

Participatory budget planning and monitoring for improved service delivery in Baringo County.

The participatory budget planning and monitoring forums were organized in Baringo County in three locations namely Ngetmoi, Kipsaraman and Eldama Ravine with two objectives in mind. Firstly, to strengthen the monitoring capacities of community based civil society organizations on sector budgeting and secondly was to develop and agree on baseline information with community groups that will form the basis for conducting Public Expenditure Tracking (PET) in view of improving service delivery.

The forums were conducted for two days (24th and 25th of May) in each of the three venues. More than 100 representatives of the community groups were engaged including women self-help and the youth led CBOs. The forums were timely as they were designed to take advantage of the ongoing budget making process for 2018/19; to create awareness on some of the sector governance issues in the land, basic education, and natural resource and agriculture sectors.

Because of the voluminous nature of such budget estimate documents and the limitation of time and resources on the part of KAS and her partners, the aforementioned sectors were identified for piloting. The participants were taken through the budget estimates which in an overall sense added up to 8 billion Kshs. Presentations were made on each of the specific sector budgets vis-à-vis the existing community plans and other policy objectives and participants were given time through group work and presentations to analyze areas that presented huge gaps or what was perceived as “unnecessary public consumption” for review.

Generally, the estimates in the three areas of focus appeared to attract a huge appetite for recurrent spending rather than development spending. For instance, community land adjudication and demarcation are some of the priority issues one would expect for consideration as the county awaits the deployment of community land registrars by the National Government sometime this year, however, the budget failed to capture the reality of this exercise.

A petition as a tool to fast track and guide possible review was shared in the forums and group work were used to collect information to inform the petition which has been drafted and presently in the final stages before it's shared by partners to the various sectoral committee heads of the County Assembly.

With the listed sectors being perceived by most evaluations and debates for having performed very poorly in the delivery of services in the ASAL Counties of Kenya, at least in the last two financial years, they are also difficult to lobby around. Because of this factor, KAS and her partners also used the forums to sensitize the community groups and CBOs on the tools that they could use to track the spending of the public funds and to assess the quality or value outcome. The public expenditure tracking was discussed and an attempt was made to simulate key components of the (PET) including how a resource flow risk maps and the social audit works. Areas of interest as per the allocation in the budget were pointed out including for example in the agriculture sector, the need to track the nature of support farmers were being given in respect to farmers training collages as well as to track the funding set aside for 'livestock development in Baringo'. It's our hope that we will engage further upon the passage of this budget with the same target groups to conduct budget tracking -resource flow risk maps- and social audit.