

**VERNACULAR RADIO AS A TOOL IN PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN  
COUNTY GOVERNANCE IN KIRINYAGA COUNTY, KENYA: THE CASE OF  
KENYA BROADCASTING CORPORATION'S CORO FM, *THANDI* RADIO  
PROGRAMME**

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## DECLARATION

### Declaration by the Candidate:

This is my original work and it has never been submitted for a degree in another institution. Without the author's and/or Moi University's explicit written consent, no portion of this thesis may be reprinted.

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**DEDICATION**

This project was dedicated to my family for their support throughout my studies.

## ABSTRACT

While the Kenya constitution (2010) provides a strong legal framework for public participation, there is a problem on how to make many people use the given tools to make valuable contributions to the governance process. The conventional techniques of public participation like holding public meetings fail to achieve their objectives of public engagement. One of the main reasons is inability of the public to attend due to time and cost constraints. In addition, only those who are vocal get to be heard in these meetings. However, radio has a great potential to reach a wide audience especially with the growth of the FM stations. Against this background, this study examined the role of vernacular radio as one of the tools of enhancing public participation. The focus was to establish the contributions of a political radio programme 'Thandi' aired on Coro FM every Sunday between 5pm and 7pm, in promoting public participation in public agenda. Besides, the study sought to find out the routes through which ideas, suggestions and views given by public during the radio show could influence decision making by the county government leaders. The research also sought to establish techniques that could be employed to draw large audience to radio public participation activities. From a relativist perspective, a qualitative approach and case study were employed. In depth interviews, focus group discussions, informal conversations and content analysis were used as the main data generation techniques. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Kirinyaga County government and respondents of committees in the assembly, executives, individual senior government officials and community representatives. A total of 65 respondents participated in the study. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. The study found that radio was useful in achieving self-efficacy, dialogue, civic education and consensus building which are important elements in actualizing public participation. The study also found that views generated through radio could influence individual policy and law makers, legislative committees and County Budget Economic Forums who participated in the radio programmes. Various techniques used in rallying large audience to the radio programmes included formation of listener's clubs, turnaround of public broadcaster, programming and content reviews, and re-designing a county content generation and dissemination framework. The study contributed to knowledge that will be useful to stakeholders in both national and county governments as well as civil society. It will help them design and implement a framework of using radio to actualize constitutional requirement of public participation in governance. The study recommends use of vernacular radio in actualizing public participation agenda as envisaged in the Kenyan constitution.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CBEF</b>	:	County Budget and Economic Forum
<b>CDF</b>	:	Constituency Development Fund
<b>CEC</b>	:	County Executive Committee
<b>CoK</b>	:	Constitution of Kenya
<b>FGDs</b>	:	Focus Group Discussions
<b>FM</b>	:	Frequency Modulation
<b>KARF</b>	:	Kenya Audience Research Foundation
<b>KBC</b>	:	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
<b>LASDAP</b>	:	Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan
<b>NGO</b>	:	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>UNEP</b>	:	United Nations Environmental Programme

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Public broadcaster:** it is a communication outlet that involves radio, television and other electronic media outlets whose primary mission is to provide a varied range of programmes for every group in society. It operates nationally or locally. In Kenya, KBC operates several of them regionally and in different languages.

**Vernacular radios:** these are radio stations which broadcast in different local languages and dialects. They are critical in disseminating governance information which helps people in public participation to make informed decisions.

**Public participation:** it is the inclusion of the citizenry in the activities of any organization or project. Participation is about actions a person or group can take to get involved in issues of government or community that are of concern to them. It ensures that citizens are heard and can actively participate in decision that impact their needs. It gives powers of self-governance to the people and enhance their participation in the exercise of the powers of the State and in making decisions affecting them” (Article 174c, Constitution of Kenya).

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Background information, research topics, scope, and limits of the study are all included in this chapter. In public participation, people who will be impacted by choice have a right to be included in the decision-making process, and their input should influence the conclusion (Roberts, 2004). This enhances self-efficacy of the citizens. Roberts (2004) further noted that throughout the first half of the 20th century, people relied heavily on public officials and administrators to judge public policy and its execution. Still, this transition occurred in the latter half of the century. The county governments' stakeholders and their local demands need to be factored in when developing plans and services.

Creighton (2005) observes that early in Kenya's history, public engagement was fostered through development initiatives that benefited the local population, like the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and Local Authority Service Delivery Action Plan (LASDAP). Since independence, legislative steps have been taken to give the public a voice, urging them to take an active role in their country's governance. This has been effected through civic education and consensus building by county governments.

The public is now aware of its constitutional rights and wants to participate in dialogue for decision-making processes. In Kenya, 95 per cent of the population listen to the radio regularly, making it the most popular and accessible medium (Media Council of Kenya, 2011).

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Roberts (2004) defines public participation as the public's engagement on matters of public concern and is viewed as one possible solution to the crisis in public trust and

governance. Instead of treating the public as a passive receiver of policy choices, the goal is to include them more actively in the decision-making process by allowing them to express their opinions. Public involvement tries to bridge the gap between governmental actors, civic society, the business sector and the public. Media especially the fm stations has been used as a tool to achieve this.

According to Roberts (2004), the public depended on those in official positions to judge public policy and its execution throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Still, there was a trend toward increasing direct citizen engagement towards the end of the century. Public consultation and making development plans and services more responsive to local demands in Kenya is now a constitutional duty.

According to Creighton (2005), public engagement in Kenya has its origins in community development programs. Since the country gained its independence, legislative steps have been taken to give the public a voice by encouraging them to participate actively in the governance of their nation. However, the majority of these methods have been restricted to municipal governments. Citizens do not wholly comprehend their rights or embrace the opportunity; hence, public engagement has not achieved its full potential. Today, the government has become decentralized through devolution, where power is transferred to the 47 counties as listed on the First Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010. Every one of these counties comprises the County Assemblies and the County Executives. They are all required by the Constitution to embrace public participation in the decision-making process, which includes consulting and including interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies, and government entities. However, the problem is to get as many individuals to utilize the tools provided to make valuable contributions to the governance process as feasible.

Article 174 (c) of the Kenyan Constitution describes the purpose of devolution as "to grant powers of self-government to the people and improve the involvement of the people in the exercise of the powers of the state and in making decisions affecting them." Article 174 (d) specifies another purpose of devolution: to "recognize the right of communities to govern their affairs and advance their development." However, even with such provisions, conflicts have been experienced where county residents have protested that their county governments rarely engage them on legislation and development execution.

In a report on public meetings on county finances in 2014, it was evident that the lack of public participation in enacting the Finance Bill led to riots in several counties across the country. Most counties introduced levies without consultation with the local stakeholders. Nakuru, Kiambu, Kakamega, and Machakos County Governments had to review some of the contentious provisions after protests by angry traders were witnessed, claiming they were not involved in drafting the Bill as required by law. The public broadcasters played a major role in influencing the county governments' house committees, legislators, administrators and CBEF members in resolving the stalemate.

To ensure large public participation in county governance as envisaged in the Kenya constitution 2010, public broadcasters could use listeners clubs, phone in, reviewed content and programming as appropriate techniques. The vernacular radio were in fully engaged in reaching the masses and allowing their voice to heard,

Against this background, this study examined the role of vernacular radio in enhancing public participation in the political agenda where the 'Thandi' programme (literally translated to mean 'fireworks'), a political show on Coro FM, was studied,

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The Kenya Constitution's Fourth Schedule (2010) assigns counties the responsibility of fostering community involvement in government. According to the County Government Act of 2010, counties must promote citizen engagement through meetings where identification of project priorities, plans, and budgets can be discussed. However, this role has been challenging to achieve due to some challenges. The conventional methods of community participation, such as public meetings held in public places like schools, churches, or other community buildings, often do not represent the opinions of the broad community. This is because they may be scheduled during the day when people are at work or in the evening when the majority of the population may not avail themselves of meetings, preferring to rest after a day's work.

Moreover, these meetings may be dominated by a minority of the vocal citizens who get to be heard, while other people are unable to participate because they lack information on the issue being discussed. In a similar vein, participatory arrangements have been called out for criticism because they do not adequately reflect the populace since they disproportionately include wealthy and educated people (Carver, 2001). In addition, meetings may be expensive, both in terms of time and money, and as a result, they are often seen as ineffective.

Therefore, the study examined whether vernacular radio could be a solution to the challenges of public participation. For instance, the cost incurred by the community in moving to where participatory meetings occur since one can listen to the radio from their comfort. I also examined official routes that can be used to ensure public input through radio is reflected in the laws legislated and policies adopted.

Academically, studies have been done on citizen participation in public works and public

administration, but few on the role of vernacular radio in enhancing public participation. Though many counties use these conventional participatory approaches, citizens have expressed dissent across counties on various policies adopted by county governments.

At the policy level, there are laws that have been overturned by Kenyan courts due to lack of public participation. This study will create knowledge on media role in public participation. It will offer insights to the two levels of government i.e. national and county government on better approaches to strengthen the practice of public participation through vernacular radios.

The research would bridge the three gaps experienced by the county governments in public participation namely; ensuring public participation as a constitutional requirement, dealing with challenges of distance in public participation and having a large number of the population getting involved in public participation.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The overarching objective of the study was to evaluate how vernacular radio can be utilized to actualize public participation in governance. Specific research questions were:

- i. How can vernacular radio contribute towards institutionalizing public participation in Kirinyaga county government?
- ii. What are the official routes that can be utilized to ensure public input generated through radio influence Kirinyaga county government policymaking?
- iii. How can large audience be drawn to radio public participation activities in Kirinyaga County?

### **1.4 Scope of the study**

The research focused on vernacular radios as a tool of promoting in public participation in County governance, a case of Kirinyaga County. It was carried out among the citizen



and government officials of the county. It was conducted in 2016/2017 financial year of Kirinyaga county assembly.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

Methodologically, this study used the single case study method. It was not a comparative study of two countries or radio programmes. This was done to help in an in-depth understanding of the radio input in public participation. However, this is connected to the distinction between statistical and analytical generalization; single case studies are less suitable for the former, but they may still have significant utility in the later. This relates to the distinction between explanatory and exploratory research as well as theory-testing and theory-building Gerring (2006).

To increase the dependability of data, triangulation was used where evidence from a wide range of sources was compared. I also used data triangulation to compare data from in-depth interviews, informal conversations, focus group discussions, and content analysis (Patton & Cochran, 2002). The county officials and administrators are a busy people and in line of duty travel a lot and often in meetings. They may not be readily available promptly when needed due to the nature of their work. To address this the researcher used phone calls and also booking appointment in advance.

The data was collected from Kirinyaga County which is a huge county by surface area. To make it manageable to collect data in a vast land, the researcher used focus group discussions and phone in. This enable easier generalization of the findings to all parts of Kirinyaga County and other counties.

### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

The debate of Public Participation has spilled over to courts in Kenya. The Kiambu Finance

Act 2013 for instance was challenged in Robert N. Gakuru & others Governor Kiambu County and 3 others in petition No.532 of 2013. The arguments were that the Act was unconstitutional for failing to meet public participation criteria. The judge ruled in favor of the petitioners and observed that the county assembly ought to have done whatever was reasonable to ensure many constituents were involved. He gave example of using vernacular radio and other avenues where the public are known to converge to share information with respect to the intended action. The county had used public forums to consult the public about the law. The conventional techniques of public participation like public meetings usually fail to achieve their objective. A main reason is inability of the public to attend due to time and cost constraints. In addition, only those who are vocal get to be heard.

The study examined appropriateness of vernacular radio in engaging the public in political agenda making process. Which helped determine whether vernacular radio can be used in place of public forums.

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

Scholarly, the study is of great importance in bridging the knowledge gap existing community participation and the media political programmes. The findings are useful in providing more literature on vernacular radio and public participation in governance. This will form a basis for future studies in this area and more specifically to the academia world; the findings will therefore be useful to scholars with an interest in vernacular radio in promoting public participation. At policy level, the study creates knowledge on media role in public participation. It offers insights to the two levels of government namely the national and county governments. These two levels will find a set of approaches to strengthen the practice of public participation in governance. These approaches if employed will ensure public participation radio programmes are run effectively, sustainably and satisfactorily.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a study of the framework of public participation in governance. It presents a synthesis and description of the relevant literature concerning the variables: vernacular radio, audiences of vernacular radio, the governance processes and the Kirinyaga County. It also discusses the theoretical framework upon which the study is underpinned. In particular, the chapter discusses aspects of the level of participation theory, the ladder of citizen participation theory and the participation measurement theories. It explores the way public participation fits into different views of the environment, society, politics, and law. A review of relevant literature was captured in sub-topics including media and public participation, situating the study in the field of communication studies, a review of theories related to the studies as well as review of past studies related to public participation.

#### **2.2 Review of relevant theories**

In this section, the study reviews levels of participation, the ladder of citizen participation as well as public participation measurement theories. The theories are relevant to this study because they provide the basic criteria against which media performance is judged.

##### **2.2.1 Levels of Participation**

The amount of engagement varies across programs. The notion that "more engagement is better" is not necessarily accurate since the more persons who become engaged, the more time both sides demand. This is particularly true in large-scale initiatives in low-income areas, where the community may simply not have the time or resources to devote to achieving the maximum levels of involvement (Imparato & Ruster, 2003).

Access to information, consultation, and active involvement via discussion and cooperation are all recognized degrees of participation in international agreements and country-specific regulations. The table below summarizes how these levels are defined in various texts.

