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UNDP Support to Devolved Governance in Kenya

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This collection of documented stories was made possible by our valued development partners: the UK Department for International Development (DFID), USAID, and the Governments of Sweden and Norway. Their support to the devolution process in Kenya during its nascent phase has been critical to devolution's success and the voices in the book are testament to the positive change made. We value this partnership and are energised by the trust in UNDP to deliver effective and inclusive support for the people of Kenya.

Published January 2020

ACRONYMS

ASAL: Arid and Semi-Arid Land
CAF: County Assemblies Forum
CCIC: Complaints, Compliments and Information Centre
CEC: County Executive Committee
CHEW: Community Health Extension Worker
CHV: Community Health Volunteer
CHW: Community Health Worker
CIDP: County Integrated Development Plan
CoG: Council of Governors
CSP: County Spatial Plan
DFID: Department for International Development (UK)
DRM: Disaster Risk Management
DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
GIS: Geographic Information System
HRBA: Human Rights-Based Approaches
KENWOG: Kenya Network of Women Governors
KSG: Kenya School of Government
M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation
MCA: Member of the County Assembly
NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
PMS: Performance Management System
PWD: Person with Disabilities
SDG: Sustainable Development Goal
SDU: Service Delivery Unit
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

FOREWORD



The implementation of devolved governance in 2013, as provisioned for in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, was a fundamental turning point in Kenya's history: through devolving responsibilities from the national government to

47 elected county governments, the balance of power in the country was reconfigured. The first 5 years (2013-2018) of devolution witnessed progressive democratization and the expansion of political space, particularly for historically marginalized groups and communities in Kenya.

UNDP has been a strategic partner in the devolution landscape since 2013, when in partnership with the Government of Kenya and development partners, the Integrated Support Programme to the Devolution Process in Kenya was formulated and actioned. The project was further strengthened in 2015 through the addition of a gender-responsive budgeting and gender mainstreaming component under UN Women.

This project came to an end in 2019 with transformational results being reported: counties have established policy and legal frameworks to support devolved gov-

ernance structures, service delivery has improved based on results-based management principles, and adoption of key service delivery accelerators such as performance management frameworks, inclusive participation, human rights-based approaches and gender-responsive budgeting have all contributed to this. Furthermore, county-level frameworks for climate resilience and adaptation as well as mechanisms for disaster risk preparedness and responsiveness have been enacted. This has been achieved with the generous support of our donors – DFID, USAID, the Government of Sweden and the Government of Norway.

Despite substantial progress in Kenya's development, poverty levels still exceed 60% in some cases in the remote, arid and sparsely populated northern frontier counties, and poverty also remains highly feminized. In response to these challenges, 3 UN agencies – UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women – have entered into a strategic partnership to develop a joint devolution programme, which commences at the beginning of 2020: this is intended to consolidate transformational gains and accelerate Kenya's devolution process, with an added focus on supporting good practices in public financial management.

Having concluded the first phase of devolution programming, we are now preparing to break new ground on the next. In this publication, we are pleased to share the voices of Kenyans as they tell the story of UNDP-led devolution support so far.

Walid Badawi
UNDP Kenya Resident Representative

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Turkana County – Human rights-based approaches give community health volunteers dignity and respect



In 2010, a new constitutional order came into effect in Kenya, a key feature of which being the devolution of governance responsibilities from the national government to 47 county governments. The healthcare sector was the one of the largest service sectors to be devolved under this new arrangement and the constitution promulgated in 2010 provides for a legal framework that guarantees an all-inclusive rights-based approach to health service delivery to Kenyans.

The devolved system was meant to accord county governments the opportunity to devise innovative models that suit their healthcare needs as well as encourage effective citizen participation. However, the extent to which counties have been able to execute this mandate varies significantly. Many are grappling with

challenges ranging from capacity gaps, human resource deficiencies, lack of critical legal and institutional infrastructures and corruption, as well as conflicts and ambiguities in the relationship with the national government; collectively, this has led to a stagnation in healthcare provision.

It's against this backdrop that UNDP's support to the devolution process in Kenya has been a key ballast and advisor in smoothening the transition to devolved governance – particularly so in Turkana County in collaboration with other UN Agencies, the national government, and other stakeholders.

One such support was the Human Rights-Based Approaches (HRBA) training that Members of

the County Assembly (MCAs) of Turkana County participated in, aimed at supporting more inclusive and socially-effective legislation by analysing the principles of human rights-based policymaking and sustainable development practices. Conducted in March 2018, the training helped to sensitise MCAs into incorporating human rights approaches at every opportunity into their legislative process.

“We realised that members were voting even without understanding what they were voting on. Much as we have improved on crafting the bills, we look forward to further improve on this and we are proud to say we have been able to pass quality bills because of the lessons learnt from the UNDP training” notes Wilson Ikamar, Director of the Executive Office of the Speaker, Turkana County Assembly.

Soon after the HRBA training, the Turkana Community Health Services Bill was drafted to recognise Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in law, people who previously had been working unpaid on an informal basis. The Bill, which is now an Act, strengthens CHVs as professionals recognised by the Ministry of Health as crucial players in the health structure, and they are now entitled to a modest stipend for their grassroots work.

“CHVs are recognised because they’re doing the sensitive part — they’re identifying serious illness, serving rural communities and helping mothers at the community levels... there is dignity there now that there wasn’t before, and they can gain respect at an official level. I



think this Act was a product of the human rights-based approach we were trained on to recognise these sort of interventions” stresses Mr. Ikamar.

Lotoot Ekam has been working as a Community Health Extension Worker (CHEW) since 2014 and is tasked with duty of supervising CHVs. This was often previously a tall order, he notes, due to the unpaid status of these workers:

“When you supervise people who are not getting paid, but you still have to put pressure on them to produce results, it can be a very big challenge. Many times, the CHVs I supervised would challenge me on why I demanded results from their output, yet they were the ones doing all the work and I getting paid” says Mr. Lotoot.

When Jacob Eyanae – a CHV who has been working under the supervision of Lotoot since 2009 – heard about the passing of the Turkana Community Health Services Bill into an Act, he was elated:

“I look forward to my payday. It will help me take care of my needs and I will not be distracted to abandon duty in



search for money for my upkeep” says Mr. Eyanae.

The duties of CHVs include advising community members on healthy living, providing first aid, referring cases of sickness to link health facilities, maintaining village health registers as well as tracking of tuberculosis defaulters, immunisation, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS. Since the passing of the Act, CHVs have been highly motivated and filing their reports on time, according to Lotoot: *“a huge load has been lifted”*, he says.

Other than recognising CHVs, the Turkana County Community Health Service Act also led to the establishment of Community Health Units for ease of delivery of community health services at the village level, introduced Community Health Services Committees responsible for coordination of community health services in the County, and to cap it up, established the Turkana Community Health Services Fund to finance county community health services.

Turkana County – Monitoring and performance management brings quality healthcare to far-flung communities

For many years, the only substantial health facility in Lorugum, Loima Sub-County, was the Catholic Church run St. Elizabeth Health Centre located 25km away from Turkana County's capital Lodwar town. A second, Lorugum Health Centre, was operationalised under devolution to provide complimentary services for the local community. Prior to this facility coming online, most residents could not afford the medical fee charged at St. Elizabeth Health Centre since it was privately

owned. Owing to this reality, many cases were referred to Lodwar County Referral Hospital which has to serve the entire Turkana County population of one million people.

