



SDGs KENYA FORUM

For Sustainable Development



CIVIL SOCIETY POSITION PAPER 2021

CSOs contributions towards the 2021 Position Paper

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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the CSOs contributions towards the implementation of the SDGs in fulfilling the 2030 Agenda. It also highlights a number of challenges, emerging issues and lessons learnt in that journey as well as repercussions of COVID – 19 pandemic and the various strategies adopted to circumnavigate effects of the virus.



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1. General background

Kenya's Development Agenda is anchored on the Kenya Vision 2030 which aims at creating "a globally competitive and prosperous country with high quality of life by the year 2030". The Vision seeks to transform Kenya into "a newly industrialized, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment. The Vision is actualized through five year Medium Term Plans (MTPs) of which the current plan, the MTP III's (2018 – 2022) theme is aimed at "transforming lives: Advancing socio-economic development through the "Big Four Agenda". The Big Four Agenda namely: provision of adequate decent housing (11), increasing manufacturing (9 & 12), universal Health coverage (SDG 3), and attaining Food and Nutrition Security (SDG 1 & 2). The Kenya Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have managed to engage in the SDGs implementation process within their different spaces either working on a standalone basis or in partnership with state actors and non – state actors under the Inter – Agency Technical Working Group chaired by National Treasury – SDG unit (National Government), co – chaired by the private sector through the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), and CSOs through the SDGs Kenya Forum. Other Key actors also include, the Sub – National Governments through Council of Governors (CoG), the youth, academia, Parliament (National Assembly and the Senate), Parliamentary caucus on SDGs and business, UN Agencies, Human Rights institutions and the County Assemblies Forum.

The CSOs have however tremendously contributed to different thematic areas such as disaster and humanitarian response, Sustainable community empowerment as well as education and child development programs among others. Under the disaster and humanitarian response, work has been done to reduce the humanitarian impact of conflicts and natural disaster. Under sustainable community empowerment, there has been a continued empowerment of communities to surface from poverty and vulnerability through secure livelihoods and food security, improved water access, improved sanitation and hygiene, improved health and nutrition and supporting of financial inclusivity. Other engagements on education and child development program aims to improve access to quality basic education and protection of vulnerable children hence globally contributing to Goal 1; Goal 2; Goal 3; Goal 4; Goal 5; Goal 6; Goal 13; Goal 16 (which is considered as the transformative goal within the Sustainable Development framework because it emphasizes the importance of governance, peace, access to justice and effective institutions to realize the SDG agenda. It is instrumental in the effective realization of the shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, through partnership) and Goal 17 (with a continued committed to responding to Sustainable Development under goal 17 which seeks to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. More specifically, to strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

2. About this position paper

The main purpose of this position paper is to generate support on the issue of SDGs implementation processes. Civil society organizations have been instrumental in their areas of work, championing to address issues that affect the people and sectors. Such programs have directly targeted different implementation efforts, those programmes and activities are also encapsulated in the SDGs hence anchored in the agenda 2030 and the principle of leaving no one behind. This paper therefore addresses issues arising with the CSOs working space and engagement with state and other non – state actors and offers a rationale for that matter. Further, this paper also provides evidence – based facts that offers a solid foundation for the reconsideration of gaps that still exist that impedes the implementation process of SDGs hence the realization of the 2030 agenda. Finally, the paper elaborate different pathways towards the implementation success of the SDGs diverse actors in the Kenya space should undertake to ensure the realization of the goals.

3. Progress towards Achievement of Targets – Indicators level in the last four years

There has been considerable and a growing interest in SDGs implementation and review in Kenya by both state and non-state actors. More so, trends points to the direction that SDGs linked to basic services like availability and sustained management of water and sanitation (SDG 6), health and well – being (SDG 3), inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion lifelong learning Opportunities (SDG 4), and promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable Economic Growth, full and productive employment and Decent Work (SDG 8) need to be fast tracked. SDG 10, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13, SDG 14, SDG 15 are however still lagging behind across almost all indicators and are critical for ensuring that no Kenyan is left behind.

Whereas, a lot of effort and investment has been put towards achieving the goals, Kenya still has a long way to cover based on the account that efforts and investments are not proportionate across the 17 goals. At any given point, some goals have had disproportionate investments (for example, Health and infrastructure have had substantial investments over the last 5 years) while some do not (climate change). Financing SDGs however, has been a challenge owing to the government having been classified as Lower Middle – Income Country, meaning loans to Kenya are becoming increasingly expensive. The government should therefore consider exploring other sources of financing (public private, alignment of CSOs funds with the MTPs and MTEF) apart from ODA as well as well as strengthen fiscal performance

On inclusive human settlements (11) and decent work (8), it should be noted that about 31% of the Kenyan population are city dwellers of which nearly half lives in the informal settlements¹. Majority of the population also are not only employed in the informal sector, but also find dwellings in informal settlements and slums. Consequently good housing has been hindering progress on these goals though well Still, on SDG 8, many women lost their livelihoods thus

¹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics - Distribution of Population by Socio-Economic Characteristics

taking away their bargaining power in decision making – which had a ripple effect on SDG 5 due to rising cases of sexual and gender based violence. On SDG 11, the government needs to focus on providing housing (and creating policies for such an enabling environment) to urban informal settlements.