**Access to information** is the fundamental, most basic and most crucial right that underpins the whole participation process. While this implies that the government tells the public about its goals and the sorts of papers it wishes to adopt at the start of the process, it also emphasizes the public's right to access all material (including drafts, comments, and rationale) throughout the process. Access to information is governed by special legislation. While there is no need for significant engagement between the government and the public at this level, the government should not take steps that prevent the people from accessing critical information.

**Consultation** is a method of involvement in which the government solicits the opinion, comments, opinions, and feedback of the general public about a certain document. The problems on which the public is consulted are determined by the government; however, throughout this process, the public should also be given the opportunity to voice their view on other matters that are included in the draft. Consultation may be arranged with a wider number of people from the general public serving as participants. The public gets engaged because the government asks them to do so, which is a kind of involvement that is considered to be reactive. On the other hand, this does not mean that members of the public can't make a request to be consulted. Indeed, individuals have the ability to take an active role in the political process and remind governmental authorities of the need of soliciting their feedback on legislation that will have an impact on their lives.

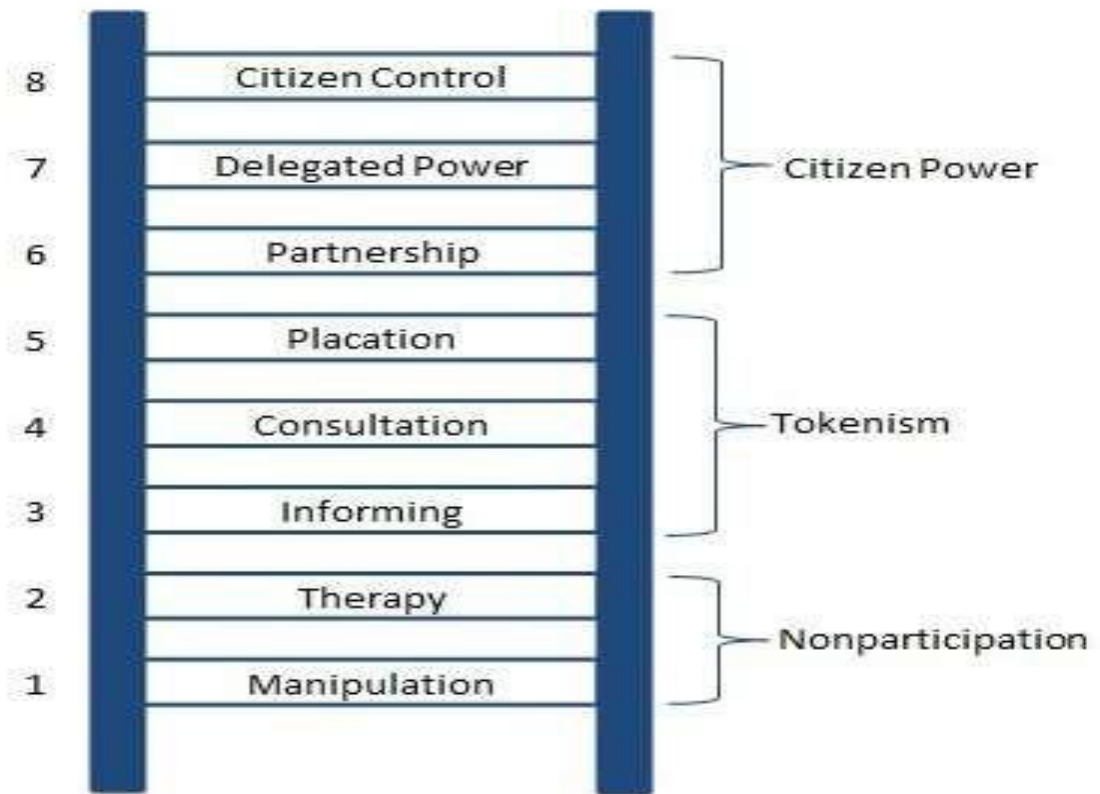
**Active involvement** (partnership) at all levels of the decision-making process involves

cooperation and shared obligations (agenda setting, issue identification, drafting, decision and implementation). It is the greatest level of engagement; it may be characterized as a scenario in which public representatives share a platform with government officials. Both parties may take the initiative. While there should be consensus on the process's shared aims, people engaged from the public should be free to maintain their independence and advocate for the ideas they wish to see implemented.

### **2.2.2 The Ladder of Citizen Participation**

"The ladder of Arnstein" is a well-known paradigm for public involvement, ranging from non-participation to citizen control and entrusting authority and responsibility to the people themselves at each step along the way. Sherry R. Arnstein was the first to describe the "ladder of citizen engagement" in an essay (Arnstein, 1969). Public participation in decision-making may take a variety of forms, as this article describes. It explains eight degrees of engagement, which are split into three primary groups. Many people in the planning, architectural, political, and power sectors still accept the varied degrees of engagement, despite the fact that this document was initially published over 50 years ago. As indicated in Figure 1, these tiers may be seen as a ladder.

Non-participation, according to Arnstein, is when the public is not directly engaged and may be tricked into believing that they are a part of decision-making. This may happen when the people in power build a fictitious kind of involvement around a choice that has already been taken. To begin with, individuals are "educated," and they may be urged to sign plans that they feel are in their best interests.



**Figure 1: The Ladder of Citizen Participation**

**Source:** Adopted from Arnstein, 1969

The second level of engagement, which Arnstein refers to as therapy and describes as "healing" the people, includes those in positions of power. The people in positions of authority have committed to providing assistance to the populace and encouraging them to participate in a variety of activities designed to "cure" their beliefs so that they may be accepted by the populace.

Tokenism is a term that Arnstein uses to describe the third, fourth, and fifth levels. The participation of the public is required at this stage, but to a limited degree. The level known as "informing" is the one at which the inhabitants are given information on what is going on. People get the information in a unidirectional manner, since it is disseminated to them via sources such as newspapers, the media, the internet, and other channels.

The fourth phase is called "consultation," and it is at this step that the views of the public might begin to alter the viewpoint of the power holder. This is a typical method of public engagement that is applied throughout the urban planning process. This may be successful if, as part of the planning process, information and consultation are taken into consideration and taken into account. This stage, however, will be of limited value and, as a result, might fall back into the level of non-participation if the consultation and information are not taken into account at the end of the day.

At the fifth rung of Arnstein's ladder, people's voices will begin to have an impact on the decisions that are made by those in positions of power. This rung on the ladder is what Arnstein considers to be his position. At this stage, residents may be selected at random or via a selection process to serve on a governing board that is responsible for making decisions on the planning process. Arnstein believes that this procedure has a greater chance of success if the board members are evenly divided between citizens and power holders. In this way, the people will not be able to be outvoted throughout the procedure.

The last rung on the participation ladder is citizen power, which is what Arnstein refers to. Here is where the regular people have a chance to have direct input into the decision-making process. An alliance between the people in positions of authority and the general populace is established at stage six. Arnstein places a relatively high value on collaboration since, in her view; it is the best way to ensure that both people and those in positions of power are happy.

According to Arnstein, the seventh level is comprised of delegated authority. At this point, the people are able to begin seizing control, and those in positions of authority are required to begin bargaining with the population. In contrast to the scenario that was

provided for placation (which corresponds to the fifth level), the majority of the board members would consist of ordinary folks. This would entail the power holders having to engage in decision-making negotiations with the other members of the board.

The third level, which Arnstein refers to as citizen control, comes after that. These phrases accurately characterize this level since it gives the people the ability to make decisions. Referendums provide the possibility of accomplishing this goal; but, given that they are notoriously time-consuming and complex to organize, their use is likely to significantly slow down the process. As a result, they are often reserved for use in making more significant choices. However, in many circumstances, local authorities do not offer their residents complete influence in such elections. Instead, they regard the outcomes of such elections as only advisory for the ultimate decision that is made by the city council or other similar decision making bodies.

### **2.2.3 Public Participation Measurement Theories**

The level of attention that is currently being given to increasing the amount of public participation in the policy process highlights the necessity of considering what effects these processes might and will have on the decisions that are made regarding policy as well as on those who participate in them (Charmaz,2006). Researchers and others who influence policy are presently showing a significant amount of interest in the idea of public involvement assessment. The creation of tools to validate the findings of the impacts of inclusive participation practices on decision-making processes is the primary obstacle that is presented by this idea. Techniques such as comment solicitation, follow-ups, workshops, conversation groups, advisory committees, and negotiated rulemaking procedures are often used in the process of determining whether or not the public was satisfied following their engagement.



The majority of the progress that has been made has been focused on improving what are still primarily formative evaluation studies. This refers to the efforts that have been made to improve on existing practice and to evaluate public participation in comparison to a set of goals for what constitutes effective public participation. The user-based evaluation approach, the theory-based evaluation approach, and the goal-free evaluation approach are the three main popular approaches to evaluation. The user-based evaluation approach is based on the assumption that different participants have different goals, and that evaluation must take these into account. The theory-based evaluation approach is driven by theories and models of public participation, and it applies normative evaluation universally to any public participation effort is carried out in the absence of any preexisting hypothesis. To this day, the majority of assessment studies that have been conducted may be classified as user-based.

The focus of public involvement assessment, which may be either on the process of evaluation or the results of evaluation, is another characteristic that sets it apart.

**Table 1.2****Outcome Evaluation Criteria used in Public Participation Evaluation Studies**

OUTCOME CRITERIA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy/Decision Influences</li> <li>• Time to develop regulations</li> <li>• Reduce/eliminate judicial challenges</li> <li>• Agency responsiveness to participants' policy demands</li> <li>• Influence on public</li> <li>• Social impact</li> <li>• Impact on general thinking</li> <li>• Effect on public and plan support</li> <li>• Participants' values/opinions changed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interaction with lay knowledge(impact on lay learning)</li> <li>• Effect on staff and planning process</li> <li>• Impact on training(learning of knowledgeable personnel)</li> <li>• Staff awareness</li> <li>• Conflict resolution</li> <li>• Restoring public trust in public agencies</li> <li>• Perceptions of consultation by MPs, public, media(i.e., perceived success/failure)</li> <li>• Effectiveness and cost effectiveness</li> <li>• Procedural impact of the mechanism</li> </ul>

**(Source: Rowe and Frewer, 2004)**

Theoretical and practical issues confront evaluation methods. First, identifying the end-point of a participation exercise for the sake of determining efficacy is often difficult. More specifically, the capacity to quantify the process' institutional and social implications, which might take years, may be difficult to separate from other events that influence the policy process. Second, although the public involvement approach may meet certain requirements, it may not meet others. How can we know how much weight

to give to a democratically-driven advice that seems to be acceptable? The measuring criteria are the third major obstacle. Despite the difficulties connected with its interpretation, participant satisfaction is often utilized as a measure of success. In any review, the question of perceived vs. real consequences is difficult. Another issue that requires improvement is the lack of adequately validated measuring instruments.

Process-oriented research and outcome-oriented studies are two types of research evidence found in the empirical assessment literature (Abelson, 2006). The former demonstrates that "process matters," and that various methods of public engagement should be tailored to particular sorts of concerns, decision-making environments, and participant groups. What's less obvious is which of these contextual factors is most important, and which processes are best suited to each of these distinct configurations.

The majority of outcome-oriented empirical research has examined the effects of public involvement methods on a variety of citizen participant characteristics. Higher interest and awareness of public problems; enhanced ability for future public engagement; increased tendency for social connection creation; and improved trust of fellow citizens have all been documented in these research. Public discourse may result in policy results, but the circumstances under which this happens are difficult to pinpoint. Recent research has shown a significant link between widespread acceptance of decision results and procedures in which agencies are responsive, participants are motivated, deliberation quality is good, and participants have at least a reasonable degree of influence over the process.

### **2.3 Participatory communication pathways and counties governance**

Public participation advances participatory communication (Walker, 2007). This is when everyone is given a chance take part in voting for or making bylaws that govern them thus

providing the opportunity for individual participation.

In addition, public engagement in vernacular radio provides the populace with the opportunity to contribute to the agenda for growth. Different nations all around the globe have come up with innovative ways to engage, which have led to the development of a broad variety of participatory communication systems. People in the populace are able to have direct conversations with one another, during which they may exchange ideas and express their perspectives. There are additional techniques of online participation where the information flows in just one direction, providing the community with knowledge but without enabling them to have any say in the direction the project takes. It's possible that some of these online engagement initiatives will also function as a two-way flow between the people and whomever has the authority, ensuring that a variety of perspectives are taken into consideration. At each stage of engagement, a choice must be made on the kind of procedure that will be implemented and the degree of involvement that will be extended to individual citizens. (Innes & Booher, 2004).

Building trust between members of the public and those in positions of power may be accomplished by involving communities or individual people in the public participation process. One of the most important possible remedies to the problem that has arisen in public trust and governance is the participation of the people. Instead of seeing members of the public as bystanders in the decision-making process, government officials need to be more active in including the general public in the formulation of public policy. It is widely accepted among political theorists, social observers, and even politicians that public engagement boosts public trust in authorities, improves citizen understanding, and contributes to the enhancement of democratic governance and the quality of policy choices. Additionally, it results in increased collaboration and

increased sustainability. This is accomplished by establishing a shared base from which it becomes possible to generate solutions. This may also be helpful in the future for avoiding conflict between people and the authorities of their country.

