

Public participation and social accountability in Kenyan counties

A pilot study using interactive radio in Siaya

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List of Acronyms

ADP - Annual Development Plan

CECM - County Executive Committee Member

CHVs - Community Health Volunteers

SIBO - Siaya-Bondo Water and Sanitation Company

LVWSB - Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Board

KMTC - Kenya Medical Training College



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

There is a strong consensus amongst governance specialists that citizen engagement is integral to supporting social accountability and more broadly strengthening democracy.¹ However, how to effectively provide for citizen engagement and social accountability is more ambiguous. The impact of the modalities through which citizens make demands on the degree to which citizens feel empowered to trigger recognition and action from the government remains an open question.² This is especially the case in Kenya. In the eyes of many, the extent to which public participation has effectively led to greater social accountability and improved governance performance under the mandate of the new constitution is highly variable.

“Social accountability” refers to a form of civic engagement that builds accountability through the collective efforts of citizens and civil society organizations to hold public officials, service providers and governments to account for delivering in a responsive and timely manner.³ Besides strengthening civic engagement and amplifying citizen voice, social accountability initiatives aim to increase the transparency of governance in many arenas, ranging from local service delivery to national processes of development policy formulation.⁴

In the Kenyan context, citizen engagement and social accountability align to the 2010 Constitution’s provisions on “public participation”. The new constitution brought about an ambitious new system of decentralized governance, predicated on devolving authority to 47 new counties and devolving power towards the citizenry. Public participation is a core element, and the new constitution enshrines public participation as a national value and principle of governance (Constitution of Kenya 2010, Article 10(2)). Articles 174(c) and 232(d) protect the rights of citizens to engage in decision-making and accountability on issues and matters that affect them. Elsewhere, the Constitution obligates county governments to provide for structures for citizen participation to be established (Article 191(1)). In its January 2016 ‘County Public Participation Guidelines’, the Government of Kenya’s Ministry of Devolution and Planning & Council of Governors, defined “public participation” as follows:

“the process where individuals, governmental and non-governmental groups influence decision making in policy, legislation, service delivery, oversight and development matters. It is a two-way interactive process where the duty bearer communicates information in a transparent and timely manner, engages the public in decision making and is responsive and accountable to their needs. The public gets actively involved in the process when the issue at stake relates directly to them.”⁵

At the same time, Kenyans have had very high expectations that devolution will improve service delivery and accountability.⁶ Further, in a context of poor governance performance and high levels of

¹ Bhavna Sharma, *Voice, Accountability and Civic Engagement: A Conceptual Overview* (UNDP 2008); *Fostering Social Accountability: From Principle to Practice*, Guidance Note (UNDP 2010) .

² Although much literature evaluates approaches to civic engagement more broadly, the format in which citizens make claims is rarely systematically evaluated - see for example - Anuradha Joshi and Rhiannon McCluskey, *The art of ‘bureaucraft’: Why and how bureaucrats respond to citizen voice* (MAVC 2018), Jonathan Fox, *Social Accountability: What does the evidence really say?* (GPSA 2014)

³ Houtzager, P. and A. Joshi (2008). Introduction: Contours of a research project and early findings. *IDS Bulletin* 38 (6), p. 1-9.

⁴ Gaventa, J. and G. Barrett (2010). *So What Difference Does it Make? Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement*. IDS Working Paper No. 347. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies.

⁵ Government of Kenya (2016), *County Public Participation Guidelines*, Ministry of Devolution and Council of Governors. Nairobi: Government Printer. See also:

<http://www.hakijamii.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/County-Public-Participation.pdf> (accessed 15 November 2019).

⁶ Finch C. and Amollo, A. (2015). *Building Public Participation in Kenya’s Devolved Government*. Working Paper, Kenya School of Government, Centre for Devolution Studies, February 2015.



extant corruption, experts have noted that devolution without effective citizen participation and social accountability mechanisms risks elite capture, clientelism, competition over power and poor information flows between levels of government. In some studies on areas under devolution in Kenya such as land reform, poor engagement and tokenism in public participation are considered factors in inadequacies in legislation and implementation.⁷

However, public participation has proven to be one of the most challenging areas for realising the aims of devolution under Kenya's new constitution. Studies suggest that citizen awareness on county budgets, county strategies and county integrated development plans is very low.⁸ In turn, awareness of public participation mechanisms and attendance at public participation meetings have been found to be low.⁹ Where public participation has been reported, its role in responsive and accountability governance is hard to unravel. The impact of public participation on service delivery outcomes in Kenyan counties has been assessed as negligible.¹⁰ In an analysis of Afrobarometer survey data from Kenya, researchers found an association between reports of 'meaningful public participation' and citizen perceptions on the performance of Members of County Assemblies and the performance of Governors. The direction of the causal relationship is unclear: Does a perception of well-performing politicians motivate a sense of public participation being meaningful? Or does the opportunity for meaningful public participation lead to better performing politicians in citizens' eyes?¹¹

In specific counties such as Siaya, the challenges with ensuring inclusive, sustained and impactful public participation have also been noted. In the sector of water, researchers have noted that 'although responsibility and accountability are now more tightly linked to the county government, the existence of multiple players forms loose boundaries and overlapping purviews and translates into a decreased level of responsibility, commitment, and motivation... Public participation might be able partially to influence priorities, but apparently it cannot influence proper implementation.'¹² In other areas, such as land reform in Siaya, the verdict is more damning. A recent study argued that 'old-guard' elites exercise veto powers in the legislature to arrest reforms, suggesting 'bottom-up' accountability remains thwarted.¹³

The Agile and Harmonized Assistance to Devolved Institutions (AHADI) program has given increasing attention to public participation. In recent years, AHADI has had a pillar on enabling government entities and citizens to engage in collaborative and mutually-beneficial relationships that improve accountability and service delivery. Since 2017, the citizen engagement strategy has focused on supporting development of public participation mechanisms and guidelines that increase citizens' access to information, and enable citizen organizations to engage with county governments. Social

⁷ Boone, C., Dyzenhaus, A., Manji, A., Gateri, C. W., Ouma, S., Owino, J. K., ... & Klopp, J. M. (2019). Land law reform in Kenya: Devolution, veto players, and the limits of an institutional fix. *African Affairs*, 118(471), 215-237.

⁸ See for example: Mbithi, A., Ndambuki, D., & Juma, F. O. (2019). Determinants of Public Participation in Kenya County Governments. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54(1), 52-69.

⁹ Transparency International (2016) The Kenya County Governance Status Report. Available at: <http://tikenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/county-governance-status-report.pdf> (accessed 15 October 2019)

¹⁰ See Muriu, A.R. (2014) How does citizen participation impact decentralized service delivery? Lessons from the Kenya Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP, 2002-2010). Available at: <https://www.internationalbudget.org/wp-content/uploads/How-does-Public-Participation-Influence-Decentralized-Service-Delivery-Muriu-April-2014.pdf> (accessed 1 November 2019).

¹¹ See Mbithi, A., Ndambuki, D., & Juma, F. O. (2019). Determinants of Public Participation in Kenya County Governments. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54(1), 52-69.

¹² Avidar, O. (2018). Half-hearted Devolution: A view of Kenya's water governance from Siaya County, Kenya. *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 9(4), 319-338, p. 333.

¹³ Boone, C., Dyzenhaus, A., Manji, A., Gateri, C. W., Ouma, S., Owino, J. K., ... & Klopp, J. M. (2019). Land law reform in Kenya: Devolution, veto players, and the limits of an institutional fix. *African Affairs*, 118(471), 215-237.



accountability has been a focus of AHADI's citizen engagement strategy, and the growing focus in recent years in Kenya on public participation was met with support for a range of CSO initiatives, capacity building of County administrations and pilot studies aligned to the Public Expenditure Management efforts.

In response to the above context and this increasing focus on public participation, this pilot study in Siaya County sought to assess what makes for more effective public participation in Kenya. In contributing to a timely policy concern about how to best meet the imperatives/aspirations of devolution, it sought also to address the limited empirical evidence in scholarship about how to design effective public participation.

The pilot study had two operational components, designed to generate new insights into public participation in the context of devolution in Kenya: 1) implementation of an intervention, designed to generate citizen engagement and feed insights from citizen voice into a Country policy process; 2) a study into the intervention, examining the extent to which its distinct elements make it an effective means of providing for public participation with County governments in Kenya.

1.2 Project Objectives

This pilot study involved implementing and studying an intervention, found in the approach of Africa's Voices Foundation, a Kenya-based non-profit organisation. This intervention, the 'Common Social Accountability Platform' (CSAP for short) proposes to use interactive radio shows to achieve meaningful spaces of mediated public discussion between citizens and authorities that are valued by both and strengthens relations between them, whilst also providing evidence of citizen opinions in a form that supports policy action by authorities. Citizens' opinions are collected from the radio discussions and analysed to provide 'evidence' of these opinions and how they vary between socio-demographic groups and over time.

The specific objectives of the project were as follows:

1. To study Africa's Voices interactive radio approach as a citizen engagement/public participation tool for building social accountability in local governance, including its efficacy for:

- Increasing the scope and quality of citizen engagement
- Fostering public dialogue between citizens and authorities
- Providing a channel for government's Information dissemination on performance
- Enabling citizen feedback and influence on decision-making
- Advancing accountability of authorities for decision-making and action

2. To recommend programme/policy options for Kenyan county governments, civil society actors and donors to improve on delivering public participation commitments under devolution.

1.3 Location and scope: Siaya County, public participation and the 2018-19 ADP

After extensive consultations with the AHADI project team, AVF selected Siaya County for implementation of this pilot study between March and August 2019 on how the radio intervention method might be implemented with county government in Kenya. Siaya County was selected according to the following criteria:

1. The county government was receptive to testing different approaches to civic engagement,



- including those based on broadcast media and digital technology;
2. The media and technology landscape of the county was sufficiently developed to allow for viable interactive radio interventions
 3. The county was not a clear outlier, and therefore findings from this study could inform hypotheses about likely processes and outcomes of civic engagement interventions in other countries, although this would require further testing to bear out.
 4. The AHADI programme was operational in the county.

Siaya's County Government strongly emphasizes public participation, with a mission to "achieve sustainable development and excellence using world class methods of service delivery and technology with emphasis on public participation" (IDP 2018-22, pp. i). Public participation is built into its Integrated Development Plan, which included plans to create a unit for public participation with a coordinating officer and budgetary allocation. This was partially in response to the recognition that participation levels were often low and insufficient for their purpose, both with the County Executive and Assembly (County Government of Siaya, Integrated Development Plan 2018-22, pp. 80, 104-5).

Within the wider framework of abiding by the Kenyan Constitution, the Siaya County Government has set out Public Participation Guidelines, specifying five key objectives. The first three set aims to improve government responsiveness towards county development: 1) strengthen democracy and good governance so that "the decision-making process becomes more representative"; 2) improve transparency and accountability so government representatives are "held to account for their action and are responsive to the needs of citizens"; and 3) improve the quality of results through generating a better understanding of citizen perspectives.¹⁴ The two remaining objectives are more intangible, focused on societal relationships and relationships between citizens and authority: 4) the reduction of social conflict and 5) the enhancement of process legitimacy, defined as support and trust in implementation.¹⁵ At the time of this study, Siaya County also had a draft bill - Siaya County Public Participation and Petitions Bill - which was not yet law but still indicates how they conceive of civic engagement. The bill notes the purpose of citizen engagement to include citizens in decisions around planning, performance management, and budgeting. It also mandates that participation shall be through petitioning (outlined in detail in the law), public hearings and forums, and public comment processes.¹⁶

During the pilot study, AVF had a productive partnership with the County of Siaya. The then CEC Minister for Governance and Administration and the Governor endorsed the project. Prior to agreeing on the intervention, AVF consulted with Siaya county government officials to strengthen buy-in and identify their existing approaches and implementation of civic engagement, as well as their priority questions in terms of selecting and operationalising different civic engagement models.

