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Master Thesis

Decentralization, citizen participation and local public service delivery:
A study on the nature and influence of citizen participation on
decentralized service delivery in Kenya

Schriftenreihe für Public und Nonprofit Management, No. 17

Provided in Cooperation with:

Chair of Public and Nonprofit Management, University of Potsdam

Suggested Citation: Muriu, Abraham Rugo (2013) : Decentralization, citizen participation and local public service delivery: A study on the nature and influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery in Kenya, Schriftenreihe für Public und Nonprofit Management, No. 17, Universitätsverlag Potsdam, Potsdam,
<https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus-65085>

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Universität Potsdam

Abraham Rugo Muriu

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Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.de/> abrufbar.

Universitätsverlag Potsdam 2013

<http://verlag.ub.uni-potsdam.de/>

Am Neuen Palais 10, 14469 Potsdam
Tel.: +49 (0)331 977 2533 / Fax: 2292
E-Mail: verlag@uni-potsdam.de

Die **Schriftenreihe für Public und Nonprofit Management** wird herausgegeben vom Lehrstuhl für Public und Nonprofit Management der Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Potsdam.

ISSN (Online) 2190-4561

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Potsdam, Univ., Masterarbeit, 2013

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Online veröffentlicht auf dem Publikationsserver der Universität Potsdam
URL <http://pub.ub.uni-potsdam.de/volltexte/2013/6508/>
URN [urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus-65085](http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:kobv:517-opus-65085)
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Declaration of Honor

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Potsdam, August 31st, 2012

Acknowledgements

I thank my wife, Faith Njuhi and our son, Amani Muriu for their support and patience during the many days I was engaged in writing this thesis and throughout my studies at the University of Potsdam. I acknowledge the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst – Public Policy and Good Governance (DAAD-PPGG) Programme for supporting my studies in the University of Potsdam. I thank my colleagues at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Kenya) for the shared experiences and inspiration that have enriched my understanding of the subject under study. Annette Omolo, Albert Mwenda and Wanjiru Gikonyo are appreciated for their help in providing me with the necessary documents that were in their possession. I thank the staff at Potsdam Center for Policy and Management led by Ms. Giulia Carboni for the timely support. Richard Ajuik, Thomas Muasya and Kim H. Bothner did an immense job of proof reading and giving helpful comments that improved the study. Finally, I am grateful for the guidance provided by my able supervisors, Prof. Dr. Isabella Proeller and Prof. Dr. Werner Jann.

A Study on the Nature and Influence of Citizen Participation on Decentralized Service Delivery in Kenya

Abstract

Governments at central and sub-national levels are increasingly pursuing participatory mechanisms in a bid to improve governance and service delivery. This has been largely in the context of decentralization reforms in which central governments transfer (share) political, administrative, fiscal and economic powers and functions to sub-national units. Despite the great international support and advocacy for participatory governance where citizen's voice plays a key role in decision making of decentralized service delivery, there is a notable dearth of empirical evidence as to the effect of such participation. This is the question this study sought to answer based on a case study of direct citizen participation in Local Authorities (LAs) in Kenya. This is as formally provided for by the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) framework that was established to ensure citizens play a central role in planning and budgeting, implementation and monitoring of locally identified services towards improving livelihoods and reducing poverty. Influence of participation was assessed in terms of how it affected five key determinants of effective service delivery namely: efficient allocation of resources; equity in service delivery; accountability and reduction of corruption; quality of services; and, cost recovery. It finds that the participation of citizens is minimal and the resulting influence on the decentralized service delivery negligible. It concludes that despite the dismal performance of citizen participation, LASDAP has played a key role towards institutionalizing citizen participation that future structures will build on. It recommends that an effective framework of citizen participation should be one that is not directly linked to politicians; one that is founded on a legal framework and where citizens have a legal recourse opportunity; and, one that obliges LA officials both to implement what citizen's proposals which meet the set criteria as well as to account for their actions in the management of public resources.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DA	District Accountant
DC	District Commissioner
DDC	District Development Committee
DDO	District Development Officer
DFRD	District Focus for Rural Development
DO	District Officer
DRB	District Roads Board
FPE	Free Primary Education
FSE	Free Secondary Education
GPT	Graduated Personal Tax
IEA	Institute of Economic Affairs-Kenya
IPAR	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KBI	Kenya Bribery Index
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KIPPRA	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
KLGRP	Kenya Local Government Reform Programme
KRB	Kenya Roads Board
LAs	Local Authorities
LASDAP	Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan
LATF	Local Authority Transfer Fund
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
MP	Member of Parliament

NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NSA	Non-State Actor
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PT	Brazilian Workers Party
REPLF	Rural Electrification Programme Levy Fund
RMLF	Roads Maintenance Levy Fund
SPAN	Social and Public Accountability Network
SPRD	Special Programme for Rural Development
TI	Transparency International-Kenya
UN	United Nations

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Citizen participation in governance and public service delivery is increasingly pursued in a bid to improve the performance of governments. Indeed, improving delivery of public services continues to be a key objective that has occupied the agenda of public administrators and researchers. Faced with constraints and failures of centralized service delivery especially at the local level, governments have turned to decentralized mechanisms of service delivery (Bardhan, 2002; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Robinson, 2007). According to Azfar, et al., (1999:1) decentralization has involved ‘the transfer of administrative, fiscal and political *powers and* functions of the central government to lower-level governments’ [italics added]. The number of countries adopting it, and the magnitude of implementation has made decentralization a key global trend in public administration and management in the last three decades (Azfar, et al., 1999; Ahmad et al., 2005; Steiner, 2005). In a World Bank policy research paper on decentralization and service delivery, Ahmad, et al., (2005:1) observe that in the period 1980-2005 ‘over 75 countries had attempted to transfer responsibilities of the state to lower tiers of government’.

Of interest is that while the earlier focus of decentralization was on transfer of resources and functions to improve administrative and service delivery outcomes, recent shift has been on the government’s relationship with the citizens (Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007). The shift has been occasioned by what Hayden (2007:216) terms ‘an assumption that development [...] is the product of what people decide to do themselves to improve their livelihoods’. With people as the focus, decentralization efforts now have citizens’ empowerment and participation in decision making at their core. In fact Steiner (2005:6 citing Litvack and Seddon, 1999) notes:

‘The potential of decentralization for higher popular participation through local elections and opportunities for people to get involved in public decision-making has played a key role in the drive towards decentralization’.

This has been in the context of increasing focus on democratic governance, whose core principles include participation, transparency, accountability, subsidiarity and separation of powers (Cheema, 2007). In this context, decentralization is seen as a conducive means of achieving the principles, by what Cheema (*ibid*, p.171) calls, ‘providing an institutional framework at the sub-national level through which groups and citizens can organize themselves and participate in political and economic decisions affecting them’. Robinson (2007:1) advances that such an arrangement is based on the assumption that the local government units will ‘be more responsive to the needs of the citizens and take their preferences into account in determining the type of services to be provided, the level of resources required, and the optimal means of ensuring effective delivery’. This requires local government units that have the political space and capacity to make and effect decisions. It is for this reason that decentralization¹ has been favoured and promoted internationally (Blunt and Turner, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite the theoretical underpinnings and advocacy for citizen participation in decentralized service delivery, evidence on the resulting impact is mixed at best. Available studies look at how decentralization enhances participation (Von Braun and Grote, 2002; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Kauzya, 2007; Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007); design and

¹ This is particularly in its political/democratic form. See also Steiner, 2005; Robinson 2007; Blunt & Turner, 2007.

emerging mechanisms of participation in sub-national governments (Azfar, et al., 1999; Kauzya, 2007; United Nations (UN), 2008; John, 2009; Matovu, 2011; Joshi and Houtzager, 2012); and, factors influencing citizen participation in local governments (Esonu and Kavanamur, 2011; Yang and Pandey, 2011; Bay, 2011; Michels, 2012). However, few studies have examined the direct impact of participation on decentralized service delivery outcomes especially in the developing countries (Putnam, 1993 cited in Azfar, et al., 1999; Fiszbein, 1997; Isham and Kähkönen, 1999; Devas and Grant, 2003).

In the case of Kenya, a key aspect of local government reform starting in the late 1990s has been to improve local service delivery by, among other means, institutionalizing citizen's voice in decision making. This came against a background of poor performance in service delivery, huge debt burdens, and gross mismanagement of resources in Local Authorities (LAs). The formal (state) mechanism established for citizen participation has been the Local Authorities Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) (Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), 2001). Established in 2001, LASDAP was to ensure that citizens residing in each LA's jurisdiction participated in decision making, implementation and monitoring of service delivery. In 2010, Kenya promulgated a new constitution that overhauls the current local government system by establishing 47 county governments² (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Article 196 of the constitution expressly obligates the county governments to institutionalize citizen participation in its decision making processes. This is expected to improve the governance of the devolved governments including service delivery.

² The county governments will come into force after the next general election in March 2013.

The move to a new system comes against a background of little evidence on how citizen participation in the past (i.e. through LASDAP) has influenced local service delivery is seen as a major research concern. Available studies have looked at different aspects of LASDAP in the broader aspect of local government reforms (Devas and Grant, 2003; Lubaale, et al., 2007; Syagga & Associates, 2007; Oyugi & Kibua, 2008; Cifuentes, 2008). However, none has expressly sought to establish the direct link between participation of citizens in LASDAP and performance of local service delivery in LAs. This study sought to fill this gap as it would provide helpful ideas on how to structure the new framework of citizen participation towards effectiveness.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The overall purpose of this study was to understand the link between citizen participation and service delivery in local government. This was in order to contribute to the discussion on how best to institutionalize participation in the county governments in Kenya. By investigating citizen participation in LAs in Kenya during the period 2002-2010, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) To establish the nature of citizen participation in decentralized service delivery;
- (b) To investigate the influence of citizen participation in Kenya's decentralized service delivery; and,
- (c) To propose a framework for institutionalizing meaningful citizen participation in the *new* local government system.

1.4 Research questions

The above objectives were met by answering the following three corresponding questions:

- (a) What has been the nature of citizen participation in local governance in Kenya?
- (b) How has citizen participation influenced local service delivery in Kenya?
- (c) What should be the imperatives of an effective framework of citizen participation in Kenya?

CHAPTER 2: STATE-OF-THE-ART ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECENTRALIZED SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1 Defining the Concepts

2.1.1 Decentralization and Decentralized Service Delivery

According to Rondinelli (1999:2) decentralization entails ‘the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector’. The transfer can be through deconcentration, delegation, devolution or privatization/deregulation and involves (a combination of) dimensions of fiscal, administrative, political and economic powers and functions (Rondinelli, 1981, 1999; Steiner, 2005; Rondinelli & Cheema, 2007; Phillip, 2009). Services whose delivery and financing is oftenly decentralized include but are not limited to education, health, water, sanitation, public transport and infrastructure, roads maintenance, fire, housing and social welfare (Robinson, 2007). These are services which according to Azfar, et al., (1999:2) should have ‘little inter-jurisdictional spillover effect’. Steiner (2005) summarizes the relationships between the various types and dimensions of decentralization as shown in Table 2.1. In practice the dimensions do not interact in as a neat a way as the table suggests but instead various degrees of each dimension produce complex decentralized systems. Conyers (2007:18) in her study on *Decentralization and Service Delivery: Lessons from Sub-Saharan Africa* best summarizes this complexity of decentralization design when she notes:

‘The term is used to refer to anything from the deconcentration of administrative responsibilities within a single government agency to the devolution of power over all basic local services to semi-autonomous local authorities. It is also used to describe the transfer of power to a

wide range of geographical levels, from the regional or state level to that of local governments or communities’.

Table 2.1: Types and Dimensions of decentralization

Type	De-concentration	Delegation	Devolution	Privatization
Dimension				
Administrative				
Fiscal				
Political				
Economic/Market				

Source: Steiner, 2005, p. 10

As shown in Table 2.1 there are four main dimensions that decentralization takes which yield at least four types of decentralization systems. They are:

- A. *Administrative Decentralization* that involves the transfer of central government structures and bureaucracies to local level (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). It entails:
 - (a) Deconcentration, where the authorities at the sub-national level plan and deliver services while remaining fully accountable to the appointing central office. There may be levels of citizen involvement but the local officials are ‘subject to directives from above’ (Steiner, 2005:9) some of which may negate the preferences of the local population. However, Blunt and Turner (2007) argue that deconcentration can deliver on the citizen expectations by ensuring equity in resource distribution, stability and consistency of resource allocation and highly skilled manpower available to the local population.