It is laudable that there are lucid implementation to date with more awareness among CSOs and other non – state actors and the public. The government through the reporting years under the Voluntary National Reporting on SDGs implementation progress, has been annexing CSOs initiatives as a standalone results on progress for the public to engage with such contributions as well as complementing on efforts by the state. Areas mentioned for instance that need urgent attention is in the reduction of poverty level by prioritizing local human resources that will reduce unemployment and increase GDP as opposed to the current situation where foreign corporates are leading in most of the sectors such as infrastructure, food supply (importation of goods/ food products while local products have dropped due to steep competition from imported goods².

Institutions, private sector, public sector and businesses are still having a challenge in incorporating the SDGs framework in their operations. Where themes cross-cut, it compounds reporting and tracking of performance for these institutions. For example, Goal 2 (zero hunger) cannot be attained without considering Goal 13 (climate change) because climate change prompts food insecurity. Also, without strong underlying partnerships (goal 17), then none of these goals can be achieved at all.

Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy since 2015 has been on the rise. At the time of writing this report, access rate stands at 70% from 56% in 2016. However, more work is needed in terms of tracking and reporting progress of implementation on indicator 7.1 on the proportion of people with access to clean cooking – Again, import duty imposed on solar products will make people shift from purchasing solar yet this is one of the key solutions needed by people to ensure they have clean energy.

In the four years, there have been some positive legislative changes, including the coming into force of the Access to Information Act (2016). A series of significant Kenyan judicial decisions have also struck down several problematic legislative provisions that were routinely abused to limit freedom of expression, online and offline. Notwithstanding positive developments, the period under review has been marred by violence against citizens for exercising their freedom of expression rights, in particular in the run up to the 2017 elections. The government has also made numerous attempts to introduce new and undue limitations on freedom of expression, particularly online.

² The Second Voluntary Review on the implementation of the sustainable goals, 2020

On social sectors, there is increased enrolment in social protection programmes such as the Cash Transfers for persons with disabilities, orphans and vulnerable children and older persons are contributing to reduction of vulnerabilities. Universal Health Coverage is also being rolled out and is expected to facilitate improved access to health care. However, a lot has to be done to evaluate in absolute format the impact of the social protection programmes that has been initiated as well as the affirmative action funds that had been rolled out such as the “*Access to government Procurement Opportunities*” which specifically targeted women, youth and persons with disabilities.

There has been around Social Protection including Universal Pension (Inua Jamii 70+). Good Health and Well Being has been promoted through Universal Health Coverage (UHC) but older have experienced various barriers to accessing health such as lack of appropriate community health structures. Human resources are not trained to handle issues of older persons including negative attitudes towards older persons by health personnel. There are improvements in areas around infrastructural development, visible action by the government around COVID – 19 response and recovery, institutionalization of multi – sectorial and multi – stakeholder mechanisms for implementing SDGs. Areas needing attention: a) Reduced Inequalities still far to reach goal b) Good Health and Well Being equally behind especially for vulnerable groups including older persons c) Poverty gaps still wide d) Human Rights and Equality Issues especially older people.

The progress has been steady and engaging on areas like access to water, food security and housing. However, areas that have policy initiatives are slower as there is always an antagonistic approach to have a sound policy that governs implementation of SDGs – especially on enactment and adoption processes at the executive and legislative levels. The question of inequality has also had increased attention in Kenyan policy debates as it is central to having a sound implementation framework but in general, equity remains a vexing question. It should also be noted that there is limited awareness on the SDGs as a whole to the community for them to hold governments accountable and as such the decade of action under the spirit of leave no one behind should embody localizing and focalizing these SDGs.

On data for SDGs, a lot of data have been collected from various actors at both national, sub – national level, and CSOs. Data from the CSOs (also called Citizen Generated data) has the potential to complement official statistics and to reflect voices of the people - thereby adding value to tracking, reporting and implementation of SDGs. Though production and institutionalization guidelines are still underway, there is need to involve more grassroots organization in outcome harvesting and tracking of implementation more so in the rural communities and slums settlements.

Throughout the implementation processes, there have been awareness creation and sensitization programmes through local SDGs Dialogues³. Conversely, to ensure success of such campaigns engaging those that are left behind, capacity building and financial support is needed to groups so that they can initiate and engage in income generating activities for Youths, PWDs and Women at grassroots level. As such, looking back from 2016, there have been overall on the SDGs a positive trend and undoubtedly at a better place since many people are aware of the SDGs and what they mean. Less however is known whether goals and targets are accurately measured, whether we are on track and if data to measure progress is readily available as usually data conversations are left to the very few that understand or are in the data production and use circles.

