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## Effects of Budget Economic Forums on Public Participation: A Case of Makueni County, Kenya

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### **Abstract:**

*The study was on Effects of Budget Economic Forums on Public Participation in Makueni County. The establishment of the CBEF at county level through the Public Finance Management Act, (2012) was intended to enhance public participation at the county. The essence of this study was to find out the influence of County Budget and Economic Forums (CBEF) in enhancing public participation at county level. The objectives of the study were: to determine the capacity of CBEF Members, their representation, coordination mechanism and contribution to the budget making process. Data was collected using questionnaires to gauge attitudes, values, and opinions of CBEF members on the budget making process. A census was conducted for all the CBEF members; questionnaires were emailed to them. The response rate for the CBEF members was 73 per cent. The findings of the study were evaluated in light of three theories namely: game theory, elite/mass theory, and stakeholder theory. Collected data was coded, collated and analysed in different themes, and presented in tables inform as frequencies and percentages. The main findings of the study were: the CBEF members lacked training on some critical skills, there was inadequate or lack of representation from some social groups, inadequate public participation coordination and improper contribution on the budget process. There is therefore need for CBEF members training, enhanced coordination, representation and consultation for effective participation on budget making process at Makueni county.*

**Keywords:** Budget economic forums, public participation, capacity, representation, coordination and contribution, budget

### **1. Introduction**

Public participation is a concept that has gained popularity among many democratic countries across the globe, with many countries putting in place a legal framework to govern and strengthen the process of public participation (Cherches *et al.*, 2009; Gaventa, 2002). However, the efficiency and effectiveness of the framework in place is not easy to quantify as revealed by Rowe and Frewer, (2004). A successful public participation process could be judged on: representativeness; openness, inclusivity and engagement; ensuring access to information in a way that promotes improved understanding and knowledge among participants and the legitimacy of the process (Abelson, 2006).

An effective public participation requires the establishment of mechanisms such as: professional associations, community forums, barazas and town hall meetings (Krishnaswamy, 2009; IGRTC, 2015). In addition to the mechanisms in place, there is need for an open, interactive participation that will ensure proper participation from relevant stakeholders, proper coordination as well as feedback to participants (World Bank, 2013; CISP, 2017). Article 174(c) of the constitution of Kenya (2010) makes provision for public participation in policy formulation process, hence a binding legal requirement. There are two dimensions of public participation; the direct where we have the public and the indirect is where the public is represented (Omollo, 2011).

The PFM establishes CBEFs as an indirect form of public participation (PFMA, 2012). The study looks at four variables, namely: the members' capacity on budgeting, their representativeness, public participation coordination mechanisms and the contribution of members to the budget making process, which determines the effectiveness of a CBEF. The CBEF constitutes of both the county executive and the Non- State Actors (NSA), this consortium is to consult with the respective groups that they represent and relay their collective proposal on the budget (CRA, 2013). The need for the CBEF was intended to remedy the gap in public participation as a result of lethargy by the public (Mbithi, 2018; MoDP, 2016). In addition, the CBEF was intended to ensure that the membership comprises of people with the requisite capacity in handling budget matters, hence a minimum requirement of a diploma in accounts or finance (PFMA, 2012). The CBEF membership composition is supposed to include representatives from diverse sectors for purposes of broad representation (CRA, 2013). Success in any public participation is majorly defined by the coordination mechanisms employed (MoDP, 2016; IGRTC, 2015), however, the mechanisms may vary with the circumstance. The availability of members, their capacity on the subject matter and the coordination of a public participation can only be successful if the members are enthusiastic in participating and making their contributions (Mayne, 2018). The contribution of CBEFs in

enhancing public participation has not been ascertained. This study seeks to assess Makueni County Budget and Economic Forum contribution to enhancing public participation.

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

As much as public participation has been embraced by many countries, there are myriad of challenges that they are still grappling with (Chereches *et al.*, 2009; Gaventa, 2002). In Indonesia for instance, the government never envisage any meaningful outcome from public participation for their citizens' lack of knowledge and insufficient resources (Azizan, 2015). In Tanzania, a study by Chaligha, (2014) revealed that the professionals hardly take part in public participation, hence lack of meaningful input from those participating especially on technical matters. Mbithi, (2018) and MoDP, (2016) reveals the same for Kenya; despite the involvement by citizens in public participation, citizens lack the ability to influence public participation as a result of low education level of some participants, lethargy and lack of representation from various social groups (Mbithi, 2018; MoDP, 2016). More so, elite capture and poor coordination of public participation to a larger extent undermines public participation too (Kabamba, 2010; Masango, 2001; Crook & Sverrison, 2001). The establishment of CBEF by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), (2012) was intended to remedy these challenges of lack of capacity, improper representation, poor coordination in public participation and inadequate contribution. However, the effectiveness of CBEFs in enhancing public participation is yet to be ascertained. This study therefore seeks to demystify the contribution of CBEF in enhancing public participation at county level. These shall be assessed in light of capacity of CBEF members, representation, contribution and coordination mechanism in public participation.