Together, they decided to focus the public participation intervention on the county's performance in its most recent Annual Development Plan. The Annual Development Plan is the budgeted workplan that details how the multi-year County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) will be implemented in the forthcoming budget year. In recent years, the standard approaches in the country for public participation were used in preparing the next year's ADP. However, missing here was public participation to enhance social accountability on the county's performance on the previous year's ADP. In co-designing the pilot intervention in May 2019, County officials highlighted this gap and the opportunity to fill it with the Africa's Voices Executive Director. The then-CEC Governance and Administration noted: "The ADP defines the rest of the programme for the year - it generates key issues of relevance to citizens," however, "We don't get feedback on the ending ADP. We don't get

¹⁴ County Government of Siaya, Siaya County Public Participation Guidelines (2018), pp.1-2

¹⁵ County Government of Siaya, Siaya County Public Participation Guidelines (2018), pp. 2

¹⁶ Siaya County Government, The Siaya County Government public participation and petitions bill, 2014.



lessons for the new year ... we need to amalgamate challenges and progress. We've achieved a lot and the citizens don't know. Media is often too negative." Similarly, the CEC Water stated, "As we start a new cycle of ADP, we can get a feel for what the public wants." The CO for Finance and Planning added: "We don't reach all the [geographic] sectors of the citizens, they don't know what we're doing. Feedback on the ADP and also publicizing our achievements is good. This can help with course-correcting for 2019-20." By looking at the Annual Development Plan, the pilot intervention and case study was thus positioned within an ongoing process of planning and citizen engagement in the County. It met a perceived need from county bureaucrats to obtain citizen feedback on the implementation of the previous year's Annual Development Plan.

1.4 Pilot study overview

The Africa's Voices intervention - what it calls the Common Social Accountability Platform (CSAP) - takes a particular form: namely leveraging existing popular local language radio stations, presenters and shows to produce a media format that gives emphasis to the voices of audience members contributing to a discussion on a particular topic via free SMS, and bringing those voices into exchange with authorities, either as live studio guests, or in subsequent engagements around the evidence and insights generated from audience opinions. CSAP's objective is to enhance the inclusion of citizens in decision-making by:

1. Building inclusive dialogue between citizens and authorities, at scale;
2. Gathering insight on public opinion to inform governance decision-making.

This project deployed CSAP with the specific aim of generating large-scale and inclusive dialogue between the Siaya County Executive and citizens in Siaya, and to fill evidence gaps on citizen perspectives so as to make County government's performance more accountable, responsive and grounded in the voices of citizens.

As the intervention took place, a case study in collaboration with Dr Diepeveen from Cambridge conducted research on the AVF intervention and its impact.¹⁷ This study found that AVF proposes to achieve two types of outcomes:

1. Meaningful spaces of mediated public discussion between citizens and authorities that were valued by both and strengthened relations between them (a substantive outcome), whilst also
2. Providing evidence of citizen opinions in a form that supported policy action by authorities (an instrumental outcome).

Overall, the case study found that the intervention had a positive relationship with the quality of citizen-state relations. SMS feedback generated discomfort and a compulsion among authority figures to respond to citizen concerns. This compulsion was found to result in action in cases where complaints were isolated and immediately actionable, without additional resources, planning or buy-in. The intervention also revealed some trade-offs and variables that could lead to divergent outcomes, specifically:

1. Trade-off between mediating the space to ensure specific outcomes, and allowing for the openness of a live radio show;

¹⁷ The case study research was conducted in collaboration with researchers at the Centre of Governance and Human Rights, University of Cambridge, so as to ensure a level of independence in assessment and analysis of the AVF intervention. Dr Diepeveen led development of the case study research framework, the collection and analysis of source data and presentation of initial findings.



2. Trade-off between creating a sense of community, and protecting anonymity; and
3. Variable effects on trust depending on how county executive officials engage on air.

The findings of the case study are elaborated in more detail in Section 4.

1.5 Structure of this report

This report details the process, insights and policy recommendations generated through the study of the public participation intervention using the AVF approach. It is structured as follows. Section 2 details the design and method used for the intervention, identifying its distinct components as an approach to public engagement, and the methods used to reflect on its effectiveness in Siaya. Section 3 describes the public engagement events that took place, specifically the scope of engagement through the four radio shows and associated SMS feedback.

Section 4 outlines the insights generated through this project, and is divided into three subsections. Through the intervention and its associated analysis, this project was able to generate insights on three levels: a) insights from citizen voice on the effectiveness of the ADP in Siaya; b) insights into participants' experiences of radio and SMS as means for engagement; c) insights into opportunities and challenges around radio and SMS as means for public engagement in devolved government in Kenya. Section 5, the final section, provides policy recommendations, generated from the three areas of insight.



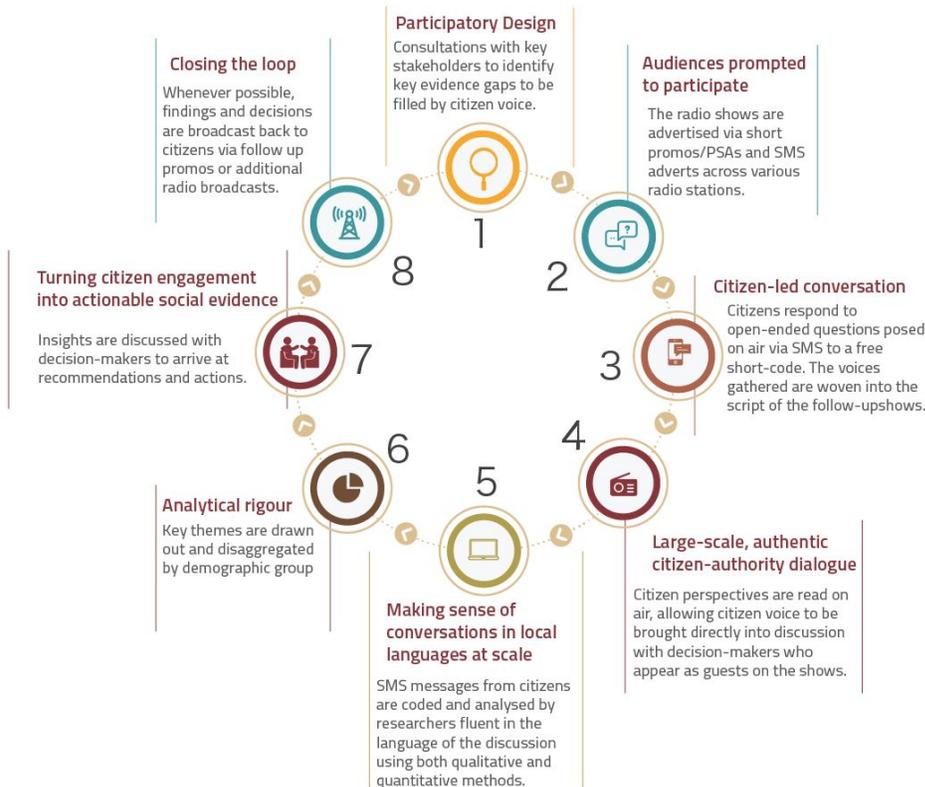
2. DESIGN & METHOD

This section outlines the design and methods for: (1) the Africa's Voices intervention in Siaya; and (2) the case study of the intervention, and on what basis the intervention's effectiveness was examined and reflected upon.

2.1 The Africa's Voices Pilot Intervention

Figure 1 presents the 8 steps of Africa's Voices' Common Social Accountability Platform (CSAP) intervention, starting with the participatory design of the key evidence gaps and research questions that stakeholders are interested in gathering citizen feedback on. Prior to the show, Africa's Voices advertises the show via short PSAs (public service announcements) and SMS adverts to previous CSAP participants. These invite audiences to send their opinions via a toll-free SMS shortcode to a question of the week. Those citizens who participate are self-selected. Their feedback is gathered via SMS and a representative set of views are woven into the show script in advance of the live radio show, bringing citizen voice directly into discussion with guests from decision-making institutions (e.g. government and aid actors). In addition, all participants who respond automatically receive a short SMS questionnaire asking for further demographic information. Following the show, the collected SMS messages from citizens are coded and analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods to derive findings and recommendations to present back to decision-makers. Ideally, the feedback loop should be closed with citizens, so they learn of the insights gathered and action being taken.

Figure 1: CSAP Methodology





2.1.1. Building inclusive community engagement at scale

The first pillar of AVF's CSAP method and the interactive radio approach is to convene citizen engagement and public dialogue on live local language radio. In this study, AVF deployed a four show interactive radio series across 2 radio stations. The interactive radio series broadcast between **June and July 2019**, specifically targeting listeners in Siaya County. Radio Namlolwe (Kisumu) and Radio Ramogi (Nairobi) were the two radio stations chosen for this project. According to the latest Ipsos Audience Research Report,¹⁸ the scale, geographic focus and diversity of their audiences suggested that both Ramogi and Nam Lolwe were the most ideal for this project.

Each of the four radio shows in both radio stations included interviews with relevant guests from the County government who could speak on each priority topic. Guests were carefully selected by AVF. Guests responded to comments from citizens during the radio show, effectively placing the voices of communities in direct conversation with these key actors from the County government. The radio programmes were aired live in the local language, Dholuo, through the two radio stations on Thursday and Friday each week in the morning from 8-9am to increase audience engagement and listenership. Radio presenters were trained on the interactive radio method, and guided by Africa's Voices team to ensure a fair and balanced discussion.

2.1.2 Evidence generation on public opinion to inform decision-making

The second pillar of the interactive radio approach is analysis of audience engagement to inform decision-making with a rich understanding of public opinion. Each radio show was structured around one key priority sector related to the 2018-19 ADP that had been identified during a participatory workshop with local government in Siaya County in May 2019. For each week, a research question was tailored to the county's context and built around evidence gaps that were identified in the workshops. From there, radio questions were devised. They were open-ended to provoke lively and plural discussion in an engaging and accessible way. The questions were designed according to social scientific frameworks to ensure comprehensibility and accessibility and that citizen responses correspond to the concepts being measured. AVF conducted FGDs to test the question aired on radio through two focus group discussions (FGDs) in Siaya. See Table 1 for the research and radio questions. Evidence generated through the radio shows was shared and discussed with senior members of the Siaya County Executive in **late August 2019**.

Table 1. Stakeholder Priorities for Research on Audience Engagement in Siaya

Week	Research question	Radio question
1	County performance on the ADP 2018-19	How do you think Siaya County has performed in the last one year in terms of public service delivery? In what ways?
2	Access to water	This year, Siaya county prioritised improving access and quality of water and sanitation services for citizens. How has it performed in your community?
3	Access to health care	In the last year Siaya county has prioritised providing free maternal health, access to primary health care and equipping all public health facilities for efficient service delivery. What changes have you seen in your community?
4	Governance and public participation	Does the Siaya county government ensure wide public participation in decision making such as taking part in development of ADP? What more should be done?

