselves experts in their field.
- Lack of incentives and skills among project staff to encourage them to adopt a participatory approach: Public participation requires a set of skills amongst officials to be able to interact with diverse communities and understand dynamics of the society. Without incentives, officials do not go an extra-mile to involve the public. Lack of community engagement skills also compromises effective public participation.
- Limited capacity of local-level participation and insufficient investment in community capacity building.

Other challenges include among others, resource constraints; abuse of participatory structures by community elites and opportunists; marginalization of communities from decision-making; legitimacy of structures, through which the public participates. In addition, lack of transport for members of the public to attend public participatory forums and utilization of ward committees as platforms is also a challenge.

Research Objective

The objective of the study was to assess the challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development

LITERATURE REVIEW

Devolved Governance

Devolution is considered a form of political decentralization, involving a full transfer of responsibility, decision-making, resources and revenue generation to a local level of public authority that is autonomous and fully independent from the devolving authority. Decentralization is often linked to concepts of participation in decision-making, democracy, equality and liberty from higher authority (Dutta, 2009). The objectives of devolution in Kenya are stated under Article 174 of the Constitution (Republic of Kenya, 2010) and they are:

- a) To promote democratic and accountable exercise of power;
- b) To foster national unity by recognizing diversity;
- c) To give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance the participation of the people in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them;
- d) To recognize the right of communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development;
- e) To protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities;
- f) To promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya;
- g) To ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya;
- h) To facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya; and,
- i) To enhance checks and balances and the separation of powers.

To achieve the objects of devolution, the key building blocks, founded on effective citizen participation, devolved governance will require effective political parties, operations founded on ethics and values, effective development planning, a skilled human resources and sustainable funding as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Objects of Devolution



Source: Report of the Force for Devolved Government, TFDG (2011)

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 seeks to ensure effective citizen participation in all facets of governance, to which the county governments must respond. According to Report of the Task Force for Devolved Government, TFDG (2011) the new constitution seeks to reverse the centralized non participatory governance paradigm by institutionalizing an embracing governance system and a leadership with integrity. It does this primarily by: establishing an enabling normative framework; creating relevant governance institutions; creating checks and balances on the exercise of executive power; providing for facilitative legislation; enhancing public participation in governance as a bulwark against abuse of power and tightening the process of recruitment, and retention of critical public officers. The system combines self-governance and shared governance at the local and national levels respectively. The essence of this is that at the local level the people are allowed a certain flexibility within which they can make decisions that are unique to themselves and their locality.

Public Participation

Public participation is the involvement of all parties who may potentially have an interest in a development or project, or be affected by it. It is an empowering process which enables local people to do their own analysis, take command and gain confidence (Chambers, 2002). Public participation may be advanced as part of a “people first” paradigm shift, that public participation can sustain productive and durable change (Mdunyelwa, 2008).

Public participation is seen as a form of empowerment and is a vital part of democratic governance. It is part of a ‘people first’ or ‘people centered’ methods of management, which avoids centralized, hierarchical decision-making. Participation is important because practical experience on the ground shows that it establishes the necessary sense of ownership. Generally people tend to resist new ideas if these are imposed on them, (Odhiambo and Taifa, 2009). The Kenyan constitution 2010 provides viable proposals aimed at achieving participatory governance. It is, however, critical to observe that devolution in itself will not enhance ‘automatic citizen participation’, (Republic of Kenya, 2010). First, it will be imperative that adequate civic education and awareness is provided so that citizens understand their responsibilities in a devolved system. Scholars have cited lack of capacity of many of the actors in developing countries as the reason for governments’ resistance to participation by the poor, who generally, have limited education, low literacy levels and hence deficient understanding of the policy process (Anwar, 2007). Hence, civic education is necessary and urgent.

