PDF
THE PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL

REPORT OF THE 5TH EDITION OF THE
PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL
2023

HELD ON 8TH – 11TH MARCH 2023

AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM GROUNDS OF KENYA, NAIROBI

BY CENTRE FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY (CMD-KENYA)

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ACRONYMS

AMWIK	Association of Media Women in Kenya
AYT	Africa Youth Trust
CCK	Chama Cha Kazi
CCM	Chama Cha Mashinani
CIDP	County Integrated Development Programs
CMD-Kenya	Centre for Multiparty Democracy Kenya
CME Trust	Canada Mathare Education Trust
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CRECO	Constitution and Reform Education Consortium
DAP-K	Democratic Action Party of Kenya
DEP	Devolution Empowerment Party
DP	Democratic Party of Kenya
EALA	East Africa Legislative Assembly.
ELF	Emerging Leaders Foundation
ELGIA	Electoral Law and Governance Institute for Africa
ELOG	Election Observation Group
FNF	Friedrich Naumann Foundation
GMOs	Genetically Modified Foods
ICJ	International Commission Of Jurists
IEBC	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
IMLU	Independent Medico Legal Unit
JP	Jubilee Party
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
KI	Katiba Institute
KUP	Kenya Union Party
LSK	Law Society of Kenya
NACADA	National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition Party
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PAA	Pamoja African Alliance
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
RHNK	Reproductive Health Network Kenya
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TI-Kenya	Transparency International Kenya
TJNA	Tax Justice Network Africa
TSP	The Service Party
TVET	Technical Vocational Education Training
UDA	United Democratic Alliance
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UDPK	United Disabled Persons Of Kenya
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UPIA	United Party of Independent Alliance
WFD	Westminster Foundation for Democracy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 People Dialogue Festival (PDF) was the fifth in the series that have been organized in Kenya by the Centre for Multi-party Democracy (CMD-Kenya). The PDF is essentially a platform for dialogue among citizens and between citizens and the leaders. The 2023 PDF had five main villages: political parties Expo, Political dialogues, youth, SDGs and Ni Sisi ni Sasa. The framing of the content came in the backdrop of continued promotion of democratic governance and contextual issues including the 2022 general election, a burgeoning youth population and a strained economy characterized by heavy taxation and debt burden, COVID-19, climate change, and global development goals.

The proceedings demonstrated that the event was quite successful and the objectives were largely met. Some of the indicators include the number of both physical and virtual participants, the range of themes discussed, the number and skill variety of session moderators and panelists, the high profile of keynote speakers in opening and closing sessions among others. More importantly, the topics that were discussed resonated with the experiences and expectations of Kenyans given that each session had a wide range of views from the participants. Indeed, the 2023 PDF inclusion of a platform for and by adolescents was certainly quite refreshing in a society where across cultures public discussion on sexuality and reproductive health, mental health, substance and drug abuse, are considered taboo.

This report presents the proceedings of each village during the PDF 2023. At the end of each session, the report details key recommendations and take-aways that aim at informing policy proposals and legislative reforms that various actors taking part in the event can pursue to strengthen the country's democratic setting.

PART ONE:

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Background

The People's Dialogue Festival (PDF) is a democracy festival through which political actors, citizens and other stakeholders such as government institutions and civil society organizations hold a meeting to discuss matters affecting the country. PDF in Kenya mirrors the 'people's meeting', traditionally organized in Sweden as **Almedalen** and in Denmark as **Folkemøde**. The concept also resonates with the Kenyan concept of **Kamukunji**, a term popularized by its usage to represent the country's pro-independence gatherings held in today's politically popular Kamukunji grounds, and by its usage to represent university students' gatherings to lobby or agitate on a certain issue.

In Kenya, PDF is organized by the Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD-Kenya), which is a political parties'-based membership organization with the mandate of strengthening multiparty democracy in the country and in political parties through policy influence and capacity building. From CMD-Kenya's perspective the underlying premise for PDF is that the degree of democracy in a country can be measured by the extent to which the government opens up to citizen involvement in public affairs and the space they give for citizens to hold the government accountable. The first PDF in Kenya was held in 2019, and since then, PDF has become an annual event. The 2023 event was the fifth, and was held on 8th – 11th of March 2023 at the Nairobi Museum of Kenya, Nairobi. At the time, CMD-Kenya's membership comprised of 28 registered political parties.

1.2 Rationale

Since independence in 1963, Kenya has made some significant progress towards democratization. An important indicator of this progress is the institutionalization of election in every five (5) years as a system of changing individuals occupying political offices including the presidency. Another key milestone is the legal provision for local public participation in decision-making for developmental initiatives, for example, in setting priorities and having a voice in budgetary allocation to developmental activities.

The democratic progression is, however, encumbered by challenges. For example, the democratization process has largely taken place with limited institutionalization such that the executive arm of government is often deemed as interfering with election coordinating agency (i.e., the Independent Election and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)) as well as with other key players including the police. Indeed, since the re-introduction of multiparty elections in 1992, out of the seven (7) ordinary presidential elections, the 2005 referendum, and the repeat election of 2017, only the 2002 election that marked the retirement of President Daniel Moi and election of Mwai Kibaki that has generally been deemed free and fair. The rest have been characterized by litigation at the Supreme Court (i.e., 2013, 2017, and 2022) and/or generalized chaos (i.e., 1992, 1997, 2007, 2017, and 2022).

Parliament, which is ideally a neutral people's watchdog, is also deemed partisan at

the behest of the ruling or the opposition parties. The level of engagement between citizens and elected leaders, which is also part of democracy, has also been low. In this regard, there is a general perception that citizens only interact with citizens only during campaign period. Further, the relationship between political leaders and the civil society is deemed to be low, while the relationship with the media is deemed to be mainly confrontational rather than collaborative. The lack of citizens' reach to elected leaders either individually or through representation is deemed to contribute to poor governance indicated by corruption (i.e., abuse of office), economic mismanagement, exclusion, and to public dissatisfaction with democracy in Kenya.

1.3 Context

The PDF was held on the background of a significant political and socio-economic crisis locally and internationally. First, the convening was held in the background of a general election held in August 2022 and whose aftermath had been fairly violent. In the Presidential election, Dr. William Ruto emerged winner against the main challenger Raila Odinga. Ruto was the Deputy President in two election cycles (i.e., 2013-2017 and 2017-2022). His opponent Odinga, however, had the public support from the incumbent President, Uhuru Kenyatta. The declaration of Ruto as winner elicited litigation at the Supreme Court, which withheld the election results. However, Odinga was not satisfied with the ruling and thereafter called supporters to street protest.

Secondly, the event was held in the context of a military operation in the North Rift region of Kenya, and which has been a response to intermittent cattle rustling, and related loss of human life and displacements. Thus, the PDF provided opportunity for leaders from the Northern Kenya to reflect broadly on issues of national importance including how to sustainably address the perennial challenge.

Thirdly, the 2023 PDF was also held in the aftermath of the COVID-19 disease pandemic. The pandemic which, in Kenya was declared in March 2020 had not yet been officially declared over. Among the costs of the pandemic was a dilapidated economy indicated by high inflation, and which had been identified by Odinga as a reason for the street protests.

Fourth, 2023 PDF occurred during a period of a drought that had persisted for four (4) years; and generally, in the context of global climate change characterized by global warming that threatens global food security. Other background factors included the Russian-Ukraine war whose outcome included escalation of food prices given that Kenya imports from both countries' products such as cereals and fertilizers.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the 2023 PDF was to provide political parties, state and non-state political actors with political dialogue platform centered on governance reforms, safeguarding democratic gains and socio-economic development. The specific objectives were to:

a. Deepen public participation through the provision of safe spaces for citizens to engage in dialogue on issues of national interest.
b. Improve citizens' understanding of governance and socio-economic issues and who and which institutions they should hold responsible.
c. Distill a reform agenda that political parties and other relevant actors can adopt for immediate and long-term implementation to improve people's welfare.
d. Advocate for issue-based politics, enhanced understanding of Kenya's development agenda and commitment to fulfilling its obligations to regional and global commitments including implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

1.5 Expected Outcomes

The expected results from the PDF 2023 were:

Optimism: Enhancing appreciation for democracy, and strengthened belief in positive change among Kenyans.

Relationships and Equality: Encouraging new and strong relations, building trust between the system and citizens, reduced power distance and diversity.

Innovation and solutions: Championing new politics, ideas, methods, and processes, strengthening the capacity to develop solutions and creativity.

Conducive Political competition and cooperation: Increased awareness of the importance to balance the use of political competition and cooperation for sustainable development and for providing meaningful choices to citizens.

Participation and dialogue: Increased capacity to participate, opportunities to do so, curiosity, open conversations, and showroom of new participatory and collaborative methods.

PART TWO:

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Delivery Approach

A range of interactive and creative methodologies including keynote addresses, themed workshops, round-table discussions, panel discussions, plenaries, exhibitions, lectures, speeches, interviews, masterclasses, focus group discussions, fireside chats, watch parties, live performances, and edutainment were applied in the delivery of the different sessions. The sessions within PDF 2023 ran simultaneously throughout the event with participants left free to engage in platforms of their preference.

2.2 Venue

Like the previous four (4) editions of the PDF, the 5th edition of the PDF 2023 was held at the Kenya National Museum in Nairobi. Discussions around the thematic areas were structured and held in several venues including the Amphitheater, Courtyard, SDG village, political parties' expo, main stage and #NiSisiNiSasa village. A total of 18 events and discussions were held concurrently in the various venues. The event was held over three and half days (8th -11th March 2023).

2.3 Structure and Format of the PDF

The 2023 PDF was conducted in a wide range of interactive and creative methodologies. These included keynote addresses, themed workshops, round-table discussions, panel discussions, plenaries, exhibitions, lectures, speeches, interviews, master classes, focus group discussions, fireside chats, watch parties, live performances, and edutainment. The PDF discussions were primarily held in five main platforms namely:

   a. **Political Parties Expo –** where political parties exhibited, engaged in inter-party dialogue, and debated and held speeches by top political party officials, and held structured conversations between political and civic actors on the performance of democratic institutions.

b. **The Ni Sisi Ni Sasa Village –** which was meant for participants below the age of 18 years to amplify their voices and harness their ideas on issues that concern them. The platform was also meant for them to enhance their civic competence and their participation in democratic and governance processes.

c. **The Youth Village –** which was meant to be an intra-generational dialogue space for those aged 18-35-years to share lived experiences, inspire each other and actively learn to engage in a robust dialogue on a wide range of subjects to improve their civic competence.

d. **The SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) Village –** which focused on conversations around the United Nations' current developmental goals and how they can be locally implemented; and showcased efforts by various organizations in the realization of the SDGs.

e. **The Political Dialogue Village –** where high level conversations took place focussing on contemporary issues including reflections on the 2022 general elections; marking the International Women's Day; the role of money in politics, the role of church in politics; political party leaders' hour among others.

The five (5) platforms ran simultaneously and were streamed online. Participants had the latitude to participate in a platform of their preference. The thematic areas discussed across the four platforms were interlinked such that participants in any platform had an opportunity to engage in the key themes of the event.

2.4 Topical Areas for PDF 2023

Some of the thematic areas to cast a spotlight on during PDF 2023 are described below:

1. **The Burden of Tax and Debt:** The debate on taxation in Kenya explored the two most significant questions. Can Kenya Tax Itself to Prosperity? In what ways can Kenya ease the growing burden of taxation? How did Kenya get to the point of external debt burden, and what are the consequences and way out of the crisis? This session involved subject matter experts both academia and practitioners to surface the issues, offer insights, respond to questions and enlighten citizens on their civic duty to speak truth to power when the trajectory to increase taxes is considered

2. **Kenya's constitutional duels:** Is it about power struggles among the elite? In 2010, Kenya ushered in the most comprehensive constitutional reforms since independence. Yet it is fair to observe that the country is constantly subject to agonized constitutional debate with proponents for amendments arguing that the time is the right time to cure deficiencies in the 2010 constitution. This session provided opportunity to various players to explore concerns regarding the push for constitutional change being about competition for power among the country's elite, and debate about popular and parliamentary routes to constitutional amendments whilst avoiding politically divisive reforms.

3. **Post General Elections 2022 Evaluation Report – Looking Back to Move Forward:** On 9th August 2022, Kenya held its seventh general election since the return to a multiparty system in 1991 and its third general election under the 2010 Constitution. The backdrop to the general elections was marked

by a deepening economic downturn, increased social vulnerability, and rising poverty levels. After the elections, the IEBC convened a series of post-election meetings to reflect on its gains and challenges in the 2022 General Election. At the PDF 2023, this session featured Elections Management Bodies and key CSOs which focus on a wide range of areas during the election cycle and thus have useful insights on areas of improvement towards a more seamless electoral process within the context of the post-election evaluation report.

4. **Maturity and Progressiveness of Political Parties to Fix Ailing Democracy:** World over, there are legitimate concerns about the trilemma of resurgence in populism, democracy failing to deliver and people becoming increasingly skeptical of politics. This scenario invites the question: What key opportunities and challenges do political parties face on their path to institutionalization and to safeguarding multiparty democracy in Kenya? The PDF 2023 provided opportunity to key stakeholders including the regulator (Registrar of Political Parties) duty bearers in political parties, political actors (PPLC, PPDT, IEBC), activists, analysts, and democracy support organizations to delve into the challenges that face political parties and opportunities they present towards building a democratically resilient society.

5. **Democracy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** As a basic institution of all modern democracies, political parties have a fundamental role in empowering citizens and ensuring inclusion and equality in societies around the world. Indeed, it is parties who are responsible for aggregating social demands and transforming them into political decisions. In this sense, political parties act as a chain of transmission, translating the popular will to those that hold power and take decisions. That is why political parties are essential to achieving the SDGs. Within the PDF 2023, the SDGs village was the arena for political parties, policy makers, civic actors, private sector and citizens engage in constructive dialogue on issue-based politics, utilizing SDGs as a frame of reference for political parties to develop policies, and evaluating adhering to Kenya's development agenda and fulfilling obligations to regional and global commitments.