- (b) Delegation, where the central government transfers service delivery responsibilities to semi autonomous government agencies or non-state organizations³ that are fully accountable to the assigning ministry or department. The delegated authority may include cost recovery through charging fees for the services delivered.
- B. *Political Decentralization*⁴ which is also referred to as democratic decentralization entails the transfer of administrative, fiscal and political powers and functions of public service delivery to elected local governments (Rondinelli, 1981, 1999; Azfar et al., 1999, 2004; Conyers, 2007; Robinson, 2007). It takes the shape of devolution and is the most far reaching type of decentralization as the local governments have the discretionary space to make decisions and implement them within their jurisdiction (Steiner, 2005; Kauzya, 2007; Phillip, 2009). These governments by design are expected to be downwardly accountable to the citizens, horizontally accountable to the elected officials and upwardly accountable to the central government (Devas & Grant, 2003). Political decentralization is seen as the most conducive approach towards effective citizen participation in influencing local service delivery (Kauzya, 2007; Brinkerhoff, et al., 2007).
- C. *Fiscal decentralization* entails the ‘means and mechanisms of fiscal cooperation in sharing public revenues among all levels of government’ (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007:7). Four aspects that entail effective fiscal decentralization are the assigning of clear expenditure responsibilities; clear revenue responsibilities;

³ Non-State Organizations (NSO) include the private sector and civil society organizations. They are also referred to as Non-State Actors (NSA).

⁴ This study is in the context of political (democratic) decentralization.

intergovernmental fiscal transfer mechanisms from the central to local governments; and authorization for borrowing and revenue mobilization through loan guarantees from the central government (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2005; Phillip, 2009). Fiscal decentralization is rarely implemented alone but rather accompanies political and administrative decentralization. According to Wachira (2010) fiscal decentralization is also pursued to ‘facilitate and enhance citizen participation in identifying their development priorities’. This argument underscores the primary role of citizens in ensuring resources are economically, efficiently and effectively applied for their development.

- D. *Economic or Market Decentralization* entails among other things, privatization of state enterprises and deregulation of markets (Cheema & Rondinelli, 2007). According to Phillip (2009:8), privatization includes at least three aspects, that is, ‘allowing private enterprises to perform functions that had been monopolized by government; contracting out the provision or management of public services or facilities to commercial enterprises; and, financing public sector programmes through the capital market’. Deregulation entails ‘reducing the legal constraints’ hence allowing a greater role of non-state actors in public service provision (ibid, 2009:8).

Proponents of decentralization argue that it improves governance and local public service provision in several ways (see Azfar, et al., 1999; Ahmad, et al., 2005; Robinson, 2007; Mwenda, 2010). First, proximity to the citizens provides better understanding of their needs and hence improves efficiency of resource allocation. Secondly, it promotes accountability through provision of information to local residents. Thirdly, it reduces corruption in government by distributing authority over public goods and services to different actors who provide checks on each other.

Fourthly, it improves cost recovery by increasing the willingness of service consumers to pay for the services as they match their preferences. Fifthly, by enhancing the voice of citizens in decision making processes, decentralization can facilitate equitable distribution of services especially to marginalized and poor communities. Implied in these arguments is that the local government is in touch with the citizens it seeks to serve. Also that there are mechanisms citizens to demand the necessary accountability, provide information on their preferences and that the local government has the capacity to respond effectively. This may not always be the case (Steiner, 2005).

The above notwithstanding there have been arguments against decentralized service delivery. First, it has been cited that the difficulties of policy coordination between the various levels of government can undermine development outcomes (Azfar, Kähkönen and Meagher, 2001). Secondly, there is a likely capture of the sub-national units by the local elites - especially where the citizens' awareness and collective action is low - who collude to the detriment of the majority by hindering service delivery (Cheema, 2007). Thirdly, Mwenda (2010:9 citing Barret, et al., 2007) advances that where the design and implementation is poor, decentralized service delivery would be entangled in the inefficiencies transferred from the central government such as 'inefficient utilization of resources and lack of accountability'. Last but not least, and emanating from poor accountability and enforcement mechanisms, decentralized service delivery can permit 'greater levels of corruption and mismanagement of resources' (*ibid*, p. 9). These constraints are particularly severe in weak states which according to Hayden (2007:220) are 'characterized by the prevalence of informal over formal rules and patronage over policy'. In such states, Hayden (*ibid*, p.226) advises, 'it makes sense to encourage a bottom-up or demand-driven approach to development that is based on creating policy and decision space for local actors'. It is in light of these and other shortcomings that citizen participation in decentralized

service delivery has been increasingly supported so as to provide the necessary impetus to keep the local governments focused on the objects of decentralization.

2.1.2 Citizen Participation in Decentralized Service Delivery

Citizen participation, according to Devas and Grant (2003:309), is the ‘ways in which citizens exercise influence and control over the decisions that affect them’. Gaventa and Valderrama (1999:4 citing Cunill, 1997) refer to it as ‘the intervention of citizens with determined social interests in public activities’. This can be directly or indirectly. Direct participation, the focus of this study, occurs where citizens - individually or in various forms of self-organization - are actively engaged in the decision-making processes on matters affecting them. Indirect participation is where citizens express their preferences through their elected and other representatives. It (indirect participation) is also referred to as political participation as the citizens’ role is limited to selecting representatives (*ibid*, p.2). Citizen participation can be both a goal of and a means to effective decentralization (Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) (2006). It is a goal, when decentralization creates opportunities for participation by bringing government closer to the people (Robinson, 2007). In that case interaction of the citizens and the state is expected to increase when there is proximity to government institutions. On the other hand, it is a means to effective decentralization where the citizen through their collective action provide the demand-side input of service preferences as well as the necessary pressure of ensuring that those empowered to deliver services perform their duties accordingly.

Citizen participation has come to the centre of decentralization reforms as a result of what Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:1) term, ‘the transition from government decentralization to decentralized governance’. Promoted by economic and political pressures and conditions of international development partners, governments

especially in developing and least developed countries are increasingly incorporating the principles of good governance in their decentralization efforts, hence decentralized governance (*ibid*). Accordingly, it is argued that successful decentralization is one that allows for increased participation of the citizens in the policy cycle i.e. in planning, implementation and evaluation. It enables the strengthening of local people's capacity in decision making by 'providing greater access to local political participation' (Singh, 2007).

As a means to effective decentralization, citizen participation improves service delivery by affecting its key determinants including allocative efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, equity, quality of service and cost recovery (Azfar, et al., 1999; Robinson, 2007). It enhances allocative efficiency by providing the means for 'demand revelation thus matching of allocations to user preferences' (Azfar, et al., 1999, p. 13). On accountability and reduction of corruption, citizen participation facilitates information dissemination and increased public awareness on the actions of government. This is particularly so where it 'increases the political cost of inefficient and inadequate public decisions' (*ibid*, p.13). By participation, it is argued that citizens cultivate ownership of the policy decisions undertaken and thus increases their willingness to pay for services hence there are higher chances of cost recovery. Inclusion of the marginalized and the poor in decision making would lead to pro-poor policies hence assuring equitable service provision. Quality of service is likely to be a result of citizens input and feedback on the standards of services expected.

The case against citizen participation has been advanced based on a number of arguments. First, its critics cite the costs in time and finances that come with participatory mechanisms. Secondly, they argue that in any society the citizens may

not always agree on what their priority needs are and hence there can be difficulties in agreeing what should be done, resulting in delays in service delivery.

2.2 Mechanisms of Citizen Participation

Mechanisms are the instruments or channels that are used to achieve an intended objective. Mechanisms⁵ of citizen participation can largely be categorized into vote and voice (Kauzya, 2007). Vote is the means through which citizens select their representatives at the local level. Decentralization facilitates this by putting in place structures that allow citizens to exercise their voting power with limited ‘hindrance or interference from the central government’ (*ibid*, p. 76). Voting can be limiting as participation is only interpreted as elections, which in many countries happens once in every three to five years. Participation in terms of voice is where citizens have the power to influence ‘the making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions that concern their socio-politico-economic wellbeing and to demand accountability from their local leadership’ (*ibid*, p. 78). Kauzya (*ibid*, p.76) posits that voice is facilitated by decentralization ‘when there is a transfer of power and authority for making socio-politico-economic decisions from the central government to local government and communities’. On a similar note, Cheema (2007, p.170) advances that, ‘citizens are more likely to actively participate in the local political process where local government is perceived to be sufficiently autonomous in making political decisions affecting them’. Theory suggests that the benefits of citizen participation are optimized when both vote and voice mechanisms are institutionalized in decentralized systems (Azfar, et al., 1999). These, as Brinkerhoff, et al., (2007:189)

⁵ At a functional level the mechanisms can also be categorized as state and non-state mechanisms. State mechanism refer to those spaces created by the government for citizen participation, while non-state mechanisms refers to those spaces created by non-state actors in a bid to engage and influence the management of decentralized services.

observe is in appreciation that ‘citizen participation and responsiveness to citizens’ needs and preferences are important components of democratic governance’.

Some of the commonly used mechanisms (Azfar, et al., 1999, 2004) are here discussed as follows:

- (a) *Elections* are a basic mechanism through which citizens express their policy preferences. This is by voting for the candidate (political party) that offers the promise that matches the expectations of citizens. However, electoral practice has shown that in many countries, promises made during elections are rarely kept. Further, few political party manifestos express clear policy programmes that they intend to pursue once in office.
- (b) *Surveys* can be used by local governments to establish the expectations and satisfaction of citizens with service delivery. The concern with surveys has to do with sampling of respondents. Where it is poorly done then the views may not be representative of the citizens’ preferences and may lead to ineffective policy choices.
- (c) *Town meetings/public hearings/hotlines* can be used to provide a direct platform where citizens articulate their preferences, disappointments and other proposals on improving service delivery.
- (d) *Direct community involvement* in service delivery takes the shape of service implementation and management committees. It also involves citizen’s contribution in kind (such as providing materials, expertise and labour), and in cash in the delivery of public goods.
- (e) *Exit* has been called ‘voting with your feet’ (Azfar, et al., 1999:18 citing Hirschman, 1970). This is where the citizens can either move to another jurisdiction that is more responsive to their needs or simply switch the service provider. This means that there have to be an alternative which depend on the nature of the service (*ibid*). For instance in health and education, citizens

can shift to private providers of the said services. However for regulatory services where only government is the provider, the switching option is unviable.

- (f) *Participatory planning and budgeting* is where citizens participate in formal platforms where plans and budgets for service delivery are made. This depends on the willingness of the local government to create such forums and to seek mobilize the citizens to participate. The awareness and capacity of the citizens is thus a key factor in this mechanism of participation.
- (g) *Monitoring and Evaluation* is the last, yet important, opportunity for citizen participation. Citizens can engage in closely following the implementation of services to ensure that it is according to the plans and that resources are put to their rightful use. This presupposes that the citizens have correct information of the project/service being provided. In evaluation the citizens participate in the whole project/service review to ascertain if it is accomplishing its intended objectives.

2.3 Evidence of the influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery

In discussing the influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery it is worth noting two points. First, there are other factors that may be equally influential⁶. Thus attributing the local service delivery outcomes singly on citizen participation becomes a difficult task. Further, Cheema and Rondinelli (2007:9) observe that the relationship between citizen participation and decentralization is

⁶ These other factors include the political framework, form of local leadership, fiscal aspects of decentralization, transparency of government actions, the effectiveness of the civil society, aspects of the social structure and the capacity of the sub-national governments. See Azfar, et al., 1999, 2004; Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007, Yang & Pandey, 2011.

‘conditioned by complex political, historical, social, and economic factors’ which differ in magnitude and importance from country to country. Secondly, despite the international support for citizen participation in decentralized service delivery, there is a dearth of data on the resulting influence on service delivery. Robinson (2007:7) observes that a major problem with available empirical literature is that ‘there is no systematic or comparative evidence on whether increased citizen participation in decentralized local governance generates better outputs in provision of education, health, drinking water and sanitation services’. Where data is available it is ‘from single countries and sector or is anecdotal and temporarily specific and highly localized thus rendering generalization problematic’ (*ibid*, p.7).

That said, a couple of relevant studies are highlighted here. One study was on demand-responsiveness of decentralized water service delivery in Central Java, Indonesia (Isham and Kähkönen, 1999). It found that only if users were directly involved in service design and selection, were services likely to match users’ preferences. Informed participation saw households willing to pay for more expensive technologies than the leaders would have chosen for them. Another study in Colombia by Fiszbein (1997) found that community participation increased demands for effective local governments and also opened the window for building the capacity of the citizens. A third study of Italian regional governments (Putnam, 1993 cited in Azfar, et al., 1999:15) found that ‘governments that were more open to constituent pressure, managed and delivered services more efficiently’. Devas and Grant (2003) established a shift in expenditure priorities in local authorities in Kenya as a result of citizen involvement in decision making through LASDAP.

A key internationally recognized successful case of local participation is that of participatory budgeting and auditing in Brazil’s southern city of Porto Alegre (United

Nations (UN), 2005; Cheema, 2007; Van Speier, 2009). Beginning in 1989 when the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) won the municipal elections, local assemblies have been organized to propose, debate and decide on ‘allocations and spending of the municipal investment budget’ (Cheema, 2007:182). As a result, as of 1996 the ‘number of households with access to water services had increased by 18 per cent, the municipal sewage system was expanded by 39 per cent and the number of children enrolled in public schools doubled’ (*ibid*, p.182 citing various World Bank reports). The observed outcomes were found to have increased the trust of the people in government and motivated them to pay taxes leading to a 50 per cent increase in government revenues. Van Speier (2009:157) in his review of Ian Bruce’s book, *The Porto Alegre Alternative: Direct Democracy in Action* has observed that participation energized citizen involvement and especially of the poor and illustrated the ‘positive effects that government-supported citizen participation can have on urban planning’.

