

Empowerment of Women in County Assemblies

On 18th – 19th & 25th - 26th November 2020, KAS Kenya held an activity in Nakuru and Mombasa respectively to enhance the capacities of nominated and elected women MCAs from the Coast and Rift-valley regions. The specific objective of the event was to enhance the capacities of selected women legislatures i.e. elected/ nominated women members of county assemblies on effective campaign strategies to increase their numbers and quality of political debates during and after the 2022 elections. This would as well enhance gender responsive legislations and political initiatives at the county level and thus continue to promote decentralization governance system in Kenya.

This training was necessary, owing to the fact that women play a crucial role in the legislation and representation process in the Country. Despite the introduction of the two-thirds gender rule, women legislatures continue to be subjected to stereotypes, sexism and accusations of incompetence. With 2022 elections only two years away, women legislators need to arm themselves with the necessary knowledge, skills and strategies to competitively vie for political seats to either keep their current positions or target higher positions.

The following topics were up for discussion; Tips on campaign strategies including messaging, personal branding in politics, networking and fundraising and election rules and engagement with IEBC. By empowering the women legislators on how to effectively campaign, this would enable the female legislators be able to retain their seats and even claim for better elective positions come 2022. The BBI debate and its proposals could not be ignored and the two key amendment proposals; Article 177 of the Constitution is amended— in clause (2) by deleting the words “be nominated by political parties in proportion to the seats received” and substituting therefor the words “be elected through the party list by political parties in proportion to the votes received”. With regards to senate, there shall be ninety-four members, being one woman and one man from each county, elected by the registered voters of the counties. These proposals were partly received with mixed reactions since some participants were for it and some not. The most important is that they were informed to be strategic come 2022.

Overall, 30 women member of county assembly were able to fully participate in the training. As a result of the workshop, this report affirms that all participants had the intention and interest to vie for public office in the upcoming 2022 Kenyan elections as either elected, nominated or appointed candidates, not limited to the role of Members of County Assemblies. Others (elected ones) attested to defend their seats. This would be the best outcome for both participants and KAS and thus moving forward, we shall continue to engage and support the women through provided them with strategic information and monitor their progress. The two-thirds gender may seem like a pipe dream but with the right strategies and determination, nothing is impossible.

In the end, the participants applauded the event, affirming that they will use the gained skills in their day-to-day preparations for 2022 elections. A lot of gratitude and appreciation was commended for KAS for organizing the workshop and having invited a great team of facilitators.



Dr. Annette Schwandner, KAS Country Director giving opening remarks



Participants in Nakuru workshop listening keenly



Hon. Faith Boniface from Mombasa County making a contribution