### 1.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Establish how capacity of Makueni CBEF members affects public participation in Makueni county
- Examine how representation within Makueni CBEF members affects public participation in Makueni county
- Assess how coordination approaches employed by Makueni CBEF affects public participation in Makueni county
- Determine how contribution of Makueni CBEF members affects public participation in Makueni county

### 1.3. Justification

As much as public participation has been embraced by many countries as a way of resolving policy issues, it is coupled up with a myriad of challenges (Chereches *et al.*, 2009; Gaventa, 2002). These include inadequate civic education and limited support from those in power are some of the ways that undermine effective public participation (Chereches *et al.*, 2009; Gaventa, 2002; Mbithi *et al.*, 2018; Masango, 2001). The MoDP, (2016) and Naidoo, (2017) also allude to challenges of representation, competence, apathy of participants and improper coordination of the process. The rigorous process of budgeting requires consistency and incessant availability of participants/stakeholders at all consultative stages, hence the need to ensure that there are specific participants/stakeholder on course through the process. In consideration of this challenges, the PFMA, 2012 established the CBEF at county level to remedy these short falls in public participation. However, this new framework in the arena of public participation, is under trial on its effectiveness in enhancing public participation. Makueni County is cited as one of the counties doing well on public participation among the 47 county governments (CISP, 2017). This study sought to establish the effects of Makueni CBEF on public participation; with a view to demystify the relevance of this framework and its contribution in enhancing public participation as envisaged by law.

### 1.4. Significance

The study provides additional information on CBEF; given that it is a new concept with scanty information documented. Identifies short fall of CBEF and provides recommendations on how this can be remedied to enhance public participation in budget formulation as well as highlighting areas requiring further studies.

### 1.5. Scope

The study was carried out in Makueni county government; the participants were 21 CBEF members (APPR, 2018).

### 1.6. Limitation

The plausible limitation was that, once the CBEF members discover that their significance is what is being investigated, they could respond in a way to portray the best of themselves and not the actual situation.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Public Participation

Public participation is viewed as a way of empowering citizen, for it gives the public the ability to make decision on matters that concern them (Ronoh, 2018; IGRTC, 2015; Babooa, 2008). Babooa, (2008) defines public participation as a process of involving citizens, workers, individuals, different group representatives, in goal-directed activity of making and implementing policy in government institutions. Public participation is a process where the public are directly engaged in decision making and their contribution given consideration in the final decision making (EPA, 2012). Kenya's Ministry of Devolution and Planning (MoDP) defines Public participation as: a way through which groups, individuals, government

and non-governmental entities influence policy decisions. Naidoo, (2017) defines five levels in the process of participation, these are informing the public, consulting, involving, collaborating and empowering the citizen.

The World Bank, (2013) identifies three categories of participation: Passive; where only information is disseminated, consultation; is where the community is consulted before decision making but they don't share in decision making responsibility, and interactive participation; is where there is full involvement in collaborative analysis and decision making. Interactive participation is the most ideal form of participation as envisaged by the Constitution of Kenya (CoK, 2010). As clearly seen from the above definitions, the whole process of public participation entails a series of processes which include consultation, information sharing and citizen empowerment, hence, the disparities in definitions are determined by the scope (Bailey, 1994).

The concept of public participation is not a new phenomenon, many democratic countries are advocating for it (Babooa, 2008; IGRTC, 2015; Williams, 2006). In South Africa, the importance of public participation in policy making process is synonymous to legitimate leadership (Williams, 2006; GSA, 1996). Public participation, dates back to the period of apartheid error, where there was minimal participation from Africans, until the democratic constitution dispensation in 1994 (Masango, 2001). Before then, public policy process was limited to whites and Asian only, while the black Africans were discriminated. Despite this, the Africans tried to influence policy formulation through boycotts and demonstrations (Masango, 2001).

On gaining independence, constitutional and statutory provisions were put in place to ensure public participation (Williams, 2006; GSA, 1996). Provision was also made for civic education and free flow of information to participants involved (GSA, 1996). The local government institutions are used in fostering public participation by consulting with interest groups which include governmental, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade unions. The mechanism of participation includes, invitation of public submissions on various matters, conducting public hearings and meetings at ward level, conducting surveys and publication of results. The mechanism put in place also takes into account the different needs of the public for instance, the person with disability (PWD).

In Romania, as much as their democracy advocates for public participation, there is no clear framework on how this is done (Catalyne *et al.*, 2009). A study conducted on professional groups namely doctors, lawyers, public managers and Professors to ascertain their contribution in public participation indicated that these four categories were never keen on participating (Catalyne *et al.*, 2009). This is contrary to the expectations that professionals and expertise in specific fields should be involved in participation to enhance the quality of input (CISP, 2017). The main impediments in Romania participation is lack of a proper framework, lack of knowledge on public participation as well as dominating values and culture (Catalyne *et al.*, 2009).

Mauritius' democracy is defined by decentralization and public participation (Babooa, 2008). During the British rule, Mauritius was characterized with secrecy and limitation to participation in its policy formulation processes (Babooa, 2008). After independence, public participation is conducted and managed by public institutions, representation of the public is through the local government elected leaders. It is by virtue of their election that their opinion is construed to be representative of their electorate (Babooa, 2008). Before the promulgation of the 2003 constitution: public participation, the power to make legislation and policies were vested only in institutions, elected representatives and the president (Babooa, 2008). However, the Local Government Act 23 of 2005, brought a shift by ensuring that the public are directly involved in policy formulation, hence community engagement forums. Participation on laws and budgets are carried out by ward committees (LGA, 2005). It is the role of the councilors by virtue of being closer to the people to ensure there is public participation and policies passed are tailor made to suite the community (LGA, 2005). The Local Government Act 23 of 2005 makes provision for a notice on public participation and consultations with interest groups.

