

Participatory Budgeting

A community-led process to generate and advocate for alternative budget and policy proposals

July 2019

BACKGROUND

Marakwet Highland Farmers Association (MHFA), a group of farmers based in the highlands of Elgeyo Marakwet is attempting to help farmers organize and take advantage of economies of scale while marketing Irish potatoes in the highlands of Marakwet East and West sub-counties of the County. This initiative was prompted by exploitation of farmers by middlemen who bought Irish potatoes at low prices as a result of inadequate organization and lack of standardized measurements. However, having made progress by bringing together about 2600 membership in five wards, with view of mobilizing additional membership and expansion of its geographical coverage, the associations biggest challenge is at the three stages of the agricultural value chain in the production of Irish potatoes i.e., production, post-harvest management and market access. These challenges collectively hinder the utilization of economies of scale.

Essentially, key agricultural services such as agricultural technical services, storage facilities and harvest management practices and access to markets are critical building blocks for agricultural productivity, however, these services not accessible as desired from the county government or at least not to the satisfactory levels desired for adequate agricultural productivity.

Faced with inadequate PFM knowledge and advocacy skills to champion for the delivery of these services, the association decided to offer these services directly to its members, however, the association understands that the decision to offer these services directly is neither accessible to her farmers in the desired quantity and quality nor sustainable in the long-term.

PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

What if citizens led their own process to identify key issues, develop proposals to address them and mobilize themselves to attend and deliberate with government during public forums? Would participatory process produce better results? Overtime, our budget analysis show that the outcomes of participatory processes are far from addressing the needs of communities. Take agriculture sector value chain for example in Elgeyo Marakwet County as explained in the background note.

Current production of Irish potatoes average upto 100 bags of 65kgs each per acre. This represents about 20% of globally estimated potential of up to 465 bags for the same piece of land. Of this production, farmers are averaged to loss about 10% to post-harvest factors such as delayed harvest, poorly managed harvesting process or even more when poor market prices at the time of production is accounted for. This points to inadequate technical ability of farmers to apply the correct production techniques, handle-well post-harvest management practices and, access to reliable market access in a timely manner.

On average, each ward of the 20 wards in Elgeyo Marakwet County is allocated Ksh. 40 million to fund its development projects. Yet, even when accorded the opportunity to shape budget priorities in their respective wards by leading the identification projects and determining financing of these preferred projects through ward public participation forums organized by the government every year in August, annual budget rarely reflects their agricultural needs.

The big question is whether citizens understand the inadequacies in service delivery and are able to link their lived experience to public budget so that then, they can identify the right projects and programs to address limitations to agricultural productivity and eventually explore the full potential of agriculture.

Partially, the challenge is contributed by the participatory processes adopted by the county which mobilize citizens to congregate at a central location in each ward and decide how the allocation of their ward is spent on. Effectively, these forums are single day blank-slate annual events that lasts, on average, for about 4hours. Consequently, the opportunities availed to citizens to reflect and interrogate their needs and effectively apply their lived experiences in advance are inadequate. Instead, deliberations are driven by emotions and self-interest in the selection of project preferences rather than objective analysis and considerations of needs on the basis of experience to inform application of the ward budgetary allocation to address barriers impeding service delivery.

OGI Kenya therefore modified a World Bank concept of Youth Participatory Budgeting (PB) and applied the same, as an experiment, to support farmers in Elgeyo Marakwet Highlands. We facilitated trained community facilitators to organize and mobilize farmers. The experiment was sequenced into phases of: learning and reflection; assessment and development of proposals to address community needs and; mobilization of community members, government official for support prior to and after government organized public forums in August every year to mobilize for funding for the identified solutions. The idea was to educate and stimulate citizens to think critically and challenge their assumptions in order to make proactive budgetary and policy alternative priorities.

GOALS

1. Facilitate communities to understand government responsibilities in agricultural value chain and related enablers, establish the linkage between challenges faced by farmers and budget and policies.