Public participation also leads to public understanding of the government activities being undertaken. Government officials are expected to be more accountable and transparent when the public is involved assuming they have a better understanding of the process. It also leads to improved decision making because it is also important for creating agreement among key stakeholders on the optimal strategy to development, therefore boosting the project's performance and effect.

Public engagement also enhances project design and aids in the development of a viable solution that people can afford and are prepared to pay for. It also gives pertinent local information and allows for its consideration. Giving the people a voice and enabling them to participate increases their feeling of ownership and responsibility (Imparato & Ruster, 2003).

The three major roles of Public Participation are information dissemination, consultation, and participation (Innes & Booher, 2004). These roles are overlapping processes and will be discussed under levels of participation.

A society that has a high level of awareness about the structures and operations of its government is more likely to engage in the management of its affairs. In Kenya, the engagement of the many stakeholders and the optimization of development plans and services to the local community has been made a constitutional duty and against this background the research on vernacular radio as a tool in promoting public participation in county governance found that public engagement may provide a means for the communities who are involved to keep public authorities responsible for the execution.

Effective public engagement practices therefore helps governments to be more accountable and responsive, improving public's views and perception of government performance. Public oversight accelerates transparency in government therefore preventing abuse of power. The quality of the plan is improved as a result of the public's contributions of their ideas, views, and localized expertise when they are provided with the necessary information and given the opportunity to be heard. It also allows people in authority the opportunity to help individuals in question in better comprehending the problem at hand, as well as have viable answers and alternatives.

#### **2.4 Media and public participation**

One of the best avenues for public participation is Media which includes vernacular radio. This study aimed to find out how vernacular radio can be used as a tool for public participation in devolved governance. Since the main aim of public participation is to encourage the public to have meaningful input into the decision-making process, the vernacular radio provides the opportunity for communication between the county government leaders and the public with an aim to make them part of the governance. Public participation ensures that the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making process. Kenya's constitution places public engagement at the heart of the country's administration. The Constitution emphasizes citizen engagement. It all begins with Article 1, which stipulates that the people of Kenya have complete sovereign sovereignty. At the national and local levels, this authority is exercised either directly via public engagement or indirectly through democratically elected officials. "Participation of the people" is one of our country's ideals and principles of government, according to Article 10(2) (a). Meanwhile, public workers are required to

incorporate individuals "in the process of policy making" under Article 232(1) (d). Article 174(c) of the Constitution states that one of the goals of devolution is to "increase the involvement of people in the exercise of State functions and in making choices that affect them." Article 184(1) (c) further demands that procedures for resident involvement in the administration and management of metropolitan regions and cities be established in national law. It is laid forth in the constitution in Article 174, which explains what it is supposed to do. The purpose of devolution, according to Article 174(c), is to "provide people the capacity to govern them and to increase their involvement in the exercise of state power and in making choices that concern them." Another goal is to "recognize the right of communities to govern their own affairs and to advance their development," according to Article 174(d).

The purpose of public participation is to make it easier for anyone who might be impacted or interested in a decision to participate in making that choice (and generally a decision of governmental bodies). Those who will be directly impacted by a decision have a duty and a responsibility to participate in the deliberations that led to the decision. That the engagement of members of the public can have an effect on the choice that will ultimately be made is an assumption that is implicitly made here. The engagement of members of the general public is seen as a kind of empowerment and is an essential component of democratic government. It is a component of management styles known as "people first" or "people focused," which seek to eliminate centralized and hierarchical decision-making structures. Therefore, engagement from the general people is widely acknowledged to be an essential component of effective administration. The provision that "the right to knowledge is a basic right indispensable for the enjoyment of all other rights" may be found in Article 35 of the Constitution of the United States of America. When it is fully implemented, it will make it possible for

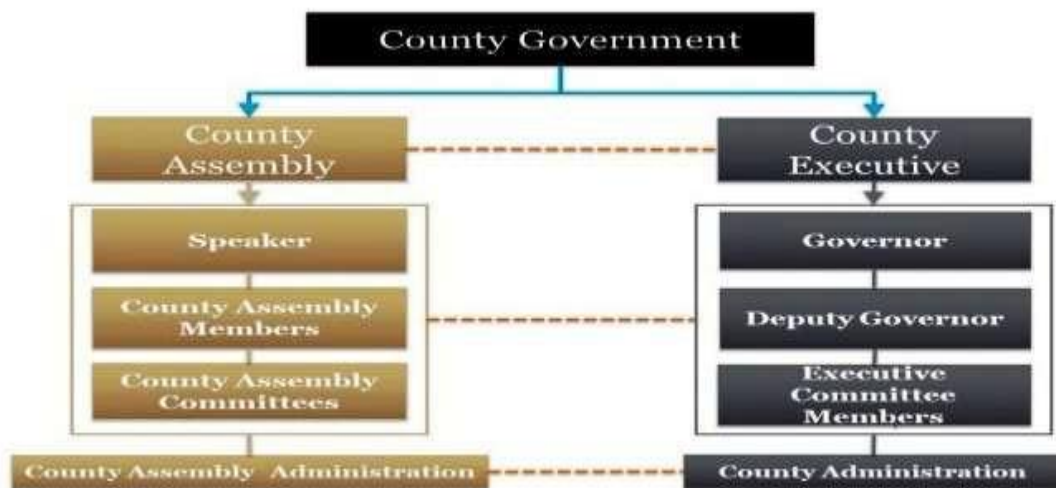
people in Kenya to learn about their development rights and the initiatives from which they are meant to be benefitting, such as the CDF. It is required that the county assembly encourages public involvement in the legislative and other activities of the assembly. This provision may be found in Article 196, paragraph 1, clause b.

The involvement of the people is seen as an integral component of the core values and guiding principles of national government, as stated in section 10(2)(a). In addition, public engagement is outlined as one of the principles of public finance under Section 201(a), which also describes transparency and accountability as principles of public finance. The engagement of the public strikes a healthy balance between the concepts of governance "for the people" and "by the people." The idea places an emphasis on the need of promoting broader engagement of citizens and meaningful participation in the process of decision making within government systems. If it is used effectively, public involvement has the ability to play a large role, significantly influence decision making, and eventually lead to an improvement in the process of governance. The engagement of the public places an emphasis on ideas such as "many heads are better than one," which may lead to change that is both productive and durable. In point of fact, it is a component of a management style known as "people first" or "people focused," which seeks to eliminate centralized and hierarchical decision-making structures.

One kind of decentralization is known as devolution. The concept of decentralization refers to the shifting of certain responsibilities away from centralized authorities and toward more manageable organizational levels. The state's powers of income collection and spending, among other things, may be devolved to local governments via a process known as devolution. This involves the transfer of authority from a central authority to a local authority by a legislative act. In the case of Kenya, the existing Centralized



System Government, which has its headquarters in the city of Nairobi, which serves as the Capital, ceded authority to the 47 Counties that are specified on the First Schedule of CoK 2010. Each of these Counties is responsible for forming its own county government, which is made up of the County Assemblies and County Executives. The County Assemblies are in charge of legislative duties, while the County Executives are in charge of carrying out the policies and laws that have been passed.



**Figure 2: The County government structure in Kenya.**

Traditional methods of community participation, such as attending meetings, which are frequently held in churches, schools, or other community buildings in the evening or when people are attending work, frequently do not represent the opinions of the entire community because many people are unable to attend meetings during the time that they are scheduled to take place. It's possible that a small segment of the more vociferous folks will take control of these sessions.

In a comparable vein, Participatory arrangements are frequently accused as lacking representativeness by preferentially incorporating the wealthier and well-educated population. It may also frequently be difficult for the typical individual to grasp what is going on (Carver, 2001). Furthermore, because of the time and money they need,

participatory approaches are often seen as ineffective. Many government entities prefer to exclude or reduce public engagement in planning initiatives arguing citizen participation is too costly and time consuming. As a result of public outcry against a planned project or action, many citizen engagement initiatives are born. There is also a knowledge gap to be overcome between people and government employees in complicated decision-making processes (particularly when employing specialized technology applications) (especially when using specific technical applications). Formal decision-making processes are typically long, which does not match the expectations of people engaged, who anticipate speedy choices and outcomes because of a cultural divide between government employees and residents. Public authorities have oftentimes limited expertise in coordinating successful participatory initiatives.

There is no doubt media play a very critical role in our society. However, the argument among the scholars as well as the media recipients is the scope or extent in which the media affects the society. In democratic societies, media and media practitioners such as journalists, reporters, etc. play a very significant role and they act as vehicles reflecting on the public opinion through the highlights of issues which are of public concerns besides making citizens aware of state policies, important events as well as the country's viewpoints. To some extent, media and journalism are perceived to be catalysts for social change and democracy. According to Christians et al (2009: 158), they play a facilitative role by "reflecting the political order in which [people] are situated" as well as "promote dialogue among their [audiences] through communication". In other words, the development or expansion of democracy in a given country is based on an informed and educated public which takes any action, political, developmental or social change, depending on what it knows and therefore, information is very vital and plays an important role in society, "Television, popular

newspapers, magazines, and photography, the popular media of the contemporary time," writes Hartley (1992: 1), "are the public domain, the space and means by which the public is made and has its existence." Politicians are now aware that most people prefer to get their information from the media rather than attending political events in public venues. The media is more successful when it focuses on subjects that they believe the public should be concerned about. By regularly using public officials as sources in the news, the government plays a role in determining the content of the media. The media, like the government, may affect the political agenda by concentrating on certain problems and determining what subjects the public and government should be concerned about.

For long, mass-communication scholars and researchers have been brawled with questions of why, when, where, and how media produce effects. These concerns which span a wide range of areas such as health communication, commercial advertising, and political communication, could be broadly perceived as being issues of persuasion. Lasswell (1927) postulates persuasion as being focused on "the management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols" (1927: 627). Persuasion, according to Simons (1976) is a "human communication that is designed to influence others by modifying their beliefs, values, or attitudes" (p.21). Miller (2000) states that persuasion entails three different processes: response change, response reinforcement, and response shaping. Response shaping is focused in forming the initial response on how individual reacts upon an object, whereas response reinforcement focuses on strengthening the already existing act toward an object. On the other hand, response change entails pure identification or a shift, either positive or negative, on people's reaction towards an object subjected.

The political role of mass media is identified during elections campaigns, debates as well as the involvement of citizens through participation in the political process. It is much understood that they play a critical role of sustaining and reinforcing democracy (Dumitrescu and Mughan, 2010)

## **2.5 Radio programme participation**

Many institutions in the world including UNDP and the World Bank term the media as one of the tools and that can contribute to good governance. Media can fulfill several critical tasks in the issues of governance. Norris (2012), sees the media as having three key roles in contributing to democratization and good governance. First, it works as a watchdog over the powerful, promoting accountability, transparency and public scrutiny; second, as a civic forum for political debate, hence facilitating informed electoral choices and actions; and third, as an agenda-setter for policy makers, strengthening government responsiveness.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The study adopted a case study design and qualitative approach. Primary data was collected from respondents using the focus group discussions and phone in. Purposive technique was used to select research respondents. Data generation instruments, their reliability and validity and the plan for data generation procedure and analysis are discussed

#### 3.2 Philosophical Paradigm

Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) define a philosophical paradigm as a researcher's way of looking at the world and interpreting what is studied. The study adopted relativist-interpretivist paradigm. This required the researcher to include aspects of human interest into the study. There is a presumption that the only way to access reality, whether it be a given or something that has been socially produced, is via social constructions such as language, awareness, shared meanings, and tools. The theoretical assumption that reality is socially produced and malleable underpins these viewpoints and serves as their foundation. Therefore, all that we know is subject to constant negotiation within the context of other cultures, social circumstances, and our relationships with other people. When seen from this angle, the concept of validity or truth being rooted in an external reality is impossible. What is bargained to be true or valid, and there might be numerous legitimate claims to the same body of information at any same time.

Angen (2000) outlines a few criteria that might be used when doing an evaluation of research from an interpretivist point of view. Three of them were singled out:

- a. Awareness and articulation of the choices and interpretations the researcher

made during the inquiry process and evidence of taken responsibility for those choices

- b. A written account that develops persuasive arguments
- c. Validity becomes a moral question and located in the discourse of there search community.

### **3.3 Qualitative Approach**

It has been proposed that qualitative research is a technique to investigation that stresses the quest for relative meaning and the possibility of many interpretations (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). Main features of qualitative approach include a relatively small number of cases, reflexivity and unstructured data.

The researcher sought to understand how vernacular radio contributes towards institutionalizing public participation and routes through which public views generated through radio influence policy makers. The respondent involved were those who made contributions to the subject under study and were relatively small in number. The study involved qualitative approach where qualitative data was gathered, analyzed, presented, and discussed clearly.

The study helped the researcher understand and explore the meaning participants ascribe to social and human challenges in pursuit of self-governance. The intent was to develop far reaching recommendations to relevant government agencies in charge of institutionalizing public participation.

### **3.4 The case study method**

A case study method of Thandi Radio Programme on Coro FM was adopted. A case study is an in-depth investigation of a particular case or cases in real-life context in

which perspectives related to the complexity of the cases are sought (Litchman, 2014). According to Gillham (2000), in order to really comprehend people, one must look at them in the context of their environment and study how they interact with the world around them. Gillham also believes that we can only really comprehend the behavior, feelings, and thoughts of others when we comprehend the environment in which they live and the things they are attempting to accomplish within it.