¹⁸ Available here: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wIP0RX-wdjZlJB9iDNbBh0NtGp6krv1/view>



Analysis: AVF coded the messages received according to different themes that our Luo-speaking researchers identified in the data. The coding process follows best practice social science techniques: a 'coding frame' of themes and sub-themes is tested using inter-coder reliability and datasets are labelled and validated, prior to quantitative analysis. By combining this labelled dataset with data received from audiences on their demographic information (where available), AVF analysed how perspectives varied between different demographic groups. Regression and odds ratios were used to test for associations between groups and ideas. As regards limitations, AVF considers its interactive radio method as a credible intervention for turning citizen engagement into evidence, however the organisation also acknowledges limitations with the mixed-methods analytical approach: that the insights from citizen voice are not immediately generalizable to the population.¹⁹

Consent: AVF made clear in all communications that data would be analysed to inform county government policymaking. This was then re-iterated at the start of the SMS survey and participants were given the option of opting out from having their data analysed through using a keyword.

2.2. Pilot Study: framework, method, sources and analysis

A research study on the pilot, led by Dr Stephanie Diepeveen at the University of Cambridge, ran in parallel with the AVF intervention in Siaya County. It aimed to contribute empirical evidence about what makes for more effective public participation in Kenya and the effect of intervention design on government responsiveness and citizen-state relations. In doing so it addresses a policy concern in Kenya about how to best meet the aspirations of devolution, and also a lack of empirical evidence in scholarship about how to design effective public participation.

The study conducted a case study analysis of the AVF intervention, which sought to accommodate instrumental and substantive benefits of civic participation. This intervention proposed to achieve meaningful spaces of mediated public discussion between citizens and authorities that were valued by both and strengthened relations between them (a substantive end), whilst also providing evidence of citizen opinions in a form that supported policy action by authorities (an instrumental end). The intervention itself, plus the study, were guided by two questions:

1. How do differences in the design of civic engagement interventions affect the quality of public participation, citizen trust and decision-makers' responsiveness?
2. How can AVF's interactive radio method help to meet some of the challenges facing civic engagement in the context of devolution in Kenya, helping to augment counties' ability to meet constitutional requirements for civic engagement?

¹⁹ The data gathered using AVF's interactive radio method constitutes a non-probabilistic sample and this affects the type of insights that can be reached. Firstly, low literacy rates limit effective coverage. Second, there is a sampling error: those who participate are self-selected amongst potential audiences based on a range of factors such as phone ownership, media habits, literacy, and gender roles. This dataset thus cannot be used to estimate the prevalence of certain perspectives based on this sample for either radio audiences or the Siaya County population. Some perspectives held by those groups outside of radio participants (e.g. those unable to access radio) may not be identified by this approach. Instead of pursuing quantitative aggregates of individual perspectives, AVF's research seeks to complement and strengthen qualitative analysis by understanding how opinions are shared - and vary - at the group level. This allows us to identify how these ideas might circulate beyond the specific radio participants as they are indicative of a wider group. From a statistical point of view the lack of representativeness is less important for a study based on associations than aggregate indicators. This method's qualitative insights about opinions and associations with demographic groups are therefore of indicative value for understanding the perspectives of comparable groups in the population. They are best used with other knowledge and research for informing decision-making.



2.2.1 Study data collection and analysis

Data collection for the study of the intervention was through three forms: Key informant interviews, observations and document review. Interviews were conducted with members of the County Executive and the County Assembly, civil society, radio personnel, and participants (i.e. those who texted in) and non-participants from all sub-counties. Interviews were confidential and anonymised. A table below provides a breakdown of interviews conducted. Participant observations were conducted weekly during the radio shows at Radio Nam Lolwe. An Africa's Voices Project Officer was also present at Radio Ramogi to assist with the intervention but not for research purposes.

Shows were transcribed, excluding the second show on Radio Nam Lolwe as the station lost the audio file. Here, analysis drew on observation notes and post-show interviews with the hosts and guests. Observations were also conducted of some public hearings by the County Assembly in June 2019. Observations and interviews were translated into English (if done in Swahili or Luo) and transcribed. Providing contextual information, county documents were collected and coded. This included news reports in *The Standard*, *The Star*, *Kenya News Agency*, and the *Daily Nation* between April and August 2019, as well as minutes, reports and citizen memoranda submitted for budgetary public hearings held by the County Executive. We also reviewed the public participation bill and other County Executive documents on participation. Data was analysed using MaxQDA software. The study team designed and agreed on a coding guide, which was applied by one researcher and reviewed by a second. Axial coding was also used to identify additional ways that citizen-state relations were realised throughout the intervention. Templates and the coding frame can be supplied upon request.

Table 2. Interviews conducted (N = the number of people interviewed)

	Executive	Assembly	Civil Society	Radio personnel	Participants	Non-participants
Before the intervention	2		2	1 (N=3)		
During the intervention	7	3		4 (N=5)	21*	12**
2 months after	13***	3	5	1	6	1

*by sub-county: Ugenya N=3; Bondo N=3; Gem N=4; Rarieda N=4; Alego N=3; Ugunja N=4

** by location: Bondo N=3; Ndori N=3; Siaya 4; Wagai N=2

*** by level: Director N=4; Chief Officer N=4; CECM N=4; Other N=1

We interviewed those who participated in the show, as well as other citizens from the county who did not participate, to contextualise and compare the views of participants. Among participants, 20 interviewed were male, and 7 were female, reflecting the greater representation of men among those who sent in SMS. In the Siaya County Government, we interviewed all CECMs immediately after they participated in the studio. Also, two months after the intervention we interviewed four directors, 4 chief officers, 4 CECMs and one other county executive official about the intervention, its effects and wider issues around public participation in Siaya. Finally, providing further context, we conducted 7 interviews with leaders in civil society in Siaya County as well as three clerks/assistant clerks from the County Assembly who had been involved in public participation forums, and three Members of the County Assembly, who were also chairs of Assembly Committees.



3. INTERVENTION RESULTS: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN SIAYA 2018-19 ADP

3.1. Citizen Engagement using Interactive Radio

This section presents an overview of the engagement that the radio series generated in Siaya. It shows participation levels, the quality of responses, radio stations chosen, topics covered and guest speakers for each show.

3.1.1. Content of the radio dialogue

This sub-section of the report describes the specific content of the radio show in Siaya County. It is intended to demonstrate how the interactive radio approach works in practice to build effective citizen-led discussions in a twofold manner: a. The content of the radio shows is shaped by citizen responses; and b. The voices of citizens, read out on air, are placed in direct conversation with decision-makers who respond to them.

Episode 1: Citizens perception on County performance on the ADP 2018-19

How do you think Siaya County has performed in the last one year in terms of public service delivery? In what ways?

The first show was launched with an episode on the citizens' perceptions on County performance of the ADP 2018-19. The guest speakers were Hon. Richard Mungla, CECM, Finance and Planning and Mr. Jared Abwao CEC in charge of budget. Mr. Jared addressed peoples' concerns that the county government has done nothing but stated that the county prioritises a specific project each year. Hon. Richard Mungla responded to citizens feedback that there is theft and shortage of drugs, he acknowledged that being a challenge but are putting strategies in place to deal with that.

Episode 2: Access to water

This year, Siaya county prioritised improving access and quality of water and sanitation services for citizens. How has it performed in your community?

The second show was on access to water and the guest that graced this show was Hon. Adrian Ouma, CECM, Water. He talked about what the ministry has done so far in ensuring provision of quality water to the residents of Siaya County.

Episode 3: Access to healthcare

In the last year Siaya county has prioritised providing free maternal health, access to primary health care and equipping all public health facilities for efficient service delivery. What changes have you seen in your community?

This episode featured Hon. Dorothy Owino, CECM Health and Sanitation and Mr. Joshua Ondiegi who is in charge of Maternal and Child health in Siaya County. Hon Dorothy talked about the work they have done that is building health facilities and ensuring that they are accessible and fully equipped with drugs and personell as well, however she mentioned that staffing the hospitals still remains a challenge but are working on it. Mr. Joshua also dispelled concerns raised by mothers that KMTC students were handling cesarean patients but that they are only there to observe and learn under instructions from their superiors.

Episode 4: Governance and public participation

Does the Siaya county government ensure wide public participation in decision making such as taking part in development of ADP? What more should be done?

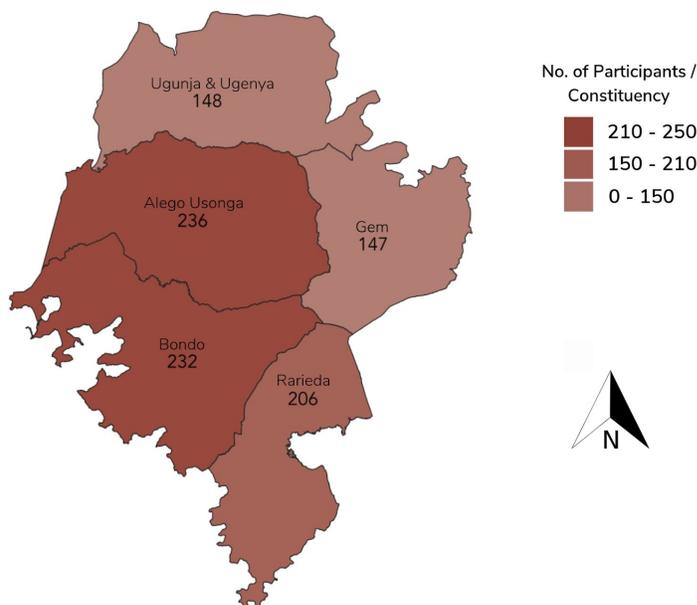


The final show was on governance and public participation and the guest for this week was Hon. George Rubiik, CECM, Governance who talked about public participation being an integral part of devolution and what Siaya County is doing about it to ensure that it is entrenched in the county laws.

3.1.2. Citizen participation demographics

A total of **2,296 individuals** sent in a total of **5,490 messages** in the radio discussions hosted over four weeks after data cleaning and consent. Almost three quarters participated in only one show (70.6%), almost a quarter participated in two shows (21.3%) and 6.5% participated in three shows. Thirty-six people participated in all four shows. The typical participant in the radio show discussions was a younger male from across Siaya but more likely Alego Usonga or Bondo constituencies.

Gender: Approximately 75% of participants in the shows were men and 25% were women.



Geography: Most participants were from Alego Usonga constituency (21.4%). The map below shows the distribution of participants from Siaya County (only those who responded to follow-up SMS questions on location). Participation was also high in Bondo (21%) and Rarieda (18.6%).

Figure 2: Participation from Siaya constituency

Age: 61.6% were aged 18-35 years; 30% 36-54 years; and 8.3% 55+ years.

