

# KENYA LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND INITIATIVE

## POLICY BRIEF

### SIAYA COUNTY

April 2021

#### **Ethos**

This policy brief seeks to address the key gaps identified during the county-level research focusing on disabilities by the Kenya Leave No One Behind Initiative (*February-April 2021*). At the outset, at the community level, the factor of disability is informed by lived experiences with disability. The perceptions are strongly driven by a lack of awareness, information, and knowledge. These are underpinned by superstitions, biases, stereotypes, and unquestioned beliefs on the root causes and reasons behind the occurrence of disabilities.

#### **Summary of Issues**

According to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics, with a rate of 4.1 % of disability prevalence, Siaya County ranks alongside Makueni County as counties with a high prevalence of disabilities, making it the third county with the largest incidence of disabilities in Kenya. Research findings showed that mobility (walking); visual, mental disabilities constitute the largest number of persons with disabilities in Siaya. The research also noted that there is an undocumented number of secluded (*hidden*) persons with disabilities at the household level in the county.

#### **1. Organizations planning to conduct surveys to include questions on inclusiveness and meaningful participation**

Siaya County hosts some civil society, humanitarian agencies, and faith-based entities that from time to time offer support to persons with disabilities. As at the time of the research, no organizations were identified to be planning to conduct upcoming surveys, that include questions on inclusion and meaningful participation or disabilities as a key factor.

In Siaya County, social inclusion and meaningful participation by persons with disabilities have opportunities in aspects of employment, representation by persons with disabilities as political representatives, political appointments. It also has opportunities through access to government initiatives, programs, and projects, business, and employment by other employers locally or externally to the county. The research noted that participation, engagement, and involvement among persons with disabilities are hindered by among other factors:

- ϕ lack of education awareness, information, knowledge, and skills among persons with disabilities;
- ϕ the perception that society does not regard persons with disabilities as adequately able;
- ϕ exclusion of persons with disabilities from meaningfully engaging to participating in forums in society on governance and others;
- ϕ perceptions that persons with disabilities did not have adequate capacity to represent; voice issues;
- ϕ lack of adequate functioning capacities among groups, associations, and organizations of persons with disabilities.

**Needed Action:** *The Leave No One Behind project can support Siaya County to conduct surveys to include questions on inclusiveness and meaningful participation as there no organizations focusing on that at the moment. Siaya County, National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics will need to be part of such a process to build on existing Census 2019 data on disabilities and conduct a process that documents disaggregated disability data at the county level by Ward and Sub-county. Such data will be useful for guiding plans on inclusion participation, disability-sensitive County planning, and budgeting budget tracking and monitoring...*

#### **2. Existing structures, policies systems mechanisms, processes, programmes, and projects, that allow or hinder meaningful participation of the different social groups in the implementation of SDGs**

Siaya County has a focus on disabilities and ensures that persons with disabilities are engaged and involved in its strategies, plans, programs, and interventions among them; the County Social Protection Policy, Access to Education for All; Access to Government Procurement Opportunities, and the County Social Cash Transfer mechanisms. These programs and opportunities are available and target persons with disabilities.

Part of the existing programs has been to ensure inclusion in employment, business support to self-help groups. There is also a representation of persons with disabilities in the County Assembly. The research found that some of the representatives of persons with disabilities do not have adequate information and knowledge about SDGs, human rights, and concepts of social inclusion, citizen engagement, and participation, budget formulation, tracking, and reporting mechanisms and processes.

In addition, there are limited opportunities to expose persons with disabilities to skills on how to carry out their roles in representation, presentation of issues on disability, and how to influence policy, planning, and budget formulation. The county did not have a readily available documented record of the number of persons with disabilities and the types of opportunities they have for livelihoods employment business etc., that can facilitate tracking and monitoring the scope in access to opportunities. This renders representatives of persons with disabilities to be without knowledge and how to carry out these aspects as frameworks appropriately in presenting issues on disability and to influence policy, targeting planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting. This is an aspect of the capacity building among persons with disabilities in the County.