When concerns about education (Gulsecen & Kubat, 2006), sociology (Grassel & Schirmer, 2006), and community-based problems (Johnson, 2006) are highlighted, such as poverty, unemployment, drug addiction, illiteracy, and so on, the role of the case study approach in research becomes increasingly important. These were also concern of this study. Researchers used case studies to provide thorough and in-depth explanations of social and behavioral difficulties. A researcher utilized case study approaches to understand behavioural events from the perspective of the respondents, going beyond quantitative statistical data.

The case study research technique is defined by Yin (1984:23) as "an empirical investigation that analyzes a current phenomenon inside its real-life setting;" The researcher may use the single-case design when there are no additional examples available for replication. In addition, the case's characteristics, informants, and other institutional and political environment variables must be carefully and in-deeply considered (Stake, 2005). Qualitative case study research conducted using an interpretative according to Stake, benefits from the investigator having a direct relationship with the case.

### **3.5 Sampling**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), population refers to a full collection of persons, situations, or objects having some common observable features, while target population refers to the population to whom the researcher wishes to generalize the findings of a study.

#### **3.5.1 Population**

The population consisted of residents across the constituencies. The issues at hand were of concern to these residents. In regard to leadership structures in the county all executive and county assembly committees in the county government were part of the population. The county government administrators and legislators of Kirinyaga County who constituted the house committees. The choice of Kirinyaga County was triggered by many factors such as strong signals of Coro FM in the county, time convenience, cost effectiveness as well as highlistenership of Coro FM according to Kenya Audience Research Foundation (KARF) report(2014).

#### **3.5.2 Sample technique**

The sampling technique that used was purposive sampling. Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011) cite Stake (2005) who opines that purposive sampling is essential as it helps the researcher to engage with the respondents in gathering information supported by the researcher's interpersonal power. This process assists in creating opportunities to get an in-depth study as well as understanding the insights beneath the study. According to Silverman (2013), purposive sampling is critical as it assists the researcher to choose the case to focus on besides being convenient and accessible. He added that purposive sampling requires our critical thinking in identifying the parameters that help in choosing the sample of our study.



### 3.5.3 Sample size

Using purposive sampling 40 community representatives who were mobilized to engage with 13 county government officials and 4 committees of 3 in studio.

<b>Table 1 Categories</b>	<b>Size</b>
Community representatives	40
County officials	13
<u>Committee members</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Total</u>	<u>65</u>

These community representatives were those individuals who can catalyze change in the society and included activists and opinion shapers. Community participation was also mainstreamed through playing of vox pops which were pre-recorded prior to the show and WhatsApp voices, reading of SMS and social media messages and invitation of call in from members of the public.

Purposive sampling was therefore used to select officials, executive and county assembly committees as well as County Budget Economic Forum involved in the study. The executive and county assembly committee respondents were selected from the researcher's discretion in order to achieve the anticipated study questions. The selected committees were the ones that had ongoing discussions on county bills, policies and pressing issues that were of concern to the population of Kirinyaga County.

### 3.6 Data generation techniques

Data was generated through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and content analysis. Informal conversations supplemented the data. Data was generated from

sampled committees, leaders and community representatives.

### **3.6.1 Focus Group Discussion**

According to Holliday (2007), focus groups are popular and the most recent technique of gathering qualitative data. A focus group is a small gathering of people who have a similar interest or trait, gathered by a moderator who utilizes the group and its interactions to collect information on a specific subject (Williams & Katz, 2001). They are further expounded by Morgan (1996) as having the ability to facilitate effective individual's responses as compared to interviews and would encourage more sums of individuals to respond. Moreover, Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011) delve that FGDs have the potential to accelerate the natural social processes by which individuals compare opinions with each other hence assisting in providing more data to the study. The focus group discussions in the study were conducted off air. They were composed of relevant legislative committees and the change agents in the society who were previously involved in the radio debates. Also Focus Group Discussion with the County Budget Economic Forum were conducted.

### **3.6.2 In-depth interview**

It is the most common qualitative method of generating data. Jwan Ong'ondo (2011) describe them as being fit to gather information as they are potentially open-ended and yet they are directed and shaped at the discretion of the interviewer. They are much useful in exchanging information via a dialogue.

In-depth interviews were also conducted off air with selected county government officials and community representatives. Individuals interviewed included very influential personalities in the county government and were the county governor and his deputy, county speaker and key opinion leaders who represented the community.

### **3.6.3 Informal conversations**

Informal conversations as a data generation technique can either be supplementary technique or a method in its own right (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011).As a supplementary technique, a researcher may follow up or seek clarification through phone call or hold subsequent meetings with research participants. On the other hand, conversations can be a method in its own right when a researcher is discussing general issues with either participants, group of them or people knowledgeable on issues under study and an aspect of the research arises. The researcher at this point needs to be keen to understand information relevant to his/her research which he/she should write down the key issues immediately after the discussion.

In this study, informal conversations were useful since the radio host narrated to the researcher about his experiences in engaging the county government officials. The narration was an important source of data. General talks and issues related to the study were discussed in a relaxed and friendly environment. Phone conversations made with these leaders relevant to the study were also treated as source of data. Informal conversations helped to examine whether the radio programme shaped the perspectives of leaders in the development agenda. They also helped me to seek more clarifications.

### **3.6.4 Content analysis**

Content analysis is a vital qualitative data generation technique and it goes beyond mere reporting, counting of words as well as extracting objective content from the messages delivered by thematically determining the meanings beneath those mere texts (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009).Content analysis was used in examining SMS that were sent to studio, call in made and radio programmes recordings.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The researcher generated various forms of data from in depth interviews and focus group discussions. Listeners' contributions sent through social media sites and SMS formed part of data as well as informal conversations held during off air sessions. The analysis was thematically done across all the data to identify the common trends that recurred and identified the common themes that summarized all the views collected. Focus group discussions and Interviews on both verbal and non-verbal data were transcribed into text. The transcripts were read to have initial understanding of the data. Themes were identified, making notes on the transcripts, developing a coding scheme. Codes and sub-codes helped in reflecting broader analytic themes ensuring that a truly comprehensive analysis was done.

In addition, each recorded case was looked at normatively so that the story of each participant was not lost. Themes were looked into details to examine how they interrelated. The data was useful in identifying the participants' assimilation and contrast effects on the messages disseminated during the broadcast of 'Thandi' talk show. Qualitative data generated through focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, content analysis and informal conversations were analyzed thematically and presented in narrative, inserting useful quotations and giving credence to the voices and paraphrases of the participants.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness**

Qualitative research like other research approaches seeks to produce credible knowledge of interpretations of reality. This therefore calls for credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of data findings. The correctness of data to represent observable social processes is referred to as credibility. Simply put,

credibility refers to whether the study measures or tests what it claims to measure or test. The level of application into various contexts or circumstances is referred to as transferability. Dependability is synonymous with reliability or repeatability. Taking into consideration all of the changes that occur in a location and how they impact the way research is performed is what reliability is all about.

Qualitative data is collected in a relatively unstructured form. Thus, it remains important to ensure that the analysis is reliable and its validity safeguarded. In this research, to ensure reliability of data analysis, recorded all the interviews and group discussions and documented the whole process of analyzing data in detail. To increase dependability of data; triangulation was used where evidence from a wide range of sources was compared. Also data triangulation was used to compare data from in depth interviews, informal conversations, focus group discussions and content analysis (Patton & Cochran 2002).

### **3.9 Ethical consideration**

Rules and procedures necessary for the maintenance of the ethics while conducting the research were observed. In regard to guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, Participants were assured that the information generated from them was to be held in strict confidentiality. Sources of data were not disclosed. They were assured that the research was solely conducted for academic purpose. In addition, data collected was accurate and free from errors.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data generated from 9 in-depth interviews and 3 Focus group discussions was presented. The data was interpreted and discussed in themes that were in line with the research questions. Data was presented and analyzed under the three research questions of the study, which are: How can vernacular radio contribute towards institutionalizing public participation in Kirinyaga county government? What are the official routes that can be utilized to ensure public input generated through radio influence Kirinyaga county government policy making? How can large audience be drawn to radio public participation activities in Kirinyaga County?

The data is in narrative form with a few quotes and paraphrases from data sources in table 1. The interview and focus group discussion data is supplemented by data from informal conversations and content analysis.

**Table 4.2: Symbols used to indicate sources of data**

F1	–Focus Group Discussion with County Assembly,
F2	–Focus Group Discussion with County Assembly-Education committee and community representatives
F3	– Focus Group Discussion with County Budget Economic Forum members
E1	– Interview with County Executive member in charge of Agriculture
E2	– Interview with County Executive member in charge of Education
E3	– Interview with County Executive member in charge of Youth
M1	– Interview with a community activist- Agriculture
M2	– Interview with a community activist- Education
M3	– Interview with a community activist- Youth affairs
N1	– Interview with county speaker
N2	– Interview with county governor
N3	– Interview with Deputy/Governor

## **4.2 Contributions of vernacular radio in achieving public participation**

Centralization of decision-making has the potential to alienate inhabitants in rural regions, especially young people, and lead to civil upheaval. Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have advocated for decentralization of decision-making to empower people who stand to profit from well-delivered public services. Promoting political awareness in communities that have historically lacked access to information is an important aspect of this endeavor, since it allows residents to be more effective participants in their own administration. Radios are one potentially cost-effective way to convey community, governmental, and political knowledge to groups of individuals who generally have limited access to such information. Radios have the capacity to increase information about various groups and government procedures, as well as change views about women, foreigners, and authority, and encourage more engagement in local affairs. Radios boost community awareness, resulting in increased engagement in the local village, and these impacts are maintained over time. Radio, in particular, encourages public engagement by doing the following:

### **4.2.1 Promoting Self-Efficacy**

Citizens with low efficacy have little trust in their government and feel that their activities have little effect on the government or the acts of its political leaders. Citizens with high efficacy have trust in their government and feel they can influence political leaders and affect the government. The majority of participants thought the Thandi radio show inspired conversation, which is a crucial factor of effectiveness and action in a society where talking and expressing thoughts is unusual.

Audience members were overwhelmingly positive about the role of Thandi in increasing their understanding of the civic engagement on topics it covered. The Programmed audience needs in this area. The audience members were more able to articulate their key local concerns, and reported awareness and understanding of key civic engagement terms than before. Interactive dynamics

created an emergent property that was more than the sum of its individual attributes in self-efficacy (NI).

The media, the freedom to protest, the ability to submit petitions, and free and fair elections are all ways that political effectiveness may be shown. When a person feels helpless in their own nation, the outcome is often violence. This is a side effect of having poor political effectiveness. Social and political involvement is strongly associated with feelings of effectiveness. Amongst citizens, there are various disparities, such as race, gender, handicap, sexuality, money, position, or whether individuals reside in urban or rural regions. The repercussions of these discrepancies are far from neutral, and they are often accompanied with power disparities. Each citizen's identity is made up of multiple features at once. It's critical to notice the power imbalances that occur both inside and between these various social groupings. Participants also noted that since governments and the citizen are made up of different people, radio helped to overcome these hierarchies of power and facilitated participation of women, poor and marginalized groups. It allowed all people, including the poor and marginalized, to engage with county governments to account over the issues that mattered to them most.

Radio was an important tool for the rapid diffusion of county integrated development plan. It disseminated information on agriculture, health, nutrition, and other policy issues. Combined with other media, it was a useful media for training and the transfer of technologies. It not only provided a venue for the expression of the needs, ideas, and ambitions of rural women, but it also encouraged conversation and discussion on the most important problems pertaining to rural development. Women were able to express their worries and talk about their goals for the future with external partners such as county policymakers and development planners thanks to the medium of radio. The use of radio was critical to the achievement of fruitful connection with rural communities (N2).

Radio programs are at their most successful when they are created with audience involvement, in the languages spoken locally, and with cultural norms and practices taken into mind. Live public events and discussions in the local community are examples of successful features.



#### **4.2.2 Promoting dialogue**

The citizen is increasingly at the center of politicians' deliberations, not merely as a target, but also as an actor, according to devolution theory and practice. The goal is to create policies and services that are tailored to the requirements of people and appropriate to their situations. Co-creation and co-production are terms that have arisen to characterize the deliberate pursuit of long-term cooperation among government institutions, non-governmental organizations, communities, and individual individuals. Research participants noted that though the concept of citizen participation is hyped, existing tools used to execute it have failed and radio offers a unique approach in this agenda.

It has been discussed or attempted, but citizen engagement in the creation of policies and the design of services has not been achieved nearly often enough. There is a wealth of research in the field of public policy that supports the idea that counties should work together. However, in order for government agencies to really involve citizens in the "co-production" of policies and services, they will need to undergo significant cultural and organizational changes. It necessitates novel ways, such as equipping public officials with new abilities to work as facilitators, negotiators, and partners. It requires people to have a public-good attitude, a desire to actively engage, and the skills necessary to participate and discuss effectively. These are lofty goals, particularly when citizens are disengaged and some sections of people are disenfranchised. Effective citizen engagement, in particular, requires government backing for the actual devolution of authority and decision-making to frontline public officials and professionals, as well as the residents and stakeholders with whom they interact. Radio in these efforts would bring the two parties on one debating table where they can dialogue as the wider community follows these discussions (F2).

The government as the supplier or guarantee of services to suit the requirements of the people, and citizens as consumers of these services, was one way the radio show saw the governance connection between citizens and government. It was discovered that many efforts to enhance the quality or scope of services rely on residents giving feedback to governments on whether they are delivering the appropriate services to the right people at the right time.

