

# Enhancing Citizen Participation in Public Service Delivery

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This article borrows lessons from studies conducted on metropolitan governance under KIPPRA's Infrastructure and Economic Services Division. Why the focus on citizen participation? Because it is both a critical and elusive ingredient – capable of tilting the scale towards equitable and sustainable service delivery, or escaping the grasp of decision makers when laying out measures altogether. Citizen participation in the development agenda also identifies entirely with the spirit of the current constitution.

The examples cited are part of the key findings from ongoing metropolitan regional modelling studies and a service level mapping exercise that KIPPRA carried out in the Municipal Council of Mavoko between October and November 2011. To get full details on the whole study, contact the Infrastructure and Economic Services Division of KIPPRA.

KIPPRA recently shared with stakeholders the results of a pilot study on metropolitan governance. This took place during the Metropolitan Service Level Mapping and Social Accountability Summit held at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012. Stakeholders came from all the 15 local authorities in the wider Nairobi and its neighbouring regions.

The pilot study was conducted in the Municipal Council of Mavoko as part of laying ground for best practice in metropolitan governance in Kenya. This particular study was on service level mapping, a central foundation to the other four project components

on effective metropolitan governance, funded through the Rockefeller Foundation.

## Enhancing citizen participation: A critical requirement in metropolitan governance

Under Kenya's new constitutional dispensation, citizens' quest for quality, transparency, and equity in access to various county or sub-national services has grown stronger than ever. Over the years, around the globe, public participation has effectively reinforced its prime position in public policy discourse as a critical

prerequisite for ownership, successful implementation, and sustainability of development decisions. Building on its predecessor held in 1992, the recent Rio+20 summit served to confirm that collective action is critical to ensuring sustainable development, hence the need for bottom-up approaches in devolved governance, thus moving up the citizen participation ladder from mere tokenism or “placatory” approaches to active participation.

The pilot study on service level mapping involved citizens directly by capturing the opinions of 2,044 respondents on service delivery within the Municipal Council of Mavoko. The survey was conducted at the household level, complemented by key informants at the institutional level and opinion leaders. The service areas surveyed were: water and sanitation, housing, energy, education, health, and ICT services. The rapid population growth rate in the Municipal Council of Mavoko, averaging 11% per year over the last decade, and its socio-economic and ecological diversity, are the major factors that led to its selection for a pilot case study.

A review of citizen engagement models across the world justifies the need to have forums in cities and counties that can reach the lowest levels of public participation. This has important implications for strengthening the Urban Areas and Cities Act, and neighbourhood associations. New methods of reaching people in exciting ways are crucial to breaking away from boring, pedestrian citizen

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engagement approaches. A major lesson from cross-country reviews is that citizen commitment and affinity to the city is better motivated through creative and locally relevant methods. Different age groups and socio-economic classes must be reached through innovative methods that are most appealing to them, such as social media and other web-based (mobile phones) communication strategies. Addressing attitudes is also crucial. Urban residents need to develop a sense of ownership and gradually move from the mindset of being “transient villagers” who end up giving the city half-hearted attention with little incentive to invest and improve their neighbourhoods.

Strong civic forums in cities such as London provide lessons for a new civic engagement initiative. The biannual “People’s Question Time” of the Greater London Authority, which is used to

ask the Mayor questions, can be adopted as a citizen involvement model for greater social accountability. Citizens need to be more involved in county politics and have greater understanding of the inherent procedures and activities. Another example is the annual “State of the City” address in Portland, Oregon, which can act as an opportune occasion to elucidate metropolitan development agenda and involve citizens in city planning and management. There is also a broad view of civic engagement activities adopted in Toronto, Canada, which provides a good lesson on having specific performance indicators for ranking the effectiveness of civic engagement activities to inform metropolitan planning. Through such innovative methods, more people across the entire range of age and socio-economic profiles can identify with, and effectively articulate, metropolitan development visions.

**Facing metropolitan governance challenges: A glimpse of worrying statistics**

Kenya’s urban population is likely to exceed 60% by the year 2030 (KIPPRA projections have approximated a higher figure of 74% urban population by 2030). Provision of services to this population will be a huge challenge.

Metropolitan areas such as Nairobi should already be thinking of land banks to preserve land for important public infrastructure such as housing, water, and solid waste management. Daily water demand is expected to exceed 500 litres per household in Nairobi by 2017.

