



Policy Brief

Thinking Policy Together

No. 130/2024/2025

Devolution Achievement at 10 years for Laikipia County

By Dire Dika Bilala and Abdifatah Omar Maalim

Overview of the County

Devolution achievement at 10 years was assessed through the computation of the Devolution Achievement Index (DAI). Laikipia County covers an area of 9,532.2 km² and ranks as the 15th largest County in the country by land size. It borders Samburu County to the North, Isiolo County to the Northeast, Meru County to the East, Nyeri County to the Southeast, Nyandarua County to the South, Nakuru County to the Southwest, and Baringo County to the West. The annual average rainfall varies between 635mm and 1,210mm. According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC) by KNBS, Laikipia County had a total population of 518,560 persons comprising 259,440 males, 259,102 females, and 18 intersex.

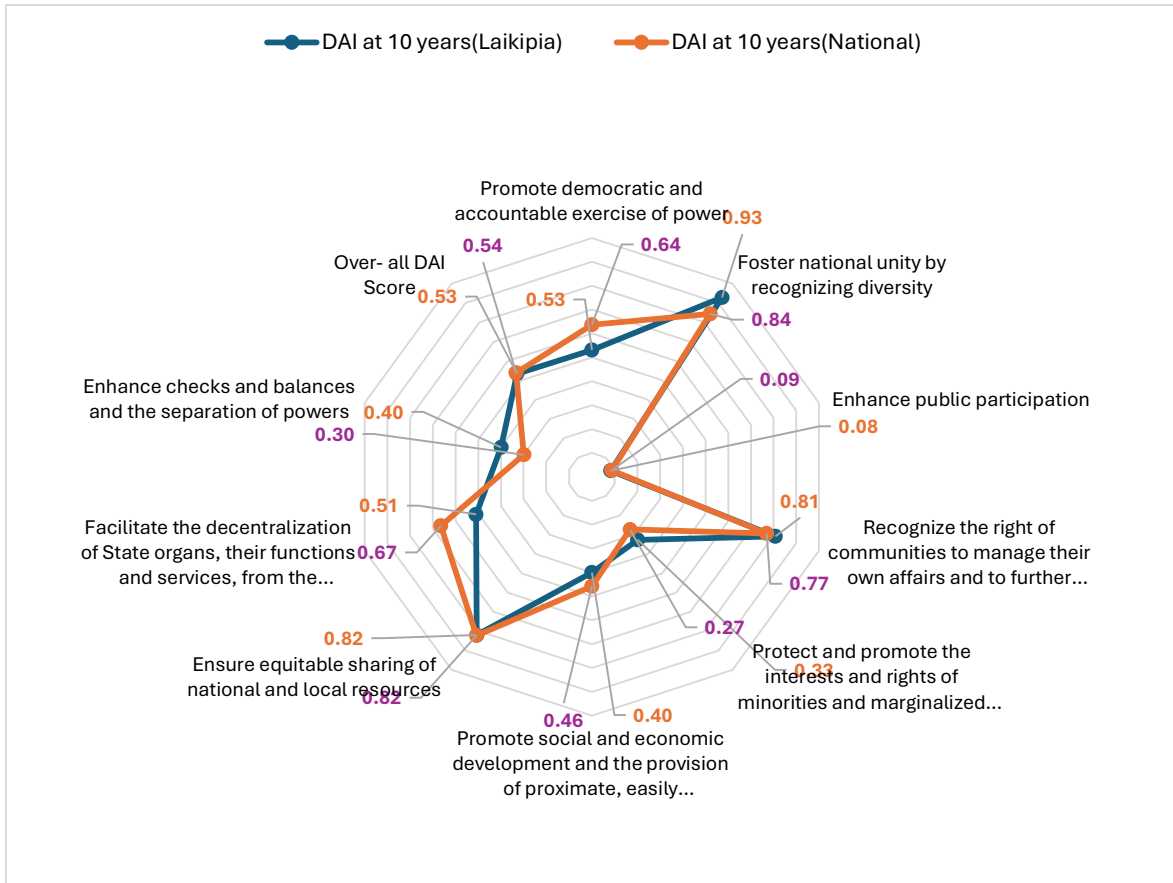
Key Highlights

The county score for the overall index was 0.53. The county performed well in the following objects: recognizing the right of communities to manage their affairs and to further their development (0.81), ensuring equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout the county (0.82), and fostering national unity by recognizing diversity (0.93). The county did not perform well in enhancing public participation (0.08), protecting and promoting the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities (0.33), promoting social and economic development, and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services

throughout the county (0.40) and enhancing checks and balances and the separation of powers (0.40).