With the support of partners, in 2016 the county government renovated the maternity ward to create a theatre and neonatal unit to provide for specialised services such as integrated maternal neonatal child health to the people of Lorugum, mostly rural Turkana



pastoralists and marginalised minority groups. Soon after, the health centre was upgraded to a sub-county hospital to serve the wider Loima Sub-County. The need for this upgrade was partly informed by data gathered from the County's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) function – a key area addressed by UNDP's capacity building support, under which Turkana is a focal county. This training was also delivered in conjunction with the State Department for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.



During the reorganisation of health services in Turkana, M&E data played a significant role in influencing decisions on how and where to upgrade facilities in the County – including the decision to upgrade to upgrade Lorugum Health Centre to a Sub-County Hospital to serve as a referral facility.

“Planners could easily see the number of referrals from Lorugum to Lodwar and hence the need for the upgrade... UNDP’s technical assistance helped us to understand the usage and value of M&E, develop an indicators handbook and eventually develop a policy. We are now able to link M&E to planning, something we were not able to do before the support” says Richard Emoru, County Director of Economic Planning.

Since the 2016 upgrades, the hospital has not only been equipped with specialised equipment and personnel, but services have significantly improved – something Mr. Emoru attributes to the Performance Management Systems (PMS) implemented in ministries through technical support from UNDP. The computerised real-time system monitors targets, allowing for seamless integration between organisational and individual performance plans, thereby simplifying performance planning, measurement and reporting processes.

“The PMS helps us track county performance. Through Performance Contracts, staff have contractual obligations to fulfill plans they committed to deliver. In the case of Lorugum, the Health Management System links medical cases to resources, leading to improved services” notes Mr. Emoru.

According to Major Rtd. Dr. Ekiro James Kidalio, the Medical Superintendent at Lorugum Sub-County Hospital, the maternal mortality rate has gone down from 1,594 per 100,000 live births 6 years ago to a current estimate of 500 per 100,000 live births. The infant mortality rate has also reduced significantly which is attributed to better facilities and availability of

personnel and has led to a better local reputation of the hospital and increased uptake of services, he says.

Pauline Longor, 22, is one of the beneficiaries of the improvements to Loruugum Sub-County Hospital. Unbeknownst to us, on the day we visit she had several hours previously given birth to her fourth child at the facility. Whereas her first two children were born at home owing to the fact that the health facility was not well-equipped at the time of their births, she has chosen to attend the hospital this time around.

"There was nothing to entice me to come to hospital because the services were not good and I was sure I would not get a doctor to attend to me in case of an emergency while giving birth... Now, I feel I am safe to deliver at the hospital since there are health workers around the clock. Various medical equipment is also now available, and I feel more assured of getting quality medical care"

Longor relays, holding her newly-born baby.



The PMS has enabled the county to prioritise its projects by aligning them with the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) from where Annual Development Plans are developed with targets which are monitored using the system. Targets are assigned to members of county staff who have signed Performance Contracts linking their personal evaluations to tangible goals. These are then assessed at the end of the year, thereby enhancing accountability in meeting deliverables.

Before the upgrade of M&E capacity and the introduction of the PMS, projects were often done on

an ad-hoc basis, sometimes haphazardly, while funds were not guided by any quantitative or measurable inputs, leading to overspending. However, with the introduction of performance contracting county staff work towards specific goals knowing they will be evaluated at the end of the day against their targets and using resources allocated to them.

"I feel a tremendous sense of accomplishment because we have helped thousands of people gain access to healthcare, which was not available to them before," says Dr Ekiru, adding "We're going to continue saving lives and change the course of history for this community."

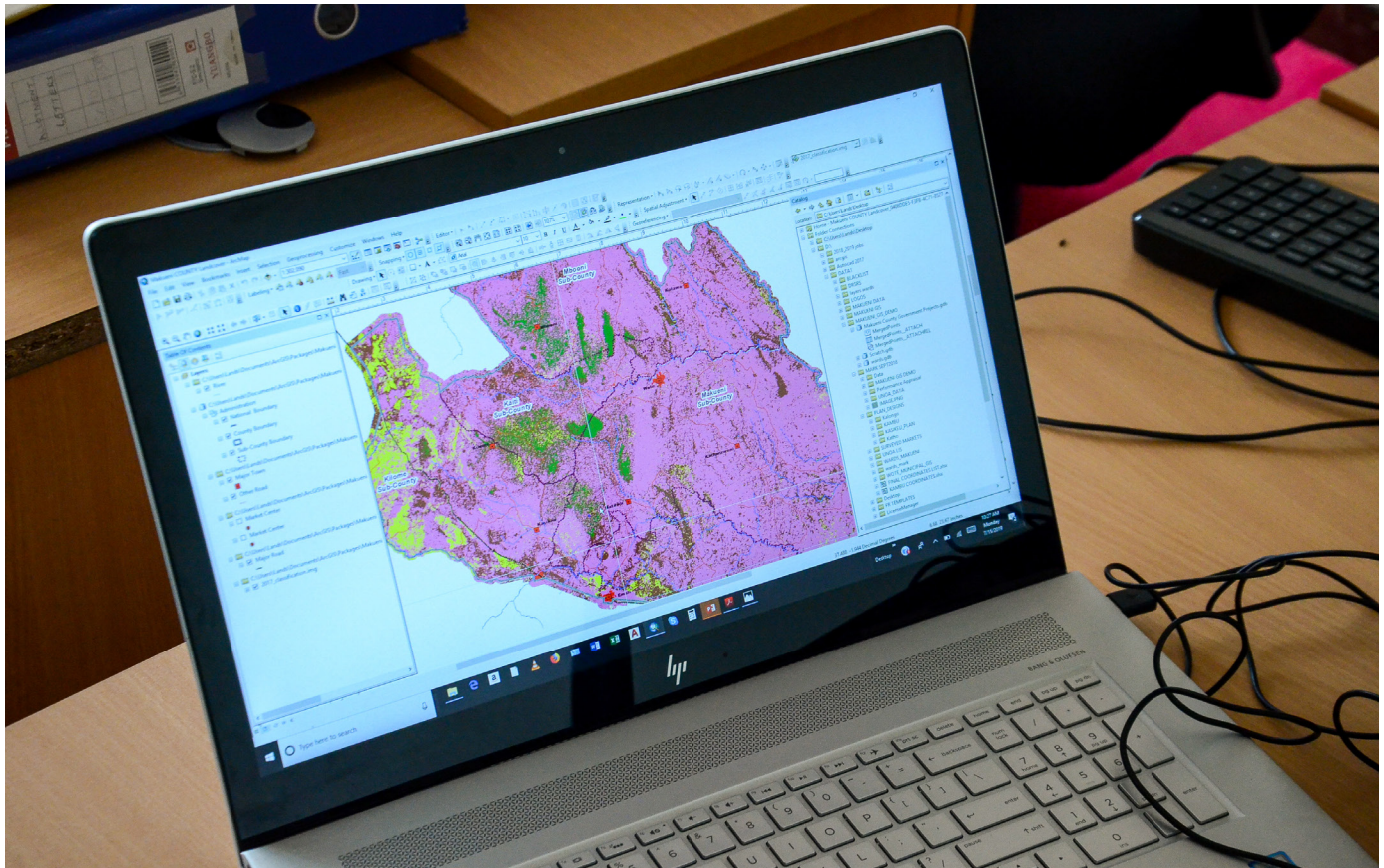
Makueni County – GIS brings efficiency and accountability to public service provision



Like many counties in Kenya, Makueni has been grappling with urban planning challenges due to rapidly increasing urbanisation and capacity gaps in coordinating changes to service delivery to match its new human geography. This has impacted negatively on other complementary land uses, particularly

around water usage, in the eastern county, which is a recognised arid and semi-arid land (ASAL).

