

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION AND POST-EVALUATION ANALYSIS OF E-PARTICIPATION PROJECTS THE “WIN WIN EPARTICIPATION MODEL”

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Abstract: In developing countries the majority of eParticipation and, in general, eGovernance projects fail. After an introduction to the “literature of failures” and of Heek’s (2003) “archetype of failure”, this paper will introduce the African media landscape and reflect on some revealing findings from the World e-Parliament Report 2008. After a cursory overview the paper will focus on a field analysis, a micro perspective based on data obtained from a small qualitative research undertaken by the authors during the year 2007/2008 in Kenya. The paper will suggest possible measures to foreclose the risk of failure of an eParticipation project implementation phase, by using the model developed during this research experience. Finally, the “the Win-Win eParticipation model” will offer address conclusions and highlight recommendations on how to implement an eParticipation project within an African-European cooperation framework.

Keywords: Baraza – Participation – Democracy – Kenya – Parliament

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement 1: (How should eParticipation be defined?)

A recent article concerning participatory democracy describes a comical exchange seen on US TV between an American journalist and an Iranian demonstrator during the Iranian revolution centring on what it means to participate politically in different regimes [1]. The author notes: "the question of whether there is more participation in the U.S. or Iran is in the end unanswerable because the very activities that count as incidences of participation to the American do not count for the Iranian [and vice versa]." In other words political participation (and by extension eParticipation) is not limited to ‘democratic contexts’; rather democracies prioritise particular forms of political participation, for which civil liberties certainly are preconditions, but other types of political participation (such as participating in an Islamic republic) fundamentally differ. Without considering these factors, when a developed state implements an eParticipation project in a developing country, there is a high probability that the project will fail due to this kind of techno-deterministic and ethnocentric approach. Developed countries and international donors should first try to understand the potential of eParticipation in specific historical and geographical contexts, as a resource for both civil society and national governments. Only after local contingencies and exigencies have been thoroughly assessed should the project be implemented; the relations between actions, results and outcomes can then be examined and explained.

This will not only vary regionally, but also within different domains in democratic societies. For example, an health authority could contact a citizen, urging her/him to 'get involved' and offering several online and offline channels through which citizens can have a say about what type of health services they need in the region where they live. They want the citizens’ input because they recognise...

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that the authority does not have all the answers. There are many public bodies like this, often unelected, that feel they can benefit from greater public participation in terms of accessing local knowledge - the dispersed 'expertise' of their service users, i.e. The goal is not to democratise the way the service is run, but to improve its functionality, efficiency and responsiveness. In this paper, eParticipation is not exclusively related to democracy, and is not strictly related to the concept of democracy developed by western societies. However, when eParticipation is related also to eParliament, as in this case, the issue of democracy can not be avoided. Therefore, a set of ‘international assumptions’ emerges to address the contextual and political issues associated with designing online engagement exercises and measuring their impact on the policy process. This set of assumptions regards: the respect of the basic civil and political rights; the freedom of speech; and the freedom to organize a civil or political movement to democratically achieve the improvement of a certain group of people who have the rights to vote and participate in the political life of their own country.

Without the respect of these basic rights, eParticipation can only be related to the technical aspects of a bureaucratic organization, such as the one mentioned above.

1.2 Problem Statement 2 (the Literature of Failures)

Numerous studies have demonstrated the failure of most externally-implemented information systems in developing countries. A literature review in this field concludes by stating, “successful examples of computerization can be found..... but frustrating stories of systems which failed... are more frequent” [2]

According to Heeks [3], most e-governance projects in developing countries fail. 35% of these implementations are considered total failures (not implemented at all, or implemented and immediately abandoned). 50% were considered as partial failures (major goals were not attained and there were often undesirable outcomes).

By examining numerous cases of e-governance failure in developing countries, Heeks (2002; 2003) states that a major reason for these failures is the mismatch between the current reality and the design of future information systems. The risks of failure increase as this gap grows. Heeks (ibid.) uses the model (Fig.1) to illustrate this situation.