From these programmes, it came out that radio dialogue can facilitate direct democracy which would keep community participation active and public institutions accountable. Radio facilitated the establishment of a political society capable of changing dependent private persons into free citizens and partial and private interests into public benefits via a participatory process of continual, proximal self-legislation. It also provided a forum for direct participation, which was not only desired but also possible. Citizens obtained a better understanding of and capacity to engage in the political, technical, and administrative issues that impact them. Above all, it is their right to participate in the choices that affect their life.

Participation, as a consequence, is intricately intertwined with the right to communicate, which citizens exercise not only within the constitutional boundaries that have been mutually agreed upon, but also with a feeling of civic obligation to keep the state accountable to the people. Therefore, participation and vernacular radio seem to be tightly intertwined, to the point where it is impossible to talk about one without mentioning the other. This is the case because it is difficult to speak of one without mentioning the other. Therefore, public engagement in vernacular radio involves a philosophy of communication practices that are ingrained into the day-to-day lives of communities, as well as material that is generated by those communities. Vernacular

radio also indicates content that is produced by communities.

The combined use of community representatives and digital media in the Thandi radio programme deepened the roots of the station in the Kirinyaga community. It also democratized communication by empowering local citizens to participate in local debates without the limits of time and space. Its audiences structurally organized the station in a way that enhanced and facilitated democratic participation. The station also embraced the use of the new digital media that generally had a greater potential for active, individualized, and interactive usage and reinforced the capacity of radio to be a platform of accountability that was truly informed by community. The digital media contributed to the creation of organic, bottom-up, and participatory communication in local development and governance issues in the County. Participants described the programmes as interesting since they operated in the processes of convergence and used a diversity of technologies to realize their objectives.

The programme constructed and reinforced participatory cultures between the county government and citizens. They created active audiences in radio who participated across the production, distribution, and consumption of content. I would say that these perceived emerging participatory cultures on radio could be said to constitute active or participative citizenship. Frontline SMS was successfully utilized by the station to promote interaction with audiences in the production and dissemination of the programme. For instance, frontline SMS service facilitated news tips and feedback to the station's programs. It also utilized public text messages extensively for story ideas. I liked the way the radio host encouraged people to use text messaging, mobile voice calls, e-mailing, and social media to participate on issues of local and national importance (M2).

Public radio stations must be centers of expertise that are skilled in both democratic practice and the real structure of democracy. In theory, public-owned radio provides a departure from the top-down, paternalistic broadcasting strategies that are prevalent in the commercial sector. According to the findings of the study, public broadcasting stations should embrace community radio style, which emphasizes a bottom-up

approach based on local communities' direct engagement, ownership, and control.

#### **4.2.3 Achieving Civic education**

The Constitution of Kenya, which was passed in 2010, encourages citizen engagement in government at all levels. This involvement is only conceivable when the public is informed on the problems that impact their lives and how to influence the important decision-makers of such concerns. Only then will this participation be achievable. In this sense, civic education is a vital instrument that may be used to increase the level of public engagement. Through things like civic education, citizens of a community may be made aware of the ways in which the government intends to advance development and how they can play a role in ensuring that the plan is successfully implemented.

The radio was put to use as a tool to enlighten individuals of their rights and obligations, raise awareness of social concerns, and provide the circumstances for increased engagement in both the life of the state and the general public. The use of vernacular language made it possible for people of older generations as well as those who were illiterate to access and comprehend information. The shows were entertaining because to the incorporation of elements such as drama, music, humor, interviews, and case studies. When recording, designing, and delivering these one-of-a-kind radio-based civic education programs, the Coro radio team's expertise and years of experience were put to good use across the many programs. In order to carry out civic education, the programs relied on the expertise of a broad variety of professionals, such as members of civil society, active attorneys, and influential opinion leaders.

Civic education through radio helped citizens challenge the necessity and legitimacy of specific government policies and actions. It was evident from the study that citizens can better

contribute to the development of their counties when they know how the county governments work and how to support issues important to them. In particular, the radio programmes, helped to create an informed and responsible citizenry that played a critical role in enhancing democracy.

Many research participants from their experiences in the radio engagement observed that radio was a powerful tool that empowered county residents to be responsible citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities and are prepared to contribute to a fair and equitable society.

Thandi radio programme facilitated civic education. It helped in informing citizens of major social economic and political issues that affect their lives. It also educated citizens on their specific civic roles and responsibilities, which helped them to be active participants in democratic processes. The radio project also built better advocacy skills and increased levels of civic understanding in regard to good governance, proper leadership, the rule of law and democratic principles. More importantly, radio was key in keeping citizens informed about government initiatives and encouraged greater citizen participation in service delivery and other related issues (E3).

Through civic education, people were empowered and informed to agitate for solutions to community problems and demand change in government policies. Civic education raised public awareness and increased citizen participation, which are critical components of a thriving democracy. Citizens through radio were empowered to seek solutions to the issues they most care about, and held their governments accountable. In addition, radio gave a voice to the most vulnerable in society especially women, youth and people with disabilities.

Part of the difficulties in talking about development concerns with the public, according to some participants, was that people didn't understand the structure or roles of the numerous government agencies working on critical policy topics like health, education, agriculture, or trade. They found that few individuals were aware of essential aspects of

the policymaking process, such as decision-making, budgeting, and real government actions.

Many of the participants stated that radio might help bridge the gap by offering basic civic education and greater coverage of public policy news. They pointed out that civic education was an essential gap to close since a lack of public awareness made it difficult for politicians to serve effectively, as well as for people to hold officials responsible for carrying out their obligations.

The public would be better equipped to create reasonable expectations — and subsequently hold officials responsible — if they had a clearer knowledge of the legislatures and ministries' duties and capabilities. Both politicians and the public they represent will gain from civic education delivered through radio. More information about the policy process through mass media is needed with a focus on citizens' participation in the implementation of devolution, reforms and promoting social accountability at the county level. It is difficult for a citizen to get involved in the political process without understanding how their government works. Radio in the Thandi programmes provided citizens with requisite skills and the confidence to voice their concerns in order to hold public officials accountable. It also informed citizens of their rights and responsibilities and provided them with necessary skills to make informed choices (F3).

Participants observed that the biggest single obstacle to broad community participation during the radio programmes was apathy. They did remark, however, that over time, radio was useful in overcoming political apathy, which arises from a lack of awareness or comprehension of politics and county administration, as well as a failure to see the significance of their actions for the greater good. Political apathy is a persistent problem that stymies progress in various sectors of county administration. It is perpetuated by the fact that citizens, in general, are usually unwilling to participate in democratic politics.

Some people who were to benefit or affected by issues we were discussing on radio at initial stages of the radio programmes preferred to remain on the sidelines. They failed to send feedback and this demonstrated lack of interest. As long as it's evident that their involvement was aggressively asked and that they declined, anybody (even someone with a potentially strong interest) who declines to join early in a project's planning phase loses considerable respect. Participation in the project's decision-making process is not without its detractors, some of whom have their own agenda unrelated to the projects. The members of the community prefer to behave based on your perspective of reality rather than reality itself. I however must applaud Coro FM since with time; they were able to generate interest of this audience (E1).

#### **4.2.4 Consensus building**

Building consensus is the process of developing a feeling of "ownership" in a project or action that a government desires to finish. This may be done in order for the government to be successful. If the government does not have "ownership" in the planned project or activity, it may have to watch while a crucial advantage or interest is weakened at the hands of the opposition from the members. If certain requirements are satisfied, the many interests that comprise a community are prepared to accept the personal losses and suffering that may emerge from a plan or project. These conditions include the following: Thandi programme enabled the county government successfully generate community support for the decisions they made. Most participants noted that by engaging in a proactive engagement process of strategic communication and collaborative decision-making, conflict was avoided or minimized and replaced by acts of support and approval. Participants attributed this to the act of ensuring decision-making process was collaborative. This also minimized social and financial costs. Participants also noted that in achieving consensus, not every radio contributor who enthusiastically and totally supported every aspect associated with a particular course of action that the county government decided to pursue. It meant that the decisions were supported because majority believed that the actions were, overall, in the best interest of residents because they addressed, to some extent, the majority of their needs.

Participants in the study noticed that the majority of people in the neighborhood were hostile against the notion that the government should tell them "what is good for them." As a consequence of this, the objective of "lecturing to the public" is not a prudent one. Not only does the appearance of a proposed solution to a problem play a role in determining whether or not members of a group with a particular interest are prepared to accept it, but so does the question of whether or not the answer is being "imposed."

Not only does the appearance of a proposed solution to a problem play a role in determining whether or not members of a particular interest group are prepared to accept it, but so does the question of whether or not the solution is being "forced." It is essential to solicit the opinions of local residents on the strategy that the county government intends to use to handle a problem. In most cases, the public do not have the competence to rapidly produce solutions, which makes it difficult to solicit their participation. The thing that seems to be the simplest for them to do is to respond to anything in the form of possibilities, as long as those options are plural, which means that there are more than one, and it is obvious that they have not been completed. People have the impression that they are stuck when you just give them one choice, because giving them any choice in its final form would suggest that their contributions were not taken into account. Therefore, if the officials of the county government provide their constituents with a variety of possibilities, it provides the constituents with choices and the chance to improve those options, assuring citizen engagement via the choosing of an option and the process of refining it (FI).

Opposition based on misinformation or misperceptions was a type of resistance overcome on radio. It was evident that county governments previously over relied on one-sided communications like newspapers to educate people. Participants noted that many of these techniques were less effective in overcoming opposition caused by misinformation. Radio however went beyond and introduced potential opponents of specific projects to debate with each other, which allowed them to hear and adopt each other's arguments.



Radio platform provided an informal setting in which citizens had an opportunity to provide information to county government officials regarding some problem and the two parties generated a range of options available to address that problem. Both debating parties reviewed the information, asked questions, reacted to alternatives, and made further suggestions regarding solutions. It is best to schedule an open house over a few days to accommodate diverse schedules. The county government officials had the chance to bridge gaps through friendly and informal discussions (M3).

Some conflicts experienced on radio stemmed from citizens' unmet emotional needs. Some members of the community felt that they were not consulted on certain proposed actions and decisions. In order to fulfill their need to share their knowledge in a specific field, several community professionals expressed a desire to participate in the process. They also wanted to be included. They proposed that in the future, they participate in task forces and committees where their engagement would be direct and apparent, suggesting that this should be done in the future.

It was evident from the radio debates that satisfying emotional needs is usually the least expensive way to reduce opposition to county government action or project. Radio provided an arena to allow community members vent their anger toward their leaders. County government decisions were usually opposed because they conflicted with priorities of certain members. It was evident that community members supported a proposal when it met their positive interests (E2).

Radio presented county government officials with a suitable arena to address members' unstated demands while completing consensus building and education. As a result, there was a greater feeling of belonging and involvement among the residents. Prior to executing the suggested course of action, county governments should, according to participants, conduct one last public review with residents. They also pointed out that reading a report or going through a set of plans does not always help individuals imagine what a suggested course of action would look like in practice. They will also not confess that they cannot grasp anything that is provided to them for evaluation. It is consequently vital for the county administration to make their aims in a number of clear and descriptive ways. A good example of a demonstration project is painting one

building or one side of a building a suggested color so that the occupants may see what the color looks like in person before it is implemented.

It's difficult to engage individuals in project planning unless there's a proposal — something to respond to. Giving your audience choices implies giving them freedom. Providing just one option seems to be more restrictive. Selecting the "best" course of action from the available options is basically a political process for your community. In order to describe the problem and present a range of solutions, it is recommended that the county government set aside enough time for civic education and input so that residents have plenty of opportunities to ask questions, add new options, refine existing ones, and decide what is best for them and the community. Residents' psychological and procedural needs must be addressed throughout this time. In general, they will support the government's substantive interests if they believe the county government respects their perspectives and concerns (M1).

Participants appreciated the role of radio in facilitating problem-solving process. They noted it allowed free flowing, give and take, discussion. Radio ensured county government officials listened to what citizens had to say about the current issues as well as their sentiments, aspirations, and hopes regarding government projects. It also provided a time for two-way dialogue between government officials and citizens. The context of discussion was semi- informal where citizens felt comfortable interacting with their leaders. The primary goal of the problem solving process through radio was to reach consensus by clearly identifying areas of disagreement and agreement so that the participants could expand on the areas of agreement by talking through and addressing the difficult areas. Community members and government officials aired differences through constructive dialogue. Radio recordings documented concerns in a “verbatim” format archiving comments of discussing parties exactly as they said them. This facilitated follow-up which was important for both the community and government officials to review if need be. After the county government developed the course of action that was, to the degree possible, based upon the input received on the radio, the county government announced the resulting decision. The government also explained

how it took citizens' concerns into consideration. If it did not, it was explained why the public input was not factored in the decision making process. Many participants described this as a cornerstone of the democracy. This generated community spirit and support for several county government lists of actions.

This was an effective phase within any process of strategic planning since it aided in obtaining feedback from individuals on the prioritization of projects for the yearly budget. The administration was able to build support for its activities throughout the year by successfully reaching an agreement on expenditure decisions before those decisions were implemented. This strategy was developed with the presumption that individuals who are closest to a situation, in these case citizens, can identify any problems related with it as well as ways to solve those problems. To ensure the greatest amount of success, we encouraged as many residents as possible to provide input via various channels, including SMS, social media, and other online forums. The county government officials first gave background on the problem and provided citizens with an opportunity to ask questions so that they could clarify the information.

