

KENYA ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

By Stephen Jairo ¹

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INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

In the context of the second election after the 2010 constitutional reform in Kenya, the Institute of Economic Affairs sought to raise the relevance of public policies in favor of vulnerable groups such as youth, women and people with diverse abilities, and empower these groups to participate in the electoral process from their respective platforms.

1. CONTEXT

Kenya general election was held on August 8th, 2017. Being only the second after promulgation of the Kenyan Constitution in August 2010, many citizens were optimistic of an issue based campaign platform for the political leadership. It is with this understanding that the Institute of Economic Affairs identified five issues of social and economic policy that affect the country and applied the same in voter education and in facilitating dialogue on the areas identified.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

The objectives of the initiative were to:

- Enhance the awareness of voters and the public on the identified social and economic policy issues and improve their participation before, during and after the electoral period;
- Build the capacity of women, youth and PWDs with leadership potential, to position them strategically as active and informed participants in their respective political spaces.
- Involve community based and civil society organisations as partners to enable them to drive dialogue at the national and county levels during and after the electoral process.

3. DESIGN OF THE INITIATIVE

The project can be broken down in three stages:

1. The author is the Assistant Programme Officer of IEA's Regulation and Competition Policy Programme.

- i. Research on critical socio-economic areas affecting the country.
- ii. Trainings to political parties, community based and civil society organisations and the electorate in selected counties.
- iii. Meetings with political stakeholders and the various ministry officials to share findings and recommendations and to inform their policy positions in the five areas.

4. GOVERNANCE AND ALLIANCES

IEA partnered with [International Foundation for Electoral System \(IFES\)](#) to carry out research in five socio economic areas affecting the country. Within this partnership, IEA-Kenya was mandated to carry out research and to undertake dissemination of the findings, while IFES oversaw Monitoring & Evaluation of the project milestones.

In implementing the project, IEA-Kenya was able to make contact with 59 community based, civil society and faith based organisations spread in three counties. These were tasked to disseminate the information shared with them to their various constituents prior and even after elections are conducted. In the same vein, the IEA made contacts with 8 major political parties who also expressed willingness to work with the IEA going forward especially in fine tuning policy recommendations for inclusion into their political party manifestos.

5. FINANCING OF THE INITIATIVE

The programme was entirely supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under their Kenya Electoral Assistance Programme (KEAP), aimed at providing technical assistance and support focused on strengthening internal governance systems and process; developing election regulations; promoting voter education and registration and enhancing the ability of elections officials to apply technology in election management. The total cost of the project was approximately Ksh. 12 Million (USD 115,000)

6. IMPLEMENTATION

Research on critical socio-economic areas affecting the country (March – May 2017)

At the time the project was conceived, IEA-Kenya had proposed to undertake research in 10 socio economic areas. However, due to time constraints and resource availability, an agreement was reached to start with five areas. This selection was considered aspects of Public Service Delivery which are a right to all citizens, as well as the urge to meet Sustainable Development Goals. Also, selection was based on areas in which the IEA has technical capacity to undertake proper and in-depth research.

The five selected areas were: education, unemployment, housing, health, and water and sanitation. Each of the areas was tasked to a specific team led by the IEA's Programme Officer and assisted by the Assistant Programme Officer, and where possible, a Research Assistant. Using a Human Rights Based Approach, the IEA-Kenya research teams looked at the global context on those sectors, the policy environment in the country, measures in place to meet obligations to the right holders, as well as the national targets on these issues in the short, medium, and long-term.

The research was undertaken over a two-month period, after which a peer review process took place. The IEA-Kenya held a roundtable at which experts in the various socio-economic areas were called upon to give input to the initial research study and subsequent findings. Attendees included representatives from Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Africa Institute for Health & Development (AIHD),



Source: IEA (2017)

Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE), and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) among others. Upon conclusion of the peer review meeting, each research team was tasked to incorporate the feedback. The final papers were first published as policy briefs and finally compiled in the booklet [“Policy Debate on 5 Socio-economic issues in Kenya: Elections 2017”](#).