With support from DFID, UNDP's Integrated Support Programme to the Devolution Process in Kenya moved in to support Makueni County in addressing its climate



related planning challenges. Specifically, developing the use of spatial planning as a means of integrating climate adaptation and minimising disaster risk.

Under the national County Government Act, counties are required to prepare a Geographic Information System (GIS) based County Spatial Plan (CSP) since it is the framework that guides the use of territory. The CSP – explains Bii Kenneth Ng'eny, Director of Lands and Urban Planning – is, when executed properly, a blueprint for the direction that investment ought to take

to drive maximum efficiency of expenditure in service provision.

During the first five years of devolution, very few counties undertook the initiative to develop their spatial plan; however, Makueni County has now developed a comprehensive GIS based CSP and aligned it to the vision of the county. This was developed through the establishment of a fully-equipped GIS lab which itself was the product of technical support, training and funding from UNDP and DFID.

Prior to the production of the Makueni CSP, the previous county administration conducted its physical planning affairs manually. With the GIS-driven CSP in place, Ng'eny explains the county government will now be able to gauge how resources in Makueni County can be optimally shared, whether the projects are undertaken by national, county or local-level parties or development partners.

County authorities are already utilising the CSP, with some departments using it to plan future projects. Mr. Ng'eny highlights rangeland management in the Kabiti Plains, where there is tourism and agriculture potential and the Athi River as an irrigation source as being two specific examples of geographic assets to leverage using the GIS lab and CSP.

Previously, there was a risk of duplication of projects as facilities were developed without considering if similar activities were being carried out in the same area – since the formation of the GIS facilities, with a click of a button it is possible to see the gaps or concentration of services and accordingly spread them evenly to ensure balance and equitable distribution of resources.

“With GIS mapping, it is now possible to monitor how resources are distributed, including the need of, for instance, erecting a bridge to enable members of the public to access an already existing dispensary in a nearby ward. We are also able to show the MCAs how resources are distributed and how the same can be used efficiently” adds Mr. Ng'eny.

Before the CSP, the county used to distribute project funds between the different departments equally rather

than as a function of efficiency, now distribution of funding is partially determined by the CSP. For example, the Department for Trade is building an abattoir in Kambu, Kibwezi East Sub-County, because CSP was used to show the economies of scale which led to the allocation of funds for the project.

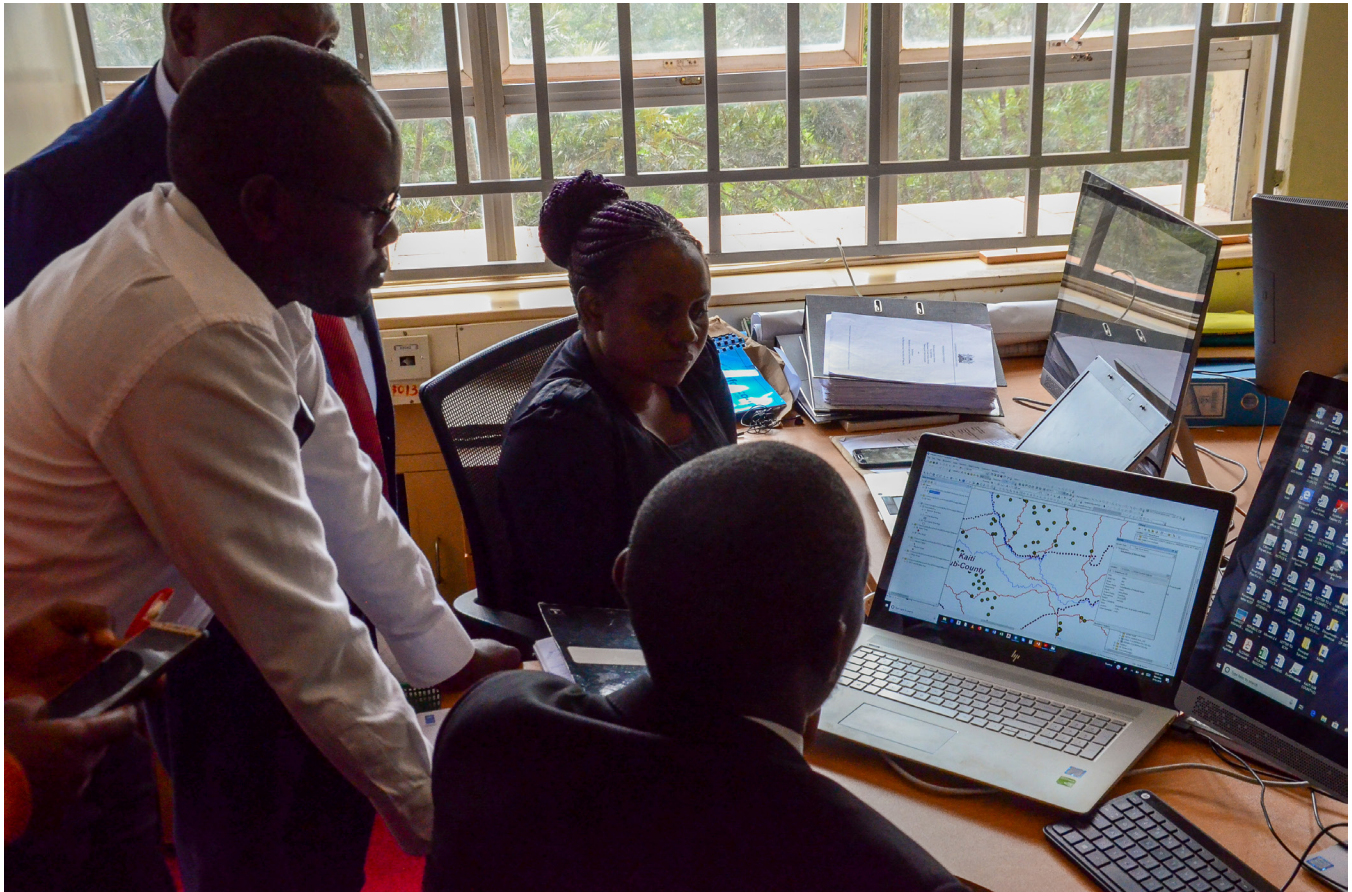
“What is needed now is to sensitise the MCAs on resource planning so that they accept GIS based resource recommendations instead of insisting on resources in their wards and in the process reduce duplication of projects. There is a further need to prioritise projects to ensure good use of resources” says Mark Mulinge, Makueni County Cartographer.

Presently, the county is in the process of conceptualising the usability of GIS, the Finance and Planning Department is expected to do project mapping so that budgeting utilizes GIS data. This process needs to be undertaken before MCAs engage their voters in public participation to increase understanding through the governance ecosystem and prevent ambiguities in how GIS data is employed.

The CSP will be the guiding reference document for Makueni County to manage land allocation and optimise funding to various social amenities such as schools, hospitals, markets and public recreational areas. It is also intended to boost county-level revenue collection, the county now is piloting spatial location and land use through the zoning of each plot, which will give an indication of the value of each plot and give the county an indication of its property rating.