2.5 Participants

On average, 2,000 participants attended the PDF 2023 on daily basis. This means cumulatively, 8,000 participants attended the PDF 2023. Of these, 57% were male while 43% were female. Comparatively, this demonstrates a slight improvement in the percentage of women who took part in the PDF 2023 compared to the PDF 2022. In the PDF 2022, 60.7% of the participants were male while 39.3% were female. The percentage composition of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) was low as was constituted only 0.1% of the participants. With regard to age, majority of the participants were young people aged below 35 years, who composed of 68% of the PDF 2023 participants. By and large, young people being majority of participants in the 5th edition of the PDF reflects the trend for the past 4 editions of PDFs none of them has ever registered the population of young people being below 65% since inception.

2.6 Social Media Reach

The event was streamed through social media platforms (CMD-Kenya Page and PDF Page and the CMD-Kenya YouTube Channel) as follows:

a. In the **#PDFuntamed** and the #peopledialoguefestival online engagement, reveal that 2,876 posts were made with 775 users actively engaging on the discussions. 5,060 online individuals interacted with the discussions through commenting, liking the posts as well as sharing. 2,098,624 unique online users interacted with the #PDFUntamed online conversations and 10,525,827 was the number of times that the #PDFUntamed hashtag was viewed by online users.

#PDFUNTAMED   FEB 24 2023

| 2,876 | 775 | 5,060 | 2,098,624 | 10,525,827 |
| POSTS | USERS | ENGAGEMENTS | REACH | IMPRESSIONS |

b. In the **#PeopleDialogueFestival** online engagement, 3,876 posts were made with 875 users actively engaging on the discussions. 6,060 online individuals interacted with the discussions through commenting, liking the posts as well as sharing. 4,098,624 unique online users interacted with the #PeopleDialogueFestival online conversations and 18,700,840 was the number of times that the #PeopleDialogueFestival hashtag was viewed by online users.

#PEOPLEDIALOGUEFESTIVAL   MAR 3RD –MAR 10TH

| 3,876 | 875 | 6,060 | 4,098,624 | 18,700,840 |
| POSTS | USERS | ENGAGEMENTS | REACH | IMPRESSIONS |

c. In the **#ShereheAtPDF** online engagement, 3,001 posts were made with 680 users actively engaging on the discussions. 4,060 online individuals interacted with the discussions through commenting, liking the posts as well as sharing. 2,056,624 unique online users interacted with the #ShereheAtPDF online conversations and 10,025,800 was the number of times that the #ShereheAtPDF hashtag was viewed by online users.

#SHEREHEATPDF   March 11th 2023

| 3,001 | 680 | 4,060 | 2,056,624 | 10,025,800 |
| POSTS | USERS | ENGAGEMENTS | REACH | IMPRESSIONS |

d. In the **#PDFestival2023** online engagement, 2, 675 posts were made with 779 users actively engaging on the discussions. 3,015 online individuals interacted with the discussions through commenting, liking the posts as well as sharing. 2,000,026 unique online users interacted with the #PDFestival2023 online conversations and 10,775,967 was the number of times that the #PDFestival2023 hashtag was viewed by online users

e. With regard to sentiments, 46% of the discussions were positive and in support of the need to embrace dialogue as Kenyans. 40% were neutral sentiments either in support of embracing dialogue during or no, whereas negative responses not in support of the People Dialogue festival campaign were at 14%.

THE PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL 2023 OPENING CEREMONY

The theme for the PDF 2023 **Competition and Collaboration in Democratic Development** was premised on the understanding that, democracy, good governance and a political dialogue culture are key to a stable and prosperous Kenya today and in future. At the centrality of PDF 2023's Opening Ceremony were discussions on; recognition of the need to provide safe spaces for citizens to engage in dialogue on matters of national importance as a step towards deepening the culture of public participation for members of the public and equally important towards development of citizen friendly policies that safeguard the welfare of the people. The need to better citizens understanding of governance, socio-economic issues, national-institutional mandates and the role of citizens in ensuring accountability. The significance and need for issue- based politics as a step towards changing the construct of our governance, the understanding of Kenya's development agenda and the commitment to fulfilling our national, regional and global obligations including the sustainable development goals which would constructively look into the emerging issues of climate change. For posterity, the need to refine a reform agenda that political parties and all relevant actors could adopt for rapid and enduring implementation to improve people's welfare. Emphasizing the need for inclusivity in governance as a system that would create an environment, systems and a community that is welcoming and accessible to individuals despite their background, identity, abilities or differences. This was further marked by the commemoration of the international women's day as a step to promoting inclusivity.

The Chief Guest at the opening ceremony was Rt. Hon. Moses Masika Wetangula, Speaker of the National Assembly

PART THREE:
PROCEEDINGS BY VILLAGES (SESSIONS)

3.1 POLITICAL PARTIES EXPO VILLAGE

3.1.1 Overview

Kenya has over 90 registered political parties. The country has a presidential political system whereby the candidate with majority votes (i.e., 50% plus one) is the winner and his/her political party becomes the governing party. In parliament, political parties that win seats constitute the majority and the minority sides while those win seats as independent candidates can ideally align with either side. The Political Parties Expo was a Village where the key topics that touch on the position of political parties in democratizing the country were discussed as highlighted in the following sections.

Moderators:
Elvis Wambura, KYPA &
Wafula Wakoko, ORPP

Panelists:
Tony Muturi- Legal Officer, ODM Party.
Ali Surraw- Assistant Registrar of Political Parties.
Anika Jane-Member of the Green Congress Party.
Benedict Wachira- Secretary General for Communist Party.
Hon. Dennitah Ghati- Advocate for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

3.1.2 Beyond Elections: The Role of Political Parties in Governance and Promotion of Women's Participation

The focus of this topic of discussion was the appreciation that women constitute more than 50% of Kenya's population and thus their participation in democratic governance is of particular importance. Most importantly, political parties have a significant role to play to ensure that women are granted opportunities to participate in governance in between elections. Besides, the session provided opportunity for duty bearers to discuss how Kenya's Constitutional and legal ecosystem has facilitated the growth and institutionalization of political parties as institutions of democratic governance. The key highlight from the discussions was that there has been significant improvement in political governance, which indicates growth in the country's democracy. The improvement is indicated by:

    a. Increased representation of women in the National and County Assemblies,
    b. Increased confidence in judicial adjudication of political petitions;

c. The establishment of the office of the Registrar of Political Parties that registers and regulates political parties.
d. Increased institutionalization of political parties as indicated by the notable tendency for aspirants to vie through parties than as independent candidates. This is indicative of the growth of internal party democracy.

Although the legal regime was conducive for growth of political parties, discussants observed that there was much to be done to make political parties inclusive particularly to members of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and also active after elections. The key takeaways from this session were:

a. In the run-up to the 2022 elections, political parties utilized negotiations as a method for picking candidates to contest for political office. However, the process was not very objective in the eyes of many candidates, especially women. Political parties should review the so-called negotiated democracy and refrain from asking SIGs to step down in favor of non-SIG candidates. In this respect the political parties should develop an attitude that winning an elective seat is not an end in itself. That means, even if an SIG candidate would fail to win that experience is important for future electoral bids.
b. Preparation of the party lists: again, informed by the experiences of the 2022 elections, almost all political parties prepared and submitted to IEBC lists that were not gender compliant. Political parties must be deliberate in ensuring they meet the inclusion requirements as per the law. Similarly, for Kenya to benefit from the nominative seats at the County and National Assemblies, there must be a provision in law clearly indicating who should be nominated through the top-up mechanisms. As is now, the process is open and easily abused by political parties and therefore less beneficial towards consolidating our democracy.

3.1.3 Acceleration of Realization Vision 2030 And Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) In Kenya: Key Strategies

Kenya Vision 2030 is the long-term development blueprint launched in 2008 and aims to transform the country into *"a newly-industrializing, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment"*. It has three pillars: **the economic pillar** which is concerned with enhancing GDP growth by focusing on six priority sectors namely tourism, agriculture and livestock, wholesale and retail, trade, manufacturing, financial services, business process offshoring and it-enabled services; **the social pillar** which aims to improve the quality of life for all Kenyans by targeting eight key social sectors, namely; education and training, health, water and sanitation, environment, housing and urbanization and gender, youth, sports and culture. This pillar also makes special provisions for Kenyans with various disabilities and previously marginalized communities, and **the political pillar** which envisages a democratic political system that is issue based, people-centered, result-oriented and accountable to the public".

In order to safeguard the plan from revision or abandonment that might happen regime change the vision is anchored in nine governance principles namely: constitutional reform, sovereignty of the people, gender equality, national values, goals and ideology, a bill of rights, a viable political party system, public participation in governance, separation of powers and decentralization.

Moderator
Dennis Kabara

Panelists:

KIPPRA
Council of Governors
Dr. Daniel Mutegi – VDS
Political Parties

At the PDF 2023, the discussion centered on aligning county development plans with Vision 2030 and the achievements that have been so far realized. The discussion revealed that it was well understood that counties can leverage on the enabled environment that has already been created by the national government. The indicators and enablers towards realization of the vision were highlighted as:

a. The 2010 Constitution, for creating devolution.
b. Infrastructural projects that are the vision's flagships including the SGR.
c. Public sector reforms such as performance contracting.
d. Land reforms including digitisation of records.
e. Science, technology and innovations for example through the Ajira digital platform that was launched in the Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) to enhance youth employment through online jobs and offers basic training on how to make money online.

The challenge to the realization of the vision was highlighted to be indicated by the fact that only a small percentage of the youth population could have directly benefited from the affirmative action interventions meant to bring the youth on board the vision 2030 strategic plan. Despite the challenges touching on slow economic growth, corruption, the effects of COVID 19 and limited political will, the discussions recommended as follows:

a. Deliberately link and align Kenya's national vision with the global vision, for example, with regards to SGDs in order to make the Kenyan more competitive

both locally and globally. This should be followed with budgetary allocation to ensure that specific projects are pursued to create opportunities for especially young people, locally and internationally.

b. 'Politicize' conversations around Vision 2030 and SDGs, ensuring that political parties link their policy proposals with specifics provisions in Vision 2030 and SDGs. This will ensure politicians, political parties and Kenyans in general have enhanced understanding on the provisions in Vision 2030 and SDGs thereby accelerating their implementation.

3.1.4 The Role of Political Parties in Shaping the Legislative Agenda of the 13th Parliament

The overall objective of this session was to reflect on the fundamental role of political parties in shaping the legislative agenda in Kenya. The key highlight was that political parties play a significant role in shaping legislation through their manifestos. The manifestos are an accountability tool that helps political parties to remain focused on promises they make to the electorate. They also play a significant role in mobilizing public opinion, articulating policy positions, and ultimately influence government policy formulation and implementation. However, political parties in Kenya have not played their role effectively because 'they are formed just for elections' which means that after the elections their manifestos become moribund or redundant. Furthermore, political parties suffer from founders' syndrome whereby the party's positions are not essentially determined by a firm ideology but reflect the party leader's goals or intentions. The parties also suffer from political patronage which means that the party leader's goals and actions are influenced by the desire to reward loyalists. This can be seen in the light of the Deputy President's (Rigathi Gachagua) likening of the government as a company with shareholders who must first benefit before others.

Moderator:
Philip Gichana, Mzalendo Trust

Panelists:
Caroline Gaita- Executive Director; Mzalendo trust
Prof John Lonyangapuo- Party leader, Kenyan Union party
Michael Orwa - Sec Gen NARC-Kenya
Isabella Mwangi- Gender Advocacy
Karobia Maina- MP EALA
Hon Crystal Asige- Senator PWD

Despite the aforementioned challenges facing political parties, the session affirmed that they are important institutions for any healthy democracy. The following were agreed as key recommendations from the session:

a. There is need to revisit the Political Parties' Act Amendments that were hurriedly passed in early 2022 ahead of the August 2022 general elections. A conversation on for instance, the suitability and operations of a Coalition Party should be initiated to avoid confusions for example that emerged on the determination of the Majority side in the National Assembly after the elections. A similar conversation should be made around candidates' nominations to contest for political office so that some sections of the society do not feel excluded through processes such as negotiated democracy. In any case, negotiated democracy as convenient as it may be to political parties, should be legislated.

b. Political parties should be encouraged to remain active between elections. Those in the majority side should play their role of policy implementation in line with their pre-election pledges and those in the minority side play their oversight role. This should be possible since more political parties will be receiving funds from the Political Parties' Fund (PPF) following the 2022 amendments in the Political Parties Act.

c. Electoral system – Kenya should discuss the extent to which our pure presidential system under the winner take-all electoral system has contributed towards strengthening or weakening political parties, especially Parliamentary representation and oversight. To cure the founders' syndrome and properly anchor political parties on well-defined ideologies, there is need for the country to have this conversation.

d. There is need to simplify the requirements for registration of political parties. The requirement for a party to have at least 24 physical offices in the country is stringent. How can the country utilize the online space to ensure that political parties can register and mobilize members to join them.