Table 3: Variation of participants by gender and age

Age range	< 35	36 to 54	>=55
Female	27%	22%	14%
Male	73%	78%	86%

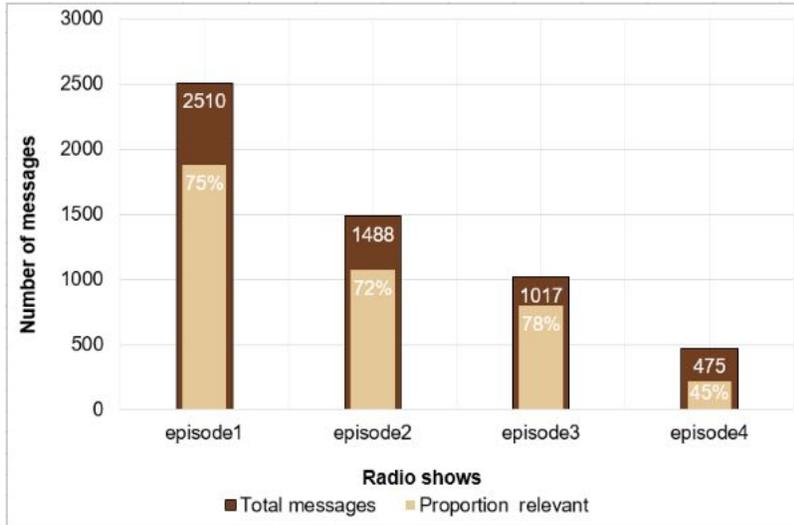
Relevance of responses

Cumulatively 5,490 messages were received. On average, 67.58% of the messages received were relevant. Relevance was higher for the first three episodes (county performance, water and healthcare) and less relevant for the fourth episode on public participation processes. Relevant messages are messages with meaningful responses to the research question asked on air. Messages considered non-relevant include greetings and thank you messages among others. Although these are not



responses to the research question, and are hence not included in the analysis, they are still considered to be a valid form of engagement with the show.

Figure 3: Number of messages received with corresponding number of relevant messages



The level of attrition observed in this project was unusual as compared with previous AVF interventions. It is common for engagement to grow over a season of radio shows. The AVF team have hypothesised that the level of expectation amongst radio audiences ahead of the first show was very high. However, as a Siaya County official could not attend the first three radio shows on the popular national Luo radio station RamogiFM (which is based on Nairobi) due to financial constraints of the pilot, possibly the audience was less optimistic that their voice would be 'heard' or would 'matter'.

3.2 Insights from Citizen Voice on Siaya's Annual Development Plan 2018/19

Summary of insights from Citizen Voice

Siaya's overall 2018-19 ADP performance: Infrastructure matters most for how citizens who participated evaluate the County's overall performance in the 2018-19 ADP cycle. Infrastructure was the main reason for dissatisfaction (41.7% of all negative views, n=1087), but also for satisfaction (81.1% of all positive views, n=95). Overall, 92% of participants (n=1160) were unsatisfied with performance.

Water and sanitation priorities in the ADP: Most citizens who participated (86% of all views) felt the County's performance fell short on delivering water quality and improved sanitation in 2018-19. The main reason cited is poor supply and distribution (47.2%), followed by concerns over the lack of implementation (28.1%) and completion (13.5%) of projects. A number of citizens expressed concern over the performance of the parastatal Siaya-Bondo Water and Sanitation Company (SIBOWASCO, or "SIBO"). There was relatively more positive feedback from Rarieda and Ugunja.

Health priorities in the ADP: Lack of improvement in the availability of drugs (and equipment) is the major concern (62%) of citizens who participated when it comes to assessing ADP performance on health. Older



participants, aged 36-54, were significantly more likely to have negative assessments on changes in health services in 2018-19.

Public participation in Siaya: 42% of citizens who participated felt that public participation was working in Siaya, but could be strengthened by increasing the reach and improving the level of consultation/listening. Citizens clearly value public participation, and are eager to see it realise its potential for involving them in decision-making and accountability.

The rest of this section expands upon the key findings of this public participation intervention in Siaya. It provides a week-by-week mixed methods analysis of citizen responses on key topics. The specific examples of messages received that are included here as 'thick description' are chosen to be indicative of salient ideas and representative of demographic diversity. This section also provides quantitative analyses of the data collected for topics in the interactive radio series. Where relevant, statistically significant correlations between themes and demographic groups are included in the analysis.

Week 1: Citizens perception on County performance on the ADP 2018-19

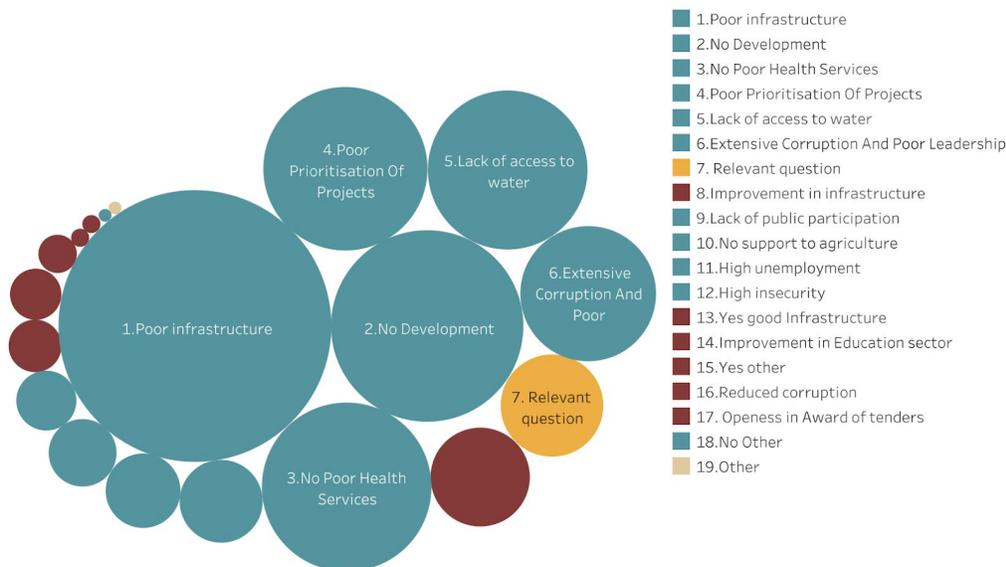
In Week 1, **1418** participants sent in a total of **2510** messages in response to the following question: ***How do you think Siaya County has performed in the last one year in terms of public service delivery? In what ways?***

74.9 % of participants sent at least one relevant message.

Figure 4 below summarizes the frequency of the key perspectives put forward regarding citizens' perception on county performance. The legend is numbered in order of frequency of the themes.

Figure 4: County Performance on the 2018-19 ADP

County Performance on the 2018-19 ADP





The colour blue in the bubble chart above shows those participants that had negative views, maroon shows participants with positive views (expanded on below) and orange shows listeners asked a question which is relevant and in response to the question.

Most participants **91.8%** were unsatisfied with the County's performance under the 2018-19 ADP. Responses mainly centered around **poor infrastructure 41.7%**, **no development 20.7%** and **poor prioritization of projects**. This is indicative of lack of County government action and thus the need to have people' voices at the centre of development projects.

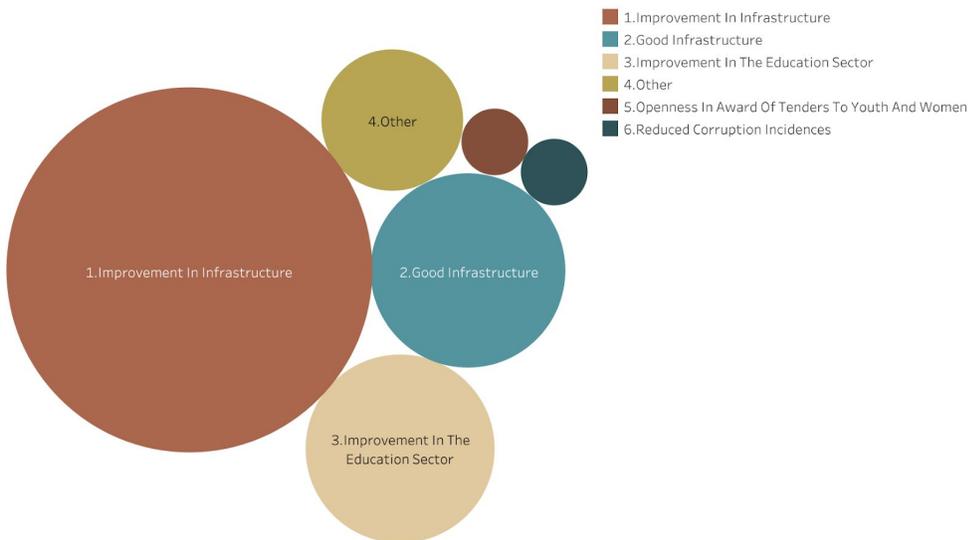
"All irrigation projects in Siaya never took off. They have been allocated funds in millions every year, but it's unfortunate that nothing is practically happening on the ground. Not even a ball of tomato has been realized from all these millions wasted." Male, 63 years, Alego Usonga

"There is nothing good in Siaya, roads are bad, hospitals lack medicine, poor state of markets such as Ndigwa, Madiany, Aram, Manyuanda, Kamariga, Misori, Wichlum - yet we pay taxes." Male, 51 years, Rarieda

"There is no development at all in Siaya County. We are very disappointed. Our leaders have let us down." Female, 27 years, Rarieda

Figure 5: Positive views on County performance

Positive Views on County Performance



On the other hand, some of the participants had positive views on the County's performance and commended the steps that the county is taking in improving service delivery. Some of the positive views mentioned were on improvement in infrastructure such as roads and improvement in the education sector.

"Commendable job in Ugenya, the roads are smooth." Female, 35 years, Ugenya

"Corruption incidences have reduced and there is improved service delivery. All North Uyoma roads have also been done and I applaud the county government for the good job." Male, 25 years,



Rarieda

"The county government of Siaya has tried but there is still more to be done especially in roads and infrastructure." Female, 23 years, Siaya

Key insight: Infrastructure matters most for how citizens in Siaya who participated evaluate the County's overall performance in the 2018-19 ADP cycle. Infrastructure was the main reason for dissatisfaction (41.7% of all negative views, n=1087), but also for satisfaction (81.1% of all positive views, n=95).

