

Understanding The Level Of Devolution Awareness Among Youths

Survey In Lunga Lunga Sub County-Kwale County

About Us

Derin Peace Network is a Community Based Organization working to sensitize young people in the coastal region of Kenya about the importance of public participation within the devolution process. The group also works in connection with local stakeholders within the coast, including the Kwale County government, in order to represent youth interests and address some of the bottlenecks that prevent young people from participating fully, including helping them understand their democratic rights within public participation processes.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

This report summarises research conducted in Lunga Lunga Sub County in Kwale, Kenya in 2020. The research sought to assess how aware Lunga Lunga's young citizens were of devolution and its associated processes in their sub-county. **Devolution is a critical part of Kenya's local political system and to understand how young people perceived and engage with it, the researchers surveyed 104 young residents of Lunga Lunga.** All research participants were aged 18-24 and had attained at least form four level of education.

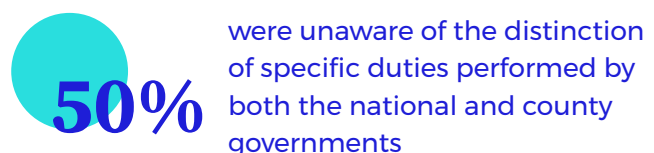
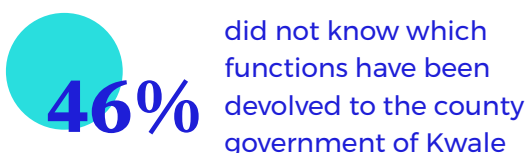
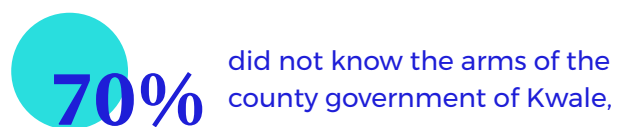
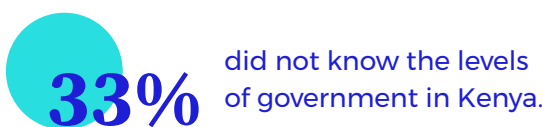
This survey was conducted as part of a community-based project to improve civic participation amongst young people in Lunga Lunga sub-county. The results offered an important evidence base and helped inform a series of training activities for over 80 of young people. In addition to increasing participants' knowledge and understanding of devolution and local governance, this project sought to improve youth perceptions of local governance and provide them with useful resources that can help enhance their participation. The project has published this research in hopes that the results will help inform more work in this sub-county and its recommendations can help guide work to enhance youth civic participation across Kenya.

This research employed a descriptive research design. To ensure the safety of the research team and all participants during the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was conducted online using Google Forms.

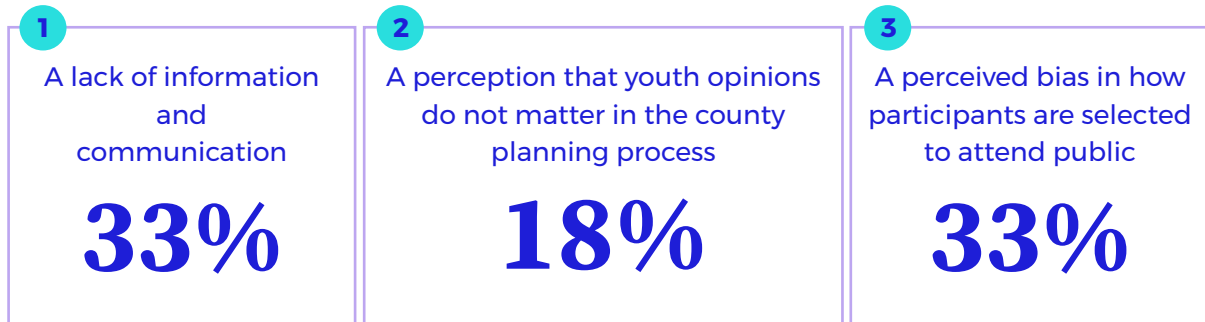
Key Findings

The research findings provided a fascinating glimpse at the reality of Lunga Lunga's young citizens and their understanding of devolution and critical civic processes. It revealed a diverse range of situations, problems, and solutions, as well as a mixed record of strengths, successes, and challenges.

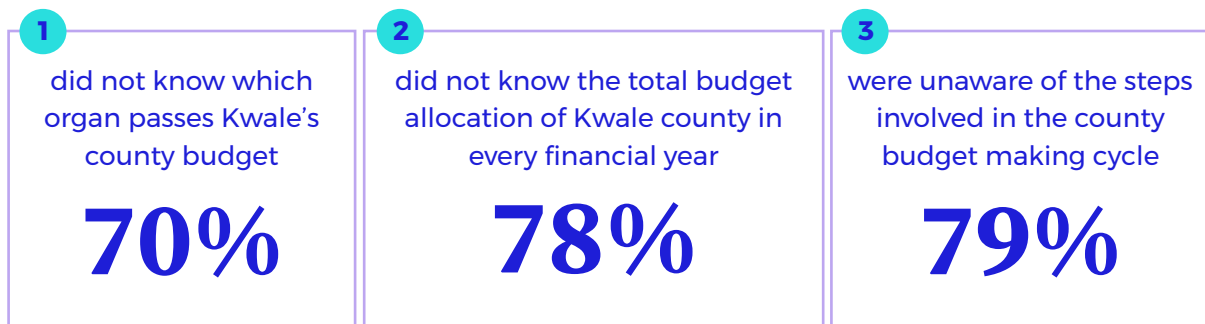
The survey showed that **most young citizens in Lunga Lunga were aware that there was a devolution process in place. However, the majority had very limited knowledge about how their local government functioned.**



With such limited knowledge, it is perhaps unsurprising that **less than 30% of the youth surveyed had ever participated in any civic participation forums** in Kwale County or county key decision making meetings. Young people face many barriers to participation; this survey's respondents emphasized the following:



Youth in Lunga Lunga were also conspicuously absent and uninformed in the budget-making process: 85% of youths surveyed had never attended budget-making public participation forums.



Recommendations

Although this research was relatively limited, the results were striking and lead to some clear recommendations.

- 1 There is a critical need for civic education to enhance youth understanding of devolution and local governance.** Devolution can only be successful in Lunga Lunga if its citizens understand it and understand their role, responsibilities, and opportunities in this system.
- 2 To enhance participation, young people need greater access to relevant information, meaningful consultation, and opportunities to take an active part in policy-making amongst other administrative processes.** The county and sub-county governments should make an active effort to inform youth about upcoming meetings or participation opportunities and work to include them actively in every step of governance.
- 3 In order to reach more young people, information must be presented in formats and on platforms that resonate with young people.** 80% of participants in this survey were very active social media users and frequently used platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube to find information and news. Local governing bodies should use these platforms to reach more young people, as well as SMS. Information should be clear, concise, and actionable, focusing on when, where, and how to engage with various devolved planning and budgeting processes
- 4 Social media is also a valuable place to share information** to educate about devolution and governing processes to enhance young people's knowledge and understanding.
- 5 In addition to civic education, there must be more training opportunities available for young people** to build skills in simple, contextualized project planning, management, and procurement, thus building a cadre of future leaders at the local level.



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