4. Emerging issues, Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Emerging Issues

A number of policies for instance has been in the spotlight when it comes to SDG 17 including: Kenya – EU Partnership for the implementation of the Kenya National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (CVE) strategy; Public Procurement Disposal Act; (Public Private Partnership) Regulation 2009 and Infrastructure Finance and Public Private Partnership. However, there has been weak link between industry and government on levels of engagements.

There are cases of pending bills especially “The Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes (Amendment) Bill, 2019” which aims at amending the Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act No. 3 of 2003 so as to prescribe a minimum penalty to act as deterrence mechanisms for persons who engage in corrupt conduct as defined in the Act.

It is also clear that there is need to involve the devolved governments in reporting the status of implementation of SDGs at the county level. As such, there is a proposal that the County Government Act should be reviewed in order to make it mandatory for County governments should give annual reports on the implementation of SDGs. Additionally, the National Government and Constituency Development Act should be reviewed to reflect the Sustainable Development Goals.

Gaps had initially been identified and a myriad of them still persist across different SDGs from 2017 – 2020 reporting. Below are challenges and gaps that have not yet been resolved and efforts are underway to ensure these issues are levelled.

Challenges

SDG 1: No Poverty

In the comprehensive poverty report, it is recorded that More than 1 in every 3 Kenyans (36% or 15.9 Million) – are monetary poor, while, more than half of the Kenyan population (53% or

³ Summary report of community dialogues on the sustainable development goals in Kenya, 2019

23.4million Kenyans) are multidimensional poor - deprived of at least 3 basic needs, services and rights out of the seven analyzed namely nutrition, education, economic activity, information, water, sanitation, and housing. A number of challenges have been advanced in responding to poverty:

- There have been limited resources among CSOs to address the challenges faced in order to achieve the goals
- There is also lack of data consistency which makes it hard for budget allocation and in tracking indicators
- Knowledge gaps between the farmers and the policy makers which negatively affects the agricultural sector in regards to poverty eradication 2019 - 2020
- In the recent past, there has been a decline in the share of population living in extreme poverty as from 2005 up to slightly below 40% in 2015 in Kenya certainly owing to the improved infrastructure that enables access to market and even the poverty reduction strategies for the development of a pro poor growth strategy that emphasizes a growth process that directly addresses poverty and leads to sustained poverty reduction.⁴

SDG 2: Zero Hunger

- There have been gaps in the implementation of the national food and nutrition security policies
- Inconsistency of data produced by different government institutions on various aspects of food and nutrition security, as well as agricultural production creates gap in data reliance

SDG 3: Good Health and Well – being

- Provision of health care workers but was resolved, this became a further challenge with the onset of COVID – 19.
- Mental health has become also become an issue especially exacerbated by COVID – 19

SDG 4: Quality education

- In terms of disability there is lack of an integrated information system that provides data on children with disabilities to facilitate planning and following up on their progress with education 2019 – 2020
Universal basic education has been commended has is has addressed some issues of access but challenges still exist as quality has tremendously reduced.
- Kenya’s education ministry is grappling with the cost of offering free secondary school education. This was a major plank of campaign pledges made by the two main rivals in the country’s 2017 elections

SDG 5: Gender Equality

- The slow changing norms on unpaid domestic work as a result of a highly patriarchal system
- Persisting harmful cultural beliefs and practices that slows the achievement of some targets
- Lack of expertise in gender to engage in policy and budget and gender analysis
- COVID – 19 also increased cases of Gender based violence due to lockdowns dubbed “*the shadow pandemic*”

SDG 6: Water and Sanitation

- Inadequate water and sanitation infrastructure makes it hard to provide services to citizens especially in the informal setup
- Duplication of WASH programme by both state and non – state activities as a result of poor coordination
- Climate change that disrupts water provision
- Financial constraints and high cost of developing a proper infrastructure
- Lack and inconsistencies in data from different entities to inform WASH

SDG 7: Access to sustained and affordable energy

- Lack of up – to – date data on access to energy
- Inadequate support to households to adopt and use clean energy
- Inadequate gender mainstreaming efforts in policies development and implementation

SDG 8: Decent work

- Job creation efforts has been thwarted the slowed economy down to around 0.6 percent in 2020 from a growth of 5.4 percent in 2019 partly as a result of COVID – 19
- The Informal sector – which is the major employer – grapples with low credit access, technology and insurances
- Efforts to improve business environment has been thwarted by regulatory barriers and burdensome licencing procedures

SDG 11: Safe cities and housing

- Limited data availability to inform planning and provision of safe spaces in urban areas

SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

- Inadequate market regulation has created loopholes for brokers and middlemen to exploit farmers by paying low prices for farm produce. This led to losses that make

commercial farming unsustainable, however, certain crops where the Ministry of Agriculture has intervened, things have moved in the right direction⁵⁶