This model has led Heeks (2003) to identify archetypes of situations where design-reality gaps are common. These are summarised below:

1. Hard-Soft Gaps: the difference between the actual technologies and the reality of the social context in which the system operates;

2. Private-Public Gaps: a system that works in the private sector often does not work in the public sector;

3. Country Context Gaps: a system designed for a developed country can not be applied to a developing one;

4. Sustainability: these projects often depend upon aid from donors. Once this financing ceases, there is often insufficient funding to continue the project (Swihare and Deane, 2003).

5. Size: governments in developing countries often prefer impressive projects, as they are seen as evidence of political action. However, the risk of failure is proportional to the size of the project. (UNDESA, 2003).

6. Underestimation of low-tech solutions: if the aim is to reduce the cost of transfer of information and to reach as many people as possible, then why are low-tech solutions not
considered? It may be more appropriate to look at low-tech solutions that fit with the existing infrastructure (Cecchini and Raina, 2004).

The state of media in Africa has been studied by the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) [4] - the most extensive independent survey of the state of the media across 17 sub-Saharan African countries. The conclusion of the survey was that: “In nine of the 17 countries, more than 60% of the population lives in rural areas with restricted access to most forms of media, mainly due to the lack of transport facilities and electricity (e.g., in Kenya only 8% of the rural population has electricity).

The media in the countries surveyed are serving populations that are growing and are primarily young, rural and non-literate. Radio dominates the mass media spectrum. Television is becoming more widespread, although growth over the past five years is less dramatic than that reported for radio. Newspapers remain concentrated in urban centres with varying growth patterns across the countries. In the new media sector, the adoption of mobile telephony has been the most spectacular, far exceeding the uptake of the Internet. Cellular mobile use to more urban areas, the low cost of entry and ability to be “mobile”, all present media practitioners with a new audience and a possible expansion of the definition of local content production in text messaging and other electronic communications.

Communication between members of parliaments and citizens has been studied by the “The World e-Parliament Report 2008” [6], an assessment from a global perspective of how information and communication technologies (ICT) are being employed by parliaments across the spectrum of activities for which they are responsible. The report is divided in 8 sections and the last one, Section 8, focus on how systems for supporting communication between citizens and parliament are used in high income, upper middle income and lower income countries around the world.

“Almost three quarters of members of parliaments in the High Income group use websites to communicate their views, while over half of those in the Upper Middle Income group do so. This is another example where there is a wide variation by income level. While not currently having websites for members to communicate their views, 57% of those from the Low Income group indicate plans for providing this capability. However, 22% are not planning to do this” (p.135).

“A series of papers published in the Journal of Legislative Studies provided the results of a comparative study of four parliaments within the European Union (UK, European Parliament, Portugal, and Sweden) ... The same study also concluded that while websites were valuable tools for parliaments and individual members to make information available to the public, the amount of actual interactive engagement between citizens and parliaments was quite low”(p.135).

Some of the recommendations are:

[1] “Since members from parliaments in lower income countries are far less likely to have their own websites, cooperation among parliaments could help to bridge this gap by creating shared website software and sharing good design practices for member sites ” (p.139)

[2] “Some experiments with blogs and other interactive features of websites are underway, and there are several efforts in different countries to develop on-line discussions and receive citizen comments on pending legislation and policies under consideration by parliament.... In other cases, major challenges remain in terms of which technologies work best, how to capitalize on the positive aspects of interactive technologies.. and how to use ICT in ways that engage citizens...” (p.137).

[3] “In addition, more academic research needs to be undertaken to better understand what approaches will be most effective and what changes in technologies need to be made in order to better support actual dialogue between the public and parliaments” (p.139).

In other words eParticipation/eDemocracy at parliamentary level is at a very early stage and the way forward would seem to be in experimentation with new technologies and new approaches.
The research presented in the next paragraph focuses on how citizens and MPs are communicating with each other using all the media they have access to, both in the current situation and within their own contexts. This approach is used because the research is based on the assumption that the Internet is part of a wider “communicative ecology”[7] and should not be studied as an isolated media.

At the Seoul Digital Forum in May 2007, Eric Schmidt, CEO of Google, was asked to define Web 3.0. He responded: "...the applications can run on any device, PC or mobile phone, the applications are very fast and they're very customizable. Furthermore, the applications are distributed virally: literally by social networks, by email. You won't go to the store and purchase them... That's a very different application model than we've ever seen in computing." (Eric Schmidt source Wikipedia).

