



## AFRICA IN MOVIMENTO / AFRICA ON THE MOVE

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**TITLE: LOCAL GOVERNMENT PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AND PARTICIPATION IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

The paper examines the implementation of participatory mechanisms in the financial management of county (local) governments as stipulated by the new Constitution and enabling laws and the extent to which implementation progress has impacted on public service delivery and democratic governance. It reviews citizen representation, involvement and institutional capacity and environment in evaluating performance of County implementation process. The study relies largely on desk research, including scholarly journal articles, books, the Constitution and enabling law as contained in County Government Act, Public Financial management Act, County Public Financial Management Act, Public Participation Bill and county policies on financial management. Complimentary to review of literature, the study undertaken through interviews of citizen's on their participation in decision making on financial governance matters at different county government levels. The study also employed uncontrolled observational methods at sub-county public forums in collecting necessary data in evaluating levels of participation in line with the study objectives. The study reveals that there is considerable progress in establishment of participatory initiatives in line with new Constitutional dispensation, most notably the holding of public forums on county fiscal strategy paper. However, participation mechanism was affected by lack of civic awareness, technicality of budgetary process, inadequate financial literacy, under-representation at grass root levels, low capacity and dominance of political representatives hence compromising delivery of services to the citizens. The challenges to the existing participatory processes in place result in an incomplete and weak governance structure with little contribution to citizen's entitlement to consolidation of democracy at the local level. To ensure benefits of citizen involvement in decision making at the local level as envisaged in the new Constitution, robust civic awareness ought to be conducted alongside strengthening the capacity of the county Assembly to hold executive into account.

**Key words:** *Democratic governance; service delivery; local government; participation;*

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