

BASELINE REPORT

Study on The Role And Structure of Political Parties in
Selected Counties in Kenya

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Executive Summary

For nearly 20 years, CMD-Kenya has been working to, promote institutionalization of vibrant political parties capable of enhancing multiparty democracy in Kenya. To achieve this important goal, in 2011, CMD-Kenya partnered with the Danish Liberal Democracy Program (DLDP). The focus of that partnership has been on constructive involvement of young people in political parties as well as on dialogue across the political parties. In 2023, CMD-Kenya and its partner, the Danish Liberal Democratic Party (DLDP), will expand the partnership to include three more Danish political parties namely: The Social Democratic Party, The Conservative Peoples' Party and The Green Left. The partnership will seek to enhance issue-based politics and involvement of party structures in selected counties; promote focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an avenue to more issue-based politics; and devolve and develop the People Dialogue Festival (PDF) further with the aim of revitalizing the dialogue between numerous sectors in the society.

To prepare for this new phase, CMD-Kenya commissioned a study of political parties' role, structure, and processes nationally, and in West Pokot, Meru, Narok, Kisumu and Uasin Gishu counties as a benchmark of the status across the country. Key recommendations from the study included: the need for political parties to institutionalize as self-sufficient entities; the need to ensure parties are able to internally raise resources to complement the political parties fund; the need for parties to center on collective ideology; the need for parties to build internal capacity to sustain structures and processes that will serve to institutionalize the party beyond political elections and personalities. Further political parties need to be intentional to ensure meaningful inclusion of youth, women and persons with disability. Parties need to ensure that party ideology is well understood by all party members and elected leaders and that they are clear on their role in advancing party ideology. This ideological clarity among political parties is important in advancing the implementation of SDGs that reflect party positions and policies.

CMD-Kenya seeks to use these findings to design interventions that will strengthen parties at national and branch level.

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Background

CMD-Kenya is a political parties-based membership organization established in March 2004. The mandate is to enhance multiparty democracy and strengthen the institutional capacity of political parties in Kenya through policy influence and capacity building. The organization provides a platform for political parties, political actors and policy makers to engage in dialogue and cooperate in strengthening multiparty democracy. CMD-Kenya works closely with political parties, political actors, strategic partners and key stakeholders in promoting social justice, political governance best practices, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

1.2 Context of A Baseline Study on The Role & Structure of Political Parties in Select Counties in Kenya

In August 2022, Kenya elected leaders for the devolved counties for only the third time since the promulgation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. For nearly 20 years, CMD-Kenya has been working to, among others, promote institutionalization of vibrant political parties capable of enhancing multiparty democracy in Kenya. To achieve this important goal, in 2011, CMD-Kenya partnered with the Danish Liberal Democracy Program (DLDP). The focus of that partnership has been on constructive involvement of young people in political parties as well as on dialogue across the political parties. In 2023, CMD-Kenya and its partner, DLDP, will expand the partnership to include three more Danish political parties namely: The Social Democratic Party, The Conservative Peoples' Party and The Green Left. The focus of the new Danish partnership with CMD-Kenya is expected to:

- a) Enhance issue-based politics and involvement of party structures in selected counties.
- b) Promote focus on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an avenue to more issue-based politics, cross-political dialogue and to strengthen the implementation of the SDGs in the counties. This will include national channels such as the County Assemblies Forum (CAF) and Council of Governors (COG) and perhaps create linkages to the parliamentary caucus for SDGs.
- c) Devolve and develop the People Dialogue Festival (PDF) further with the aim of revitalizing the dialogue between numerous sectors in the society.

As such, it is critical for CMD-Kenya to understand the role, structure and processes of political parties at the branch level as this will enable CMD-Kenya to adequately plan its interventions together with its partners. The study, which is considered a baseline for the proposed interventions, will provide entry points to engaging parties at the branch level as well as provide a metric to measure the success of future interventions with the county party structures.

1.3 Purpose & Objectives of The Study

The objective of the study was to generate baseline information on the role, structure, and processes of political parties at the National (Nairobi) and branch level (County level) in five counties – Narok, Meru, West Pokot, Kisumu, and Uasin Gishu. Further, the study sought to understand *the dynamics of local party operations, and ideology* and the extent to which this affects the relationship between the party officials, elected and nominated leaders and party members. The study endeavored to understand the extent to which *inclusion of youth*,

women, persons with disability and marginalized communities are integrated into party processes, structures and activities. Finally, the study sought to determine the extent to which political parties at branch level *articulate and advance implementation of SDGs* through and with county governments.

As such, the study defined the following overall objective and three specific objectives to cover the scope of this assignment.

