

A BRIEF REPORT ON THE FIELD STUDY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY AFFAIRS: DECENTRALIZATION

THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2013,

Introduction,

Public participation is a requirement of the law, The Constitution being the supreme law in article 1 gives the sovereign power to the people, article 10 on the national values and principles of governance identifies patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power, the rule of law, democracy and the participation of the people as key to governance as the first principle.

The Constitution further requires the county governments to facilitate public participation in the governance of the county,

Other devolution laws like the County Government Act 2012, Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011, Public Finance Management Act 2012 among others also talks about citizen participation in running the affairs of the county.

Therefore, it's against this backdrop, that The Institute for Social Accountability saw the need to do a survey to understand and know the level of public participation in eight constituencies of Nairobi County.

TISA sent some of her staff to go and check the progress of the field study in field and I managed to attend three constituency field work, that is; Westlands, Kibra and Mathare,

Fieldwork Findings.

1. Most of the questionnaires administered in Westlands did not capture to a larger extent the low income areas which if could have been capture could have given us true representation.
2. In all the areas visited some residence had no knowledge on some of the issues in the questionnaire or some issues on devolution.
3. In all of the constituencies I visited, the time to administer one questionnaire depended on the knowledge of the person on the topic being discussed, those who understood the questions could take 30minutes or less but those who could not understand the questions would take between 45minutes to 1hour,
4. On some instances, like in Mathare, women were not ready to open up and respond to the questions as led by the enumerator or even give their contacts because of the fear that their information could be used against them,
5. In all the constituencies I visited, the enumerators could take the people through the questionnaire and write their responses, except in some circumstances in Westlands where I saw the people themselves filling the questionnaire.

6. The questionnaires were written in English which was hard for some people in the village to understand and therefore required interpretation to the language they understand leading to more time in filling the questionnaire.