A regional report on citizen participation for the three East African countries by Gaventa, (2002) reveals that; in Tanzania, kitongoji chairpersons were elected by the president and they became part of the village council, these served as village representatives. To date, Tanzania does its participation to the village level, with public participation defining their governance (Chaligha, 2014). However, a study by Chaligha, (2014) reveals that Tanzanian elites hardly take part in public participation. In Uganda, the lower councils 1 and 2 together with the civil society plays a significant role in the mobilization of public for participation (Kabamba, 2010). The Local Government Act (LGA) (1997) is a planning authority that plans and incorporates the lower local council to represent communities in policy decision such as development plans and resource allocation. Kabamba, (2010) reveals that some of the drawbacks for public participation in Uganda are elite capture from councilors, civil servants and affluent business people who pursue personal interests by taking advantage of limited knowledge and skill by participants. This is consistent with the findings by Yang and Callahan, (2007), who asserts that participation through representation relays their own interests and not the public's.

In Kenya, right from the colonial period, the public was not given an opportunity to participate in policy formulation in the August house, in the guise that they had no capacity to articulate their issues (TFDG, 2010). However, after independence, public participation was through elected representatives. The 2010 constitution gives preeminence to public participation in all matters that concern the public (CoK, 2010). More so, public participation is entrenched in the constitution as one of the national values and principle of governance, exercising of powers of the State and making decisions on matters affecting the public (CoK, 2010). Both the national and county governments are expected to consult and engage the public on all matters that concern them (CoK, 2010). Hence a balance of responsibilities between county governance and NSA in decision making process and complementary authority and oversight (IGRTC, 2015; CGA, 2012). There is a legal provision on access to public information, as a way of equipping the public for informed and quality participation (PFMA, 2012). The information on the issue at hand should be easily understood and unambiguous (MoDP, 2016; CGA, 2012). Public involvement in the entire process of planning, formulation, implementation, oversight of projects

is paramount for ownership, sustainability, equity, accountability and efficiency (MoDP, 2016; Babooa, 2008; Gaventa, 2002). Various avenues for participation should be explored to enable as many stakeholders to take part (MoDP, 2016). Consideration of the affected persons with special focus on marginalized and disadvantaged communities in public participation is underscored (MoDP, 2016; PFMA, 2012).

In as much as public participation has been acknowledged and embraced by most democratic governments, the emphasis on citizen engagement remains amorphous as long as there is no clear framework and a defined threshold for participation (IGRTC, 2015). This process not only requires a framework through which it could be carried out, for this alone creates a lacuna between framework and actual practice (Gaventa, 2002). Hence the PFMA, (2012) provision for regulations that govern the process of public participation. Leveraging on this legal provision, the Ministry of Devolution in conjunction with the Council of Governors, and other stakeholders developed guidelines for effective public participation (MoDP, 2016).

## 2.2. Members' Budgeting Capacity

In public participation, there should be no discrimination on: level of education, gender, age, sex or race of participants (MoDP, 2006; Calvin 2017), this, diversity sets in the complication of having participants with varied levels of understanding and capacity (Masango, 2001). Hence a need for the knowledge gap to be bridged between citizens and government officials especially in complex decision-making processes (Ronoh *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, capacity building for the public is paramount for the realization of effective public contribution in policy formulation process (Ochanda, 2013; Masango, 2001).

The South African constitution makes provisions for public participation as well as capacity build for the public in their respective municipalities in order to equip them for constructive/meaningful participation (Masango, 2001). Likewise, for Kenya, the County Government Act Sections 100 and 101 provides for an institutional framework on civic education, however, civic education is a national government function.

The guidelines on public participation for Kenyan county and national government provides for capacity building of the participants (MoDP, 2016). This is important because the effectiveness of public participation is influenced to a larger extent by the caliber of participants (Masango, 2001; MoDP, 2016; Chereches *et al.*, 2009). The different stakeholders have different interests and all work towards shaping the policy, however, Masango, (2001), opines that as much as capacity building is key for effective public participation, decision making is majorly influenced by those with political power and skill.

Despite the fact that participants, make contribution on matters that concern them regardless of their educational background (Gaventa, 2002; Masango, 2001; Naidoo, 2017), their contribution may be a challenge when it comes to technical matters that require specialized expertise. Hence the knowledge, skill and capacity of a participant come in handy in defining the caliber of participants (Masango, 2001; Naido, 2017). The PFMA, (2012) prescribes that members of the CBEF should have at least a minimum of a diploma in financial management and accounting.

## 2.3. Membership Representativeness

Involvement of citizens from a cross the divide is key for effective participation, for it brings together a consortium of expertise (Krishnaswamy, 2009; CISP, 2017). However, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD) and Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC, 2009) opines that most countries although they have embraced public participation, there is still a gap in terms of representation of various groups of the social divide. Most democratic governments use the elected politicians to represent the rest of the citizens, however, Serrano, (2017) and Yang and Callahan, (2007) argue that representation such as that of elected representatives does not adequately represent the views of the citizens. They rather urge that the kind of institutions' representation should be decided by the public.

According to Powell and Kleinmann (2008), the poorest and most marginalized in society are neglected in most participatory processes, hence, require special support to enable their voices to be heard. The inclusion of the marginalized such as PWD, youth and women as a way of inclusion, representation and participation should be given priority (Kabamba, 2010). There ought to be no cases of discrimination on gender, race, tribe, age and religion in public participation (Naidoo, 2017; MoDP, 2016). A representative composition of participants can be acquired by employing diverse selection approaches, however, often than not, this can result in a mere presence of local participants affiliated to certain institutions (Kabamba, 2010; William, 2006).

