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**The Synergy between the Cooperative Movement and Devolved Units in the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya**

By

<sup>1</sup>Rose Namikoye Masibili

Tutorial Fellow, Mount Kenya University

School of Business and Economics

Email: [rmasibili@mku.ac.ke](mailto:rmasibili@mku.ac.ke), Mobile no: +254702595738, P.O Box 342 Thika

<sup>2</sup>Tobias Ochieng

Tutorial Fellow, Mount Kenya University

School of Business and Economics

Email: [tochieng@mku.ac.ke](mailto:tochieng@mku.ac.ke), Mobile no: +254702921076, P.O Box 342 Thika

<sup>3</sup>Prof Pamela Ochieng,

Mount Kenya University, School of Education

Email: [pochieng@mku.ac.ke](mailto:pochieng@mku.ac.ke), Mobile no: +254722577037, P.O Box 342 Thika

**Abstract**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emanated from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio. It aimed at producing universal objectives that met the environmental, political and economic challenges facing the world. This paper focuses on the role that devolved units at the county level play in achieving sustainable development goals in Kenya, through cooperatives and saving societies. For the SDGs to be effectively implemented there is need for active participation of citizens in their individual and collective capacities. Cooperatives provide a platform to achieve this as they aim at pooling together resources from individuals who participate in similar economic activities and have common goals. Considering that the cooperatives are organized structures established, as efficient channels through which SDGs can be implemented at the grass-root level. The paper focused on analyzing SDG 1. No poverty 2, decent work and economic growth and 12 on responsible consumption and production. The cooperative principles promote self-sustainability, inclusive management and good governance. The paper observes that SDGs can be achieved through devolved units (counties) in Kenya. However, the question to be addressed remains: - To what extent are the counties using Cooperatives and saving societies toward achieving SDG's No 1, 8 and 12? The study endeavored to establish the extent to which Counties promote Cooperative financial inclusion and knowledge management in their activities, as they seek to achieve SDGs No 1, 8, and 12 in Kenya. An assessment was carried out by examining the County Integrated Development plans(CIDP)-2018-2022 in order to establish the extent to which the Counties have inculcated Cooperatives in the achievement of SDG's 1,8, and 12 in Kenya. The study utilized a Desk Review approach with a focus on the CIDP of all the forty-seven (47) counties in Kenya to assess whether the County units strengthen the SDG'S Number 1, 8 and 12 economic pillars. The study concluded that whereas most counties mention cooperatives in their CIDP, they have not clearly aligned them with the SDGs number 1, 8 and 12. Hence the need for training county executives on SDGs on the important role of Cooperatives in the devolved units. County governments in Kenya should link cooperative societies with all 17 sustainable development goals as well as formulate policies and regulation on development of cooperative societies anchored on SDGs.

**Keywords:** Cooperative Movement, Devolved Governments, sustainable Development Goals

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## **The Synergy between the Cooperative Movement and Devolved Units in the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya**

By

Ms Rose Namikoye Masibili, Tobias Ochieng & Prof Pamela Ochieng

### **Introduction**

Cooperative Societies are voluntary unions created to meet the social, economic, and cultural aspirations and needs of their members. This is done through a joint ownership and democratic control of enterprises (Kumar, Wankhede & Gena, 2015). Cooperatives serve as significant players in economic development, employment creation, meeting needs of the society and mobilizing savings to improve livelihood.

Kenya changed its constitution in 2010. The new constitution devolved governance by creating a unitary state composed of forty seven county governments. These devolved units operate as independent entities. Many functions that were managed by the national government in the former dispensation are now assigned to county governments. One of the devolved functions is the development, management and regulation of cooperatives. The county governments must now domesticate the national cooperative policy and come up with county specific policies that cater to the diverse and unique needs of the various counties (Wafula & Odula, 2018).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emanated from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio (2012). It aimed at producing universal objectives that met the environmental, political and economic challenges facing the world. (SDGs) are described as those that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs” (Hák, Janoušková & Moldan, 2016).