Figure 1 summarizes the score for the various pillars that reflect the objectives of devolution as spelt out in the constitution. It compares the county score with the average national score.

Figure 1: DAI at 10 years scores for National and Laikipia County



Data source: KIPPRA (Devolution at 10 years: Achievements and Opportunities for Kenya, 2024)

To deepen the devolution process, there is a need to:

- Promote democratic and accountable exercise of power object, review and strengthen the public procurement legal and regulatory frameworks to enhance compliance in both the County Executive and County Assembly and implement regular audits and assessments of procurement processes in the county. Further,

provide targeted training for county executives on public procurement regulations and the consequences of non-compliance.

- Enhance public participation, provide training resources to enhance the provision and use of the digital infrastructure, and ensure all notices and reports are easily accessible to the public including publishing them on the county website.
- Improve the representation of the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities, implement an affirmative action that enhances the representation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in public service. Additionally, expand ICT infrastructure and fast-track electricity connectivity through the rural electrification programme.
- Promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout county objects, scale up the implementation of physical plans by investing in sanitation infrastructure to adequately enhance access to sanitation services by the unserved and underserved populations, and increase funding for road networks.
- Facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions, and services, from the capital of Kenya object, allocate additional resources to set up new Huduma centres and upgrade existing ones, especially in areas outside county headquarters, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Huduma centres in improving access to government services, adjusting strategies as needed.
- Enhance checks and balances by developing standardized guidelines for the passage of bills and acts complemented with capacity-building programmes for members and staff of county assembly that focus on the legislative process and the importance of checks and balances. These actions aim to create a more structured and transparent legislative environment, ensuring that all legislative activities are conducted fairly and efficiently.

Introduction

The Constitution of Kenya outlines the objectives of devolution in Article 174, which includes promoting the democratic and accountable exercise of power, fostering national unity by recognizing diversity, empowering self-governance for the people, enhancing public participation in state affairs, recognizing community rights to manage their affairs, protecting the interests of minorities and marginalized communities, promoting social and economic development, ensuring equitable resource sharing, decentralizing state functions, and enhancing checks and balances. The Devolution Achievement Index (DAI) provides a framework to assess the progress made in achieving these goals over the past ten years. It identifies the successes and challenges encountered in implementing devolution at the county level and offers policy recommendations to address these challenges. By evaluating these indicators across the nine objects of devolved governance, the DAI serves as a vital tool for enhancing accountability, promoting inclusivity, and ensuring that the benefits of devolution are realized by all citizens. This alignment with the constitutional objectives reinforces the importance of devolution to foster equitable development and strengthen democratic governance in Kenya.

Promote Democratic and Accountable Exercise of Power

The score for promoting democratic and accountable exercise of power object at 10 years was 0.53. Compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for the county executive, compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for the county assembly, and the voter turnout indicators declined in the second county government compared to the first county government.

Table 1: Comparison of DAI first-county and second-county governments scores for the promoting democratic and accountable exercise of power object indicators

Indicators	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for county executive	0.37	0.11	0.24
Compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for county assembly	0.81	0.43	0.62
Voter turnout	0.81	0.65	0.73
Promoting democratic and accountable exercise of power object	0.66	0.40	0.53

Areas of Concern

- i. A low and declining compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for the county executive.
- ii. A low and decline in compliance with the public procurement legal and regulatory framework for the county assembly.
- iii. Reduced voter turnout.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Review and strengthen the public procurement legal and regulatory frameworks to enhance compliance in both county executive and county assembly.
- ii. Implement regular audits and assessments of procurement processes in the county.
- iii. Provide targeted training for the county executive on public procurement regulations and the consequences of non-compliance.
- iv. Implement voter education programmes to increase awareness and participation during elections.