SDG 13: Climate Action

- The objective of the National Climate Change Framework Policy, was to establish and maintain an effective and efficient institutional framework to mainstream climate change responses across relevant sectors and into integrated planning, budgeting, decision – making and implementation, at both the national and county levels. Such has not been consistent at the counties.
- Lack of county climate change secretariats and exclusion of marginalized groups prevent mainstreaming of climate change in county development plans

SDG 14: Life below water

- CSOs have limited technical and financial capacity to do their groundwork as well as watchdog roles. Some of them are poorly equipped in terms of office to operate while many of them are not well informed
- Limited human capacity and availability of equipment to conduct research on key areas such as persistent organic pollutants

SDG 15: life on Land

- Mainstreaming biodiversity to achieve development that is inclusive requires diverse knowledge, expertise and actors from various sectors.
- Lack of enforcement of trade laws, low fines for wildlife crimes, economic incentives to convert/change land use, and poorly planned infrastructure promote human actions that deplete the spaces available for wildlife and allow wildlife crime networks to thrive. This undermines the effectiveness of wildlife conservation efforts

SDG 16: Peace Justice and strong institutions

- Poor coordination amongst the various actors and government department.
- Even though there is a policy on access to information there is no implementation structure
- Despite the availability of policy framework, implementation is impeded by the fact that there have been limited resources towards this end. In addition, there is no legislation that would ensure that the exchequer commits funds to support such initiatives and structures across the country.

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<https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/opinion-analysis/editorials/munya-kt-da-wars-risk-hurting-the-tea-farmer--3478148>

⁶ <https://www.the-star.co.ke/business/kenya/2021-07-19-munya-says-tea-farmers-to-benefit-in-new-auction-rules/>

- Lack of political goodwill on honoring and ascending to legislations and treaties which are critical in arms control and management such as the SALW policy, Signing and ratification of ATT among others.
- Inadequate resourcing of key government institutions such as the National Legal Aid Service and the Judiciary which are charged with the core responsibility of implementing the Legal Aid Act 2016 and the Alternative Justice Systems Policy. As a result, it has been challenging to operationalize the Legal Aid Fund that would be critical in supporting accredited legal aid providers to conduct access to justice programs.
- Lack of accountability as a result of weak structures and politicizing of the war against graft. Citizens also lack adequate civic education to enable them to demand for accountability from the government. Those involved in corrupt dealings are rarely convicted and little effort is being made to recover stolen resources.
- Government gag: the government has attempted an unsuccessful crackdown on civil society. Particularly in times of high political tension like the election period.
- The parliament has yet to pass legislation that would bring its own two houses – the National Assembly and the Senate – in line with the Constitution’s “two-thirds rule.”
- Amendments to the Elections Act and the Political Parties Act (PPA) have improved the regulatory environment but remain inadequate, lacking meaningful incentives and enforcement mechanisms. Compliance among political parties and the parliament continues to be problematic, despite Supreme Court rulings mandating implementation of the two-thirds rule.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals

- Lack of data collection standards and adherence as data is manipulated sometimes In addition, lack of sharing of data amongst the CSOs and also not termed as scientific

Specific challenges related to data

- Inadequate domestic resource mobilization.
- Statistical desegregation of indicators is still inadequate.
- Low out – sourcing of Statistical data Collection.
- Existence of obsolete data on Kenya at the international stage.
- Lack of coordination data producers and users.
- Corruption and Illicit financial outflows deny Kenya the much need revenue.
- Inadequate reliable data
- Inefficient methodology to apply in measuring the progress

Lessons learnt

COVID – 19 has made the use of technology more relevant in conferencing and meetings it saves costs and to the provision of education even though equity and access to quality education is still a challenge.

A policy gaps analysis in 2018 assessed the country's preparedness to implement the 2030 Agenda by elaborating how SDGs targets align with the national planning frameworks. Government and non – state activities could tap into this report to help align programmes so as to respond to some of the challenges affecting implementation.

The use of natural resources unsustainably, minerals are extracted by foreign corporates leaving Kenya at dire poverty⁷. There is also the issue of dumping of electronic waste in Kenya from developed states and minimal recycling processes⁸. The efficient management of our shared natural resources, and the way the state dispose of toxic waste and pollutants are important targets to achieve targets.

Encouraging industries, businesses and consumers to recycle and reduce waste is equally important, as it is supporting developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption by 2030. As an account, 1.3 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year, while almost 2 billion people go hungry or undernourished. Achieving economic growth and sustainable development requires that we urgently reduce our ecological footprint by changing the way we produce and consume goods and resources. For instance, agriculture is the biggest user of water worldwide, and irrigation now claims close to 70 percent of all freshwater for human use.

CSOs have contributed enormously towards the realization of SDG 5. In the gender mainstreaming, there have been efforts to mainstream some of gender issues within county government and training officers to have gender as part and parcel of the work. There has also been policy gaps due to lack of authentic quality data for analysis so as to have a good policy frameworks as such, some of the key gender policies still lack at sub – national level but there are efforts to enact some of those policies hence will trigger financing. At sub – national level, it should be noted that public participation forums are the base point to include issues of gender especially on Gender Responsive Budgeting, if views are not taken up at this level then prioritizing gender issues becomes a problem.