SDGs comprise of a set of 17 goals each with supporting pillars. The goals are all interrelated. A careful look at SDGs 1, 8 and 12 reveals similarity with the objectives of cooperative movement (Diaz-Sarachaga, Jato-Espino & Castro-Fresno, 2018). Hence the SDGs can be achieved through the cooperative movement. For this to be realized, the main agencies responsible for their development, management and regulation, the county governments, must be aware of this link and must therefore align the cooperative development agenda to the SDGs. County governments must deliberately provide a roadmap for the cooperatives. However, the question to be addressed remains: - To what extent are the counties using Co-operatives and saving societies toward achieving SDG’s No 1, 8 and 12?

### **Statement of the Problem**

The United Nations views cooperatives as a key contributor to advancing the global development agenda, and seeks to work with them (cooperatives) for the greater social good for mankind. Given their record of social empowerment and economic resilience, cooperatives promote a

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solidarity economy and people-centred development. Nabiswa (2020) asserted that cooperative enterprises are best suited to meeting economic dimensions of SDGs such as reducing poverty and exclusion by identifying economic opportunities for their members, empowering the disadvantaged to defend their interests, providing food, nutritional and health security to the poor. This is done by allowing cooperatives to convert individual risks into collective risks and mediating member access to assets that they utilize to earn a living.

The recognition of local and regional government's role in achievement of sustainable development goals has challenged county governments in Kenya to aid in achieving the stated goals. County governments in Kenya have been developing County Integrated Development plans (CIDPs) to aid in the achievement of various goals as set out by the National government and international organizations. These CIDPs were tailor made as per the prevailing needs of the counties in line with the Nation's agenda. However, it is still obscure whether the county governments have recognized cooperative movement in the achievement of sustainable development goals. This paper therefore, investigated the Synergy between the Cooperative Movement and Devolved Units in the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Cooperative movement in Kenya**

A cooperative is primarily organized to provide the necessary common needs of its members that improve and uplift their living condition within the context of the universally accepted cooperative principles of membership, democratic administration, equitable contribution, savings disposal, education and cooperative cooperation (Gweyi, 2013). The main goal of the Kenyan cooperative movement is to achieve sustainable economic growth through strengthening of the movement, improving cooperative extension service delivery, access to markets, corporate governance and marketing efficiency (Republic of Kenya, 2004).

There are various types of cooperatives in existence ranging from agricultural, consumer, and housing to worker-based cooperatives. This implies that all sectors of the economy have an element of cooperatives as an engine that brings persons with similar objectives together. Cooperatives thus play a significant role in economic development and in employment creation, meeting needs of the entire society and mobilizing savings to improve livelihoods (Kumar, Wankhede & Gena, 2015).

Cooperative movements have a socially composed structure that has brought about development among societies. Mohammed Barr notes that the estimated population in the world being 153 million people, 9.6% are members of the cooperative societies distributed across more than 37,900 registered cooperatives, mostly saving and credit cooperatives (SACCOs) 49.0% and agricultural cooperatives (34.1%). Among these registered Cooperatives 60% are actively engaged in productive activities. This is also in concurrence with Cruz et al. (2006) who notes information, integration and participation plays an important role for sustainable development. This implies that cooperatives generally form the biggest engine that can drive the counties economic activities.

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Moreover, Cooperatives worldwide have enhanced development and growth of communities and the economy at large. Bebbington and Unerman (2018) noted that cooperative objectives can be summarized in two: first, economic and business development; and second, social inclusion and empowerment. SDGs have a long term aim of being constantly in progress of being achieved thus inculcating them to match the cooperative principles can serve as a tool in their achievement. Cooperatives being widespread and present at grassroots levels will go a long way in ensuring that the impact of SDGs are realized and achieved at all levels (Wanyama, 2016).