3.1.5 Citizen Participation in County Governance: Lessons and Best Practices from Counties

Public participation is one of Kenya's national principles and values of governance, and one of the key objectives of devolution as provided in the Constitution (Article 174c) that gives "powers of self-governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them". The discussion generally agreed that public participation is important because it increases transparency and creates greater public trust in governance processes. It also empowers individuals and communities and enhances decision-making by allowing for a diverse range of opinions to be considered when making decisions, leading to more informed and inclusive decision-making

The discussions, however, revealed that public participation in the counties is generally perceived to be a formality because its resolutions are not keenly considered in decision-making. As a result, citizens were reported to be not keen on attending public participation forums. Other reasons for non-attendance were given as:

a. Lack of incentivization, for example, catering for participants' subsistence;
b. The agendas are determined by political leaders who often make populist statements (false promises) which are not followed with actions. For example, political leaders often make promises of facilitating development of infrastructure projects but which are not followed through showing a disconnect between populism and planning/programming. This also underscores the need to empower citizens on the mandate of political leaders.
c. The meetings tend to take long time (which was explained as resulting from organizers presenting long documentation and using technical jargon);
d. The meetings are scheduled in short notice;
e. The meetings are not inclusive; there is rarely deliberate attempt to incorporate people with special needs such as PWDs, young women, the elderly etc.

The discussion recommended that public participation could be increased by:

a. Making information easily accessible and publishing reports, budgets, and meeting minutes online so that the public can be able to access.
b. Simplifying the public participation program, including simplifying the topics of presentation and also the language used in the presentation.

c.   Increased awareness of government policy making processes including the role of citizens in it;
d.   Using social media platform as a tool to pass information about public participation. This is key especially in Counties with greater Internet penetration;
e.   Establishing public participation committees within the Counties. For instance, Nyandarua County has through the Public Participation and Civic Education Bill of 2015 among others provided for conducting at least two forums at Sub-County and Ward level to inform citizens on issues including policy making, law-making, public-finance management processes, monitoring and evaluating county budget implementation, evaluating periodic county's reports.

3.1.6 Over 100 Days of Power and Service: Sweet or Bitter To "Hustlers"?

The Kenya Kwanza assumed power in August 2022 against a backdrop of economic hardships attributed to global supply chain disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war and a mounting public debt. The coalition rode to power on the platform of lowering the cost of living and that overall, a Kenya Kwanza Government will be an economic moment presenting opportunities aimed at uplifting 'hustlers' from economic downturns. Some of these promises were to be achieved within 100 days of Kenya Kwanza's government in office. In March 2023, when the PDF was held, Kenya Kwanza government was slightly more than 100 days in office. This session therefore provided opportunity to participants to reflect on the work of government with particular emphasis on its 100 days in office.

Moderator:
Edward Kakumu, Program Management Specialist

Panelists:
Advice Mundalo – Youth Leader, Jubilee Party
Adrian Kamotho – Head of Legal, UDA
Ndegwa Ngugi – Youth Leader, Narc-Kenya

Among other issues touching on the fight against corruption by the government, shrinking civic space, freedom of the media, reducing the cost of living, tackling unemployment, the discussion was critical of the removal of the fuel and maize flour subsidies. On the importance of subsidies, the discussion observed that the financial assistance to individuals or businesses is meant to encourage production by lowering

the cost of production and/or increasing profits by encouraging the consumption of the subsidized goods or services. Subsidies also may enhance creation of new jobs. However, the current administration argued that it is better to subsidize production, for example, through issuing subsidized fertilizers than subsidizing consumption which is a short-term measure. It is instructive to note that the protests by the Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya alliance was insisting that consumption subsidies be re-introduced. Apart from subsidizing production through affordable fertilizers, the Kenya Kwanza administration introduced programs to create employment for the youth. One such program is the affordable housing project in Nakuru County.

It was concluded that implementation of pre-election pledges is a function on political goodwill (at all levels of policy-making and execution) as well as continued engagement and information sharing between the government and relevant stakeholders, including citizens. The following were key takeaways from the session:

a. That the Kenya Kwanza Government should ensure that MPs are supplied with their agenda in parliament and there is monitoring of their performance. Ensure that their pre-election pledges are clearly defined and programmed so that they can be easily monitored and evaluated. That means there should be clear definition the expected short- and medium-term results (i.e., outputs and outcomes) and the timelines for achievement of those results.
b. Ensure that it creates adequate ownership of the manifesto such that its members internalize the pledges. There is a real feeling that those who developed the Kenya Kwanza government manifesto are not involved in actual implementation and monitoring. This was creating a disconnect between the Kenya Kwanza pre-election pledges and the expectations among its members.

3.1.7 Education Reforms and Implications

The discussion was essentially between stakeholders in the education sector and students and focused on how to harness students' voice for increased involvement in decision making on issues affecting them, for example; the University Act, curriculum changes, higher education funding among others. The discussion revealed that students do not generally participate in governance due to lack of appropriate forums to do so; for example, they rarely interact with political parties.

The discussion recognized the need for students' involvement in governance as:

a. Students are directly affected by decisions made about education and development.
b. Students may have unique perspectives and experiences that are important to consider in decision-making. Having students involved in governance can ensure that their voices are heard and that decisions are made with their best interest.
c. Students may develop important skills such as leadership, communication, and critical thinking, which can foster a sense of responsibility and encourage students to be active and engaged citizens in their communities.

Moderator: Mildred Nzau

Panelists:
Raymond Ochieng, Secretary for Youth Affairs, State Department for Youth Affairs
Melvin Thogo, School President, University of Nairobi
Kepha Erick Opass, School President, Moi University
Joshua Changwony, Executive Director, CRECO
Boaz Waruku, Strategy and Policy Advisor, Elimu Bora Working Group

d. When students feel like they have voice in the decisions that affect them, they are more likely to be satisfied with their education and be more engaged in their learning. This can lead to better academic outcomes and a more positive school culture.

e. Students' involvement is needed as the country is implementing the competence-based curriculum which entails critical thinking, communication and collaboration, self-efficacy and problem solving. Thus, their involvement in decision making will also enable them sharpen these skills.

Key recommendations from the session were as follows:

a. That Kenya Young Parliamentarians Association (KYPA) and Kenya Young MCAs Association (KYMCA) should develop mechanisms towards supporting students' councils in institutions of higher learning as a strategy for the students' involvement in governance and also mentorship. This approach should not end at the institutions of higher learning but also scale down to high-schoolers. Beyond PDF that happens annually, there is need to collaboratively develop platforms that can enable these engagements at the County levels.

b. Public participation sessions touching on education and attendant reforms to happen in learning institutions, directly involving students. This should be done alongside engaging with stakeholders including parents, industry, and political leaders to ensure that the education curriculum meet their needs. Engaging subject matter experts to initiate such reforms should not be an end in itself; dynamics around young people and education are fast changing that subject matter experts may not adequately capture in their recommendations.

c. Government to invest in research to better understand the demands of the job market so that students are marketable in the job market upon school completion. This will ensure education is demand driven, which means that the education system should be tailored to meet the needs and aspirations of students, communities and employers. This would ensure that the student

is prepared for the world of work; for example, by emphasizing practical skills and vocational training that is in line with demands of the technological oriented Labour market.

3.1.8 Validation Workshop – Study on The Role and Structure of Political Parties in Kenya

In March 2023, CMD-Kenya in partnership with its Danish Partners had finalized a baseline study on the role and structure of political parties in Kenya. the baseline study was aimed at informing a new 3-year partnership project (2023 – 2025) whose focus would be strengthening the policy-making role of political parties at the local/branch level. It is the findings of this study that were presented and validated at the Political Parties' Expo Village during the PDF 2023. The discussants were political parties' representatives, thematic civil society organizations and a delegation from the Danish political parties.

The key highlights from the study were:

a. That the County structures of political parties are not realistically organized in the prescribed fashion of their mother parties at the National level. This makes the branches remain inactive after elections.
b. That there is a clear distinction between the national and county levels on the understanding of roles of various units within the political party. At the national level, roles such as the National Executive Council, National Election Board and the National Delegates Council were clear and understood. However, at the county level, there was no corresponding knowledge on the roles of the

county or constituency committees.

c. Clarity of party ideologies is lacking. That there was no clearly defined political identity that serve to strengthen political parties through their contribution to consistent policies based on common values.

d. That few fewer political parties had a clear understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For purposes of strengthening political parties at the branch levels, the session recommended as follows:

a. The need to support national and county branch offices of political parties to have good relationships and create interest in the national offices of political parties to support the County branches. This will ensure political parties remain active and visible in between elections.

b. Properly support County branches of political parties to understand and align their aspirations with those of their national offices.

c. The ORPP and CMD-Kenya in coordination with parties and the IEBC should collaborate to strengthen policies such as accounting for money one uses during campaign to be able to level the play field for all during campaigns and provide a safer space where youth, women and PWDs can participate.

d. It is important to capacitate political parties to think strategically on the implementation of the SDGs at the local and national levels. Partnership and learning opportunities from other established parties such as the Danish Liberal Party, Social Democratic Party, Conservative Peoples' Party and the Green Left will benefit the parties' integration of the SDGs among other key lessons. This will allow them to coordinate their local efforts at global level and further provide opportunity for learning as they learn how other parties integrate these critical components in their day-to-day party activities.

3.2 POLITICAL DIALOGUE VILLAGE

3.2.1 Overview

The political dialogue village is a platform where high level political conversations, keynote addresses and political party leaders assembled to have their discussions. The subsequent sections detail topical discussions that happened at the village.

3.2.2 Post General Elections 2022 Elections Report: Looking Back to Move Forward

The 2022 general elections were the seventh cycle since reintroduction of multiparty elections in 1992. The elections were the third in the 2010 constitutional dispensation. A characteristic of the post-2010 elections is the devolution of political power which is indicated by introduction of new seats including 47 Senators, 47-woman representatives in the National Assembly, 47 County governors, and 1,450 Members of County Assemblies. The devolution of political power was in part intended to reduce negative competition that has been associated with conflict in the multiparty era.

Moderator:
Eric Latiff – Standard Media Group

Panellists:
Ruth Kulundu- IEBC, Deputy Commission Secretary, Operations.
Felix Owuor- Executive Director ELGIA
Patience Nyange- Executive Director – AMWIK (Gubernatorial Candidate, Taita Taveta)
Mule Musau- Executive Director ELOG
Dr. Annette Schwandner- Country Director Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)
Dr. Lawrence Mute – UDPK Representative.

The results of 2022 general election were as contentious as most of the multiparty era elections. At the Presidential level, the winner garnered 50.5% compared to the runners up 48.9% of the valid votes cast. The results were challenged at the Supreme Court which, however, reconfirmed them. Underlying the litigation were suspicion of fraud, irregularity and mismanagement of the electoral process, overt disagreement among the seven commissioners of the electoral body (IEBC), and a murder of an election officer and harassment of many of the IEBC officers. By the time of the 2023 PDF, the

country had not returned to normalcy as the opposition side was organizing country-wide protests against the government claiming that there was new evidence to show that the results were tampered with.

The election evaluation report was presented by the IEBC Deputy Commission Secretary in charge of operations (i.e., Ruth Kulundu). The evaluation focused on the whole electoral cycle including pre-election preparedness, voter registration, political parties' nominations, campaign, polling and post-poll phase. Data were obtained from various stakeholders including IEBC staff, political class, religious bodies, civil society organizations, human right defenders and development partners. Qualitative data were collected through key informant interviews. Leaders representing key institutions during the PDF 2023 weighed in on the report findings and recommendations including the National Coordinator of ELOG; Executive Director of ELGIA; Country Director of KAS; Executive Director of AMWIK and a representative from UDPK.

The successes and the critical success factors of the elections were (reported to be) as follows:

a. IEBC successfully deployed technology for biometric voter registration, voter identification and results' transmission that is referred to as the KIEMs kit. In the 2017 election the KIEMs kit failed in some areas that resulted to manual transmission, which became a major cause for litigation and Supreme Court that the election was characterised by irregularities and illegalities. The 2022 transmission was direct to the IEBC observation centres and to national television, which led to greater acceptability of the results. As IEBC reported, some candidates were conceding defeat on the basis of electronic results even though IEBC would only confirm results from final hard copies.
b. There was, for the first time, voter registration and voting in the diaspora for the presidential election.
c. There was less petitions (compared to 2017) and most of them were determined before provided deadline of six (6) months after elections as provided by the Elections Act of 2011.
d. IEBC had good collaborations and partnerships with other stakeholders including the media, political parties, and observers which made the process run smoothly. Some of the partnerships' outcomes include KAS training one thousand election observers which happened within appropriate time (i.e., six months before the election). KAS also evaluated 2022 general election and found them to have been free and fair.
e. IEBC implemented the Electoral Security Arrangement Program (ESAP) in collaboration with the national police service (NPS).

The evaluation reported the 2022 general election challenges to be:

a. Intimidation of IEBC staff where an alleged murder of a returning officer of Embakasi East constituency occurred.
b. Last minute court rulings that affected IEBC's operations against stringent legal and operational timelines.
c. Misinformation or biased reporting of electoral matters, which undermined

IEBC's public outreach gains/efforts;

d. Delayed funding to IEBC by the National Treasury, which denies IEBC time for effective planning.

e. People with disability still found difficulty in some polling stations since there were no wheelchair ramps provided.

The key recommendations were:

a. To ensure independence of the IEBC, there is need for Government to operationalize IEBC Fund to resolve delayed access to funds for programming.

b. Enhance inclusivity in the electoral process by providing appropriate assistive measures and devices for PWD's including special booths, braille, tailor made audio and visual materials to secure their privacy and secrecy.

c. Lobby Parliament to ensure that the law-making process is complete at least one year to the next general election.

