

CISP approach to Participatory Advocacy

Empowering communities and authorities to demand and provide quality and inclusive services in Kenya



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Introduction

This document is a summary of CISP approaches to participatory advocacy and governance. It describes what has worked and what types of engagement of both rights holders and duty bearers have mostly contributed to improving the life of citizens. This analysis is the result of the implementation of three projects funded by the European Union and UNICEF during the period 2014-2017: TAKE PART (“Towards Accountability through Kenyans’ Empowerment in Participation and Active Request for Transparency”) in Kilifi, Mombasa, Taita Taveta and Kajiado counties, *“Advocacy for Improved Nutrition in Kilifi, Kwale and Kitui counties”*, and *“Enhancing integrated child protection prevention and response services through Child Protection Centres in Nakuru and Kilifi Counties”*.

This document focuses on: A) Evidence-based advocacy for improved service delivery, B) Participation of civil society organizations in governance, C) Citizen’s participation in governance, D) Efficiency and accountability of service provision; E) use of media in advocacy.

A. Evidence-based advocacy for improved service delivery

A.1 Assessment of existing policies, strategies and practices

Rationale: Koffi Annan mentioned recently: “Without good data, we're flying blind. If you can't see it, you can't solve it.” The use of evidence-based and knowledge management has been cited as vital in informing policy and strategies in service provision. Leadership and Advocacy for improved services must be guided by context specific priorities. Moreover, advocacy works best when the stakeholders themselves see their context in the design and implementation of advocacy processes.

Objective: To understand best practices and gaps in policies and practices at county and national level which would lead the development of an advocacy plan for action.

Success stories:

Evidence based advocacy for improved nutrition services

CISP in strong collaboration with Pwani University and the County Governments has carried out three studies on best practices and limitation in the delivery of nutrition services in Kenya. The findings have been disseminated among key stakeholders and community members and used to develop specific advocacy strategies at ward, sub-county and county levels. Key actions have been taken so far, including setting aside 4 million shillings for Nutrition in Kitui county for the year 2017/18, a setting up of a budget line including a budget allocation of 4.8 million shillings and an increase in nutritionists from 8 to 33 within the duration of the project in Kilifi county.

Evidence based advocacy for improved ECDE services

CISP in collaboration with Kilifi county and through a project dubbed TAKE PART conducted a research on assessing the delivery of ECDE services in Kilifi county. The research highlighted gains, best practices (what is working) and challenges of the Kilifi county government in delivering ECDE services. The research has been disseminated widely to CSOs and county governments where the project was operational for exchange and bench marking. The report is currently being used to inform policy and advance advocacy issues by non-state actors working in education and children's rights.

Evidence based advocacy for county budget allocation in Child Protection

CISP has conducted a comparative study assessing key trends and good practices on county child budgeting in six counties, i.e. Kilifi, Taita Taveta, Makueni, Kakamega, Nakuru and Kajiado. The study is currently used as an advocacy tool to increase investments by the counties of Kilifi and Nakuru in child protection.

A.2 Participatory approach to development of advocacy strategies

Rationale: Advocacy is a people-centered approach that will only succeed when all key stakeholders and influencers are identified and targeted with appropriate messaging and engagement. Advocacy is a system with multiple processes by multi actors towards a common objective, and all parts of the system must exist and contribute.

Objective: to uphold inclusion of all key stakeholders in the design and implementation of advocacy strategies.

Success stories:

Nutrition Advocacy strategy at county level

CISP working with the national government's Ministry of Health acted as Trainer of Trainers on advocacy for county level actors in Kwale, Kilifi, and Kitui counties. County level stakeholders included government staff, civil society, media and development partners. A national level advocacy strategy document was cascaded to the counties and re-imagined into county-specific advocacy plans for the counties to apply in future advocacy efforts. County strategies ended up responding to county-specific needs, yet still linked to the overall national intent for advocacy.

Nutrition Advocacy strategy at sub-county level

To push for greater participation of communities and community leaders in advocacy, CISP elected to train leaders from the sub-counties of Kitui County in advocacy. They were officials from different government departments, located at the sub county level. After training, the different officials decided to form a sub-county advocacy committee, in which they utilized the platform to raise awareness and seek for community engagement and input in various areas, representing interests of the different departments. This way, water, education, livestock, agriculture and health received overall support at sub-county level and enhanced accountability and participation among communities and their leaders.

B. Participation of civil society organizations in governance

B.1 Enhancing the capacity of civil society to participate in governance

Rationale: Civil Society Organizations are the most common localized set-up that collects, refines and engages with government representatives on issues affecting local communities. Historical trends show key advocates for solutions to common challenges have been from civil society, and governments, by mandate, are bound to respond to community needs. Civil Society has changed rapidly from an all-out critic of government processes to an ally that participates in crafting responses in tandem with the government. The devolution has given more opportunities for the civil society to participate in governance.