It has been noted that cooperatives in East Africa have made remarkable progress in agriculture, agro-processing, dairy, credit, banking, insurance, produce marketing, fishing, storage, and housing among other activities (Nwankwo, Ewuim & Asoya, 2012). This implies that its widespread nature and variety of activities may be able to positively impact the achievement of SDGs. Cooperatives aim at becoming knowledge creating institutions by embracing the management of information, and the enablement of knowledge, the two critical aspects in the future direction of cooperatives in Africa and in the realization of sustainable development.

In Tanzania about 90 per cent of the population is excluded from the mainstream banking sector (Finscope, 2009). As a result, Tanzanian SACCOS have formed the fastest growing type of MFIs in the country (Marwa & Aziakpono, 2015). Their growth in numbers has surged from 803 in 2,000 to 5,400 during 2012, their membership increased by 584 per cent, and savings increased by 1,780 per cent in the same period (BOT, 2013; MAFC, 2013). In effect the Saccos in Tanzania serve majority of the unbanked population thus promoting economic growth.

### **Kenyan Cooperatives**

The cooperative agenda in Kenya is based on locally determined proposals whose aims are to empower citizens to realize their socio-cultural and economic capacities using locally available/generated resources (Ounga, 2017). Wanyama (2016) appreciates that Cooperatives contributes to improving the governance, efficiency and performance of primary cooperatives, other social economy organizations and their higher level structures in order to strengthen their capacity to access markets, create jobs, generate income, reduce poverty, provide social protection and give their members a voice and representation in society. Formation of cooperatives aims at enhancing participation of citizens in economic growth by providing opportunities to earn more income through use of locally available resources.

Ngongo (2019) carried out a study on efficiencies in the dairy cooperatives noted that embracing technology will enable reduction of unit costs. They emphasize the need of enjoining more members or merging cooperatives so as to create economies of scale.

### **Devolved Units**

The devolved system of governance in Kenya has allowed citizens to exercise their sovereign power (Khaunya & Wawire, 2015). It has also allowed for transfer of powers to the 47 county governments. According to the UNDP report of 2015, citizen empowerment in local

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development planning and financing would nurture effective partnerships with government and community based organization. As a result, this would encourage growth from the grassroot level. The objectives of devolutions according to the Article 174 of the Constitution 2010 include enabling communities to manage their own affairs and to further their development; promoting social and economic development and provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya; to ensure equitable sharing of national and local resources throughout Kenya; facilitating the decentralization of State organs, their functions and services.

In achieving all this it implies that services, resources opportunities should be available to citizens at the grassroots level. Among the devolved functions from the national government to the county government are Cooperative societies. County governments have a role to play in improving the efficiency of Cooperative societies. Achievement of the SDGs is not only a National government role but also a role of the county governments. The use of Cooperatives as a vehicle to achieve SDGs will in turn make this goals and individual and community affair as guided by the principles of Cooperatives (Imaz & Eizagirre, 2020).

### **Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emanated from the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio (2012). It aimed at producing universal objectives that met the environmental, political and economic challenges facing the world.

#### **Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

As indicated by UNDP (2006), poverty is the inability of individuals to acquire the basic goods and services necessary for survival with dignity. Poverty leads to lack of income and productive resources that enable sustainable livelihoods; hunger and malnutrition.

Poverty alleviation is one of the objectives that led to formation of cooperatives as it enables creation of economies of scale by reducing production costs and increasing returns through combination of resources to achieve a common goal by individuals (Wan & Qie, 2020). Cooperatives create mechanisms that create opportunities, extend protection and facilitate empowerment. These three elements, opportunity, protection and empowerment, are essential elements of any poverty reduction strategy.

Cooperatives and mutual associations enhance resilience by providing (micro)-insurance coverage based on the principles of mutuality, solidarity and reciprocity (rather than seeking to maximize profits); less formal types of mutual associations' extent a minimum of social protection to unprotected workers and producers in the informal economy and in rural areas (Sudan, 2019).