Trainings (June – July 2017)

Upon conclusion of the policy briefs, IEA-Kenya embarked on different sets of trainings aimed at disseminating the research findings to a wider audience and, ultimately, reach the electorate. The first training took place in Machakos County and brought together political party representatives to inform them about research findings and recommendations that they could incorporate in their party manifestos. IEA-Kenya selected the eight major political parties with a national outlook for the training with representation from three groups of interest: youth, women and disables. Attendees included youth leaders, women leaders, executive officers, heads of secretariats, administration assistants, party treasurers, disability leaders, and gender officers. A second round of trainings took place in Kitui, Mombasa, and Kisumu counties, 92 representatives of the community based and civil society organisations and the electorate.

Meetings with stakeholders (September – October 2017)

After the elections, IEA-Kenya initiated a round of meetings with officers of the various ministries with responsibility in the five critical areas, aimed at sharing the findings of the studies and provide more specific recommendations that the government should consider in their policy planning processes. Meetings have also been planned for the various committees of the National Assembly and the Senate.

A National Stakeholders Roundtable has also been scheduled for October 2017 with community based and civil society organisations related to the five socio economic areas. The main aim of this meeting will be to discuss the new policy environment and its challenges, as well as proposals for the way forward. Out of this meeting, IEA expects to continue advocating for better policies in the five areas.

The way forward

Moreover, IEA-Kenya plans to partner with county based organisations to undertake monitoring efforts and evaluate uptake of recommendations, conduct county based analyses on the five areas, and meet with county based executive committees and discuss solutions to the existing policy challenges. However, this is pegged on a settled political environment in the country and the availability of funding and resources from willing development partners.

7. RESULTS

Consolidated proposals in critical areas

Because of the research and dialogue efforts, IEA-Kenya was able to compile and validate solid set of policy recommendations in critical policy areas for the country with a focus in the short, mid and long term.

Increased awareness of community based and civil society organisations

The analysis of the pre and post evaluation forms of the trainings showed that the organisations that attended had raised their knowledge in the five socio-economic areas.

Relevance of information to political parties

Participants during the political party’s training expressed the relevance and usefulness of the workshop especially in terms of the recommendations to be included in their manifestos.

Creation of linkages at the county level

IEA-Kenya was able to build a solid network of community based and civil society organisations working on the critical areas and reinforce the scope of its work at the local level. This will also give IEA-Kenya access to local data and allow a wider outreach of its work.



Source: IEA (2017)

Enhanced partnership with policy makers

IEA gained access to and strengthened links with relevant political stakeholders based on their interest in the initiative. Looking forward, several ministries acknowledged the need for objective research in other critical policy areas, what opens an opportunity for future partnerships with IEA.

8. CHALLENGES

Timing for trainings

Due to time constraints, the objective of training representatives of local organisations had its difficulties. The training began two months before the general election and the last training was held in Kisumu County just two weeks before the election. This made it difficult for the organisations attending the trainings to have time to disseminate the information among their own audiences.

Under-representation of civil society

Not all the representatives of the various organisations in the three counties attended the trainings, thus leaving various districts unrepresented and therefore hampering the extent of outreach.

Mobilisation of stakeholders

Mobilisation of participants was an uphill task since most had embarked in other political activities.

9. LESSONS

ELECTORAL TIMING

In the context of an electoral campaign, the timing of actions is critical: research needs to be ready and dissemination take place before political parties develop their manifestos. Moreover, if advocacy efforts take place too close to the election they might not reach all the stakeholders as had been envisaged.

TARGETING ORGANISATIONS VS INDIVIDUALS

Training community based and civil society organisations revealed to be more effective for outreach than training the electorate, as the former has more capacity to reach out to constituents in the different counties. This was informed by the fact that IEA is based at the national level and as therefore, requires partners at the county level to help in dissemination of research output to various audiences at that level.

Institute of Economic Affairs –Kenya

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Kenya) is a think-tank that provides a platform for informed discussions in order to influence public policy in Kenya. We seek to promote pluralism of ideas through open, active and informed debate on public policy issues. We undertake research and conduct public education on key economic and topical issues in public affairs in Kenya and the region, and utilize the outcomes of the research for policy dialogue and to influence policy making.

Contact: Stephen Jairo, Regulation and Competition Policy Programme: Stephen@ieakenya.or.ke

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