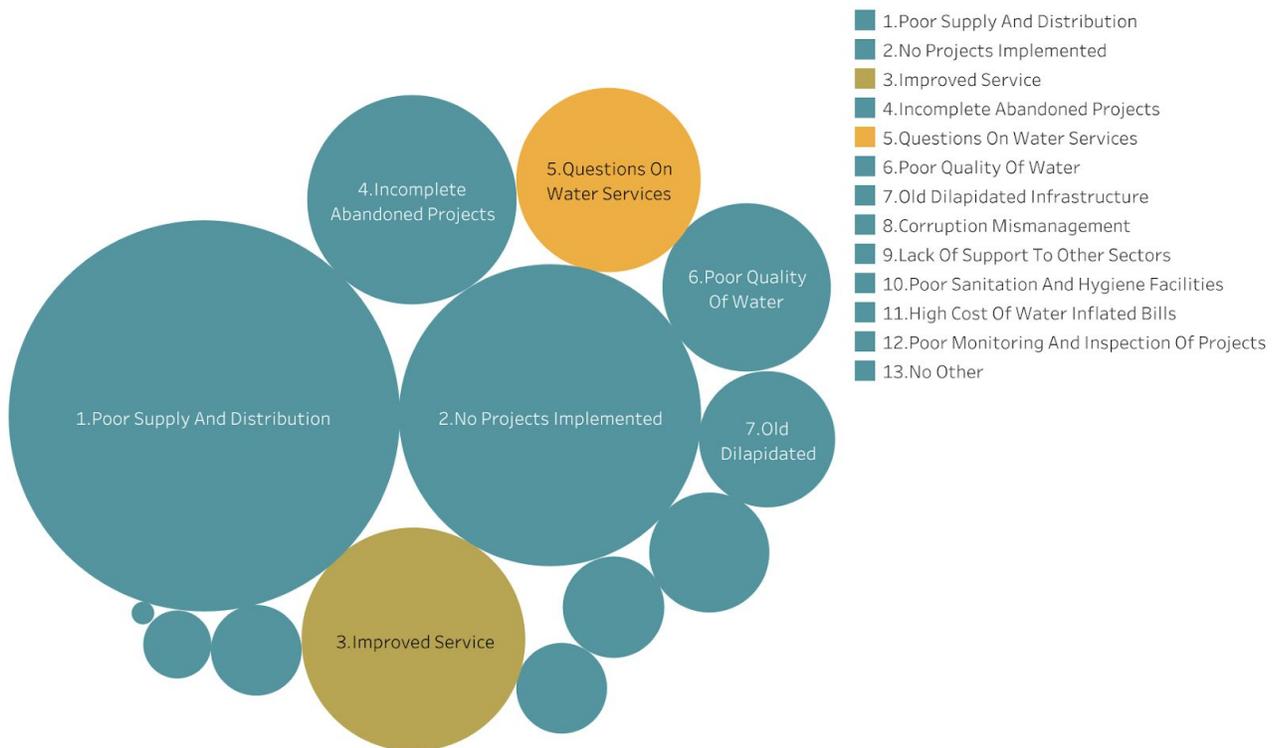
Week 2: Access to water

In Week 2, **890** participants sent in a total of **1488** messages in response to the following question: **This year, Siaya county prioritised improving access and quality of water and sanitation services for citizens. How has it performed in your community?**

24.1% of the respondents participants came from Bondo Sub County, 22.7% from Alego Usonga while 20.9% came from Rarieda Sub County. **Figure 6** below summarizes the frequency of the key perspectives put forward regarding citizens' perception on county performance.

Figure 6: Access to water

Access to water



The colour blue in the bubble chart above shows those participants that had negative views, green shows participants with positive views and orange shows listeners asked a question which is relevant



and in response to the question.

Men were more likely to express negative views compared to women.²⁰

The main reason mentioned was **poor supply and distribution (47.15%)**, followed by concerns over the lack of implementation (**28.1%**) and completion (**13.5%**) of projects.

Citizens expressed unhappiness with the performance of the Siaya-Bondo Water and Sanitation Company (SIBOWASCO, or "SIBO").

Experience shows local variance, for example with relatively more positive citizen feedback from **Rarieda** and **Ugunja** constituencies.

Most of the participants felt the county has not prioritized improving access and quality of water and sanitation for citizens. They say the county has neither implemented water nor provided water for agriculture and livestock activities making them travel long distances to get water for both domestic and animal use. They have also mentioned several incomplete and stalled projects, incomplete or stalled projects that have not benefited them despite being commissioned several years back.

"Water projects have not been implemented. We do not have water till now." Male, 54, Ugunja

"The county should be considerate enough and sink boreholes to serve livestock in Bar Olengo Sub Location. The people have to trek long distances in search of water especially when drought strikes." Male, 27 years, Alego Usonga

"Water has become a disaster in Siaya .Since I came to Siaya last year I have not seen any improvement, that water we are using comes from pond called 'Uyemba' it is milky even before adding milk this is affecting people's lives." Female, 23 years, Siaya

"Projects that were started by former MCAs have not been completed e.g water project at Got Osimbo primary." Male, 35 years, Ugunja

Despite the county government trying in terms of implementation of water projects, there are several mentions of SIBO as the missing link and a major contributor to the failure of the county to successfully improve the access and quality of water and sanitation to the residents of Siaya. The 2017/18 ADP mentioned an unclear relationship between SIBO and the County government in terms of roles and responsibilities. This unclear relationship could have rolled into the 2018-19 year thus slowing down the delivery of quality water and sanitation services.

"Morning. 1. Distillation of Ufinya, Nyalnawe, Futro dam and Sandhof has been done. 2.Karapul water project in Ngoya Village is already done. Though the county government is trying but SIBO has been a great let down H.E Rasanga should do something about SIBO." Male, 31 years, Alego Usonga

Participants highlighted that there is failure to look after the supply of water. Most respondents also said despite the water supply being erratic and inadequate they are still slapped with high water bills.

"For over 10 years now,we have been suffering from water shortages in Siaya.We do not have water in Bondo.The county government has been giving us promises about the water that is only supplied once a month!! What a disappointment!" Male, 21 years, Bondo

²⁰ Men were more likely to mention negative views compared to women at 86.5% to 80.6%, significant at p = 0.029.



"I understand how important water is in life. One is as healthy as what he takes. But so much funds is allocated to SIBOWASCO but it has continued to perform dismally. It doesn't expand, it has several suspicious bill payment accounts and the complaints are endless. Can this be another county finance siphoning conduit?" Male, 63 years, Alego Usonga

In addition to the responses that expressed dissatisfaction on specific themes related to poor services, some respondents also asked specific questions related to quality, cost and supply and availability of water. In asking questions, citizens are appealing to officials for dialogue and explanation, and demanding a space of accountability through the radio show.

"The water supply in West Uyoma is run by cartels hell-bent on profit. Untreated water, high cost, irregular working schedule and nepotism. Open theft in the guise of meter readings and exorbitant reconnection fines. Where do the fines go? Why? Ginga Village, Kokwiri, West Uyoma Ward, Siaya." Male, 34 years, Rarieda

"Why has the water supply from Ndunya been erratic especially during dry seasons?" Female, 27 years, Rarieda

A small proportion of participants felt there was a general improvement in the quality of services. Some responses came in commending the county government for ensuring reliable water supply in the county with them now getting adequate piped water. Some feel the county government should not take credit for the improved water situation in the county as that has been made possible by other partners such as NGOs or foreign donors such as the Chinese government.

"We get consistent, reliable door to door water piped from the lake." Female, 28 years, Rarieda

"The county government has improved the water supply. We now get piped water and pay through cards, thanks to the county government and the donor." Male, 38 years, Siaya

"The water supply in West Uyoma is run by cartels hell-bent on profit. Untreated water, high cost, irregular working schedule and nepotism. Open theft in the guise of meter readings and exorbitant reconnection fines. Where do the fines go? Why? Ginga Village, Kokwiri, West Uyoma Ward, Siaya." Male, 34 years, Rarieda

Week 3: Health

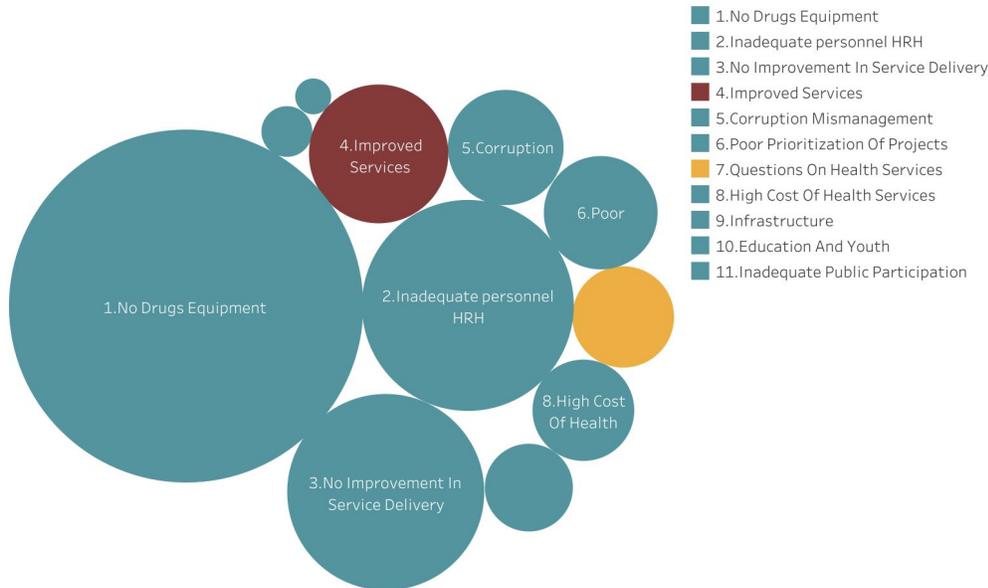
In Week 3, **608** participants sent in a total of **1017** messages in response to the following question: **In the last year Siaya county has prioritised providing free maternal health, access to primary health care and equipping all public health facilities for efficient service delivery. What changes have you seen in your community?**

23.5% of the participants came from Alego Usonga Sub County, Bondo Sub County and Rarieda Sub County contributed 22.2% and 20.3 % of total respondents respectively. Figure 7 below summarizes the frequency of the key perspectives put forward regarding citizens' perception on county performance.

Figure 7: Access to Health care



Access to healthcare



From the participation in the interactive radio shows,²¹ **lack of availability of drugs (and equipment)** is the major concern (**62%**) of citizens in Siaya when it comes to assessing ADP performance on health.

Older participants, aged **36-54**, were significantly more likely to have negative assessments on changes in health services in 2018-19.²²

A majority of participants feel the county has performed poorly in improving access to primary health care and equipping all public health facilities for efficient service delivery. Responses mainly mention hospitals, dispensaries and health centers lack drugs, diagnostic equipment and health personnel with most participants describing in detail the specific hospitals, services sought, time they took to get (or not get) the service and also the attitude of health workers.

There is a belief among the respondents that despite the county government investing in brick and mortar, the quality of health services is still poor because of absence of essential drugs, equipment and poor staffing. The view that there are no drugs and equipment is mentioned across all the sub counties.

“Segere and Osoro Health Centers never have drugs apart from panadol. When we went to Siaya for X Ray services we waited for the radiographer to come on the waiting benches but on arrival he said he is alone and has been overworked yet there were more than six nurses telling stories at the reception.” Male, 40 years, Alego Usonga

²¹ The colour blue in the bubble chart above shows those participants that had negative views. Maroon shows participants with positive views and orange shows listeners asked a question which is relevant and in response to the question.

²² Older participants were 24% more likely to have a negative assessment of changes in health services than younger participants, significant at a p value = 0.028.



"On health matters the county seem to have achieved the 5Km radius for health facilities.Challenges : facilities have very few staff, drugs are inadequate due to Kemsu rogue supply despite orderings we do or county non payment to Kemsu. MCAs frustrating medics in matters they totally don't understand just to massage public ego. They are a big threat and demoralising to the hospital staffs.MCA Politicians!" Male, 31 years, Rarieda

"Siaya is the most poorly managed county in Kenya. The health sector is abandoned. No equipments and enough machines.....the imaging machines like the X-ray, MRI or CT scan machines are obsolete in Siaya county and Bondo sub county hospitals. Inadequate drugs in the hospitals, on this dispensaries/clinics are highly affected. Inadequate healthcare givers.In addition , the county hasn't invested on research to know their priority areas in matters health." Male, 27 years, Sakwa

"Treatment is free but the fact is going to see the doctor and the buildings then coming back with nothing ,No medicine no treatment Siaya county is still behind.kizito from Rarieda ojawa school." Male, 31 years, Rarieda

Some participants however absolve the county leadership from blame and instead believe the shortage of drugs is an artificial one caused by supply chain technicalities and corrupt nurses who deny the patients the drugs and only produce them when put under pressure or when a patient creates a scene.