#### **Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, productive employment and decent work for all**

The International Center of Research And Information on The Public, Social and Cooperative Economy (CIRIEC) 2007 estimated that cooperatives and the wider social economy contribute around 7% to the global GDP and employment. The African population comprises of about 7%

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being members of a cooperative (Schwettmann, 2014); globally, cooperative membership represents about 14% of the world population. In relation to comparison with the total population both in Africa and worldwide, there is need to increase membership or creation of Cooperatives that relate to the economic activities of the populace.

The study proposes that higher levels of productivity of economies can be achieved through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, by focusing on high value addition during production. This will improve the quality of goods and services and provide a variety of employment opportunities. The cooperative principles provide a basis for development of innovations by members and sharing of innovations among members.

Cooperative development policy, as a subset of national policy together with the appropriate legal and institutional framework, can provide an environment that is conducive to joint entrepreneurship, to the creation of decent jobs, to building bridges between informality and formality, as well as to access to finance (Deng, Huang, Xu & Rozelle, 2015).

Cooperatives being formed at the community level promote productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value (Rai, Brown & Ruwanpura, 2019).

Humphrey and Navas-Alemán, 2010; Stoian et al., 2012) established that Market-oriented development for addressing poverty reduction responds to the need to re-invigorate rural development through, among other things, increased income and a decent standard of living for people in developing and emerging economies.

### **The link between Cooperatives, County Governments and SDGs**

When the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) were introduced in 2000, the development agenda relied heavily on national government involvement. The implementation modalities were primarily top-down and little role was left for local government. According to Reddy (2016), this move to localisation “began earnestly in 2005, five years after it was initially implemented”. It was clear that the MDGs needed to ensure a better local anchorage. Thus, until the new SDGs were adopted, there has been “strong advocacy from local governments to be a key implementation partner in the achievement of the new SDGs”. The new SDGs positively stress the critical role that regional and local governments have to play. Moreover, from the 17 adopted SDGs, SDG 11 is a clearly dedicated urban goal (Kauzya, 2020).

The UN has also emphasized that cooperatives are sources of sustainable development from the very beginning. In a more concrete way, the General Assembly Resolution 70/128 concludes that “cooperative enterprises have a strong potential to alleviate poverty and hunger, stimulate economic growth, create employment and decent work opportunities, build social capital, address inequality and empower women. Such power of cooperatives is particularly important for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the least developed countries”. In addition, the International Labor Organization considers that cooperatives meet sustainability per se, due their own principles and values, and are well placed to contribute to the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental objectives (ILO, 2020).

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Fox and Stoett (2016) noted insufficient progress on the 2030 Agenda, and called for stronger involvement of regional and local governments, explaining that cities are at the forefront of sustainable development issues, including natural disasters, hunger and poverty. They noted a misunderstanding of internationally agreed decisions at the local level, including the SDGs, and the need for more awareness raising, capacity building and “significant” public and private investment.

Diaz et al. (2018) highlighted and emphasized the key ideas with regard to organised local government, including coordination with private partners, cooperative movement, the relationship between elected representatives and officials, local participation in decision-making and fiscal decentralization in achieving SDGs.

Two key issues seem to play a crucial role in enabling coordination, and making sure that local government can play a full role in delivery of development targets and specifically the SDGs: (a) resource dependency and (b) harmony of interest. Local government is in a unique position of being able to draw on a network of partners from across the community to deliver development. It is impossible to see how the SDGs could be implemented without recognition of local government’s role in promoting cooperative movement (Oosterhof, 2018).

County governments developed County Integrated Development plans to aide in achievement of various goals as set out by the National government. These CIDPs were tailor made as per the prevailing needs of the counties in line with the Nations agenda. In assessing the CIDPs, this paper analysed the extent to which Cooperatives are being used as an organ to achieve SDGs in the respective counties.