CSOs also noted the government was very weak on fiscal management as rising public debt and competing demand for government expenditure has made it difficult for the government to increase spending to pro –poor programmes. There is also limited availability of disaggregated data on the needs of vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities preventing effective planning and budgeting for inclusive development.

In order to achieve Gender Equality, efforts must be made to ensure that the different marginalized groups are represented and participate meaningfully in decision making spaces at

⁷ Muigua, Kariuki. "Exploited, Poor and Dehumanised: Overcoming the Resource Curse in Africa." (2020)

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<https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/gallery/2017/feb/01/nairobi-kenya-electricals-e-waste-recycling-sa-faricom-ibm-samsung-in-pictures>

all levels. Resources allocation by the government in the different sectors should also be gender responsive. It should be informed by the priorities of the different groups and evidence on the needs of these groups. To achieve gender equality, interventions needs to address the issues holistically. This however cannot be achieved by a single institution and calls for an integrated and multi – stakeholder approach to programming to ensure that all stakeholders are working towards complementing each other’s efforts.

Among other targets, by 2030, Kenya is to ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums. The Government rolled its slum upgrading project which is on track however a few hitches such as security, needs to be looked into especially since women and girls are mostly affected when cities are not safe. Again, it is noted that most of the cities are not designed with a disability lens. Most urban informal settlements have little or no access to especially those on wheelchairs which further reduces their productivity and enhances GBV.

In climate change, weather patterns are fluctuating as every year hot temperatures are recorded. Climate change has happened and is still happening with very little effort to mitigate it. The best shot is to adapt and only mitigate to avoid further damage. There is need to collaborate with local communities who hold the economy especially farmers if we want to achieve balance. Engaging farmers to incorporate and adopt climate – smart agriculture using improved crop varieties and improved technology to circumnavigate weather challenges and to double productivity, improve nutritional value and increase income will be a sure way to rip of such efforts. Nonetheless, there is need for strong partnerships, a multi – stakeholder engagement and embrace the issue of internal resource mobilization as a country in order to address the climatic challenges.

5. Innovative Ways of Addressing Challenges and Emerging Issues

CSOs having tapping into the use of radio, internet, and digital technologies to provide education during the COVID – 19 lockdown. Such technologies have also been in use more intensely in addressing gender – based violence and teen pregnancies and other forms of violence’s against women and girls.

They have also been advocating for the use of compost manure as opposed to toxic fertilizers that are health hazard highlighting the major causes of unstainable production and consumption. There has also been extensive education offered to the public on sustainable production/consumption and continued sharing of data with different stakeholders especially the county governments for purpose of working on the gaps.

CSOs have also ensured that all men and women and the societal intersectionality are involved in the public participation forums so that their issues could be heard through awareness creation and compelling the government to make sure such forums are representative. They

have also held engagements with the Gender Technical Working Groups to offer technical insights to the counties so as to develop sound gender policies in line with the national guidelines. On data, they encourage governments to carry out periodic data collection and having them in a central repository and to analyze such data that will orientate programs as well as submitting periodic asks from KNBS to carry out county fact sheets and statistical abstracts so as to be at par with the counties economic life.

A number of research and analysis have also been conducted to inform allocation of scarce public resources in ways that address the needs of those left behind. For instance, since 2016/17 to date CSOs have done analysis on pro – poor spending at the national level to inform allocation of public resources. In 2020, for instance there was a joint analysis with International Budget Partnership and 70 other CSOs and submitted a joint Memorandum to Parliament's Budget and Appropriations Committee for consideration.

A number of Women's Rights Organizations have also led in emergency interventions e.g. COVID – 19 responses thereby prioritizing the needs of women, youths and children in these interventions. Some initiatives have also been put in place such as the adoption of technology in responding to disasters e.g. using digital apps to access GBV services, and use of mobile money to provide cash transfers to vulnerable women during the pandemic; Male engagement (male champions) in addressing patriarchal social norm and beliefs e.g. Unpaid Care and Domestic Work as well as using the voice and agency of women to influence resource allocation i.e. formation of women federations who are facilitated to petition the government on gender responsive budgeting.

Most Civil Societies Organizations have also come together to rally for safe cities for women and girls through Social mobilization and dialogue. They have also contributed in providing data from Adolescent girls critically affected by insecurities in the Slums. This data could be used to influence policy review on sexual harassment. Most CSO's within slums rallied together during COVID – 19 to provide hand washing stations and water to curb spread of the virus and held dialogue forums with local government to improve security and access to more clean water.

There have also been the promotion and adoption of renewable energy sources such as the use of briquettes and solar use of seed balls. In agriculture and climate change adaptation, CSOs have been championing for Climate Smart Agriculture with the adoption and use of Early Warning Systems to help farmers know when it is appropriate to plant and improved crop variety and new irrigation and planting technologies to improve yields.

