

LAUNCH OF GOVERNANCE AND PEACE BUILDING PROJECT IN THE COAST OF KENYA

KENYA COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE (KECOSCE) is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) based at the Coast of Kenya. KECOSCE's main goal is to promote justice, peaceful coexistence and democratically governed society that upholds progressive equality. KECOSCE's mission is to mobilize, organize and empower citizens to effectively participate and influence social, economic and political processes that impact on their well being in order to realize sustainable human development.

It should be noted that over the years, the number of people who vote in the Coast region are 50% and below. This situation is caused by various factors including lack of required documents for one to vote (ID and voters cards), lack of awareness on the importance of voting and general apathy amongst the communities from experiences from electoral violence, voter buying, election rigging etc. The concept of devolution at the coast has been confused with federalism commonly referred to as "Majimboism", where the perception resonates well with the people given the perceived and real marginalization and historical injustices in the region the most affected are women, youth, people with disabilities and minority communities who might be further excluded in under the devolved governance structures.

While the constitution provides a framework that will usher in a new era in service delivery and development through devolution, many people are still not aware of the numerous opportunities offered by devolution. Comprising of such aspects as increase in resources channeled through counties; equity in resource allocation irrespective of political persuasions; ability of county governments to generate revenue internally; formation of a county public service; and allocation of critical service delivery functions to county governments, it offers an opportunity for marginalized parts of the county to develop. It also promises to bring certain services closer to the people.

Kenya Community Support Centre has launched its governance and peace building project whose main goal is TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUITY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNANCE AMONGST COASTAL COMMUNITIES. The project will be implemented in Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale, Taita Taveta and Lamu counties in the Coast region starting April, 2012 to March, 2013

Specifically the project will seek to

- To enhance understanding on devolution and land reforms for marginalized groups in the four counties.
- Promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence amongst communities in the coast of Kenya.

To implement this project, we shall work with community structures like village elders, the women groups, youth groups, and religious leaders, Association of people with disabilities at the Coast and the provincial administration and other civil society organizations in the coast.

We shall

1. Hold awareness forums and land clinics for women and youth on devolution to empower them to understand the new opportunities that promote their rights in regard to access, ownership and management of land to enable them apply for joint registration of family land to avoid family disputes..
2. Train community leaders in Alternative Dispute Resolution skills to enable them mediate over local conflicts and enhance community coexistence.
3. Work with the Registrar of Persons to hasten issuance of IDs cards to eligible youth to enable them actively participate in forthcoming elections and to contest for the various leadership positions under the new constitution.
4. Partner with the media to create mass awareness, debate of pertinent issues related to devolution, land, ongoing reforms and to promote peaceful coexistence amongst communities as well as influencing policy makers and politicians to promote issues of relevance to the people they serve.

5. "Jukwaa la Ugatuzi" for youth. The purpose of these forums will be to create a platform for engagements on the electoral processes and facilitate debates on why it is important for communities to take part in the elections and ensure peaceful campaigns during election period. Each forum will have approximately 100 the forums will be accompanied by screening of video documentaries. The participants will then be expected to continue with the discussions in their groups to reach more people.
6. Strengthen conflict early warning and early response system – we will work with partners and also support peace monitors in the six counties to monitor, send information to KECOSCE and to the national centre to facilitate proactive response to manage conflicts and reduce the impact of violence escalation leading to loss of property and lives.

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