## **Methodology**

The approach to this study is analytical. It is based on desktop review approach whereby it analyzed the County Integrated development plans of all the 47 counties. Desk research is not about collecting data, instead, is to review previous research findings to gain a broad understanding of the field. Therefore, based on the nature of the study, it was decided that a desktop research would bring out the critical issues. The study targeted 47 counties in Kenya as the per 2010 constitution. All counties were considered in this study through census sampling techniques. Therefore, the study collected information from 47 CIDPs. The primary sources utilised were CIDP for 2013-2017 and 2018-2022. The keywords used Boolean operators set of search string commands including parenthesis, truncations and phrases for different keywords. The researchers used search terms including: cooperative movement, devolved units, and sustainable development goals. Information collected included i) link to SDG; ii) Mention of cooperatives and saving societies and iii) linking cooperative to SDG. Content analysis was used to examine linkage to SDG as per the CIDP. Mention of cooperatives and saving societies and iii) linking cooperative to SDG were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentage. The aim of the study was to establish the extent to which the CIDPs have incorporated SDGs in their goals and whether Cooperatives have been adopted as a tool to achieve the CIDPS which in the long run will enable achievement of the SDGs.

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## **Findings**

### **Number of cooperative societies in Kenya as Declared in CIDP**

With regard to 2018-2022 county integrated development plans, 7 counties did not declare the number of cooperative societies. These counties were Vihiga, Migori, Kisumu, Busia, Lamu, Makueni and Nyandarua. From those counties which declared the number of cooperative societies, they reported a total of 10,076 cooperative societies of which 6,420 were active, representing 63.7% of the active cooperative societies. Wajir County had the least number of cooperative societies (15) while Nairobi had the most cooperative societies (1,408), mainly of financial nature. Turkana County had the least number of active cooperative societies at 30% which represent 6 active cooperative societies out of 20 while Kirinyaga County had the most active cooperative societies at 91.6% ( 109 out of 119) total cooperative societies. Eleven (11) counties were found to have less than 50% of their total cooperative SACCOs being active. This included Turkana (30.0%), Kisii (32.4%), Kwale (32.4%), Wajir (33.0%), Tana River (42.9%), West Pokot (43.4%), Kitui (44.0%), Isiolo (46.2%), Narok (47.4%), Trans Nzoia (48.7%) and Uasin Gishu (49.0%). The distribution is as shown in Table 1.

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**Table 1: Total number of Cooperative Societies in Counties**

County	Total	Active	% Active	County	Total	Active	% Active
Kisii	256	83	32.42	Trans Nzoia	234	114	48.72
Laikipia	270	156	57.78	Tana River	28	12	42.86
Garissa	36	22	61.11	Mombasa	214	179	83.64
Uasin Gishu	610	299	49.02	Samburu	52	26	50.00
Siaya	247	164	66.40	Kirinyaga	119	109	91.60
Muranga	322	259	80.43	Kitui	91	40	43.96
Wajir	15	5	33.33	Narok	213	101	47.42
Kwale	256	83	32.42	Nakuru	828	600	72.46
Kericho	265	174	65.66	Nyeri	180	143	79.44
Homabay	248	142	57.26	Kiambu	554	424	76.53
Kilifi	260	150	57.69	Baringo	186	113	60.75
Busia	N/A	N/A	N/A	Migori	N/A	N/A	N/A
Taita Taveta	87	72	82.76	Kakamega	164	123	75.00
Mandera	158	131	82.91	Kajiado	420	300	71.43
Isiolo	65	30	46.15	Nandi	315	215	68.25
Tharaka Nithi	84	60	71.43	Kisumu	N/A	N/A	N/A
Embu	49	40	81.63	Nyamira	104	74	71.15
Nyandarua	N/A	N/A	N/A	Machakos	315	215	68.25
Makueni	N/A	N/A	N/A	Bungoma	300	180	60.00
Marsabit	87	55	63.22	Vihiga	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nairobi	1408	790	56.11	Lamu	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bomet	528	400	75.76	Elgeyo Marakwet	70	70	100.00
Turkana	20	6	30.00	West Pokot	83	36	43.37
Meru	335	225	67.16				