To properly create an enabling environment for the SDGs implementations, CSOs have adopted working in partnerships and coalitions to gear efforts, force and have a common working agenda in the operationalization processes of SDGs. They have also endeavoured to create

policy spaces for the vulnerable groups through engaging the government and formation of platforms while embracing local resource mobilization.

6. Key Interventions

CSOs have been working to align programming initiatives to SDG 4 on education and continues to holding government to account through policy advocacy to enhance equity and inclusiveness. They have noted that the government should develop measures and policies that are practical to each and every member of the society to ensure inclusion of all. As the total number of deaths from the pandemic continues to rise, it is still not clear as to when schools will fully get back to normal, and therefore advocates for remote and digital learning to be permanently and fully embraced. CSOs also advocate for the government to include digital learning as part of new policy interventions necessitated by the pandemic, else it will be difficult to sustain education in the country if left to parents/guardians only. Civil society organisations also need to ensure that their programming is inclusive and supportive to the most left behind learners, and addressing them as individuals and also think of intersectionality approaches.

CSOs have also held sensitization programs for the public and advocates for implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and its 23 objectives. They are advancing the minimization of the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin; provision of up to date agricultural machinery for better produce to provide food security to Kenyans to minimize migration for better livelihood. CSOs in retrospect, also develop, maintain and share data of activities with relevant bodies to help develop disaggregated data of activities taken and advocate for standardization of all local produce and value addition for the same to increase production and consumption.

CSOs have been instrumental in ensuring there are policies in place that govern gender operations at the County. For that matter, counties like Kajiado has enacted the gender mainstreaming policy, the Anti – FGM policy; Bomet with the Women Enterprise bill and Kisumu with the Sexual and gender – based Violence policy. All these have been instrumental in ensuring there are budget lines on gender though they still have low financing, there is hope that gender activities at the county will receive higher level of prioritization.

CSOs are implementing a number of programs to ensure eradication of poverty. These include programs that support livelihoods such as provision of microfinance services. CSOs have also promoted the use of data and evidence to inform allocation of public resources in ways that promote equity and equality. They continue to provide evidence through annual analysis of investment in pro-poor programs and data through online portals – “the Spotlight on Kenya” – hence improve use of data and evidence is expected to ensure better targeting of public resources to those left behind to eradicate poverty.

A number of CSOs engage in social protection interventions for vulnerable households, there is also the aspect of Women Economic Empowerment Interventions for those in the informal economy to boost businesses and help in start – ups. Finally, CSOs have put in place intervention to ensure Tax Justice and Public Finance Management to ensure access to basic services.

Some key interventions have been on the provision of sanitation within schools, reusable sanitary towels thus promoting hygiene within schools in the slums as well as provision of soap to promote hygiene and reduce communicable diseases. In relation to sexual harassment and violations of the women and Girls, through one of the policy paper on sexual harassment sought dialogue with the local government as well as the national on how to provide safe spaces. Through this, such interventions are ensuring local boys do not idle around water points as it would be a vector of harassment.

More importantly, CSOs have engaged in fostering partnerships with other like – minded institutions. They have formed groups based on themes and goal and also specific coalitions/working partnerships through mapping exercise of key stakeholders working around the goals so as to have a unified voice and resources towards the implementation of goals and by extension holding the government accountable through advocating for enabling policies.

7. Strategies in place to address the plight of the vulnerable and ensure No one is left Behind

CSOs have ensured a number of strategies to ensure LNOB initiatives are anchored in the implementation processes. They have however been working through the intersectionality lenses; getting data on who is most left behind, (Using citizen generated data) understanding their plight, challenges and issues that are most important to them.

The Government and other stakeholders have come up with a number of interventions in an effort to address the situation of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in the country. However, many remain unreached and the situation demands for targeted and more sustainable and concerted synergies focussed on addressing the plight of these OVCs. Through the National Plan of Action for OVCs the government has identified the following Priority Strategic Areas as key for OVC interventions:

- Strengthening the capacity of families to protect and care for OVCs
- Mobilising and supporting community based interventions
- Ensuring access for OVCs to essential services including but not limited to education,
- Health care
- Birth registration
- psychosocial support and legal protection
- Ensuring improved policy and legal framework are in place to protect the most vulnerable children

- Creating a supportive environment for children and families affected by HIV and AIDS
Strengthening and supporting national coordination and institutional structures for OVCs
Strengthening national capacity to monitor and evaluate OVC programme effectiveness and quality

The country has also pioneered the Green Economy Strategy initiatives that aim to support development efforts towards addressing key challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, environmental degradation, climate change and variability, infrastructure gaps and food insecurity. A green growth path results in faster growth, a cleaner environment and high productivity. The minerals and mining policy was developed and approved in 2016. The enactment of Mining Act 2016 and the development of 14 regulations necessary to operationalize this Act are in their final stages. In addition the Mining Policy 2016 has put sustainable mining at the core of all extractive industries.