#### **4.3 Routes through which public views generated through radio influenced policy outcomes**

From this study, it was evident that public views generated through vernacular radio can influence both the legislative debates and government actors thereby influencing policy outcomes. Thandi programme played a significant role in identifying community problems requiring policy solution. The programme also influenced the process of policy development including how the problems were framed by various stakeholders, which problems made it into the policymaking agenda, and how the policies were formulated. Radio from the study proved to be politically powerful and socially

popular. It enjoyed support in general from the populace. Leaders committed and acted to resolving issues that were raised by the community during the radio programmes. The public views generated through radio influenced policy development since radio provided a platform for advocacy and policy dialogue by stakeholders. Various routes were used to achieve this influence as discussed below.

#### **4.3.1 Influencing legislators and senior county government executives directly**

Radio acted as an enabler of community activists building relationships with legislators or a group of them. This was a great route to policy impact as it had a direct way to get information from ordinary citizens debated into the county assembly. Every radio debate often had a particular policy interests, related to the issues of community concern. Advocates of certain agenda who were usually made up of community activists were able to reach out to the community at large to enable them to influence legislators to prioritize certain issues. The radio host moderated negotiations and ensured debates were respectful and mindful of importance of long-term relationships.

I must say radio was a very effective tool in enabling us to discuss issues of youth empowerment with members of County Assembly who were relevant to the views and issues, and who were willing to work collaboratively. It also enabled us to widen the network of supporters through calling, sms and social media networks. We were also able to identify and interact with officials and community members whose views varied from the views of the supporters. These individuals voiced the arguments that could likely be raised in opposition to the advocacy goal. These individuals were persuaded to support a part of the effort or a single objective in the larger goal (M3).

Feedback generated from the members of the public was essential in enabling members of county assembly recognize community problems. Problem recognition occurs when a problem is placed on the government's agenda. In the radio programmes, the most influential actors were Lobby groups, community activists and experts who utilized the radio platform created to bring to attention issues of public concern to legislators. Proposals

for addressing particular problems also came from community sources through radio feedback. Most participants underlined the importance of radio in ensuring government executives and legislators were aware of community problems and allowing for discussions of these problems.

No matter how an issue is of importance, it normally will not be attended without the knowledge of government executives or legislators. This is because these are the people in a position to champion an idea to be resolved by relevant government departments. Radio provided a platform where stakeholders debated, shaped and informed their proposals by consulting with experts, interest groups and people likely to be affected by the plans (F3).

The debates allowed negotiations that allowed the community to negotiate the way forward with legislators and government executives. The interested parties were able to generate a 'green paper' - an initial outline of an idea. Subsequent debates and follow-up discussions led to production of a 'white paper', which was a firmer statement of the government's resolve in approaching issues raised. Having consulted and generated a policy document, government officials used radio to persuade community to support the idea. The merits of various policies were debated later outside radio in cabinet committees, made up of executives from across government.

#### **4.3.2 Influencing Through Legislative Committees**

The radio programme host county assembly committees in a bid to influence them. These committees were able to conduct inquiries on radio; it made it possible for them to generate reports on a variety of topics, ranging from the operations of the county administration to specialized subject areas.

Communities were able to submit their views to these committees. This was a very effective way through which views of the community influenced decisions on policy and law making. First, there were the occasional open-ended discussions on major issues, which committees recommended and organized, and which always resulted in a well-informed, intelligent, non-partisan, and representative discourse in which community viewpoints were fairly stated across a wide spectrum of opinion.\

Setting the agenda refers to putting the "problem" on the official policy agenda of concerns that authorities must address. Stakeholders outside government suggested issues to be addressed by policymakers through radio. The government policymakers became engaged and debated on problems identified with the members of the community. The radio programme influenced items, which made it to the agenda of cabinet meetings and county assembly committees.

It is very essential to acknowledge that within the framework of radio discussions, the ability to discuss matters of concern that go beyond radio is of the utmost significance. It is necessary to recognize this. It is the arguments, conducted in good faith both on radio and beyond, that distinguish a legislature that is really representative, dynamic, and responsive to the public. These debates also help to establish trust and confidence between elected officials and the people they serve. Radio's efforts were crucial in the county assembly being more focused, representative, and attentive to its constituents' needs. These conversations opened themselves up to the collective knowledge of all aspects of legislative representation and debates, as well as the wisdom of the community, and accepted it as if it were their own. This allowed for a broader sense of communal duty to be discussed.

Radio played a significant role in enabling us run inquiries in particular topics on agriculture. We were able to look at evidence from a wider range of sources. Written evidence was induced through radio and submitted by interested members of the public, organizations, charities and academics. We considered the Evidence and asked certain individuals and groups to come to county assembly offices to give oral

evidence. These groups came and spoke to the committee about the subject and were questioned on specific issues contained in their reports (F1).

In this context, it was proposed that the treatment be seen as part of a wider definition of legislative, which is defined as a system of government in which the sovereign authority of the people as a whole is exercised either directly or via elected representatives. As a result, the entire process should be open, transparent, and allow for public participation and supervision for all public officials, whether elected or not.

Members of the public were able to influence policy through effective and focused debates. County assemblies braced up to wider community consultations and involvement in policy analysis, which contributed to making the assembly constitute peoples parliament and there by moving away from insularity and partisan views to a “representatives of the community”. Once all the evidence had been considered, the committee would write up a report of recommendations to the committee of the plenary with the aim of positively influencing policy decisions.

#### **4.2.4 Influencing through County Budget Economic Forums (CBEF)**

The Public Finance Management Act of Kenya established the County Budget Economic Forums (CBEF) to allow county governments to comment on the drafting of county plans, the County Fiscal Strategy Paper, and the County Budget Review Paper. They also make it easier for the public to participate in county budgeting, economic level, and financial management. The Governor chairs the County Budget Economic Forums, which include all members of the County Executive Committee (CEC). Furthermore, the law requires the Governor to appoint to the CBEF a number of civil society and private sector representatives equal to the number of CEC members from among individuals nominated by organizations representing professionals, business, labor issues, women, and people with disabilities, the elderly and faith-based groups at the county level.

Radio debates host members of County Budget Economic Forums. Through radio discussions, County Budget Economic Forum members were able to explain to county residents of what the CBEF is for and how it relates to the broad legal requirements for public participation. At the county level, citizens were also involved in discussions on budgets, the economy, and financial management. The participants discussed county plans, which include all of the plans mandated by the County Governments Act 2012, such as the county annual development plan, five-year County integrated development plan, and ten-year sector and spatial plans.

We used radio to address budgeting and financial management issues such as the County Fiscal Strategy Paper and the Budget Review and Outlook Paper. The 30 August Treasury circular, budget forecasts, the main budget plan filed in the Assembly by 30 April, quarterly implementation reports, and advisory information supplied by the Controller of Budget and the Commission on Revenue Allocation were all debated on the radio (F3).

Budget debates have generally elicited little public participation. Most encounters took the form of public hearings, or 'barazas,' in which the general people listened to what the leaders had to say. Radio facilitated dialogue and deliberation on community issues and not one-way public barazas. These discussions were preceded by ensuring proper access to all relevant plans and budget documents to community members. From these discussions, it emerged that public consultations should have clear and specific purposes and allow the widest participation without discrimination. Radio also ensured that any single interest group did not dominate debates on budget and fiscal plans. The radio moderator set aside time for public feedback and question time. Participants specifically noted that radio provided a powerful platform for meaningful consultation. Radio was key in ensuring real influence of public input on matters of budgeting and fiscal plans.

Radio served the important function of reaching out to citizens and structuring participatory processes for gathering input on plans and budgets. It helped in achieving the principal role of the CBEF, which should be to convene public consultations, rather than to represent the public. It enabled CBEF to serve a deliberative body with the community ensuring budget decisions fully represented views of county's citizens (N3).



Radio was effective in overcoming misinformation, which can have negative consequences such as encouraging fiscal irresponsibility. It supplied the much-needed impetus to listeners, allowing them to completely immerse themselves in the discussion and become adequately informed on the economic, social, and political challenges associated with budgeting. The discussions offered a well-organized forum for the dissemination of information and education of the general public about budgets. At each of the four steps of the budget cycle—the formulation stage, the revision and approval stage, the implementation stage, and the assessment and audit stage—the public was informed and consulted. During the phase of formulation, determining which priorities should be prioritized was typically the primary focus of discussions.

From the study, it emerged that output of consultation matters in motivating public to continuously participate. People tended to want to be consulted and continued to participate in consultations when their inputs were actually utilized. Participants from government noted that it is important to make part of public views generated from the members of the public binding.

One method to guarantee that people perceive that their suggestions are taken is to make at least some portion of the consultation obligatory on us as a government entity during the stage in which it is being formulated. I took note that this is one of the benefits that comes with having participants in the budgeting process. Citizens need to have the opportunity to pick certain development initiatives they value more than others, and the conclusion that they reach ought to be legally obligatory on the executive branch. The adoption of tangible and legally enforceable judgments will be appealing for a number of reasons. For one, it will guarantee that consultations have well-defined goals, preventing them from degenerating into aimless ramblings with no discernible starting point or conclusion (N2).

They pointed out that even though the choices that are made by the public do not have any legal weight, the government should nonetheless offer feedback on the suggestions that are

made by the public. This feedback should include an explanation as to why any advice was not taken into consideration. Because of this, the conversation will have more structure, since the government will be required to record comments and reply to each individual one. It is also helpful to prevent the production of large wish lists that cannot be usefully utilized by requiring radio participants to order their priorities or to establish clear tradeoffs between several prospective products. Both of these strategies may be applied.

In the stage of implementation when projects that were discussed on the radio were being carried out, feedback was often given in the form of particular complaints or worries. Due to the fact that there was not necessarily a choice that was being made, feedback was necessary in this instance. If a project was intended to be done but was not, then the important issue was to describe how this problem was to be rectified, rather than to take a precise judgment about which priority should be completed first. In most cases, the feedback was detailed, documented, and easily verifiable. To put it another way, it was feasible to go back to the feedback from a specific radio broadcast and check to see whether any promise was being carried out.

From the study, it emerged that budget information is generally difficult to obtain, and hard to understand. Participation mechanisms instituted by radio ensured a high degree of transparency, ensuring information availability, which was disseminated in a form that was simple and easy to understand. This information simplification for public consumption facilitated effective engagement and participation.

#### **4.4 Techniques public broadcaster employs in drawing large audience in vernacular radio public participation activities**

To command a large audience base to future public participation programs, research participants noted that it would be necessary to develop tactical ideas and best practices that can be implemented. Participants affirmed that in radio broadcasting, the most successful players are the ones that create programming that attract listeners. From this research, the following techniques to increase audiences to public participation radio programmes were provided:

##### **4.4.1 Establishing listeners' clubs**

The Community Listeners' Clubs have the ability to pique people's curiosity, not only in rural areas, but also in development circles. In other countries, these clubs have been tremendously beneficial in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as assisting rural people, particularly women and adolescents, in participating in communal life and their personal development.

Most participants noted that listener's clubs would be effective in creating a network of listeners. This will in turn give a voice to county population and contribute to their social and economic empowerment by increasing their access to services and resources like information and communication regarding government services and rural development in general. The clubs would be well-organized, with community groups meeting with government officials on a regular basis to discuss development concerns and difficulties and work together to find answers. Public broadcasting radio stations will be employed as information media relays in this process to boost communication flow, offer access to knowledge, and raise awareness on topics that the clubs have chosen and requested. Members of the clubs would communicate with each other and with other clubs through radio, which allowed for subsidized calls.

Most participants noted that citizens' access to information and communication in Kenya is very limited and that there is a gap between public broadcasting radio stations and citizens. They suggested that these radios adopt listener's clubs.

These Community Listeners' Clubs are both a tool and a method for discussion for people and groups. They would be an efficient mechanism for distant rural communities to acquire information and participate in participatory communication, and would consequently become stepping stones for action. Members of the community and officials from the government would communicate their worries, priorities, and requirements to one another via the Clubs. They would also access information that would be beyond of their grasp otherwise and collaborate on the development of positive solutions (N1).

Listeners clubs have a potential of generating listening enthusiasm among the population. These clubs have a potential to produce changes in the behaviour, practices and perceptions of rural communities. These changes include not only in access to information and knowledge but also in economic practices, self-confidence, civic participation, and community social mobilization. Participants noted that many radio episodes that were done during Thandi project demonstrated that citizens through a combination of radio and organized forums can have self-confidence. This will ensure citizens play an active role in community life. Participants underlined the importance of having organized clubs to consolidate these gains.

An improvement of marginalized groups status and leadership inside the community was often a consequence of their active participation in the radio. This increased their leadership and self-esteem. Through radio, citizens had the opportunity to assume an active role as fully entitled participants in community life and this had immediate benefits to their livelihood. Going into the future, there is a need to have organized clubs to enable communities to decide on actions to solve their own problems (N3).

The bottom-up approach used by Thandi project, which ensured discussions were directed towards realistic courses of action and self-efficacy, would be necessary in establishment of listeners' clubs. This approach would be essential in ensuring there is continued citizens' involvement and ownership of county government projects and priorities. Listeners' clubs

have the potential to enable women and youth access information and facilitate communication in their quest to actively be elected to political seats. They would also make sure that members of the community come together on a regular basis to talk about problems with development and collaborate on finding solutions to those problems.

