



SNAPSHOT

Interface Aids Collaboration for 47 Assemblies

USAID is supporting intergovernmental cooperation for functional and effective devolved systems.

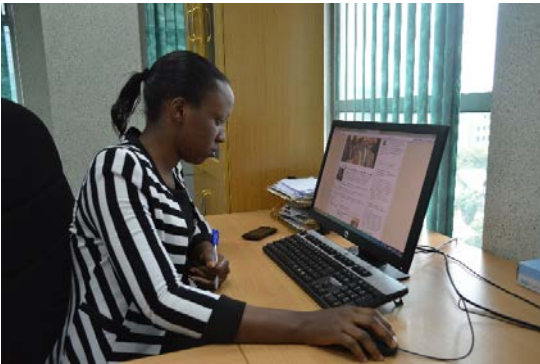


Photo: County Assemblies Forum

Gladys Sisina, CAF legislative officer, makes updates on the new website.

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— Gladys Sisina, Legislative Officer
County Assemblies Forum

Kenya embarked on an ambitious program to shift power from the top to the counties following passage of the 2010 Constitution and the general elections of March 2013. Almost two years later, county governments have taken root, despite challenges to effective execution of their mandates.

The County Assemblies Forum (CAF) coordinates lawmaking, oversight, intergovernmental relations, representation and capacity development of the 47 new county assemblies. It is an excellent example of devolution’s successful implementation.

One of the biggest hurdles CAF faced was communicating with its 2,248 members spread across the 47 county assemblies. Since its inception in 2013, CAF has relied on rudimentary communication methods. The staffs had to type and send each message several times to reach all members on new policy directions, calls for meetings and training announcements. CAF was looking for a solution to allow efficient information sharing information, a robust feedback mechanism, chat and discussions and a repository of laws and policies.

In response, the USAID Agile and Harmonized Assistance to Devolved Institutions (AHADI) project provided support for the development of a communications platform for CAF. “Thanks to this support, the forum boasts a new website, as well as an interface for a short message service (SMS) platform,” Gladys Sisina said. The website and SMS platform launched in January 2015 and have greatly improved dissemination of information to the 47 assemblies and their committees. Sisina, a CAF legislative officer, said, “We can now update members in real time, enabling them to provide timely input to bills before the Senate — something that was very tedious and time-consuming before.”

The website is also providing a way to share best practices, with two key features: an updates section and a bills tracker. The former allows members to share innovative ways of encouraging public participation, while the bills tracker enables county assemblies to compare progress in the legislative process.

The State University of New York Center for International Development (SUNY/CID) implements AHADI. SUNY/CID aims to help Kenya achieve devolution through a more transparent, accountable governance system.

Telling Our Story

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