As Makueni embraces the new GIS technology, the county is yet to realise the full advantage of the plan because of a shortage of qualified planners to use this data. The Makueni Urban Land Use Plan, for example, is a 5-year plan, yet Section 107 of the County Government

Act, 2012, requires counties to prepare a 10-year GIS-based spatial plan. In fulfilling this requirement, the county has set aside funds to train GIS technicians to make the most of the new systems and technologies in place, thanks to UNDP and DFID.



Taita Taveta – Listening to citizens brings public participation and inclusivity to the fore



Typically, public mechanisms of handling complaints from citizens have been ineffective in Kenya at national, county and local-levels, often characterised by confusion due to absence of a central focal point where they can take their issues, a lack monitoring and a fear of recrimination against complainants. The result of this has often been that the voice of citizens has gone

unheard, local disputes have needlessly escalated, and misconduct of public officials, particularly involving corruption, has gone unchecked.

To address this challenge, the County Government of Taita Taveta approached UNDP for support in establishing Complaints, Compliments and Information Centres (CCICs) to give a new voice to its citizenry.

Prior to rolling out CCICs in the 4 sub-counties of Taita Taveta – Voi, Mwatate, Wundanyi and Taveta – 16 county technical staff were trained on information management and a database was developed to register citizen feedback. The identified office space at the centres were equipped with computers, photocopiers and mobile phones, which serve as hotlines, whilst CCICs were linked to the internet and had websites set-up to ease communication.

CCICs are a primary link between the County Government and residents of Taita Taveta. Each sub-county centre accords members of the public the

opportunity to register their concerns and frustrations, which are forwarded to the respective departments for action and monitored by a complaints officer at the county-level. Procedurally, complaints are registered in a book, spelling out the category of complaint, the relevant department to act on the complaint and status of the complaint before they are logged in the computer indicating the name and contact of the complainant, the nature of the complaint and when the action was taken.

Mwanjala Donald, Administrator of Voi Sub County, explains that the centre acts as an all-purpose feedback



points for citizens; before the setting up of the CCIC, he says, residents used to complain of poor or lack of feedback altogether from county authorities.

According to Mwanakombo Nzale Ali, Voi Sub-County's Complaints and Compliments Officer, the sub-county receives about 10 complaints a week, most of which are related to land disputes, which she typically forwards to the County Department of Physical Planning. Besides land disputes, other complaints in Voi revolve around poor health services and human-wildlife conflict.

Pascal Keke, 31, is a complainant to Voi CCIC. He first heard of the centre during a *baraza* (typical local awareness meetings) in Voi in 2017. Much as his previous reports to other offices had proved futile, he noted that the new mechanism was more formalised and structured and seemed to fully focus on the citizen. With this knowledge he decided to launch his complaint.

"My complaint was in regard to stray dogs in my neighbourhood that were a menace to the community. Within two weeks of reporting my complaint of stray dogs in my neighbourhood, the dogs started disappearing and before I realised it, the Complaints Officer called me to inquire if my issue had been resolved which I affirmed," said Mr. Keke, who is a small-scale trader in Voi town.

According Mr. Donald, the community appreciates the services because any complaint raised is dealt with appropriately and the complainant is contacted to see if she or he is satisfied with the action taken. To date, an estimated 556 complaints have been received and resolved at Voi CCIC. The complaints are received

directly at the office or via phone, and even sometimes through Twitter.

At Mwatate Sub-County, Sub-County Administrator Jackson Maka is getting ready to attend to a land dispute between Victor Mzame, 72, and Selina Mwanganyi, 48, who had bought the same piece of land from a neighbour. The complaint was launched at the CCCI a couple of days before; Mr. Maka is familiar with such cases and does not experience any difficulty in resolving the matter. He has sharpened his skills in handling such complaints through the initial training during the inception of the programme and the on-job experience, having previously served as Acting Complaints and Compliments Officer.

"Before the establishment of the CCIC, we used to handle complaints but without clear direction. The training equipped us with the know-how considering the Complaints Charter dictates a time limit of resolving an issue" says Mr. Maka.

Isaac Makange, County Chief Officer in charge of Service Delivery, Energy, Research and Industrialisation, says that the essence of complaints is that they are lodged when services are either not delivered efficiently or at all. He cites the instance of Kaloleni Ward, where County staff only realised there was a water shortage courtesy of the complaints desk.

As the CCICs gain popularity, the County Government leadership is now alive to the reality that through the complaints being lodged it can aptly gauge its performance and accordingly improve service delivery



to the community. County officials similarly hold public meetings to create awareness on existence of the centres.

The Complaints and Compliments Officers also attend *barazas* and town hall meetings, from where he or she receives complaints and channels the same to the relevant offices for action. Building on the CCICs programme and the importance accorded to the citizen feedback, Taita Taveta's 4 sub-counties hold *barazas* once every month for purposes of getting feedback on ongoing projects and service delivery.

"The CCICs have informed our programmes in civic education because we rely heavily on the feedback from the complaints desks to enlighten the citizens on various issues that are not clear," says Charles Mwadegi, the County Chief of Civic Education and Public Participation.

The CCICs have created strong synergies between departments in addressing issues by ensuring complaints are channelled to the relevant Chief Officers for appropriate handling thereby improving service delivery and have increased the voice of public participation and inclusivity in Taita Taveta County.

Taita Taveta County – Empowering young women to dream bigger



When it comes to national and county-level politics in Kenya, women continue to lag behind men in terms of representation in leadership positions despite the attention and concerted efforts by various players to correct the existing imbalance. The much-cited ‘two-thirds rule’ in the 2010 Constitution is yet to be assented into law, and positive steps taken in increasing the

number of women in legislatures are unfortunately smaller than originally envisaged.

To address this challenge, the Kenya Network of Women Governors (KENWOG) developed a mentorship programme aimed at attracting and retaining high-potential talent among women, geared towards aiding women with skills and leadership development. UNDP

utilized support from UN Women and mentees aged between 22 and 30 were selected and attached to 11 counties which had female governors and/or deputy governors in Kitui, Kirinyaga, Bomet, Kwale, Taita Taveta, Nyandarua, Narok, Nyeri, Makueni, Nandi and Kericho counties.

The mentees also got the opportunity to work closely with other staff members as one of the mentees was attached to the Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Governors (CoG). As part of the mentorship programme, the mentees were trained and coached on image and branding, self-assertiveness, self-positioning, leadership in respect to their roles, and ‘finding your spot at the workplace’ among other topics of interest.

Laura Mghoi, 28, was one of the mentees. Having graduated in 2012 from teacher-training college as a P1 teacher, she taught briefly but opted to try her hand in marketing. After a few months, she decided to return to her studies and pursued a bachelor’s degree in Commerce and Finance at Taita Taveta University, successfully completing the course in May 2017.

She subsequently joined the County Government of Taita Taveta 2 months thereafter as an intern – which ended after a chance meeting with the Deputy Governor at an engagement Ms. Mghoi had been invited to speak at:

“It was not easy working as an intern without any money for upkeep. I almost gave up, but my mother encouraged me to stay on and I did, but under financial duress... At the meeting, as I stood up to talk at the back of my mind, I knew this was a great opportunity and I publicly asked for

a job from the Deputy Governor Majala Mlagui, who was in attendance” recalls Ms. Mghoi.

Two weeks after the request, there was no word from the Deputy Governor, and she was convinced her request had fallen on deaf ears. But soon the Deputy Governor, Ms. Mlagui, called and invited her into the mentorship programme:

“I was excited because besides being mentored by the Deputy Governor, I was going to get a stipend of Ksh. 10,000 per month. The offer was irresistible since I had worked for nine months without any pay” she recalls with smile.