3.2.3 Party Leaders' Hour - H.E. Kiraitu Murungi, Party Leader - Devolution Empowerment Party and Former Governor, Meru County

Psychological and Cultural Barriers to Political Participation in Kenya

The party leader's hour session was an occasion for leaders of CMD-Kenya member political parties to reflect on the state of democracy in Kenya and its challenges. Overall, the key observation was that there has been restructuring of the democratic space through constitutional, legal and institutional reforms but the democratic culture is yet to firmly take root. Some the challenges were identified as:

Moderator:
Lurit Yugusuk

Keynote Speaker:
Kiraitu Murungi - Devolution Empowerment Party

a. Disillusionment and voter apathy of the young people which is partly related to lack of fulfilment of pre-election pledges.
b. Lack of fulfilment of pre-election pledges which lenders politics to be perceived as only working for the leaders themselves.
c. Lack of public participation which although is provided for in the Constitution is rarely and effectively used in decision making. This is a weakness because democracy requires an informed and participative citizenry.
d. Weak internal democracy within political parties which is indicated by the dominance of opinions of party leaders and not of the membership. This is particularly significant during party nomination of candidates for elections where more popular candidates may be sidestepped in favor of a weak one. Ultimately, the quality of leaders may not be optimal hence impacting negatively on the overall democratic governance processes.
e. Trust deficit on IEBC which makes election results to be easily perceived as invalid or manipulated. This in part also contributes to voter apathy.

Besides Hon. Kiraitu Murungi, H.E. Nderitu Muriithi, former Governor, Laikipia County made a presentation around the rise of populism in Kenya. He observed that populism, which is the political stance of emphasizing the idea of 'the people', and often juxtaposes the people against the elite. Populism contrasts 'politics', which is a competition between different policy positions. Populists argue that a nation's political elite are indifferent to the common, corrupt and self-serving; do not represent interests of the people. Populism demands a direct connection with its supporters is unmediated by political parties, CSO's or the Media but rather relies on rhetoric to gain and hold power.

The sessions' recommendations were;

a. Promote and support internal democracy within political parties. This is critical considering that the president has been accused of raiding members from political parties in the opposition coalition. It is significant given the internal wrangles in Jubilee Party (the immediate former ruling party) had already had two camps with each camp claiming to be rightfully in leadership.
b. In addition, political parties should rethink the policy and practice of negotiated democracy within which some candidates may be asked to step aside for others. Whereas negotiated democracy has its value, for example, in affirmative action for members of SIGs, it can be abused if the affirmation is for those who do not deserve it such as if based on friendship, family or other idiosyncratic considerations.

3.2.4 Marking International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) is a globally celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women. The theme of the 2023 campaign was "Embrace Equity". The International Women's Day was marked during the PDF 2023. The day was marked in partnership with UN women and Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA). The key theme was inclusion of women in political governance. It was largely observed that the concept of democracy in Kenya

is largely incomplete.

Moderator:
Anna Mutavati; UN Women Country Director

Panelists:
Hon. Martha Wangari, MP Gilgil Constituency
Hon Grace Bahati –Independent Candidate - MP Chelini Ward – Machakos County
Catherine Omanyo – County MP, Busia
Gloria Orwoba – Nominated Senator

A key observation in marking the International Women's Day was that the concept of democracy, which essentially means equalization of society, is incomplete if and when women are not at its centre. That means that women should be visible in electoral participation as well as representation. However, as the 2022 general election results show women were underrepresented given that the women succeeded in only 10% of the National Assembly seats and 6% in Senate and 14.8% in Governorship. In addition, it was observed that Kenya has failed in three successive parliaments to enact a law towards actualizing the not more than two-third gender rule which requires that no one gender should have more than two thirds representation in elective and appointive positions.

The session highlighted factors that undermine women inclusivity in governance as:

a. Underrepresentation in Parliament which does not support the passing of women friendly bills.
b. Patriarchy, which devalues and/or endangers women as they make decisions to vie, during party nominations when women are generally short-changed for lack financial muscle, during campaigns and in monitoring election results.
c. Lack of resources to fund campaign activities. This is in particular relevant because Kenya has so far failed to enact a law capping the amount of money a candidate can use during campaigns.

As way forward the session recommended:

a. Enlisting the support of men in confronting the challenge of patriarchy through targeted messaging which can also be undertaken within political parties.
b. Development partners and civil society to support political parties' programs that enhance women inclusivity.

c. "He for She programs" need to be explored and strengthened because when men support women, inclusion will be seamless.
d. Civil society organisations were urged to play a role in combating misinformation and disinformation; i.e., by conduction civic education.

3.2.5 KEYNOTE ADDRESS: The Burden of Tax and Debt

HON. MUSALIA MUDAVADI, Prime Cabinet Secretary, Government of Kenya

The session on the burden of tax and debt was preceded by a keynote address by the Prime Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, whose speech highlights were:

a. That the Kenyan economy has been struggling as a result of persistent drought.
b. That the solution should come from dialogue among stakeholders including government, private sector, and citizens, which would establish a common ground for finding solutions. Some of the solutions would include structural reforms to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness.
c. That political agitation would only undermine finding of sustainable solutions to the existing debt problems. However, political opposition should provide constructive criticism.

3.2.6 The Burden of Tax and Debt – Panel Discussion

Statistically, Kenya's tax profile comprises of 26% personal income tax, 4% social security contributions, 23% value added tax, 11% corporate income tax, 29% taxes on goods and services other than VAT and 8% other taxes. The Kenyan personal income tax is higher than the African average of 18%, and that of the most developed OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries' rate of 23%. The Kenyan VAT rate is lower than the African average of 28%, but higher than that of the OECD countries.

These statistics demonstrate a fairly higher tax burden for Kenyans. The tax burden in Kenya is directly related to the debt burden. The February 2023 Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) data showed that the country's public debt was Kshs. 9.145 trillion, equivalent to 62.3% of the GDP. The debt comprised of 50.6% (Kshs. 4.7 trillion) external (commercial, bilateral and multilateral) debt, 49.3% (Kshs. 4.5 trillion) domestic debt, and 0.4% (Kshs. 37.9 billion) publicly guaranteed debt. The total debt was close to the ceiling of Kshs. 10 trillion set by Parliament in June 2021. The 2023 debt burden represent an increase from the Kshs. 8.7 trillion at the end of Uhuru Kenyatta administration (2013- 2022) and the 1.9 trillion at the end of Mwai Kibaki administration (2002-2013).

Moderator
Trevor Ombija, Royal Media Services

Panel Discussion
Sigurd Agersnap – MP Green Left Party Denmark
Joe Wanjohi – Head of Policy, Research & Advocacy – KAM
CPA Samuel Mwaura – Member, ICPAK Public Finance and Tax Committee

Against this background, the PDF set out to examine the question on how Kenya got to the external debt burden, and what are the consequences and way out of the crisis. An additional question was which one between aid and taxes is more harmful to livelihoods and the economy in general. The debate was contextualized in the background that citizens often detest government interference in their affairs, yet governments need money to operate. The Kenyan situation is, however, deemed extraordinary in that high taxation is attributed to government inefficiency, for example, as it relates to a high public wage bill and to the external debt burden. The setting makes successive governments seeking to raise revenue, with the urge to increase taxes and to broaden the tax base.

3.6.7 Kenya's Constitutional Duels: Is It About Power Struggles Among the Elite?

Articles 256 and 257 of the CoK 2010 provides that the Constitution can be amended through parliament or through a popular initiative. Attempts to amend the Constitution through the BBI failed because the top three courts (High Court, Court of Appeal and Supreme Court) ruled that the President had no power to initiate the Constitution's amendment popular initiative. At the time of the PDF 2023, the Kenya Kwanza administration of President Ruto had proposed amendment of the Constitution through the parliamentary initiative. The PDF discussed whether the constitutional duels in Kenya

are for citizens' benefit or about power struggles among the elite. The discussions were led by representatives of political parties and civil society organizations. The highlights of the discussion were that:

Moderator: Javas Bigambo

Speakers:
Hon. John Makali – MP, Kanduyi Constituency
Njoki Mboce - Law Society of Kenya

Panelists:
Njoki Mboce -LSK council member,
Isabella Mwangi – CREAW
George Wainaina - Secretary General, KANU
Patricia Waithera Joseph - Katiba Institute
Dr Mwenda Makatumo - Secretary General, The Service Party (TSP)
Thumbi Mburu- ICJ

a. Kenya has a long history of constitutional amendment starting the 1964 dissolution of the main opposition party; the 1969 banning of KPU party in essence transforming Kenya into a de facto one-party system, the 1992 re-introduction of multi-party system, the 2010 promulgation of a new constitution.

b. By 2023 there were new proposals to amend the Constitution, to among other things re-introduce the office of the official leader of opposition, to introduce the participation in parliament of the cabinet, to establish a formula to guide the computation of gender ratio in the National Assembly to correct the failure of previous parliaments to enact the two-third gender rule. According to the gender rule, the National Assembly with 290 seats would have at least 97 seats reserved for women. The 97 seats would include the current 47-woman representative seats. The proposed formula would cover any deficit from the 97 seats, a gap that would be filled through nomination.

c. Some quarters (e.g., LSK) deemed the President's call for Constitutional amendment as contravening the requirements since the Constitution does not provide for the President to initiate such amendments;

d. The new Government failed women again in the Cabinet Secretary appointments where instead of appointing a third of women directly to cabinet seats created advisory roles which have a delegated voice. In addition, the concluded CAS

appointments only had 13 women out of 50. Gender equality is an international human right and should be served immediately not progressively.

As a way forward, the discussion suggested that:

a. The two-third gender rule should continue to be pursued and actualized immediately.
b. Women in politics should change tact for the two-third gender bill to sail through by collaborating with political party leaders, enticing fellow women and asking them to show support for the two-third gender rule and fighting for senior positions in the political parties so that they are part of the decision makers. It was observed that most women take up mobilization roles as opposed to decision making roles within political party structures.
c. Citizens should realize that the Constitution is not owned by the political elite thus should check their political leaders. They should be aware that their voice is anchored in the Constitution.
d. Civil society organizations and other stakeholders such as LSK and have a duty to Kenyans to educate masses on importance of public participation and to alert them when the constitution is violated.

3.6.8 Inclusion of PWDs In Political Leadership

Inclusion of PWDs in political governance processes is an important indicator of democratization in a country. In Kenya, the rights of PWDs are outlined in Article 54 of the Constitution. In respect to their inclusion in governance, Article 54(2) states the State shall ensure the progressive implementation of the principle that at least five percent of the members of the public in elective and appointive bodies are persons with disabilities. Consequently, Parliament enacted the Representation of Special Interest Groups Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019 which provides for mechanisms of funding the campaign activities of SIGs, of which PWDs are part of, and for the establishment of a platform to advocate for accessibility of electoral infrastructure including technology, voter registration and polling stations. The discussion sought to probe whether political parties are considering PWDs in their structures. The key highlights were:

Moderator: David- WFD

Panelists:
Justus - Freedom and Justice Party Leader
Faith Odidi- West Minister Foundation in charge of programs
Stanley Mutuma - Advocate of the High Court; UDPK, representative
Joseph Atela - COPDK CEOS
Oliver Flugt - Social Democratic Youth, Denmark

a. Although IEBC is mandated to ensure that political parties in their nomination's lists comply with the reserved quota for PWDs, this has not been adhered to. This means that PWDs continue to be underrepresented and their slots in party nomination lists given to other non-PWD members especially in the County Assemblies.

b. Despite challenges, the 2022 General Elections had fairly good participation of PWDs whereby 85 submitted themselves as candidates, of whom 23 were cleared to vie, 10 were elected as MPs, five (5) as MCAs and two (2) were nominated to the Senate.

c. The challenges that PWDs face in their quest to participate in political governance include:
   - Funds for PWD programs by government are never disbursed on time.
   - Some mentees of political leaders do not open spaces or extend mentorship to the rest of their colleagues.
   - Lack of internal democracy and the issue of bias within political parties.
   - PWD candidates are bullied and shamed during the campaigns.
   - The older generation PWD bar the younger generation from participating within the movement.

As a way forward it was suggested that:

a. Political parties should comply with the law by having PWD representation within political party structures. This should be done voluntarily by political parties even though the law provides for the same.

b. Incorporation of PWDs in political parties' structures should be treated a process not as an event; i.e., the engagement should be meaningful and not as tick in the box. This should also be reflected in the SDG's perspective of 'leaving no one behind', also embracing the PWDs issues.

c. IEBC should ensure that there is PWD voter assistance at polling stations during election. Besides gender consideration during party nominations, IEBC should ensure that political parties meet the PWDs' requirements while submitting their candidate nomination lists.

d. ORPP and other agencies should ensure that political parties that do not meet the criteria of inclusion are sanctioned as the law (CoK 2010, Article 91; Political Parties Act 2011 section 26) provides. There should be transparency in political parties in the use of PPF in financing PWD activities.

e. Enhanced awareness creation at the societal level to ensure change in attitudes and perceptions towards PWDs in Kenya.

3.6.9 The "Money in Politics" Debate and Effective Ways to Improve Democracy in Kenya

The panel discussion was facilitated by representatives drawn a Danish political party (Conservative People's Party), civil society organization (The Institute for Social Accountability, TISA). The key highlights were:

Moderator:
Sheila Masinde -Transparency International, Executive Director

Panelists:
Prof Ole Therkildsen - Researcher
Henrik Solje Weilin - Vice Chairman -The Conservative People's Party, Denmark.
Eric Kinaga -The Institute for Social Accountability- Representative

a. The Campaign financing Act passed in 2013 has not yet been operationalized. Unregulated campaign finances and non-adherence continue being a key challenge in Kenya as it creates an unlevelled playing fields for candidates. It also means that the more you spend the greater the chance of winning. In Kenya, campaign money is spent of the voter as facilitation hand-out.
b. The Danish experience shows that the culture of campaign hand-outs to citizens does not exist. Instead, political parties are state funded based on votes garnered i.e., 5 US dollars per vote. The funds received by political parties have to be spent within that financial year.

The discussion recommended that there should be civic education on the vices of hand-outs and how it affects the electoral process should be prioritized. Further, civic education should aim at reducing citizens' financial demands on political aspirants/leaders so as to reduce their (politicians) need or urge to give handouts.