**Source: CIDPs 2018-2022**

From the CIDP, not all counties provided the breakdown of cooperative societies. Sixteen (16) counties out of 47 provided this information, Embu, Garissa, Meru, Kiambu, Bungoma, Tana River, Mandera, Kirinyaga, Tana River, Baringo, Turkana, Kakamega, Elgeyo Marakwet, Isiolo, Nandi and Nyeri. The distribution is as shown in Table 2.

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**Table 2: Cooperative Categories**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SACCOS	1093	45.67
Agro based	852	35.6
Transport	145	6.06
Housing	143	5.98
Juakali	84	3.51
Multi-Purpose	50	2.09
Union	12	0.5
Consumer	11	0.46
Mining	3	0.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>2393</b>	<b>100</b>

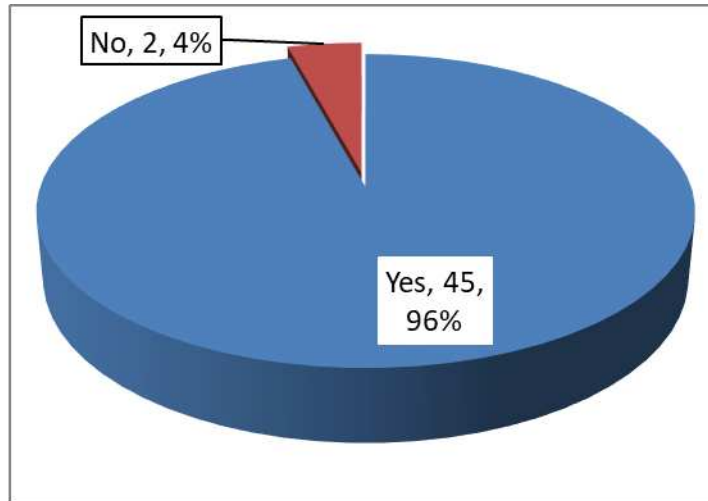
**Source: CIDPs 2018-2022**

From table 2, a slight majority of the cooperatives were Saccos as indicated by 45.7% of the total Saccos. This comprised of both rural and urban Saccos in the 16 counties. Agro based cooperatives were 35.6% which comprised of dairy, livestock, cash crops, irrigation, poultry, bees, fish, horticulture, cereals among others. Other cooperatives such as Transport, Housing, Juakali and Multi-Purpose Saccos ranged between 10% and 1%. On the other hand, cooperative unions were 0.5%, consumer cooperatives were 0.46% and mining 0.13%. It is evident that there are few agro-based cooperatives as compared to non-agro-based cooperative societies which are key for production and achievement of various sustainable development goals.

### **Findings Link to Sustainable Development Goals**

Information as declared in CIDP indicated that all 47 county governments in Kenya had link to SDG except Turkana and Isiolo County Governments. For instance, Bungoma County has acknowledged SDGS and the intention to set county targets in relation to this while Busia County has outlined the 17 SDGS and linked them to various sectors. This is as shown in Figure 1.

