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Bringing Every Voice to the Table: How West Pokot County is Strengthening the Participation of Women and Vulnerable Groups

County:	**West Pokot County**		
Sector/s:	**Directorate of Legal Services and Gender Committee**	**Sub-sector/Theme:**	**Public Participation**
Keywords: (for search in the online platform)	**Public Participation, Women and Vulnerable Groups, West Pokot County, Maarifa Centre, Success Stories**		
Target Audience:	**County Governments, policy makers, development partners, Citizens, NGOs**		
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Introduction:

For women and vulnerable groups, having an opportunity to participate in public decision-making can determine whether the services that matter most to them are recognized in County development priorities. Issues such as access to water, maternal health services, safe roads, early childhood education and protection from harmful practices are closely connected to their everyday experiences, yet practical barriers can make it difficult for their voices to influence the decisions around these services.

In West Pokot County, these challenges are compounded by the distance between settlements, varying access to information and the difficulty some residents face in reaching public participation venues. County officials identified patriarchal norms and gender roles as barriers to women's participation. Household and caregiving responsibilities can limit the time available to attend forums, while persons with disabilities can encounter physical and communication barriers. Residents in remote areas may also have to travel considerable distances to participate.

The County Government of West Pokot has responded by strengthening the way women, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are reached and engaged in public participation. The approach combines grassroots mobilization, accessible participation spaces and targeted support with mechanisms that connect community priorities to County planning and budgeting.

The aim is not simply to increase attendance. It is to create conditions in which groups that can easily be left out of formal decision-making are able to articulate their priorities and contribute to decisions affecting their communities.

Implementation of the practice:

Public participation in West Pokot is coordinated through the County's devolved structures under the Department of Public Service Management, working closely with Finance and Economic Planning. This coordination provides a link between engagement at the community level and the processes through which County plans and budgets are developed.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF WEST POKOT

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COUNTY TREASURY

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR FY 2026/2027 - 2028/2029 MTEF PERIOD

The County Government of West Pokot is in the process of preparing Budget Estimates for the FY 2026/2027–2028/2029 Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF).

In accordance with Article 201(a) of the Constitution of Kenya, which emphasizes openness, accountability and public participation in public finance, the County Government invites all members of the public and county stakeholders to participate in the County Budget Public Participation Forums. The forums will be held in all twenty county wards on 12th and 13th February 2026.

These forums will provide an opportunity for members of the public and stakeholders to contribute to and shape FY 2026/2027 budget proposals. Deliberations will be guided by the priorities set out in the approved Annual Development Plan (ADP) for FY 2026/2027, which will inform the selection of projects for implementation.

All members of the public are encouraged to attend and share their views to help shape a responsive and inclusive county budget.

The forums will be held on the dates and at the venues indicated in the schedule below, commencing at 9:30 a.m.

DATE	DAY	WARD	VENUE
12/2/2026	Thursday	Kapenguria	Mtello Hall
12/2/2026	Thursday	Mnagei	Kishaunet Showground
12/2/2026	Thursday	Siyoi	Siyoi Ward Administrator's Office
12/2/2026	Thursday	Lelan	Kabichbich Ward Administrator's Office
12/2/2026	Thursday	Suam	Karon Cornerstone Church
12/2/2026	Thursday	Batei	Sebit Catholic Church
12/2/2026	Thursday	Riwo	Ward Administrator's Office
12/2/2026	Thursday	Sook	Chepnyal Catholic Church Hall
12/2/2026	Thursday	Chepareria	Chepareria Vocational Training Centre
12/2/2026	Thursday	Kodich	Kodich VTC
13/2/2026	Friday	Weiwei	Youth Empowerment Centre
13/2/2026	Friday	Masol	Masol Community Conservancy
13/2/2026	Friday	Endugh	Chemwapit Trading Centre
13/2/2026	Friday	Sekerr	Mbara Catholic Church
13/2/2026	Friday	Lomut	Otiot Catholic Church
13/2/2026	Friday	Tapach	Ward Administrator's Office
13/2/2026	Friday	Kasei	AGC Kangoletiang Church
13/2/2026	Friday	Alale	Alale Sub-County Administrator's Office
13/2/2026	Friday	Kiwawa	ACCK Church, Kiwawa Centre
13/2/2026	Friday	Kapchok	Konyao Social Hall

Written memoranda may be submitted to the Ward Administrator's Offices, the Department of Finance and Economic Planning, or via email to planning@westpokot.go.ke and must be received on or before 16th February 2026. Copies of the ADP are available for download on the County website at: www.westpokot.go.ke

HON. PAUL P'KUKOT WOYAKAPEL
COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER -FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Figure 1: Public Participation Notice on budget proposals for FY 2026/2027 - 2027/2028

The process begins with reaching residents early enough for them to prepare to participate. Public notices are issued at least 14 days in advance, with information shared through several channels rather than relying on a single means of communication. Local radio stations, including *Kalya FM, North-Rift Radio, Kokwa Radio* and *Aperit FM*, complement mobilization through County administrators, chiefs, elders, public address systems and community networks. This combination is particularly useful in reaching women and vulnerable residents who may have limited access to online information.