**Towards delivery of spatial justice— Insights from service level mapping in the Municipal Council of Mavoko**

Service levels refer to aspects of quantity or availability, affordability, quality, and timeliness as required for evaluating the coverage of services in a region. The standard way of communicating service levels is through statistical data showing different categories of frequency analysis. Despite their vast geographical scope, countrywide statistics such as the recent Kenya Population and Housing Census of 2009 do not provide deep insights into some implicit, but no less important, aspects of service delivery. The spatial context of service delivery is key, but this important aspect is usually missed out in such statistical analyses. Advances in mapping technologies have opened up a vast array

## Feature

of possibilities to exploit the power of visualization and unlimited scenario modelling availed through Geographic Information Systems (GIS). To ensure effective governance systems, it is necessary to integrate statistical variables with mapping to deliver on spatial justice. Given the importance of space organization in any society, social accountability must interrogate the degree to which various study methodologies explore linkages between space and social justice, hence the concept of spatial justice. Technology in this case holds the promise of effectively addressing governance challenges in a bottom-up approach, being the means to ensuring transparent mapping of inequalities in service delivery, and justifying any affirmative action for deserving regions. Against this background, it can be seen

that the spatial component in regional analysis is essential to arriving at an acceptable revenue allocation formula. Spatial analysis technologies that promote interactive discussions guided by common development agenda can accelerate the achievement of the objective of enhanced citizen participation in metropolitan governance and formulation of local policies.

### **An innovative approach to fieldwork**

To close the gap between statistical and spatial analyses, KIPRA used an innovative approach to carry out the service level mapping study in Mavoko. Satellite imagery was used to pre-identify the settlement clusters to sample in the survey, so that research effort could be directed in proportion to spatial extent



**Planners and policy makers have a common quest for information on the spatial coverage of key infrastructure and economic services, as well as the sustainability of such services**

and population density. Furthermore, survey assistants from Oakar Services Ltd were engaged to direct research assistants to the clusters using hand-held GPS. Each household or institution at which a questionnaire was

administered was captured by GPS coordinates, and coded using a unique identifier corresponding directly to the alphanumeric identifier assigned to the questionnaire. The unique identifiers were used to link the statistical data

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## Households in Mavoko Municipality according to 2009 population and housing census

Location	Sub-location	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Households	Population density (persons per km <sup>2</sup> )
Athi River	Athi River Township	39.5	17,596	1,260
	Athi River North	38.3	353	41
		<b>77.8</b>	<b>17,949</b>	
Katani	Katani	40.8	2,541	245
	Ngelani	95.0	1,046	36
	Syokimau	37.3	14,332	1,130
		<b>173.1</b>	<b>17,919</b>	
Lukenya	Kinanie	129.3	2,140	55
	Muthwani	180.4	4,227	84
	Mathatani	282.6	3,247	37
		<b>592.3</b>	<b>9,614</b>	
<b>Mavoko Municipality</b>		<b>843.2</b>	<b>45,482</b>	<b>165</b>

collected from questionnaires with the GPS points to create a GIS database. Spatial analysis using ArcGIS tools enabled the production of maps on perceived service levels, according to the users of the six services surveyed in the municipality. For ownership of the process, two planners from the municipality were incorporated into the research team. The entire exercise covered all the sub-locations in Mavoko as the basic administrative units, with households as the basic unit complemented by 50 key informants. Out of a target sample of 2,550 respondents, 2,044 or 80% were successful and gave their views on service levels for the six selected services.

### Key findings from the service level mapping study

The service level maps displayed the different degrees to which users of the surveyed services are satisfied or

dissatisfied, from one location to another. The following were some of the salient findings:

Water and waste management services, as well as housing services, scored below the average user expectations in the entire municipality. Only about half (46%) of respondents stated they were satisfied with water services, and half claimed satisfaction with waste

management and housing services.

There was high (70%) satisfaction level with education and health services in the municipality. However, physical access to health services was a significant hindrance due to long average travel distances to health facilities (approximately 13km to dispensaries and hospitals and 8km to clinics).

Interestingly, expectations of better safety and security came out as one of the important factors that attracted immigrants into the Municipal Council of Mavoko. Distance to work, favourable cost of housing and home ownership plans were the other important pull factors mentioned.