The composition of the CBEF is defined to include: a Governor, County Executive Committee Members (CECM) and representative members from other professional bodies in the county (PFMA, 2012; CRA, 2013). The number of NSA should be equal to the number of appointed CECs (CRA, 2013). The CBEF serve as a think tank for the county on both financial and economic matters of the county (MoDP, 2016; World Bank, 2013). The NSA act as a link between the public and the county government in project identification, prioritization, management, funding and mobilizing the public for public forums/engagements (CRA, 2013). The contribution of participants, regardless of their status, make a meaningful contribution on matters that concern them (Naidoo, 2017). Masango, (2001) opines that the public is motivated when it comes to them making contributions on matters that affect them. Hence, by tapping directly into the knowledge of citizens, policies are more likely to address the real needs of communities.

## 2.4. Public Participation Coordination

A coordinated and effective public participation should have a plan that incorporates four cornerstones, namely: purpose, people, method and evaluation (Miskowiak, 2004). The purpose cornerstone relates to the type of people involved and when they are involved. For instance, when a matter touches on a specific area or sector, involvement of the

stakeholders from the respective sector is paramount (Miskowiak, 2004). The people cornerstone depicts the type of audience expected to participate, the method cornerstone deals with the tools and methodologies used in engaging the public, while evaluation cornerstone has to do with documenting and evaluation (Krishnaswam, 2009; Miskowiak, 2004).

The Public Participation Plan (PPP) list the activities at each planning process. The plan is very important for coordination purposes because, public participation ought to be continuous (PFMA, 2012; Miskowiak, 2004). Hence, the importance of CBEF because the public cannot be consistently available (Miskowiak, 2004; PFMA, 2012). County Governments Act, (2012) require that the County Governments establish modalities and platforms for public participation in the governance of the County. The fourth Schedule provides for coordination on community participation at local level. The PFMA, (2012), Section 50(3) (g) provides among other things that, the Sub-County Administrator shall facilitate and coordinate citizen participation in policy formulation, plans and service delivery. The coordination for public participation should include participation objectives, awareness, education and input (IGRTC, 2015).

The County Government Act Sections 94 to 96 provides that Counties establish mechanisms to facilitate public communication and access to information using media with the widest public outreach (CGA, 2012). Availability of relevant information and proper communication for the participants puts them in a better position to effectively engage in policy formulation process (Ochanda, 2013). Every county is expected to designate an office for ensuring access to information (CGA, 2012). The information on the subject matter should be shared to the public in a concise, clear manner that can be read and understood within a short period of time (MoDP, 2016; World Bank, 2013; CRA, 2013). The diverse kind of information communicated should be geared at enhancing communication, information on service delivery and government functioning (Macintosh, 2004; CRA 2015). There are diverse avenues through which sharing of the requisite information with the public could be done, they include radio, newspapers, magazines, television, posters, drop in centres and open-door policy (MoDP, 2016). The process of public participation should as well as provide for an opportunity for the public to give feedback on the issues presented before them and subsequently get feedback on their contribution (MoDP, 2016).

The coordination of various aspects of participation result to a cost in conducting public participation (Gaventa, 2002). For instance, the New York City has the largest participatory budget of the United States both in terms of participants and budget amount (William, 1998). Lack of financial power limits local government capacity and autonomy as seen in the three East Africa countries, namely; Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Gaventa, 2002). In Kenya, local councils had little impact because of the lack of funds (Gaventa, 2002). In Tanzania, local government planning processes have a 'surreal character' because their decisions are unlikely to be funded, while in Uganda the conditions placed on local government finance undermines the whole decentralization process (Gaventa, 2002).

### *2.5. Contribution to Budgeting Decision Making*

For there to be influence from the stakeholders that are identified to take part in public participation, they should be well versed with the subject matter, have capacity to articulate their issues and be available to make their submissions (Miskowiak, 2004). Misinterpretation of the subject matter lowers the threshold of participants' influence (Krishnaswamy, 2009). The influence of participants in the policy process can be drawn between the recommendations made by participants and the final policy outcome (Yang & Callaham, 2007).

There are studies done which depict on level of influence in public participation, however the degree and magnitude is not easy to determine (Abelson, 2006). The degree of influence can be characterized by increased levels of interest and recognition of public issues, enhanced capacity for future public involvement, increased propensity for social bond formation and improved trust of fellow citizens (Abelson, 2006; Yang & Callaham, 2007). Citizens influence on participation could be measured through members' participation and input (Yang & Callaham, 2007).

The CBEF members are expected to mobilize the public in participation (CRA, 2013); how easy or hard it is for this mobilization depicts their level of trust in their public participation process. Mayne (2018) opines that, the willingness to contribute is motivated by good governance, as this builds trust with the public. The willingness in participation of the participants is attributed to the level at which their participation yield fruit by influencing the outcome (Khoshdel and Bakhsham, 2015; Mayne 2018). An effective public participation is described as one that meets legal stipulations, clearly articulates goals, and objectives, has political backing and forms an integral part of decision-making structure, has adequate funding, identifies the right stakeholders and has shared responsibilities (Mayne, 2018).