Overall Objective:

To assess the structure, processes and roles within political parties at the national level and provide a comparison with the county level

Specific Objectives

- 1) To determine the structure, processes and roles within political parties at National and County level in Nairobi, Kisumu, Uasin Gishu, West Pokot, Narok and Meru Counties.
- 2) To determine the level of inclusion and mainstreaming of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in party decision making structures, processes, and activities in the five party branches and at the National level.
- 3) To determine the extent to which the SDGs are championed by political parties at the County level.

1.4 Geographical Coverage of the Study

For the purpose of this study, research was limited to the following target counties: Nairobi (national focus), Narok, Meru, West Pokot, Uasin Gishu and Kisumu. The selection of the study Counties was purposive but informed by the following factors:

Criteria	Counties	Justification
1. Counties with absolute majority parties in the County Assembly	Kisumu	- Absolute majority (Azimio Coalition) ODM party. Does the party have the structures to engage citizens, champion policies and play oversight role?
	Uasin Gishu	- Absolute majority (Kenya Kwanza) UDA party. Does the party have the structures to engage citizens, champion policies and play oversight role?

2. National Level/Counties with minority Governors	Nairobi	<p>- Political party dynamics at the national level. It is also a more pluralistic and Cosmopolitan County with varying political, ethnic and economic interests and dynamics.</p> <p>- How are the parties structured at the national level? Are there connections between the national and County levels?</p> <p>- The Governor's party (UDA) does not control the majority in the County Assembly. Kenya Kwanza associated with the President had 53 members while Azimio had 61 members. The Governor belongs to Kenya Kwanza while the Senator belongs to Azimio Coalition One Kenya.</p>
3. Counties with minority Governors	West Pokot	<p>- Azimio has a slight majority with 10 MCAs; UDA has 9 while 1 MCA is independent.</p>
4. Swing Counties	Narok	<p>- The Governor belongs to Kenya Kwanza (UDA) while the Senator is from Azimio Coalition (ODM). Implications of the political parties in their oversight and County governance roles.</p>

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study sought to answer the following research questions founded upon the specific objectives as indicated in the table below.

Objective Area	Research Questions
Party Organizational Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Organizational Hierarchy of the Party at National & County Level? • How does the hierarchy cascade within the various committees?
Role of Specific Offices/ Units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of the various organizational units identified above? • How do the various units interact?

Political Party Processes	<p>How does the party manage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment ● Internal Party Programs (Particularly between elections) ● Elections ● Compliance & Accountability ● Mentorship within the Party ● How does the party interact with other political parties?
Party Ideology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is the Party Ideology? ● Who Sets Party Ideology? ● Who is tasked with advancing party ideology? How is it advanced? ● What is the role of elected leaders? ● Is the party focused on issues-based politics?
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the party consider itself inclusive? ● How is inclusion mainstreamed within the party? ● What is the impact of the party being inclusive on the party?
Championing SDGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How does the party advance the SDGs?

Table 1: Research Criteria

On party organizational structure, the study sought to establish how the party organizes at the national and county levels. To determine this party leadership, the head of the secretariat and leaders of the various units/ committees were interviewed. Further the study investigated the roles of the various units/ committees identified and how they interact and coordinate with each other. To understand the efficiency of the party as a unit, the study reviewed its processes and their efficiency thereof. Specifically, the study focused on party membership and recruitment, internal party programs and activities, elections, compliance, and accountability of the party internally and externally and the aspect of mentorship within the party.

The study sought to understand the party ideology and issue- based politics within the party. Focus was laid on understanding who sets party ideology, how the party ideology is advanced and what is the role of elected leaders in relation to party ideology. The study investigated the party’s understanding of inclusion, whether youth, women and persons with disabilities are mainstreamed within the party and whether this has had an impact within the party at both local and national levels.

Finally, the study sought to understand how political parties are advancing the SDGs and how this is inter-woven within the party ideology, policy frameworks and how each party unit and members plays a role towards this.

Section 2: Research Methodology

2.1 Data Collection Approaches

Figure 2: Triangulation of Data



Participatory methodologies were used to collect qualitative primary and secondary data on agreed upon evaluation concerns and questions.

Primary data was collected by conducting interviews (structured and semi-structured) with political party leaders and members as well as members of county government, and key informants (other relevant stakeholders). Focus Group Discussions with sampled party caucuses to ascertain their participation, and role within the political party were also conducted.

Secondary data was collected by reviewing relevant legislative documents at the national and county levels. Critical documentation emanated from: the party secretariat, the legal provisions and the ORPP.

2.2 Data Collection Instruments

2.2.1 Desk Review

To provide context and understanding of political party regulation, management and operations, the study also conducted a desk review of various literature on political parties in Kenya and beyond. This included but was not limited to legal texts, party manifestos and constitutions.