Michels (2012) in a study on *Citizen Participation in Local Policy Making: Design and Democracy* in developed countries⁷ found an impact in 11 cases of participatory governance⁸ and five of the deliberative forums⁹. The study found that citizen participation had a clear impact on policy through participatory governance than through deliberative forums. Notable in the above studies is that the influential potential of citizen participation is only unleashed when other enabling factors are addressed. These are discussed in the next section.

⁷ This included 20 Cases of Participatory Governance and 19 Deliberative Forums in Australia, Germany, Netherlands, United States, Britain, Spain, Ireland, Israel and Austria.

⁸ Participatory governance is used in this study to refer to platforms where citizens have an active role in working with government to make policy choices.

⁹ Deliberative forums are used in this study to refer to platforms where citizens are only involved in discussions on policy alternatives but decisions are made by the government.

2.4 Factors leading to a positive citizen influence on decentralized service delivery

The above observations point to the fact that there are conditions under which increased citizen participation in local governance leads to improved service delivery. According to Robinson (2007:13) such conditions are a combination of ‘political, institutional, financial and technical factors’. Azfar, et al., (1999:4) advance that overall ‘the performance of decentralized service delivery depends on the design of decentralization and the institutional arrangements that govern its implementation’. It also depends partly on the ‘effectiveness of civil society and on certain aspects of the social structure within the jurisdiction’ (Azfar, et al., 1999:19). The capacity of the citizens participating is also an important factor. Their education, the socio-economic status, their networks are all important factors in determining whose voice gets heard and what decisions get adopted (John, 2009).

Information – its quality, accessibility, accuracy – is also a key determinant in ensuring an effective influence. This is the conclusion that Devas and Grant (2003:315) make in their study of citizen participation in local government in Kenya and Uganda when they write that ‘information needs to be shared widely and strategically’. Other factors that they (*ibid*) find critical are ‘committed local leadership and external pressure from the civil society organizations, the central government and development partners’. This is in agreement with the findings of Yang and Pandey (2011:889) who establish that ‘public management factors matter in citizen participation’. They find that key aspects of public management such as the level of red tape, elected official support, hierarchical authority and transformational leadership are key to determining the impact that citizen participation has on service delivery. Particularly they establish that red tape and hierarchical authority are

negatively associated with participation outcomes. Positive outcomes are associated with elected official support, transformational leadership of the chief executive officials, and, the participant competence and representativeness. The above variables were found to be significant even when ‘participant competence, representativeness, and involvement mechanisms’ (*ibid*, p.889) are controlled for. It thus occurs that effective participation is a factor of interrelated variables.

A similar fact was underscored by Bay’s (2011) study on *Citizen Participation and Social Service Delivery in Nicaragua* which established that:

‘Municipal political configurations, the local balance of partisan power, legacies of conflict and cooperation, local leadership and the availability of subsidies determine who participates, how they participate and the quality of and access to social service delivery under participatory governance’.

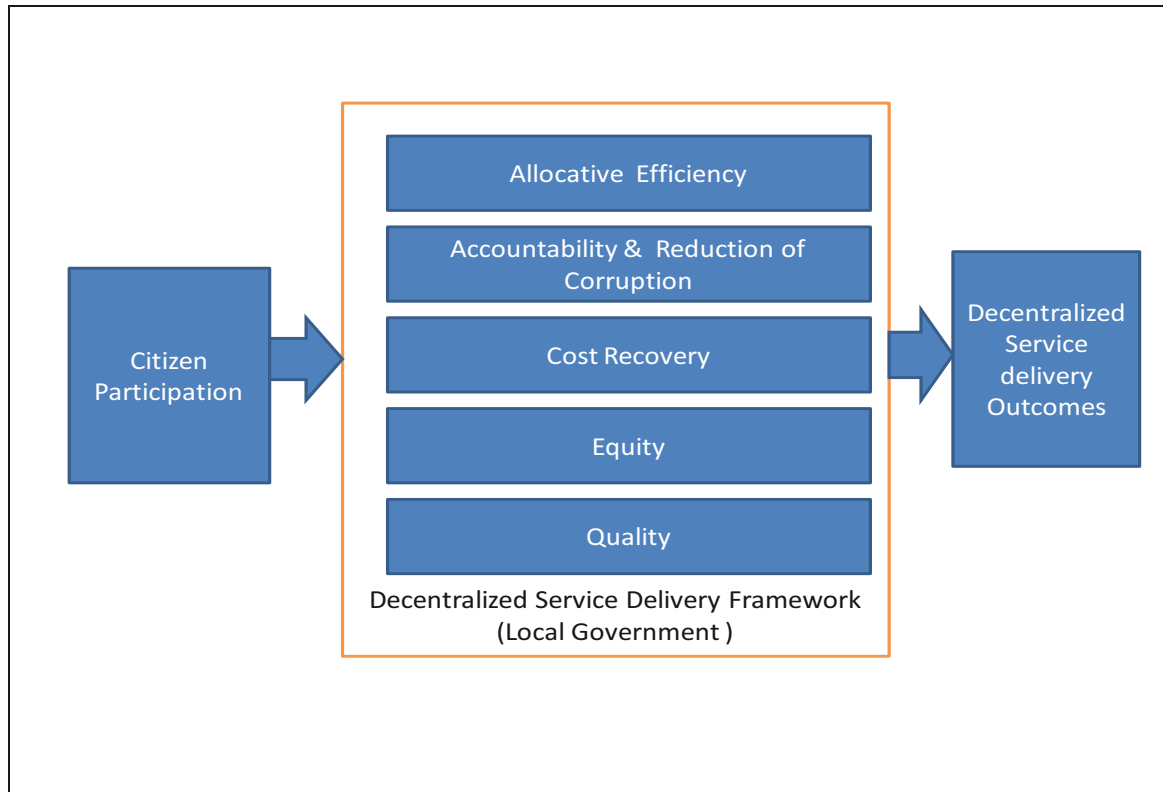
These factors point to the need for intentional action and will of both the government officials and the citizens in making participation work. In fact, Bay (*ibid* citing Avritzer, 2009) observes that participation is only likely to work where government officials (especially politicians) and citizens agree. It is only in such an environment that citizen’s preferences are likely to be taken seriously.

CHAPTER 3: ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The increasing support of citizen participation in decentralized local governance warrants a closer look. This is particularly so in the face of limited empirical evidence to support the theoretically based positive effects attributed to direct citizen participation. Thus the question is, how does citizen participation influence decentralized service delivery? And how can such influence be determined? To carry out this inquiry this study assumed the argument that citizen participation influences service delivery outcomes through impacting its determinants or characteristics that include efficient allocation of resources, equity in service delivery, accountability and reduction of corruption, quality of services, and cost recovery (Azfar, et al., 1999; Von Braun and Grote, 2002).

As shown in Figure 3.1 citizen participation was taken as an input factor that influences the determinants of decentralized service delivery outcomes. The framework is highly simplified in the sense that in its very design it suggests that the various determinants of service delivery have an equal weight and that citizen participation, regardless of the form it takes impacts on each determinant equally. This is far from the reality but is helpful for establishing a framework of analysis. For instance, direct participation of citizens in implementing a project will not have the same effect as participation in identifying which services are to be provided, on say, reduction of corruption. This is also greatly affected by the decision-space allowed to citizens to effect change on the service delivery cycle and the point of entry of citizen participation. This is in relation to the service delivery cycle, that is, agenda setting, planning and budgeting, implementation, and evaluation. For instance allocative efficiency and equity would be greatly impacted if citizen participation occurs at the planning and budgeting and implementation stages as compared to that at the monitoring and evaluation stage.

Figure 3.1: Linking Citizen Participation and Decentralized Service Delivery



Source: Authors own construction based on Azfar, et al., 1999; 2004.

Citizen participation, the independent variable, is operationalized in terms of the mechanisms or instruments through which citizens have a contact with decentralized service delivery. In this study it narrows on one mechanism of voice relating to the stages of service delivery, that is, planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. The mechanism is LASDAP and is specific to the case selected for this study. In this context participation is assessed by in terms of how and where in the service delivery cycle the citizens participate.

The dependent variable, decentralized service delivery, is operationalized by indicators of allocative efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, equity, quality of service and cost recovery. These are picked as key indicators of whether service delivery has improved or not, in line with the common objectives of decentralization. In this study this indicators are conceptualized as follows:-

(a) *Allocative efficiency*: This is the extent to which the services delivered match the preferences of the citizens. It is assessed by the extent to which citizen needs expressed in proposals are reflected in the decisions and final services provided. It is expected that through participation by citizens, local governments have better knowledge of the preferences and hence can vary services to suit demands (Azfar, et al., 1999:2). Further where exit options exist, citizens can put pressure by moving to jurisdictions where their needs are met effectively. The resulting competition and fear of loss of tax revenues is likely to make local governments keener in their resource allocation so as to satisfy the citizens in their jurisdiction (Oates, 1999). In this study allocative efficiency is measured as the degree to which services provided match citizen preferences and the satisfaction level of citizens with it.

(b) *Accountability and reduction of corruption*: Accountability is the practice where service delivery agents make public and are responsible for their actions. In this case it is the extent to which officials of the local government give account to the citizens on the resources at their disposal and how they have been used in service delivery. Reduction of corruption is the extent to which abuse and misuse of public resources for private gain has been controlled and minimized. Where those charged with decentralized service delivery apply all resources for the intended purposes. It is also seen as the measure in which transparency through information sharing is practice. According to Devas

and Grant (2003) enhanced citizen participation can strengthen accountability. In so doing ‘citizens should have accurate and accessible information about local government: about available resources, performance, service levels, budgets, accounts and other financial indicators’ (*ibid*, p. 310). This indicator will be assessed based on records of information accessibility, level of information asymmetries in the local government, and existing structures of demand and supply of accountability.

(c) *Equity* has to do with geographical and demographic targeting of services especially to the most needy groups in the society. This includes targeting the poor and marginalized who have previously been ignored. It implies that citizens contribute according to ability but are allocated according to need. Although Azfar, et al., (1999) observe that genuine decentralization results in inequity, they do argue that local initiative (participation) coupled with equalization transfers can remedy the problem. In this study equity is assessed as the extent to which the voice and preferences of the marginalized are incorporated in decision making.

(d) *Cost Recovery* refers to the extent to which services provided can meet their own costs. This may be by cost sharing, charging of the full cost of services, or by optimal application of the resources available so that no debts are incurred. It is an outcome of how consumers are willing to pay for the service. Azfar, et al., (1999:3) advance that ‘households are likely to be more willing to pay for and maintain services that match their demand’. Cost recovery is most effective in an environment where citizen’s choices are adhered to and where there is transparency on service costs. This will be assessed by the extent to which beneficiary citizens have been willing to pay

and what they actually pay to ensure that services provide meet their running costs.

- (e) *Quality of service* refers to the extent the services provided meet the needs of the citizens. It is assessed in the satisfaction rating of the citizens as to the value added by their use of the service.

In analyzing the links, the citizen participation mechanism was matched with these five measures of decentralized service delivery using the template shown in Table 3.1. The filled table is presented in Table 4.6.

Table 3.1: Template for matching citizen participation mechanism and Service delivery indicators

Service Delivery Indicators	Effect of Citizen Participation
Allocative Efficiency	
Accountability & Reduction of Corruption	
Equity	
Quality of Service	
Cost Recovery	

Source: Authors Construction

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND DECENTRALIZED SERVICE DELIVERY IN KENYA

4.1 Methodology

This section presents the case of citizen participation in decentralized service delivery in Kenya. It used a case study approach and employed secondary data¹⁰ from available literature as well as personal experiences of the researcher¹¹.

4.2 Brief History of Decentralization and Decentralized Service Delivery in Kenya

Kenya is a country in the East of Africa with a population of about 40 million people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2010). It was colonized by the British and hence its politico-administrative system has been largely influenced by the Westminster model¹². At independence in 1963, Kenya adopted a quasi-federal system of government. This was a radical shift from the highly centralized system that had been used by the colonial government. The independence Constitution of Kenya of 1963 created 7 semi-autonomous regional governments and a central government with its headquarters in Nairobi. The regional governments had a

¹⁰ See Appendix III for a summary of the main data sources used to assemble this case study.

¹¹ The researcher has been working at the Institute of Economic Affairs - Kenya on projects of empowering citizens to participate in local governance in Kenya for a period of 4 years (February 2007 - March 2011).

¹² Kenya's system has been considered as a hybrid of the Westminster parliamentary democracy and the American presidential system. This is where the president is both head of state and government and selects his cabinet from elected members of parliament. However the new constitution that came to force in August 2010 made a Kenya a pure presidential system. See Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

legislative assembly and an executive committee that was to ensure the handling of all functions devolved to them. Within each region, substantial responsibilities were decentralized to local governments including basic education, primary health care, business regulation, water, and, sanitation. Local governments were divided into wards through which members of the local assemblies (councilors) were elected.

