

The Governors Baraza: Report



The Governors Baraza, a high-level breakfast meeting that brought together Governors, civil society organisations and development partners on **October 12, 2022** was held at the **Baraza Media Lab in Nairobi**.

The first of a new series of engagements, the Governors Baraza aims to provide a platform where county leadership can highlight their county priorities in the new administration to provide civil society actors and development partners with information on how they could best support and keep the governments accountable in achieving their development objectives.

Our ultimate goal is to enable CSOs to provide support, build relationships and to advocate for the governors to adopt good practices from the onset.

The event was structured as follows:

- **The Governors Address:** The Governors were given 15 minutes each to speak on their immediate goals and challenges and the areas in which they welcome the participation of CSOs.
- **The Governors Panel:** The Governors answered specifically moderated questions posed to each of them by the moderator.
- **Open Floor Questions:** Lastly, the floor was opened for questions from the CSOs and development partners present in the audience and from the online audience.

Session 1: The Governors' Address - Highlighting County Priorities

Nandi County

H.E. Dr. Yulita Mitei, Deputy Governor of Nandi County in her address outlined the successes of the previous and current governments, showcasing that there was considerable growth witnessed in the county but that there was more that needed to be done.

A summary of the county priorities and potential areas of collaboration

1. **Education:** In the county, they are constructing more ECD classrooms, to meet the demand, and they hope to meet the gap of over 1000 classrooms, despite the constraints such as financial resources.
2. **Health** - To address the needs, the county budget has been increased from 22% - 38%. However, the gaps they foresee include:
 - a. equipping the new mother and child unit in the county hospital in Kapsabet, and
 - b. Recruiting specialized doctors to serve the citizens
 - c. Medical and non-medical supplies - the presidential resolution that appointed KEMSA as the sole provider has limited access to essential supplies. There is a need for CSOs to help advocate and add a voice to review this decision to provide greater access for counties.
3. **Agriculture** - the county is currently building a milk processing plant, and there is a focus on ensuring dairy farmers have better breeds and access to artificial insemination (AI) services when needed. The county would like to partner to ensure better access to markets and pricing for dairy farmers.
4. **Gender-based violence** - currently, the Nandi Call Centre staff have received training in dealing with GBV cases, and a space has been created to address GBV in the county hospital, however, cases of gender-based violence are high, so there is a need to have conversations to address these challenges.

Makueni County

After her address, we invited County Secretary Rael Mumo, Makueni County, who highlighted the county priorities as follows:

A summary of the county priorities and potential areas of collaboration

1. **Prioritising the people of Makueni:** capacity building to have people be part of governance and do away with the *serikali saidia* mentality. Once the project is in the community, life cycle of projects is 3 years - how can we have these projects be sustained by the community and the committees and govern and own the projects to build the community and benefit
2. **Good governance:** at a good level, continue to be transparent and accountable. More trends in the governance space to do better - CSOs. support to work with data for better accountability and best practices. Proactively share info with citizens, good devolution structure - citizen participation to the ward level - involve citizens
3. **Strategic partnerships:** water and food insecurity due to climate change. Invite partnerships to achieve better climate resilience. Investment for market linkages to bring value-added products to the shelves countywide (mangoes and mango juice, extractives products e.g. sand).
4. **Innovation and sustainability:**
 - a. Creative industry and the youth: create opportunities for economic involvement and employability, more ideas to tap into the talent and leverage on the creative economy including capacity building.
 - b. Health: how to sustain the county universal health care and what other innovations can be implemented to make it work? As the county shifts priorities into primary healthcare, there is a need for more capacity building, particularly for the 3000 CHWs, and to support the community healthcare strategy in the county.
 - c. Stories: need to partner with the creatives to document all the information for the future, and build capacity for preserving the lessons.