“Public participation” and “sustainable development” have become central and interconnected terms in present day development discourse. According to Economic Clpommission of Africa, ECA (2004), “public participation” has been proposed as an essential

pre-condition for sustainable development. “One of the fundamental prerequisites of the achievement of sustainable development”, states Chapter 23 of Agenda 21 (the declaration emerging from the 1992 Rio de Janeiro UN Conference on Environment and Development), “is broad public participation in decision-making.” Public participation in decisions about development is fundamental to achieving lasting and sustainable solutions. Modern democratic life requires an active role from the members of the public. Participation transforms the democratic system, energizing it, by creating a permanent connection between the governed and those who govern. The joint venture permits more reasoned decisions (being these the product of a higher consensus), enables a better understanding of the problems that preoccupy a society, and allows the two parties to work cooperatively towards possible solutions leading to sustainable development. Public participation allows government actions to become transparent, effectively avoiding corrupt behaviors.

Legal provisions for Public Participation

Our Constitution makes citizen participation a central part of Kenya’s governance system. Participation of the people is recognized in Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya as one of our 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.”* Article 184 (1) (c) also requires that mechanisms for participation by residents be included in the national legislation relating to urban areas and cities governance and management, Republic of Kenya (2010). The centrality of public participation cannot therefore be over-emphasized.

The rationale of public participation is based on the foundation that the people of Kenya have sovereign power which they have delegated to state actors at the national and county levels. The sovereignty must be respected and institutionalized in all processes of governance. The Constitution of Kenya demands transparency, accountability, participation and inclusiveness in governance. The County Government Act, Kenya (2013) and other devolution laws mandate county governments to engage citizens in planning and policy making processes, facilitate public communication and access to information, establish citizen fora and conduct civic education, among others.

The Constitution provides for the participation of the public in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions through indirect and direct involvement of the people in the process of policy making (Article 232. (d) and participation in the legislative business of the National Assembly, Senate and County Assemblies. (Article 118 (1) (a) (b), 124.(1) (b), 124. (4) (c), 196. (1) (a) (b). The point is to fortify the entailed Constitutional gains through practically

consistent legislations. Article 196 of the Constitution further provides for public participation in the proceedings of the County Assembly, Republic of Kenya (2010). This will enhance responsible governance and accountability to the people as well as community-based monitoring and advocacy for transparency and accountability. Closely related to leadership and integrity, are the national values and principles of governance that should guide us as a country and as individuals in spirit and practice. These are defined in Article 10 (2) of the Constitution. Some of constitutional and legal provisions for public participation are shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Constitutional and legal provisions for public participation

Article 1(2) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010	All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya. The people may exercise their sovereignty directly or through their elected representatives.
Article 10 (2) a, b and c	The national values and principles of governance include; democracy and participation of the people; inclusiveness; good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability.
Article 27	The Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination. Hence, public participation should ensure equality and non-discrimination.
Article 33	Public participation should respect the freedom of expression of all participants.
Article 35	The Constitution guarantees the right to access information by citizens
Article 174(c)	Objects of devolution are; to give powers of self-governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of such powers in decision making.
Article 174(d)	Communities have the right to manage their own affairs and to further their development.
Article 184(1)	National legislation shall provide for the governance and management of urban areas and cities and shall provide for the participation of residents in the governance of urban areas and cities.
Article 232(1)(d)	The values and principles of public service include the involvement of the people in the process of policy making and (f) transparency and provision to the public of timely and accurate information.
Fourth Schedule Part 2(14)	The functions and powers of the county are to coordinate and ensure the participation of communities in governance. Counties are also to assist communities to develop the administrative capacity to enhance their exercise of power and participation in governance at the local level.
The Public Finance Management Act Section 207	County Governments are to establish structures, mechanisms and guidelines for citizen participation.