- v. Implement mechanisms to ensure continuity in governance practices across different county government regimes.

Foster National Unity by Recognizing Diversity

The score for Laikipia County on fostering national unity by recognizing diversity object at 10 years was 0.93. Only the percentage of female members of the county executive indicator experienced a decline.

Table 2: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for fostering national unity by recognizing diversity object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Percentage of minority ethnic group	0.76	0.94	0.85
Female members of county assembly (elected and nominated)	1.00	1.00	1.00
Female members of the county executive	1.00	0.86	0.93
Fostering national unity by recognizing diversity object	0.92	0.93	0.93

Area of Concern

A decline in the representation of female members of county executive.

Policy Recommendation

Establish oversight committees to monitor diversity and inclusion efforts within the county.

Giving Powers of Self-governance to the People and Enhancing Public Participation

The score for Laikipia County on public participation object was 0.08. There were no public participation reports published on the county website in the first county and second county governments.

Table 3: Comparison of DAI in the first county and second county government scores for the public participation object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Public participation notices published on the county website	0.00	0.33	0.17
Public participation reports published on the county website	0.00	0.00	0.00
Enhancing public participation object	0.00	0.17	0.08

Areas of Concern

- i. Low publication of public participation notices on the county website.
- ii. Not publishing public participation reports on the county website.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Mandate the regular publication of public participation notices and reports online.
- ii. Provide training and resources to the county government to improve its digital infrastructure and ensure that all notices and reports are easily accessible to the public.

Recognize the Right of Communities to Manage Their Affairs and Further Their Development

The overall score for recognizing the right of communities to manage their affairs and to further their development for Laikipia County was 0.81. All indicators experienced high performance except non-poverty incidence.

Table 4: Comparison of DAI in the first county and second county government scores for recognizing the right of communities to manage their affairs and to further their development object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Adult literacy rates	0.80	0.78	0.78
Non-poverty incidence	0.54	0.65	0.60
Percentage of non-stunted children	0.85	1.00	1.00
Percentage of own source revenue (OSR) against targeted revenues	0.82	0.86	0.86
Recognize the right of communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development object	0.75	0.82	0.81

Area of Concern

High and increasing poverty incidence in the county.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Strengthen the county's social safety nets and economic empowerment programmes.
- ii. Enhance access to microcredit, vocational training, and entrepreneurship opportunities to lift people from poverty.

Protect and Promote the Interests and Rights of Minorities and Marginalized

The score for Laikipia County on protecting and promoting the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized object at 10 years was 0.33. The scores for all indicators remained low.

Table 5: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for protecting and promoting the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
PWDs Representation in the public service	-	0.26	0.26
Percentage of households with internet connection	0.32	0.29	0.29
Percentage of households with electricity connectivity	0.40	0.42	0.42
Protect and promote the interests and rights of minorities and marginalized communities object	0.36	0.36	0.33

Key: (-) data not available

Areas of Concern

- i. Representation of PWDs in public service is low.
- ii. A low percentage of households with internet connection.
- iii. A low percentage of households with electricity connectivity.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Implement affirmative action policies to increase the representation of PWDs in the public service.
- ii. Ensure accessibility in public facilities and workplaces to encourage more PWDs to participate in the public service.
- iii. Fast-track the implementation of county connectivity Project Phase III to enhance ICT infrastructure coverage.
- iv. Fast-track rural electrification programmes to improve electricity access.

Promote Social and Economic Development and the Provision of Proximate, Easily Accessible Services throughout the County

The score for Laikipia County on promoting social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout the county object at 10 years was 0.40. The scores for access to improved sanitation and share of paved roads indicators remained low.

Table 6: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for promoting social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout the county object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Access to improved water	0.70	0.64	0.67
Access to improved sanitation	0.40	0.42	0.41
Share of paved roads	0.10	0.14	0.12
Promoting social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout the county object	0.40	0.40	0.40

Areas of Concern

- i. A low access to improved sanitation.
- ii. A low share of paved roads.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Scale up the implementation of physical plans by investing in sanitation infrastructure to adequately enhance access to sanitation services by the unserved and underserved populations.
- ii. Establish a coordination framework to enhance collaboration among players in the water and sanitation sector at both the county and national level as well as development partners.
- iii. Increase funding for road networks.