This technical and conceptual evolution of the web has a special value for the African continent, in which the use of the mobile phone and the radio is much wider than the traditional use of the internet through PC. For African countries, Web 3.0 means that eParticipation projects have a greater chance of success than previously, due to the fact that information stored and uploaded on on-line databases can now circulate through more media than before. However, in order to succeed, projects should be implemented using a different approach.

Traditional decision-making systems and traditional methods based on the use of old and new media are, in this moment, more effective than the use of Internet to reach citizens, and are already known and implemented by the MPs and their staff members. The situation will drastically change in the next few years especially in urban areas, but the question still remains: how can the Internet empower and reinvent the use of the already existing decision-making systems and ‘communicative ecology’ in order to support the development of a more transparent and participatory democracy?

To answer this question we should first understand: what the relations are between traditional forms of participatory decision making and the new ones; furthermore, what and how eParticipation is expected to contribute to the development of a specific country by its own citizens and politicians. In very few cases, before the implementation of an eParticipation or other eGovernance project, researches about traditional forms of decision-making and communicative ecologies have been undertaken by international agencies and organizations.

Most of the time, however, pre-implementation or in general researches in this field “lack sensitivity towards self-representing strategies of political actors in their communicative practices, ....There is a need for mixed and triangulated research designs. An example of methodological triangulation is the combination of ethnographic research approaches, semiotics of political systems and quantitative methods used for eParticipation practice. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods will counterbalance deficiencies of individual methods, overcoming overconfidence in established methods of individual disciplines” [8].

2. Objectives

The overall aim of this paper is to advice policy makers and project managers working in the field of eDemocracy/eParticipation in Africa on how to avoid failures and provide, at the end of the projects, ROI (return of investment) data for all the stakeholders who are investing in the project.

The concrete output of this study is “a model” developed to support and empower the implementation of accessible technologies used to support existing information systems supporting traditional participatory practices/process.

The model is based on the assumption that in Africa, and in most developing countries, participatory process and information systems already exist; their performances should be empowered instead of replaced by others. A similar approach to this topic has been developed in Ghana by Prof. Irene K. Odotei who, many years before the advent of the “knowledge society”, was already using
innovative technologies to record customs and disseminate the culture of traditional information systems to support participatory decision-making processes [9]. Our approach is similarly based on the assumption that, by understanding the traditional participatory process, it is also possible to understand what participation means in a particular context, but in this paper the issue of power in democracy is not deeply discussed. For this reason the analytical model based on an ethnographic approach has been chosen, as it focuses mainly on the communicative and cultural aspects related to the analysed contexts. However, it is important to recognise that further studies on how to assess and analyse the variables connected to power and democracy should be undertaken, in order to be integrated in all the pre-implementation and post-evaluation models, such the one presented in this paper.

3. Methodology

3.1 Field Research

The field research, consists of 16 interviews with personal assistants (PAs) of Kenyan members of parliaments (MPs), 8 constituency officers (COs) and 2 community radio journalists (CRJs).

The main focus areas are:
1. the usage of different media to communicate between each others (Pas, Mps, Cos & CRJs) with citizens, civil society and journalists
2. the usage of the media mix: new and old media, strategies and tools to inform and engage citizens in public debates
3. perception and prioritization of different technologies usage, and finally their socio-technological ideas and scenarios for the future.

During most of the interviews, the authors where assisted by a local expert and a fellow researcher who, after a first period of training, was also able to make some of the interviews alone.

3.2 The Ethnographic Approach

This approach has traditionally been used to understand different cultures by observing their behaviour, while in the field of the media studies this approach has also been used to observe and understand how a specific group acts in a specific context to receive, interpret, produce and distribute information to pursue a specific objective.

In our case, the specific group is composed by: the MPs, the PAs and the Cos. Their need is to communicate their visions and policies to the citizens. The objective of the group is to create consensus and popularity among the constituents in order to gain power/authority and fulfil their mandate.

The ethnographic approach should ensure that project development takes place within a broad understanding, embedded in local contexts and needs. Nevertheless, the approach of this research is not limited to a specific field in terms of a geographic area; in this case, the field needs to be redefined.

3.3 The Network Ethnography

Howards (2002) developed a specific methodology the “Network ethnography”, defined as “the process of using ethnographic field methods on cases and field sites selected using social network analysis”[10].