3.6.10 Is Democracy Delivering? Movers and Shakers

The session brought together leaders representing different sectors such as religious institutions, students, CSOs and political parties. The discussion zoomed into the place of church in shaping the country's democratic agenda. It was emphasized that the church plays a crucial role in politics. It helps check the powers of political leaders' and hold them accountable for their actions. It was also recognized that the church is a fertile vote hunting ground for politicians and that religious leaders have influential power over their congregants. Therefore, religious leaders act as mediators between citizens and the political class. In addition, church leaders have a voice on policy making process especially in policies that relate community values; for example, the LGBTQ issue. The discussions agreed that there should be a line drawn between the church and politics as every Kenyan has the right to the leader of their choice. It was noted that some religious leader take advantage of the influence they have on the congregation to lead their members to lean on a certain political party or leader after receiving some favours from

the politician.

As a way forward, the discussion suggested that:

a. There should be document on the code of conduct by the Interreligious Council of Kenya that prohibits politics in the Church/pulpit.
b. Religious leaders should hold public leaders accountable on governance and democracy-based issues.

Moderator:
Kevinnah Loyatum - CMD Board Member

Panelists:
Elijah Ambasa-Technical Advisor Good Governance, Giz-Board Chairman, Siasa Place
Dr Oliver Waindi- Uraia Trust-Executive Director
Reuben Kigame, Hsc, Presidential Candidate, 2022 General Elections
Bishop John Warari- Intereligous Council of Kenya
Gachui Kariuki – Narc-Kenya Party and Advocate of the High Court of Kenya
Cliff Nyandusi - CUEA, Student Leader

3.3 YOUTH VILLAGE

3.3.1 Overview

The Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010 in Article 260 defines the youth as persons aged between eighteen (18) years and thirty-four (34) years. According to the latest census in 2019, the youth constitute 29% (13.7 million) of the population. In the political participation landscape, the youth are categorized, together with women and people with disability, as part of the special interest groups that have been traditionally excluded and therefore require targeted interventions. In Article 55, CoK provides that the state shall take measures to ensure that the youth have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life. Legislatively, the youth are given more recognition in the Representation of Special Interest Groups Law 2019 which seeks to enhance the capacity youth in the electoral process. Kenya has also ratified international and regional standards that seek the protection of the rights of all citizens to express support and vote for her or his preferred candidate, to compete for office, and to be informed about and influence public policy.

Despite these supportive provisions, a recent study (Carter Centre, 2018) on youth and women's consultations on political participation in Kenya found out that participants had a narrow understanding of political participation which was limited to voting and running for office but not in engaging in policy debates. In addition, a review of the 2022 August general elections shows low youth representation in elective positions; that is, only two governors (4.2%), three senators (6.3%), three members of National Assembly (1%), five-woman representative to the National Assembly (10.6%), and 317 members of County Assembly (21.8%). The succeeding sections detail thematic discussions the 2023 PDF Youth Village.

3.3.2 Young Women's Participation in Governance and Politics

According to Youth Agenda (YAA, 2013) , in spite of policy support, the participation of young women in Kenya's electoral and political processes remains dismally low due to chains of challenges ranging from socio-cultural barriers to poverty issues. This is despite the fact that Article 55 of the CoK (2010) on the youth recognizes the importance of their inclusion in political, social and economic spheres of life. Also, the Kenya National Youth Policy attempts to address issues affecting young people to enable them to reach their maximum potential. The Policy envisions a society where youth have the same opportunities as other citizens to realize their fullest potential, productively participating in economic, social, political, cultural, and religious life without fear or favour. YAA further observe that the formulation of specific pro-youth policies and programmes has created a favourable environment for youth empowerment but with little emphasis on enhancing the potential of young women in active engagement in political participation. This has presented difficulties in mainstreaming young women needs in appropriate policy and planning programmes that would comprehensively respond to their needs and integrate them in the mainstream economic and political activities.

Moderator:
Judy Mwaniki -Young Persons for Development.

Panelists:
Rosa Wangu- Narc Kenya
Margaret Wanjiru-Youth Café
Emillie Flink- International Officer, Liberal Youth of Denmark
Irene Kendi- Acting Director, National Youth Council

Against this, the PDF 2023 provided opportunity for discussion on the state of young women's participation in politics. The discussion suggested that young women's participation in governance and politics is challenged by:

a. Cultural stereotype that women should not hold political positions;
b. Patriarchy, which renders the Kenyan political space to be male dominated;
c. Lack of information utilization; for example, with respect to existing government funding programs;
d. Lack of safe spaces for women and the youth to participate in politics. Female aspirants experience victimization when they vie for political seats particularly on social media.

As key takeaway, it was recommended that:

a. Young women should take initiative to offer themselves for leadership positions as it is the only way they can position themselves for election. This should include identifying a gap or niche; for example, girl/boy child welfare, education, or health.
b. Young women to actively participate in youth agendas and organizations such as football or music clubs to horn up leadership skills through improving dialogue, communication, and networking.
c. Young women to exercise their right to vote and elect young people in order to support pro-youth policies.
d. Young women to appreciate their strengths especially in resource mobilization which they can use to advance their political ambitions.
e. Political parties create an enabling environment that encourage young women to participate in politics.

3.3.3 Status of Women's Rights in Kenya- "Meet and ask Balozi"

The discussion centered on the status of attainment of women's rights in Kenya; for example, in the context of existing drought, and religious and political radicalization in the ASAL regions. The discussion also sought on ways to enhance young women's resilience especially in rural communities through leveraging on digital technology for purposes of enhancing communication.

Moderator:
Nyambura Mundia

Panelists:
Musa Haji- Danish Youth Sounding Board Member
Diana Ambani-Royal Danish Embassy Youth Sounding
Crystal Asige-Nominated Senator, PLWD

3.3.4 Reflections of the 2022 Elections – Youth Voter Apathy and Youth in Leadership

The discussion brought together young people from political parties, County Assemblies, and civil society organizations to discuss the issues of youth voter apathy in the 2022 general elections. The discussion highlighted that only 40% of the youth were registered voters 62.5% (5 million) voted while 37.5% (3 million) did not. Youth voter apathy was explained from manual voter registration processes that deemed time wasting; while they would prefer a digital registration process.

Further, the discussion explored why the youth shy away from participating in the electoral process despite being a significant voting bloc. This was explained from:

    a. Young people's lack of confidence in the electoral process whereby they feel that their votes do not count (because the results may be manipulated anyway).
    b. Mistrust between youth and political leaders who do not fulfil the promises they make to them during campaigns.

Moderator:
Tyson Majani (Action Aid)

Panelists:
Braian Osodo-KYMCA
Organizing Secretary MCA,
Kachieng ward
David Muruaru-Policy Analyst
and Researcher Master Peace
Kevin Mahelo-MCA Kakamega
County
Vicky Wamwere-Youth Service
Organisation
Jackline Nakato-Vijana 4
Uganda

The discussion highlighted that the failure of young people to vote contributes to the election of wrong leadership manifested in poor legislation, lack or little positive change in society, unfair distribution of resources. It was, therefore, recommended as follows:

a. That various stakeholders should conduct a detailed assessment and analysis of why young people refuse to participate in the country's electoral processes, with specific focus on the 2022 general elections. The analysis will help unpack the attitudes and perceptions of young people towards elections in Kenya and what should be done to change this trend.
b. The nature of young people's participation in the electoral process should be redefined; from being mere attendants of political rallies and demonstrations (when they happen) to active participants in the electoral process.
c. Electoral management bodies particularly IEBC to manage the electoral process in a transparent manner to instil confidence among young people. Every vote cast should in real sense, count.

3.3.5 Female Youth Skills Development

The session sought to discuss alternative skills that the youth can learn for self-employment to cure the unemployment problem in Kenya. Unemployment is defined as the lack of work for someone who is qualified and seeking work opportunity. The suggested initiatives were:

a. Waste management; and it was recognized that the National Assembly has passed enacted a Waste Management Bill which is expected to bring opportunities for start-ups.
b. Taking up TVET courses; even though there is uncertainty about the employability of TVET graduates. Against this, it was suggested that there should mentorship programs to encourage students to open businesses and become self-employed after training.

Panelists
Ole Thonke-Ambassador for Danish Embassy in Kenya
Seina Ngei-COTU representative
Representative Danish Confederation of Industry

3.3.6 Tax Burden and Economic Debt

There is a general perception that the tax rate in Kenya is high, which in part if fueled by the criticism that the taxation does not seem to cater for public goods and social services; for example, as it relates to infrastructure, health, or education. The discussion highlighted that some civil society organizations are promoting the participation of citizens in national and county government budgeting decision-making processes. The progressive taxation model by which people's tax contributions depend on their income (e.g., Pay As You Earn) was observed to be fair in wealth redistribution. However, corruption is a contributor to social inequality. For this reason, there is need to empower the youth to enable them participate in governance processes, and to hold the government accountable in terms of advocating social change, transparency, and participation in Kenya's policy processes.

Panelists:
Abraham Ochieng- Program Officer - Advocacy & Outreach at International Budget Partnership Kenya.
Oliver Flugt- Social Democratic Youth, Denmark.
Paul Wambua-Program officer of Public Finance Management at Transparency International Kenya.
Marion Ngayi-Program Lead at Pawa 254.

3.3.7 Technology and Democracy

The session brought together persons of interest who have knowledge of how technology influences democracy. It was agreed that technology has both worked for and against democracy, for example, in the 2022 general elections technology made it possible for Kenyans to hold conversations online about pertinent issues informally. Candidates were also able to sell their manifestos online by tweeting and posting on Facebook and even allowing the critics to come on board. It also helped in keeping people informed about the tallying process of the general elections. Everyone including those that did not vote was plugged in and following the process on both mainstream media and social media.

Panelists:
Odanga Madung; Senior Researcher-Global Elections and Platform Integrity - Mozilla Foundation
Edward Kipkalya, Program Officer-Information Technology and Governance - ELF Africa
Mercy Kilel - Nakuru County Assembly
Teresa Loch; Program Officer -Maskani ya Taifa
Shikoh Kihika; Executive Director - Tribeless Youth

It was, however, noted that when it comes to digital platforms, there is an inequality conundrum in access and use of technology. The current national internet penetration was estimated to be about 37.2% and while this may look like a progressive figure which has increased over time, women are lagging at 17% while men are at 57% according to a recent report by the Kenya digital economy. This reflects on how this may affect women candidates. Instances where technology worked against democracy have also been evident, for example, actors in government squash credible voices with dissenting voices in the social media to the extent of enacting policies that repress the voice of civil society.

3.3.9 Empowering and Including Youth in Socio-Economic Development

In this session, hindrances and solutions of youth to access finances were discussed. It was affirmed that young people continue to face numerous hindrances to accessing finances. It was however revealed that the government is working with partners to address the issue with the development of initiatives such as Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project (KYEOP) which has several interventions including training and

internship geared towards imparting technical skills to the youth, particularly those between 18 to 29 years.

Panelists:
George Osaso - Kenya Youth Employment Opportunities Project
Dr. Franklin Mbae - Deputy Director & Current National Project Coordinator
Richard Congo - Royal Danish Embassy
Ashora Michaels - National Youth Council

Another intervention has to do with administering grants targeting individuals between 18 and 35 years. This includes a business plan competition targeting 750 youth, of whom 250 were given grants; as well as the Ajira initiative which equip young people skills that can help them become self-employed. It was firmly recommended that while these initiatives were functional, it is important that a huge number of young people are enlightened on the available opportunities and how to access them. This will ensure that low success rates in the previous financial opportunities such as the youth fund and the women enterprise development fund are addressed under the new opportunities.

3.3.10 Youth Participation in Political Parties Processes

The session sought to discuss the benefits of youth participation in political party processes. It was noted that political parties remain key vehicles in which the youth have a chance of getting elected. Political parties provide exposure to the game of politics. The exposure propels individuals to even bigger leadership positions. Some discussants observed that were it not for political parties, they would not be holding their current positions.

The panelists further agreed that young people must be involved as much as possible in political activities that are of interest to them. They should take initiative and involve themselves in committee sessions at the Senate whose proceedings are required to be in public. Additionally, young people should engage youth organizations in giving feedback and opinions on various issues affecting them.

3.3.11 Making the Youth Factor Count in Social, Economic, and Political Spheres of Life

The session observed that the challenge for young people in Kenya is that their voice is suppressed in the mainstream media and in development initiatives. It was, however, recognized that the youth should embrace negotiating for their interests and accepting that they 'will not always have their way'. Young people were encouraged to be keen in identifying opportunities.

Young people need to harness the power of social media as the world is shifting from traditional mainstream media to digital content and young people are at the center of the shift as they form the bulk of social media users. Young people want portable/soft content; hence, the need to take the conversations to them through social media. Conversations in digital spaces are better than in mainstream media as they are not censored. Finally, it was recommended as follows:

a. That there must be deliberate efforts by State and non-state actors to place young people at the centre of development discourse in all spheres of life. But also, young people must be encouraged to practically identify developmental gaps at the policy levels and propose pragmatic solutions to the gaps identified.

3.3.12 Social Accountability

Social accountability was defined as holding those in leadership to account. It is based on a comparison between what leaders promised to deliver before elections and what they have actually delivered; and if what they delivered is of good quality and there is value for money. Accountability is anchored in law and is achieved by citizens exercising the right of voting leaders whom they will hold accountable. Also, transparency is a parameter of accountability that is envisaged in Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Panelists:
Kenneth Ogembo - Siasa Place
Paul Martin Konyango - Head of Legal Africa
Karen Munyae - Emerging Leaders Foundation (ELF)
Muisyo Musila – Activist
Wendy Ongare - FNF
Paul Martin Konyango - Head of Legal Africa Retold

PDF 2023 recommended as under:

a. That it is important to build the capacity of young people demand accountability of their leaders. The capacity building can be achieved through training; for example, as is being undertaken by organizations as FNF, the Kiamaiko Justice Centre, and Mukuru Kwa NJenga Centre. Further, it was suggested that using the judicial processes by young people raising petitions in court if they feel

their leaders are not performing their roles as they should is w ay of promoting social accountability.