Through collaboration with public vernacular radio stations, the production of interactive radio programming in the communities' native languages, which would raise awareness and understanding of topics that are vital for the lives and livelihoods of the communities, would take place. There is also the possibility that the listeners' clubs will provide its members the ability to become active participants in their own personal growth. The talks that the participants have about various issues, during which they share their worries, priorities, and requirements, are either broadcast live on the radio station that is collaborating with them or taped for subsequent broadcast. This would, in turn, promote debates in other clubs broadcast by the radio station, with a particular emphasis on tangible actions that may be implemented in the community and on maintaining the discourse among all of the listeners' clubs in the surrounding region. Additionally, it would inspire members to get even more interested in the issue that is currently being discussed.

My conversation with Thandi opened my eyes to the fact that community listening clubs may assist rural people in becoming more active participants in the growth of both their communities and themselves. Members of all ages and genders, including young people, will be able to voice their concerns and work together to find solutions. The clubs have the potential to become agents of change not only in agriculture but also in other aspects of society, taking on sensitive issues such as HIV/AIDS, early marriage, and the rights of women to inherit land through their collaboration with rural radio stations that feed and broadcast their discussions. This would allow the clubs to expand their sphere of influence beyond agriculture. The strategy will also increase members' self-confidence, particularly the self-confidence of women, and enhance understanding of the requirements and priorities of rural communities. Because discussions were action-oriented in Thandi, the programme built members' political skills. Establishing listeners' club to build on these gains will be instrumental in informing county government officials about local problems (F1).

Listeners' clubs would also be necessary to help resolve community conflicts peacefully and give rural women an increased role in decision-making. These clubs have the potential to enable women express their views publicly, thereby gaining the confidence to successfully negotiate for political power and enter into key decision-making authorities.

#### **4.4.2 Transforming public broadcaster to become citizens' voice**

Most participants noted that a majority of citizens are dissatisfied with the public broadcaster and perceive it as government "Mouthpiece". They described it as government controlled, designed to convey the government's view, and to protect and advance government interests. It therefore lacks credibility – perhaps the most important quality for any successful media. They noted that Government control over public broadcaster is evident.

The government is primarily responsible for appointing board members to public broadcasting organizations. They are administered as government parastatals and its personnel are considered to have the status of civil servants, despite the fact that they are owned, overseen, and maintained by the government. In their coverage of current events, they concentrate mostly on official happenings as well as the actions of state officials and members of the governing party. The voices of those in power are prominently included, whilst the voices of that in opposition and of average individuals are often excluded from the conversation. The many social, political, and cultural subgroups that make up a nation's population are not portrayed in a way that is fair and inclusive. These subgroups each have their own unique views, beliefs, and interests. As a result, public broadcasters are seen more as government organs in the government's employ and in its service, rather than as organizations that are designed to serve the people and the community (M2).

In contrast, research participants envisioned a broadcaster whose only purpose is to serve the public good. The performance of Kenya's public broadcaster, which is just public in name, has severely degraded the notion of public broadcasting in the country. Nevertheless, overwhelming majority of participants was enthused about the notion of public broadcasting. There was also widespread consensus that Kenya Broadcasting Corporation should be turned

into public-service broadcaster accountable to the people. Each and every one of those who took part in the study envisioned a broadcaster that would truly serve the public's interests by reporting on events completely and impartially, by providing a credible platform for democratic debates, by promoting empowerment and inspiration among all people, especially the poor and marginalized, and by providing a diverse range of programming to appeal to all demographics, including underrepresented groups.

Many journalists and civil society organizations have called for the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) to be transformed into a public broadcaster throughout the years, and some tentative efforts have been made, according to participants. KBC is well aware of its dubious position, as well as the growing erosion of audience trust and the negative impact this has on its competitive future. There have been a few initiatives to restructure the organization from inside. Some lawmakers were not pleased with the corporation's initial moves to professionalize and restore a sense of balance in the press. The ongoing push to decrease expenses or even generate a profit is another barrier to change. The apparently public broadcaster sees itself as a financially oriented broadcaster with a public mission. Financial concerns often take precedence over a dedication to professionalism or public service objectives. Too frequently, civil society's efforts to assist in the desired change have been irregular, mainly reactive, or limited to repeated complaints, with few provided proposals or model solutions on how to tackle the issues. Many politicians are unaware of the media's function and the value of media freedom in a democratic society; many consider independent media as a nuisance at best and intrinsically antagonistic at worst. They lack the political will to address media reforms and instead seek "the politics of non-reform," with the exception of a few cosmetic modifications to avoid losing all credibility. The status quo is unquestionably better than the idea of allowing critical voices to speak or abandoning control

of a state-owned and controlled station. Opposition politicians publicly complain about this favoritism and, if available and accessible, utilize private media to spread their own views, in the hopes of one day taking control of the state broadcaster and using it for their own purposes. This feeds the vicious cycle of inefficiency and laziness.

Many observers are also worried about the involvement of the big media companies, who seem to be pleased with the existing, controlled state of things and the area they have carved out for themselves. This makes them reticent to join in discussions about far-reaching reforms: a more appealing national broadcaster may become an unwanted rival. A first step would be to follow the lead of concerned individuals in various African nations who have launched long-term initiatives to achieve true public broadcasting. Stakeholder groups fighting for free speech and community activists should join pressure groups with other civil society organizations, who are natural partners in this fight. They should be brought together for seminars or online forums to talk about what they want from their national station. This should be followed up with specific actions. One suggestion is to establish a national broadcaster "watchdog," which would monitor and examine the national broadcaster's performance over a period of time. This might lead to campaigns based on solid facts rather than ad hoc complaints. Long-term monitoring might be accomplished by setting up an alarm system through email and social media to report instances of power abuse by the national broadcaster. The means to effect change are available. All that is required to put them to use is activists' political will to begin organizing support from media professionals and, most importantly, the general public.

Participants noted that the concept of marketing Thandi programme through social media was that listeners did most of the marketing. The most successful stations build their audiences through word of mouth. This is sometimes a slow process but listeners gained through social



media are more likely to remain as listeners because their friends listen too, and they like to discuss the station.

Radios are often enjoyed by audiences gathered together. In this scenario, the radio broadcast has the potential to spark conversation among the individuals in the gathering, regardless of whether they are members of the same family, neighbors, coworkers, or friends. Through the use of interactive programming, radio may be transformed from a medium that only allows for one-way communication into a medium that allows for conversation in both ways. There is a significant improvement in the quality of communication that takes place when going from a one-way medium to a two-way medium, and it is even conceivable for radio to go beyond two-way communication. In this context, radio acts as a catalyst that propels members of the community to connect with one another and develop relationships with individuals they were previously unfamiliar with. At the same time as it satisfies the requirements of the audience, this may help to prevent conflict between different social groupings. Utilizing organizational forms such as listeners' clubs and special-interest organizations is one method for accomplishing this goal.

In these types of programs, groups of listeners gather together once a week to participate in group listening sessions followed by post-show discussions on the content of the program. After the completion of the program series, some of the members of the group continue to communicate with one another and provide assistance to one another in their newly established enterprises. The radio program series encourages listeners to interact not just with the station but also with one another and with other listeners. This is the kind of experience that lends itself well to being replicated in a wide variety of different ways.

#### **4.4.3 Programming and content reviews**

The vast majority of participants indicated that the requirements of the community are always changing, and as a result, it is a good idea to continually assess programs and query if some new kind of program has become relevant. The community stands to benefit the most from this kind of event, and the radio station that arranges this kind of program will progressively build up a reserve of goodwill for them in the process.

A basic guideline for all content creators is to constantly study and understand their audience. You'll have a greater chance of attracting the proper sort of listeners to your station in the future if you think like your audience and understand where they're coming from. Make a list of what identifies your station (F4) to establish which group you wish to target as your audience.

The importance of content in keeping loyal audiences cannot be overstated. The emotional connection is the primary cause for audience loyalty to a station. The complete package of a station's services, from local programming to interaction, develops relationships with listeners who choose to listen to public radio on their local station. Listeners who are emotionally linked have a greater affinity with local stations. Emotional bonds are formed as a result of a variety of circumstances, including time spent listening and a feeling of location. The longer a listener stays on a station, the more likely they are to have an emotional connection with it. Another component is the listener's feeling of location, which is a common denominator among those who are emotionally linked. Listeners appreciate the station because of its local news and programming coverage. Broadcasts concerning the listener's hometown strengthen the listening experience on public radio. Local broadcasters should customize their material to their audience and provide a local flavor, according to the participants. They should also encourage listeners to feel a feeling of belonging.

The quality of the programs broadcast on public radio is at the core of its appeal. It is the defining characteristic of a radio station. It is the face that is shown to the public, and the station manager is the one who is responsible for deciding what sort of music, news, public affairs, radio dramas, and other programming will be aired over the airwaves. The broadcasting of locally generated news and public affairs programs is

*an essential component in the operation of a successful public radio station. Despite the fact that there is widespread agreement that this kind of programming is essential to the success of a radio station, public radio station employees often lack the resources and the training necessary to create the types of programs that are required (F4).*

There is increasing awareness of the need to meaningfully engage society in efforts to tackle radio programming. Continuous audience research in radio provides tools to see audiences through the multiple lenses with which society interprets radio programming efforts. Audience research in radio programming enables radio managers to find out everything about radio market and audience preferences through market mapping and audience perception studies.

#### **4.4.4 Re-designing county content generation and dissemination framework**

The implementation of devolved system of governance in Kenya has resulted in power and resource disbursement to the grassroots in order to guarantee citizens' inclusiveness and participation in self-governance, economic and social development. In order for Public radios to acquire audience leadership within the devolved system of governance, participants observed that it will be necessary to review content development and dissemination policies and re-map broadcasting technology to tap to revitalized audience across 47 counties.

There is great need to re-designate sustainable grassroots county content generation and dissemination framework for innovative coverage of county affairs. This is by producing regular county news roundup, interactive talk shows, special features and documentaries. This can be achieved through deployment of radio producers to strategic regions to coordinate cost effective on ground content gathering and packaging for relay to Nairobi. The producers should be equipped with laptops, internet, modems and recorders to enable them collect, package and send materials to Nairobi for vetting, scheduling and transmission (F3).

Key content needs for listenership would be sensitizing the public on devolution of power, social economic resources and human capital through live and recorded coverage of such innovative forums. There should also be comprehensive coverage of news, live governor's debates and briefs, county assembly proceedings, sports events, documentaries, profiles,

features and other programmes on social, economic, political and developmental issues.

Participants also underlined the importance of events such as live focus group discussions, on-ground activations such as road shows, theme nights, cultural festivals, market day trade fairs, ASK shows, business exhibitions, auctions, drama and music performances, university, college and school open days in drawing huge audiences.

For a public radio station to achieve its full potential, it must expand its programming beyond radio and organize live events that may later be turned into radio shows. On-ground political debates, educational programs, and any other kind of event that relies primarily on sound are examples of these kinds of gatherings. Local events, which can include sporting competitions, agricultural shows, musical and theatrical performances, educational projects, and welfare initiatives, are highly valued in many communities. These events are typically staged once a year and can include anything from educational projects to musical and theatrical performances. A lot of goodwill from the community will be directed toward a station that provides assistance with an occurrence of this kind that is well reported. The primary contribution that a radio station is able to provide is in the area of publicity. This involves making announcements on the event in the weeks leading up to its occurrence and, if applicable, organizing live broadcasts from the event itself (N1).

The content mapping should also factor reporting on the various county strategic plans such as county integrated development plans (CIDP), constitutional requirement for public participation in devolution and milestones/achievements in county governance. Another important component is highlighting sector development at county level and moderating county politics especially on resource allocation and public perception. In setting up a devolved system of broadcasting, the public broadcaster must maintain a centralized content generation and transmission policy framework that fosters national unity and cohesion. The policy should work within the provisions of the Kenyan constitution and public service broadcasting mandate in promoting the country's binding values of nationhood such as patriotism, unity, celebration in the country's social cultural diversity, peaceful co-existence of communities and good neighborliness among other national and universal values.

Participants said that radio signal is an important consideration in ensuring success in county dissemination framework. They suggested that the public broadcaster should extend signal reach in all the 47 counties with priority across all regions including marginalized areas. There is a great need to strategically re-map signal coverage and realign them according to cluster counties, which share cultural languages. Local radio stations can have a wide range of effects, but they should provide a platform for education, self-expression, and communication in rural areas that aren't well-served by commercial broadcasting. They should also promote the history, music, and oral traditions of the communities they serve.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter the summary of key findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are stated.

#### **5.2 Summary of Key Findings**

This study was based on three research questions which were: How can vernacular radio contribute towards institutionalizing public participation in Kirinyaga county government? What are the official routes that can be utilized to ensure public input generated through radio influence Kirinyaga county government policymaking? How can large audience be drawn to radio public participation activities in Kirinyaga County?

In order to answer the questions, in-depth interview and focus group discussions were conducted with participants who had previously been deliberately engaged in public participation radio programmes. Content analysis and informal conversations supplemented the data from interviews and focus group discussions. On question one; vernacular radio was used to promote public participation in several ways. It promotes self-efficacy among citizens. Radio also facilitates dialogue between government officials and citizens. In addition it was evident radio built consensus among development stakeholders.