In May 2018, Ms. Mghoi joined the Office of the Deputy Governor as a mentee and even before she could settle down, she was being invited to address crowds at various events:

“I initially was very shy but she taught me how to introduce myself and address an audience with ease and calm. I also learnt, through observation, how bold and confident the Deputy Governor was while talking to individuals and audiences” she says.

Other than public speaking, Ms. Mghoi learnt several office work tasks as she was tasked to maintain the Deputy Governor’s daily programme, make her appointments, file her documents, receive her visitors and manage her office expenditure, in addition to organising local and overseas travel.

Though the mentorship programme was to last for 6 months, her performance earned her a 5-month extension; just before the extension lapsed in March

2019, Ms. Mghoi's senior, the Deputy Governor's personal assistant, resigned. Whilst in Nairobi for a meeting with her boss, Ms Mghoi says she was surprised to be offered the personal assistant position by the Deputy Governor, which she quickly accepted.

Mghoi is very grateful for the mentorship programme that eventually landed her a job at the County Government. She has since learnt a lot, including how to relate with politicians and a better understanding of how government works.

Noting that Mghoi is bright, proactive and quick to take up opportunities, the Deputy Governor herself says the programme has greatly assisted her mentee whom she now describes as more self-assured. According to the Deputy Governor, her former mentee and current personal assistant has improved in her communication

skills, is able to coordinate activities that require attention to detail while still keeping sight of the bigger picture.

"As a graduate, don't stay at home. Look for volunteering opportunities and job opportunities will find you there. Had I not volunteered, I wouldn't have met the Deputy Governor and she wouldn't have offered me a job" says Ms. Mghoi, sporting a broad smile.

For a more impactful mentorship programmes, the Deputy Governor advocates for additional training modules that can be delivered either through more regular meet-ups or an online course. The Deputy Governor further calls for a provision of mentorship guiding material geared at assisting one-on-one sessions that would build on the everyday work of mentees.

Nyeri County – Giving new impetus to fighting gender-based violence

Members of County Executive Committees (CECs) are ideally supposed to be well-versed with policies on gender equality which respect the agency and human rights of women – it's a fundamental part of inclusive policymaking. However, in practice, the extent to which county-level officials are adequately informed unfortunately varies.

During a CECs induction meeting in Nyeri County, held in December 2017, CECs in charge of various gender dockets openly confessed gaps in their knowledge around effective prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence (GBV). They accordingly requested the CoG to remedy this by building their capacity to enable them to effectively deliver on their mandate as they had not been sensitised on GBV matters since their appointments.

UN Women was ready and able to organise this via the medium of sensitisation forums run in conjunction with CoG. The exercise targeted 62 county officers representing all Kenya's 47 counties. Participants included CECs in charge of gender and education, directors in charge of health and chief officers in charge of finance and planning.

The training sessions, which involved 32 women and 30 men, were expected to enable those counties without county Gender based Violence (GBV) technical committees to establish them and to strengthen those already in existence. The sessions were also aimed at helping create



linkages between the county coordination platforms and the national coordination mechanism in addressing GBV related issues across the country.

Lydia Nyaramba, Nyeri County Disease Surveillance Coordinator, was one of the participants; Ms. Nyaramba describes the training as one of a kind, despite having attended numerous training courses on GBV in her capacity as a County GBV committee member.

"I still use the skills to sensitise members of the community on the need to report on GBV. And we have agreed to create awareness on the issue at the village level" she says.

Ms. Nyaramba's passion to tame GBV has seen her

organise a series of training sessions and mentor Community Health Workers (CHWs) and women's groups. Jacinta Nduta Muya, 49, is one of the women who works closely with Nyaramba under this initiative – she praises the quality of the training, particularly around presentation of evidence to present to police. She also says the contacts she made during the training means that cases she brings can be prioritised by the police, and she is updated on ongoing cases.

According to Ms. Muya, GBV is so rampant in Nyeri County to the extent that people perceive it as domestic issue and therefore the matter ought not to be reported to the police:



SERVICE CHARTER FOR GENDER AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE DEPARTMENT					
SERVICES	CLIENT OBLIGATION	WAITING TIME	UHC	NHIF	CHARGES
CONSULTATION & TREATMENT	-UPDATED RECEIPT -REFERRAL LETTER	15-20 MIN	FREE	FREE	FREE
MED. CERTIFICATE	-UPDATED RECEIPT	10-15 MIN			500/-
CONSELLING FOR YOUTH	-UPDATED RECEIPT -PARENT / GARDIAN -OFFICIAL LETTER FROM INSTITUTION REQUESTING CONSELLING SERVICES	15-30 MIN	FREE	FREE	200/-
H.I.V. CONSELLING AND TESTING	-UPDATED RECEIPT	10-15 MIN	FREE	FREE	FREE
TRAUMA CONSELLING FOR GENDER AND SEXUALLY ASSAULTED VICTIMS	-UPDATED RECEIPT -PARENT / GUARDIAN / POLICE OFFICER -SIGNED CONSCENT -CLIENT EXHIBITS -O.B. NUMBER FROM POLICE -P3 FORM	10-20 MIN	FREE	FREE	

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"We trained CHWs to treat any GBV related case as a criminal offence... My work changed after the training. I now know that the rule of law must be followed and I similarly report every GBV case to the chief or the police" says Ms Muya, who has been training fellow CHWs on GBV as well as community members.

Relentless efforts by women such as Ms. Nyaramba and Ms. Muya to tame the GBV menace have seen them bring together different sectors under one roof. A 15 member committee comprising of health, gender, education, media, probation, judiciary, children's offices police, prison civil society, chiefs, and religious organisations was formed recently and now operates as one team.

The Nyeri County Government is now taking the GBV issue so seriously that premises within the Nyeri County Referral Hospital have been set aside to deal with GBV

cases alone, the facility offers free services to GBV patients and has a dedicated doctor and two nurses. Anne Gichuki, a nurse and a counsellor at the GBV Centre, receives 15 to 25 patients a month. She says she registers more patients during school holidays and whenever the centre carries out monthly educational campaigns.

Anastasia Njeri (real name changed to conceal her identity), 22, is a full-time student and a patient at the GBV Centre on the day we visit. It is her second day at the facility, having reported the previous night. She narrates her ordeal in painful detail:

"One of my male friends lied to me he was sick and asked me to visit him. When I entered the house, he insisted he must make me pregnant so that I don't leave him. He grabbed a kitchen knife and threatened to stab me if screamed. I was too scared to scream and so he raped me

at will” she says, tears rolling down her cheeks.

Njeri subsequently escaped before seeking help from the guard in the compound, who called her friend and took her to Nyeri County Referral Hospital. She was later referred to the GBV Centre for treatment.

The anti-GBV campaign has also been central to sensitisation efforts of members of the county judiciary; following this, cognisant of the devastating effects of GBV on children, the judiciary started a children’s court.

“In the children’s court, we have opaque booths where children can give evidence without being seen and

intimidated. Of course, this is partly aimed at protecting their privacy” says Chief Magistrate Mercy Kagendo, pointing at one of the booths in the empty court room.

According to records from Nyeri Law Court, between 2018 and 2019, of the 130 sexual offences cases that were registered, 83 of these cases were concluded. In the same period, there were 56 convictions, 18 acquittals and only 9 withdrawals.

“Cases have been moving because we have performance contracts and they must be concluded within a specific time frame” concludes Chief Magistrate Kagendo.