For Howard, the meaning of “field sites” is adapted. Instead of choosing territorial field sites, the researcher has to choose a perceived community and select the important nodes in the social network as field sites.

In our case, we need to consider as part of the same community (constituency) people living and working outside the constituencies (e.g. Immigrants, International Donors, National media based in
Nairobi and International Media based abroad, PAs and staff members who are spending most of their time in Nairobi), because they are all somehow connected between themselves.

3.4 The Ethnographic Action Research (EAR)

“Ethnographic action research is a methodology, which provides a flexible and adaptable approach to gather knowledge about community media centres (CMC), their users and wider communities. The methodology is based on combining two research approaches: ethnography and action research.

Action research is a research approach used to promote new activities through new understandings of situations. It is based on a cycle of plan, do, observe and reflect – and this enables the collection of rich research data through an ethnographic approach to be fed back into project activities on an ongoing basis”[11].

This methodology has been developed to capture the necessary data to assess the rapidly emerging range of communications initiatives currently being promoted by multilateral and bilateral donors, NGOs and civil society organisations. These innovations aim to bridge the ‘digital divide’, and engage marginal or excluded communities in the knowledge economy, using old and new media technologies.

This method was developed following an evaluation of a rural ICT project in Sri Lanka and is then being applied to nine projects across South Asia by UNESCO.

In our case the “Network Ethnography Approach” is used to define the field analysis, while the EAR is used to develop a pre-implementation and post-evaluation model that will be presented in the last paragraph. Since January 2007, the authors of the paper worked in Kenya in the field of media democracy and development, with the United Nations and local NGOs. For this reason the rest of the data comes from daily observation, and also by browsing local and international organizations websites and on-line resources.

4. Technology Description

A new tool: from EAR to “The Win Win eParticipation model”

In this paragraph the authors will try to explain a specific model that can be used for the implementation, monitoring, and post-evaluation analysis of a hypothetical eParticipation project in Africa.

The “Win-Win eParticipation model” (Fig. 2) was developed to conduct pre-implementation and post evaluation analysis in the specific field of eParticipation.

The model was developed and experimented with while the authors where working on a pre-implementation analysis of an hypothetical eParticipation project in Kenya: “Speak with your constituency”.

Findings regarding the contents are illustrated in the next paragraph.

To understand the “Win-Win eParticipation model” it is important to understand first the EAR framework which is structured in 3 main parts:

1. Understanding communicative ecologies: media mixes, social organization of media, social networks
2. Design realities: social mapping and contextualization of the targets/actors involved
3. Developing projects: findings of themes and connections in order to develop strategies
The framework is been thought to be used by local researchers/activists; their duty should be to ensure the involvement of the rest of the community in the research process, in order to define categories, connections and possible strategies together with them. Tools analysis are the traditional ones of ethnographic research: interviews, observation, focus groups, etc...

The term communicative ecology refers to “the context in which communication processes occur” (Foth & Hearn, 2007, p. 9) [10]. These processes are seen to involve people communicating with others in their social networks, both face-to-face and using a mix of media and communication technologies (Tacchi, Slater & Hearn, 2003).

The" Win-Win eParticipation model” (figure 1) is based on the assumption that:

1. the concept of “communicative ecology” is the most appropriate one for understanding the reality in which a hypothetical eParticipation project should be implemented, in order to “design realities” and reduce the risks of failures caused by the “reality gaps”.

2. the “Win-Win” terms stands for relationship or transaction in which both or all parties gain from. The model is based on the assumption that a “Win-Win” relationship is happening when all the actors involved in a communication process are benefiting from a specific media mix strategy, used to pursue a common objective.

The model is based on three analytical dimensions:

1. Organizational: consists of a pre-implementation and post-evaluation analysis of the project in relation to the traditional participatory policy practices and cycle - e.g. Identify an already existing practice (like the baraza) and evaluate the impact of the project on it.

2. Socio-technological: consist of a pre-implementation and post-evaluation analysis of the project in relation to how citizens and their representatives already use the existing media (radio, video, press) and how the eParticipation platform can empower and extend their networking ability - e.g., how the eParticipation platform could empower the use of local radio, mobile phones etc.. in order to support communication between citizens and their representatives.