The regional system was short lived as barely a year later the constitution was amended making Kenya a unitary state with a strong central government (Constitution of Kenya (Amended), 1964). In the place of regional governments, the country reverted to the Provincial Administration (PA)¹³ system that had been in existence under the colonial government¹⁴ (Omolo, 2010). This was the beginning of a process that would see a great degree of centralization of power and service delivery throughout the republic of Kenya. The local government system was reviewed under the Local Government Act Cap. 265 and became fully subject to the central government through the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). This served to weaken the autonomy of Local Authorities (LAs)¹⁵ and also affected their capacity to deliver services. LAs were further weakened when their functions in education, health and roads were transferred to central government ministries in 1969 (see Transfer of

¹³ PA is an administrative structure under the office of the president and is divided into six levels i.e. Province headed by a Provincial Commissioner (PC), District headed by District Commissioner (DC), Division headed by District Officer (DO), Location headed by the Chief, and Sub-Location headed by a Sub-Chief and Village headed by a Headman. All this are appointed by the president and ensure control of public affairs. It has been abused by subsequent governments in a bid to consolidate their power over local affairs.

¹⁴ The colonial government had used the provincial administration to control, coordinate, and, mobilize the public for development. It acted in an executive capacity as an agent of the governor ensuring that the governor had full control over the districts. See Gertzel, 1970.

¹⁵ Since the review of the local government system in 1965, the local government units have been referred to as Local Authorities (LAs). The abbreviation is used henceforth in this study.

Functions Act of 1969). This included the transfer of personnel dealing with these services to the respective ministries and withdrawal of the budgetary allocations for the said functions. In 1974, their main source of internal revenue for LAs, the Graduated Personal Tax (GPT), was abolished by the central government. With their political, administrative and fiscal base weakened, LAs remained a shell of their original shape and with a myriad of difficulties in service delivery.

In the place of LAs, which remained in a weak state, the central government strengthened its de-concentrated service delivery through the districts and coordinated by the PA¹⁶. The key point was in 1983 when the government adopted the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) mechanism as its official decentralization policy (Barkan & Chege, 1989; Alila & Omosa, 1996; Chitere & Ireri, 2008). Thus the district became the focal unit of decentralized service delivery. DFRD's performance as a decentralized strategy for participatory planning and development was minimal due to among other factors, dominance of government officials in the process, lack of mechanisms to build the awareness and capacity of community members to effectively participate (Chitere & Ireri, 2008). Failures of the DFRD indicated the limitations of this approach although it has continued to be used by the central government to date¹⁷.

From the foregoing, Kenya, despite having the LAs, has maintained a highly centralized government that according to Mwenda (2010:10) has had 'an overbearing control over the sub-national governments'. As a result 'the country has had no real

¹⁶ Each ministry and department of the central government has its offices at most of the levels of the PA and their officers are accountable to the respective PA officers i.e. to the PC at the Provincial level and to the DC at the District level.

¹⁷ This has been in a revised version following recommendations from various stakeholders including development partners such as GTZ. See Schall, 1998.

experience with decentralization (*especially political decentralization*)’ (*ibid*, p. 11, italics added). As a result, the country’s attempts to decentralize local service delivery has taken at least three¹⁸ structures namely – district system, local government system and constituency development. Along these three local structures, the central government in a raft of political moves has created a myriad of decentralized funds¹⁹. These are transferred/disbursed through one of the three units or through two to three simultaneously for development purposes. This tri-approach practice over geographically overlapping units has created confusion, duplication and made service delivery expensive and ineffective (Menon, et al., 2008; Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) & Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN), 2010).

However, despite their insubordination due to political expedience, LAs remain the best example for decentralized service delivery that entails the political, fiscal and administrative dimensions of decentralization (Omolo, 2010). LAs are still expected to ‘provide facilities and services necessary for local and national development’ (Oyugi and Kibua, 2008:199). In the late 1990’s as part of the Kenya government’s public sector restructuring, there was a re-focus on the decentralized service delivery through LAs (Oyugi & Kibua, 2006). This was in the wake of international focus on deepening local democracy and good governance. The recommendations of a

¹⁸ There is a fourth system considered the Non-State (Private Sector) System where Non-State Actors have delved into service delivery where the state apparatus have failed especially in rural areas and urban informal settlements. Services include basic sanitation, water, health care, agricultural production, and education. This is both for profit and non-profit. See KIPPRA, 2006; Menon, et al., 2008 and KHRC & SPAN, 2010.

¹⁹ Decentralized funds as used here refer to ‘those funds that were availed to a decentralized or devolved authority from the central government to be applied or expended by the decentralized or devolved authority for developmental purposes’ (see KIPPRA, 2006:13). See appendix II for details of the three structures and the funds allocated to them through decentralization.

commission of inquiry²⁰ into the plight of LAs in 1995 saw the launching of the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP). KLGRP was established to coordinate reforms and management of Local Authorities (Hongo, 2010). This according to Oyugi and Kibua (2008:199) was to involve ‘restructuring of the local public sector, improving local public expenditure management, and to strengthen local level accountability mechanisms’. This was to focus on each of the 175 LAs categorized as shown in table Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Classification and Number of Local Authorities in Kenya

Type of Local Authority	Number
City council	3
Municipal Council	43
Town Council	62
County council	67

Source: Mboga, 2009

Politically, each local authority has a council comprised of elected, nominated and appointed members²¹ that provides oversight and makes policies and by-laws for application within its jurisdiction. The council provides checks and balances for the executive power within the LA. The city, municipal and town councils have mayors as the political heads while the county councils are headed by chairpersons elected from among the popularly elected councilors. The councils operate on the committee system and the number of committees depends on the services provided by the specific LA.

²⁰ The commission was named *The Omamo Commission* after its chairman Dr. William Odongo Omamo.

²¹ The Local Government Act CAP 265 provides that the nominations and appointments to the councils are approved by the minister for local government. The minister has the power to revoke the nominations and make fresh ones.

Administratively, the LAs have an executive headed by the clerk. The clerk and other senior executive officers are appointed by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). The executive hires members of the public service within the LAs and are responsible for service delivery. Service provided by the LAs is divided into mandatory and permissive functions. Mandatory are those services that each LA must provide and include providing burial sites and burying of destitute persons (Mboga, 2009). Permissive functions are those that a local authority is allowed to carry out depending on its capacity. The permission is given by the minister for local government, although the Local Government Act Cap. 265 does not provide a clear criterion of what should be considered (Mboga, 2009). Services range from markets, parks and gardens, sanitary inspection and refuse disposal, burial grounds and crematoria, fire services and fire brigade, public transport, social welfare services, basic environmental sanitation, roads and drains, water supply, and basic planning and development control among others (Local Government Act cap 265).

On fiscal arrangements, the LAs have internal sources of revenue, receive transfers from the central through the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF Act No. 8 of 1998), and can borrow from the domestic and international markets to meet their budget deficits. LATF is supported by the Local Authority Transfer Fund Regulations of 1999 (LATF Regulations Legal Notice No.142, 1999). The LAs follow the fiscal calendar starting with planning and budgeting, implementation and then evaluation of how resources have been used. LATF was introduced following years of neglect that saw an increased debt burden on the LAs and a decline in service provision due to financial constraints. There was also rampant corruption and mismanagement of the limited resources available (Kibua & Mwabu, 2008). LATF transfers 5 per cent of national income tax from the central government to the 175

LAs divided using a predetermined formula²². Disbursement follows strict regulations that seek to institutionalize fiscal discipline and efficient service delivery. The regulations include that 60 per cent of the budgeted funds are released if the council submits the required budget and has met agreed statutory creditor obligations, and 40 per cent is a performance based component that is released when a council submits the statement of actual revenues and expenditures, statement of the debtors, creditors and debt repayment plan, abstracts of accounts, revenue enhancement plan and the Local authority service delivery action plan (MoLG, 2009). Of relevance to this study is that LATF has been the means of institutionalizing citizens' participation in LAs service delivery processes. Submission of plans developed with the citizen participation is one of the conditions for the disbursement of the 40 per cent performance component of LATF (*ibid*).

4.3 Framework for Citizen Participation in Decentralized Service Delivery in Local Authorities

The direct mechanism of citizen engagement in decentralized service delivery in LAs is the Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP) that was established in 2001²³ to accompany fiscal decentralization under LATF. These two instruments were a direct output of the KLGRP. LASDAP was established through the Ministerial Circular No. 11/2001 on 19th July 2001 (MoLG, 2001) but it was until July 2005 that guidelines were published²⁴ (MOLG, 2009). According to Solomon

²² The formula of sharing the LATF Kitty is as follows: 1.5 million shillings equally to each local authority; 60% in proportion to the total population of each local authority; and 40% in proportion to the urban population of each local authority. For a detailed discussion on LATF see Syagga & Associates, (2007) Independent study on the impact of LATF in Kenya.

²³ LASDAP was applied for the first time in the planning and budgeting for the 2002/2003 fiscal year.

²⁴ The guidelines were based on field experiences of the first three years of use of LASDAP process.

Boit (as cited in Lubaale, et al., 2007:i), the then permanent secretary in the MoLG, LASDAP was to facilitate a ‘participatory planning system, which would directly engage the citizenry in planning, implementing and monitoring service delivery projects in their communities through LA funding’. In so doing LASDAP was expected to ‘improve governance through greater accountability, empowerment and responsiveness to the citizenry’ (*ibid*, p.ix). Taking a bottom-up approach, LASDAP was expected to enhance preference matching and put greater focus on service delivery especially to the ‘least advantage sections of the community’ (*ibid*). It was to enhance ownership of projects and hence their sustainability. In addition to enhancing efficient use of resources and equity in allocation, LASDAP was also to establish an accountability and responsiveness mechanism for local authority officials to the citizens (Lubaale, et al., 2007; Omolo, 2010).

LASDAP was designed to generate a three-year rolling programme of activities setting out the priorities for improving service delivery in each LA (Oyugi and Kibua, 2008). It is a process applied for the allocation and utilization of an identified resource envelope²⁵ under LATF. According to the guidelines²⁶ (MoLG, 2009) the amount allocated to projects/services identified by the LASDAP process should be at least 65 per cent of the service delivery component of LATF which is equivalent to 39 per cent of total LATF allocation. The actual amount to be allocated should be the ‘balance of realistic LA Revenues and Expenditure plus any other donation specific to supporting LASDAP activities’ (*ibid*, p.13). This means that the amount to be

²⁵ The resource envelope of each local authority comprises of the local revenue of the LA and the transfers from the central government.

²⁶ This is the revised edition of the guidelines following the recommendations of a Study on the impact of LASDAP by Lubaale, et al., (2007).

planned for under LASDAP would vary from time to time based on revenues and expenditures of the LAs.

LASDAP²⁷ provides opportunities for citizens to participate in a number of ways and at different levels. First are the *consultative meetings* which are held annually in every ward of the LA convened by the elected councilor of the ward. Notice for the meeting should be for at least one week with notices placed in public facilities like offices, schools, clinics, markets among others. Executive officials of the LA attend the meeting to provide the necessary information. The consultative meeting is open to everyone in the ward. It provides a local platform of identifying priority projects²⁸ to be implemented. Priority should be on projects that enhance poverty alleviation based on poverty demographics of the ward.

Secondly is the *consensus meeting* that brings together the LA's technical team and the representatives elected at the consultative meetings to decide which projects identified should be adopted in the council plan and budget. The agreements of the consensus meeting are drafted into the budget which is then table in a meeting of the full council of the local authority for approval. The regulations provide that the full council can only make changes by referring the matter back to the consensus meeting.

Thirdly, citizens are to participate during implementation through membership in the *project committees*. A maximum of 7 community members are elected on a volunteer basis to take charge of a single project and ensure that it is completed as expected by

²⁷ See appendix 1 for a detail presentation of the LASDAP Process.

²⁸ Services provided under the umbrella of LASDAP are packaged in terms of projects with identifiable geographical locations. They are largely capital in nature.

community. Upon completion the 7 can be retained to be the management committee or other persons are elected.

Fourthly, in *monitoring the project implementation*, the community members together with the project committee have a responsibility to ensure that all requirements of the project are adhered to.

4.4 Empirical Findings on citizen awareness, participation and influence on decentralized service delivery in LAs

4.4.1 Awareness and Participation in various aspects of LASDAP

A starting point is to establish the level of awareness and participation of citizens in the LASDAP process. Table 4.2 shows data from a study conducted by KHRC and SPAN, (2010) on *Harmonization of Decentralized Development in Kenya*. It looks at awareness and participation of citizens in the management of LATF, that is, the LASDAP process in 8 LAs²⁹. A notable observation is that the levels of awareness of LATF and the LASDAP process are high at a national average of 66.4 percent. Awareness was highest in Mumias Constituency (in Mumias Municipal Council) at 81.8 percent and lowest in Baringo Central Constituency (in Municipal Council of Kabarnet) at 41.4 percent.