2.2.2 Key Informant Interviews

Through in-depth interviews with representatives of political parties, the study gathered qualitative information on: Party Organizational Structure, Role of Specific Offices/ Units, Political Party Processes, Party Ideology, Inclusion, and Championing SDGs. The interviews were administered through physical meetings, phone calls, zoom or skype video or voice calls with the various respective respondents as was identified in the course of implementing this study. This targeted key leadership of the political parties.

2.2.3 Focus Group Discussions

Through focus group discussions, the study sought to tease out the contextual scenarios and realities of the political parties' branches in the counties as guided by the research questions. The guide was ideally composed of predominantly open ended, deep probing questions that allowed the respondents to do most of the talking. Each focus group comprised between 8-12 members.

In this regard 13 Focus Group Discussions were conducted targeting a diverse mix of party members in Narok, Uasin Gishu, Kisumu, Meru and West Pokot Counties. The FGDs reached 104 respondents that included 77 male and 27 females.

2.3 Sampling

The Following parties were proposed to form part of the research sample:

1. **Narok-** Orange Democratic Movement and United Democratic Alliance,
2. **Nairobi (National)-** Orange Democratic Movement, United Democratic Alliance, Devolution Empowerment Party, Kenya Union Party, Kenya African National Union
3. **Kisumu-** Orange Democratic Movement and United Democratic Alliance
4. **Meru-** Devolution Empowerment Party (DEP), Orange Democratic Movement and United Democratic Alliance
5. **West Pokot-** Kenya Union Party, Kenya African National Union, United Democratic Alliance and Orange Democratic Movement.
6. **Uasin Gishu-** United Democratic Alliance and Orange Democratic Movement.

2.4 Data Quality Control

The study observed data quality control protocols to ensure that the information and data collected was accurate and reliable. These protocols included: **Supervision** of the study teams which ensured that fieldwork was conducted as stipulated in the project guideline and **Briefing** of the interviewers on the general background on the project. The study through field supervisors and the lead consultant **conducted** some **Back Checks** and **Spot checks** to verify the quality of the data which was collected. Data analysis involved categorizing, organizing and cleaning of data before analysis and synthesis.

2.5 Limitations of the Study

Access & Openness of some key informants

While a sizable number of respondents were open and available, the study encountered a significant number that were either unwilling to speak to the research team or remained completely unavailable.

Duplicate Roles within Political Parties

It was our finding that in some instances, that it was impossible to speak to different people handling various designations particularly within the county branches as a few individuals often held multiple roles within the party.

Section 3: Results & Findings

This section presents findings from data collected, its analysis and the interpretation of the findings on the Study of the Role, Structure & Processes of Political Parties. The analysis and findings are thematically presented in line with the objectives and indicators of the study.

3.1 Political Party Organizational Structure

Desk review

Organizational structures and typologies play an important role in determining the extent to which organizations succeed in their endeavors or otherwise. Structure is depicted by the organizational chart of the firm. A political party may be guided in its structure and functioning by external regulations, such as the Constitution or laws and regulations, by internal party rules, such as the Party Constitution, or by both (Electoral Knowledge Network, Ace¹)

In the Kenyan context, the Political Parties Act (2011) envisions political organizations that are organized at the local (county) and national levels. The Act is the primary legal reference for management of political parties in accordance with Articles 91 and 92 of the Kenya Constitution 2010, which envisages well governed political parties that respect internal democracy and their constitutional status in the Kenyan political system.

With regards to requirements for full registration, the Act provides that a political party will qualify for registration if it has recruited as members, not fewer than one thousand (1000) registered voters from at least twenty-four (24) counties. It is also a requirement that political parties qualifying for full registration submit to the Registrar of Political Parties the location of its head office, which shall be a registered office within Kenya and a postal address to which notices and other communication may be sent; and also the location and addresses of the branch offices of the political party, which shall be in more than half of the counties.

According to the Christian Democratic Party of Norway (2018), most political parties in Kenya have their organizational structures set out in their party's constitution. These documents also clarify the roles and responsibilities of party officials, elected officials and other party members. Although these structures may differ in terms of naming from one party to the other, at the National Level, the structures mainly include:

1. **The National Delegates Conference:** the highest decision-making body of the party. Party constitutions usually limit the congress to key decisions, such as approving amendments to the party constitution, deciding on party dissolution, approving the party's key policy documents, and electing certain cadre of candidates and party officials.
2. **Party Executives:** Since the convention meets only occasionally, the powers to make decisions in between congresses is delegated through the constitution to an executive organ.
3. **Party Secretariat:** comprising the administrative staff of the party who are employees of the party whose role is to implement the political goals of the party.

