



Next Steps for Siasa Place

2018 - 2022



VigilantYouth

Venue: Aga Khan Graduate School of Media

Date: February 16th 2018

Introduction:

In 2017, Siasa Place (SP) focused heavily on our online campaigns by having weekly conversations discussing current matters while educating on the constitution.

Although the start to our online engagement was a bit slow, we began to understand our audience. Majority of online users are youth and we wanted to utilize online space to connect and engage them on informational content that kept our audience interactive. Lessons learned: We changed the chat times on various occasions until we found a formula that worked conveniently for our audience and also for us. We also began to invite different voices on the platform to discuss a variety of topical issues.

Writing:

During this same period we also began a writing program called 'Election Safari' that captured experiences of 6 selected youth around the country from August 2016 to October 2017. We wanted to understand what youth found important during the electoral period, how they receive informa-

tion and the experiences that they underwent during the year. Researchers sifted through 50 journal entries and identified key recurring themes have been compiled and will be made accessible to the public to read and share.

Findings:

- *Voter Bribery*; Use of government branded merchandise from tea, salt, maize flour, matchboxes, liquor etc to bribe voters
- *Public Resources in campaigns* - used in areas with a lot of support/diversion from areas of low support Religion – the manipulation by religious leaders in rural areas in determining who the congregation should vote for.
- *Elders to get endorsements from elders* is huge as they play old hereditary politics and the entry of 'ordinary' wananchi surprises status quo
- Election Promises - refusal to be lied to (squatters refusing to register as voters)
- Individuals refusing to take last minute cheques from a never present MP
- Plenty of examples of electioneering violence such as paying of hecklers, damaging/covering opponent campaign material
- The power of social media really stood out

in many entries and how tools for rumor mongering are used.

- *Women in politics:*
 - a) perception among men that 'chamas' are negative influences
 - b) That electing a woman married elsewhere means resources will be diverted
 - c) Use of song and dance to address social political issue
- Different interpretations of the constitution during an election period which just made it confusing for many youth.

Information from the publication gave us insight when it comes to young people's perspectives during an election period which we hope to utilize and find beneficial ways of engaging youth moving forward. This information was shared during this event while we also utilized the opportunity to:

- I. Network, collaborate and engage with potential partners, donors and stakeholders
- II. A learning engagement that was interactive, as well as gather information from participants

Below is some of the information we collected during the activities session:

In your opinion when was the best run election in Kenya?

- 1968
- 1992
- **2002 – 40**
- 2010
- 2013 – 5
- 2017 – August
- 2032
- 2037
- None - 6

Out of 57 responses, 70 % believe that 2002 held the best election

What was the election to you in one word?

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Depressing | • Disappointing |
| • Sh** - 2 | • Running battle |
| • Unconstitutional | • Dramatic -2 |
| • Tiring | • Depressing |
| • Frustrating - 3 | • Theatrical |
| • Confusing - 3 | • Messy |
| • Interesting - 2 | • Hotly contested |
| • Cluster f*** | • Scripted |
| • Corrupt | • Fake |
| • Coronation -2 | • Long - 3 |
| • Treacherous | • Terrible |
| • Deflection | • Disappointing - 2 |
| • Numbing | • Just a formality |
| • Unsettling | • Messed up – 2 |
| • Flawed | • There was no election – 2 |
| • Joke | • Telenovela |
| • Sinister | • Tour de force |
| • Sham – 3 | • Fraudulent |
| • Rigged | |
| • Ridiculous | |

The most common words were, frustrating, confusing, long and sham

Words to describe the political scene in Kenya

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| • Tiring | • House of Cards |
| • Hopeful | • Mean -2 |
| • Tribal -3 | • Drama |
| • Sexist | • Idiotic Chaos |
| • I haven't done enough to make things better | • Circus |
| • Chaotic | • Mess – 2 |
| • Controversial | • Contest |
| • Fraud | • We have hit rock bottom |
| • Utter impunity | • Pathetic |
| • Sham | • Shameful |
| • Elitist | • Growing pains |
| • Captured | • Not inclusive |
| • Developing | • Nonsensical |
| • Encouraging | • Despotism |
| • Apprehensive | • Desperate |
| • Confusing – 4 | • Uncertain of the future |
| • Unbelievable | • Scary |
| • Dream killer | • Shriill |
| • Messy | • Suicide Squad |

- F***** - 3
- S***** - 3
- Selfish - 5
- Loading
- Chaotic
- Tense

The event was graced by our board through Orwa Michael who introduced SP and what we would like to do in the next few years to come also inviting stakeholders to partner and strategize with us in ways to collaborate and promote public participation in the country among youth.

Dr. Alex Awiti gave an interesting conversation about how Kenyans take for granted the most basic things around us, he gave an example of how majority of people living in Nairobi use matatus. The vehicles are not well maintained, several of them are dirty and drive dangerously yet average citizens do not see a problem with that and use them daily. We need to awaken young people to recognize that the way things are done in several areas of our lives can be changed especially if they decide to actively participate to engage and change it.

Nanjala Nyabola gave a unique insight on how we are always too hard on ourselves.

That change is a slow process and we should not always beat ourselves as Kenyans too hard too often about changing things because it is our fault. It is not necessarily just our fault to see the way things have turned out in our country looking at our political context.

Result:

The event was a success, we had 90 people in attendance as well as trended No.1 in the country on twitter for 6hours. SP also managed to share the plans that they have for the next few years as well as interact with entities willing and interested to collaborate on future projects with the organization.

Priority to our activities is grassroots engagements with the youth. We have identified 10 counties to host forums, targeting 50 youth in each county. This year, we will reach atleast 500 youth, distribute no less than 500 constitutions and educate them on the importance of public participation and mobilization around policies specific to their issue.



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