However, the actual levels of participation are low especially with regard to management of services (10.6%), monitoring of services (12.7%), budgeting and planning (13.3%), and implementation (13.6%). In comparison, participation was

²⁹ In each of the 8 LAs, data was collected from one constituency; hence there may be limitations in detailed generalizations. However the sample provides an overall picture of citizen participation in Kenya.

only higher at project identification (26.4%) which corresponded with a positive response of 39.1 percent that found the services undertaken to meet the community needs. Whereas an average of 10.6 percent of the respondents had personally been involved in the management of local service delivery, it is notable that 47.7 percent indicated that they were aware that citizens are involved in the management. 32.7 percent of the respondents were aware of the management guidelines of LASDAP projects.

From a gender perspective, the study found that males were relatively more aware (57.4%) than females (54%). However the females were more involved in identification of projects, and in budgeting planning. The females also registered a higher satisfaction rate with projects implemented than males at 34.4 and 19.7 percent respectively. Males participated more in implementation, monitoring and management. They (males) were more aware on guidelines and also indicated greater knowledge of citizen involvement in management of the services. On means of communication on management of LATF the study found that most people (14.8%) got information through interpersonal contacts, 10 percent from the radio, and, 10 percent from reports of the LA officials. 7.2 and 1.9 percent got information from the newspaper and television respectively. On the frequency of getting information, 7.4 percent got it always, 22 percent got it sometimes, 27.3 percent got it rarely, 6.4 percent never got it at all, while 1.1 and 35.8 percent had missing information and none applicable respectively.

Table 4.2: Awareness and Citizen Participation in LATF Management (LASDAP Process)

		Local Authority & Constituency ³⁰											
	Gender	City Council of Kisumu	County Council of Taita Taveta	City council of Nairobi	Municipal Council of Kabarnet	Municipal Council of Mumias	Mandera County Council	Nyeri Municipality	County Council Isiolo	Natio			
		Male	Female	57.4	61.7	64.9	58.6	41.4	81.8	72.3	79.7	70.6	66.4
Issue													
Awareness (Yes %)		54.0	19.7										
Citizens' involved in project identification (Yes %)		21.3	19.7										
Citizens' involved in budgeting and planning (Yes %)		9.9	9.8										

³⁰ This is the constituency in which data was collected from in the Local Authority indicated

<i>Citizens' involved in implementation (Yes %)</i>	10.4	13.1	9.9	10.5	28.6	1.4	29.1	7.7	7.2	14.7	13.6
<i>Citizens' involved in monitoring (Yes %)</i>	12.4	13.1	12.3	1.8	30.0	4.3	25.5	10.8	4.3	12.9	12.7
<i>Aware of the management guidelines (%)</i>	26.2	31.1	25.9	19.3	34.3	20.0	61.8	27.8	37.7	35.0	32.7
<i>Citizens are involved in management of services (Yes %)</i>	37.6	42.6	44.4	33.3	40.0	25.7	76.4	56.9	53.6	51.2	47.7
<i>Has been involved in its management (Yes %)</i>	9.9	13.1	9.9	7.0	5.7	7.1	20.0	10.8	13.0	11.0	10.6
<i>Addresses priority needs of community? (Yes %)</i>	34.4	19.7	34.6	31.6	34.3	11.4	69.1	33.8	20.3	78	39.1

Source: Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN), 2010, p. 40

Earlier in 2006, a national baseline survey by the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Analysis and Research (KIPPRA, 2006) on *Decentralized Funds in Kenya* based on a sample of 7 districts³¹ established a similar trend as above. It found that only 29.8 per cent were aware of LATF and participation in analysis, agenda setting, decision making, and, attendance of meetings was below 5 percent in all the sample units.

During the same period, Oyugi and Kibua (2006) in a study on *Planning and Budgeting at the Grassroots level* with a sample of 7 LAs³² found that awareness of LASDAP was low, and participation and representation was poor. It found that most participation was at the point of identifying projects and preparation of what it called ‘wish lists’ of projects (*ibid*, p. 227). On who participates in the LASDAP process, Oyugi and Kibua (*ibid*) found that in all the 7 LAs, there was non-attendance of meetings by the local elites hence there was notable low quality of discussions.

The *Study on the Impact of LASDAP* (Lubaale, et al., 2007) that was commissioned by the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme (KLGRP) to assess the results of six years in the implementation of LASDAP found a similar scenario. It was based on a review of LASDAP documents of all 175 LAs and primary data from ten LAs³³ selected to provide a national picture. On citizen participation it found that LASDAP had ‘enhanced citizen participation and provided the tools for more equitable and participatory allocation of resources from the LATF’ (*ibid*, p.xii). However the participation was limited to mere consultation and not much involvement in

³¹ The districts were Bondo, Bungoma, Nakuru, Machakos, Kirinyaga, Wajir and Mombasa and the capital city of Nairobi. See Appendix II for the corresponding LAs.

³² They are the City council of Nairobi; the Municipal Councils of Machakos and Limuru; the Town councils of Kangundo and Kajiado; and, the County Councils of Olkejuado and Masaku .

³³ They are the City Council of Nairobi; the Municipal Councils of Nyeri and Mombasa; the Town Councils of Wote and Kikuyu; and the County Councils of Garissa, Nandi, Kakamega and Kisumu.

implementation and monitoring stages of local service delivery. Participation was highest in LAs with small populations, that is, town and county councils. Unfortunately, the study could neither establish the quality of participation nor the type of participants as the LAs did not keep such records.

The above was firmed up in a National Conference on The Role Of Non-State Actors (NSAs) in Decentralized Financing³⁴ that sought to establish what impact organized citizen participation has had on decentralized service delivery in Kenya (IEA-Kenya, 2010). Of the 43 organizations that submitted the profiles of their work, 35 (81 %) were engaged with service delivery in LAs. Their role was largely indirect as they facilitated communities to participate in the LASDAP process through capacity building, advocacy with LAs to create spaces for engagement with citizens and auditing management of resources. The profiles indicated that citizen participation was improving as a result of awareness but was still low. A key indicator of increased participation was local citizen organization through Community Based Organizations (CBOs) that enabled speaking on a collective platform.

4.4.2 Effects of Citizen Participation on Decentralized Service Delivery in Local Authorities

Despite the low levels of participation as shown above, this study attempted to establish what effect it has had on service delivery in the LAs. The available data, albeit limited, shows that some aspects of service delivery have been affected

³⁴ The Conference was part of a project conducted by this study's author during his work at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Kenya) in the period 2008-2010. The project was dubbed *Empowering Communities for Self Governance and Development* aimed to build capacity of local communities across the country to participate in planning and demand for accountability in decentralized service delivery in their localities (See IEA-Kenya, 2011).

positively by citizen participation while others have remained the same³⁵. In one of the earliest studies just a year after the inception of LASDAP, Devas and Grant (2003) found that as a result of citizen's input LAs had shifted expenditure focus to local needs such as clinics, roads repair and water as opposed to what they had earlier prioritized such as vehicles and office equipment. Displaying of resources available on public notice boards was 'increasing public awareness and demands for accountability' (*ibid*, p. 314). However budget constraints were leading to citizen's proposals not materializing and this was beginning to weigh on the public confidence. This was largely due to poor internal revenue mobilization, hence great reliance on LATF revenues that were hardly enough. They (Devas and Grant, 2003:314) further observed that 'major problems of corruption, improper accounting, abuse of tender procedures, over-employment of junior staff for political reasons and poor relationships between executive officials and elected councilors had further minimized the decision space and effectiveness for citizen participation.

The KIPPRA (2006) study found that the levels of accountability in the management of LATF were very low. 7.5 percent (9.3% of rural and 5.7% of urban cluster) rated that decisions on service delivery were taken openly; 7.4 percent indicated that they get sufficient information (8% of rural and 6.7% of urban cluster); 9.3 percent indicated that the projects undertaken were in line with the mandate of LATF (10.3% of rural and 8.4% of urban cluster); 5.6 percent (6.3% of rural and 5% of urban cluster) indicated that they were able to get explanations for the management of resources in their LAs; and, 3.9 percent (4.8% of rural and 3% of urban cluster) responded that they are able to get explanations from the national level on what is allocated to their LAs.

³⁵ A major challenge in this respect is lack of a baseline survey on the state of service delivery before LASDAP was implemented that would make establishing variations possible.

Lubaale, et al., (2007) found that ‘limited participation of the citizen in the consultative and consensus meetings on project implied that LASDAP did not always reflect the priorities of the citizens’ (*ibid*, p.17). Further while the guidelines provided for equitable allocation of resources based on needs, the *de facto* practice was to divide the resource envelope equally between all wards in a LA. Thus the most needy areas have too little to plan with. Also the guidelines for identifying pro-poor projects³⁶ including use of poverty maps had been largely ignored in most LA’s planning processes. It is thus not clear to what extent the poor and marginalized had benefited from the services delivered.

The study (*ibid*) found that LASDAP had become an instrument used by councilors to reward their supporters hence the distribution of projects was skewed accordingly. As a result prioritization and implementation of services had not improved as earlier expected. Further the study found that the projects identified tended to be ‘wish lists’ as opposed to well considered interventions, and their belated or partial implementation was causing frustration among citizens. The collective force of citizen voice through organized civil society organizations was found to be waning due to increasing ‘mutual suspicion and mistrust’ (*ibid*, p.xiv) between LA’s officials and the CSOs which had complicated working relationships. As a result some CSOs had withdrawn from participating in LASDAP meetings. This study also found accountability by LAs to citizens to be at a minimal. However, it observed that ‘LAs are beginning to appreciate the need to be accountable to citizens. LA Budget Days

³⁶ Some of the pro-poor criteria would include ensuring that the projects are located in areas where urban poor live; that poor and low income earners are capacitated and empowered to fully engage in all stages of project cycle; that the low income segment of the society is properly targeted; use labour intensive technologies and techniques with an in-built capacity building component for locally based labour force. See Lubaale, et al., (2007:18).

and participation of citizens in the LASDAP meetings *were cited as* some of the indicators of this appreciation' (*ibid*, p.61) (italics added).

On implementation of projects proposed through LASDAP, the study (*ibid*) found that while there were a significant number which were completed and running efficiently, there were others that were incomplete, unavailable for verification or difficult to establish the changes as result of proposals made by citizens. This was despite the fact that the financial records showed that the monies had been spent and the projects marked as completed. This revealed a gap in monitoring of projects in the LAs. Interviews with officials of LAs revealed that monitoring and evaluation was not one of the top priorities of the LAs. There was also a general concern from residents in the LAs that the services such as street lighting, public toilets, and beautification of parks and walkways were being undertaken in places which already had better conditions and ignoring the poorer areas. This was justified by the LAs as being a result to insufficient resources allocated for LASDAP process due to other pressing needs such as repaying debts, salary arrears and meeting other recurrent expenditures.

Syagga & Associates' (2007) *independent study on the impact of LATF* had similar findings as Lubaale, et al., (2007)³⁷. Of interest, it found that the levels of satisfaction with service delivery in LAs corresponded with the participation levels of citizens. As shown in Table 4.3, both individual responses and group/institutional responses indicate that satisfaction with service delivery declined as their participation declined.

³⁷ Both studies were commissioned at the same time by the Kenya Local Government Reform Programme. Lubaale et al.,(2007) looked at service delivery from the LASDAP (participation) perspective while Syagga & Associates (2007) focused on the financial perspective.