Other hindrances identified include but are not exclusive to:

- ϕ inadequate mechanisms, and systems for assessment, identification, classification of disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate number of the required competent personnel to conduct a continuous assessment, identification, and classification of disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate coverage in the issuing of registration cards to persons with disability;
- ϕ centralized system for issuing registration cards faltered by bureaucratic processes and procedures;
- ϕ limited access to services such as rehabilitation, and access to assistive devices and appliances;
- ϕ inadequate access to employment, sources of income, and business opportunities;
- ϕ expressed levels of nepotism corruption and unfair consideration of persons with disabilities for opportunities;

**Needed Action:** *The project can collaborate with Siaya County to strengthen the capacities of relevant departments on mechanisms that deliver assessment, identification, classification of disabilities; issuing of registration cards, enhanced access to services, and economic opportunities on the one level. On the other increase the dissemination of Disability Mainstreaming, and disability sensitive approaches, enhanced awareness among persons with disabilities of their role in engaging, participating, and seeking avenues for inclusion in county planning budgeting, budget tracking, and other forums to voice their issues on access to services, protection, justice, and opportunities.*

### **3. Voluntary National Review and Participation**

Persons with disabilities pointed out that they had inadequate information knowledge on Voluntary National Review. They lacked adequate awareness of opportunities, mechanisms, processes, and procedures and how to use them. This hindered their involvement, engagement, and meaningful participation in Voluntary National Review. Other factors hindering participation in Voluntary National Review include, but are not exclusive to:

- ϕ low levels of education, awareness exposure, and knowledge on Voluntary National Review processes and issues among persons with disabilities;
- ϕ very few persons with disabilities have the means for movement to locations of meetings and forums to participate or and only very few can be reached on time to participate;
- ϕ very low level of involvement locally, low representation and engagement hinders meaningful participation;
- ϕ inadequate resource means at the County government for facilitating added cost of inclusion of persons with disabilities in Voluntary National Review mechanisms, including the planning, monitoring, and budget formulation and reporting processes.

In this regard, existing county participation mechanisms for persons with disabilities in Voluntary National Review are inhibited by lack of information, inadequate mobility by persons with disabilities to forums and set locations to participate and inadequate resources for the county to facilitate the processes of engagement, involvement, and inclusion of persons with disabilities.

### **4. Participation mechanisms for Persons with disabilities**

Siaya County has mobilized self-help and social support groups of persons with disabilities, however, several factors continue to inhibit citizen participation on important forums thus: -

- ϕ the majority of persons with disability are socially economically and politically in a position they cannot influence and inform policies, access to services, rights, and justice;
- ϕ groups of persons with disabilities and their leaders had inadequate capacities in aspects of how to prepare and present issues during mechanisms of Voluntary National Review planning and budget formulation;
- ϕ inadequate capacity among groups and organizations of persons with disabilities on how to prepare, to represent, present issues, etc.;
- ϕ participation in Voluntary National Review, planning, and budgeting processes required movement (mobility/transport) to a defined location distanced from households and this is challenged by inadequate means for movement/transportation;
- ϕ the county did not have adequate means to provide transport of different categories of persons with disabilities from different localities to participate;

- ϕ representatives drawn from among persons with disabilities were perceived to be unable to adequately voice issues in the existing framework by those planning and coordinating such mechanisms;
- ϕ key offices in the county perceived that it is costly to have to include and involve persons with disabilities for they have special needs over and above normal persons that must be met e.g. providing means of transport and specific care during forums and processes and available budgets could not cover such costs.

### **5. Disability Sensitive targeting Planning and Budgeting**

In Siaya County disability sensitive targeting, planning, and budgeting is inhibited for lack of appropriately relevant data to use for identifying, prioritizing, and targeting disability needs, outcomes-based planning, and budgeting appropriately. The research study identified the following hindrances among others:

- ϕ priorities, plans, and budgets were not adequately based on disability sensitive baselines thus plans led to generalized service delivery;
- ϕ the perception among county personnel and the general public that issues of disability were regarded perhaps as less important hence they were not given priority in budget allocation at the county
- ϕ budgets on disability are reduced or cut back when there was a financial shortfall;
- ϕ budgets on disabilities tended to be small and with limited scope for lack of adequate data and information about disabilities;

### **6. Reporting and county budget formulation**

Siaya County's budget formulation did not adequately address the priority needs of persons with disabilities. The County did not fully engage, include, and create adequately sensitive spaces and forums inaccessible locations where persons with disabilities could meaningfully participate in budget formulation, tracking, and reporting. Other aspects affecting budget formulation were thus: -