3.3.13 Rule of Law

The 2010 Constitution of Kenya in Article 29 provides for the right to life. In the PDF 2023, the debate of rule of law arose in the backdrop reported cases of extrajudicial killings, the pattern of police officers arresting people at weekends to ensure that they remain in custody for a few days before arraignment in court. The discussion generally agreed that such conduct was unconstitutional. Police conduct was also faulted as discriminatory in informal settlements. The solution was deemed to be various actors sensitize citizens particularly young people to have access to the right information. It was also recommended that due to language barriers especially in informal settlements, civic actors should simplify the materials that detail the rights of citizens so that they can easily read and understand.

Panelists:
Jackline Kwanusu - Ag. Elections Coordinator, IMLU
Daniel Adhika - ELF Alumni
Editar Ochieng - Founder Feminist for Peace

3.3.14 Harnessing the Voice of the Youth in SDGs' Implementation

The PDF 2023 discussions observed that young people have a role to play in the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), which they can play by tapping into their skills, energy, and fresh ideas. The youth can form groups and lobby for support from the government as well as from donors. To this end, it was recommended that the government make SDGs' documents accessible to the youth including PWDs so as to bridge the gap to access to information in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

Panelists:
Hesbone Ndungu- Executive Director, AYT
Wendy Aura, Executive Director - Young Women Leaders Connect
Emillie Flink - International Officer, Liberal Youth of Denmark
David Kariuki.

3.3.15 Speed Date Session: Legislatures Edition

The session was facilitated by young MCAs through Kenya Young MCAs Association (KYMCA). It was intended to highlight the role of young MCAs in the legislative processes in the County Assemblies and how they have advanced the youth agenda in their respective Counties. The young MCAs noted that regardless of a political party affiliation, it is imperative for a leader to strike a balance between their personal interest, political alliance, and citizen interests. The main priority should always remain serving the people that elect a person. Secondly, to attain a political position, young people should volunteer and offer themselves for political positions. Kenyan youth are always blamed for violence in the country, particularly during the campaign and electioneering period. It was emphasized that the youth are not violent and that there are specific people that fund some youth to cause chaos for their own benefit.

Panelists:
Hon. Grace Bahati - MCA Machakos (ward).
Hon Wanyuto Waweru - MCA Komothai.
Hon Fiu NiFiu- MCA Karura.
Hon. Joy Muthoni- Nominated Senator Nairobi.

It was recommended that various organizations with interest in advancing youth agenda across the country should create more spaces for enhanced interactions between elected young MCAs and youth in the communities. This will ensure that young people can directly channel their concerns to elected leaders for adoption and policy influence.

3.3.16 Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Several organizations that work in youth empowerment, peace and justice promotion explained their work in details in this session, for example, *'Crime Si Poa'* which works in youth empowerment; *Mkenya Daima* which was started by KEPSA in 2012 works in promoting peace and justice; ELOG which takes an observer role during elections by sending observers to the constituency six months to one year before an election. It was recommended as follows:

a. That the youth must have access to information about justice and the judicial process. This will help them know their rights when arrested and how to pursue justice. It was observed that it is common to find young people in jail for crimes they did not commit because they are not informed about the judicial processes. It was suggested that improving their access to information would improve the access to justice for young people.

Panelists:
Peter Ouko – Crime si Poa
Mercy Mutana - Democracy Network
Azarious Karanja – ELOG
Oliver Mushilla - Youth Café

3.3.17 Climate Action, Food Security, GMOs, Climate Change, and Agriculture

The session was held to discuss the effects of climate change on food security. It was noted that human beings are the biggest contributors to climate change and also the biggest solution to climate change. Kenya has felt the impact of climate change

characterized by prolonged seasons of drought which has led to food shortage. In a bid to feed its population the government mooted to introduce genetically modified foods in order to bridge the gap between the growing population and demand for food. However, the policy direction has not received universal support. Most people want to stick to traditional foods but they are no longer enough so there is a choice to make between welcoming the uptake of GMOs and letting people die of hunger. It was suggested that the government should involve the citizens through public participation in making the decision so as to reduce resistance. Further, it was recommended that the debate around climate change, GMOs and food security should be simplified to enable all citizens a better understanding of the subjects.

Panelists:
Daniel Odinga - Action Aid
Billy Mwangi - Youth Leader, Millennium Network Fellow, and Student at the Technical University of Kenya
Daniel Muruaru - Public Analyst & Researcher

3.4 SDGs VILLAGE

3.4.1 Overview

The SGDs are 17 objectives of the UN General Assembly 2030 Agenda that was launched in 2015 and replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that ran for the period 2000 – 2015. The SDGs are a call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that everyone lives in peace and prosperity. The 17 objectives are:

3.4.2 Launching of the SDGs village

The village was launched by the Danish Ambassador to Kenya, Hon. Ole Thonke. In his remarks, he highlighted that SGDs are important for Kenya because they provide a roadmap to realization of higher quality of life. From the embassy's perspective, the PDF

2023 was well anchored in goal 17. Another highlight was the urgency in programming towards realization of the goals given that their lifespan has only seven years remaining. Towards this, Kenya has developed an SDGs recovery and acceleration plan that is being implemented through the County Governments.

3.4.3 Milestones for implementing SDGs in Kenya

Some of the realized achievements include:

a. Increased GDP through investments by 17.7%, which is partly attributed to improvement in the ease of doing business.
b. Improvements in delivery of public services including in administrative functions (i.e., Huduma Centres that are in all 47 Counties), health (e.g., Universal Health Coverage program, new high level hospitals), education (e.g., introduction of Competence Based Curriculum), energy (i.e., the last mile connectivity program which had increased to 8 million households by 2021), water and sanitation, agriculture (e.g., construction of dams), transport including road, railway and ferry projects, and gender equality.
c. Improvements in governance including the promulgation of 2010 Constitution, institutionalization of political parties, independence of judiciary.

The main challenge reported was the impact COVID-19 that affected the rate of economic growth.

Panelists:
Hon. Chris Mark – KYMCA Florence, SDGs forum - Executive Director
Julliet Muriimi; Deputy Director, Social and Political Affairs
Ken Oluoch; Technical lead for SGDs -Council of Governors

3.4.4 Unpacking SDGs for Citizens

The session sought to explore ways in which the citizens can be enabled to better understand SGDs and how they can get involved. The key highlights were that, drawing from the Danish experience – Social Democratic Party), political parties can   raise awareness among citizens, and that a disaggregated approach, in which a population

sector such as the youth pick a goal that specifically concerns them, is better for the achievement of the goals. In this regard it was recommended that the youth can collaborate with the Council of Governors to ensure that issues that concern them are included in the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP). It was recommended that more opportunities need to be provide opportunity for regular engagements between citizens, political parties, civic actors and County governments to ensure broad support towards SDGs implementation across the country.

Panelists:
Lasse Ryberg; General Secretary -the SDP party in Denmark.
Virdiyanna Wasike; Partnerships and Resource Mobilization - National Youth Council
Daniel Juma; Country director - Global Peace Foundation.

3.4.5 Marking the International Women's Day: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality

The session observed that women are the earliest consumers of government digitalized services such as in acquisition of Unique Personal Identifier (UPI) numbers for children at birth. It was also noted that gender equity starts within the classroom, whereby girls should be taught how to navigate the technology space. Some of the successes include the 2022 general election experience whereby the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) in partnership with common social media service providers (i.e., Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Google) trained women on digital security and online safety skills. In addition, a survey was carried out on abusive words that were being used in all the languages across Kenya. These abusive words were flagged for censorship in the social media platforms; thus, creating a safer space for women in the online platforms.

Several challenges that impede women's contribution to innovation and technology include:

   a. Access issues - most women do not have smartphones and therefore do not have access to online services.
   b. Increased risk of violence online for women in politics.

c. Lack of political good will – there is little effort by elected leaders to push for digital literacy among women either due to ignorance of how it can impact a society or just because it is not deemed important.

The key recommendation was that there need for establishment of technology incubation hubs in the counties where women and girls can be trained and mentored.

Panelists:
Nerima Wako , Executive director - Siasa Place
Susan Mule Mutuku, Computer Science Student, International University of Applied Sciences.
Mary Mwangi, Head of the Secretariat and the programme coordinator, Kenya women parliamentary Association.
Mary Mumbo, Gender Officer, SDGs Kenya Forum

3.4.6 SDGs from Human Rights Perspective

The overarching objective of the SDGs is to leave no one behind, which enhances the human rights concepts such as the principles of equality, non-discrimination, and empowerment. The session noted that the achievement of some goals is lower than others (e.g., gender equality compared to health and education).

Panelists:
Cyrus Maweo; Lawyer – KNHCR
Antony Wangila; Disability rights –KNHCR
James Mema - IMPACT

3.4.7 Water and Sanitation – "Leave no one behind in the Context of Water and Sanitation"

The meeting noted that there is correlation between population growth and demand for water and sanitation services. Population growth affects water supply due to encroachment of water catchment areas and through water contamination through human activities. Poor water and sanitation's services contributes to waterborne diseases, which disproportionately affect children and women. The recommendations were:

a. Mobilizing communities to take charge of planting trees which will help attract rainfall in their areas instead on relying on traditional water sources. An example of a tree planting project is in Makueni County where more than 22,000 seedlings were planted in three Wards and public spaces (i.e., school, hospital, and church grounds). The trees in schools were placed under the adoption of the pupils to enhance ownership. It was realized that through this community initiative, survival rates for trees were between 60% and 70% despite the drought.
b. The government must take thoughtful steps towards protecting the water catchment areas across the country.

Panelists:
Titus Shak; Director at Harvey Achievers Employment - CBO
Vidiwani Sadiki; CEO - Citizen network pro development
Milka Mutindi Makato; CEO -Greening More Environmental Initiative

3.4.8 Data for SDGs Reporting

At the global level, the 17 SDGs have 169 targets and 248 indicators for monitoring. Kenya has an indicators' monitoring of 58% (144 indicators). At the county level, Makueni County was cited as an example of good data collection and monitoring of the SGDs. In 2022, Makueni County published a handbook to help in tracking and reporting of achievements of SDGs' targets, which cited as a good strategy for the SDGs' mainstreaming. Other Counties should develop modalities for data collection and reporting on SDGs implementation.

Panelists
Benjamin Cheragu; Director of operations -The Open Institute.
Ruth Mwongelli; Data Protectionist -Makueni County.
Leah Wambugu; Assistant manager and statistician - Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

3.4.9 Synergy between Stakeholders for Effective Partnership towards SDGs Funding and Implementation

The private sector has a direct role in the implementation of the SDGs such as through voluntary commitment to consider gender equality in recruitment and in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities, and indirect role through creating employment. The meeting observed and highlighted on the importance of partnership with the local communities that for example, can contribute land for a communal farming project, or can volunteer skills. A key partner in the achievement of the SDGs is the Kenya Parliamentary Caucus for the SDGs and business which is a platform for Parliamentarians to engage SDGs in their work. The caucus popularizes SDGs in the National and County Assemblies and is a reporting mechanism to the United Nations.

Panelists:
Mr Ludi Amolo; Representative - UN Global Compact Kenya Network
Matilda Maseno; Programme Manager - East Africa Philanthropy Network
Imelda Achieng; Kenya Parliamentary Caucus of the Sustainable Development Goals and business.

3.4.10 Technology Development and Transfer for Climate Action

The discussion focused on climate change and on efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change. It was highlighted that technology can address climate change challenges. For example, through technology Israel has used sewage treatment to produce energy, biogas and water for irrigation. Kenya was, however, noted to lag behind in knowledge and technologies to address the climate change challenges. There is need for Kenya to explore strategies for employing technology towards tackling climate change including water harvesting.

Panelists
James Kanyi - Pan African Climate Justice Alliance
Judy Kengo - County Coordinator, Kenyan Members of County Assembly/ MCA Kwale County
Benard Bett; Elevator Echo Solutions Limited - Climate technology
Abraham Maruti - Ford Kenya party.

3.4.11 SDGs and Sustainability

It was noted that energy is needed to sustain majority of the SDGs because it is an enabler for education, manufacturing jobs and maintenance of food systems, among others. It was observed that there have been private and public initiatives geared towards energy production and utilization. The Centre for Energy Efficiency and Conservation is as a result of public private partnership in the Ministry of Energy that helps in policy work. Kenya Association of Manufacturers also support manufacturers to conduct pre-feasibility studies on appropriate sources of energy solar, biogas or small hydro sources. There is need for concerted efforts by various state and non-state actors to ensure that all sectors are powered to stimulate the implementation of the SDGs.

Panelists
Innocent Mokua Onseio - Kenya Association of Manufacturers
Saumu Ismail; Indian Climate Innovation Centre - Noble Energy engineer
Stefan; Danish Energy Agency

3.4.12 Political Goodwill in Implementation of SDGs

The session emphasized that political goodwill is central in ensuring successful implementation of the SDGs. Government and citizens have their roles to play in implementing the SDGs. It was observed that with devolution and every County having SDG champions, the goals will be mainstreamed. It was observed that while some political parties have integrated the SDGs in their manifestos, their implementation was still weak. Further, it was noted that in implementing some of SDGs, there needs to be a budgeting tool. However, it was observed that Kenya suffers from financing deficit with regard to meeting basic needs; for example, in healthcare and education. It was recommended that institutions (including political parties) that have committed to implement SDGs move from what they have on paper to actualize the same. And this calls for political goodwill. County Governments should particularly be supported to establish platforms for discussion between elected leaders and citizens on how to accelerate the implementation of SDGs.