Table 4.3 Linking Citizen Participation and Satisfaction with Service Delivery

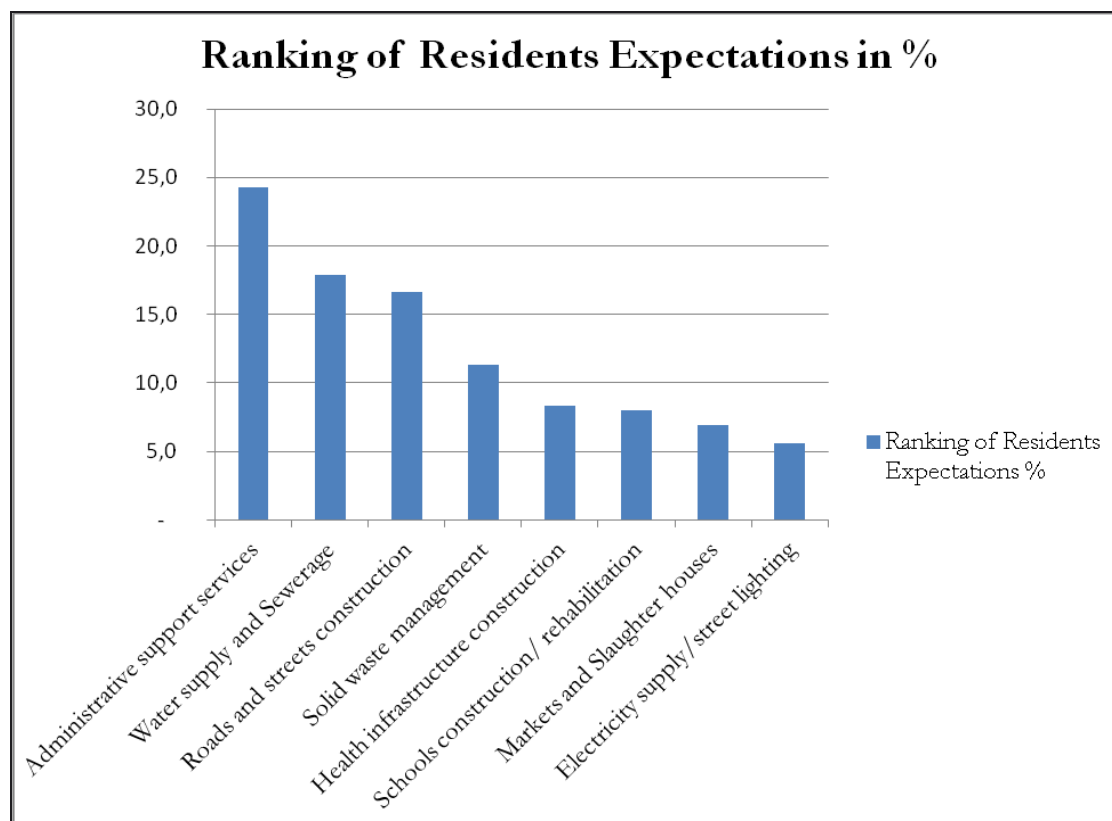
Mode of Participation	% Positive/Yes Response by Residents (N=557)	% Positive Response by Groups/Institutions (N=140)	Corresponding Level of Satisfaction	Multiple Responses by Residents (N=557)	Multiple Responses by Groups/Institutions (N=140)
Knowledge of LATF	70.6 %	82.9 %	Satisfied with factors in project identification	77.3 %	78.0 %
Participated in project identification	40.5 %	38.6 %	Satisfied with type of projects	36.1 %	38.5 %
Received feedback after project identification	50.0 %	54.5 %	Satisfied with Project costs	31.7 %	31.6 %
Involved in project implementation	18.9 %	25.5 %	Satisfied with management of projects	22.8 %	24.5 %
Involved in project monitoring	17.8 %	25.2 %	Satisfied with Completion rates of projects	12.4 %	12.6 %

Source: Generated from Syagga & Associates, 2007, p. 36-37

Another finding that the study (Syagga & Associates, 2007) made was on the expectations of citizens and the shift of expenditures in the LAs. Figure 4.2 shows the expectations of citizens in order of priority, while Table 4.4 shows the various capital expenditure lines of the LAs in 1998/1999 and 2005/2006 fiscal years respectively. The highest expectation is for administrative services support (24.3%) such as registration and regulation of businesses and managing of smooth provision of other services through technical personnel deployment. The other expectation is

for water supply and sewerage (17.9%) and the least expectation is on electricity supply and street lighting (5.6%).

Figure 4.1 Expectations of Citizens on LAs in order of Priority



Source: Constructed from Syagga & Associates, 2007, p. 34

On expenditures between 1999 and 2006 there was a substantial increase in expenditures of health infrastructure (+ 5.6%), solid waste, water and sanitation (+9.7%), schools (+14.1%), and other services such as sports and recreational facilities (+17.3%). There is a marginal increase in expenditures on roads (+ 2.7%), electricity supply and street lighting (+ 0.6 %). There was a decrease in expenditures on markets, slaughter houses and bus parks (- 11.8 %), administrative support services (- 16 %), and, motor vehicles and equipments (- 17.2 %).

Table 4.4 Comparison of Capital Expenditures of all LAs in 1999 and 2006

Service/Project Type	Number of Projects at June 1999	Number of Projects at June 2006	Total Expenditure as of June 1999	Total Expenditure as of 30 June 2006	Percentage of total Expenditure 30 June 1999	Percentage of total Expenditure 30 June 2006
Solid waste, water and sanitation	106	614	47,769,000	160,132,000	7.3	17.0
Roads	232	468	119,681,000	315,705,000	18.2	20.9
Health infrastructure	24	416	13,233,000	115,015,000	2.0	7.6
Schools	35	973	6,773,000	228,037,000	1.0	15.1
Markets, slaughter houses/bus parks	283	184	131,206,000	125,520,000	19.9	8.1
Electricity supply/street lighting	11	51	6,066,000	23,063,000	0.9	1.5
Administrative support services	67	62	116,419,000	25,154,000	17.7	1.7
Motor vehicles /equipment	185	156	194,896,000	186,903,000	29.6	12.4
Others ³⁸	50	681	22,823,000	331,555,000	3.5	20.8
Total	1013	3,605	658,867,000	1,511,084,000	100.0	100.0

Source: Syagga & Associates, 2007, p. 35

Oyugi and Kibua (2008), over and above establishing that the level and quality of participation in the LASDAP process was poor, found that while stakeholders were partially involved in planning, it was the council officials who did the budgeting and hence made final decisions on what was to be implemented. The said budgeting was by sharing the resource envelope equally between the wards in each LA. This, while appeasing the political actors (councilors and their supporters) was not advancing the objectives of equitable service delivery for which LASDAP was expected to meet. They (*ibid*) observed that in general ‘identification of projects, prioritization,

³⁸ This includes sports and recreation facilities and housing.

implementation, monitoring and evaluation and creation of project committees had largely remained the work of the council chief officer and councilors' (*ibid*, p. 229). Interviews with the residents in the sample LAs revealed that councilors were using the LASDAP process and resources to gain political capital. On transparency in resource allocation and use in service delivery, the study found that in all the 7 sample LA's none had institutionalized the displaying of details of the resource envelopes in place notice boards as provided in the LASDAP guidelines. Further, the citizens neither had information as to what resources were being used for which service nor knew the basis upon which members of the various project committees had been identified.

At a micro-level, Cifuentes (2008) sought to establish the impact of LASDAP in an informal settlement in the City Council of Nairobi. This was in Korogocho slums. Her study found that of the nine projects approved in the period 2002-2006, only two had been completed as of 2006. Citizen's concerns were rarely taken seriously and 'sometimes councilors even stopped attending crucial meetings when they felt that their power was contested'. (*ibid*, p. 246). Implementation of services was hampered by political interference and there was no independent monitoring hence making accountability difficult. As a result, LASDAP had 'neither extended nor improved services in Korogocho' (*ibid*, p.248)

The general picture on corruption in the LAs is drawn from the Kenya Bribery Index (KBI) that is generated by the Kenyan chapter of the Transparency International (TI-Kenya) since 2001. Available reports of the KBI show that citizens rate the Local Authorities³⁹ as among the most corrupt institutions. As shown in table 4.5 save for

³⁹ The City Councils of Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu are ranked separately from the other 172 LAs. This is owing to their large organizational size. The KBI reports for 2005, 2006 and 2007 were not available.

the year 2003 the LAs were in the top ten most corrupt organizations. The impressive picture of 2003 could be attributed to the change of government that indicated a zero tolerance on corruption⁴⁰. However after sometime things were back to business as usual such that as of 2008 they were ranked as the second most corrupt organizations in Kenya.

Table 4.5: Rating Corruption in Local Authorities

Year	Aggregate Index ⁴¹	National Rank
2002	36.1	6
2003	17.3	20
2004	25.2	3
2008	47	2

Source: Reports of the Kenya Bribery Index, Transparency International-Kenya, 2004, 2005 and 2008

From the above data, the effects observed on the various aspects of service delivery as a result of citizen participation in the LASDAP process were matched as shown in Table 4.6. They are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

⁴⁰ After 40 years in power the Kenya African National Union (KANU) government lost to the National rainbow Coalition (NARC) in the December 2002 general election. NARC was voted on a reform agenda and fighting corruption was a top priority. Thus in its first year there was lots of effort to eradicate the vice. It is thus notable that in most organizations corruption levels went down. See KBI, 2004.

⁴¹ Aggregate index is calculated between 0-100 with the higher value indicating greater corruption. It is based on six indicators i.e. incidence, prevalence, severity, frequency, cost and size of the corrupt act.

Table 4.6: Observed Effects of Citizen Participation through LASDAP on Decentralized Service Delivery (2002-2010)

Decentralized Service Delivery Indicators	Effects of Citizen Participation
Allocative Efficiency	• Focus on local needs such as clinics, roads repair and water as opposed to what LAs had earlier prioritized i.e. vehicles and office equipment (Devas & Grant, 2003) • Political expedience leading to equal sharing of the resource envelope has negated the input of the citizen voice
Accountability & Reduction of Corruption	• Displaying of resource envelope details on public notices has increased demand for accountability • Limited effect on reduction of corruption as citizens have no options for legal recourse especially in the absence of evidence
Equity	Limited influence as the resource envelope is shared equally between all wards in most LA's
Quality of Service	Many fragmented projects done to please citizens for political mileage have impacted negatively on the quality of service
Cost Recovery	No effect established in the data available

Source: Based on Devas & Grant, 2003; KIPPR4, 2006; Lubaale, et al., 2007; Syagga & Associates, 2007; Oyugi & Kibua, 2008; KHRC & SPAN, 2010

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the findings of the study in line with the three questions of the study, that is, What has been the nature of citizen participation in LAs?, How has citizen participation influenced decentralized service delivery in LAs?, and, What should be imperatives of an effective citizen participation framework? An important note is that given the absence of concrete baseline data before LASDAP was rolled out, there is no control condition to assess detailed variations as a result of participation. Nevertheless this study sought to establish the observable changes based on the available data that had attempted to make comparisons.

5.1 What has been the nature of citizen participation?

The data presented as well as experiences of the researcher indicate that the participation of citizens in LA's service delivery has been minimal. It has been limited in space and thus influence. The only direct participation seems to be by being consulted on what projects should be done and even this is not always binding. Though the studies show an increased awareness of the existence of a LASDAP process, this knowledge seems not to translate into active participation. Also the participation is seen to decrease as the process progresses from needs identification to implementation and monitoring and there is basically no concrete participation in evaluation going on. It hence means that there is no evidence of whether the services implemented have been accomplished as planned and have met the needs of the citizens. Limited, and at times no information on what is being done by the LA means that the citizen have no idea of how, when and where they should participate. This gives a great advantage to the LA officials (especially the councilors) to use the information for their benefit. From the findings it is clear that the domination of councilors on the LASDAP process has stifled participation and made independent

citizen input of little effect. Further the annual consultation meeting in each ward can barely be termed as participation as it's attended by hundreds of persons and as earlier noted what the councilors want is what gets done at the end. Anecdotal evidence shows that local elites prefer to engage directly in informal settings with the LA officials some of who are their peers as opposed to attending the consultative meetings.

5.2 How has citizen participation influence decentralized service delivery?

As established in chapter 3 the study sought to establish influence of citizen participation on decentralized service delivery on five main parameters namely; allocative efficiency, accountability and reduction of corruption, cost recovery, equity and quality of service. An overall observation is that the effect of citizen participation on these parameters of decentralized service delivery has been minimal. Each of the parameters is hereafter discussed.

(a) Allocative Efficiency

Decentralized service delivery is premised on the fact that lower level units of government have information necessary to enable better matching of services with citizen preferences. Citizen participation is expected to increase the availability of such information and should thus enhance allocative efficiency. This study finds that LASDAP has, albeit in a small way, led to increased allocative efficiency. Figure 4.2 shows ranking of citizen expectations with the highest being administrative support services followed by water, roads, solid waste management, health infrastructure, schools, markets and electricity supply including street lighting. In agreeing with these expectations the study by Devas and Grant (2003) indicated that there had been a shift on expenditures from vehicles and office equipment to services in health,

transport infrastructure and water. This was also the finding by Syagga and Associates (2007) and Oyugi and Kibua (2008) who showed that the highest expenditures in the LAs were in education, health, water and physical infrastructure. Particularly table 4.4 shows the change in expenditures between 1999 and 2006. It is notable that save for drastic reduction in expenditures on administrative support services⁴² which are most expected by citizens, there is an increase in expenditures on health infrastructure, solid waste management, water and sanitation, schools and other services such as sports and recreational facilities. There is a marginal increase in expenditures on roads, electricity supply and street lighting. This last observation can be explained by the fact that road services are under the Kenya Roads Board (KRB) and their local services are financed by the Roads Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF) which is separate from LATF. However, this may not hold water as a part of the RMLF is allocated for to the LAs for roads maintenance. Electricity provision is financed by the Rural Electrification Programme Levy Fund (REPLF) and is thus not a key expenditure for LAs. Street lights are a responsibility of LAs and it is not clear why the expenditures have decreased⁴³.

This evidence is a clear indication that LAs have been allocating resources where the citizens expect. However, this study notes that this may not necessarily be entirely an outcome of citizen participation. This is because despite the observations on allocations, the satisfaction of citizens on service delivery is rather low. Table 4.2

⁴² This can be explained by an earlier finding by the Omamo Commission (Republic of Kenya, 1995) on the plight of Local Authorities, that established that most of the LAs had exaggerated personnel numbers and were spending up to 70 per cent of their budgets on personnel. Syagga and Associates, (2007) also found cases of 'ghost' workers in the LAs. These are persons who appeared in the payroll but never existed in the workforce of the LAs.