- ϕ reporting and budget formulation were not done continually, and persons with disabilities were not informed ahead of time when next to engage and in budgeting and reporting processes;
- ϕ some county personnel had the perception that reporting and budget formulation have "*technical aspects*" and persons with disabilities were therefore assumed not to be able to grapple with such technicality for lack of education, information, and knowledge;
- ϕ budget formulation, budget tracking, and reporting were not based on concrete data on the status of disabilities at the household and individual level, but rather on the Sub-county project level.
- ϕ due to distances, persons with disabilities could not be reached on time with information and for engagement as the county does not have capacities to launch an outreach program to enhance the reporting and budget formulation mechanisms close to where could engage and participate;
- ϕ County reporting and budget formulation mechanisms and processes did not have adequate resources of time, finances, and transport for outreach to localities more persons with disabilities could engage and participate;
- ϕ due to poverty, lack of income, and mobility challenges, they could not adequately attend forums meetings and engagement where reporting and county budget formulation were taking place;
- ϕ persons with disabilities could not therefore adequately influence budget formulation or provide feedback on budget plans and project implementation.

In this regard, there is a need for improved approaches to create mechanisms by which engagement, inclusion, and participation among persons with disabilities are promoted at the county level is improved. There is also a need to strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities for their roles in representation, participation, presentation of issues, and influencing.

The project can contribute to aspects of capacity strengthening among persons with disabilities, at the groups, associations, and organization level to improve their capacities in engagement, preparation for meaningful participation, as well as on how to represent, engage and present issues.

**Needed Action to address gaps:** *The project will need to facilitate develop collaborative interventions among key actors in disability in Siaya County that contribute to capacity strengthening among persons with disabilities, at the groups, associations, and organization level to improve their capabilities in engagement, preparation for meaningful participation, as well as on how to represent, engage and present issues. The interventions should also strengthen the capacities of persons with disabilities in the leadership of groups and CBOs of PWD to be more effective in representation, participation, and presentation of issues and influence.*

### **7. Inequalities and intersectional disadvantages that lead to exclusion**

In the Census of 2019 the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics presents advanced coverage on disabilities in that, it has reported six categories of disabilities up to the Sub-county level in each county. However, the current data on disabilities is not disaggregated adequately to highlight *in situ* inequalities, nature, types, and severity of disabilities, intersectional disadvantages, and localities person with disabilities live. Siaya County has no immediate plans to address disaggregation of data or address the gaps in data yet even though it has identified this as a crucial need. Some other factors that drive inequalities and intersection disadvantages and exclusion include but are not exclusive to: -

- ϕ budget constraints limit the scope of the county from dealing with data the disaggregation issue;
- ϕ lack of disaggregated data inhibits the county's ability to target, plan and budget specifically on disabilities at the household and individual need level;
- ϕ society in Siaya County is not open on intersectional exclusion associated with intersex and different sexually-oriented persons;
- ϕ inadequate documentation of secluded persons with disabilities at a household level among them persons with very severe types of disabilities, mental disabilities, intersex, pregnant and breastfeeding females with disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate data and evidence on abuse and sexual violation committed against the person with disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate knowledge and competence how to collect and preserve evidence in the case of abuse loss of rights and sexual violations among households with persons with disabilities, and in groups and organizations of persons with disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate access to protection, justice, and rights at the family level, society level and also in the justice systems (police, courts, and local public administrators) in particular for persons with mental disabilities, persons with visual, hearing, and speech disabilities;
- ϕ inhibited access to services caused by lack or poor infrastructure inhibiting mobility, high cost of transport, among persons with disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate awareness and knowledge about rights, and human rights among persons with disabilities;
- ϕ inadequate capacity among organizations at the county level that presses for justice and rights of persons with disabilities;
- ϕ inhibited access to services is inhibited due to a lack of registration cards for persons with disabilities.

In this connection, factors promoting inequalities require awareness building at individual, household, and among service providers, such as law enforcement, justice personnel, and local public administration. Factors promoting intersectional disadvantages also need to be identified, documented disseminated, and highlighted during the planning and public sharing and exchange forums so that they can be addressed as part of county priorities.