"Seeking health services at Siaya Referral is akin to waiting for the coming of Jesus. You can easily die while waiting to be served." Female, 50 years, Alego Usonga

"Nurses are the bad ones, they are not interested in serving patients. They lie there are no drugs but when you insist and create a scene, the drugs are found." Female, 30 years, West uyoma

However, many respondents display a sense of disillusionment in the county government's ability to improve the health situation.

"Im worried, In Siaya referral, you have to get someone to put you through for you to see the doctor. You bribe them. Where are we headed as a county. Female, 27 years, Bar Agulu

"Siaya County government should just be disbanded we revert to the central government. No development, no service delivery, nothing going on. Ministers enjoy being driven around in top of the range cars. The county government is asleep." Male, 36 years, Bondo

"There is nothing in Siaya to write home about. Nothing. Nothing at all. We have wasted 10 years. Male, 54 years, Alego Usonga

The few positive views are mostly on maternity care services and the role of community health volunteers and investment in brick and mortar such as the maternity wing in Madiany Sub County Hospital. However, these positives are hindered by delays in operationalization or equipping the specialized units and delays of the stipends to the CHVs.

"Rasanga is trying in regards to Siaya County hospitals. For example Sifuyo health centre where the CHVs are doing a commendable job. The only problem is that they are paid in piecemeal. Male, 58 years, Ugenya

"Siaya County has ensured that expectant women are given health services while delivering." Male, 36 years, Rarieda



"Kudos to the son of Amoth. You have made CHVs frequent banks. No do a little more.May you be blessed." Female, 45 years, Alego Usonga

"Health services are good,the maternity wing(theatre) at Madiany has been opened,women deliver free of charge.Let them now equip the hospital with drugs.Malaria drugs are available.CHVs are working well." Male, 47 years, Rarieda

"Siaya county has actually improved greatly on the provision of free health care as this is observed at Rera health facility in Gem Subcounty.The health services are provided free of charge." Male, 25 years, Gem

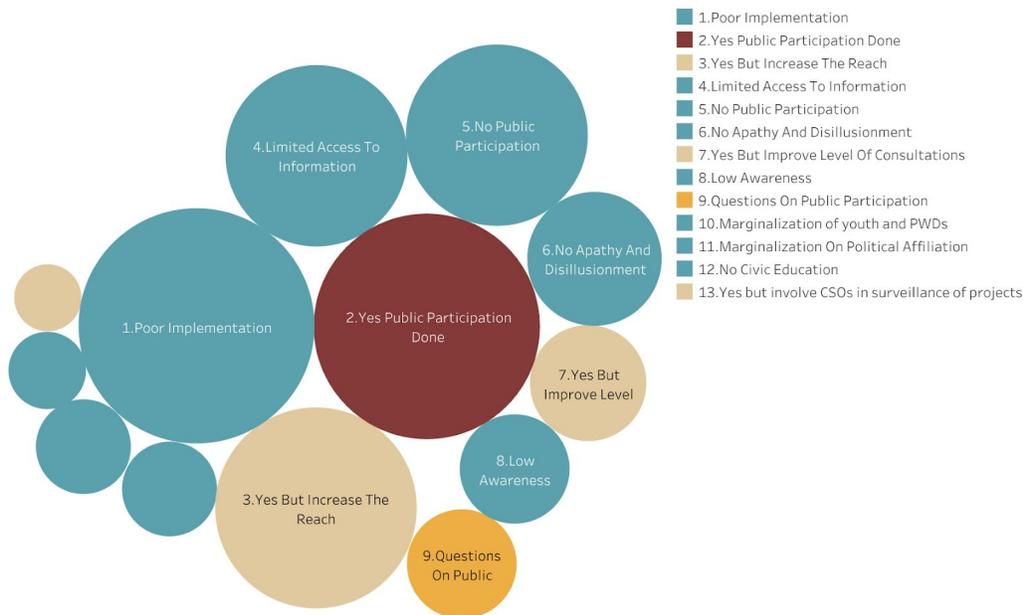
Week 4: Public Participation in the 2018/19 ADP

In Week 4, **278** participants sent in a total of **475** messages in response to the following question: **Does the Siaya county government ensure wide public participation in decision making, such as taking part in the development of ADP? What more should be done?**

24.8% of the participants who sent in their views came from Rarieda Sub County, 22.8% from Gem while 21.5% from Alego Usonga. 74.3% of the participants were men and 25.7% were female. **Figure 8** below summarizes the frequency of the key perspectives put forward regarding citizens' perception on county performance.

Figure 8: Governance and public participation

Governance and public participation





24% of citizens who participated felt public participation in 2018-19 showed progress.²³ A further **30%** were ambivalent, calling for increased reach and improving the level of consultation/listening. Those unsatisfied (**46%**) cited poor implementation and lack of access to information.

Younger participants (18-35) have higher expectations, and are less satisfied compared to older participants.

A discussion emerged between those who believe that the County government involves its people in the development of the ADP and those that feel they are not at all involved. This however suggests that there is a need for awareness creation and deciding on the best mode of involving citizens in public participation.

"It has not been involving the residents in county affairs but this year they have made improvements in involving the mwananchi." Female, 32 years, Bondo

"Whereas the citizens are involved in the ADP development process, it is clearly evident that their views are not taken into consideration during the budgeting process. The projects implemented are different from the ones they participated in identifying. The collection of views from citizens in Siaya County is nothing but a formality." Male, 22 years, Gem

"Siaya County involves its people in the preparation of the ADP. However, this exercise should be done from the village to ward levels. This is because many people are not able to attend the ward forums due to transport constraints or other commitments." Male, 50 years, Rarieda

"Public Participation is well done in Siaya. We are proud of that." Male, 20 years, Bondo

3.3 Participant Feedback collected by AVF

After the radio shows were completed, Africa's Voices asked participants 4 follow-up questions using SMS to better understand their engagement with the radio shows. AVF also conducted semi-structured key informant interviews with the stakeholders that were involved in the process including the CEC ministers who appeared as guest speakers and the radio presenters. This part presents an overview of the findings from the SMS feedback and evaluation process. The evaluation results are likely to contain a response bias, given the low response rate.²⁴

3.3.1 Views on the radio show making people feel more included in government decision-making processes

The question asked via SMS to the participants was: **Has participating in the radio show made you feel included in Siaya government decision making process?**

77.2% of participants of those who responded reported that they felt more included in decision making. Those who participated twice in the radio shows were more likely to feel that way. Participants gave reasons such as that it opened their eyes and that usually there is not enough time put aside for public participation hence they miss out on giving their opinion but now understand the process better.

²³ The colour blue in the bubble chart above shows those participants that had negative views. Maroon shows participants with positive views and orange shows listeners asked a question which is relevant and in response to the question.

²⁴ The SMS survey was sent to all participants. Response Rate = 17.4%; n=400.



"The radio shows have been very well planned and we are informed in good time about the questions for the specific shows. This gives us adequate time to prepare. The county government has not done enough to ensure we are included in the development plans. The budget documents are distributed late and we do not have adequate time to go through them, hence affecting the quality of our participation. Even the MCAs have ulterior motives of denying us the opportunity to understand the contents of the documents. We always see huge sums allocated to projects already completed. We have also seen money being allocated year in year out to projects that are never completed." Male, 63, Alego Usonga

Nevertheless others felt excluded from decision-making for different reasons.

"I am a sports person but they do not consider that as a serious occupation." Male, 21 years, Bondo

"No, because my child is disabled and I have not heard anything touching on persons with disability." Female, 30 years, Siaya County

"I have not been included in any of the development projects in Siaya County." Male, 41 years, Alego Usonga

3.3.2 Views on the radio show improving understanding of government decision-making processes

The question asked via SMS was: **Has participating in the radio shows helped you better understand the work of the Siaya County government?**

78.5% of participants who responded thought that radio shows provided them with useful information that helped them to better understand the government decision making process. Reasons shared by participants highlighted transparency: that when issues are discussed publicly, citizens understand better and therefore appreciate that the county government is actually delivering on its mandate.

"It has made me especially appreciate the role of the county government of Siaya in delivering on its mandate to the residents." Male, 25, Gem.

"When issues are discussed publicly, it awakens those involved. I therefore think there has been a change." Male, 85, Ugenya.

However, the substantial minority (21.5%) that did not feel the radio shows improved their understanding of government decision making raised concerns that there is no adequate civic awareness that has been done to make people understand what is entailed in the Annual Development Plan. For some, they expressed frustrations including the exclusion of persons with disabilities in the county.

"No, wananchi need civic education to understand how the county runs its operations!!"
Male, 37, Alego Usonga

"No, because my child is disabled and I never had any plans targeting persons with disabilities."
Female, 30, Siaya.



3.3.3 Citizens' views on the radio show increasing trust in Siaya county government's ability to serve their interest

The question asked via SMS to participants was: **Has participating in the radio shows increased or decreased your trust in Siaya County governments' ability to serve your interest?**

77.2% of the participants who responded reported that listening to the radio shows on topics about the ADP increased their trust in the Siaya County government. Older participants were significantly more likely to think so²⁵, but this significance could be affected by the low sample size in this age group. Participants report that the discussions increased their trust in Siaya county governments' ability in serving their interest and that they value the process in itself and that it should continue.

"It has increased my urge to participate in my county development plans." Male, 36 years, Bondo

"It has improved and I expect it to continue". Male, 36 years, Rarieda

The minority who believed their trust in the county government of Siaya had gone down cited the inaction of the county assembly and the lack of county development projects oversight.

"[My trust] has reduced, because even the county assembly itself has not yet conclusively discussed whether the projects to which money was allocated have been completed or not." Male, 25, Bondo

3.3.4 Views on 'positive changes'

The question asked via SMS to participants that engaged with us was: **Do you think that participating in the recent radio consultation will lead to positive changes in public service delivery in Siaya county?**

88.2% of those who responded expressed a positive answer to this question. Women were more likely to respond positively than men.²⁶ Participants responses mainly centered around inclusivity, the importance of public participation and the need for the implementation of the citizens' views.

"Yes, it will help in ensuring quality service delivery to citizens." Male, 38 years, Gem

"Yes, it will help in a very big way." Male, 35 years, Bondo

"Yes, if they will listen and implement the views of the citizens in our county." Male, 36 years, Bondo

Finally, a small proportion of participants (11.8%) were not so optimistic whether the consultations would lead to positive changes to the service delivery of the county government because they think that it excludes those in the rural areas and some stated the leaders have failed in taking responsibility for their people in the county.

