

MEMO ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION CHALLENGES IN ISIOLO COUNTY

To: The Clerk, Isiolo County Assembly
From: Isiolo County Youth Champions
Date: 23-12-2024

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09 JAN 2025

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF ISIOLO

Subject: Addressing Public Participation Gaps and Enhancing Inclusivity in Isiolo County

1. Introduction

This memo highlights the pressing challenges undermining public participation in Isiolo County and proposes actionable recommendations to strengthen community engagement. Public participation is a constitutional mandate under Article 196 of the Kenyan Constitution and the County Government Act (2012). However, its implementation in Isiolo County remains inadequate, with key issues such as poor forum advertisement, lack of access to budget documents, and minimal inclusivity for youth and persons with disabilities (PWDs).

2. Key Challenges

2.1. Lack of Advertisement for Public Participation Forums

- Public participation forums are rarely advertised effectively, leading to low community awareness and turnout. This contravenes legal requirements for public involvement in decision-making processes.

2.2. Non-Disclosure of Budget Documents

- Official budget documents, which are legally required to be accessible on the county website, are not consistently posted. This limits transparency and accountability, hindering citizens from effectively engaging in fiscal matters.

2.3. Lack of Inclusivity

- **Youth Exclusion:** Young people face barriers to participation, including insufficient platforms, lack of facilitation, and tokenism in engagement. As a result, the voices of the youth, who comprise a significant portion of the population, remain unheard in decision-making processes.
- **Exclusion of PWDs:** Public participation forums often fail to accommodate the needs of PWDs, such as accessible venues and communication aids, further marginalizing this group.

2.4. Politicization of Public Participation Forums

- Public participation forums are frequently transformed into political platforms, undermining their intended purpose of genuine community engagement. This deters meaningful contributions and alienates stakeholders.

3. Proposed Interventions

3.1. Enhance Advertisement and Awareness

- Adopt diverse communication channels, including community radio, social media, and local leaders, to advertise public participation forums well in advance.
- Publish detailed schedules of forums on the county website and noticeboards in accessible locations.

3.2. Ensure Transparency

- Regularly update the county website with official budget documents, reports, and other key governance materials, as mandated by law.
- Simplify budget documents to make them more comprehensible to the public, enabling informed participation.

3.3. Promote Inclusivity

- Establish youth-specific forums to ensure meaningful involvement of young people in county planning and decision-making.
- Ensure public participation venues are accessible to PWDs by providing ramps, sign language interpreters, and accessible communication materials.

3.4. Depoliticize Public Participation

- Develop guidelines to ensure public participation forums focus on community engagement and decision-making rather than political agendas.
- Train facilitators on managing forums to ensure neutrality and inclusivity.

4. Expected Outcomes

- Increased awareness and attendance at public participation forums due to improved advertisement and transparency.
- Greater inclusivity of youth and PWDs in county governance, fostering equity and representation.
- Strengthened trust between the county government and residents through enhanced transparency and accountability.
- Depoliticized forums that encourage genuine community-driven solutions and engagement.

5. Conclusion

We call upon the Isiolo County Government to urgently address these challenges and prioritise the above recommendations. Strengthening public participation mechanisms will not only comply with legal requirements but also empower residents to actively contribute to Isiolo County's development.

We remain committed to collaborating with the county government to achieve these goals.

Signatories: Isiolo County Youth Champions

Copy: County Secretary, Isiolo County



PATHWAYS



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

PROGRAMME _____ DATE _____

ACTIVITY: _____

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Recorded by: Lucky Namungira Sign Date 13/12/2024

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