¹ Retrieved from https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pca/pca01/pca01a/mobile_browsing/onePage

4. **Party Caucuses or Parliamentary Groups:** Caucuses are composed of the elected representatives to the various legislative bodies of the country who are members of the party.
5. **Women and Youth leagues:** women and youth leagues serve to promote the interests of these groups within the party.
6. **Election and Dispute Resolution Boards:** Parties also have special bodies responsible for the conduct of their elections and party nominations listening to appeals and other internal party disputes.

At the County levels:

1. **Branches:** branches correspond with Kenyan counties. They are mandated with clear decision-making and deliberative responsibilities. Branches consist of sub-branches (ward-level) and polling station units.
2. **Branch-level Committees:** There are generally three levels of committees within party branches; the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), the Sub-Branch Executive Committee (SBEC) and the Polling Station Steering Committee.
3. **County Assembly Groups:** The purpose of this group is to coordinate the party's work within the county assembly.

A party branch office is the most important link between the local and national party organizations. It is responsible for building bridges between the national and county levels and including the grassroots levels in the different processes of the party. Sharing of information between the various party organs will lead to a spread of ideas and hopefully inspire party members.

Ideally, political party branches should maintain and sustain constant communication with its national office before, during and in between elections. This will ensure that party branches will communicate in a relevant way to their local constituencies and members. Political news from the national office and those from the branches will find easy flow and be better communicated to party members.

Field Findings

At the county level, the study found that only one of the five parties sampled had a well-defined county coordinating structure. The study found that across, all the counties, ODM had a uniform structure of county, constituency and ward committees and their corresponding leadership. Additionally, ODM had the youth, women and PWD leagues across all the counties. This is the only party whose local structure closely mirrored what was presented at the national level.

UDA also displayed uniformity across the counties as each county had a raft of coordinators from the county to the constituency level. However, this does not reflect the structure shared at the national level that included fully-fledged committees from the county to the polling station unit. Party members interviewed indicated that this was as a result of the party being new and local officials' elections were yet to take place.

The Devolution Empowerment Party indicated that they had no local structures and that party organizing at the county level was carried out by a county chairperson, secretary general, and

a treasurer. This, arrangement, does not mirror the provision outlined in the party's constitution, which provide for county committees.

The Kenya Union Party, was unique in that its headquartered at the county level, indicated that the party utilizes grassroots organizing to run party affairs. As such, there was a formal structure at the county level to support party operations.

All the parties sampled indicated that they held a seasonal secretariat with volunteer staff with the exception of ODM. ODM across the counties held an office that was manned by at least one paid staff for a majority of the electoral cycle, however, due to lack of funds, at the time of the study, some of these offices were closed. The other sampled parties indicated that party county offices were mainly operational during the election season, these have since closed or were inactive.

All parties indicated that they did not feel empowered or capacitated as party officials to make decisions at the county level on behalf of the party. They also cited lack of finances as a reason for poor coordination at county level. The lack of finances was attributed to dependance on individuals (either party leaders or elected leaders) to finance party operations or delays in disbursement of funding from the national level as in the case of ODM. It is also important to note that while at the national level the party leader is regarded as the center of power for the party, at county level this power often shifts between the Governor and elected members of parliament.

3.2 Roles within Political Parties

Desk Review

According to the Electoral Knowledge Network, Ace², political parties are often described as institutionalized mediators between civil society and those who decide and implement decisions. As such, they enable their members' and supporters' demands to be addressed in parliament and in government. On their part, Randall & Svasand (2002) aver that although political parties are not usually included in the definition of democracy, the emergence of some form of multi-party system is generally seen as both an unavoidable consequence of basic democratic rights such as freedom to associate and freedom of expression, and as a necessary component of democracy as is practiced in the real world.

Despite the important roles of political parties in the democratization process of any country, it is important to note that while political parties are expected to contribute towards this goal (role), there are also expectations on how they need to look like in order to make this contribution a reality (structure). It is on this basis that Randall & Svasand (2002) observe that:

- 1) The ability of parties to perform functions associated with democratic consolidation should be seen as a function of both the characteristics of parties and of party systems generally and;

² [1] <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/pc/pcb/pcb03/default>

- 2) The contribution political parties can potentially make in democratic consolidation depends on the political, and economic, context of party politics, including national and international dimensions.

To fulfil these functions, parties assign specific roles to identified organizational units to ensure that the party is able to deliver expectations of both members and citizens. Such roles include decision making, mobilization, representation, policy making and multi-level coordination between party branches to ensure that the parties functions and processes are carried out.

Field Findings

The study found a clear distinction between the national and county levels on the understanding of roles of various units within the political party. At the national level, roles such as the National Executive Council, National Election Board and the National Delegates Council were clear and understood. However, at the county level, there was no corresponding knowledge on the roles of the county or constituency committees. This can be attributed to the findings above that the county structures are not realistically organized in the prescribed fashion.