"It will only help in a small way. Only those near Siaya town will benefit with those in the rural areas being left out. This will in the long run affect their belief in the Siaya County." Male, 29 years, Ugenya

"No, because they have failed to take responsibility." Male, 27 years, Rarieda

²⁵ Older participants were more likely to have increased trust after the radio shows than younger participants significant at p value = 0.034

²⁶ Women were more likely to be positive than men significant at p value = 0.06



3.3.5 Feedback from Siaya CEC Ministers

As part of its own learning, Africa's Voices asked CEC Ministers who participated in the interactive radio dialogues whether the Siaya pilot worked. Responses from the ministers mainly focussed on the importance of getting feedback from the citizens and the fact that some of the issues raised during the interactive radio shows are things they have received reports on. The need for creation of awareness was also emphasised and thus the need for leaders to rethink their strategies in handling county matters.

"This was my first time on Radio and I liked the experience. Our government relies on feedback from the people to improve on services to the people. These kinds of interactive shows should be encouraged." Hon. Richard Munгла, CECM, Finance and Planning

"The county government of Siaya is implementing very many water projects in different sub-counties in Siaya but apparently, many people are not aware of these. The radio show was therefore valuable in sharing what we have done with the citizenry and answering some of their questions and concerns." Hon. Adrian Ouma, CECM, Water

"A lot of issues raised during the radio shows are things we also get reports on in the office. This is making us now to begin re-thinking about our strategy as regards public participation." Hon. George Rubiik, CECM, Governance

"This was a good discussion that should continue in the future more regularly. The county has improved several health facilities and availed drugs. I am surprised that most citizens are saying that there are no drugs in our hospitals and health centres." Hon. Dorothy Owino, CECM Health and Sanitation

3.3.6 Feedback from radio presenters

Africa's Voices also asked radio presenters what they thought of the CSAP approach and whether they think the pilot had worked. The responses hinted at the power of interactive radio consultations in leading to positive changes in public service delivery, that media actors could buy into and support:

"We have had radio shows on the counties within Luo Nyanza for a long period of time, mainly discussing good governance related topics but I think the AVF method is really good as it allows me as a presenter to move away from our normal way of running the show where we do our own research by talking to our contacts on the ground with the counties then use the show to inform the public on what is happening in their respective counties. But the AVF method creates a discussion space that I oversee from the studio. It's like a debate that you are not seeing the debaters face to face but their voices are heard, and all views are valued. It is a great way of running radio shows where the audience is at the centre, this is what we need to incorporate in our programming." Victor Juma, Ramogi FM

"I like the AVF method of running interactive programs, it allows the radio host to guide discussion between the audience and the guest without any of the parties being unheard in the process. The fact that the audience views are collected for free allows for participation from marginalized groups like women, the old, disabled etc. The method is also built around the bottom up approach where views are mobilized from the lowest units where the audience comes from and translated into a huge regional debate." Beatrice Wasonga, Presenter Radio Nam Lolwe



4 PILOT STUDY FINDINGS: DOES INTERACTIVE RADIO WORK FOR CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT IN KENYA?

This section summarises the main findings from the case study on the intervention's effectiveness in relation to government responsiveness and the quality of citizen-state relations. Overall the study found that the shows mattered to the quality of citizen-state relations. SMS feedback generated discomfort and a compulsion among authority figures to respond to citizen concerns. This compulsion was found to result in action in cases where complaints were isolated and immediately actionable, without additional resources, planning or buy-in. The intervention also revealed some trade-offs and variables that could lead to divergent outcomes, specifically:

1. Trade-off between mediating the space to ensure specific outcomes, and allowing for the openness of a live radio show;
2. Trade-off between creating a sense of community, and protecting anonymity; and
3. Variable effects on trust depending on how county executive officials engage on air.

Each of these conclusions is discussed in turn, below. An expanded research report of the case study findings can be supplied by the authors upon request.

4.1. Contribution to responsive government

The intervention contributed to responsive government, most often in the form of acknowledging and validating citizen concerns

1a. Specific messages read on air generated an immediate response by authorities

One logic that underpinned AVF's approach to citizen participation in the radio shows was that government acts when people make noise that disturbs government. A radio show could put a public spotlight on a leader that increased pressure on leaders to respond to citizens. This logic was partially affirmed through the AVF intervention. Government officials took action in response to specific and repeated complaints raised on the shows. After participating on air, most officials personally followed up on specific concerns raised by listeners, usually to verify their complaints. One CEC explained, SMS read on air "has forced me from that experience to go out and see for myself."²⁷

Action in the form of personal verification was most clearly illustrated around complaints about drug supply at health facilities. A live show on health resulted in a heated exchange between a presenter and a County Executive Committee Member (CEC). The CEC disagreed with listeners' claims that there were no drugs in health facilities while the presenter pushed listeners' views. Following the show, and outside of the public eye, government officials were less dismissive of complaints. Raising complaints on air did not affect the actual provision of drugs; officials explained drugs had already been bought prior to the shows. Instead, government officials went in person to confirm whether or not some complaints raised on air were valid. SMS sparked concern but were not taken as 'fact' without personal observation. In one case, government officials identified and addressed a problem in management of drug supply. They found multiple staff in one facility had access to the drug store, opening up scope for misuse. The government officials discussed and agreed with facility staff to limit the number of staff who could access drugs.²⁸ This problem was determined to be an isolated case and did not spark

²⁷ CEC, interview on 30 August 2019 (G1)

²⁸ Chief Officer, interview on 29 August 2019 (G16)



any immediate and wider reform to management. As this follow up took place individually, after the show, audience participants remained largely unaware of how government officials were responding. Therefore, SMS raised on the live show did compel a response from members of the County Executive, but arguably not in a way that was longer-term or clearly transformative. There was little scope for their verification of individual complaints, done outside of the radio show and public eye, to fundamentally alter citizen-state relations.

1b. The presentation of analysed SMS feedback generated concern among high level government officials, but was not easily followed by action

The difficulty of providing for longer-term improvements in responsive government, noted in the introduction of this study (pp. 2-3) was reaffirmed in the pilot when considering County Executive engagement with the more in depth analysis presented to them by Africa's Voices in late August 2019, a month after the radio shows.

In collating, disaggregating and analysing the SMS feedback, county officials were confronted with citizen views in a format that was new and difficult to ignore. Reactions by various CECs revealed this, for example:

"This is an eye opener. For the first time we have been hearing all these complaints on radio, but they were never organised in a set that then you could come out with some idea of generalisations about how the public perceive your performance."²⁹

"There is something about you engaging one on one with the people but then there is also another thing about somebody capturing this, and then tabulating it, and bringing it to you to see that this is actually what happens. It really gives you something to think about ... especially when you come up with these percentages. Then you'd begin to evaluate yourself, see where you really need to put in more effort and maybe where you have already reached."³⁰

Analysed SMS feedback generated a strong reaction among the CECs. Members of the County Executive tended towards two main conclusions in their reflections on the AVF briefing of SMS insights: first, that citizens were not informed, and second, that there was an issue with communication between the County Executive and citizens. Most often, County Executive officials determined that citizens' dissatisfaction was the result of a lack of information. Some county officials became concerned with ways to improve communication to solve the gap in perspective between the citizen and the County Executive. Improving their performance with citizens depended on improving communication, rather than necessarily altering what they were doing in service delivery. One solution highlighted among county officials was to find ways to provide information about service delivery, particularly in advance of public participation. Regular communication from the government to citizens could help to inform public participation.

However, in contrast to individual SMS during the radio shows, which led to a direct action by the authorities, the subsequent presentation of analysis did not result in immediate action. Unlike individual SMS, it did not appear to have an easy or immediate solution. The lack of action could be tied to the difficulty of change required. The analysis showed a bigger and wider problem that required more substantive and wider planning. It gave pause for thought. However, how this pause for thought feeds into more sustained and structural changes in government responsiveness has to

²⁹ CEC, interview on 30 August 19 (G1)

³⁰ CEC, interview on 29 August 2019 (G15)



be understood as part of a longer story of the evolution and negotiation of citizen-county government relations.

4.2. Contribution to citizenship and political community

The intervention generated a sense of community among citizens as audience-participants

The intervention created an opportunity for citizens from across Siaya to share their views in a public arena. While they did not directly speak to one another on the show, consistently audience-participants identified a sense of community as citizens of Siaya as emerging through the radio shows, as they heard SMS being read out. Participants identified collectively as residents of Siaya who were experiencing similar service delivery challenges. Some found appeal in the geographical scope of messages as they came from across Siaya. One participant from Gem stated, "I really liked that many messages came from all areas of Siaya including where the governor is coming from. This shows that no one is doing well in the county."³¹ A sense of community was reinforced for some by their awareness of other friends and acquaintances listening and participating.

Identification of where someone was based was key to enabling this emerging sense of community. Someone identifying their location was taken as fact and used as criteria for verification. This brought up a tension in the intervention design. On one side, to protect individuals' ability to be open in what they shared, AVF promoted anonymity in reporting to the county executive. On the other side, identifiable information about who else was participating encouraged others to participate. This trade off indicates the need for further investigation about how to both build a sense of community while also ensuring that the radio shows are experienced as a safe space for anyone to participate.

4.3. Contribution to citizen-state relations

The intervention had divergent effects on the quality of citizen-state relations

The shows disrupted citizen-state relations in diverging ways. Effects were observed in opposing directions, with the intervention both strengthening and challenging trust and understanding between the two. When it came to understanding the other's perspective, both audience-participants and county executive members felt that the live show improved relations. Until the point when listeners determined that the authority figure was lying, citizens were positive that the shows improved their understanding of the government's work. Members of the county executive also saw knowledge-sharing to be a valuable outcome of the interactive show. They could explain the good things they were doing to a wide range of citizens. In this sense they valued the show not because of what citizens said to them, but because of what they could tell citizens. The shows also helped them to see where they felt citizens inadequately recognised government work.

In contrast, the extent to which raising citizens' voices through the shows was seen to improve the *alignment* between citizens and government was met with different views. Some audience-participants expressed a desire to be heard, and viewed the show as enabling this. They argued raising their voices incited the government to be more aware, and maybe even responsive, to citizens. The fact that many, or multiple, people could express their view through the show was seen to give weight to the citizens' voice, and compel authorities to listen.³² Other audience-participants felt that the wider political context meant that the show was unlikely to impact on government responsiveness to citizen voice through the intervention. This belief in the meaninglessness of the citizen voice was rooted in pre-set

³¹ Male participant, Gem, interview July 2019 (P9)

³² To note, among individuals, the show could also contribute to a sense of a lack of voice. Some felt excluded because their specific message was not read on air; this reinforced a prior view that the county government did not listen to citizens.



views of the county government. Contrasting again, for senior County Executive officials, citizens' voices on air drew attention to a problem in citizen-state relations. Some officials determined that SMS showed how citizens were unaware, and even unappreciative, of the County Executive's actions. Some even, in listening to what citizens articulated, did not see a need for action by the government, but a need for citizens to adjust their expectations of government.

The effect of the show on trust also diverged. Building trust between citizens and authorities through the intervention was arguably a key opportunity and risk. For both authorities and citizens, the tendency was to suspect the other of lying rather than fully engage with their view into account. What took place on the show could accentuate these suspicions or alleviate them. Listeners became upset with the government when they did not acknowledge or agree with what they asserted was the situation on the ground. Government officials mitigated against this lack of trust if they sympathised with what citizens said and explained how they were making an effort to address concerns. Accepting what citizens perceived on the ground as somewhat valid prevented the development of mistrust.