Ensure Equitable Sharing of National and Local Resources throughout the County

The score for Laikipia County on ensuring equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout the county object at 10 years was 0.82. The county experienced high scores in all the indicators with the percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel improving significantly.

Table 7: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for ensuring equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout county object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Percentage of exchequer issues to budget	0.81	0.77	0.77
Percentage of births attended by skilled health personnel	0.59	0.93	0.93
Primary net enrolment ratio	0.80	0.76	0.76
Ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout the county object	0.73	0.82	0.82

Areas of Concern

- i. A decline in the percentage of exchequer issues to budget.
- ii. A decline in the primary net enrolment ratio.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Strengthen capacity building initiatives to ensure effective utilization of allocated resources in the county.
- ii. Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to track the impact of resource distribution on development outcomes.
- iii. Implement full free primary education.

Facilitate the Decentralization of State Organs, their Functions, and Services, from the Capital of Kenya

The score for Laikipia County on facilitating the decentralization of State organs, their functions, and services, from the capital of Kenya object at 10 years was 0.51. The County had a higher score in the attainment of the Abuja declaration on health budget allocation. However, established Huduma centres and the attainment of the Maputo Protocol on agriculture budget allocation had lower scores.

Table 8: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for facilitating the decentralization of State organs, their functions, and services, from the capital of Kenya object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Established Huduma centres	0.33	0.33	0.33
Attainment of Abuja declaration on health budget allocation	0.73	0.89	0.81
Attainment of Maputo Protocol on agriculture budget allocation	0.29	0.48	0.38
Facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions, and services, from the capital of Kenya object	0.45	0.57	0.51

Areas of Concern

- i. The inadequate number of established Huduma centres.
- ii. Low attainment of the Maputo Protocol on agriculture budget allocation.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Allocate additional resources to set up new Huduma centres and upgrade existing ones, especially in areas outside the county headquarter.
- ii. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of Huduma centres in improving access to government services, and adjust strategies as needed.
- iii. Increase budgetary expenditures in agriculture.

Enhance Checks and Balances and the Separation of Powers

The score for the county on enhancing checks and balances and the separation of powers object at 10 years was 0.40. The number of Bills passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances indicator declined significantly, while the number of Acts passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances remained low for both county governments.

Table 9: Comparison of DAI first county and second county government scores for enhancing checks and balances and the separation of powers object indicators

Indicator	First county government	Second county government	Overall
Number of Bills passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances	0.64	0.23	0.44
Number of Acts passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances	0.39	0.33	0.36
Enhance checks and balances and the separation of powers object	0.52	0.28	0.40

Areas of Concern

- i. A low and declining number of Bills passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances.
- ii. A low number of Acts passed by the County Assembly that effectively establish checks and balances.

Policy Recommendations

- i. Develop standardized guidelines for the passage of Bills that help to establish checks and balances in the county government.
- ii. Provide capacity building programmes for the County Assembly, focusing on the legislative process and the importance of checks and balances.

Reference

Devolution at 10 years: Achievements and Opportunities for Kenya (2024)

Acknowledgments

The authors acknowledge the special contributions and guidance provided by Dr Rose Ngugi (Executive Director, KIPPRA) throughout the entire process of preparing the county brief.

About KIPPRA Policy Briefs

KIPPRA Policy Briefs are aimed at a wide dissemination of the Institute's policy research findings. The findings are expected to stimulate discussion and also build capacity in the public policy making process in Kenya.

KIPPRA acknowledges generous support from the Government of Kenya, and development partners who have continued to support the Institute's activities over the years.

For More Information Contact:

Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis
Bishops Road, Bishops Garden Towers
P.O. Box 56445-00200, Nairobi
Tel: 2719933/4, Cell: 0736712724, 0724256078
Email: admin@kippra.or.ke
Website: <http://www.kippra.org>
Twitter: @kippra.kenya