Objective: To effect a positive and increasingly collaborative working relationship between the government and civil society for the good of the citizens.

Success stories:

Capacity building of civil society organizations

Based on a capacity gap assessment, civil society organizations in Taita Taveta, Mombasa, Kilifi and Kajiado counties have been trained on: the characteristics of the devolved systems and the channels of participation of the civil society according to the Kenya Constitution 2010. The training included the process of county budgeting and the different ways in which the CSOs can present their feedbacks, advocate and lobby for improved services. Newly established coalitions of civil society organizations have been influencing policy makers' decisions through: filing of petitions and holding of campaigns; submission of policy briefs; court cases filed on behalf of the citizens – public interest litigations; Social mobilization especially at community levels and holding demonstrations to express their concerns.

B.2 Plugging in existing county structures

Rationale: Under the devolved structures of governance, there are multiple avenues, processes and spaces for civil society organizations, as well as any other stakeholders to engage with the counties. To support the sustainability of the interventions and their impact, it is best that these interventions adopt and use existing county structures, to increase their sustainability beyond the timeframes of interventions. Similarly, anchoring the interventions in government processes will borrow larger policy and legislative frameworks and other similar processes towards a shared vision.

Objective: Anchoring interventions (planning, design, implementation, monitoring, reporting and learning) within existing government structures.

Success story:

Nutrition Plan at county level

CISP in its design for implementing a nutrition advocacy project closely collaborated with the county governments to understand the policies and laws supporting nutrition, and county plans in nutrition. To this end, CISP assisted the counties to review plans paying attention to new data generated through research, and suggested recommendations. The counties were able to draft county Nutrition Plans, with support from multiple stakeholders, including various departments, and a common platform for sharing progress. Even at the end of the implementation period, some of the action plans had timeframes beyond the project itself, and new development partners had a starting point for engaging in supporting nutrition at the counties.

Citizen Participation Policy

CISP, through a coalition of CSOs, supported the development of the citizen participation policy in Taita Taveta. This was a necessary step to eventually fast track the passing of citizen participation bills.

CIDP

Bringing together CSOs in various sectors in Kitui, Kwale and Kilifi Counties, CISP worked with them to identify areas of interest in the County Integrated Development Plan review process and draft suggestions for the county government. In all three counties, the CSOs came together to create awareness around citizen participation in the CIDP processes, convened communities for CIDP and budget hearings, and recorded community input into memoranda for the county, including separate memoranda that was divided into sectors, and each CSO coalition proposed inputs into the CIDP from their areas of work, by sector. Due to this engagement, CISP was invited as a member in the county steering committee for CIDP review in Kilifi County for the new CIDP and the 2018/2019 budget.

B.3 Multisectoral Stakeholder's Platform

Rationale: Collaborative partnerships are key ingredients of effective interlocution, leading to solutions to many collective-action problems. CSOs that collaborate with other CSOs benefit in terms of scaling up their activities as a result of co-sponsoring. The County governments are able to address collective issues highlighted by a joint CSO force that displays its partnership through complementing each other. Multi stakeholders' platforms bring together diverse types of stakeholders with a shared interest and resource to interact, create understanding, define roles and create joint strategic framework towards a shared interest. A Multisectoral Stakeholder's Platform acts as both an information forum where all vital data, plans and evidence is shared, and as a staging area, where joint action is crafted, and its implementation tracked and reported.

Objective: bring together all sectors with a stake in an action, and jointly plan, carry out interventions, report and learn from the process. The platform works to unify the vision and collate resources that may otherwise be depleted on divergent actions.

Success stories:

Multisectoral Stakeholder's Platform to support Scaling up Nutrition

CISP worked with the counties of Kilifi and Kwale to set up a Multisectoral Stakeholder's Platform to support Scaling up Nutrition in the county. The platforms brought together county health, finance, water, education, agriculture, and livestock officials, academia, civil society, development partners, media, national level disaster operations officials, and business owners to plan on how to improve nutrition in the county. A secretariat was successfully launched, together with a Common Results Framework to guide all actors in working together in their various capacities and processes towards improving nutrition.

County Advisory Boards

CISP supported the establishment of County Advisory Boards (CAB) in four counties (Mombasa, Kilifi, Taita Taveta and Kajiado). The CAB brings together different stakeholders to strategically position the category of stakeholder which they represent and take active part in county processes. The platform brought together CSOs, professionals, business, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly and faith-based groups at county level. The CABs actively participated and contributed in development of bills, county budget process and collectively submitted several petitions for consideration. Over 20 petitions were submitted during the project span and 8 were considered and action was taken by the county government. The CABs are also in forefront auditing county budgets, expenditure and projects implemented by the government. Advocacy campaigns against corruption allegations in Kilifi resulted to County Assembly investigation to the matter and tabling a report on the same.