Panelists:
Mr. Daniels Taabu - Executive Director of NARC Kenya.
Kirsten Bosbol - 2030 Beyond

3.4.13 Financing SDGs

The SGDs were adopted in Kenya under the Vision 2030 Kenya. It is broken into five-year plans, in what is known as the Medium-Term Development plans (MTPs). In the Counties, the SDGs are integrated into the County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs). Both of these plans mean that there will be budgetary allocation for implementation. The challenge is that the Counties have very good, ambitious development plans and budgets, but there is a key challenge of delayed financial disbursement from the National Treasury to the Counties. There must be a connection between the plans and implementation. There is need for National and County Governments to frame the SDGs properly; indicate how various SDGs are prioritized and funded and also communicate these policy directions for ease understanding by the final beneficiaries, who are citizens.

3.4.14 Breaking the Toxic Cycle of Media and Politics

The session sought to explore the role of media in politics and the relationship between journalists and politicians. Political debates have been shaped by mainstream media; however, Kenya's mainstream media remain strongly embedded to ethnic and class interests which have undermined their (media) capacity to facilitate fair and open debate, most evidently during elections. Secondly, some journalists take hand-outs (brown envelope journalism) to cover events, which affects the integrity of the content that is published. It was suggested that politicians and journalists need to:

a. Cultivate a symbiotic relationship with the media personnel, so as to have a more peaceful coexistence.
b. Practice transparency in their reporting by sharing truthful news not just with politicians but also with the public.

Panelists:
Hon. Mercy Kilel –MCA – Nakuru County
Tom Daleo – Journalist – Radio Africa Group, the Star newspaper

3.4.15 Place of SDGs in Political Party Manifestos

A manifesto is a promise of what a political party or an individual is going to implement when elected. The panelists agreed that best approach to achieve the goals is through the legislative agenda in Parliament and in the County Assemblies. A lesson learnt from Denmark indicated that some political parties (e.g., The Green Left Party) have a practice of annual review of the manifesto. The session recommended Kenyan political parties to consider monitoring and reviewing their manifestos on annual basis.

Panelists
Fred Okango – Secretary, Political Affairs-KANU
Sigurd Agasnap - Member of Parliament at the Green Left Party in Denmark
Orwa Michael - SG Narc Kenya Party
Hon. Wamalwa - MP

3.4.16 Sustainable Communities

The topic was aimed at discussing steps taken towards achieving goal number 16 which aims at promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Significantly, goal 16 aims to reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. One initiative that as mentioned was the ***"Crematia County"*** in Homabay County which focuses on using civic education to bridge the gap between approved budget and service delivery.

The initiative also focuses on social initiatives to address physical and verbal violence, and enhancing citizens' role in decision making. The program educates the community on existing laws and regulations in order to educate them on their constitutional rights and how they interact with the law. Another County level-initiative is the climate Change Fund Act of 2019 in Vihiga County which established the Climate Science Directorate that deals with climate risk assessment.

Panelists
Japheth Ojijo - Integrated development facility
Cynthia Mutheu - Africa for SDGs fellow
Roxana Kandie - County SDGs champion – Baringo
Winston Atamba; Director – Climate change Vihiga County

3.4.17 Resource Allocation in County Assembly with the SGDs' Lens

The discussion focused on what the Counties are doing in adoption of the 2010 Constitution. Some of the achievements cited were:

a. Promoting gender equity by having increased number of women in elective and appointive positions.
b. Devolvement of various sectors including health, agriculture and public works. Youth Action – Changing the World of Food One Plate at a Time. The session sought to discuss SDG 2 on fighting hunger. It was observed that about 30% to 40% of food production in Kenya is wasted. Controlling food waste would majorly contribute to food security. It was appreciated that facilities for food storage, especially cold food storage facilities for perishable foods are a challenge. The World Food Program affirmed that it has contributed through school feeding programmes, establishing homegrown school feeding programmes where schools produce for their own students. It was suggested that there need to be a mind-set shift such that food waste becomes less negative and more positive such as through circular economy practices of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

3.4.18 Lessons Learnt from Danida Fellowship Centre Learning Programme, 2021

The Danida Fellowship Centre (DFC) supports sustainable development and equal opportunities through training and learning programmes. The Centre organized some training programs for civil society representatives from Kenya and Uganda. Some of the key learning areas and achievements were:

Facilitation of policy dialogue between national and county governments, and strengthen community engagement. This included supporting County Governments through community dialogues; strengthening engagement between Council of Governors on one hand, and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance through the private sector devolution support program which is anchored on SDGs, and also with the civil society. This engagement supports County Governments to engage communities in SDGs' dialogues, and also includes strengthening SDG data collection and reporting.

Development of guidelines for the County Integrated Development Plans that are linked to the SDGs' targets.

Review of the Political Parties Act in order to to lower the threshold of funding through the Political Parties Fund (PPF). The Political Parties Act provided that for a party to qualify for political parties final, you needed to have participated in an election. Of the fund, 15% was to be shared by all political parties, regardless of the votes they gathered, 5% was retained by ORPP for administration of the Fund, and 80% was shared pro-rata. In 2011, that Act was amended stating that the threshold for qualifying for the fund was that a political party needed to have garnered at least 5% of all the votes in the previous general election. Other requirements were that the party should have at least 20 Members of Parliament, 3 Governors, 3 senators and 40 members of the county assemblies. This made it difficult for most parties to meet that threshold, and resulted to only a few parties qualified, which undermines the growth of democracy due to resource scarcity.

The key recommendation was that strong political parties are needed for democracy to grow. If political parties are strong, then as a country we are likely to have fewer challenges with running of elections. Similarly, if our judiciary is strong, then aggrieved parties should go to court believing that justice will be delivered fairly.

3.5 NI SISI NI SASA VILLAGE

3.5.1 Overview

The Ni Sisi Ni Sasa Village was a dialogue platform for participants below the age of 18 years to amplify their voices and harness their ideas of concern to them. It presented an opportunity to enhance their civic competence and their participation in democratic and governance processes.

3.5.2 Digital Footprints in the 21st Century – How has social media impacted social change?

It was observed that social media has positively influenced social change in the following ways:

a. Creating awareness about important issues in the society and raising voices condemn an idea or action.
b. Acting as an alternative way to hold the Government to account.
c. Easing the process of sharing information. Information can be shared through blogging platforms and social networks as opposed to the traditional ways (i.e. radio, television, and print media).
d. Creating employment for the youth through the content creation industry where young people share their art, talents and insights while making money.
e. Enabling mainstream media companies to take advantage of the social media to air trending news, and share insights.
f. Giving rise to digital marketing where companies and institutions can pitch sales of their products and services to a wide range of clients. In addition, it has allowed one on one engagement of companies with clients as it eliminate the middle men and brokers, which has helped built companies' brand and increased sales.

Some of the negative impacts of social media were noted as:

a. It can distract teenagers and hinder them from engaging in other activities and interfere with their sleep hence become less productive;
b. It has exposed people especially teenagers to cyber bullying, gossips, and peer pressure as a consequence one's self esteem is lowered.
c. It has been used by scammers to swindle money from unsuspecting users leading to depression and or suicide.
d. Clout chasing where some people display impractical lifestyles with the aim of remaining relevant in their circles which makes young people try to copy that same from the fear of missing out.
e. Social media was also noted to instigate or intensify war in conflicted areas.

The discussion recommended that the government should expand the internet connectivity and reach to bridge the digital divide and enable citizens engage, share

information and deliver services.

3.5.3 Gender (in)equality - Women in the shadow of climate change.

The session brought together stakeholders from various organizations in the climate and environmental sector. It was observed that climate change affects women and girls in the following ways;

a. They rely more on natural resources yet they have less access to them;
b. They are closer to nature than men given their gendered social roles of cooking, fetching wood fuel, ensuring food security and safety.
c. In agricultural and pastoralist production systems that characterize rural Kenya, women tend to travel long distances from their homes, which puts them at the risk of criminal victimization.
d. They are vulnerable to early marriages and school dropout, which increases the risk for physical and sexual abuse and human trafficking.
e. Climate change is also associated with extreme weather conditions such as extreme heat, which increases the spread of vector borne diseases (e.g., malaria) and subsequent risks for still birth, and adverse maternal and child health.
f. In time of natural calamities such as floods and landslides women are more likely to be injured and their survival rate is low due to disparities in mobility, access to natural resources, information and training and access to relief risking their livelihood and survival.

The discussion recommended that the government should come up with programs that cushion women from climate-induced shocks and women should be included in the decision-making process and during implementation.

Moderator:
Kimberly Onono, Environmental Scientist

Panelists:
Peter Bulimo, Activist & Campaigner – Greenpeace Africa
Barbra Kangwana, Climate Activist/Founder– LastShade Initiative,
Paul Okoth Opondo, Founder – Campde Voices

3.5.4 Electionville Game

Electionville is a game of democracy and local governance where participants take roles to educate and provide insight how democracy works. The participants become the managers of a city and act as council members representing fictional parties. They have a limited set of resources that they need to agree on how to use, within the timespan of one election term. In order to achieve their set political objectives while at the same time safeguarding public interests, they not only need to use their debate skills with the competing players, but also come to re-evaluate their initial priorities, thus becoming themselves an integral part of the larger democratic process. The game takes 90–120 minutes in teams (parties) and consists of a set number of rounds. One person, who is already trained on the game, is present as a game master and guides the players through the game. The primary target group is people aged 15–24 years. Relevant target groups also include teachers, and opinion-makers.

Moderator:
Embassy of Sweden in Kenya and NCIS team

Panelist:
Deputy Ambassador- Embassy of Sweden in Kenya

3.5.5 Think Globally, Act Regionally, Serve Locally - Inspiring transformational leadership and governance.

The session was held to share inspirational stories of young people in leadership on how they were able to overcome hurdles and become successful in the political space. It was noted that the road to success is not paved by high-quality education only, but there are other avenues to capitalize on young peoples' their skills and interest such as the social media.

Some of the highlighted challenges were:

a. Societal prioritization of boy child education in the expense of girl child education;
b. Lack of school fees;

c. Stereotypes about PWDs ability or competence to influence our community; and

d. Mental health issues.

Moderator: Abigail Akinyi Student, Compuera Mang'u Girls' High School.

Panelists:

Titus Kuria - Co-founder & Executive Director Canada Mathare Education Trust (CME Trust)

Patricia Mativo, Vice Chairperson - United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Kenya Youth Advisory Panel

Nelly Munyasia - Executive Director- Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK)

Irene Kendy – Director National Youth Council.

3.5.6 Dead Aid: Unpacking the impact of the global debt crisis on future generations

The discussion started with a dirge, that it is unfortunate that the current generation is paying the debt accrued by the past generation, and that future generations will have to pay the debt accrued by the current generation. This debt trap was observed to originate from a post-independence government policy of borrowing money without proper plans of utilizing and repaying the funds. The lacuna led to mismanagement of funds by people in power positions for their personal interests. It was mentioned that scandals like Goldenberg, Anglo Leasing, Eurobond are some of the scandals that led to wastage of borrowed money leaving the country to service a hefty debt that was looted.

The debt trap was also seen as being exacerbated by the successive Kenya governments' tendency to accumulate loans beyond the revenue collected. This means that most of the revenue collected goes to debt servicing and not to development programs. For instance, it was noted that the implication of Kenya's debt burden being at 63% of GDP is that for every one hundred shillings the government collects, 63 shillings go to debt repayment while remainder of 37 shillings go to developmental programs. The problem was further elaborated through the observation with the current (year 2023) debt of nine (9) trillion and a repayment of 1.3 trillion per year, without further borrowing, it would take the country seven (7) years to completely repay the loans. Yet the reality is that the country is still borrowing. As a result, the county's economy has become stagnant as the

burden of debts rapidly increases.

Apart from constraining the lives of the current generations, the debt trap is noted to compromise the prospects of future generations. This is in understanding that the current generation cannot, under the current economic situation and policy framework, end the debt trap. The discussion highlighted that Kenya could get out of the debt trap with good revenue's governance and management. In this respect, the case of South Korea was cited whereby the country took a huge loan to resurge the economy and with proper fiscal policies was able to grow the economy and repaid debt.

Moderator:
Thorne Barasa, Alumnus - Alliance High School

Panelists:
Francis Kairu, Policy officer - Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA)
Nicholas Odongo (Ph.D.)- Department of Public Administration- Korea University
David Wambulwa - International Political Economics Lecturer- Daystar University

With respect to Kenya, some of the prerequisites to end the debt trap highlighted include:

a. Amend the Constitution to seal the loopholes that encourage corruption and mismanagement of public funds.
b. Allocate resources based on clear strategy in order to get more from the loans.
c. Ensure that the country borrowed funds shall not surpass revenue collected.
d. Ensure proper monitoring and evaluation of projects undertaken through loans. This should ensure that every shilling borrowed is accounted for, and should be undertaken by an independent institution. Already this is the role of the Auditor General's office; hence, the critical call is for the independence, efficiency and effectiveness of this office.
e. Ensure that the country takes loans from institutions and countries with favourable interest and terms. Inasmuch as it cannot be assumed that the country does not have or follow a proposer fiscal policy, the important recommendation is that the country fiscal policy is regularly evaluated to be in consistent with national interests and global dynamics. For example, it is a debate whether Kenya should pursue developmental aid from China, who has little or no conditions on good political governance or from Western countries that often subject their aid to good political governance. This is a debate that

needs to be more and more advanced in the country.

   f. Ensure stoppage of corruption scandals like Goldenberg, Anglo Leasing, Eurobond that have led to wastage of borrowed money leaving the country to service a hefty debt that was loot. Inasmuch as the law on corruption and economic crimes is clear, what is more needed is enhancement of its enforcement.

   g. Promote public awareness and knowledge on the governance of public expenditure so as to enable citizens be able to hold the government accountable. One way of doing this is by integrating public finance governance in educational curriculum.

   h. Leaders and citizens should have a conversation together and come up with counter measures to combat the debt crisis and formulate frameworks, policy and laws that will fight corruption and mismanagement of public funds.