Laikipia County – Taming nature’s fury in a semi-arid region



Laikipia County, an ASAL region with a population of just over 500,000, is both prone to drought and susceptible to floods, factors which are responsible for the highest number of deaths in the County. The losses from these disasters – economic, environmental and social – greatly affect the short-term livelihoods and long-term resilience of the population.

Analysing Laikipia’s geography, topography and meteorology is the first step towards planning to mitigate nature’s fury. Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into planning and management reduces the magnitude of future disasters and promotes more sustainable development. It also frees up resources that would otherwise have been spent

on rapid response and recovery efforts towards viable development projects.

Through the support of UNDP's devolution programme, the County has developed the Laikipia Disaster Management Policy with a view to better manage and coordinate disaster related activities. Mustafa Pakolia, Head of DRR at the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), tells us that this was passed as a Bill following deliberate moves to sensitise MCAs.

"During the formulation of the CIDP, the knowledge they had acquired proved handy because we did not experience resistance from their lot as was the case before. We have managed to put aside money for disaster mitigation" says Charles Muiruri, County Director, Public Safety and Disaster Management, observing that the knowledge has also informed key decision making.

Once assented into law, the County will have a framework to set aside funds for Disaster Risk Management (DRM) for the purposes of preparedness, response, mitigation, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

"With funds in place, we will be able to advise people before disaster strikes so that they can equip themselves aptly" says Mr. Muiruri. According to Mr. Pakolia, once the Bill is passed, the relevant departments at the county level will be directly accountable to the National Assembly: *"The new law will give the National Assembly*

powers to interrogate the work of county departments. We are destined to be the first county in Kenya to have legislation on disaster" he says.

The County Director of Economic Planning, Joseph Ndegwa, explains that policy formulation and drafting of the Bill was an inclusive process, which involved the government, private sector as well as non-state actors. He adds that the document was a product of public participation, which subsequently fed into the CIDP.

Notably present in the CIDP, which has been borrowed from the Bill, is a Disaster Mitigation and Response Fund. Mr. Ndegwa adds that programmes on disaster mitigation have also been informed by the policy. According to Mr. Pakolia, the Fund is gaining importance because of the drought that informed the Bill, while the policy has been driven more by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This is because NGOs were having challenges in fundraising, yet it is important that they have a Disaster Risk Management Policy to access funding, in accordance with international standards.

The success of the policy and the Bill has been felt beyond Laikipia, including in the neighbouring county of Isiolo where it has influenced the development of similar policies. In Laikipia, it has informed the Dairy and Red Meat Policy.

"When drafting the Dairy and Red Meat Policy, we used the capacity we gained during the drafting of the DRM policy and Bill. We customised the National Dairy

Policy to fit the Laikipia one” explains James Karithi, Laikipia County Coordinator of Agricultural Sector Development Support Programme.

Besides the DRM Bill, the county has developed a Hazard Atlas with support from UNDP Kenya. The

Atlas will facilitate the interpretation of hazard related information and increase its use in decision-making. According to Mr. Muiruri, the previous Atlas had numerous flaws – and, crucially, capacity building on DRM under the ISPDP can correct that this time around.

Isiolo County – Training gives youth the skills to start and expand businesses



With a youth unemployment over 25%, Kenya's formal sector is unable to absorb the large and increasing number of jobseekers. Accordingly, a large proportion of economic growth and opportunity continues to come via the informal sector, which itself is often characterised by low-skilled and insecure work.

Youth unemployment in particular is a drag on socioeconomic progress in all the 47 counties in Kenya, with the northern frontier counties of registering the highest extremely youth unemployment rates.

Of great concern is the well-observed fact that unemployed youth are prone to social disillusionment,

and the crime, social ills and extremism which can follow. The youth in many of the northern frontier counties are grappling with issues such as drug abuse, radicalisation, petty crime and cattle rustling.

It is against this backdrop that UNDP, in partnership with the Kenya School of Government (KSG) and the County

Government of Isiolo, developed a youth training component under the devolution programme.

Francis Lengai, 24, is among the proud beneficiaries in Isiolo who has been trained on entrepreneurship and life skills through the programme. Upon completion of his primary school education in 2012, Mr. Lengai



looked forward to enrolling in secondary school – but his poor parents were unable to support him during his education, compelling him to join other youths living in the streets of Isiolo town eking-out a living doing menial jobs.

Fortunately, his situation was to improve. His command of English was a key factor in his appointment of Chairman of the Kasanya Isiolo Street Family Group, a local CSO working with street children. When the County Government was selecting individuals to attend an entrepreneurship and life skills training workshop, Lengai was a natural choice; alongside 52 other youths, he participated in what he describes as a “life-changing experience”.

The 10-day training, supported by UNDP, covered topics on generating, identifying and selecting business ideas, developing a business plan, record and book keeping, cash-flow analysis, savings and marketing, as well as accessing loans targeting youth and women such as Uwezo Fund, Youth Fund, and Talanta Fund.

“The training was an eye opener because I had never heard of affirmative action, let alone known that there were organisations that can support youth programmes to boost their capacities to run businesses” notes Mr. Lengai.

Isiolo County Secretary, Dr. Ahmed Galgalo, says the intention for the programme was for the youth to be enabled to tap into various business opportunities for youth, women and people with disabilities through the County Government. He says a key factor in the genesis of the training programme was to mitigate possible negative effects of disillusionment:

“We were concerned as local leaders, considering the fact that Isiolo is one of the counties in the country where idle youth have been radicalised and enlisted in (the Somalia-based) Al-Shabaab terror gang” explains Dr. Galgalo.

The positive impact of the programme is gradually being felt; soon after the training attended by Mr. Lengai, for instance, the former street-dweller organised meetings with his 600-member group to share what he had learnt:

“As a leader of my group, my members look unto me for leadership and hope and I was therefore obligated to empower them with the knowledge I had gathered from the training. The skills shared have been well received, since most of us were already running small businesses.” says Mr. Lengai.

After the group meeting, members unanimously agreed to start a microcredit union called *Ona Mbele* [See Far] – an undertaking they had never engaged in before. The programme has enabled the group to collect money to assist members with start-up capital: *“With the skills from the training we had no option but to succeed”* stresses Mr. Lengai.

James Eshakan, 33, is a beneficiary of *Ona Mbele*. Before he was given a loan of Ksh. 5,000 (USD 50) to start a business of his choice, he worked as porter at Isiolo market, struggling to make ends meet. Through financial support of the programme and business skills imparted in him, he has opened a shoe polishing business at Isiolo market.

“My life has really improved. Beside this shoe business,

I still work as a porter, meaning I have two sources of income” he explains, as polishes a customer’s shoe. With good financial discipline, which he was taught by his Chairman Mr. Lengai, Mr. Eshakan is confident about expanding his business.

Another beneficiary of the entrepreneurship and life skills training, Shinde Abdullahi, 32, says the training brought to her knowledge the existence of the Women Enterprise Fund, the Youth Fund, the Affirmative Action Fund, and the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO): *“I knew about the funds but I had no idea how to access them, but now I know,”* says the mother of two. After the training, Ms. Abdullahi didn’t waste time in registering a business. Ms. Abdullahi is also a member of a business group, her group is comprised of 10 single mothers, who are engaged in table banking to help boost their various businesses.

After the training, Isiolo County has continued to support youth to ensure they engage in profitable ventures. Dr. Galgalo explains that the county government is strictly implementing the national

government directive, which reserves 30 percent of funds for youth, women and people with disabilities.