The study did note, however, that at the county level, the youth, women and PWD leagues have taken a lead role in mainstreaming SIG participation in the party activities at the county level. Other roles identified at the county included party recruitment and campaign management. It is worth noting, the roles identified at the county level could be influenced by the recently concluded elections, in which the focus was to garner support for the party. It is not clear whether these efforts are sustained beyond the election period.

3.3 Political Party Processes

Desk Review

In a liberal democracy and traditions, political parties are permanent organizations, which contest elections to occupy the decisive positions of authority within the state and as such substantially remain integral to politics (Centre for Governance and Development, CGD, 2005). They provide the link between government and people through political education and mobilization of the electorate. According to CGD (2005), political parties in Kenya are class outfits characterized by weak organizational structures and factional fights, hardly with a coherent and consistent ideology on which to contest state power. They are formed by political elites to advance narrow individual and class interests. Usually, they are formed to act as protective masks on the part of the political class. They lack internal party democracy, effectively being associated with core interests of their founders and leaders. As a result of this, little effort is placed in establishing sustainable practices and processes of the party. It is however noted that in theory, all political parties, as is required by law, have documented detailed processes and functions of various organs within the party within their party constitutions. These factors cause the parties to have seasonal operations limited to the electoral period significantly reducing the longevity and existence of political parties.

Field Findings

Recruitment

The study determined that party recruitment is mainly handled at county level. Members were recruited manually at polling stations; this mostly happened in the days leading up to the party primaries and the party would set up shop at the polling centers to register members. UDA indicated that they recruited and registered interested members online, while parties like ODM, KUP and DEP indicated that they paid youth to go out and mobilize new members; these three parties also indicated that some leaders vying for office offered to pay for party membership fees for recruited members. Parties like KUP also indicated that they had used local media to advertise the party and boost recruitment numbers.

Internal Party Activities

All parties sampled at the county level indicated that they held no party activities beyond the election period. Those that sustained party interactions post-elections (ODM) indicated having semi-regular meeting financed through individual members' efforts. UDA indicated that the party offices at the county were already closed and as such were not anticipating and post-election activities. This once again presents a disconnect with the national level where parties indicated that they planned activities through work plans. It is however clear that these activities do not usually materialize.

Elections

The most popular method of identifying a nominee to the ballot across all sampled parties was the consensus method. This is where parties mediate candidates interested in vying for a specific seat and gain consensus on a single candidate. However, the consensus method did not always agree with all candidates as some were not included in the consensus agreement. All parties also indicated great influence of 'powerful' individuals in the choice of candidate this was either a party owner, party financier or seating elected leaders- predominantly Governors and MPs. The third and least preferred way of identifying candidates especially in the 2022 elections was through party primaries. This was conducted as an open competition. Party members however indicated that this process was not always open and transparent as there would be incidences of bribing and sometimes certificates being denied to the winners.

With regards to nomination through the party list, members indicated that this process remains opaque with the names on the nomination list only seen for the first time in the official gazette notice.

Compliance & Accountability

The study revealed that almost all sampled parties had written accountability structures and /or procedures or informal accountability structures. However, it is noted that the question of accountability to the party members ends with the possibility of a written document that mentions that the party will be accountable to its members. In practice, the study found that no such practice existed in any shape or form.

Mentorship

All the parties sampled indicated that there had no mentorship programs for its members or aspiring leaders within the party. Members at the county level indicated that the lack of succession planning is costing the party elective seats and that if proper planning and mentorship were to be carried out, the party would be in a position make formidable

challenge for all six elective seats. Specifically, mentorship through the leagues would ensure inclusive political leadership for the parties.

Inter-Party Functions

At the county level, all parties sampled indicated that they did not interact with other political parties, in fact, they considered other parties as rivals. At the national level parties indicated that they interacted with each other through the Political Party Liaison Committee (PPLC) and through CMD-Kenya engagements.

3.4 Party Ideology

Desk Review

According to the National Democratic Institute (2008), “Clearly defined political identity serves to strengthen political parties through its contribution to consistent policies based on common values.” It is noted that political parties with proactive policy platforms are better able to take on leadership roles in governance and provide for the sustainability of democratic development in their country, as well as in a regional context. It is essential therefore, for parties and individuals to complement their beliefs along the lines of a mainstream political ideology. Members of a party align their policies with those of the larger organization, ensuring that they all espouse common values. Individual parties, institutes and foundations create internal forums for open and transparent policy development processes and educate party members on identity, values, and policy positions. It is important to note that political manifestoes are derivatives of political ideology and as such parties are required to define their higher-level ideals and ideas to be able to effectively implement their manifestoes.