County Government Act Section 91	The county government shall facilitate the establishment of modalities, and platforms for citizen participation.
The County Government Act Sections 94, 95,96	Counties are to establish mechanisms to facilitate public communication and access to information using media with the widest public outreach. Every county shall designate an office for ensuring access to information
County Government Act Sections 100 and 101	County governments should create an institutional framework for civic education.
Urban areas Act Sections 21 and 22	Overarching theme is participation by the residents in the governance of urban areas and cities. The Second Schedule of the Act provides for the rights of, and participation by residents in affairs of their city or urban areas.
Public Procurement and Disposal Act 2015 Section 68(3), 125(5), 138, and 179	Emphasis on transparency of the procurement process including requirements for procuring entities to publicly avail procurement records after closure of proceedings, publicise notice of intention to enter into contract on websites and public notice boards and publish and publicise all contract awards.

Source: Ministry of Devolution and Planning (2016)

The overall responsibility to facilitate and report on public participation in the county government is on the Governor of the County Government. This is to be done through the various departments and agencies of the county and at all levels of decentralization (Sub-county, ward, village, urban and city areas). In the case of the County Assembly, the responsibility is on the speaker of the County Assembly and Chairpersons of various Committees of the House. The legal provisions for the same are as follows, According to County Government Act, Kenya 2013:

Governor: As per Section 30(3) (g) of the County Government Act, the Governor should promote and facilitate citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery in the county.

County Executive Committee: Section 46(2) (g) of the County Government Act provides that the County Executive committee should bear in mind the need for an all participatory decision making.

Sub-County Administrator: Under Section 50(3) (g) of the County Government Act, the Sub county administrator is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the Sub-county including the facilitation and coordination of citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery.

Ward Administrator: Under Section 51(3) (g) of the County Government Act, the ward administrator is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general

administrative functions in the ward including the facilitation and coordination of citizen participation in the development of policies, plans and service delivery.

Village Administrator: Under Section 52(3)(a)(I) of the County Government Act, the village administrator is responsible for the coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the Sub-county including ensuring and coordinating the participation of the village unit in governance.

County Assembly: Article 196 of the Constitution provides that the County Assembly should facilitate public participation and its involvement in its committees, the legislative and other business of the assembly.

Urban Areas and Cities: Section 21(1) (g) of the Urban Areas and Cities Act empowers boards of cities and municipalities to ensure that residents participate in decision making, its activities and programmes. Section 22 establishes that residents of a city, municipality or town may actively be involved in policy and law making plus service deliveries in their respective areas.

County Executive Committee member for finance: Section 125 of the Public Finance Management Act provides the involvement of the public in the budget making process.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted through analytical survey approach. In analytical research, the researcher has to use facts or information already available, and analyze these to make a critical evaluation of the material. Analytic surveys (also known as theory-testing or explanatory surveys), which aim to test theories about a phenomenon by examining and testing the associations between variables. The target population for this study was 1,051,077; adults who are 18 years old and above residents of the three counties i.e. Kericho, Bomet and Narok Counties. This study employed proportionate stratified random sampling for members of the public who responded to questionnaire. The respondents to questionnaires were the residents of the three counties who were 18 years and above.

The sample size was determined by the formula suggested by Fisher, *et al* (1983) in Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) for estimating sample sizes in social surveys as shown below;

$$n = \frac{Z^2pq}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

The total population of persons who are 18 years and above in the three counties are 1,051, 077; this are more than 10,000, therefore according to Fisher, *et al* (1983) the sample size will be 384. The sample size per county was distributed proportionately as shown in the table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample Size per County

County	Adult Population (18 years & above)	Percentage (%)	Sample Size	Percentage (%)
1 Kericho	350,767	33.4%	128	33.3%
2 Bomet	330, 992	31.5%	121	31.5%
3 Narok	369, 318	35.1%	135	35.2%
Total	1,051,077	100%	384	100%

The Table 1 above shows, a sample size of 128 was picked from Kericho County, 121 from Bomet County and 135 from Narok County for purposes of answering questionnaires.

Questionnaires and document analysis were used as the main tools for collecting data. The quantitative data was obtained through closed-ended questionnaires and data analysis was done using the SPSS. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and presented in table.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to assess the challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development. To achieve this objective, the respondents were asked to respond to several statements intended to describe challenges of integrating public participation for sustainable development in the devolved system of governance in Kenya.

