

Outcomes of the Webinar on The Role of Youth in Public Debt Sustainability in Kenya post Covid-19

On 30 June 2020, Acepis hosted a webinar on The Role of Youth in Public Debt Sustainability in Kenya Post Covid-19. The webinar congregated over 100 participants consisting of youth and youth leaders from Think Tanks, CSOs and media. The key takeaways from the webinar are:

The debate on the growing public debt is long overdue:

Kenya is already experiencing the effects of debt overhang. The huge debt burden has limited the government's fiscal space to deliver public goods and services effectively. Consequently, county governments are being starved of funds and the government is unable to effectively respond to economic shocks such as the locust invasion and Covid-19 pandemic. Further, the debt is already affecting the economy negatively, with the incomes of young people with little work experience being the most affected.

The youth need to be more proactive in public finance management processes in Kenya:

More than ever, youth need to be more concerned with how government raises and expends public revenue. By taking advantage of constitutional provisions such as the right to access information and policy frameworks like the National Youth Policy, the youth can participate, interrogate government priorities and add their voice in Kenya's Fiscal Policy. Further, they can push the youth agenda through public participation platforms, sector-working groups and other engagement forums, and by engaging with the elected leaders and policymakers (MCAs, MPs and Senators). The budget process is now more open. It is up to the youth to be interested in engaging in the processes.

The myth that budget information is complex is not true:

Public finance information needs to be packaged in a friendly

format to capture the attention and interest of youth. Further, taking public finance management discussions to where and when youth are available – social media, entertainment scenes, sporting events, academic institutions, youth groups and organizations, etc. can help enhance their understanding and involvement in the processes.

The media has a role to play:

Media should sustain conversations on Public Finance Management throughout the year and not limit them to the budget-reading period in June. Further, the media and the government can work together to expound and simplify budget information and present the same in a language the youth can understand.

The youth can create alternative platforms for engagement:

The youth can also create their own platforms for engagement and plug into the mainstream media platforms or leverage alternative media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, etc. for the engagements. Youth CSOs can also partner with other CSOs and stakeholders in analyzing Public Finance Information and package the information in creative and appealing forms for youthful audiences. They can then engage and interest the youth within the communities in Public Finance Management. However, these engagements and deliberations need to be followed by actions – policy suggestions and keeping their local leaders accountable.



Going Forward

Acepis seeks to sustain conversations on how youth can participate in Kenya's public finance management. We aim to do this by:

1. Holding **more forums** on Public Finance Management involving young people.
2. **Reaching out** to CSOs, youth groups and Community-based Organizations to **create a movement** aimed at igniting the interest of young people to participate in Public Finance Management processes.
3. **Researching** how public debt and overall finance management affects the delivery of public goods and services, particularly to the youth.
4. **Disseminating** public debt and overall public finance management **information** for the public, packaging, and presenting the information in more appealing formats.

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