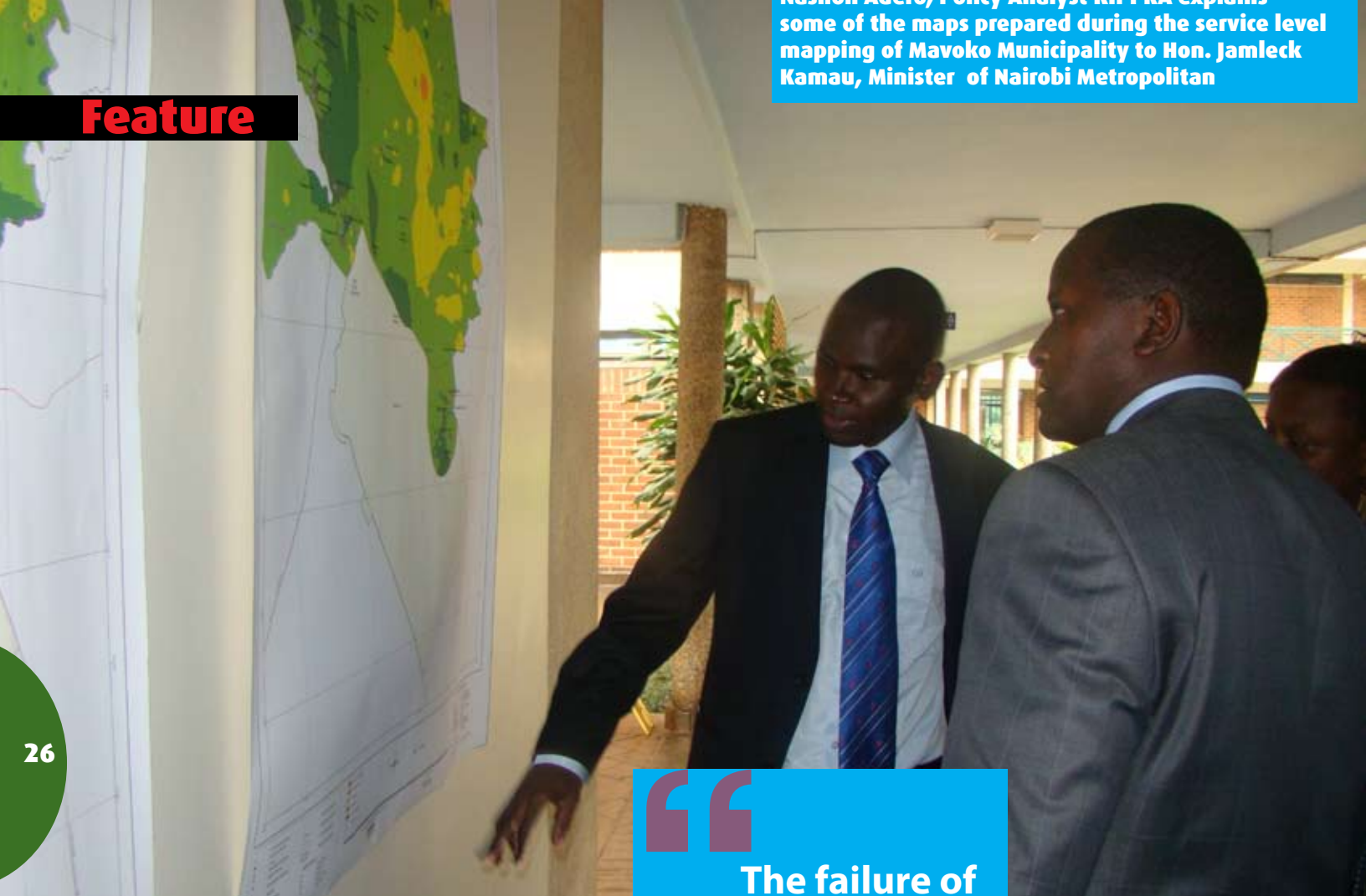
Energy consumption patterns in the municipality confirmed the threat of human-induced environmental degradation, given the dominance of charcoal, firewood and kerosene for everyday heating and cooking.

Generally, the results challenged some long-standing assumptions especially on safety and security in the municipality, which was mentioned by 11% of respondents to be a very important pull factor in their decision to migrate into Mavoko – with about 70% of the respondents saying they moved into Mavoko between 2006 and 2011.

The study also revealed salient examples where skewed messages are

**Mushrooming buildings in Mavoko Municipality which are yet to be demolished due to poor planning**





conveyed by statistics that are not mapped to geographical locations. For instance, the finding that 30% of households in Mavoko could access individual piped water and are also among the most satisfied with water services in the municipality failed to impress when the map showed the individual pipe connections are all concentrated in the western part of the municipality. This served as a fitting illustration of spatial injustice in infrastructure service delivery. Social welfare, therefore, needs to be assessed with strong linkages to geographical distribution in order to inform and justify affirmative action.

### Minister's Key Message

Hon. Jamleck Kamau appreciated that becoming a world-class African metropolis

is a vision that the Nairobi Metropolitan Region is gradually coming to terms with, "despite a multitude of challenges, some of which are new and acute, and yet some are inherited and persistent". He accentuated this as a strong cause for increased emphasis on adequate and proactive spatial planning informed by integrated approaches, and based on accurate geographical data and inclusive decision making whereby all stakeholders have a say. The failure of fragmented governance systems to deliver efficient and integrated solutions



**The failure of fragmented governance systems to deliver efficient and integrated solutions in metropolitan areas has shifted the focus of modern urban planners and policy makers to integrated metropolitan planning**

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Modern spatial information technologies come in handy in helping to analyze and understand the close nexus between geography and numerous human activities that change rapidly with time. With such potent tools, large city regions can benefit immensely from innovative technologies for mapping metropolitan service delivery and facilitating effective dissemination of research findings.

He called upon the stakeholders to give due support towards realising the seven Key Result Areas underpinning the Nairobi Metro 2030 Strategy.