Attention is then given to where engagement takes place. The Director explained that ward and sub-county administrators help identify locations that communities can reach more easily. Where a proposed venue creates accessibility challenges, it can be changed to accommodate participants. Central and levelled spaces, including social halls and churches, are prioritized where appropriate, reducing some of the physical barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and residents travelling from surrounding areas.

Accessibility is reinforced through measures designed around the needs of different groups. Officials reported using women-only breakout sessions to enable women to raise their specific concerns. Community representatives described women as active contributors, with opportunities to speak, even as patriarchal norms remained a challenge. Sign-language interpretation and accessible venues support persons with disabilities, although community respondents still identified PWDs among groups left out of participation. These experiences show why extending an invitation does not automatically create equal opportunities to contribute.

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF WEST POKOT

BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR FY 2026/2027-2028/29

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

WARD: .....DATE.....

Department	Key issues/Development challenge/ problem	Proposed intervention/project	Location of Project/	Ranking

1

Figure 2: Community Priorities Documentation form

The priorities raised through these engagements are documented and considered within formal County planning processes, including the Annual Development Plan (ADP) and the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). The Ward Specific Fund provides an additional avenue through which priorities identified at the local level can inform projects. Communities can subsequently follow project implementation and raise concerns, allowing their involvement to extend beyond the initial consultation.

Through this process, participation moves progressively from access to information, to engagement, to documentation of priorities and eventually to their consideration within development planning and implementation.

Results of the practice:

The significance of this approach can be seen in the range of community priorities that have found expression in local development interventions. For women and vulnerable groups, many of these investments address services that have a direct bearing on everyday life, from accessing water and health care to moving safely within communities and caring for young children.

Water projects such as the Kilimanjaro, Totum and Kishaunet boreholes were identified by residents as responses to community priorities. For Totum Borehole in Mnagei Ward, County officials linked the project to FY 2023/24 public participation and the FY 2023/24 Annual Development Plan, reporting an approved budget of Ksh. 5 million. The borehole was reported complete, drilled and upgraded, and serving Totum Secondary School. Officials similarly linked Kishaunet Borehole in Mnagei Ward to

public participation and the ADP for FY 2023/24, reporting the project complete and describing the intervention as an upgrade to solar power.

Community input has similarly informed priorities around mobility and local infrastructure. County officials linked Tilak–Mawingo Road improvements in Kapenguria Ward to FY 2024/25 public participation and the FY 2024/25 ADP, reporting an approved budget of Ksh. 800,000. The intervention was reported complete and described as road maintenance. Residents also cited Mnagei Road and solar lighting along Kilimanjaro roads among the initiatives influenced by their proposals.

Priorities related to health and care have also featured prominently. County officials linked the maternity wing at Kapkoris Dispensary in Kapenguria Ward to FY 2025/26 public participation and the FY 2025/26 ADP, reporting the intervention complete and describing the work as equipping the facility. In the same ward, Kotoruk ECDE Centre was linked to public participation and the ADP for FY 2025/26, with an approved allocation of Ksh. 700,000 for that financial year. The centre was reported complete and operational, serving more than 60 children. Community members also identified maternity services at Kabichbich and Sakat ECDE Centre as responses to their priorities.

Importantly, the engagement has not been confined to infrastructure. It has provided space for women and communities to raise sensitive social concerns, including sexual and gender-based violence, early marriage and female genital mutilation. Giving these issues a place within public dialogue enables women and vulnerable groups to bring forward concerns that may not always be captured through conventional infrastructure-focused planning.

The emerging picture is therefore broader than a collection of individual projects. It shows how creating more accessible avenues for participation can bring the lived experiences of women and vulnerable groups into conversations about development, allowing priorities around water, health, education, mobility, safety and social wellbeing to receive greater attention.

Lessons learnt:

West Pokot's experience shows that meaningful inclusion begins before a public participation forum takes place. People cannot participate effectively when they do not receive information early enough or through channels they can access. Combining local radio, administrators, traditional leaders and community networks widens the reach of information and reduces dependence on digital communication.

Accessibility is equally important. Taking engagement closer to communities has limited value if the venue itself creates another barrier. Working with local administrators to identify central and accessible spaces, and being willing to change unsuitable venues, can make participation more practical for persons with disabilities, women with competing responsibilities and residents travelling from remote areas.