C. Citizen's participation in governance

C.1 Strengthening county systems for citizen participation in governance

Rationale: Citizen engagement can help governments achieve improved development results. The Constitution of Kenya 2010 gives prominence importance to public participation; it promotes democracy by providing the rights holders with opportunity to take part in decision making processes affecting them in their communities. Among many reforms, devolution gives a significant opportunity to shifting from a top-down to a bottom-up governance approach.

Objective: Strengthening county systems of citizen's engagement to enhance their participation in governance.

Success stories:

Decentralization of Citizen Participation Forum

In Kilifi county Citizen Participation Forums were conducted at subcounty level and this hampered citizenry to access forums to give their inputs on development matters. Magarini ward has been marginalized for long and the effect was being felt by the residence. Magarini ward residences established with the support of CISP a Mbunge la Mwananchi to discuss their issues on a regular basis (bi-weekly or monthly). As a result, they petitioned the county and requested that the forums cascade to ward level. Follow ups on the same were conducted and for the 1st time in 2016 the county decentralized the forums to all Kilifi wards.

Citizen Participation Forum facilitated with participatory methodologies

CISP trained and mentored subcounty and ward administrators and county staff mandated to conduct Citizen Participation on participatory methodologies in Taita Taveta, Kajiado and Kilifi counties. CISP promoted the use of Art of Hosting methods to enhance participation and feedback mechanisms during Citizen Participation Forum. The approach turned out to be a huge success which opened doors for CISP to train other county officials in the Finance Department at the expense con the county government.

C.2 Civic education

Rationale: For citizens to demand for services and rights as right holders, they must first know what these rights are, what they are entitled to, existing legislation and policies that support their rights, current processes of engaging with service providers and duty bearers, models of engagement that have been known to work, and even avenues for redress in a case they feel aggrieved by a given process of representation or service provision.

People will not ask for what they do not know and will not effectively participate in processes they are not conversant about. Civic education brings awareness to first understand, then participate in existing processes to access and protect rights.

Objective: Enhancing awareness on the rights, freedoms, processes and procedures available to support citizens in pursuit of their needs, and to be effectively governed.

Success story:

Joint civic education campaigns

CISP supported civic education campaigns, conducted through the joint efforts of CSOs and county government's representatives in Kilifi and Mombasa, Taita Taveta and Kajiado counties. The education and sensitization campaigns were conducted through call-in radio programs, theatre and social media forums, meetings and baraza at county, sub-county and ward level. This has continued beyond project span where trained CSO's representatives are invited by the counties for joint civic education initiatives.

C.3 Community feedback mechanisms

Rationale: Strengthening community feedback mechanisms means strengthening participation of citizens in governance. Citizens play a critical role in advocating for public institutions to become more transparent, accountable, effective and efficient, but also in contributing with innovative solutions to complex development challenges. Building capacities of citizens to raise their voices as beneficiaries of service provision allows them to share the support they received by the institutions and the challenges they experienced in service provision. Giving community a voice is not just reporting what they say, but also going further to equip them with the skills and tools to share their experiences and thoughts with other community members and participate in advocacy actions for improved services.

Objective: growing community voice through giving them skills to report and provide feedback on their experience in development processes.

Success story:

Community Nutrition: in our own words

Stories of change as told by citizens capture the nuances and context from the perspective of the community. The specific environment, social norms and experiences of an individual if shared can influence the change of an entire community. Strengthening existing community feedback mechanisms has been the purpose of CISP intervention. With this aim CISP trained community members on journalism and advocacy skills for social change. A few stories written by the community were selected to be turned into a publication.

Note on Children's involvement: Telling stories for change is uniquely apt for children. Children's rights oblige stakeholders to include children's thoughts and needs in decisions. A current practice is the use of children's parliament as an avenue to access the voice of the children, while some have used poetry, drawings or plays to tell their stories. CISP in its child protection program works to empower children to express their opinions and make their voices count.

Bunge la mwananchi

This is a community owned and driven platform where members meet to debate on pertinent issues related to their locality. It's a platform for information sharing, consultation, formulation of proposals and advocacy plans on issues that are affecting them. The forum is composed of ordinary citizens and builds a broad-based consensus for collective mobilization, identifying leaders at every level of the community, and make them their representative holding different dockets (similar to a functional parliament). The forum facilitates close interaction with duty bearers while holding them accountable. The *Buge la mwananchi* in Magarini ward, Kilifi county, supported the identification of gaps in the government implementation of policies, plans and projects and in sensitizing people about these issues.

Complaints, Compliments and Information office

CISP supported the activation of the Complaints, Compliments and Information offices established by the county government in Taita Taveta at sub-county level. These centers are meant to ease access to information by citizens and have an alternative complaint raising mechanism other than petitions.

