



Application of Social Audit Approach to Health and Water Projects to Address Service Delivery Gaps for Improved Livelihoods

Laikipia County Civil Society Organizations Forum (LACCSOF)

Background

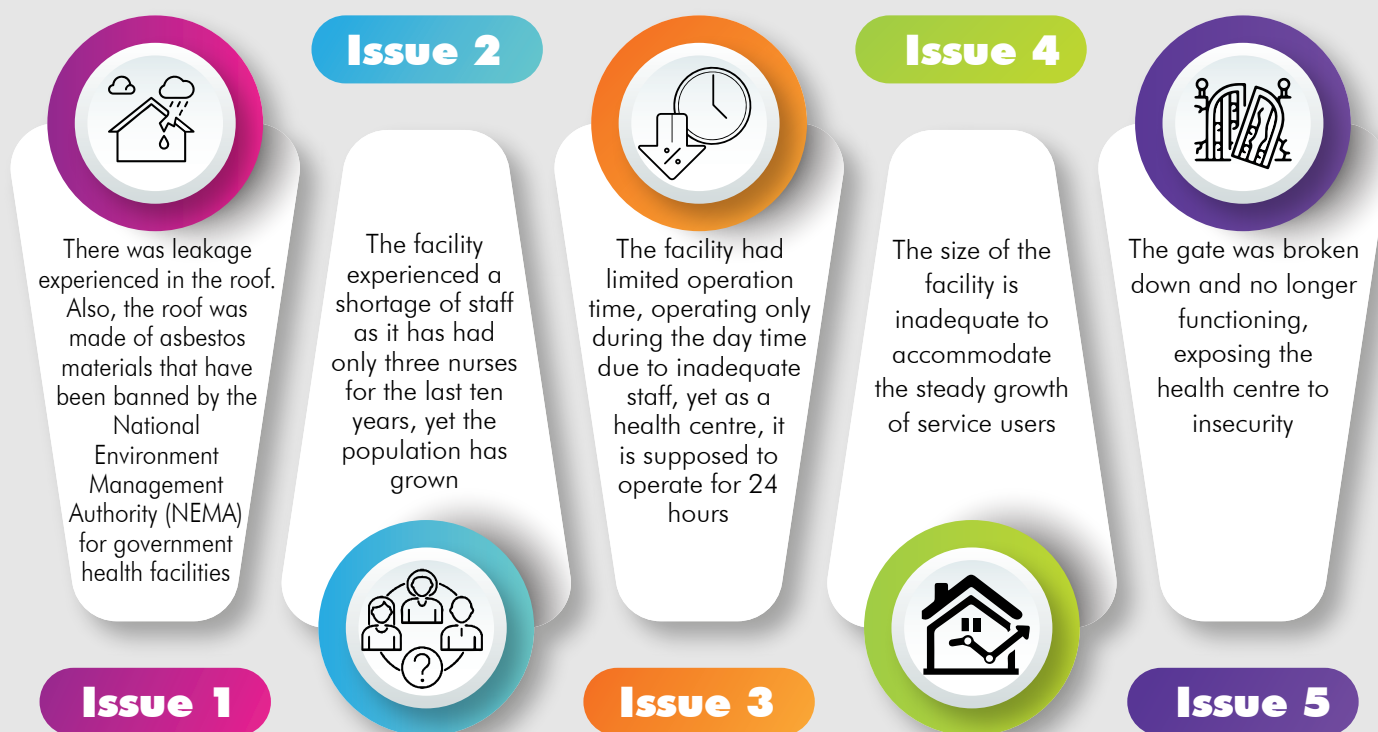
Laikipia County Civil Society Forum (LACCSOF), through the social accountability and advocacy project supported by Act Change Transform (Act!) with funding from the UK Government, addressed the following thematic areas: health, water, natural resources and climate change (including agriculture). This was a follow-up on interventions done in collaboration with the community in response to the social audits done in the water and health sectors in 2021. The network utilised community engagement and citizen actions to improve public participation, transparency and accountability during budget implementation. This was undertaken in the two development projects in the water and health sectors. The focus on the water sector was precipitated by Laikipia being ranked among the counties with the least access to clean drinking water. According to the county statistical abstract, 51% of Laikipia residents walk for more than 30 minutes to fetch water, while 30.1% cover longer distances. Access to clean, safe and adequate water for the residents of Laikipia will have a direct impact on the citizens' health and sanitation. It will help improve educational outcomes for the children in the county.

1. Kiandegge Water Project

In 2007, the Kiandegge settlement community initiated the water project (construction of water tanks) with the support of Father Roman of the Catholic Church to provide reliable and safe water to the residents. In 2019, the County Government of Laikipia and the community agreed to co-finance, and the community was to provide labour while the county provided the financial resources to purchase the water pipes. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Isacko Road Construction Company supported the construction of three tanks to benefit the community. The social audit conducted by the network in 2021 established that the county government utilised the KES. 1.5 million allocated in the FY 2019/20 to buy pipes as intended. However, the pipes were of the wrong size. The pipes purchased were 3-inch pipes instead of 4-inch pipes, as per the Bills of Quantity (BQ) and procurement documents. The community declined to use the wrong-sized pipes due to quality concerns. This still left the community to cover long distances in search of water.