### *2.6. Theoretical Framework*

#### 2.6.1. Game Theory

Game theory was pioneered by Princeton Mathematician John Von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern in 1944 (Bananno, 2015). It is a theory that talks of what happens when independent self-interests interact (Kevin & Shoham, 2008). It is a science of strategy which seeks to logically and mathematically provide the best outcome. This theory perceives public policy as a more rational choice from other competing interests (Omar & Hamed, 2014). In this game the players make their choices independently, however, the link to each other introduces cooperation which culminates into a compromise, this means that, where one loses, the other gains and vice-versa (Bananno, 2015). The game introduces both possibilities for conflict and cooperation; hence the need to ponder on how others will respond and equip self with information to convince them (Omar & Hamed, 2014).

### 2.6.2. Elite/Mass Theory

Elite/mass theory was put forward by Lasswell in 1950. In policy formulation, the small group comprises the elite while those in the large group are the masses who in essence are followers. The elites, who are presumed to be well informed and make policies to the masses; the masses are presumed to make policies passively through their voted representatives (Lasswell, 1950). According to this model, the policy does not necessarily reflect the interests of the masses but the elite.

This theory limits the participation of the public to only choosing their leaders who thereafter become their representatives in different matters, which mostly reflect their personal interests (Lasswell, 1950). Policy formulation process tends to favour those stakeholders with the greatest pressure hence skewed to the elite who put more pressure during negotiations and collective bargaining (Masango, 2001), hence public policy is a reflection of the elite. However, Mbithi *et al.*, (2018) and Crook & Sverrisson, (2001) argue that a properly conducted public participation can limit the influence of elites.

### 2.6.3. Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory was put forward by Mitr off in 1983. A stakeholder is any individual or group who are affected or can affect certain decisions, success and survival of a given venture (Fontaine *et al.*, 2006). Stakeholders have a legitimate interest and their interest has an intrinsic value to the success of any undertaking (Babooa, 2008). The stakeholder theory is faced with limitations such as legitimate but lacking in power, for instance the minorities or those not organised in defense associations (Fontaine *et al.*, 2006). The theory is supposed to lead to a win-win situation, yet the culmination into this, calls for compromise where the interests of others are traded, hence those being represented end up suffering because the economic logic is the main axis influencing the direction of decision making (Fontaine *et al.*, 2006).

## **3. Research Methodology**

### *3.1. Research Design*

A descriptive case study approach was preferred for its effectiveness in detailing in-depth investigations about a case in its real-life context (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Given that the concept of CBEFs in Kenya is at its novice stage with scanty information, descriptive research was used so as to generate more information on CBEFs.

### *3.2. Variables/ Categories of Analysis*

The selected independent variables were on CBEF members' capacity, representation, coordination and contribution in the process of budget making in Makueni county government. The dependent variable was public participation, the study sought to ascertain how these independent variables play independently or in concert in affecting public participation in Makueni county government.

### *3.3. Site of the Study*

The study area was Makueni county government which is located in the Eastern part of Kenya. Its headquarters is Wote town, the county covers a total of 8,008 Square Kilometres and has a population of 987,653 (KNBS, 2019). It has nine sub-counties, namely Makueni, Kilungu, Mukaa, Kibwezi, Kathozweni, Makindu, Mbooni East, Mbooni West and Nzau (A1).

### *3.4. Target Population*

The target population was 21, which is the total number of CBEF members

### *3.5. Sampling Technique and Sample Size*

Given the small size of the study populations of 21 CBEF members; a census was preferred for the study.

### *3.6. Research Instruments*

The research instruments for the study were semi-structured questionnaires, which were used in collection of responses from Makueni CBEF members.

### *3.7. Data Collection*

A questionnaire (A2) was emailed to all the 21 CBEF members, who were to fill the questionnaire and email it back to the researcher.

### *3.8. Data Analysis*

The study was a descriptive study; hence most of the collected data was qualitative in nature. The data was categorised according to themes. Quantitative data was derived from the themes, it was analysed and presented in tables in form of frequencies and percentages.

## 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

### 4.1. Introduction

The chapter presents analysis of study findings on effects of budget economic forums on public participation, a case of Makueni County. The study was based on the following specific objectives: CBEF members' capacity, Representation, public participation coordination and CBEF members' contribution to the budget making process.

### 4.2. Presentation of Findings

#### 4.2.1. Response Rate and Demographics

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 70 per cent or more is good for analysis and reporting on the opinions of the entire population. The CBEF members' response rate in this case was 73 per cent. Of the 73 per cent, 56 per cent were male while 44 per cent were female. None of the respondents had any physical impairment.

#### 4.2.2. Capacity

All the CBEF respondents had tertiary level of education from diverse professional fields which included health, commerce, management, agriculture, public finance, engineering and education. However, the members indicated that, in order to enhance their contribution some needed training in: budgeting 37 per cent, oversight 25 per cent, devolved government and financial management each had 13 per cent of the respondents, whereas CBEF coordination and project management each had 6 per cent of the respondents.

All the CBEF respondents had tertiary level of education, which depicted that most members partially met the minimal academic requirements of at least a diploma, however, not necessarily in public finance as required by the public participation guide regulations and CRA CBEF regulations (MoDP, 2016; CRA, 2015). Level of education is important for purposes of understanding and being able to interrogate the budget. This is consistent with the findings by (Masango, 2001; Naido, 2017; Rono, 2018), who argues that, education level, skill and capacity are key for effective participation on matters that are technical, they further emphasize that, inadequate capacity poses a challenge in public participation.

However, there were members who indicated that they need to be capacity building on budgeting, devolved government and financial management, oversight, CBEF coordination and project management. Training in these is paramount for equipping them with the requisite skills to undertake their responsibilities as CBEF members.

