



# Policy Changes for Economic Empowerment of the Marginalized Groups in Isiolo County, Kenya

Location:

Isiolo county,  
Kenya

Partners:

Cordaid

Author:

MID-P/Ibrahim  
Kabelo



During the dissemination of Act in Kinna, Isiolo County  
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**The Kenyan Constitution 2010 and Disability Act no.14 of 2003 provides different guarantees to Persons with Disability (PWD) in Kenya. In Isiolo County, the inclusion of PWDs in a meaningful development agenda has been a major challenge due to a failure by PWDs to understand and utilize the available opportunities as provided by the law. To address these obstacles, Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P), through the Department of Culture and Social Services, organized a Lobby and Advocacy training for PWDs from the 10 Wards of Isiolo County.**

The training was tailored to put into consideration achievements of the following objectives:

- Enable leaders of Disable Persons' Organizations (DPOs) understand the principles of group leadership and dynamics
- Enables the leaders of different DPOs understand the existing legal instruments that protect PWDs
- Enables the leaders of DPOs to understand the existing opportunities that aim at empowering PWDs.

One of the action plans from the training was to come up with a Bill/ policy that supports the marginalized members of society. In 2019, *The Isiolo County Youth, Women and Persons with Disability Enterprises Development Fund Act and Regulations 2019* was passed. The law provides the establishment of a Youth, Women and Persons with Disabilities Enterprise Development Fund and promotes new and existing micro and small businesses and industries. The aim is to increase household income, improving living standards in reference to persons with disability - who are perceived to be a burden to the community because of their dependency on others, inability to have a reliable source of income and who often lack opportunities to access finance to do business.

*"This Fund is of great interest to the County Government. As you know empowering a woman is empowering the nation. We challenge the women to take advantage of the opportunity to access financial services for their businesses- an interest free loan especially for the Muslims."- Mustafa Kuntulo*



[www.partnersforresilience.nl](http://www.partnersforresilience.nl) | [partnersforresilience@redcross.nl](mailto:partnersforresilience@redcross.nl)



CEC Youth, Women and PWD addressing during PWD training  
Photo credit:

*"H.E Dr. Mohamed Kuti has promised to empower and support vulnerable groups of society. The County Government has allocated 18 million for a fund to support business owned and operated by youth, women and persons with disability. This will increase household income hence improving living standard." - Mustafa Kuntulo.*

The enterprise fund money is allocated through each cycle of the County Integrated Development Plan and funds are transferred from Isiolo County Revenue Account to the main account of Isiolo County youth fund, women and persons with disabilities enterprise development funds. In the 2019/2020 financial year, County Government of Isiolo allocated KES 8 million for utilization by women, KES 6 million for youth and, KES 4 million for persons with disability of a total of 18 million revolving fund.

MID-P, through the support of Cordaid/ PfR supported the dissemination of the draft Act among 120 members, comprising of group representatives in Kinna, Merti and central wards to enhance the understanding of the Act. The participants as a result developed action plans on how to access the fund from the County Government. The process of establishing the institutional frameworks are in the progress so that the fund can be released to groups before the end of this financial year 2018-2019. Mr. Mustafa Kuntulo, the Chief Officer for the Department of Culture and Social Services, participated in the dissemination meetings which were organized by PfR at grassroots level. He emphasized the commitment of the Department and support of the County Government of Isiolo under the leadership of the Governor of Isiolo, and he thanked the Isiolo County Assembly for enacting the Act and Regulations.

The commitment of the department is to ensure that those vulnerable groups who need this finance most, are supported through trainings and mentorship to increase entrepreneurial skills to create an impactful business. The Chief Officer said, *"This fund is of great interest to the County Government. As you know empowering woman is empowering the nation. We challenge the women to take advantage of the opportunity to access financial services for their businesses - an interest free loan especially for beneficiaries from Islamic faith. Youths are the upcoming generation and also have high population. The capacity building component of the fund will focus on improving talent and innovations, therefore on developing youth entrepreneurship skills which will create more business opportunities. We would like our partners like MID-P to walk with us."*

Great to see that the county government is making these provisions for people who often have difficulties accessing loans: as it is an interest free loan, also Muslim women have access to these funds. For young people and PWD these funds provide the opportunity to make use of their capacities.