The experience further demonstrates that equal invitation does not necessarily mean equal participation. Women-only breakout sessions can provide space to articulate concerns where

patriarchal norms constrain participation. For persons with disabilities, sign-language interpretation and accessible venues need to be accompanied by targeted mobilization and follow-up on whether their views are represented in the final priorities.

Another lesson is that inclusion becomes more meaningful when participation is connected to planning and budgeting. Documenting citizen priorities and linking them with the ADP, CIDP and local financing mechanisms gives participation a clearer purpose and strengthens the possibility that issues raised by communities can inform development decisions.

Finally, the quality of participation should not be assessed only by how many people attend. A stronger measure is whether groups that are often underrepresented can contribute, whether their priorities are captured and whether those priorities can be traced through subsequent planning and implementation.

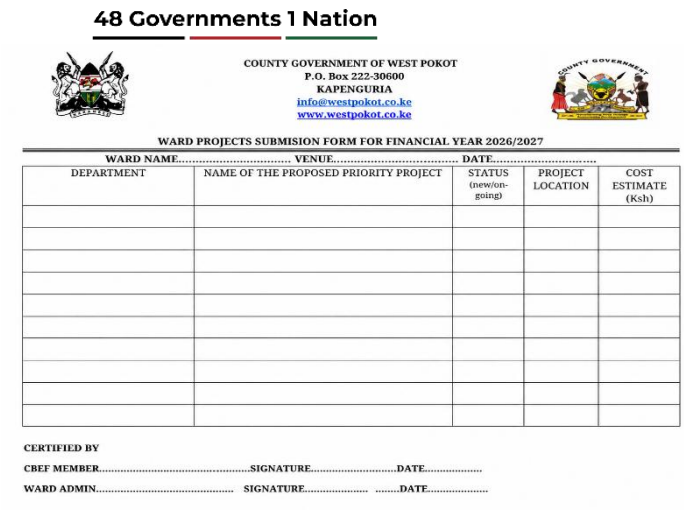
Conclusion:

In conclusion, West Pokot County's experience illustrates that strengthening the participation of women and vulnerable groups requires more than opening public forums to everyone. It requires deliberate attention to the barriers that determine who receives information, who can reach the venue, who is able to contribute and whether those contributions have a pathway into decision-making.

The County therefore offers a useful lesson for other Counties: meaningful inclusion is not simply about who is invited to participate, but whether the process enables those who are most likely to be left out to be heard, influence priorities and remain connected to the decisions that follow.

Further reading:

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ddpfujJ9bRsLzAi3IMzUwpbfH_bkEGGW/view?usp=sharing
- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Uyf8iN5A1gbTUaBhEGn9E3xYGFX_fmWZ/view?usp=sharing
- https://www.westpokot.go.ke/?s=public+participation



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WARD PROJECTS SUBMISION FORM FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/2027

WARD NAME..... VENUE..... DATE.....

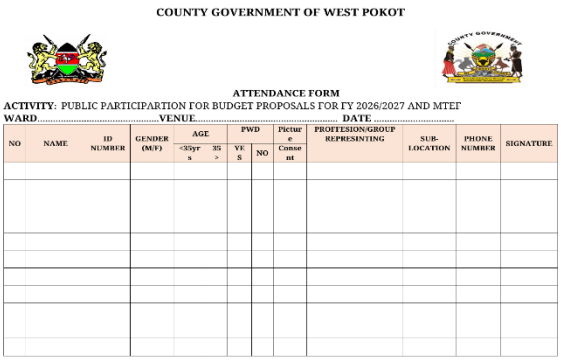
DEPARTMENT	NAME OF THE PROPOSED PRIORITY PROJECT	STATUS (new/on-going)	PROJECT LOCATION	COST ESTIMATE (Ksh)

CERTIFIED BY

CBEF MEMBER.....SIGNATURE.....DATE.....

WARD ADMIN..... SIGNATURE..... .....DATE.....

Figure 3: Ward Projects Submission Form for FY 2026/2027



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF WEST POKOT

ATTENDANCE FORM

ACTIVITY: PUBLIC PARTICIPARTION FOR BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR FY 2026/2027 AND MTEF

WARD.....VENUE..... DATE .....

NO	NAME	ID NUMBER	GENDER (M/F)	AGE		PWD		Picture Consent	PROFFESION/GROUP REPRESINTING	SUB-LOCATION	PHONE NUMBER	SIGNATURE
				<35yrs	35 >	YES	NO					

Figure 4: Public Participation Attendance Form



Figure 5: Representatives of the Council and the County Government during the Public Participation Assessment and Documentation exercise



Figure 6: Community representatives during the Public Participation Assessment and Documentation exercise



Figure 7: Representatives of the Council and the County Governments during the Public Participation Assessment and Documentation exercise



Figure 8: CECM in charge of Public Participation and Civic Education, West Pokot County, during the Public Participation Assessment and Documentation exercise



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