3. Socio-political: consists of an overall pre-implementation and post-evaluation analysis in relation to the policy cycle and the achievement of public participation goals, e.g. political vision, policy information, decision making, implementation, impact on the final decision of the Parliament (International Association of Public Participation).
(Figure 1): Win-Win model

5. Developments and Results in terms of contents and methodologies: a practical example of how to develop a framework and to use the model

“Speak with your constituency research project” a research made possible thanks to the logistic support provided by Kenya National Assembly and i-Parliaments project.

Contents of the structured interviews

1. Methods used to communicate with citizen and civil society

2. Methods used to contact the media/journalists

3. Methods used for internal communication (only between MP and his/her staff members)

4. Existing and role of local media or future plan to develop a new local media

5. Issue discussed during public meetings and on local media

6. Existence of a web-site or plans to develop one.

7. Existence of a person/office in charge of communication

8. Existence and related usages of constituency offices/spaces

9. Methods of storing and distribute data about public meetings and bottom up proposals

10. Type of existing data stored and available to be uploaded on an hypothetical on-line database
11. Importance/priority given to different media: Mobile phone, Internet applications, Radio, Video, Press

12. The media mix scenarios: how they would use different media to communicate within the constituency having the appropriate ICT resources and skills.

6. Results

1. The first finding was: the existence of an already consolidated practice to inform and engage citizens at the constituency level in Kenya. This was also discerned in other East African countries (Uganda and Tanzania).

2. In order to design an eParticipation project the first step is to understand the existing practices supporting participatory process.

   During the first interview with a P.A. assistant from Laikipia constituency, the Italian author discovered what “baraza” was and then understood the central role that this practice plays in the whole communication process between the MPs and their constituencies.

   From the transcription of the interview:

   **PA**: ....then the MP is finally in the position to tell the locational committees, and to hold a Baraza in the specific location

   **Vincenzo**: what ?

   **PA**: a Baraza is a public gathering

   **Clement**: what are the topics of discussion in this forums ?

   **PA**: with regards to the constituency we talk about the projects that they want to do, they will talk about how their MP can help them in terms of national aspects........

   The “baraza” appear to be at same time: a place, an event, and a forum, therefore is “an essential node in the social network”.

   “The baraza (pl. mabaraza) is a feature of Zanzibar’s “public sphere”. In organizational terms, a baraza may represent different degrees of formality and informality, institutionalization, and abstractness. A baraza might be a simple (informal) “meeting” of people, but it could also be a “council”, or, in historical times, the “audience” of the Sultan of Zanzibar... finally, it could refer to a vast range of clubs, unions or associations.....In spacial terms a Baraza is a public or semi-public space where people meet to chat, communicate, quarrel, sit, similar to a “Piazza” in Italy “Agorà” in Greece or the “Majlis” in Arabia”[12].

   Regarding the use of Baraza in Kenya, Angelique Haugerud (The Culture of Politics in Modern Kenya. Cambridge University Press, 1995), explains that the “quasi-compulsory public meetings held at district and sub-division and location levels, baraza began in the colonial period as fora where officials address the public. In more recent times, baraza are addressed by politicians and civil servants and constitute the most frequent public meeting of elites and masses, of the state and its citizens.”[13].

   Mabaraza today continue to be held for all kinds of different reasons and are one of the most effective ways of reach citizens also in the most remote areas of the country. Mabaraza can be now held also by a single citizen or an NGOs or a Community Based Organizations (CBO), but only with the previous consensus of the district officer (D.O.) the local authority.
MPs in Kenya are holding mabaraza mainly when they have to communicate their political agenda, and when they have to discuss with citizens and CBO on how to allocate the resources coming from the Constituency Development Founds (CDF).

One of the main objectives of the CDF staff members should be to engage citizens in local debates and political decisions about allocation of funds and national policies.

On 16 PAs interviewed 13 defines baraza has the most used way to communicate with the citizens, furthermore in the perception of most of the PAs and COs baraza is also the most effective way of communicate with the constituents.

“Our policies? We use a lot of ways to communicate. The most effective is a baraza. We also have printouts of vision....” (Wajir East constituency).

For this reason we introduced other questions: about how they inform the public about incoming mabaraza, and how they store and distribute the contents of this meetings to citizens and journalists.