Training on public finance will be key for them to be able to contribute to the development of the budget in accordance to the PFM provisions. Budget training will equip them to analyse and interrogate the proposed budget items, while the devolved government training will equip them with information which will help them to ensure that the budget is in accordance to the devolved functions. The need for training is in agreement with Omollo (2011), who argues that for effective engagement, citizens not only need awareness of their roles and responsibilities but knowledge and skills on how to execute their responsibilities. He adds that capacity building consists of developing knowledge, skills and operational capacity so that individuals and groups may achieve their purposes. More so, capacity building on oversight is paramount when it comes to implementation as per the requirements of the CBEF guidelines which provide that the CBEF members be involved until the process of implementation (CRA, 2015).

#### 4.2.3. Performance Indicators on Representation

Table 4.1 shows the CBEF members' opinions on representation in Makueni County based on the Likert scale rating of 1-5, where 1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= agree (A) and 5= strongly agree (SA).

Statement		n = 16, % = 100				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
CBEF members are consulted in the preparation of the county budget	F	0	0	0	8	8
	%	0	0	0	50	50

Table 1: Performance Indicators on Representation  
Field Data (2019)

Table 2 shows the CBEF members' representation in Makueni County, where; Executive = county executives, NSA= Non- State Actors

Statement		n = 16, % = 100	
		Executives	NSA
As a member of Makueni County Budget Economic Forum (CBEF), what professional body do you represent?	F	8	8
	%	50	50

Table 2: CBEF Members' Representation  
Field data (2019)

Table 3 shows the CBEF members' sector group representation in Makueni County, where; Pro. = Professionals, W= Women, T= Traders, M= Makueni County Development Forum.

Statement	F	n = 16, % =100			
		Pro.	W	T	M
What social group do you represent in the society?	F	13	1	1	1
	%	81	6.3	6.3	6.3

Table 3: CBEF Members' Sector Group Representation  
Field data (2019)

Makueni county CBEF constitutes of both county executives and NSA. Of the members that responded, 100 per cent indicated that they are consulted before the county budget is prepared. This denotes representativeness and enriched consultation on the budget because the CBEF members represent diverse social groups, with diverse experiences. The composition of the CBEF meets the threshold of having people from different social groups that represent various groups, these include professionals, business community, youth and women. This is consistent with the provisions of the CRA circular on formation of CBEFs (CRA, 2015).

Of the members that responded, 100 per cent indicated that they agree or strongly agree in equal proportions that they are consulted before the county budget is prepared. The CBEF respondents comprised of both the executive and NSA in equal proportion of 50 per cent. The CBEF members constitute a wide range of social representation ranging from various professions, youth, women and business community.

#### 4.2.4. Performance Indicators on Coordination

Table 4 shows the CBEF members' opinions on coordination in Makueni County based on the Likert scale rating of 1-5, where 1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= agree (A) and 5= strongly agree (SA).

Statement	F	n = 16, % =100				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
Makueni county government mechanism for public participation is adequate	F	0	0	0	10	6
	%	0	0	0	63	37
The public are informed on the subject matter prior to consultations	F	0	0	0	12	4
	%	0	0	0	75	25
Makueni county has an interactive website on which planning information is posted and feedback received	F	0	0	5	7	4
	%	0	0	31	44	25
Makueni county has an operational grievance redress mechanism	F	0	0	7	7	2
	%	0	0	44	44	12
The governor gives an annual address on the state of the county	F	0	0	1	6	9
	%	0	0	6	38	56

Table 4: Performance Indicators on Coordination  
Field Data, (2019)

It was revealed that Makueni County has an adequate public participation mechanism with 63 per cent of the respondents indicating that they agree and 37 per cent strongly agreeing. Part of the mechanism of participation includes informing the members on the subject matter prior to the actual consultations; with 75 per cent and 25 per cent agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. There is an interactive website that facilitates communication on public participation, this had 44 per cent of the respondents agreeing, 31 per cent strongly agreeing and 31 per cent were neutral. There is an operational grievance redress mechanism in Makueni county, as agreed on by 44 per cent of the respondents, while another 44 per cent were neutral and 12 per cent strongly agreed. The governor of Makueni gives an annual address on the state of the county, this was strongly agreed by 56 per cent of the respondents, 38 per cent agreed while 6 per cent were neutral.

The various avenues used in communicating on public participation were: phone short message service (sms), bulk sms, radio, newspapers, ICT website, Public meetings, traditional media and barazas. The level at which public participation is conducted was village level, this was alluded to by 100 per cent of the participants. Public participation is conducted from the lowest level which is village, this is consistent with the CBEF regulations which provide that participation be taken to the lowest level possible such as the sub-ward (CRA, 2015). The avenues used in communicating to the public about public participation fora are phone SMS, village administrators, barazas, schools, local radio stations, daily newspapers, announcements in churches and mosques. The minorities and marginalized groups and communities are reached using the following mechanisms: use of community information centre, provision of public wifi at Wote town, representation of marginalised groups at all levels and specific clusters targeting HIV, PWD and the Youth.

These results depict that the mechanism of public participation used in Makueni county are consistent with the provisions of public participation regulations (MoDP, 2016). The public are informed of the subject matter before consultations, which is a good practice for it enables the public to be well equipped to make reasonable input (MoDP, 2016). These practices are consistent with the CBEF regulations (CRA, 2015) which require that the public be informed of



the subject matter for discussion at least seven days to the day of the meeting. There is an interactive website on which planning information is posted and feedback received, however, there is a segment who were not aware, this could be attributable to inability to access the website due to cost and or digital divide Ronoh *et al.*, (2018).

