

Organization name: Wajir Peace and Development Agency (WPDA)

Project name: Strengthening Citizen Engagement for Accountable and Responsive Governance in Wajir

Duration of implementation: 18 months

Story of Change: Amplifying Youth Voices in Wajir County Through Social Media

What was the issue?

In Wajir County, many young people had long felt excluded from governance and decision-making processes. High unemployment levels, limited service delivery and unresponsive leadership contributed to frustration and disillusionment among the youth. At the same time, clannism created additional barriers, as young people who attempted to question leaders were often pressured to remain loyal to clan interests rather than advocate for accountability. This environment discouraged open criticism and civic engagement, leaving many youths feeling powerless and unheard.

What changed and how?

Through the project, WPDA implemented participatory and inclusive interventions aimed at empowering youth with knowledge and practical tools for engagement. Civic education sessions were conducted to increase understanding of constitutional rights, public participation processes and the county budgeting cycle. Youth were also trained on responsible digital advocacy and governance reporting, equipping them with skills to use social media constructively. Structured dialogue forums and ward-level accountability meetings created safe platforms for interaction between young people and leaders. As a result, youth began using social media to highlight issues such as absenteeism of leaders at the sub-county level and unfulfilled campaign promises. Recognizing that leaders were sensitive to public image, young people recorded and shared videos to demand responsiveness. This digital engagement prompted reactions from some leaders and strengthened youth confidence. Elders also began leveraging the technical skills of youth to communicate concerns through recorded messages, fostering intergenerational collaboration. Despite attempts by some leaders to use clannism to silence critical voices, the youth remained resilient and continued to engage constructively.

What do the beneficiaries say?

One youth participant explained, *"Our leaders are nowhere to be found; they do not even answer our calls. But now we are awakened. We will mobilize our fellow youth to vie for elective posts like we did in the Tarbaj MCA position, where we supported one of our own. We use social media for accountability, reminding the community of the promises made and not fulfilled."* This testimony illustrates a significant shift in awareness and agency, as young people increasingly see themselves as active citizens capable of mobilizing peers, questioning leadership and promoting accountability within their communities.

What was the project's specific contribution?



leaders and organized ward-level accountability sessions where community members and duty bearers reviewed service delivery concerns and agreed on follow-up actions. Emphasis was placed on gender inclusion and amplifying marginalized voices. By strengthening civic knowledge, building digital advocacy skills and creating structured engagement platforms, the project helped shift local power dynamics and normalize youth participation in governance processes.

The project played a central role in catalyzing this change by addressing both knowledge gaps and structural barriers to youth participation. The organization deliberately ensured youth inclusion in all

project activities and provided tailored civic education using local languages and relatable examples. It convened community dialogue forums that created neutral spaces for direct engagement between citizens and

Group photo during the training of digital youth/content creators in Wajir

What evidence is there to support this outcome? Who else was involved?

Evidence of the outcome includes attendance records from civic education, youth engagements and dialogue forums, participant feedback demonstrating improved understanding of accountability mechanisms, and documented social media posts and videos produced by youth to raise governance concerns. Instances where leaders responded following online advocacy illustrate the effectiveness of the approach. The initiative was implemented collaboratively with local administrators, community leaders, elders and civil society partners, whose involvement enhanced legitimacy, local ownership and sustainability of the engagement platforms.

Why is the outcome significant?

This outcome is significant because it demonstrates a clear transition from youth silence to active civic engagement in Wajir County. Young people are no longer passive observers of governance shortcomings but informed and organized actors using both physical forums and digital platforms to demand accountability. By integrating social media into local governance processes, the project has created an accessible channel for oversight in a context where leaders may otherwise remain distant or unresponsive. The change lays a foundation for stronger democratic culture, increased youth political participation and more sustainable citizen-led accountability mechanisms in the county.