

GOVERNING PLASTICS NETWORK - POLICY BRIEF

COUNTRY: KENYA

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Project Information

The Governing Plastics Network is a project jointly created by the University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Surrey in the UK.

Funding partners: UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) through the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and the UKRI/GCRF, AHRC, EPSRC and UGPN.

Project Objectives: To help national partners to improve plastic pollution governance by identifying best practices on communication strategies and governance structures.

Key activities: 1) Map key national stakeholders and identify the most influential. 2) Analyse key stakeholder communication strategies and how they have affected the country's governance. 3) Analyse the country's governance frameworks relating to single use plastic and identify opportunities for improvement.

Global Project Results

Diagnostic: Despite the advanced legal frameworks in single use plastic there are two main implementation problems: 1) Cultural adherence 2) Law enforcement.

Successful cases: The project identified two types of campaigns that work well: 1) National/regional entrepreneurs that have become key plastic celebrities; 2) international NGOs that define local/global messages focused on refusing plastics and promoting alternative entrepreneurship ideas.

Implications for policy and recommendations:

- Establish a network of key plastic ambassadors (including NGOs and key entrepreneurs)
- Work on local but unified messages related to refusing plastics, promoting a shift to a circular economy and the possibilities of using alternatives to plastics.
- Support key symbolic material: involve civil society and artist in creating a new anti-plastic symbology.

National Project Results

Diagnostic: Even though the Government is beginning to move to the frontline in dealing with plastic issues; the role of individuals and the private sector cannot be undermined since both informal and private actors are involved in plastic pollution, supply of raw material to plastic production system and plastic waste management.

Successful cases: Two successful actors were identified in Kenya as;

1. James Wakibia

An Environmental activist and a photo journalist driven by passion to protect the environment from the threats of plastic pollution. Speaking to the UN he said that he [literally became obsessed with demanding for a complete ban in Single-Use plastic bags](#). He is credited with inspiring Kenya's plastic ban (2017). Mr. Wakibia used **diverse communication strategies** to influence behaviour change and plastic ban as indicated below:

- Plastic Ban campaigns article and messaging <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-environment-pollution-plastic-idUSKBN17Y1RK>,
- He actively used his twitter handle to share photos, videos and messages around plastic pollution. Twitter @JamesWakibi: <https://twitter.com/jameswakibia?lang=en>
- He became known to Kenyans as the man behind the trending hashtag that led to the Plastic bag ban [#BanPlasticKe](#)
- He embraced photography and different members of the public (taking photos of individual with placards and uploading on social media) to drive plastic messages and enhance individual responsibility [#ISupportBanPlasticKe](#)
- Participated in clean up and captured photos and videos of clean up and Pollution at Nakuru Sewerage Treatment Plant, calling upon a Rethink in strategy [#RethinkPlastics](#)
- As the campaign ambassador, he contributor to success of Fliplopi dhow sailing concept as a way to encourage communities to embrace alternative uses of plastic waste [#RethinkPlastics](#)
- Wakibia worked with Fliplopi among other partners towards revolutionising plastics [#PlasticRevolution](#)
- Calling upon the public to compel government towards the ban on plastic bags by signing [Petitions](#)

Wakibia also embraced a multi-media approach which combined different elements such as text, audio, images, animations and video into a single communication process which captured attention, enhanced interaction and inspired action by the government and other stakeholders.

Wakibia is an indication that legal regulation which ideally focuses on change of behaviour through fear of sanctions or desire for rewards can also be achieved indirectly by riding on the already perceived behaviour where the change of behaviour would be experienced due to communication strategies.

2. Kenya Association of Manufacturers

A private organization that represents the manufacturing and value-add industries in Kenya. The plastic sector is one of the 14 manufacturing sectors represented by KAM. Having an advocacy unit for driving fact-based policy advocacy on industrial policies, they are influencing policies around plastics and becoming a benchmark to neighbouring countries and across the world.

- Through KAM there has been consistent use of messages such as *TrashRight*, “**Protect our environment, Recycle Plastics**” *RecycleRight* and include #Strides2Sustainability. KAM has used media such as billboards, social media, engagement fora, websites, adverts, banners and report to create awareness about proper management of plastic waste.
- It is such **communication strategies** by KAM that has set the pace for enactment of regulations to curb the dangers of plastic pollution. For example, the erection of billboards at strategic points along the highways which are often heavy traffic zones; a billboard along Nakuru-Naivasha highway on anti-littering and proper disposal of plastic waste and along Thika Super Highway on waste segregation
- **Policy change at the National level** - - In November 2019, KAM published an industry led Kenya Plastic Action Plan whose focus is to promote a circular economy.
- **Policy change at the County level** - To promote waste management across the country, KAM continues to directly engage County Governments to present and sensitize Counties on the Model County Solid Waste Management Policy and Bill developed in partnership with the Kenya Alliance of Residents Association (KARA).
- At the moment KAM has already influenced several counties such as Uasin Gishu and Meru counties who are already in approval of the bill. Through meetings, KAM has also engaged the National Solid Waste Management Technical Committee to discuss its proposals on the National Solid Waste Management Bill 2019. KAM urged the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to hold more engagements on the Bill to ensure private sector feedback is incorporated and to allow more research to be carried out on the best policy on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Schemes.

Implications for policy and recommendations:

- **Plastic revolution** calls for combined communication efforts of various stakeholders; individuals, private sector, NGO and Government alike. Therefore, having an engagement framework will ensure optimal contribution to plastic waste management.
- **Public sensitization and awareness campaigns** are key to behaviour change and individual action.
- Policies around **privatization of waste management** would be of great impact in streamlining the process and enhancing quality and speed

towards a circular economy.

- The **progressive policy environment** on plastics is needed to ensure the policies enacted are put into action and accountability demanded from the custodians. This will also inform harmonization of policies and regulations.
- Waste segregation problem calls for **strategies and legal frameworks** that advocate for segregation at the collection points or at source.
- An **enhanced link and more collaboration** between the national and the county government to realise plastic governance/waste management.

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