**Needed Action to address gaps:** *In Siaya County, as in other counties and at the national level, aspects of intersectional inequalities are "silent" and community members, as well as officials in county departments and civil society and faith-based entities, prefer not to talk openly about the issues in this sphere. The project can support the county in developing data based in this sphere for use in profiling and highlighting interventions that address intersectional inequalities publicly. This will contribute to strengthening other entities in collaboration with the NCPWD and County level counterparts to intervene in addressing intersectional inequalities targeting root causes of marginalization through awareness building and engage key county departments to enforce improved access rights, protection, and justice.*

### **8. Planned county policies, strategies, and programmes that the project can influence at the drafting stage**

Siaya County government itself is addressing disabilities and has a County Social Protection Policy. The research noted that Social Protection Policy is more on service delivery of government initiatives and the policy does not adequately address the disabilities sector in the county. Not all aspects in the findings on gaps and factors of marginalization identified in the research have been addressed, for instance, issues about intersectional disadvantages are not brought out to the public view and debate. This provides an opportunity for Kenya Leave No One Behind Initiative to engage in policymaking at the county level.

## **9. Research to close out knowledge gaps on drivers and level of marginalization among marginalized groups**

Several aspects for which there is an opportunity for further research themes were identified thus:

### ***Caregiving and caregivers***

- ϕ There is a very limited systematic analysis, and documentation on household-based caregiving and caregivers in disabilities that provides a defined level of knowledge and understanding on the nature, types, and quality attributes of care households provide to both persons with disabilities, and the most vulnerable marginalized individuals in society. The envisaged research would include linkage to map out root causes, and how factors, drivers, and defined levels of marginalization at household and individual level associate with caregiving, and the individual caregiver.

The research should also include a systematic assessment and analysis of the basic costs, the challenges, constraints, and other lived experiences in caregiving at the household level. Attributes of quality and required competencies for household-based caregiving and among household caregivers could also be included. This gives rise to an opportunity to carry out collaborative and participatory research at two levels: -

- i) one to create concrete and systematic analysis and evidence-based documentation on household-based caregiving and caregivers and their status, situation, condition of life, well-being and the significance of caregivers and caregiving and how these influences the disability space;
- ii) second research to set basic standards and benchmarks to enhance the quality, monitoring, and tracking of household-based care on disabilities thus establish basic baselines for household quality of care indicators in disabilities.

### ***Seclusion of persons with disabilities and other most vulnerable persons at the household level***

- ϕ There is very limited systematic documented data and analysis on seclusion in disabilities and among the most vulnerable members of society at the household level which provides insights on reasons causing seclusion, nature of seclusion, and its effect on the household as a whole and the secluded persons with disabilities. This is an opportunity to carry out collaborative and participatory research to: -

i) explore and document seclusion and develop databases at the Sub-county level of the numbers of secluded persons with disabilities and the most vulnerable members of society at the household level and to examine the typical households socially, economically, politically and in other spheres they rank in society and provide evidential attributes on types of disabilities and vulnerabilities for which households find cause to seclude, with systematic analysis of the factors, elements and drivers of seclusion.

ii) systematically examine the psychosocial perspectives and elements of seclusion at the household and the individual secluded person level and document empirical evidence on the effects of seclusion on the individual and then on the household. Establish whether or not, only disabilities and vulnerabilities are secluded or whether other roots and causes exist that induce and drive seclusion at the household level.

iii) Recommend to County Governments means mechanisms and processes and procedures to monitor and track seclusion and how the counties might go about facilitating reduction of seclusion of persons with disabilities, the most vulnerable and others unforeseen individuals whom the study might identify.

**Needed Policy Action:** *There is an opportunity in Siaya County to undertake systematic research that collects and documents evidence on household caregiving, and caregivers of persons with disabilities analytically. Further would to explore root causes of factors seclusion of persons with disabilities and refine commonly-shared benchmarks for household quality of care for persons with disabilities, will contribute and influence the development of relevant policies informed by the research at the national level towards improved evidence-based work on disabilities. The outputs of this research and the added findings from further research would inform the policy formulation relevant for Siaya county and use that as a base to upscale issues at the national policy level.*