Field Findings

Of all the parties sampled, only two parties, UDA and KUP, came out clearly stating that the party’s ideology was set by party members. They referenced the economic forums held across the country as the basis for the party’s ideology and grassroots consultative forums respectively. The other parties indicated that party ideology was set either by delegates or the party owners. Upon inquiry of the role of elected and nominated leaders with regards to the party none of the party members indicated that one of the roles could be the advancement of the party ideology, instead many of the members indicated that as a party they rarely interacted with them once they assumed elective office.

3.5 Inclusion

Desk Review

The Oslo Centre³ observes that citizens are at the center of governance. Inclusion of citizens is therefore the foundation for a strong democracy where policies and services need to be of relevance and correspond to citizen needs. Citizens should therefore not only be targets by policymakers but included in the processes.

³ <https://oslocenter.no/inclusion/>

Political institutions are the vehicles for citizen inclusion and to ensure their needs are addressed. The right to political choices is a Constitutionally guaranteed right provided for in Article 38(3)(b) of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. In all democracies, political parties play an integral role in political selection. They nominate candidates who participate in elections and define the set of politicians from which voters can choose. The enactment of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya and the election sector laws provided for a new life in the country's electoral process. Section 91 of the Constitution requires political parties to abide by democratic principles of good governance, promote and practice and practice democracy including free and fair intra-party processes of candidate selection as well as inclusion.

Also, the Political Parties Act places all members at the core of Kenyan parties so as to allow them to play these roles in society (ORPP, 2014). Political parties therefore must not only have a membership that is sufficiently large and diverse, they must also know them and involve them in party affairs. The Act provides that any political party will qualify for registration if: (a) the members reflect regional and ethnic diversity, gender balance and representation of minorities and marginalized groups; (b) the composition of its governing body reflects regional and ethnic diversity, gender balance and representation of minorities and marginalized groups; and (c) not more than two-thirds of the members of its governing body are of the same gender.

The Constitution and the Political Parties Act give political parties responsibility as gatekeepers of democracy in Kenya. However, there are still gaps in the legislation regarding the lower levels of the party organization. A study by the Carter Center (2018) on Youth and Women political participation in Kenya showed that while these marginalized groups remain eager to participate in the country's political and electoral processes, they face serious financial, societal, and cultural challenges to full participation, including intimidation, harassment, and violence including during party primaries. The Center's study also revealed that political parties often hinder youth and women's participation. In particular, the Carter Center established that approximately 90% of women aspirants said they felt unsafe during the party primary period, with many sharing stories of intimidation, harassment, and character assassination. On their part, youth participants said that because of high unemployment rates, their peers are willing to hire themselves out as protesters and are susceptible to politicians pushing an agenda.

Field Findings

All the parties sampled in this study indicated that the highest level of engagement of youth, women, and persons with disability were the Special Interest Group leagues. Activities at this level primarily include mobilizing for the party and supporting its elective candidates. Respondents also indicated that the parties, across board had subsidized the candidate fees for the special interest groups. There was no mention of how the SIGs were included or mainstreamed in real decision-making processes.

3.6 Championing the Sustainable Development Goals

Desk Review

Kenya, being a member of the United Nations, participated in the SDGs processes at national, regional and global levels including during the adoption of the SDGs agenda. Kenya's involvement in global development initiatives is anchored on its long-term development blueprint, Vision 2030. Political parties are strategic organizations towards domestication and

localization of SDGs in Kenya. Vision 2030's Political Pillar aims to realize a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law and protects the rights and freedoms of every individual in Kenyan society. Progressive political parties can lead to emergence of sound public policies which can in turn be articulated through their elected representatives in Parliament and the County Assemblies. These policies can well be those aimed at the implementation of the SDGs.

Field Findings

The study found that some of the sampled party members were familiar with the SDGs, while others had simply no understanding of what the SDGs are or why they exist. Of those that were familiar, they indicated the following SDGs were being championed by their parties at both county and national level: Ending poverty, climate action, quality healthcare, quality universal education, food security, and gender equality- with a focus on ending Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The respondents also indicated that initiatives around these SDGs were often financed on initiative of individual elected members rather than a coordinated party approach.

Section 4: Conclusions & Recommendations

Party Organizational Structures

In spite of elaborate party constitutions detailing a network of party machinery from national level to the most basic county level, it is apparent that this is not the case at the county level. This study reveals four things with regards to the parties' organizational structures: 1) The county units are predominantly unstructured and un-coordinated, 2) The county units have titular functions with no real decision-making powers, 3) Parties are centered around individuals rather than the institution itself, and 4) Parties are largely reliant on financing from individuals- either party owners or those seeking elective office. These combination of factors renders the party unable to become self-sustainable, creating an ad-hoc engagement as the study has found.