The respondents to the questionnaire were asked to respond to the question, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements as the challenges of using public participation by the county government/assembly for sustainable development? They were given choices to tick; Strongly Disagree- 1, Disagree- 2, Undecided- 3, Agree- 4 and Strongly Agree- 5. The findings are as shown in the table 3 below.

Table 3: Challenges integrating public participation in the county

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Majority of the public are not aware about participation meetings when they take place	316	1.0	5.0	3.525	1.1308
Majority of the public have no capacity to participate or they don't understand what they are suppose to in such forums	316	1.0	5.0	3.747	1.0044

Table 3...

There are no designated or fixed venues for public participation and majority of the public cannot be reached because of their location	316	1.0	5.0	3.487	1.0615
Political inclination influence the extent and quality of public participation and not everyone's views are taken in	316	1.0	5.0	3.782	1.0419
Some members of the public demand for meals, refreshments, fares etc during public participation meetings	316	1.0	5.0	3.513	1.1858
Lack of time by the citizens to attend public participation forums	316	1.0	5.0	3.639	1.1476
The language used, for example, in budget making is too technical for common citizens	316	1.0	5.0	3.427	1.2540
Citizens are given short notice about public participation forums and inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals	316	1.0	5.0	3.481	1.3224

The table 3 above shows that majority of the public are not aware about public participation meetings when they take place; has a mean of 3.525 and standard deviation of 1.1308; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. The majority of the respondents think that the public are not aware about public participation meetings; this could be because most county governments do not communicate to the public effectively. Most county governments inform the public about public participation forums through daily newspapers adverts of which majority of the public cannot access them and they also use announcements through local radio stations once or twice a day yet many may not be in a position to listen to the radio. The best mode of communication is through posters which can be placed in the markets places or pathways and by use of public address systems mounted on cars which can move from market to market or village to village mobilizing residence to attend the public participation forums. There should be continuous communication and dissemination of information on what is going on in the county, engage the right stakeholders especially the opinion leaders and experts, have good timing of public participation meetings so has to have key stakeholders attending, formulate/have civic education bill or laws, assembly to be in touch with the public by use of media and public barazas etc.

The public have no capacity to participate or they don't understand what they are suppose to do in such forums; has a mean of 3.747 and standard deviation of 1.0044; which

means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents think that the public have no capacity to participate or they don't understand what they are supposed to do in public participation forums. This shows that most county governments have not carried out civic education to enlighten the public on the need for public participation, what is done in public forums and why they should participate in such forums. There is need to empower the public by giving the information and documents containing information on development activities and legislations that require their input in advance so that they know and understand what they are coming to do in public forums. They will be able to prepare their questions and contributions in advance before the actual meeting.

Most county governments invite the public for public participation forums without giving them enough information and necessary documents in time, hence few people turn up for the meeting and even those who turn up may not ask questions or make adequate contributions because they are getting information for the first time. The officers interviewed said that they normally post the necessary documents in the county governments or assemblies' websites for the public to access and download; but not many people have the capacity and resources to visit the websites and download the said documents. Scholars have cited lack of capacity of many of the actors in developing countries as the reason for governments' resistance to participation by the poor, who generally, have limited education, low literacy levels and hence deficient understanding of the policy process (Anwar, 2007).

There are no designated or fixed venues for public participation and majority of the public cannot be reached because of their inaccessibility or inability to locate the venue: has a mean of 3.487 and standard deviation of 1.0615; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents believe that there are no designated or fixed venues for public participation and majority of the public cannot be reached because of their inaccessibility or inability to locate the venue. This has also contributed to the low attendance of public participation forums because most county governments and county assemblies hold their public participation forums in place that sometimes are not well known and sometimes they keep on changing venues leaving the public not knowing where to go. Some counties hold their public participation meetings only in the county headquarters; for example in the social halls which are not known by people from the rural area who may not even travel due to lack of transport facilitation. There is need designate many places where public participation forums can be hosted and these venues should be located at the ward level if not village level; this will ensure majority of the public attend.