The findings:

3. To inform and organize a baraza, mobile phones are the most used media because they are able to support traditional networking strategies: “We have a representative per village, so this representative has a mobile phone, so when the MP wants to communicate with them he calls the representatives, they organize the meeting, then they speak ......we also use posters then we put it in the markets and churches” (Rarieda).

4. In other cases the constituency staff developed a complex media mix strategy. “We also have this public address system mounted on vehicles, so we prefer announcing our meetings ... We also have Musii FM which we also use to communicate our meetings”. (Kibwezi).

5. Only two constituency mentioned the use of email to inform about upcoming mabaraza, one of the them Kitutu Chache is located in Nyanza province, and developed an interesting media mix strategy to distribute newsletters which are also used to inform about incoming mabaraza:

“For project that we are trying to start, we take photos then we put it in those newsletters, is about project that have not been completed by the former MP; so after we evaluate the situation then we send the information. The objectives of the newsletter is to inform the constituents about projects we intend to initiate and we urge them to prioritize every village should prioritize which projects are fundamental, the newsletter is sent from Nairobi to the constituency office by email, then they photo copy it and they distribute an hard copy version of it in local churches, schools and different public spaces.” (Kitutu Chache).

6. Regarding the methods used to store and distribute public meetings contents and related citizens proposals: 8 PAs mentioned that within their staff there is a person that is in charge of using the video cameras to record mabaraza; 1 PA mentioned also the use of photo; 2 PAs mentioned the use of minutes, 1 mentioned the use of audio recording; 6 PAs do not record mabaraza.

7. In most cases the contents of the mabaraza are not distributed to the public/citizens but are used by the MPs to understand what’s going on on the ground when they are not there. In a few cases and occasions the contents are sent to the media.

This data is really interesting because shows the existence of a local video archive that could be uploaded on an Internet database to create an on-line video platform.

8. Other important findings are that 12 PAs on 16 consider the Internet not important at all to communicate within the constituency, 4 of them consider the Internet relatively important while 12 PAs consider Mobile Phone fundamental and 4 relatively important.
9. Radio is still considered fundamental by 15 PAs while only one responded that is relatively important. The role of community and vernacular radio stations is considered fundamental especially in engaging citizens, organizing a live public debate, reaching out to the broader audience, educating the masses and alerting the population in case of emergencies.

10. The Internet is considered more useful for fund raising because can be used to reach the international donors abroad, however is also considered useful to support debates and enhance transparency and accountability, but not in the current situation.

11. The mobile phone is considered the most rapid way to communicate with citizens and mobilize them.

12. Web-sites have already been developed: in 3 constituencies; 7 Constituencies are in the process of developing one; 2 Constituencies established a web-committee; 4 Constituencies don't have any plan to develop a website; 1 Constituency have a plan to build a public Internet access point.

13. Community radios like Pamoja FM, located in Langata constituency, are already using mobile phones and on-line relational database, to launch polls among the citizens and gather opinions from them. The system they use is provided by Kenyan mobile phone companies and works in this way: first journalists announce the poll on radio, then people call to the radio to express their opinion e.g. “How do you think your MP is performing?” (Pamoja FM Paoul Ohaga). To participate citizens have to pay 10 Kshs (around 0.15 US Dollars). Their opinions are registered and stored in an on-line database and at the end results are discussed again on radio. Around 200 people per day use to participate.

14. The fact that citizens are also paying to participate in the discussion, demonstrates again that there is a genuine demand of participation by citizens, and most importantly ensure also a long term sustainability of this possible eParticipation model.

15. In this moment these databases are managed by different radios and the access is limited only to their use, but they could also be used to develop a “Constituent Relationship Management System (CRMs)[14]”.

16. Most of the community and vernacular radios, are using this method to produce contents and engage their audience, this means that relational databases are filled everyday with an enormous amount of data that could be used by MPs and their staff members to better understand how citizens opinions are changing regarding different issues at local and national level.

1. This is a concrete opportunity for both, MPs and citizens, furthermore connecting these databases between each other would open new scenarios also for an hypothetical Parliamentary Information System (PIS).

The scenarios emerging from the PAs visions about how to use different technologies to inform and engage citizens, should give us a lot of directions on how to design process and customize already existing CMS.

The question was: How the Internet can empower the use of other already existing media (mobile phone – radio, video ....)?