“We came up with a Bill on empowerment of women, youth and people with disability, which has since been passed into law and is now an Act. With this Act, we have set aside Ksh. 20-50 million for loans for the special groups” says the County Secretary.

As technology becomes increasingly more important in the business world, the county has not been left behind. Isiolo has developed a website where the youth can market their products and talents. So serious is Isiolo County with youth empowerment agenda that it has acquired a training centre in Isiolo town, where youth will be trained on entrepreneurship skills. The premises are being renovated by KSG, while the equipment and furniture will be provided by UNDP.

“Without entrepreneurship skills, the loans we intend to give can go to waste. That is why we have been emphasising on training, because we want them to succeed” concludes Dr. Galgalo.

Busia County – Performance contracts improve service delivery



Over the years, a lack of accountability and results-based evaluation has hindered the public sector – a fact that has greatly hindered sustainable economic growth. As the voice of public participation has strengthened through devolution and the demand for quality services has increased, reforms to harness efficiency,

effectiveness and ethical delivery of services have been piloted in the counties, one of which being the introduction of performance contracting.

Busia is among the first counties that have embraced the introduction of performance contracting and was supported by the UNDP devolution programme to

introduce a Performance Management System (PMS). On the ground, there is a feeling that this has precipitated a change in the attitude of public officers serving in the county who operate under performance contracts as they are more focused on results and services rather than on processes, as used to be the case. The overall human resource management and operational processes have also improved. Now, the county is among those reaping the benefits of performance contracting after local members of staff were trained on how to develop performance contracts through the programme.

Among the counties, Busia is one of the largest recipients of development funds in Kenya. In late 2018, the county received Ksh. 553 million from the World Bank. Many people – including residents of the county located along the Kenya-Uganda border – were excited at the unexpected move by the global financial institution. According to Robert Papa, Economic Advisor to Busia Governor and Head of the Service Delivery Unit (SDU), the Bank was apparently impressed by the county's management style and human resource processes, and Mr. Papa credits the UNDP supported training with improving these:

“The training enabled us to develop guidelines on performance contracting, which we have harmonised with the county budget. The development of performance contracts was consultative, we reviewed our CIDPs and interrogated our earlier performance before realigning our resources to the performance contracts. 30% of our budget is now allocated to development” says Mr. Papa.

With the performance contracting up-and-running since 2018, the county has now put in place a Service Charter and opened its services to scrutiny, both of which have contributed to a reduction in wastage of resources and increase in accountability according to Mr. Papa. He also notes that each department now also has a Service Charter, which has helped to improve service delivery.

In Busia, the increase in performance-based evaluation and accountability has also helped to improve revenue collection:

“We did revenue mapping for each department to establish exactly where revenue can be collected from, thus improving revenue collection from Ksh. 176 million in 2018 to Ksh. 279 million in 2019. Each department is now mandated to collect revenue. If only we had done this earlier, we would be very far as a county” says Mr. Papa with some regret.

As revenue collection increases, in part thanks to performance contracting, absorption of resources and development indexes have exhibited an upward trend; and with this added accountability, targets and timelines have been adhered to.

Winston Mbanga, Busia County Communications Director, opines that performance contracting has permeated every aspect of county work. Local staff, he observes, used to go for training and workshops and would rarely write a report upon their subsequent return. With the advent of performance contracting, it has become mandatory to report back and state the purpose of each trip or training undertaken and an

outline of lessons learnt, including the value of the same to the county.

Performance contracts have also been used to identify staffing gaps and training needs at the county. The Director of Public Service Management at the county, Daniel Omuse, reports that promotions were initially done haphazardly, but are now being executed in accordance with performance and appraisals. The challenges of corruption and tribalism have also been

addressed, according to Omuse – whose positivity is tempered only by fear of not continuing the success had so far.

“We want the culture of performance contracting to be embedded in the civil service. If you work, you will be retained, although our fear is that with elections every five years, in-coming governors might fire old staff when they assume office. This could prove a major drawback,” says Omuse.



Busia County – Taking SDG implementation to the counties

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are consultatively produced and universally-recognised targets which provide a common framework for tackling some of the pressing challenges facing the world such as poverty, climate change and conflict. Under the devolution programme, UNDP has been providing support to county governments to integrate the SDGs into their national development plans and policies.

However, for smooth and successful implementation of the SDGs, there is need for partnership and coordination among the key players – governments, the private sector, civil society and citizens – which can be challenging. For example, whilst Kenya’s Ministry of Devolution and ASALs has been coordinating the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs, the CoG Liaison Office has been handling the inter-agency coordination, whose members are drawn from line ministries, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, National Council for Population and Development and representatives from the civil society organisations and the private sector.

To smooth this process, county officials and CSOs have been trained on how to interpret and utilise the SDGs meaningfully, and all 47



county governments were supported to integrate the SDGs into their 2nd generation CIDPs (CIDP II, 2018-2022). The CIDPs are five-year planning documents that stipulate plans and priorities for a county from which annual plans, budgets, and activities are derived from. The document also offers an entry point for identification of the SDGs, which match county needs and priorities.

Busia is among the first counties in Kenya to fully embrace the SDGs. The county's strides in execution of policies and strategies geared towards advancing implementation of the SDGs have been commended to the extent that the county was recently invited to take part in the UN High-Level Political Forum in New York City, the United States.

As demonstration of its commitment to the implementation of the SDGs, Busia has gone a step further in appointing an SDG Champion who is charged with the responsibility of spearheading the SDG agenda in the county. In Busia, the SDG Champion is Robert Papa, Economic Advisor and Head of the SDU.

The champions are the SDG contact persons at the county-level, who besides steering implementation plans, give feedback on the exercise. The SDG champions keep in close contact with CoG, the coordinating body of the SDG Champion initiative, in case they have issues that need to be addressed:

"We have created an effective communication framework with the SDG champions, including a WhatsApp phone

group" says Ken Oluoch, Programme Officer at CoG.

According to Mr. Oluoch, there is need to deepen SDG reporting as well as monitoring and evaluation. An SDG indicator handbook has been developed already and this has enabled counties to track indicators; a review framework for SDGs was also developed, with 23 counties submitting their report for review.

Busia's Economic Advisor to the Governor and Head of Special Duties Unit, Mr Robert Papa, explains that each department aligns an SDG goal that is relevant to it and incorporates it into departmental plans, thereby mainstreaming SDGs into the county's integrated development plans. This alignment, explains Papa, has enabled county officials to capture set targets as per the SDG goals.

Already positive news is coming through with regard to SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-being, the construction of a Ksh. 111 million Women's Hospital in Busia which will provide specialised family planning and pediatric services is in the offing. With regards to SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, the county has sunk a number of boreholes and employed solar water pumping that supplies an estimated 90,000 homesteads with clean water.

On SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, a Council of Elders constituting members of the Teso and Bakhayo communities, as well as Marachi sub-tribes of the larger Luhya community, has been reactivated to form a Council of Elders to resolve ethnic related conflicts by way consensus.

“There has always been a red flag warning in Busia County because of political competition between the Teso and Luhya communities. The activation of the Council of Elders has led to much needed peace and tranquillity in the county” says Mr. Papa.

As counties continue to mainstream SDGs, a voluntary national peer review to learn from these experiences is ongoing. If undertaken well, it will give a clear picture

of the progress in the counties.

“When we first started mainstreaming SDGs into CIDPs, it was very difficult to convince the Governor (Sospeter Odeke Ojamong’) that SDGs were part and parcel of our day to day work. But with time, he has been able to understand and is currently supporting our efforts fully” concludes the SDG Champion Mr. Papa.