⁴³ Some LAs have privatized Street Lighting and hence it may not be a direct budget item in their books. An example is Adopt-a-Light Company in City council of Nairobi.

shows that not more than 40 per cent of citizens are happy with type of projects undertaken, the costs they incur, and their management and completion rate. This also corresponds with low participation in the implementation and management of projects as shown in table 4.3

(b) Accountability and Reduction of Corruption

Lower levels of government are expected to be more accountable to the citizens by virtue of their proximity. Such proximity is also seen as a way of ensuring that citizens can demand for accountability and access information necessary to reduce corruption. The evidence provided in this study shows that there is still limited information accessible to the citizens that would make them play a key role in demanding accountability and controlling corruption. The fact that the chief executive officer (the clerk) and other senior executive officials of the LA are appointed by the central government means that they owe allegiance upwards and are not obligated to account to the citizens. Further, the Local Government Act (Cap. 265) gives decision making power to the full council and this has been used to justify instances when citizen's preferences as expressed in consultative and consensus meetings are overruled.

While the study does not find any credible evidence to show how citizen participation has impacted on reduction of corruption, the secrecy in the operations of the council and especially in the use of resources can only be interpreted as an intention to mismanage public resources. In fact in their conclusion, Oyugi and Kibua (2008:229) note that 'inadequate participation of stakeholders in LASDAP has created the suspicion that both the councilors and the council staff are in cahoots to mismanage and misappropriate the funds meant for local development'. The dominance of the councilors in the process has been such that they not only decide what projects will

be done and how much will be spent on them, but also decide which contactor is given the work. Yet it's the same council that is expected to receive evaluation and audit reports. This lack of separation of powers further points to the potential for increased corruption. Also as established by Lubaale, et al., (2007) cases of 'completed' projects that could neither be physically verified nor were known to the citizens despite evidence that resources allocated to them had been expended, show that corruption was rife. It is thus no surprise that citizens have continuously rated LAs as being among the most corrupt organizations as evidenced the KBI reports cited here.

(c) Equity

Equity is achieved where resource allocation and service provision is pursued based on the differentiated needs of various citizen groups. It thus implies that not all areas get the same degree of resources and services but rather they get what they need most. Equitable service provision is a central argument for decentralization as local units are expected to pursue pro-poor programmes based on their information advantage. The evidence alluded to in this study provides a minimal case for equitable service provision. It is here established that while citizens give their preferences according to their needs, the budgeting is done in such a way that each ward is allocated the same amount of resources. This equal treatment of unequal circumstances can only lead to greater inequality. It is also clear in this study that there is evidence that LAs were investing more of their resources in the places that were already well endowed while ignoring the neediest areas. This could be explained by poor accountability where the LA officials allocate services to the places where they and their fellow elites live. Thus equity has not been achieved by the LASDAP process. This finding can be attributed largely to the veto power that is with the council in making the final decision of how resources are applied.

(d) Quality of Service

Where the quality of services is high the citizens experience value addition in their livelihoods. They are more confident to use the services and register higher satisfaction levels. In this study, the very low satisfaction with rate of completion (12.4% individual and 12.6% group responses) (See Table 4.3) indicates a concern with the quality of work done and the resultant effect on service delivery. It is also noteworthy that this rate of satisfaction corresponds with a low participation in project implementation and management. This may imply that for the citizens, the level and quality of participation in the process of service delivery is as important the end service delivery.

(e) Cost Recovery

The study finds no evidence of how citizen participation has impacted cost recovery. This may be explained by the fact that no study has undertaken to collect data on this item. Secondly, most of the projects undertaken by LASDAP have their running provided for by various departments of the central government. For instance, where a medical facility is built, its management is the responsibility of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation that deploys staff and provides equipment. Hence any records of cost recovery would be available with the respective ministry or department.

5.3 In search of an explanation for the low citizen participation and the negligible influence on decentralized service delivery

The above state of affairs on the level and influence of citizen participation on service delivery in LAs leaves a lot to be desired. This study deduced a number of explanations. First is that the main motivation of LA officials to involve citizens seems to be in order to meet the minimum requirements for the transfer of LATF allocations from the central government. Thereafter following up is left to the discretion of the officers. This could explain the slightly higher participation recorded in identification of projects and decline thereafter as projects move to implementation. In such an environment the preferences of citizens are rarely taken seriously and their voice is not incorporated in the critical stages of service delivery. This is reinforced by the fact that the LASDAP guidelines provide a lot of discretion to LAs (especially the elected officials) on who to involve in the LASDAP process. In most cases they only involve their close allies and lock out groups of citizens that are considered 'difficult'. (Devas & Grant, 2003; Oyugi & Kibua, 2006; Wachira, 2010). Further Lubaaale, et al., (2007) established that proposals from the consultative and consensus meetings were sometimes overruled by the full council and as a result there was waning interest among citizens due to unmet needs. That citizens voice can be ignored agrees with Robinson (2004) who observes that 'the current framework of local governance does not give citizens real power to influence the decision making process'.

Secondly, the short notice (one week) given for LASDAP consultative meetings means that not many people get to be reached especially in the remote areas (Omolo, 2011). Of those who get the notice, there is hardly enough time to consult among community members on what priorities they should propose. Despite there being an elaborate timetable for LASDAP process (See appendix I), 'it's publicizing is poorly

resourced and limited’, thus citizens are not aware of where and when they come in (*ibid*, p.11). Also, since most meetings were called during working hours⁴⁴, most people could not make it.

Thirdly, access to information has been limited as most decisions are still made behind closed doors away from the citizens. (Devas & Grant, 2003; KHRC & SPAN, 2010; IEA-Kenya, 2010). Government officials decline to provide detailed information of resources and actions being taken justifying it on the Official Secrets Act Cap. 187 of the Laws of Kenya. That the country had not passed the Freedom of Information Law⁴⁵ was a key hindrance to demanding transparency. Further LASDAP does not have a ‘formal communication structure and hence information is passed on *ad hoc* basis’ (KHRC & SPAN, 2010:39 citing Action Aid International – Kenya, 2006).

Fourth, the central government focuses more on the financial audits of LAs. This provides information on compliance with accounting and management standards established and not whether the intended services were delivered or not. This means that the LAs may have clean books of accounts while performing poorly in service delivery. It leads to perpetuation of corruption and mismanagement of resources. Although Non-State Actors have been undertaking service-effectiveness audits through instruments such as social auditing and citizen report cards, they have no power to take action on errant officials. In the end, it is the citizens and especially the poor and marginalized who suffer most.

⁴⁴ The general working hours in Kenya are 0800-1700 Hours on Monday to Friday

⁴⁵ The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 now makes it mandatory for government officials at national and county levels to make information relating to service delivery public. Supporting legislation is being prepared to provide the mechanisms for the same

Fifth, there is a notable limitation of technical and managerial skills in the LAs and this may explain the inability to respond effectively to citizen preferences (Syagga & Associates, 2007; Oyugi & Kibua, 2008). The earlier observed systematic process of weakening LAs saw functions taken away by the central government ministries⁴⁶. This also meant a transfer of highly qualified personnel. The renewed focus on LAs as key units of decentralized service delivery with increasing mandates did not see a reversal in personnel deployment from the central government and thus the available ones are poorly skilled and thinly spread.

Sixth, while the LAs are in theory expected to account downwards to the citizens, there are no firm mechanisms that mandate them to do so. In practice, the LAs are only concerned with accounting upwards to the central government from where comes the money. On a similar note the LAs act largely on directives from the central government as their executive officers are its employees. The competition between the central government appointed officials who wield the executive power and the councilors who are popularly elected as to who should have a greater say in management of LAs has made working relations complex and hindered the optimal performance. It is notable that where such relations have been smooth then performance has been better (Lubaale, et al., 2007).

Seventh, and lastly, is that LASDAP is one of the many local financing mechanisms (see Appendix II) that require citizens participation. This means that citizens cannot give maximum attention to it. The studies mentioned here and especially, KIPPRA (2006) established that citizens paid more attention to funds that had more direct and immediate benefits to them such as the Free Primary Education Fund (FPE). This

⁴⁶ The reference here is to the Transfer of Functions Act of 1969. See section 4.2 of this study.

fragmented demands amidst the struggle to make a basic living means that citizens can barely engage effectively.

5.4 What should be the imperatives of an effective citizen participation framework?

From the findings of this study it is clear that for citizen participation to have a positive effect on decentralized service delivery, there are key factors that should be considered and institutionalized. Thus an effective framework of citizen participation should be one that:

- (a) Is not directly controlled by politicians;
- (b) Is founded on a legal framework and where citizens have a legal recourse opportunity;
- (c) Obliges local government officials to implement what citizens propose as long as it meets the set criteria as well as account for their actions in the management of public resources;
- (d) Is guided by a long term strategic direction thus consistent and focused; and,
- (e) Is meant to influence service delivery and resource allocation of the entire local government and not just some parts of it.

These imperatives of an effective citizen participation framework are expounded in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

A key danger in embarking on study as wide as this is three-fold. First it makes rather broad generalizations on the state of citizen participation in the 175 LAs and yet there may be detailed variations within each unit. Secondly, the impact of citizen participation just like other developmental initiatives takes long to be realized fully. Thirdly, and most relevant is on its reliance on secondary data and yet the objectives of the studies used may be at variance with those of this study. This study was alive to these facts and made due diligence to use the information available with integrity.

It concludes that the citizen participation through LASDAP has had minimal influence on the decentralized service delivery in local authorities. It finds that the decision space has been limited to a few resources and hence the overall influence even where fully exerted can only make a little difference. Participation emerges as only a commitment in rhetoric as there is little effort to institutionalize and act on the preferences of citizens. On the citizens side it concludes that lack of awareness and inadequate capacity to participate has hampered their input in the process. It finds that the situation is worsened by the fact that provision on participation was without review of the power for decision making given to the full council and executive officials of the LAs. This conclusion notwithstanding, it must not go unmentioned that LASDAP has definitely ushered a process towards greater institutionalization of citizen's voice in local decision making that will be hard to reverse in the future. It has established a learning ground that future structures of participation will build on.

6.2 Recommendations

In line with the findings of this study, the literature reviewed, and, taking cognizance of Kenya's ongoing overhaul of the current local government system, this study seeks to contribute to the design of an effective framework for citizen participation in the county governments⁴⁷. It advances the following five recommendations.

First, there should be a separation of functions between the executive and legislative functions by officials in the local government. The elected representatives should particularly not be in charge of the participation process but should play a policy formulation and oversight role. To make this effective it would be imperative that all executive power be devolved to the local government unit with obligations to account downward to citizens, upward to the central government and horizontally to the elected officials. This would provide the checks and balances necessary for effective separation of powers.

Secondly, capacity of stakeholders to participate effectively should not be assumed. Thus in addition to resource allocation for service delivery, there should be allocation of resources for awareness raising and capacity building of both the local government officials and citizens on their joint role in the participatory process. Empowerment of the citizens should be seen as an equally important aspect of improving service delivery as it shows the value the local government places on its citizens. The government officials should see their role as facilitators and not just implementers of service delivery. It is this attitude of partnership that would be most beneficial in seeking mutual cooperation in service delivery.

⁴⁷ In line with the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, county governments will come into force when the next general elections are held in March 2013. Each of the 47 county governments have a constitutional and legal mandate to institutionalize citizen participation in the decision making mechanisms. See Article 196 available at <http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ConstitutionofKenya2010.pdf>.

Thirdly, participation cannot be left to chance and convenience of actors involved. It needs to be planned for in terms of time and resources. As such participation should be entrenched in a well articulated legal framework. It should be for regular times of the year and not just one mass meeting before the budget is done as is the practice with LASDAP: Part of the failure of LASDAP has been that it is not legally enforceable especially when duty-bearers abdicate their responsibility to citizens. The said legal framework should provide strict regulations on use of resources and allowing citizens a legal recourse where their voice is ignored or their resources misused.

Fourthly, participation should be premised on a long term development framework. Strategic goals should be identified with the input of citizens which should then guide the choice of public investments. This would serve to provide a sense of direction and continuity when participants or local government officials change. It is this overall strategic long term orientation that would help guide equitable choices that ensure all areas of the local government's jurisdiction are addressed. This would be opposite to the practice with LASDAP where many small projects are pursued without a cohesive goal that they seek to achieve.

Fifthly, it is important that participation be towards influencing all service provision in the local government unit. The current practice in LASDAP is that citizens are only involved in the planning for a limited resource allocation and not all of the LA resources. An involvement in overall planning of the local government services would serve to give citizens a clearer picture of what is happening in their local government and could lead to their willingness to participate in meeting the costs of service delivery. It would also lead to reduction of opportunities for corruption as all resources are made known to the public.

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Appendix 1: LASDAP Process

The six stages of the LASDAP process, the key activities in each process and the expected outputs are shown in the following table.

