



Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program

What is the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program?

The Kenya Civil Society Program works with hundreds of civil society organizations to help them effectively advocate for governance reforms, conduct civic education and peace-building activities, and improve management of natural resources. The program also strengthens the capacity of civil society organizations, community based organizations, local peace structures and the Government of Kenya to reduce incidences of violent conflict and advance peace in the country.



Members of the National Youth Sector Alliance in collaboration with Youth Agenda march through Nairobi's Central Business District in August 2012 to deliver a memorandum to the Speaker of the National Assembly. The memo was in protest of the deletion of clauses in the Leadership and Integrity Bill that would have required vetting of holders of public offices.

Project Duration and Budget

September 2006 – September 2013
\$35.5 million

Who implements the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program?

Pact, Inc.
<http://www.pactkenya.org/>

Where does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program work?

Nationwide

What does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program do?

The program provides sub-grants to approximately 260 organizations working to advocate for and monitor progress on important issues, including: elections; ethics and anti-corruption; land; human rights; devolution; the police; judiciary; rights for women, youth and persons with disabilities; peace building; and natural resource management.

The program provides training on organizational development, financial management, strategic planning, program design and management, networking and fund raising.

How is the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program making a difference?

Over 260 organizations received financial support totaling over \$27 million – approximately one hundred of the sub-grants are currently ongoing.

The program assisted civil society to provide input and advocacy on key pieces of reform legislation. Bills successfully enacted include: Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Bill; National Land Policy; Political Parties Bill; Elections Bill; Forest Act; and Wildlife Policy Bill. Partners continue to monitor implementation of these new laws.

Civil society became actively engaged in civic and voter education regarding the proposed constitution. Efforts helped to ensure a peaceful referendum vote.

More than 5,000 people benefited from the improved management of more than half a million hectares of land. The program has created viable, profitable nature-based enterprises and natural resource management activities.

Community relations in the Rift Valley and the Coast improved through peace-building activities. Highlights include: the acceptance of returning IDPs; reconstruction of houses burned during the post-election period; disarmament and demobilization of militia members; resolution of simmering conflicts; and improved engagement with government institutions through peace committee structures and joint government/community activities.

The program strengthened the ability of the National Steering Committee to coordinate peace efforts countrywide, especially through District Peace Committees.

What key challenges does the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program face?

Until 2002, civil society organizations were systematically repressed by the government; in spite of that the sector was able to help lead the way to the restoration of multi-party politics in the 1990s and an end to the Moi regime in 2002.

There is a concern that following the successful passage of the new Constitution the sector is again playing catch-up with regards to reforms. Kenyan civil society is often seen to be performing well on the supply side (technical input) of the reform process, but it is frequently seen as weak and reactive on the demand side (advocacy). To many observers, civil society's voice has once again become muted and disunited on key national issues, instead of being the driving force behind reform and holding the government accountable.

Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program in Action

In the village of Bangal, a rural community in Garissa County, Ahmed Alio had vowed never to participate in any governance or electoral processes. Ahmed never bothered to apply for a voter identification card saying it was a waste of time as he had no faith in elected leaders and politicians to improve life for even the average Kenyan, let alone a person with disabilities like him.

"It's even against the religious laws, it's written, if you support an evil man, you share his sins," says Ahmed. Therefore, he felt it was better for him to remain alone with his own problems rather than waste time on a process he thought might even make his life worse.

Ahmed was one of the people targeted by the Northern Nomadic Disabled Association, part of the Kenya Civil Society Strengthening Program. The project aims at enhancing participation amongst persons with disabilities in governance and electoral processes in northern Kenya. The Northern Nomadic Disabled Association also works to inform persons with disabilities on their rights in the 2010 constitution, the Disability Act of 2003 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The project holds village meetings, informative sessions in public meetings and barazas, and sensitization workshops and trainings in Garissa, Wajir and Isiolo Counties.

As a result of the interactive sessions carried out in Garissa County, Ahmed realized that he was denying himself his own democratic rights and denying himself and

the opportunity to serve his community as a leader. Ahmed Alio is now on the forefront of disability rights issues, raising awareness among persons with disabilities and urging them to be more civically engaged.

He acts as the advocacy and awareness link for Garissa County. "I will be part of governance, democratic and electoral processes and will vie for an elective post and urge others to participate also," says Ahmed.



Ahmed Alio is now an advocate among people with disabilities in Garissa, encouraging them to exercise their rights and engage in their communities.

For more information

<http://www.pactkenya.org>

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