Nandi County – Mentoring tomorrow's women leaders

Mentorship is an intensely personal experience, and one that can make an enormous impact on peoples' lives. It's also potentially a strong force for social change, as targeted empowerment of marginalised and underrepresented groups can be included in processes they have been excluded from. Cognisant of this, under the UNDP devolution programme, UN Women supported the Kenya Network of Women Governors and Women Deputy Governors (KENWOG) to initiate a mentorship programme geared at aiding women in skills and leadership development.

With support from UN Women, mentees were attached to three counties, Kitui, Kirinyaga and Bomet, which are led by women governors, whilst another set of mentees was seconded to eight counties of Kwale, Taita Taveta, Nyandarua, Narok, Nyeri, Makueni, Nandi and Kericho counties, which have women deputy governors. The aim of the programme was to attract, nurture and retain high-potential talent among women.

Mentees were guided on image and branding, self-assertiveness, strategic positioning, leadership, and 'finding your spot at the workplace' among other topics of interest. The mentees' abilities to augment their skills were reinforced by observing their mentors in action. As Lydia Lagat and Maureen Jepchumba, two mentees who were attached to Nandi County Deputy Governor Yulita Mitei, explain:

"For a long time, leadership positions in Nandi were a preserve for men. When I joined the mentorship programme and saw a woman in such a high office addressing huge meetings, I was really encouraged. I knew I would also soon be able to talk in front of people, let alone men" says Ms. Lagat.

Ms. Lagat's journey as a mentee was not easy, as she could not speak the local vernacular fluently at first: *"I had a challenge expressing myself in the local dialect while addressing the public, but the Deputy Governor gave me encouragement. I am now able to express myself without any hitch".* Ms. Jepchumba agrees that building self-confidence was a key part of her menteeship.

Recalling her first meeting with the Deputy Governor, Ms. Lagat says she was cautioned to be responsible and strong since she was joining a political office. After three months in office, Lydia was formally assigned roles and responsibilities and attended all meetings pertaining to women's issues with the Deputy Governor. She was specifically attached to *Korge Arise*, an empowerment programme in Nandi that ensures sustainable development is strengthened by involving women in diverse economic activities.

Deputy Governor Mitei says of the two: *They were fresh graduates from college with little or no experience and each one of them was unique in their own way. It has been*

a good opportunity to work with them, push them from their comfort zone to handle big responsibilities.”

Recalling her experience, Ms. Lagat characterises the mentorship as a two-way process, since it depends on the mentor and the mentee’s attitude:

“The mentor has the ability to either support or hinder a mentee’s growth. The mentee on the other hand must have the right attitude to benefit from the mentorship. Ours was a mother-daughter relationship and we became very open to each other” she asserts.

After their mentorship programme, both Ms. Lagat and Ms. Jepchumba were offered roles as full-time staff

of the Nandi County Government under the Office of the Deputy Governor – a promotion which came as a welcome surprise to them both.

For future mentorship programmes, the Nandi Deputy Governor observes that more time is needed to pick the mentees so that adequate vetting of candidates can be done, whilst she also feels remuneration rates should be higher. Ultimately, however, the Deputy Governor characterises the programme as a success; such mentorship facilitates the growth of the relationship between the mentor and the mentee by encouraging the use of leadership skills, before a mentee assumes a leadership position themselves.

National – Putting women at the centre of devolution



With over 2,000 Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) as well as county assembly ministries and other technical, administrative and support staff, Kenya has established a deep and extensive county assembly infrastructure across the 47 counties. Devolution, as envisaged in the 2010 Constitution, has brought political and governance transformation that has

improved access to government and grassroots representation.

As with the national level, the nomination process for additional legislature posts in addition to the elective posts at county-level, ensures inclusive representation. Historically marginalised groups including women, youth and people with disabilities (PWDs) have attained

new rights and a voice, positioning them as Kenya's frontline changemakers.

To ensure that county assemblies nationwide are well coordinated, the County Assemblies Forum (CAF) was established in 2013 with MCAs and Speakers as the main constituents of the CAF General Assembly. CAF acts as a convener and a facilitator in delivering targeted capacity-building opportunities to county assemblies, their members, speakers, and staff. This includes legislative drafting support in partnership with institutions such as the Kenya Law Reform Commission.

As devolution scales the development trajectory for Kenya, institutions like CAF have a pivotal role to play in advancing gender and minority rights as enshrined in the constitution. Thus, Judy Wangalwa, the CEO of CAF, together with her team, are advocating for inclusive policymaking at county level, with an emphasis on gender mainstreaming and promotion of gender-responsive legislative approaches. CAF also seeks to influence county government legislation to adopt and institute people-centric legal frameworks, such as the creation of a County Attorney's office in each county.

There is noteworthy progress and political goodwill as reflected by the number of women's representatives in the county assemblies. However, Ms. Wangalwa notes that of the 875 women MCAs, over 80% are nominated rather than direct elects, thus challenging their credibility – an indication that the place of women in Kenya politics is far from being established. Therefore, safeguarding women's participation in politics and consolidating the position of the first-generation of

women MCAs and enabling them to empower the next is crucial.

"Women have been approaching us: there was a lot of outcry about how women were being treated as legislators. Kenya is traditionally a highly patriarchal society – men feel they are the only ones capable of leading – and this has made it difficult for women to come out and run for political positions.

"If one declared an interest, she would be branded inappropriately, and many women end up withdrawing. Also, elections and politics are costly in Kenya. For women to vie for an elective post in Kenya, they need good access to finances, and the nomination process has been a good solution to this" cites Ms. Wangalwa.

Under devolution programme, UNDP and UN Women have supported CAF to empower women MCAs using several approaches that are making tangible and positive changes to their working environment. For example, in 2018 over of 75% female MCAs attended CAF's women's leadership training and capacity building workshops held in Kisumu, Mombasa, Nyeri, Meru, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, and Nairobi counties that also acted as platforms for peer-to-peer experience sharing. Gender audits conducted in 12 counties in December 2018 cast light on the lack of representation of women in key county assembly committees such as budget committees. Further to this, CAF developed its gender policy to mainstream gender in all of its activities, acting as a model example to its membership.

In Vihiga County, following CAF leadership training, women MCAs who had been sidelined from county

committees were able to advocate and push for gender inclusion through direct engagement and lobbying for support from their constituents in villages, marketplaces and through barazas:

“Their male counterparts invited them back to discuss what committees they were interested in, finding an amicable way forward without involving the courts or creating a public fiasco. By the end of March 2019, the issue was resolved, the women MCAs were all serving in various committees, some as leaders. The speaker of Vihiga is a woman – and they respect her!” Ms. Wangalwa adds.

Unfortunately, the Vihiga case is just one of several recent instances where county assemblies have sidelined women representatives unfairly, a clear indication that while the place of women in Kenyan

politics today has its gains compared to 5 years ago, more needs to be done. Evidently, women, especially from the grassroots, are moving forward to claim their leadership and political spaces, despite existing cultural opposition or societal predisposition. CAF – by engaging today’s issues whilst thinking about tomorrow’s – are working to make that happen.

The gains that women have made over the past 2-3 years are significant. However, how can we advance the agenda to improve their chances in the next electoral cycle? Will we be able to use the strategies we have to move to a higher level? What will be the exit strategies of women who were elected, and how do we enable them to act as advocates for more women to be elected? These are upcoming challenges we are yet to address” concludes Ms. Wangalwa.