Recommendation

Build the capacity of the political parties at national and county level to cascade county structures as envisioned in party constitutions. Further, it will be essential to build the capacities of the established party leadership at the county level on management, fundraising, and lobbying. It will also be essential to support the parties with establishing a functional county secretariat that can be sustained in respect to the current state of the party, this could be on a voluntary or paid basis, with the option setting up their own independent office or being hosted in a possibly free office space.

Roles within Political Parties

The study revealed that at the county level, the roles identified by the party members were largely defined by the election where the focus was on recruitment and campaign management. At the national level, the roles seemed much more well defined and were executed or overseen by a team of technocrats that were professionally astute as to what was expected. This skill gap at county level has resulted in menial reduction of county roles to recruitment and mobilization of party support during elections.

Recommendation

Along with capacity enhancement of county leadership as recommended above, it will be essential to support parties at both national and branch level to define roles for each organizational unit. Further, it will be important to establish a plan for continuous skills transfer between the national and county levels and define oversight roles to avoid technical gaps as witnessed during this study.

Political Party Processes

The study reveals that political party processes at the county level need to be streamlined to ensure they match the expectations of the party members as well as deliver on their mandate as outlined in their various constitutions. It is noted that party member recruitment is not a continuous process but rather a campaign exercise carried out every five years, similar to internal party activities. Election processes within the parties are also opaque and subjective and there are no planned mentorship activities to ensure the party remains robust and ready to take on leadership challenges. This coupled with zero accountability by the party, has cultivated disempowered party members unable to independently manage at branch level.

Further, there is no opportunity for cross-learning across parties as parties at the county level consider themselves as bitter rivals.

Recommendation

There is a need to institutionalize political parties from a top-down approach (national-county). This will streamline processes within the party ensuring they are uniform from headquarters to branch level and across the different counties. This will also further increase the efficiency and effectiveness of party operations.

Party Ideology

The study found that more often than not, party ideology was often set by individual party owners rather than the collective party members. In fact, even in the example shared by UDA on using the economic forums to determine party ideology appears to have already been pre-determined as the forums were already labeled ‘economic forums.’ Further, there is no nexus between the party ideology and the elected leader’s post-election. It is apparent, that in this context, party ideology is considered synonymous with election issues. This sets an unsteady precedence for the party as the issues keep changing across the electoral cycle leaving no common ground for party members to distinctly identify as the binding issue for the party. Lack of a clear and consistent party ideology has also led the public to view political parties as causes of disruption rather than a voice on key issues.

Recommendation

There is need to support political parties to identify key thematic issues that they can focus and address as a party, this way they will remain strategic and consistent and gain the ability to measure their contribution towards a specific theme.

Inclusion

The study revealed that women, and youth especially, are still only perceived as foot soldiers for political party campaigns. Their value is measured based on the numbers they are able to mobilize to join the party and carry it to election victory. As a result of this tokenistic approach to inclusion, the leagues primary motivation is the little money dished out by politicians seeking to mobilize the highest support. It is also noted however, that a section of youth respondents particularly, were proud to have supported their parties in this way.

Recommendation

There is a need to support political parties to develop intentional, meaningful SIG inclusion strategies. In so doing parties will be able to leverage on versatile new ideas and approaches that can elevate political parties to be a true representation of the people of Kenya.

Championing the SDGs

It was clear, during the interview with the respondents that the SDG initiatives that were championed by members of the party were not part of a coordinated SDG intervention by the

parties but rather initiatives on issues that mattered to the electorate. Further, there was no clear way defined by the party to champion the SDGs.

Recommendation

While the work already happening in-county is great, it is important to capacitate political parties to think strategically on the implementation of the SDGs as a party. Partnership and learning opportunities from other established parties such as the Danish Liberal Party, Social Democratic Party, Conservative Peoples' Party and the Green Left will benefit the parties integration of the SDGs among other key lessons. This will allow them to coordinate their local efforts at global level and further provide opportunity for learning as they learn how other parties integrate these critical components in their day to day party activities.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Focus Group Discussion Guide

Study on the Role & Structure of Political Parties in Selected Counties in Kenya

1. Are the decision-making organs of the party at the county level?
2. Does the party have a county secretariat? If yes, is the secretariat paid or on voluntary basis?
3. What is the role of the various organizational units that you belong to? (County/constituency/ward/ polling center committees, youth/ women/ PWD leagues)
4. How are party members recruited?
5. What
6. Does the party run activities/ programs between elections? If yes, which ones?
7. Does the party have any activities targeted towards youth, women, PWDs?
8. Are there any youth, women or persons with disabilities in the party's decision-making organs? If yes, how has this impacted the participation of these three groups within the party?
9. How does the party identify candidates for:
 - a) Nomination to the ballot
 - b) Nomination to the party list
10. Does the party interact with other political parties? If yes, how?
11. Does the party have any programs/ elements of mentorship and succession planning? If yes, describe this.
12. Is the party accountable to its members? If yes, how?
13. What is the party Ideology?
14. Who sets the party ideology?
15. What is the role of elected and nominated leaders in relation to the party?
16. Does the party champion the SDGs? If yes, how?