CSOs have also championed the implementation of some of the affirmative action such as the establishment of funds aimed at reducing gender disparities such as the Women Enterprise Fund. Furthermore, progress has been made in trying to carryout studies on the implementation level of affirmative actions like the AGPO (Access to Government Procurement Opportunities) that was meant to take into consideration a proportion of the society that were still left behind e.g. the women, youth and PWDs that were meant to access 30% of the total procurement opportunities. These studies found out that most women, youth and PWDs in the rural areas are not even aware of such opportunities, and if they were aware they were still confronted with bureaucratic tendencies making access a changing. CSOs therefore are engaging in an up to speed awareness creation to ensure that every person has information on available opportunities and that the government be alive to the intended goal of the affirmative actions.

Social protection programmes have been established by the government to support the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. These include cash transfer programmes, and health insurance subsidies, that target vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and older persons and school feeding programmes.

A number of CSOs have also applied feminist approaches in the design and implementation of interventions. There has been a continued investment in people led and centred interventions and linking of local issues with global processes where possible. Other prompt interventions include the amplification of the voices and action of the people; leveraging on collective knowledge when designing and implementing interventions and engaging with and tapping into the power and influence of digital technology.

Other key interventions include:

- Provide a platform through which CSOs can have dialogue with the public

- Implementation of policies that address the vulnerable in the community and enactment at the local level of existing policies
- Adoption of the equality fund by the national treasury
- Formulation of the Climate Change strategy by the national and some county governments.
- Allocation of resources to key areas e.g. to ASAL areas
- Putting in place the social protection department to address the plight of the most vulnerable

8. Adverse impact of COVID – 19 on sustainable development

Public health experts have consistently warned that the novel coronavirus outbreak presents a unique public health threat to Kenya which has lowered production rate – health and social economic impact migration from urban to rural areas leading to decrease of production and reduced employment. There have been deaths and burden of buying vaccines that led to a lot of out – of – pocket expenditures that would have been used for domestic production.

Due to school closures for close to 6 months, about to 4 million children are likely not to get back to school for a variety of reasons (early pregnancies, gender – based violence, COVID virus etc.). This has made it imperative to pivot the programming, look more in – depth into remote learning, and opportunities offered by digital technologies. There is also need to look at education provision in TVETs and how to enhance digital inclusion, and promote values, and life skills within the education curriculum. Many children and Youth could not access education with the introduction of online classes. This has had challenges for both students and teachers because unequal access to technology and internet costs is prohibitive for many. Not all have access to the internet, a smart phone or a laptop while some parents are not even able to pay for the internet services. Many rural areas do not have network coverage as such it has led to a number of students lagging behind in the syllabus. Class sizes had to be adjusted for social distancing hence putting pressure in schools that do not have adequate rooms and spaces. Prolonged school closure and home confinement has also had negative effects on children’s physical and mental health. There have been indication of children dropping out schools due to various reasons, such as, child pregnancies, child marriage, complete closure of private schools etc. Many children have also been forced to change schools, some of whom are to sit for their final examinations. There are also socio – economic impact to families, and learners. In this regard, there is need to consider effect of pandemics to the education system to enable better planning and support.

The subsequent lockdowns and restrictions in some counties disrupted value chains hence markets suffered economic setbacks. There were reports on decline in food prices and purchasing power as well as loses as a result of perishability of consumables. Markets closures also disrupted not only food value chains but also other businesses that women largely depend

on within the market i.e. the agricultural IGAs. There were also reported cases of women and girls having minimal or no access to contraceptives and other sexual reproductive health services. Most resources initially available had been obstructed as budgets meant for such services were diverted to COVID – 19 response. Similarly, most resources allocated towards promoting SDG 5 were channelled to COVID – 19 response both at National and County level putting on hold a lot of departmental gender work plans. Consequently as mentioned above, there were reports on the increase in teenage pregnancies across a number of counties due to school closures. In some counties there had been a participation program in the teenage pregnancy tracing and response committee. This impacted negatively SDG 4 (education) on the girl child especially on school access, completion, transition and access to employment. CSOs subsequently recorded heightened cases of GBV and all forms of discrimination during lockdowns. The national hotline 1195 registered a number of cases and the general call for support went towards strengthening of the reporting and referral systems. There was also decreased public participation in development and decision making processes across the counties due to the nature of COVID restrictions this was mainly due to the stay at home restrictions. Finally, the loss of employment especially for women and girls who largely work in the hotel sector, markets and schools (especially those working within private institutions).

In general, there had been lots of records on loss of livelihoods, leading to increased vulnerability and poverty risks. According to the World Bank's Kenya Economic Update report for 2020, COVID – 19 has eroded progress in poverty eradication, with an estimated additional two million people becoming poor due to loss of income and livelihoods.