There is an operational grievance redress mechanism at the county. The governor gives an annual address on the state of the county as agreed by majority of respondents. The practice is consistent with the findings by Omollo, (2011), who argues that citizens require information on ongoing basis, more so reporting on outcomes and dissemination of status reports should be made available. The county shows some effort in consideration of the marginalized and PWD by ensuring that there are public participation clusters targeting the marginalised. Special consideration and support for the marginalized is important in ensuring that the marginalized have opportunity and their voice is heard as opined by Powell and Kleinmann (2008).

#### 4.2.5. Member Contribution

Table 5 shows performance indicator on CBEF members' contribution in Makueni County based on the Likert scale rating of 1-5, where 1= strongly disagree (SD), 2= disagree (D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= agree (A) and 5= strongly agree (SA).

Statement		n = 22, % =100				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
Individual members or groups make contributions that are considered in the budget	F	0	0	0	9	7
	%	0	0	0	56	44
CBEF members are enthusiastic in participating in the budget making process	F	0	0	0	11	5
	%	0	0	0	69	31
CBEF members mobilize the groups they represent on the budget making process	F	0	0	3	10	3
	%	0	0	19	62	19
It is easy to mobilize these groups for participation on budget making	F	0	1	2	11	2
	%	0	6	12.5	69	12.5

Table 5: Performance Indicators on Member Contribution  
Field Data, (2019)

The results from Table 5 reveal that: CBEF members make contributions that are considered in the final budget, this was indicated by 56 per cent of the respondents who agree and 44 per cent who strongly agreed. The enthusiasm of members in the budget making process is supported by 69 per cent who agreed, and 31 per cent who strongly agreed. The CBEF members mobilize the groups they represent during the budget making process as depicted by 62 per cent who agreed, and 19 who strongly agreed whereas 19 remained neutral. There was ease of mobilization of the public for participation as revealed by 69 per cent of the respondents agreeing, 12.5 per cent strongly agree, 12.5 per cent neutral and 6 per cent disagreeing.

These results confirm that CBEF members contribute towards the formulation of the budget, this is because their contribution is given consideration in developing the final budget. Hence, the establishment of Makueni CBEF is not a mere legal fulfilment. The results on consideration of members' views and their enthusiasm to participate has a connotation that participants' views influence policy decision making process as revealed by Mbithi *et al.*, (2018). The ease in mobilization of the public for public participation depicts public trust in the public participation process as well as the CBEF members. This is as demonstrated by Mayne, (2018) whose findings reveal that willingness to participate signifies trust in governance. In addition, enthusiasm of the CBEF members in participating in the budget making process connotes that there is transparency in the process and that their views influence policy outcomes as opined by Mayne, (2018).

## 5. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this section was to summarise the discussions and draw conclusions and recommendations of the findings of the main objectives of the study which were: to determine the capacity of CBEF Members, their representation, coordination mechanism and contribution to the budget making process.

### 5.2. Summary of Findings

Makueni county constitutes of members with tertiary level of education and are professionals with diverse expertise. However, some of them are devoid of some critical skills and knowledge on budgeting and budget analysis, public finance and devolved governance, which are essential for execution of their duties and responsibilities as CBEF members. The Makueni CBEF has good representation from both executive and NSA from diverse groups and sectors. The groups that are represented include: women, youth, business community and professions from various sectors. However, youth representation is low, with most of the CBEF members being above 35 years of age. The fact that the members are indeed consulted on the budget making process denotes representation for the diverse groups. However, the forms of representation are partly characterised with challenges such as elite capture, where some members end up representing individual views instead of group interests. This is as per the revelation that, some CBEF members do not consult with

their respective group that they represent. The marginalized and PWD could be receiving minimal representation because there was no specific individual among the CBEF member who directly represents this groups.

Generally, Makueni county government has complied with most legal and regulatory provisions on public participation, however, their public engagements are not devoid of challenges in terms of coordination. As much as the village is the lowest level of participation, some participants still cited distance of venue for public participation meetings as a challenge. However, this could be attributed to the expansiveness of the county, which could be mitigated through transport facilitation. On the aspect of mobilizing of the public for public participation, 19 per cent of the CBEF members who gave a neutral response, signifies that they do not mobilize the groups that they represent in order to get their views; which reveals a flaw in the coordination process. The 12.5 per cent who had a neutral response on the ease of mobilizing members signify that there is no confidence by the public that they are being represented by the CBEF members in the budget process, hence the lack of ease in mobilizing of those certain groups represented by these CBEF members.

The 31 per cent of the CBEF members that had neutral response on availability of an interactive website could signify that majority of the public were not even aware of the website given that a good number of the CBEF members were also not aware. The 44 per cent of the CBEF members who were not aware of the grievance redress mechanism signifies lack of sensitization of the same to the public, hence, translating to a higher number of the public who could not be aware of the redress mechanism. This in essence points out on public participation mechanisms that are put in place for purposes of compliance but are not useful to the public in enhancing participation.

The CBEF members make contributions which are considered in the formulation of the budget, however, given that a good proportion of them do not have the budgeting and budget analysis skills, their contribution is somewhat curtailed. However, the enthusiasm of the members in the budget making process signifies trust in the budget making process. The proportion of CBEF members who were neutral about mobilizing the social group members that they represent also signifies representation gap. This could imply that a segment of the public is not consulted for input in the budget. The proportion that indicated that they don't know or where neutral on the ease of mobilization of the groups they represent on budget public participation signifies that there is some form of exclusion, inadequate consultation as well as improper coordination between the CBEF members and the groups they represent.