On question two, the research found three official routes that public input could be generated to influence county policies formulation. One was influencing legislators and county government officials directly. The second route was influencing through legislative committees and finally was influencing through County Budget Economic Forums.

On question three, various techniques to draw large audience to radio public participation activities were realized. They included establishment of listeners' clubs, transforming public broadcaster to broadcast citizens' voice rather than being a government mouth piece, carrying out regular programming and content reviews and redesigning county content generation and dissemination framework.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The study sought to examine the role of public broadcasting vernacular radios in promoting public participation in county governance. This was through a programme aired on one of the public vernacular radios, Coro FM. A case study method was used where three Focus Group Discussions and nine in-depth interviews were conducted. This was supplemented with data from informal conversations and content analysis.

From the study it is evident strategic use of public vernacular radio is a powerful approach to actualizing public participation as envisaged in the Kenyan constitution 2010. Radio is a powerful tool which could be used to give communities a right to manage their own affairs and development stated in article 174(d) of the constitution. Public input generated through convergence of new media with radio when was taken through official government routes mandated to formulate policies influenced policy outcomes. Article 232(1) (d) instructs public servants to include citizens in the process of policy making. Radio debates between government officials and citizens were excellent ways of public servants involving citizens in policy making.

Article 35 states that the right to information is a fundamental right necessary for enjoyment of all other rights. This right was realized through civic education conducted on radio. Article 196 (1) (b) requires that the county assembly facilitate public participation in the legislative and other business of the assembly. Section

201(a) further outlines public participation, openness and accountability as principles of public finance. Arranging county assembly committee's and county budget economic forums to engage with citizens on radio was significant in meeting constitutional obligations. Overall, radio is a tool that can be used to meet constitutional obligations on public participation.

The study contributes to knowledge on public participation. The long-term goals of participatory radio are to create a more democratic participatory culture that is based on the prioritization of the inputs of ordinary people, thereby making them the key players in making and shaping the development process in their society. This information was provided on radio as an important tool for these goals. As a policy space, the radio has proved to allow for community debate and inputs that shape development agenda. It is a space where policy makers get to listen to the community and the community gets to listen to the policy makers. Mobile interactivity and social media facilitates instantaneous communication between the community and policy makers in time and space on issues of community interest. Therefore, as a result of the confluence of radio and these digital media, leadership has become more democratic as a result of an expansion of public access to and involvement in the development agenda. Public participation is the way of the future and successful county governments are those to develop new ways to involve the public, acquire support and confidence in the administration of county affairs. Not only will this yield economic rewards in the form of value-added budgets that cater to the requirements of the public, but also produce political benefits.



## **5.4 Recommendations**

Different factors would be required to ensure a high level of sustainability of the public participation activities through vernacular radio: the multiplication of successes of the project and the replication of the experiences by other Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) vernacular radios so that all the 47 counties can reap the benefits of the study. Arising from the findings of this study are the following specific recommendations:

### **5.4.1 The public broadcaster should scale up civic participation radio programmes in all its' vernacular radios**

Development and democracy cannot survive in the absence of an open and free public arena in which all topics affecting people's lives may be discussed and debated, as well as a place and opportunity for them to participate in decision-making. Democracy, according to Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, is "government by discussion," and public broadcasters are well positioned to support this discourse by providing the space for it - provided their services are accessible, impartial, trustworthy, and open to the entire range of various viewpoints.

In order to foster democratic government, the public broadcaster should be required to advocate systems of governance based on popular control of decision-making and where people are regarded as equals. A successful democracy requires that all citizens have equal access to knowledge, which is a prerequisite for growth. As a credible source of fair information and varied viewpoints, the value of a public broadcaster cannot be emphasized in terms of its impact on society. As shown in the following table, the KBC local radio stations in the counties indicated against them would enhance communication and serve as effective catalysts for growth.

**Table 1: KBC local radio stations in the counties**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Radio Station</b>	<b>Target Area(County)</b>
1.	Pwani FM	Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, TanaRiver, Lamu, TaitaTaveta
2.	Iftiin FM	Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo
3.	Nosim FM	Narok, Kajiado
4.	Eastern service	Marsabit, Turkana, WestPokot, Samburu
5.	Mayienga	HomaBay, Kisumu, Siaya, Migori
6.	Mwatu	Kitui, Machakos, Makueni
7.	Coro	Nyandarua, Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Murang'a, Kiambu, Laikipia,
8.	Minto	Kisii, Nyamira
9.	Ingo	Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia, Vihiga, TransNzoia
10.	Kitwek	UasinGishu, Nandi, Baringo, Bomet, Kericho, Elgeyo Marakwet
11.	Mwago	Meru, Tharaka Nithi
12.	Kiambu	Embu
13.	RadioTaifa	Nairobi
	<b>Total Counties</b>	<b>47</b>

Civic participation stakeholders should consider supporting initiation of these programmes and ensure they can be self-reliant. This will enable public owned vernacular radio stations carry out more effective programmes on political mobilization and public participation. This will also ensure public radios have adequate funds to enable them pick up the task to produce radio mobilization programmes that will help to enhance political participation. These mobilization programmes should be repackaged with the involvement of local languages to reach the rural areas. The programmes should also seek extending to other physical spaces in the community for instance through live broadcast meetings in the community halls, where the radio stations would “put on a show on a topic selected by the local people who invite participants.”

#### **5.4.2 Public participation stakeholders should partner to support the radio programmes**

Identifiable Partners of civic participation in Kenya include International donors, NGOs, Parliament (Senate and National assembly), County governments, Kenya News Agency, County information offices and other county stakeholders. These stakeholders should come together and pull resources to support the radio initiatives. This support would include Technical Corporation in the use of KBC infrastructure and facilities, co-productions, training and programme sponsorship, cost sharing in the use and maintenance of information gathering platforms, office space, transport and any other forms of mutual facilitation and benefit.

#### **5.4.3 Authorities should always demonstrate evidence on output of radio consultation.**

People tend to want to be consulted and to continue to participate in consultations when their inputs are actually utilized. Therefore, stakeholders must demonstrate to radio participants' evidence of radio feedback being utilized in decision-making process. Participatory processes are only sustainable if people feel that their participation matters. If there is no evidence that participation has any impact on what government does, people will stop participating.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study did not analyze documents like perusal of county integrated development plans, policies and laws passed after radio engagement. Future research could be conducted to analyze documents like Hansard to check whether community contributions generated through radio feature in the county assembly proceedings. Follow-up surveys and observational research to determine real influence of

community contributions may also be conducted in the community. This will help to find out whether listeners feedback shapes policies adopted by county governments.

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**APPENDICES**  
**APPENDIX I: COPY OF RESEARCH PERMIT**

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  
**MS. JACINTA NJERI MAINA**  
**of MOI UNIVERSITY, 30456-100**  
**nairobi, has been permitted to conduct**  
**research in Kirinyaga , Nairobi Counties**  
**on the topic: VERNACULAR RADIO IN**  
**PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN**  
**KIRINYAGA COUNTY GOVERNANCE:**  
**EXAMINING 'THANDI' RADIO**  
**PROGRAMME IN CORO FM**  
**for the period ending:**  
**1st April,2017**  
.....  
**Applicant's**  
**Signature**

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/57259/9045  
Date Of Issue : 4th April,2016  
Fee Received :Ksh 1,000



.....  
**Director General**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology & innovation**



## Appendix Two: Interview Guide

The purpose of this interview guide is to ensure all thematic concerns that the research intend to address are covered during data gathering.

1. How would you describe your overall experience and the radio programme in general?
2. From the series of the radio programmes we have held, what would be your comments on radio as an enabler of public participation?
3. How was radio applicable in identifying community problems that required policy solutions?
4. How appropriate were the routes used to ensure public input influenced policy outcomes?
5. How would you describe the use of mobile interactivity and social media in the radio programme?
6. What would you advise the public broadcaster and radio station managers to do to rally audiences in the public participation radio programmes?
7. What do you think should be done to make radio programmes geared towards achieving public participation more reactive? Moving outside, on ground interactions etc.

### Appendix Three: Sample Transcript

PARTICIPANT: N1 DATE:113/01/2016

1. How would you describe your overall experience and the radio programme in general?

Radio engagements were interesting but at the same time challenging. I liked the element of listener participation and broadcasting of live conversations between the radio host who hosted us and listeners who "called in."

The function of *Thandi* in boosting audience members' comprehension of civic involvement on the themes it addressed was largely favorable. In this regard, the program matched the demands of the audience. Audience members were better able to define their main local problems and indicated more knowledge and grasp of important civic participation words than they had been before. Interacted dynamics created an emergent property that was more than the sum of its individual attributes in self-efficacy.

2. From the series of the radio programmes we have held, what would be your comments on radio as an enabler of public participation?

Radio was an important tool for educating Kirinyaga residents on various laws, county integrated development plan and other county policies. It was therefore a primary source of information and had broader impact on society. It also encouraged a two way communication process between elected leaders and citizens where we discussed major topical issues of development. It enabled citizens' voice their concerns and speak about their aspirations with county policy-makers. This fostered understanding, cooperation, and a free and lively exchange of ideas.

3. How was radio applicable in identifying community problems that required policy solutions?

When carrying out community needs assessment, information on community needs and the resource

stheyhaveisprerequisite.Informationgatheredthroughradiowasusefultopolicymakersincordinatingandplanningdevelopmentactions.Itenabledpolicymakersunderstandtheenvironmentinwhichtheywereworking.Wealsogottoknowhowthecommunityfeltaboutissueshatwereaffectingthemandwhattheythoughtshouldbedone.Gettingtheopinionsofcommunitymembershelpedinmappingtheresourcetherebygivingaholisticviewoftheissue.Thisinformationwasalsonecessaryinmakingdecisionsaboutprioritiesforprogramorsystemimprovement.

4. How appropriate were the routes used to ensure public input influenced policy outcomes?

Allow me comment on County assembly where I am in charge. The primary function of the County Assembly include making of laws and oversight role where we actively check the actions of the county government. Radio helped us run inquiries on particular bills that were under discussion by the county assembly. In doing so, it placed the people at the center of the legislative process by granting them the ability to comment on every facet of any new law. We generated public input from different zones of the county. Public views were necessary since they informed further scrutiny of the bills, putting the ideas, thoughts and concerns of ordinary people at the heart of the legislative process. Use of county assembly committees was therefore very appropriate in ensuring public input influenced policy outcomes.

5. Howwouldyoudescribetheuseofmobileinteractivityandsocialmediaintheradioprogramme?

I recognized that it is past time for us to accept that mobile phones and other new media networks would not suffice in terms of global growth. We must stop dismissing the potential of existing communications networks if we really want to utilize technology to create enduring social change and economic progress. It's time to start talking about the radio. Mobile phones and text messaging have changed the game,

turning radio listeners into active players. I appreciated how Frontline SMS were utilized to get listeners' questions, thoughts, and suggestions. SMS-oriented radio efforts enabled for unparalleled amounts of development research in addition to promoting audience involvement. We policymakers had a bank of material to study and reflect back on after getting comments on every particular problem, allowing us to better fulfill people' concerns. We were able to detect trends, requirements, and concerns, which enabled us to accelerate a series of very productive and popular development programs.

6. What would you advise the public broadcaster and radio station managers to do to rally audiences in the public participation radio programmes?

The public broadcaster should strengthen the quality of radio programming & stations. This can be achieved by working with other radio stakeholders internationally like Farm Radio International and Developing Radio Partners among others. These partners can help the public broadcaster achieve programming excellence that leads to more vibrant and participatory communities. These radio partners provide comprehensive training program to partnering station staff and this imparts them with the skills they need to run competitive radio station. These skills would also help station staff to have continued community commitment thereby guaranteeing large audience and long-term sustainability for the station.

7. What do you think should be done to make radio programmes geared towards achieving public participation more active?

Stakeholders in these programmes should always demonstrate evidence on output of radio consultation .People tend to want to be consulted and to continue to participate in consultations when their inputs are actually utilized. Therefore, stakeholders must demonstrate to radio participants' evidence of radio feedback be in utilized in decision-

making process. Participatory processes are only sustainable if people feel that their participation matters. If there is no evidence that participation has any impact on what government does, people will's participating.

#### Appendix IV: Work plan for Carrying out Research

Task	Number of days/weeks	Date
Research proposal		
Concept paper	1 weeks	4 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> August, 2015
Literature review	2 weeks	11 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>rd</sup> . August, 2015
Methodology	1 weeks	25 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> August, 2015
Preparation and Presentation of the proposal	1 week	27 <sup>th</sup> -31 <sup>st</sup> November, 2015
Generation of Data	4 weeks	16 <sup>th</sup> November -12 <sup>th</sup> December, 2015
Analysis and Discussion	1 week	14 <sup>th</sup> -December-19 <sup>th</sup> December 2015
Summaries, Conclusions and Recommendations	2 weeks	4 <sup>th</sup> January-15 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
Tables, figures, References, Appendices	1 weeks	18 <sup>th</sup> -22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2016
Consultation/ Liaison with supervisor and Revisions	2 weeks	25 <sup>th</sup> January-5 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Editing ,Proofreading and Binding	1 weeks	8 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Presentation of the finished document/report	1 weeks	15 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> February 2016.

# VERNACULAR RADIO AS A TOOL IN PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY GOVERNANCE: THE CASE OF KBC'S CORO FM, THANDI RADIO PROGRAMME

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