The most interesting answers obtained by the research are the following ones:

1. “to store information from the mobile phone in internet for future use”

2. “send news to the Radio throughout the internet already in mp3 files format”

3. “use of free text messages on the internet to educate people on the mobile phones”
4. “discuss past topics that have been discussed on radio on the internet, get statistics”.

5. “use internet to research and passing the information to the local radios for translation and local distribution” (this practice is also defined Radio browsing).

6. “you can go to the website and get information about for example infrastructure, then the information you get you can communicate to the people through mobile phones”.

7. “the information gotten from the internet can be communicated to the constituents through the radio”.

8. “the same information gather trough internet can still be published in the local newspaper to reach many people”.

9. “the community radio can be streamed live from the constituency office through the internet....”

10. “the constituency tv can be posted on a V-Tube in the internet”

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, the authors will present the results of the research not only to show what the achievements are, but also how the model could be used to design a strategy.

Results:

- Organization: mabaraza can be the main source of informations
- Media mix: mobile phones and community radios are used to organize mabaraza and communicate their contents to a vast audience, the Internet is used to send informations - from Nairobi to the constituencies, once in the constituencies they are distributed in different formats: radio and printout.
- Radio and mobile phones are mostly used to mobilize people while the Internet is seen mostly as a found raising and a business to business tool rather then a media to communicate directly with citizens by most of the constituencies officers.
- Already existing data: radio have an enormous amount of information about citizens opinions and pools, constituency staff members are video recording mabaraza and store the videos off-line.

Recommendations:

**Strategies: An information system to engage citizens in Kenya should focus mainly on:**

1. inform the citizens about incoming mabaraza, using mob phones and radios
2. record mabaraza contents using video and audio
3. distribute contents and generate debates using radio browsing e.g. [http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cmc](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/cmc)
4. get feedback from citizens using mob phones and store it on-line
5. record and keep track of citizens opinions using relational database systems
6. connect different databases between each others to have a clear picture of citizens opinions and their trends at local and national level
7. MPs should allow their staff to upload all the contents about mabaraza online so that radio stations, tv and single citizens could have access to it
8. policy makers should use the data gathered to understand priorities and needs of the citizens
Activities:

In order to implement the strategies they should:
1. Customize an already existing Content Management System (CMS) in order to be used by the actors of the already mapped ecology.
2. Customize already existing Web 3.0 applications to develop a multi platform approach in order to use different media and different sources of data
3. Involve the users and producers in the design of the platform
4. Monitor and evaluate the project cycle using the 3 dimensions: organization, media mix, policy cycle

8. Conclusions and recommendations on how to implement an eparticipation project within and African-European Cooperation framework

EU agencies and other possible donors should develop a research framework for the implementation and post-evaluation of eParticipation projects in developing countries, based on the previous failures made in this field by all the government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors who tried to implement a system, but failed in both developing and developed countries.

Best practices are rare and are based on partisan studies/reports which are usually made or financed by the same agencies who implemented the project. For this reason, a research focused on failures instead of success (best practices) could be more useful for decision makers and project managers willing to invest in eParticipation projects.

The “Win-Win eParticipation model” (based on the realities gaps) is just one of the tools that can be used to identify the best media mix strategy within a specific socio-technological and political context, in order to implement a sustainable eParticipation project, but to be effective should be combined with other methods and models.

Other aspects regarding alternative tools which could be used during a pre-implementation and post-evaluation research, and how to establish effective categories and milestones to evaluate projects' achievements using the “Win-Win eParticipation model”, are not discussed in this paper and have not been developed yet. More time and major efforts should be spent to stimulate discussion about this model in order to continue this research and build specific categories/schemas for Parliaments and local authorities.

European researchers, project managers and policy makers should develop a similar approach not only for African countries, but also for European ones with the support of African researcher, project managers and policy makers. For too long the western world has taken for granted a set of assumptions about what and how international cooperation programmes should contribute to the development of a better society. An international cooperation project should not be based on the assumption that a particular model is more effective than another until that specific model has been tested in both contexts and compared to other existing models. Lessons about how to implement eParticipation projects can also be learned from developing countries.
Literature / References


[12] The Baraza a Grassroots Institution ISIM REVIEW 16/AUTUMN 2005