Annex 2: Key Informant Interview Guide

Date:		
Name of Interviewee:		
Designation:		
Party:		
County:		National <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/>

Section 1: Party Organizational Structure

1.1a) What are the organizational units within the party at the national level?
(skip to 1.1b if respondent is county level)

1.1b) What are the organizational units within the party at the county level?

1.2a) What is the hierarchy between these units?

Section 2: Roles Within Political Parties

2.1a) What is the role of your organizational unit?

2.1b) what is the role of the other organizational units identified in section 1 above?

2.2) How do the organizing units interact with each other?
(How are political party functions coordinated by these units)

Section 3: Political Party Processes

3.1 How does your party manage:

a) Recruitment:

b) Internal Party Programs/ Activities:

(Does the party have activities between elections? What kind of activities?)

c) Elections:

(Prompt: who handles this, how are they selected? Is this a supreme function or who are the accountable to? Identification of candidates, fees charged or not? nomination to ballot/ party primaries, support to candidates, nomination to party list, rules that govern this entire process, dispute resolution)

d) Compliance & Accountability:

(Prompt: what are the accountability mechanisms within the party? How are the various units kept in check and accountable to the members and public)

e) Mentorship within the party:

(Prompt: What is the party's strategy to win new seats, retain existing seats, ensure succession within the political party ranks and leadership)

3.2 How does the party interact with other political parties?
(Prompt: Does the party engage through the inter-party forum?)

Section 4: Party Ideology

4.1 What is the Party Ideology?
(Prompt: How is it defined?)

4.2 Who sets the party ideology?
(Prompt: who is tasked with providing party direction, is it a singular responsibility, are there people or a team that support defining party ideology?)

4.3 Who is tasked with advancing party ideology and how is it advanced?

4.4 What is the role of elected party leaders specifically when it comes to party ideology?

4.5 Is the party focused on issue-based politics?

Section 5: Inclusion

5.1 Do you consider the party consider to be inclusive?

5.2 How is the inclusion of youth, women, and persons with disability mainstreamed within the party?
(Prompt: How are they included in the key decision-making structures of the party)

5.3 What in your opinion is the impact of the party being inclusive?

Section 6: Championing SDGs

6.1 Does the party champion the SDGs? If yes which ones?

6.2 How does the party champion the SDGs?

Annex 3: Key Informant Interview List

Study on The Role and Structure of Political Parties in Selected Counties in Kenya

Interview List

National Level KIIs

List of Key Informant Interviews					
Designation	ODM	KUP	UDA	DPK (BUS)	
Executive Officer					
2 Member National Delegates Convention					
3 Member National Governing Council (NGC)					
4 Member National Executive Committee (NEC)					
5 Member Party Parliamentary Group (PPG)					
6 Member National Elections Board					
7 Leader Women League					
8 Leader Youth League					
9 Leader PWD League					
10 Regional Coordinator					
11 Membership Director/ organizing secretary					
12 Director- Party Programs/activities					

County Level KIIs

Designation	Narok	West Pokot	Usain Gishu	Meru	Kisumu
1 Governors Caucus					
2 Leader Women League/congress					
3 Leader Youth League/ congress					
4 Leader Disability League/ congress					

5	Member National/County Elections Board (NEB)					
6	Member Party County Assembly Group					
7	Member County Executive Committee/ congress					
8	County Executive Committee/ Congress					
9	Ward Steering Committee/ Congress					
10	Kijiji/Unit/polling centre Management Committee					
11	County Government Leadership (CEC/ Directors)					
12	County Assembly Leaders					

Focus Groups

County	Party Sample	Focus Group Size	Time Needed
Narok	ODM, UDA	8-12 pax per party	2 Hours each
West Pokot	KUP, UDA	8-12 pax per party	2 Hours each
Kisumu	ODM	8-12 pax	2 Hours
Uasin Gishu	UDA	8-12 pax	2 Hours
Meru	DPK	8-12 pax	2 Hours

Focus group composition

- 2 members of the youth league
- 2 members of the women league
- 2 members of the PwD league
- 1 member/ leadership of the ward committee
- 1 member of the constituency committee
- 1 member of the local elections board
- 2 members of the county committee
- 1 member of the party county secretariat