On the debate on the effects of foreign aid and taxes on livelihoods and the economy, the general perspective was that foreign aid is more harmful because it is given on conditions, with the implication that it carriers hidden benefits to the donor. It also creates a dependency syndrome whereby citizens learn to depend on the aid rather than innovate their way out poverty. Taxes on the other hand, were deemed to be more reliable – that is, they have no external control. Also, the pain of taxation was deemed to be short-term unlike in debt repayment that permeates generations. At a practical level, it was noted that when citizens pay taxes, the government borrows less; hence likely to generate economic stability and mitigation of the debt crisis. This debate is, however, not conclusive in that both taxes and loans are separate, though related, modes of public financing. Indeed, there is possibly no single country that does not have a share of both.

3.5.7 Building Equal and Inclusive Societies Through Community Service

The discussion observed that poverty is the root cause of many issues affecting children and youth in the continent including malnutrition, teen pregnancy, GBV, mental health, gender inequality, drug and substance abuse and youth representation.

It was noted that in order to create a more inclusive world we need to give equal chances to the vulnerable. The youth, it was noted, have positive energy and can be bold to drive positive social change because they are more technologically empower and therefore can create awareness especially through social media. The challenges faced during building an inclusive and equal society through community service were cited as follows:

   a. The process of registering a foundation is cumbersome.
   b. Lack of funds to register a foundation and other related limitations by the CSO board.
   c. Volunteering and activism in community service has not been fully accepted in our society.
   d. The gender disparity makes it difficult to attain equality. The boy child's ability to volunteer has been restricted since he is burdened with expectations and

the responsibility of giving, unlike the girl who can be supported.

The key recommendation was that there is need for communities to build a support network which would help in problem solving, resource sharing, cooperation, coordination, and coalition building.

Moderator:
Jada Amani Student, Buruburu Girls' High School

Panelists:
Irene Kendy_ Director, Youth Advisory Board National Youth Council
Brian Macharia - Regional Manager, Nairobi PaceMaker International
Francis Amonde - Founder & Executive Director, Cup of Uji
Venoranda Kuboka - Founder & Team Lead- Youth Changers Kenya

3.5.8 Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR): "Jijue, Jitambue, Jipange".

The session aimed at educating the students about adolescence and issues arise during the stage of life such as teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, sex and gender-based violence. It was noted that the adolescent stage presents a stage of identity versus role confusion during which they explore their environment to find an identity. When adolescents are well supported to explore in a safe environment, they form an identity but if they are not, they develop role confusion which leaves them vulnerable. It was further affirmed that adolescents need love, affirmation and belonging so that they be protected against falling victim to role confusion.

In the PDF 2023 it was recommended that society should identify the root cause of adolescents' vulnerabilities and come up with solutions. In particular, the session recommended that the adolescents should be exposed to more information about SRHR in order to enable them take caution and remain safe when it comes to issues of reproductive health. A debate should be opened in Kenya on whether sexual education should be introduced in Kenyan schools and the modality it should assume.

Moderator:
Ritah Anindo, Youth Project Coordinator, Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK)

Panelists:
Mercy Wairimu, Youth Advocate, Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK)
Ritah Anindo, Youth Project Coordinator, Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK)
Pamela Adhiambo - Advocacy Officer, Reproductive Health Network Kenya (RHNK)

3.5.9 Addressing a Major Public Health Concern: Drug and Substance Abuse

The discussion set to highlight the problem of drug and substance abuse and its effects on young people. Drug and substance abuse was defined as the excessive and harmful use of drugs or the chemical substances that affect the central nervous system and alter a person's mood, behavior and cognitive processes.

It was observed that in Kenya there are several drugs at disposals to minors such as cannabis sativa (marijuana), khat (miraa), cocaine, morphine, tobacco, and methadone. The long-term effects of using drugs were outlined as addiction, destruction of brain cells, cognitive impairment, impaired immune function while the risks are contracting diseases like HIV, Hepatitis B and C, crime, arrests and prosecution in courts of law.

Panelists:
Shelmith Ndung'u - Senior Public Education & Advocacy Officer, NACADA
Jackline Kaisha - Nurse Counsellor/ harm reduction mentor, Nairobi County

The discussion pointed out that there is a harm reduction management of drugs strategy which helps those already addicted to drugs to deal with it. The strategy helps lessen negative effects without necessarily asking users to cease taking drugs. It acknowledges that drug use is a complicated problem and that drug users may experience a variety of negative consequences, such as health hazards, social stigma, and criminalization. The strategy has five (5) principles of harm reduction management including:

a. Ensuring that injecting drug users have access to clean needles and syringes in order to prevent the spread of HIV and other blood-borne infections.
b. Lessening the negative effects of opioid usage, persons who are dependent on them are given opioid substitution therapy (OST), such as methadone or buprenorphine.
c. Stopping deadly overdoses by giving naloxone, a drug that reverses opioid overdose.
d. Offering drug testing services so that people may make more informed choices about their drug usage and lower their risk of overdose and other negative effects.
e. Helping drug users manage hazards associated with drug use, lessen social stigma, and enhance their general health and well-being, peer support groups and counselling are offered.

Some of the challenges in the mental health landscape were outline as:

a. Mental health is not prioritized as a public health issue hence the government does not budget for it.
b. Rehabilitation programs are very expensive hence not many people can get help.

The discussion recommended that there is need to create more and safe spaces (i.e., home, school, church and work places) where young people can seek mental health support. This is because it is a real problem affecting young people and opportunities must be provided to deal with mental health issues.

3.5.10 Shadow Pandemic: The Global Mental Health Landscape

In this session good mental health was defined as a state of well-being that enables us to cope with normal stresses of life, realize one's potential, learn and work, make contribution to one's community. It was observed that poor mental health is one of the leading causes of disability and illness among adolescents worldwide. According to statistics one out of seven adolescent experience mental health problem due to changes and identity crisis leading to depression, anxiety, drug abuse, suicide among other vulnerabilities. Mental health risk factors for adolescents were highlighted as follows:

a. Exposure to adversity such as teen parenting, stigma and discrimination, social exclusion;
b. Pressure to conform from peers or identity exploration;
c. Social media influence;

d. Poor quality of life at home due to severe social economic difficulties;
e. Violence including bullying and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV);
f. Poor parenting i.e., harsh and punitive parenting.

The outcomes of poor mental health were identified as suicidality and self-harm. Suicidality was explained as the risk of suicide evidenced by suicidal thoughts, plans and actions or suicidal attempts and suicidal plan while self-harm was defined as the pre-occupation to hurt self without conscious suicidal intent. In other words, externalizing disappointments by trying to match psychological pain with physical pain.

Panelists:
Ruth Ngatia,
Veronica Ngatia and
Brenda, programme associates, Shamiri Institute

In the PDF 22023, the students discussed signs of a suicidal person and how to help them. Some of the possible warning signs of suicidality were mentioned as change of behavior, openly making suicidal statements, changes in eating behavior/sleeping patterns, frequent sadness and social isolation from regular activities, friends, family, abrupt decline in quality of work e.g., schools work, pre-occupation with death and dying, and giving away treasured possessions. The ways in which someone can help a person with intent to commit suicide were outlined as follows:

a. Talking about suicide to clarify if that the person intends to commit suicide;
b. Showing acceptance and not being judgemental when the person shares their feelings;
c. Removing danger items such as weapons and medication;
d. Seeking professional help.

The strategies that one can use to improve their mental health were highlighted as:

a. Taking a break from everything,
b. Developing emotion regulations skills like mindfulness and creating support systems who you can open up to.

3.5.11 Global Frameworks for Development Accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development

The session took an interactive approach where the participants and the facilitators discussed the SGDs in terms of meaning and their implementation in Kenya. The students were engaged in an exercise where they were divided into groups and asked to pick one SGD. They were provided with questions to help to guide the discussion and were tasked with coming up with a call to action, the guiding questions were;

    a. What did you find inspiring in the case from the school?
    b. What other ideas for school activities/actions can you come up with to address the SDGs?
    c. What is your call to action to your school or to politicians?

The key highlights from the call to action were:

In healthcare:
    a. The government should invest more in healthcare services hence making services and medicines available and affordable.
    b. Health actors should take first aid training camps to the villages.
    c. There should be occasional medical check-ups to sensitize and encourage the public on the matter of blood donation.
    d. The government should train and employ more mental health practitioners, psychologists and counsellors to help combat mental health issues and create safe spaces for her citizens.
    e. The government should invite relevant stakeholders to frequently organise programmes and activities like marathons and tournaments.
    f. Through the goal on partnerships, the national and local government and relevant actors should partner to decentralised resources for mental health issues.

Moderator: Okuom Silvia - Public Relations Executive

Panelists:
Jeppe Sorensen - Project Assistant - Beyond 2030
Kirsten Brosbol - Former Minister of the environment of Denmark; Founder & CEO 2030 Beyond~SDG Kenya Forum
Mr. Sigurd Agersnap MP Denmark
Mr. Peter Muindi Director studies Kenya Utalii College
Ms. Maja Hedin, FGU, Denmark

In education the government should:

a. Strengthen international exchange programme by creating networks with relevant international organisations (e.g., foreign schools) and to sponsor exchange programmes.
b. Hire more qualified teachers.
c. Support co-curricular activities to nurture and mentor talents and passions.
d. Invest more in scholarships and bursaries to boost quality education, reduce inequality and promote gender equality;
e. Promote online learning particularly with the use of online resources (learning material) since hardcopy resources are expensive and difficult obtain.

In creating sustainable cities, the government should:

a. Come up with strategies to mobilise the youths to help clean and maintain a clean and safe environment. It was noted that such a strategy exists i.e., *"kazi kwa vijana initiative"* and it just needs to be amplified.
b. Embrace the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) of environmental conservation.
c. Organise dialogue platforms like the PDF to speak about the SDGs to the people at the grassroots.

3.5.12 Edutainment - Democratic Games

In the last session, students were given a chance to give their feedback on their experience in the PDF. Some of the key highlights were:

a. The PDF was an interactive and informative where they interacted with students from other school and got to learn from them.
b. The PDF gave them an opportunity, and a safe space to speak and be heard.
c. It is a mentoring/grooming ground for leaders where confidence to speak up was boosted.

The key recommendation was that the government through the ministry of education should introduce dialogue platforms in the education systems where students can share, learn and interact.

PART 4:
CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNT

4.1 Conclusion

The proceedings demonstrated that the event was quite successful in that the objectives were largely met. Some of the indicators include the number of both physical and virtual participants, the range of themes discussed, the number and skill variety of session moderators and panelists, the high profile of keynote speakers in opening and closing sessions among others. More importantly, the topics that were discussed resonated with the experiences and expectations of Kenyans given that each session had a wide range of views from the participants. Indeed, the 2023 PDF inclusion of a platform for and by adolescents was certainly quite refreshing in a society where across cultures public discussion on sexuality and reproductive health, mental health, substance and drug abuse, are considered taboo.

The 2023 PDF also catered well for human welfare. This was evident from the number of security personnel on site, the availability of fairly affordable food and beverages, free supply of water in eco-friendly paper cups (and not single use plastic bottles), and edutainment sessions.

4.2 Lessons Learnt

Whereas the recommendations on discussion issues are captured in the preceding chapters, some of the recommendations in terms of PDF organization are:

1. At the participants' registration desk, provide in the registration form a question to capture the number of PDFs that the participant has attended. This well help to capture commitment to the democratic governance and by extension change in attitude, perception and possibly political behavior. For instance, is there someone out there, an ordinary citizen and not an invited facilitator, who has attended all the five PDFs?
2. What would a PDF event look like in Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru, Machakos, Nyeri or any other city or major town? Holding the event outside Nairobi would certainly play a significant role in horizontal-regional upscaling in the country.

THE PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL 2023 CLOSING CEREMONY

The PDF 2023 closing ceremony dubbed *rededicating ourselves to the constitutional promise of a robust multiparty democracy* was underpinned by several pointers to the observations that had been made for the three-and-a-half-day event, and how best it could be done going into the future. In the wake of the call for political parties to fold, the present day and future governments were asked to keep their promises of safeguarding multiparty democracy, civic actors were also reminded to rededicate their efforts and commitment to the promotion and defense of the constitutional rights to the existence of vibrant political parties and to work with all partners and relevant actors to promote the spirit of multipartyism. The key players and actors in our electoral processes including the ORPP and IEBC to observe fidelity to the law at all times and resist any attempts to reverse our democratic gains. On the issue of inclusion, having heard the voices and concerns of the young people, political parties, parliament, the assemblies, the executive and all other frontline institutions were urged to ensure fair access to opportunities and expand commitment to effective and meaningful representation of special interest groups, especially youth, women and people with disabilities. Appealing to all political and civic actors, despite their disagreements, to always be cognizant of the prevailing political and socio-economic circumstances, keep doors open to dialogue at all times and commit to the greater public good at all times. Noteworthy, was the call to expand the reach and impact of PDF, it was a necessary commitment to exploring the possibility of a devolved edition of PDF by envisaging a couple of regional PDFs to test viability and interest. As one way to forging an intergenerational dialogue, naturing talent and entrenching the culture of dialogue, there was need to embark on experimenting the possibility of having PD,F schools editions as it had already been demonstrated by the numbers of school going attendees.

THE PEOPLE DIALOGUE FESTIVAL

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