Stage	Key Processes/Activities	Outputs
(a) Preparation	• Calculation and agreement of resource envelope • Review of past performance • Preparation of consultative meetings	• Details of Resource Envelope • Invitations to consultative meeting • Evaluation of previous LASDAP Process
(b) Consultation	• Arrange consultative meetings in each electoral ward (or for a combination of wards if small in size) • Conduct consultative meetings • Analysis of results of consultations. • Election of 2 representatives during consultative meetings to represent participants at the Consensus meeting.	• List of identified projects/services in order of priority and geographical positioning • Representatives to the Consensus meeting
(c) Design and agreement	• Consolidation of information on needs of the whole LA • Hold technical consultative meeting • Prepare and hold consensus meeting(s).	• Complete list of projects to be undertaken in the LA as a whole
(d) Finalisation and submission	• Integration of LASDAP with other planning processes and costing • Hold full Council meeting, • Share information widely Submit documentation to MOLG	• Full budget of the LA • Submitted reports to the MoLG
(e) Implementation	• Design of projects, procurements and community contracting, • Contractor supervisions and ensuring transparency and accountability • Provide feedback and updates to the community	• Contractors/Service Providers identified • Implemented Projects and services (fully or the intended phase) • Feedback to and from citizens
(f) Monitoring and Evaluation	• Identify whether implementation is within the intended plan and design. The Council forms a LASDAP Monitoring Committee, composed of local stakeholders to monitor implementation.	• Progress on project/service implementation • Recommendations for changes where things are not in order

Source: Adopted from Lubaale, et al., 2007. Outputs column added by the author

Appendix II: Local Service Delivery Structure and decentralized funds in Kenya

As indicated in section 4.2 Kenya's local service delivery has been fragmented in three key structures that do not necessarily work together. Important is that the geographical area covered by the districts, LAs and constituencies overlap each other. These are briefly discussed below.

1. The District System

The district system is used for the de-concentration of central government ministry's services to the local level and dates back to the early 1970s. It is based on the administrative unit called the district and headed by a District Commissioner (DC) who is appointed by the president. The district became pronounced in 1971 when the Special Rural Development Programme (SPRD) was launched and became the main unit of decentralized planning in 1983 when the District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) strategy was launched. District Development Committees (DDCs) chaired by the District Commissioners (DC) were formed with a mandate to facilitate participatory planning of service delivery at the local level. All key stakeholders including Members of Parliament (MPs) and officials of the LAs within a specific district were to be members of the DDC. This was at a time when the role of Local Authorities was being systematically narrowed. It is at the District level where all key offices of the central government ministries, departments and parastatals are located. The DFRD has largely failed due to factors identified by Chitere & Ireri, (2008:39 citing Schall, 1998)⁴⁸ as: '(i) Lack of separation of development and control functions; (ii) Too many 'layers' in the system which reduced transparency and increase bureaucracy; (iii) Failure to allocate funds to communities for their projects; and, (iv) Lack of transparency and accountability in relation to allocation and use of resources'.

The finances for the said ministries are channeled through the District Treasury (an office of the Ministry of Finance) and with the Authority to Incur Expenditure (AIE) given to the District Accountant (DA). There are also specific grants (decentralized funds) whose disbursement is coordinated by the respective ministries offices at the district level. The secretary of the DDC is the District Development Officer (DDO) who is an officer in the Ministry of Planning, National Development and Vision 2030. The DDO's office coordinates the writing of the District Development Plan

⁴⁸ Schall's report was commissioned by GTZ office in Kenya to advice on necessary revisions to the DFRD Strategy

(DDP) that integrates all development focus for every five years linking with the National Development Plan (NDP).

Districts thus are more a representation of the central government at the local level as the officers are largely accountable to their appointing authorities. They have also been used by the respective governments to entice citizens to support them. For instance while in the 1992 there were 47 districts, as of 2009 they had been split to 237 districts (Ministry of Finance, 2009). Creation of districts has oftenly been announced in political rallies of the governing party as a result of what has been termed ‘the request of the people for a government that is close to them’. It has not been clear what the criteria of establishing new districts is although the Provinces and Districts Act of 1992 gives the president the discretion to create new administrative units where necessary.

2. The Local Government System

The Local Government System is established under the Central Government Ministry of Local Government. There are currently 175 Local Authorities categorized into City, Municipal, Town and County Councils. The main decentralized fund is the Local Authority Transfer Fund. Details of this system have been well discussed in the study.

3. The Constituency System

This is the system for political representation in the National Assembly of Kenya. It is comprised of 222 Members of Parliament, and the Speaker and Attorney General who are ex-official members. Following in the Westminster model, the president appoints the cabinet ministers from the MPs. There are 210 Constituencies with each electing a single MP while the other 12 are nominated based on the proportion of votes received by each political party represented in Parliament. Until 2003 MPs played a policy making and oversight role. However, following years of failure of the executive in delivering services especially on physical infrastructure in rural and areas considered to be opposing the government, the MPs passed the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). This ushered a new framework where the MPs were also to engage in implementing government policy at the local level. This was in negation of the principle of separation of powers but was justified that MPs were the official representatives of the people and hence had a mandate to ensure services are delivered. CDF transfers at least 2.5 per cent of the national gross revenue. This is divided using a predetermined formula to the 210 constituencies.

Following the three systems the main decentralized grants/funds established are as shown in table II:I below.

Table II:I Main Decentralized Funds in Kenya

Fund	Year Created	Unit of Disbursement & Coordinating Central Government Ministry	Description
Constituency Development Fund (CDF)	2003 with amendments in 2007	Constituency under Ministry of Planning and National Development	2.5 per cent of gross national income shared to the 210 constituencies for capital projects and local development
Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF)	1998	Local Authority under Ministry of Local Government	5 per cent of total national income tax shared to the 175 LAs
Free Primary Education (FPE)	2003	District under Ministry of Education	1,020 Kenya shillings allocated to every child in a primary school. Other funds provided for infrastructure
Free Day Secondary Education (FSE)	2008	District under Ministry of Education	10,625 Kenya Shillings allocated to every child in a secondary school
Secondary Education Bursary Fund (SEBF)	Revitalized in 1993/94	Constituency under Ministry of Education	A Committee Chaired by the Constituency MP selects needy students based on applications received and the school fees is sent directly to the respective school
Women Enterprise Development Fund (WEDF)	2006	Constituency under Ministry of Gender and Social Services	Groups of women with registered enterprises apply and receive grants through the Social Development Office and loans through identified financial intermediaries. Applies the revolving Fund Concept
Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF)	2006	Constituency under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports	Groups of youth (18-35 years of age) with registered enterprises apply and receive grants through the Youth Development Office and loans through identified financial intermediaries. Applies the revolving fund Concept
HIV/AIDS Fund	1999	Constituency under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Office of the President	Established to contain the HIV Pandemic. Community based Organizations working to control the spread of HIV and supporting infected persons apply through the Constituency AIDS Control Committee (CACC) to the National AIDS Control Council
Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF)	1994	Constituency, Local Authority and District under the Kenya Roads Board (KRB) in the Ministry of Roads	60% of the Fund goes to international and national trunk and primary roads under Districts Roads Boards; 24% to secondary Roads under Local Authorities; and 16% to maintain feeder and rural access roads under constituencies, shared equally

Source: KHRC & SPAN, 2010; Diakonia-Sweden, NCKK & IEA-Kenya, 2011

Appendix III: Summary of Key Secondary Data Sources Used

Title, Author and Year Published	Brief Description of the Work	Coverage	Methodology	Sample size
<i>Local Government Decision-Making—Citizen Participation And Local Accountability: Some Evidence From Kenya And Uganda</i> by Devas, N. and Grant, U., 2003.	A study analyzing the decision making process in local governments in Kenya and Uganda	National	Review of the literature	-
<i>Baseline Survey Report on Decentralized Funds in Kenya</i> by Kenya Institute for Public Policy Analysis and Research (KIPPRA), 2006.	Study undertaken to establish the performance of decentralized funds after three years of a new 'reform' minded government and to establish the awareness and participation of households in the management of the funds	National with data collected from:- i. Bondo District (Town Council of Bondo and County Council of Bondo); ii. Bungoma District (Municipal Council of Bungoma, Municipal Council of Kimilili, Municipal Council of Webuye, County Council of Bungoma, Town Council of Sirisia, and Town Council of Malakisi); iii. Nakuru District (Municipal Council of Nakuru, County Council of Nakuru, Municipal Council of Naivasha, and Town Council of Molo); iv. Machakos District (Municipal Council of Machakos, Municipal Council of Mavoko, County Council of Mavoko, Town Council of Kangundo and Town Council of Matuu); v. Kirinyaga District (Municipal Council of Kerugoya Kutus, County Council of Kirinyaga and Town Council of Sagana); vi. Wajir District (County Council of Wajir); vii. Mombasa District (City Council of Mombasa); viii. Nairobi City (City Council of Nairobi)	Interview with households, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and interviews with key informants in the sample districts	• 4415 Households (26.6 of which were female headed), • 394 persons in Focus Group Discussions • 123 key Informants

<i>Study On The Impact Of The Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP)</i> by Lubaale, G., Agevi, E., & Ngari, J., 2007.	Study commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government to establish the impact of LASDAP (mechanism for citizen Participation in LA) after six years of implementation	National with data collected in :- i. The City Council of Nairobi; ii. The Municipal Councils of Nyeri and Mombasa; iii. The Town Councils of Wote and Kikuyu; and iv. The County Councils of Garissa, Nandi, Kakamega and Kisumu	A review of LASDAP documents of all 175 LAs and in-depth interviews in ten LA	1, 113 persons interviewed including beneficiaries and community representatives
<i>An Independent Study on the impact of the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF) in Kenya</i> by Syagga & Associates Ltd., 2007.	Study commissioned by the Ministry of Local Government to establish the impact that LATF had made on financial management, debt reduction and service delivery in LAs	National with data collected in:- i. The City Council of Nairobi; ii. The Municipal Councils of Garissa, Nyeri, Kiambu, Migori, Mombasa, Kitale, Embu, Kakamega, and Busia; iii. The Town Councils of Mariakani, Mandera, and Chuka; iv. The County Councils of Wajir, Kirinyaga, Gusii, Siaya, Kilifi, Nakuru, Bomet, Makueni, and Bungoma.	Review of Financial reports of the LAs and interviews with Key informants and citizens in the respective LAs. Site Visits to physically verify service provision	Interviews with 2 Ministers, 13 officials of the MoLG, 30 officials in the LAs, 46 Councillors, 140 Institutions, and 557 individual respondents
<i>Planning and Budgeting at the Grassroots Level: The case of Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plans</i> by Oyugi, L.N. & Kibua, T.N., 2008.	Study undertaken at the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR) under its focus on 'Institutions, Transition Processes and Empowerment'. It was to establish an outsider's perspective as to what impact the LASDAP as a mechanism of Participation has had on service delivery.	National with data collected in:- i. The City council of Nairobi; ii. The Municipal Councils of Machakos and Limuru; iii. The Town councils of Kangundo and Kajjado; and v. The County Councils of Olkejuado and Masaku	Review of literature and analysis of primary data based on a criterion of Awareness, Participation, Representation, Capacity and Organizational Attributes.	Interviews with 15 LA Staff, 54 Councillors, 45 Provincial Administration Officers, 2050 respondents in local forums and 60 individual respondents
<i>Better Services for All: The</i>	Study undertaken in	Local in Korogocho Ward of the City Council of Nairobi	Survey of Households	Random Sample

<i>Impact of LASDAP in an Informal Settlement in Nairobi</i> by Cifuentes, M. 2008.	IPAR to establish equity dynamics in LA service delivery and how LASDAP had affected it		and Participatory Action Research	Survey of 1000 Households
<i>Kenya Bribery Index</i> by the Transparency International (TI-Kenya), 2001 -	This an annual ranking of organizations level of corruption based on surveys from citizens	National	Survey through collection of primary data based on the criteria of incidence, prevalence, severity, frequency, cost and size	About 2,400 individual respondents
<i>Harmonization of Decentralized Development In Kenya: Towards Alignment, Citizen Engagement and Accountability</i> by Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and Social and Public Accountability Network (SPAN), 2010.	Study Conducted by a consortia of Non-State Actors to inform their advocacy work on an effective decentralization framework	National with data collected in:- i. Makadara (City Council Nairobi), ii. Nyeri Town (Municipal Council of Nyeri), iii. Mwatate (County Council of Taita Taveta), iv. Baringo Central (Municipal Council of Kabarnet), v. Mandera West (Mandera County Council), vi. Isiolo North (County Council of Isiolo), vii. Mumias (Municipal Council of Mumias), and viii. Kisumu Town East (City Council of Kisumu)	Interviews with key Informants, individuals respondents and Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs)	58 FGDs with a total of 476 participants (303 males and 173 females) 528 individual respondents (62% (326) being males and 38% (202) being females.
<i>Report of the National Conference on the role of Non-State Actors in Decentralized Financing in Kenya. Nairobi, 6-8 October 2010</i> by Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Kenya), 2010.	Report of a Conference organized at the culmination of a 3 year project on citizen empowerment. It sought to map the role of Non State Actors in decentralized funded service delivery	National	Pre-Selection of Participants based on submitted organization profiles of local initiatives based on a criteria of Regional balance, levels of operation, Thematic focus, Fund engaged, Sectoral focus and Innovativeness of the intervention	43 Organizational Profiles selected from 62 submissions.

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