Political inclination influence the extent and quality of public participation and not everyone's views are taken in; has a mean of 3.782 and standard deviation of 1.0419; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents believe that political inclination influence the extent and quality of public participation; and sometimes not everyone's views or contribution is taken in. In some counties, during public participation, elected leaders tend to discriminate against those who did not vote for them or those who have different ideologies; such that only those who are politically correct are allowed to air their views and when they do so they gives views as per the wishes of the politicians or in praise of the politicians. This discourages people who have genuine concerns or good ideas from raising them during the meetings. Some politicians transport their cronies to the public forums so that they can shout down their perceived political opponents and ensure that only their views are taken in, this has sometimes ended in public demonstrations and fights between rivals groups.

Some members of the public demand for meals, refreshments, fares etc during public participation meetings: has a mean of 3.513 and standard deviation of 1.1858; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents believe that members of the public demand for meals, refreshments, fares etc during public participation meetings; this is because majority of the citizen are poor and therefore they feel they must be compensated for leaving their work to attend public participation forums. This is also contributed by the organizers of the meetings who host them in few venues that are far apart hence making it expensive for participants to attend and also the meetings don't start on time, meaning they have to hold people for many hours therefore people will demand for refreshments, meals and fares back home.

There is lack of time by the citizens to attend public participation forums: has a mean of 3.639 and standard deviation of 1.1476; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents believe that most of the citizen lack of time to attend public participation forums this is because most of them are busy trying to eke a living and therefore finds attending such meetings as a waste of time and resources. The county government should organize the forums in such a way that most citizens will attend; these forums should happen during weekends or market-days where people are free to attend.

The language used, for example, in budget making is too technical for common citizens; has a mean of 3.427 and standard deviation of 1.2540; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents think that the language used, for example, in budget making

is too technical for common citizens to understand what the facilitators are talking about. The public participation documents should be translated to local language, Kiswahili or simple English avoiding technical jargons and vocabularies that will put off the common citizens; it can also be translated orally during presentation; therefore translators should be employed by county governments for purposes of public participation.

Citizens are given short notice about public participation forums and inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals: has a mean of 3.481 and standard deviation of 1.3224; which means majority of the respondents agrees with the statement and their responses are not so dispersed from the mean. Majority of the respondents think that citizens are given short notice about public participation forums and inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals which may not reach them. Public participation organizers in some counties put notices of public forums few days to the d day hence majority of the citizens may fail to attend or prepare adequately for the said activity. There is need to put the notice of public participation at least two weeks in advance and then keep on reminding the public otherwise majority will forget; the adverts and announcements should be in popular media such as local radio stations, daily newspapers, posters and use of public address to remind the public and mobilize them for the meetings.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the following are challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved governance for sustainable development: negative attitude towards public participation; lack of willingness of the public to participate; lack of political goodwill; lack of awareness of participation meetings; lack of capacity to participate; lack of designated venues; political interference/inclination influence the extent and quality of participation; demand for incentives; lack of time by the citizens; the nature of language during public meetings; and citizens are given short notice about public participation forums and inadequate time to reflect on development plans/proposals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve public participation, the following recommendations should be followed by county governments to overcome challenges facing the use public participation for sustainable development: develop positive attitude by the public towards public participation by explaining to them the benefits of public participation; county government leaders to provide political goodwill towards public participation, this can also be achieved if the citizens elect good leaders-governors and MCAs; increase awareness and provide adequate information on public

participation; improve capacity of the public to participate through civic education; have a designated and accessible venues for public participation; practice objectivity and political tolerance/neutrality for quality of deliberation; provide incentives; use simplified language; and give a long notice about two to four weeks about public participation forums to give enough time to reflect on development plans/proposals.

FURTHER STUDIES

The study basically assessed the challenges of integrating public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development in Kenya. Public participation is a very broad area and therefore further research could be conducted on the following areas: explore strategies on how to improve public participation in the devolved system of governance for sustainable development

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