2. Collect and translate challenges impeding agricultural productivity across the agricultural value chain and, the aspirations of farmers to improve the livelihoods into proposals that can be funded through a share of ward budgets during participation.
3. Enhance community ownership of identified alternative budget and policy proposals and to facilitate mobilization of its members to attend public participation fora to champion support of the wider community for the financing of these alternative proposals.
4. Facilitate communities to track and social-audit the implementation of funded agriculture and related enabling projects and evaluate its impact in addressing the identified community needs.

SPECIFICATIONS

Open Governance Institute (OGI) will facilitate Marakwet Highlands Farmers Association (MHFA) to implement the PB in five wards under its area of coverage in Elgeyo Marakwet, covering highland areas of Marakwet East and West Constituencies.

MHFA will ensure the following prerequisites:

- **Secure** staffing (volunteers) to facilitate execution of the PB processes.
- **Adopt** application of PB process by the association as parts of its lobby and advocacy program.
- Use its **communication platforms** to mobilize and disseminate the community PB process, including calendar of events and opportunities for community engagement widely (WhatsApp, Facebook, Faith-Based Organizations, Civil Society).
- **Engage its community partners in PB processes** (CBOS, Self-Help Groups, VSLs etc)
- **Mobilize community** partners ahead of public forums in **August** 2019 (churches, chamas, merry-go-rounds, chiefs baraza etc).
- Pre and post engage **government institutions** (CBEF, SWGs, Departments of Agriculture & Irrigation, Finance and Economic Planning and assembly committees on Budget and Appropriation and Agriculture & Irrigation).

MILESTONES

OPEN GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE TRAINING AND ADVISORY CAPACITY

OGI team will deliver a three-day training to MHFA volunteers and management on the PB process; facilitate development and production of PB tools¹ as maybe necessary; and remains available in an advisory capacity throughout the process.

IMPLEMENT PB PROCESS IN 7 STEPS

MHFA volunteers will follow and implement the following process, and record every step of the way:

¹ Facilitator's guide with program sessions; project selection criteria; project presentation templates; surveys (before and after); reporting templates

Steps	Opportunity	Weeks
#1 Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a lead committee – volunteers, reps of MHFA management and OGI Develop and agree on community PB process Recruit and train community budget facilitators (allies of the process) Schedule idea collection events (calendar) Disseminate widely (media, church, CSOs, self-help groups) 	1
#2 Collect ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At community events (CBO meetings, Chamas, VSLs, Chiefs Baraza): highlight PB process and its role, discuss community needs and brainstorm on project ideas. Elect budget delegates (to turn ideas into proposals in the next step) Consider offline/Online submission of ideas, where necessary. Consider inviting area MCAs, chiefs and agriculture officials 	2
#3 Develop proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train facilitators and volunteers on how to review community projects (tools and criteria). Facilitate budget delegates to work with the committee to transform community's initial project ideas into full proposals 	2
#4 Selection & feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At events (second CBO meetings, Chamas, VSLs, chiefs baraza): Facilitate budget facilitators and delegates present final projects to community members. Select priority projects to champion by way of voting pr consensus (secret ballot or raising hands) 	2
#5 mobilize support and endorsements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design flyers/brochures of project summaries for mobilization At events (churches, CBO meetings, chamas, VSLs, chiefs baraza, neighborhoods): share with citizen about the proposals and why they should champion them in next public participation At events: mobilize county assembly and executive support for projects (meet and discuss the projects with government ahead of PP in August) 	3
#6 Attend PP and champion for projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At events (PP forums in August): lobby fellow public participation participants (who were not part of the community PB process) to support and champion for selected projects. 	1
#7 Monitor & Assess	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze approved budgets to assess impact of the PB process –the extent to which community ideas were adopted during participation and subsequent stages of the budget making process. Design and implement social audit process for selected projects Rigorously assess PB process and identify improvements for next cycle 	--

COMMUNITY-LED MONITORING OF PROJECTS

MHFA will record and analyze the community PB process, analyze government budgets to assess impact of the Citizen-led PB process (percentage of adopted projects) and share the lessons learnt. The association will thereafter monitor implementation of the adopted projects. OGI will determine replication of the model in other parts of the county and across other counties and advocate for its adoption by governments as participatory model.