Meru County

Ms. Sandra Kimathi, working with the Meru External Linkage Office and representing the Meru County Governor, then took the stage and spoke about her County's priorities:

A summary of the county priorities and potential areas of collaboration

1. **Enhancement of agriculture:** food security is a serious concern in the semi-arid belt. The county would like partnerships to support to offer good agricultural support to farmers with special focus on promoting pulse farming in semi arid areas, production and marketing of cash crops, promotion of dairy farming, particularly to

poor families, value addition for various products including bananas, macadamia, potatoes and promotion of agribusiness for women and youth

2. **Water and sanitation:** there is a serious shortage of clean water in Meru County. Some of the priority areas they would like support include:
 - a. Increased production of water to promote health through the development of 8 dams, household tanks, dam liners and sinking of boreholes.
 - b. Rehabilitation of existing water projects to meet demand due to the increasing population.
3. **Health:** improving maternal and child health by:
 - a. establishing theaters and labs
 - b. provision of drugs and ambulances
 - c. establishment of baby nurseries for care of vulnerable children
 - d. disability mainstreaming
 - e. provision of reproductive health education targeting teenagers to mitigate against increased cases of teenage pregnancies and encourage teenage mothers to remain in school.

Meru County is also leading in cases of cancer in the country, and there is need for partnerships in research and provision of public health

4. **Gender-Based Violence:** partnerships to invest in awareness campaigns and women empowerment efforts in a bid to tackle SGBV.

Session 2: The Governor's Panel

Makueni County: What is the county's plan to increase tree cover, seeing as the county experiences a predominantly semi-arid climate?

Makueni County already has a plan in action for construction of dams in the region. The administration is also addressing the uncontrolled mining of sand, mostly along the river banks, that causes the rivers to lose form and flood, and by controlling the activity, most rivers have been conserved. They are also looking at the possibility of commercializing the sand mining for the benefit of the people of Makueni and that people were invited to invest in the venture. Dependence on rain-fed agriculture is another priority issue, and there is need for innovation towards climate resilience.

Nandi County: What is the county's plan to reduce the wage bill that stands at slightly over 60% of the county's expenses?

Dr. Yulita Mitei spoke next about Nandi County's huge wage bill saying that one of the main reasons the wage bill was that high was because the county suffered various irregularities in its hiring process. After an unsuccessful staff audit, they have instituted an airtight programme for the second audit. This has brought the wage bill down to 45%, and the ongoing exercise has identified 552 officers who are unaccounted for. The county plans to further reduce the wage bill down to just over 35% of all county expenditures.

Meru County, what actions is the county taking in dealing with Sexual & Gender-Based Violence?

Meru County is committed to ensure that women were safe and protected and were able to exist peacefully in society without fear. A multi-sectoral approach is needed to understand the issues. Awareness creation is needed, including developing curriculums to empower the children on identifying and seeking support for gender-based violence. There is a need for support in data management to understand causes of SGBV in the region, and provision of safe houses.

The breakfast meeting was live cast on Youtube, and some of the interactions and questions from the CSO community present can be viewed in full online. The full livestream of the discussions is available on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/oIDtSlBS3ow>

The Governors Baraza is slated to continue, and this event was the first of a series of dialogues seeking to explore partnerships towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

About The Convenors

[The Open Institute](#)

The Open Institute is a non-profit organisation that collaborates with Governments, Civil Society Organisations, Citizen Groups and Private Sector companies to find innovative ways to achieve Sustainable Development. We do this by providing tools, knowledge and expertise to national and county governments to promote responsiveness, and we have also been actively working with citizen groups and civil society organisations to strengthen active citizenship.

The SDGs Kenya Forum

The SDGs Kenya Forum brings together over 350 diverse civil society organizations working across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum is a voluntary membership entity open to civil society organizations, government entities, academia, media and the private sector who subscribe to the value of Agenda 2030, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals.

Baraza Media Lab

We are a new and exciting space for networking, collaborating, and experimenting among Kenya's media practitioners — journalists, bloggers, writers, artists, filmmakers, cartoonists, social media experts, technologists, and other cross-disciplinary collaborators.

By supporting collaborative storytelling ideas, methods, and delivery platforms; raising the skill and capacity of media practitioners; and providing an environment for new business models to emerge, We aim to build a community of like-minded media practitioners committed to acting in the public interest.