CSOs reported on issues of erosion of achievements/gains made in the pre – COVID period as a result of the economic impact. As such interventions are having to address issues from the scratch. It is also recorded that there is a shift in priorities e.g. huge investments being made in sectors like health while other sectors like education stalled and by extension the available resources are not enough to target everyone. COVID – 19 also disrupted the usual way of life which also has an impact on service delivery across the sectors e.g. access to SRH services, increased care work burden on women which saw a lot of women quit the work force. CSOs reported on positive effects such as the adoption of technology in the delivery of services which improved efficient in areas where there was an enabling environment, but has also increased the inequality gap between the rich and the poor and digital divide between men and women, urban and rural.

The pandemic created more unsafe spaces within the slums, while social mobilization to demand back better were limited to webinars, no more community engagements in terms of rallies and meet ups to hold stakeholders accountable greatly impacted project operations within these spaces. Nonetheless, restrictions on mobility hampered access to markets, food

production, prices of basic commodities went up and this impacted negatively on some goals such goal 1.3.

As a result the pandemic significantly reduced Kenya's GDP growth in 2020 to a negative percentage points and exposed structural weaknesses and unsustainability of economic growth & transformation model presently being implemented. It has consequently delayed discussions on key climate moments such as the postponement of CoP26.

9. COVID – 19 recovery strategies in the Sector

Vast strategies have been put in place and still under proposal. For instance, the introduction of an abridged school curriculum, remote learning system being put in place during the lockdown. The government need to design new policies on digital education, remote learning, and also general support for learners.

CSOs have also been working towards adoption of the WHO strategies to reduce infections such as the uptake of vaccines to minimize infections that now has increased some reasonable production and consumption. The World Bank's work in Kenya supports the government's Vision 2030 development strategy, which aims to accelerate sustainable growth, reduce inequality, and manage resource scarcity.

The CSOs also support the government's initiatives propelled by the launch of a three – year post – COVID – 19 socio – economic recovery strategy for county governments where Kes 132 billion shillings (equivalent to 1.19 billion U.S. dollars) has been disbursed on the basis of recovery plan to prioritize agriculture, water and sanitization, urban development and housing, transport, tourism, health, education, social protection, and gender and youth as anchor sectors that will help counties to recover from the effects of COVID – 19. This has not been without challenges; where the Office of the Auditor General reported challenges around expenditure (for COVID – 19 funds towards the end of the FY 2019/2020) by county governments and the massive scandal where monies were lost by Kenya Medical Supplies Agency.

In counties having GBV technical Working Group, led in series of radio sensitization sessions aimed at creating and strengthening pathways on the GBV Referral and response systems. County like Kisumu for instance, formulated a white paper titled "Gendered economic recovery" and presented it in the assembly highlighting a number of challenges facing the County ranging from GBV, HIV/AIDS, and flooding during the COVID – 19 period. This resulted into a constitution of Post COVID – 19 recovery committee where one of a gender champion was invited to communicate and ensure that the recovery process is anchored and responds to the gendered impacts of COVID – 19. With accountability measures from CSOs, Counties Implementation budget went into accelerating the GBV emergency response, and provision of food baskets to the most vulnerable households during that peak period.

The national and county governments and their development partners established social assistance programmes to assist the most vulnerable during the pandemic. Some of the key interventions included the establishment of the COVID – 19 Emergency Response Fund and “Kazi Mtaani” programme implemented by the government and direct donations (cash and in – kind) by development partners and the private sector to vulnerable groups. Other measures included full tax relief for persons earning a gross monthly income of up to KS. 24,000, reduction of turnover tax rate from 3% to 1% and VAT rate decrease from 16% to 14% to enhance access to basic goods and services.

CSOs immensely invested in interventions that focus on Sexual Gender Based Violence as this was one of the areas impact was recorded. They also prioritized the identification of vulnerable groups due to COVID – the old, students, PWDs, children, frontline workers – in interventions. Other interventions included:

- Strengthening the Capacity of women in the use of digital technology.
- Advocacy to the government to allocate resources to critical sectors that have been affected by COVID -19.
- Joint coalition advocacy on the mismanagement of COVID-19 funds.
- Provision of start-ups/grants to households that lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic.
- Working in partnerships and coalitions to address emerging needs holistically hence having a bigger impact.
- Use of local organizations in the delivery of programmes to ensure cost effectiveness

Finally, CSOs also focused on resilient recovery that supports the growth of trust in the government’s commitment towards ending economic insecurity especially in the informal sector and among the most vulnerable. They also endeavored to elevating additional funding and uplifting the role of science in informing policy and efforts to find a viable vaccine, new seeds, new innovative models for anchoring initiatives within policy sciences coherence and learning to guide the individual and collective action for future problem solving abilities. To the farmers and agricultural fraternity, CSOs promoted the aadoption of digital marketing and provision of advisory services (to support extensions etc.) and providing farm inputs to the vulnerable together with face masks, sanitation facilities etc. to support containment measures.



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