### *5.3. Conclusion*

Makueni county government has endeavored to comply with the legal as well as regulatory framework for public participation which includes establishment of a CBEF and public participation framework. However, this has not ensued an ideal form of public participation as yet, there are shortfalls prevalent in terms of representation, capacity, public participation coordination and contribution of the CBEF members. For instance, not all members of the CBEF had technical skills in budgeting and budget analysis and knowledge on public finance, hence their contribution to the budget process was wanting. There is lack of representation as well as isolation of some social groups which are not mobilized and consulted or represented in the CBEF; as revealed by improper mobilization by some CBEF members. Hence, in such instances, elite capture could be playing out, where the CBEF member gives personal views and not collective views of the group they represent. In addition, youth representation in particular is minimal in budget making process within the CBEF.

### *5.4. Recommendation for Policy Implication*

#### 5.4.1. Train CBEF Membership on Specific Skills on Budgeting, Budget Analysis and Public Finance Management as Well as Devolved Governance

Developing the capacity of CBEF members in these areas is key for effective participation in budget making. The training on budgeting and budget analysis will equip them with the requisite skills to interrogate and analyse the budget in order to make meaningful input during budget engagements. The knowledge on public finance will enable the members to develop budgets that are consistent with the legal provisions in the PFMA, (2012) on budget making. The understanding on devolved governance will equip the members to develop a budget that incorporates all devolved functions for effective service delivery.

#### 5.4.2. CBEF Members to Enhance Consultations with the Social Groups That They Represent for Representative Contribution on the Budget

The involvement of both the executive and NSA in the CBEF was intended to ensure representation for various social groups in the budget making process. This is to be achieved through the CBEF members mobilizing and consulting with the respective group that they represent with a view of developing a group consensus to be relayed to the CBEF about the budget. Enhanced consultation will help in curbing elite capture; that is, instances where the CBEF members represent their personal views and not collective views of the respective groups they represent.

#### 5.4.3. Need for Enhanced Representativeness in the CBEF

There is need for deliberate involvement of the youth and marginalized representatives in the CBEF. The youth and the marginalized run the risk of being isolated or underrepresented in the budget making process for lack of or inadequate representation of these groups. There should be deliberate effort therefore to ensure that, just like other groups, these two groups have adequate representation in the budget making process.

#### 5.4.4. Enhance Coordination of Public Participation on the Budget Making Process

The areas that require coordination enhancement is CBEF members respective group consultations. The CBEF members should mobilize and consult with the respective social groups that they represent in order to offer a collective view on the budget from the groups they represent.

#### 5.5. Areas for Further Studies

Does enhancing facilitation of participants enhance public participation?

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Appendix

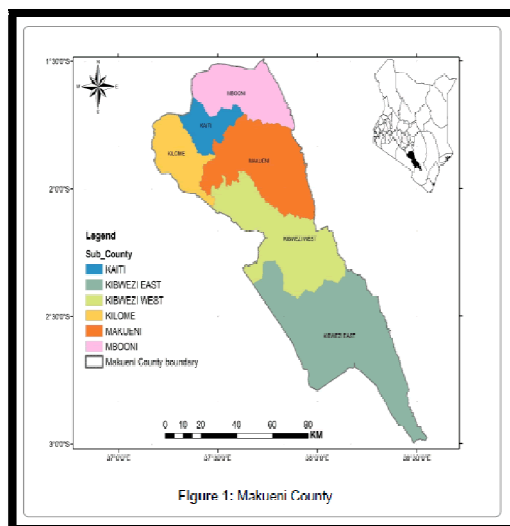


Figure 1: Makueni County Map  
Source: Geographic Remote Sensing (2018)

Questionnaire for CBEF Members

Section 1: Demographics

1. What is your gender? Male  Female
2. What is your age bracket? 18 to 35 years  Above 35 years
3. Do you have any physical impairment? Yes  No

Section 2: Representation

4. Using the following scale, please tick the one that best describes your opinion

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree.
CBEF members are consulted in the preparation of the county budget	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 6

As a member of Makueni County Budget Economic Forum (CBEF), what professional body do you represent?

County executive  Non-state actors

5. What social group of the society do you represent? .....

Section 3: Coordination of Public Participation

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree.
Makueni county government mechanism for public participation is adequate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The public are informed on the subject matter prior to consultations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makueni county has an interactive website on which planning information is posted and feedback received	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Makueni county has an operational grievance redress mechanism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The governor gives an annual address on the state of the county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Table 7

What is the lowest geographic level of public engagements? county level  sub-county  ward   
 Village  Other ... .....

6. What forms of communication does the county use to reach out to the public for their participation? TV   
 Radio  ICT Website  Public meetings  Local media  Others.....

7. What measures has Makueni county put in place to promote access to information for minorities, marginalised groups and communities? .....

*Section 4: Capacity of CBEF members*

What is your highest level of education? Primary  secondary  tertiary

8. What is your area of profession (expertise)? .....

9. What are the areas that you require to be capacity build on to enhance your future participation? .....

*Section 5: Member Contribution*

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree.
Individual members or groups make contributions that are considered in the budget					
CBEF members are enthusiastic in participating in the budget making process					
CBEF members mobilize the groups they represent on the budget making process					
It is easy to mobilize these groups for participation on the budget making					

Table 8