2. Ngobit Health Facility

Ngobit Health Centre started as a dispensary back in 1987 at an old white settler's farmhouse. Some years back, as far as 1987, the farmhouse and the compound housed different public offices, including the chief's offices, although the Ngobit dispensary then occupied the main farmhouse. A social audit by the CSOs Network conducted in FY 2018/19 highlighted that the facility was dilapidated and posed a risk to the community members. The following issues were identified:



As a result of the poor quality of service provided and the occasional unavailability of drugs, the community was forced to buy from a private chemist or walk a long distance to the next facility. Due to the lack of a well-equipped maternity wing, the number of mothers giving birth was lower than the number of mothers attending post-natal clinics.

Interventions Undertaken Through KDP by the Network



The Network successfully built the capacity of citizens within Ngobit Ward to advocate for the expansion of the Ngobit Health Centre and the correct piping for the Kiandegge water project. The community was taken through social media training on engaging with the duty bearers on questions and feedback concerning the scheme. The community participated in online engagements (Twitter spaces) with the county on development matters. The trained members, who include the elderly in the community, are now conversant in using social media and can confidently engage online on their own.



The community was also trained to write memos during the public participation process of the 3rd Generation CIDP. The project was successful in having the community submit memos to the county government to fund the piping of the Kiandegge water project, which has been neglected for over ten years, as well as finalise the equipping of the Ngobit health centre and the construction of the new maternity wing and laboratory. Laikipia CSO Forum (LACCSOF), managed in the last month of the project to engage the county government in developing the 3rd Generation CIDP which has seen the government prioritise health and wellness and universal access to safe domestic water.



The current CIDP focuses on promoting universal access to safe domestic water through the construction of boreholes, water storage tanks and water distribution to all households. As a start, the county government has committed to providing at least 50,000 water tanks to households across the county and promoting rainwater harvesting, storage, and treatment.

Results of the Interventions by the Network


The county allocated KES. 1.5 million in FY 22/23 for piping under three water projects, including the piping for the Kiandegge water project. Regarding health, the nurse in charge urged the Ngobit community to continue visiting the Health Centre for treatment. She also stated that, due to the new administration, the commitments made by the cluster lead during the interface meetings will need to be followed up on by LACCSOF members and the social auditors to continue lobbying for implementation. Under commitments made under the county leasing program, Ngobit Health Centre was to receive hematology and biochemistry machines for the laboratory and 16 beds for the maternity block.

On the other hand, three of the social auditors were assigned as team leads in the village council by the director of public participation due to LACCSOF support for ongoing County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) public participation. Within the Ngobit community, the three social auditors are in charge of the village councils for Health, Water, and PWDs. Community members praised the success of digital training, skills, and knowledge in engaging duty bearers, particularly during the last Twitter space engagement. Social auditors valued the advocacy skills provided by LACCSOF through the projects. This has allowed for more direct engagement with duty bearers. Through LACCSOF, social auditors were trained in advocacy and how to engage with various county departments without resorting to violence to meet their needs and requests.

The Network plans to sustain the good practices in future by;



Continued follow-up with the residents through social media on advocacy for the Kiandegge water project and Ngobit health centre project implementation



Support the community continue with digital engagements with duty bearers



Continued engagement with community members as needed and work with the village council leaders in leading various advocacy initiatives.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Through the engagement with the county government departments, the network learned that;

1. It is critical to have the county staff (contact persons nominated) participate in the network activities and have a few more of their own staff in the community. LACCSOF may not have the funds for the same but will work with the director of Public Participation to facilitate the county officials as part of their project contribution.
2. The collaboration within the network worked well in giving different opportunities to member organisations for training and engagements with the community, depending on the capabilities of the member organisation. This improved capacities in the network and promoted peer learning.
3. Proper timing of county officials attending the interface forum in the community could have worked better. This was due to the ongoing election campaign and the change of officers after the elections.
4. Direct engagement of the community with different county departments was critical in creating a sense of ownership and collaboration with the community. The community engaged with county officials from the Public Participation Department, Health Department, and Water Department. They had an opportunity to ask questions, and they received feedback.
5. Sensitisation of the community on advocacy and lobbying skills was key in empowering the community members to participate in development activities. This was seen through memo writing on the 3rd Generation CIDP by the community members and social auditors.
6. Community members embracing social media in advocacy and lobbying was a unique experience. This was the first experience from the community that improved their engagement with the duty bearers.



Before and after pictures of Ngobit health facility



Community supply tanks for the Kiandege Water Project



Kiandege Water Project Main Tank

 **UK International Development**
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**KENYA
DEVOLUTION
PROGRAMME**
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2021 - 2025

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