Members of the County Executive tended to adopt the view that listeners' concerns raised on air were *likely* genuine, but consistently with reservations. One suggested listeners' views were likely honest because the SMS were anonymous and listeners had time to construct an SMS. Others explained complaints were likely valid because they were similar to what they heard in other channels, e.g. WhatsApp groups. Still, a variety of reasons were given as a basis for dismissing what listeners shared at face value. Some suggested that people might not be up to date on the situation on the ground. Others suggested some listeners just wanted to vent or sensationalise. A more definite impact on authorities' trust towards citizens was only identified when authorities directly checked-up on citizen complaints after the show.

4.4. Overcoming social barriers to public participation in county governance

The intervention's design features enabled wider participation, but were insufficient for overcoming pre-existing inequalities

AVF carefully curated and prepared a discussion space on the radio that was intended to foster diverse participation from people across the county, and by age and gender. AVF's efforts to overcome distance and cost barriers did enable participation. Listeners explained that radio allowed for widespread participation because radios are common in Siaya, and enabled individuals to participate from wherever they were. The timing of the show mattered, with mornings and evenings most likely when people would be free to listen and SMS. Emphasised less, cost also was noted as a factor influencing participation.

Still, while supporting participation, the intervention's features were insufficient to ensure that diverse citizens would participate. The intervention even with its provisions, reflected existing inequalities and dimensions of exclusions in society. Challenges arose around women's participation, which was notably lower than men. This suggests more deep-set reasons underpinning women's lack of participation. Often those interviewed attributed this to social norms and expectations about who participates in public and political discussion, and on the radio.

Nonetheless, by removing barriers, the intervention created space for individuals, who had the desire, to breach norms and raise their voice, reaffirming the value in looking at the diversity of perspectives raised, rather than majority or average views. Anecdotal evidence reveals that though in smaller numbers, by encouraging participation and removing some basic barriers, women did take up



opportunities to participate around issues that mattered to them and their communities. One woman explained that she participated because the issue at hand was of utmost importance to women in her community. She would have texted even if it wasn't free or anonymous.³³

4.5. Importance and challenges of mediated public participation using radio

Active mediation was key to ensuring citizens' voices were privileged, but was marked by tensions and trade offs

The live radio show is an open and unpredictable event. How to mediate the space to provide for a dynamic and inclusive discussion, and actionable feedback, was not straightforward. Both AVF and the radio presenters played roles in mediating the show, shaping what takes place on air, and what sort of SMS are encouraged and how they are analysed. Presenters tended to adopt the role of ensuring that listeners' comments were addressed by guests from the County Executive (when present on air). AVF sought to ensure both guests and listeners remained engaged over the course of the four weeks, and that guests took SMS feedback seriously.

A tension emerged in the show between ensuring a discussion that was open, which risked hostile views being raised, and sustaining authorities' engagement. AVF took steps in the design phase to help prepare the county officials for the show. AVF sent a guest preparation guide 5-7 days in advance that reassured County Officials that AVF would screen SMS read on air or anything overly hostile. AVF was also cautious about opening telephone lines on air, only allowing live calls after the first week.

Another tension materialised between giving the radio host freedom to facilitate a dynamic show, and promoting the sort of inclusion that AVF desired. AVF prepared a cue sheet and script, collected and sent in SMS to be read on air, and was physically present in the studio during the show. Even still, radio presenters did not necessarily implement provisions suggested by AVF. This included rephrasing the question to listeners and giving suggestions of the sort of messages they could send. They also only partially read out the scripted introductory and closing texts. This limited the extent to which everyone who participated was aware of AVF's intention for the show.

These divergences did not necessarily affect the show's outcomes. Still, it is important to recognise that shows in practice do not align to one ideal model. Any live show is the result of an ongoing set of considerations and decisions that weigh different desirable characteristics, in this case, the desire for an open discussion and an inclusive discussion.

4.6. Transforming deeper structural barriers takes time

Longer standing experiences and expectations conditioned the intervention's potential for citizen-state engagement

The final key finding concerns the effect of wider political factors on the intervention's possible outcomes. Even before the intervention took place, there were widespread assumptions among citizens and authorities about what could not work with public participation. Some of this was tied to challenges with public hearings, such as a lack of resources or lack of active follow up. This was also tied to pre-existing views about the deeper problems in citizen-state relations in Kenya, specifically leaders' incentives and citizens' voting behaviour.

³³ Female participant, interview on 25 August 2019 (P38).



The depth of apathy and mistrust that stemmed from prior experiences of public participation strongly conditioned participant's expectations about what could be possible through the AVF intervention. Surrounding the intervention was a broader consensus among listeners and the County Executive that there were issues with communication between authorities and citizens. Most felt prior to the intervention that existing forms of public participation were not fully fit for purpose. The main format for public engagement was through public hearings, organised as part of policy making and review processes. Authorities noted inadequate time and resources to conduct public hearings on the ground. An important concern, raised by County Executive officials, was uncertainty about when public participation was 'enough' to warrant a government response. Citizens and civil society actors also tended to identify public hearings as deficient in providing meaningful opportunities for citizen participation. Citizen disappointment was also tied to a lack of resources, as well as a lack of well-advertised public hearings at the local (village) level. Both citizens and authority figures also identified problems in communicating back to citizens about what was done as a result of their participation.

Finally, wider and past political experiences and expectations were 'the elephant in the room' that conditioned the possibility for meaningful change to citizen-state relations through the intervention. Several listeners suggested that citizen apathy generated by repeatedly unfulfilled government promises deters participation. People had come to expect unfulfilled electoral promises. Interviewees also revealed some tension between MCAs and the County Executive, which fed into accusatory claims about the other's intentions and effects on public participation. Some, including listeners themselves, were predisposed to expect citizens to frustrate the effectiveness of public participation. Citizens' voting behaviour had resulted in leaders who were not inclined to be responsive or oriented towards service delivery. Another view raised in the County Executive was that citizens were fickle, they would forget what they asked for before and thus continue to be unsatisfied. These underlying views framed participants' engagement and responses on the show, conditioning the extent to which they were willing to entertain possible effects on the nature and quality of citizen-state relations.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recommendations to Siaya County from insights from the pilot intervention

On the basis of the insights from citizen voice during the pilot intervention, as well as the feedback from participants, the Africa's Voices project team makes these recommendations to Siaya County on how to strengthen public participation around their Annual Development Plan and other work::

1. ***Interactive radio may be an effective means to boost citizens' trust and confidence with the government, if used openly and honestly.***

This study found that when carefully designed, interactive radio is an effective channel for **informing** citizens county-wide of the county's commitments in the ADP *but also updating* citizens honestly on achievements and challenges *and how challenges will be addressed*. Interactive radio can build trust only by opening up to citizen feedback that the county must demonstrate it is **listening and responding** to. The absence of two-way communications leaves citizens feeling they are being spoken down to, manipulated or unheard. Models for implementing interactive radio as a channel in different country contexts, which assess this channel's value for money compared to other citizen engagement and social accountability approaches, should be developed.

2. ***Making and delivering, and being seen to deliver, on infrastructure promises will boost citizen satisfaction in Siaya.***

Siaya County should focus on making clear and precise **promises on infrastructure** and then demonstrate willingness to be **held to account** on delivery: the pilot made clear that this is a major opportunity for improving citizens' satisfaction with the new ADP. The baseline is dissatisfaction and frustration, but if the County demonstrates change, it will be rewarded.

3. ***More frequent and inclusive social accountability practices can tackle citizen frustration with water services.***

The County should seize the opportunity to strengthen social accountability through public participation locally *and* county-wide (such as over interactive radio) in **water and sanitation**. The study showed that citizens closely monitor **project implementation** on this priority, and their feedback suggests considerable room for improvement. Honest communications with citizens on challenges faced can build trust in performance. Citizens want to know that the County holds service providers and contractors to account.

4. ***Opening up to regular county-wide feedback on health services can highlight issues, demonstrate responsiveness and improve satisfaction.***

Siaya citizens were frustrated over the availability/lack of **availability of drugs and equipment** in the county. If the County believes there are substantial improvements in this priority Health concern, or that there are good reasons for why improvements are slower than citizens' expect, communicate these regularly, obtain feedback, and be seen to be acting on feedback.

5.3 Recommendations to Kenyan counties and supporters of devolution on public participation from the research study

5. ***Devolution's core commitment to public participation can be delivered with contextually grounded and innovative citizen engagement and social accountability solutions that have stakeholder commitment, such as interactive radio***



For public participation to not be a tick-box exercise with only limited citizen involvement and weak perception that the government actually listens, it needs a multifaceted approach, using existing formal consultative models alongside more innovative solutions. As one such alternative, this study showed how broadcast media, especially radio, combined with SMS provides a cost-effective, repeatable and large-scale modality to reach, listen to and show responsiveness to citizens, that can build engagement, accountability, trust and better governance outcomes. This approach should be replicable in many but not all Kenyan counties. However, this requires thinking on the most effective modality: would it be owned by government, media or civil society, or none of them, or co-owned by all of them?

6. ***Innovative social accountability interventions can contribute to responsive government, primarily in the form of government acknowledging and validating immediate citizen concerns. Interactive radio can build responsive government especially in the short term, with its longer-term benefit uncertain***

Citizens value spaces for listening to, but more importantly speaking to and hearing responses from, government. This pilot study showed interactive radio can contribute to responsive government, primarily in the form of government acknowledging and validating immediate citizen concerns. Specific messages from citizens read on air, with a wider listening audience, generated an immediate response by authorities. However, the results of this short study were inconclusive on whether deeper analysis of SMS feedback from citizens, which generated interest, new perspectives and debate amongst government officials, would actually be followed by action.

7. ***County-wide social accountability solutions should also be used to strengthen the devolution's promise of a new sense of citizenship and membership of political community***

The local language interactive radio intervention generated a sense of community among citizens as audience-participants, which many valued greatly. Many participants noted that they felt they were 'with others' in Siaya during the radio show discussions. Interactive radio built a sense of collective agency and belonging but this needs to be sustained and shown to be meaningful.

8. ***Public participation needs to be seen as the lifeblood of devolution, not a box tick of county governance. Diverse, regular and sustained social accountability solutions are crucial.***

Government legitimacy and perception of effectiveness comes from sustained citizen engagement. Conversely, this study suggests that if the government treats participation as a one-off or ad hoc, it seems to generate mistrust and distance. Here, different forms of public participation and social accountability should be seen as complementary and layered. Face-to-face encounters are still valued by citizens, but solutions that allow for county-wide scale matter. This study showed that interactive radio is one credible modality for getting to scale and also for participation when people can't or do not feel comfortable to attend in person.

9. ***Using citizen engagement for evidence-driven policy making and accountability requires a culture change around requiring, interpreting and acting upon citizen-generated data, as well as ensuring quality in analysis.***

This study pointed to opportunities to mainstream citizen evidence into how counties think about governance priorities and their effectiveness in delivery. Siaya county officials valued being able to get a bigger snapshot about what people think (even if not representative), but the study was too short to regularise this interaction with citizen evidence and thus assess changes in decision-making. Nevertheless, done at regular intervals, the presentation of evidence from citizen voices can help the government to get a better (or even any) sense of changes in perceptions and priorities, and needs to be linked to informing planning and decision-making.