D. Efficiency and accountability of service provision

D.1 Establishing a finance tracking system

Rationale: Knowing how much financial resources in the county or national government are available across different sectors at the onset of a planned intervention and being able to track the expenditure during the intervention is critical to ascribe how much is needed to effect what desired change in a given context. The government needs to adopt an accountability system that supports this process which can tell at any one point how much is being budgeted and utilized over time for a certain sector or purpose.

Objective: To track the financial resources budgeted and utilized by a certain county or national government for a specific intervention/sector and have an accountability system for resource use towards an explicit goal.

Success story:

Finance tracking system in nutrition

CISP in close cooperation with county governments in Kilifi and Kwale brought together multiple departments to sieve out county budgets that supported a specific cause, in this case, nutrition. Different departments went through their budgets and consolidated a nutrition-sensitive budget tracking system that helped all stakeholders know at any time how much funds were available, and what they were being used for.

D.2 Participating in budget processes

Rationale: Every year all counties are required by law to engage their respective citizens to contribute in the budget preparation and validation process. A few counties have set up the County Budget and Economic Forum (CBEF) as a consultative forum on county budgeting as well as broader economic issues and priorities of the county as a whole. CSOs and citizens are often not aware of the county budgeting process, in particular when they are called to intervene and how. The participation process is also at the times jeopardized by last-minute sharing of county budgets by the assembly or last-minute call for citizen participation, without giving the civil society the time to prepare their feedback.

Objective: To prioritize areas in which public investments could be made to improve the welfare of citizens.

Success story

Capacity building of CSOs on budgeting processes

CISP has empowered CSOs and citizens in Kilifi, Kajiado, Mombasa and Taita Taveta through open workshops on county budgeting processes and civic education campaigns. From the pre and post questionnaires, it was evident that majority of local organizations are not aware of the county processes, therefore are not able to participate.

As a result, Mombasa county's 2016/2016 budget preparation and validation process was challenged by the civil society on the basis of inadequate participation. The impact of the court petition shaped the process of engagement in the 2017/2018 budget formulation and validation process. Before discussion and passing the estimates, the county assembly reached out the CSOs to seek collaboration toward a more harmonious working relation. As a result, the assembly presented the budget estimates to the CSOs two weeks before the validating meeting. CSOs were able to scrutinize the estimates and present feedbacks collectively and the assembly acknowledged the role played by the CSOs in this instance.

D.3 Social auditing

Rationale: It is imperative that citizens are involved in public participation because the law also requires them to pay taxes for service delivery. This not only makes them consumers of government services but also the financiers. In administrative decision making, citizen participation is about an inclusive setting of goals, determining policies and strategies and monitoring of government service delivery through instruments such as social audit.

Objective: to monitor county use of public finances.

Success story:

CSOs conducting social audits

During the implementation of TAKE PART, CISP supported local CSOs to engage with the budget process and scrutiny for FYs 2015/16 and 2016/17. Queries were raised, and petitions written in regard to budgetary allocations and how the money was spent in the previous years. The CSOs conducted 4 successful social audits and findings were shared/ disseminated with the community and county for action.

E. Use of media for advocacy

Rationale: The media has been used to raise public awareness about issues that affect people across the entire country and has been a valuable means of maintaining debates. The use of this powerful tool in policy dialogue cuts across all CSO strategies. The media can be used as a source of information or ‘scoops’ on pertinent issues, as a partner in addressing policy issues, as a medium for advocacy, and as an interlocutor of debates between the CSOs, the public and government information.

Objective: create awareness and enhance dialogue on pertinent issues and propelling favorable policies

Success story:

Radio Programs

Exposure on increase of child abuse in Kilifi and Nakuru context, training through media on child protection laws, mechanisms, challenges being experienced, interventions and creating awareness on the role of citizens in regard to the subject was well applauded. The media in target Counties has been influential in propagating CISP child protection interventions – using governance lenses, processes, created an interface between the County and national government on how to support CPC center through consideration of budgetary allocation, joint action planning and networking on child protection issues. CISP has also used this medium to validate evidence on various thematic areas for policy advocacy. CSOs through our County advisory boards often continue to call press conferences to give statements on issues of concern. At the same time media in targeted counties became an important source of information in exposing some of the issues that CSOs follow up in advocacy.

Lists of Publications

All publications are available on CISP website: <http://developmentofpeoples.org/analysis/>

- 1) Assessment of the Nutrition sector at county level, CISP 2017
 - Nutrition Assessment – Kwale County
 - Nutrition Assessment – Kitui County
 - Nutrition Assessment – Kilifi County

- 2) Effective Public Participation Mechanisms in Mombasa, Kilifi, Taita Taveta and Kajiado Counties, CISP 2017.

- 3) Exploring Devolution: a study on Early Childhood Development Education service delivery in Kilifi county, CISP 2017.

- 4) Community Nutrition: in our words, CISP 2018.