



# Business unusual at the CSO coordination forum in Isiolo

Location:

Isiolo County,  
Kenya

Partners:

MID-P

Author:

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Convener of Isiolo County CSO Network Abdullahi Shandey (left) and County Secretary Dr. Ahmed Galgalo in a discussion.  
Photo credit: MID-P



Representatives of Isiolo County Civil Society Network during one of their consultative meetings.  
Photo credit: MID-P

**For more than 30 years Mr James Galgalo has been working in the civil society, it never crossed his mind that one day, non-State actors would sit on one table with Government officials to discuss development.**

*"Isiolo network of CSOs is now being invited to contribute in the county's Annual Development Plan. Here, we deliberate on the county's annual budget and how to get it incorporated in addressing some of the community needs."*

*James Galgalo,  
Director, Caritas-Isiolo.*

But this dream he never dreamt of has come to pass in Isiolo County where Civil Society Organizations, previously branded State enemies in Kenya are now key contributors to the County Government's development agenda.

Mr Galgalo is the Director of Caritas-Isiolo and serves in the position of the chairperson at Isiolo County Civil Society Network (ICCN). The network of CSOs was launched two years ago, bringing under one umbrella 60 organizations working in the County. It brings on board Non-Governmental Organizations, Faith-Based Organizations and Community Based Organizations.

This network was formed after Isiolo County Government requested Cordaid through the Partners of Resilience (PfR) programme to support a stakeholders' meeting for mapping of CSOs. The County Executive had identified coordination of CSOs as a challenge due to lack of database detailing who is doing what and where in the County.

It was envisaged that the mapping of the CSO and their activities would improve coordination, identify areas of partnership and work together in future projects to enhance impact and avoid duplication of roles.

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Isiolo Deputy Governor Dr Abdi Issa addressing ICCN quarterly meeting.  
Photo credit MID-P

*“The relationship between the CSO and County Government is at its best and the administration will continue to create a friendly environment to facilitate CSOs, development partners and private sectors to support the Government policies to deliver services. Plans are at an advanced stage to strengthen the relationship through a creation of a Directorate.”  
Dr. Ahmed Galgalo, Isiolo County Secretary.*

Prior to this request, a link had been established with the Isiolo County Government, having signed an MOU with Cordaid, on the development of its first Disaster Risk Management Policy

A meeting facilitated by Cordaid held on May 22, 2018 and attended by 30 CSOs saw the birth of ICCN. Merti Integrated Development Programme (MID-P), one of the implementers of P4R programmes in the County was given the role of coordinating all CSOs working in Isiolo County as well as lead agency in development of education.

Other CSOs allocated roles as lead agencies included Action Aid-Kenya (Economic Empowerment), Cordaid (Environment & Climate Change), Regal AG (Livestock and Agriculture) and LVIA (Water).

Gender Watch was picked to be the lead agency in Gender, Culture & Youth, ACF would lead health activities in the county while Pastoralist Women for Health and Education would coordinate Governance/Cohesion, Civic Education and Public Participation.

As the coordinator of the network, MID-P was given a central role for Integrated Risk Management policy dialogue. As an action plan, sub sector groups were formed according to thematic areas for easy coordination and deepening strategies on how all CSOs' would be meeting on quarterly basis for learning and information sharing. This translated to a high level of collaboration among CSOs members and the County Government.

County Secretary Dr Ahmed Galgalo called on the ICCN members to ensure the network survives beyond 2022 when the term of the current county political leadership comes to an end.



*"This network that brings all CSOs on board has assisted in mapping and re-aligning their activities to be in tandem with the eight main departments of the County Government for both visibility and improved services with greater impact to the communities CSOs serve."*  
*Abdullahi Shandey, MID-P Executive Director.*

He advised that programmes and projects of the CSOs should be aligned to the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and sector working groups should be strengthened and established where none exists.

According to Dr Galgalo, the work of CSOs is recognized especially in legislation and they should be inspired to influence the implementation of favourable legislation that would spur development.

Based on the sentiments of the County Secretary, ICCN coordinator and MID-P Executive Director Abdullahi Shandey, promised that the Network will continue to uphold commitment towards a common agenda.

He said with the expected joint implementation of advocacy work on IRM, all the ICCN members will have the advantage of contributing to a common pool of resources under the climate change fund.