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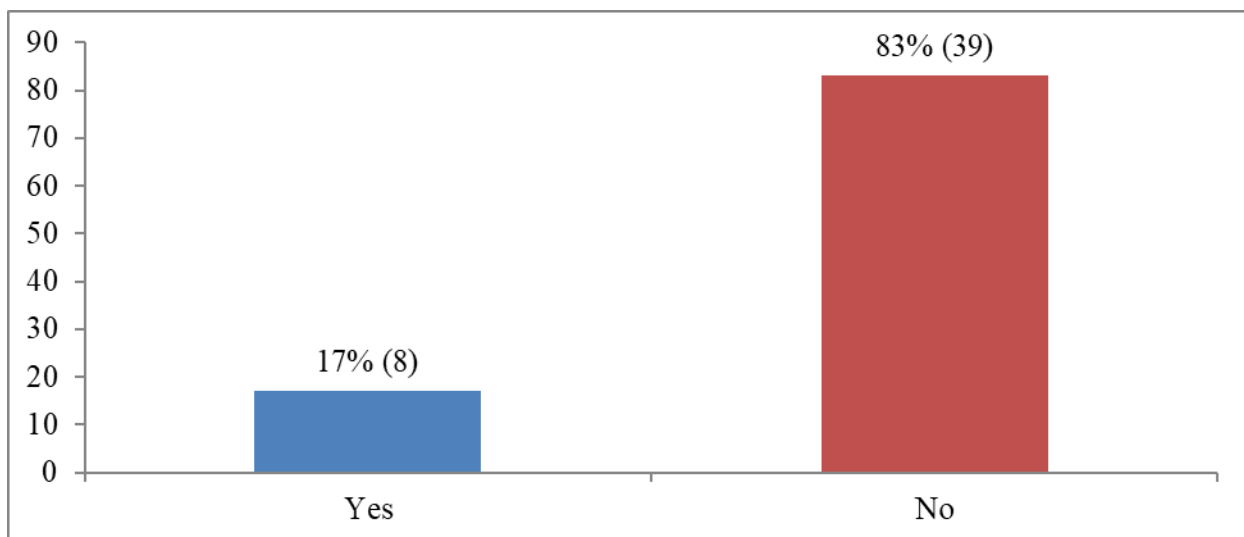
**Figure 1: Findings Link to Sustainable Development Goals**

Source: CIDPs 2018-2022

### **Mention of Cooperatives and Saving Societies in County Integrated Development Plan**

All 47 countries mentioned cooperatives and saving societies. Specifically, Isiolo County CIDP indicated that the formation of livestock cooperatives for marketing in order to improve incomes. Another county is Kakamega County which indicated that the use of cooperatives for Funds mobilization, marketing and value addition.

### **Linking Cooperative to Sustainable Development Goals**



**Figure 2: Linking Cooperative to Sustainable Development Goals**

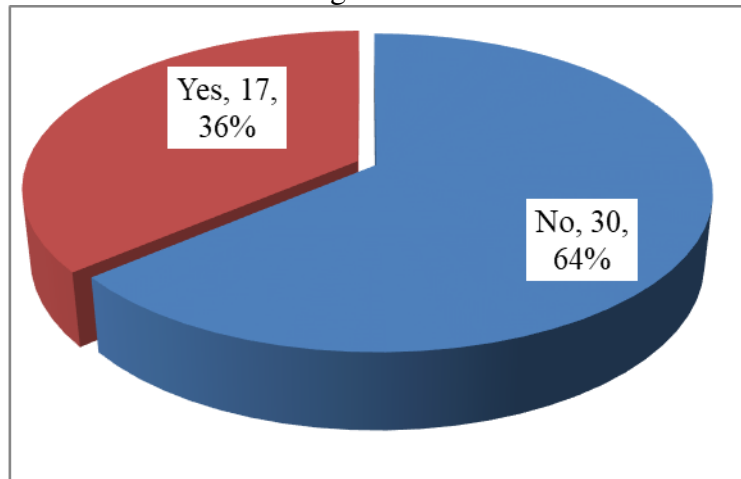
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**Source: CIDPs 2018-2022**

From Figure 2, only 17.0% (8) counties had their CIDP linked cooperatives to sustainable development goals compared to 83.0% (39) counties had their CIDP not linked cooperatives to sustainable development goals. For instance, Kitui County, mobilizing savings for economic development by members. In Trans Nzoia County, improvement of supervision and management of Dairy co-operatives and other Sacco's; Baringo County, cooperatives specifically to be guided by goal 1, 8, 9 and 12 of SDG and for Machakos County, aligned SDG 1,2,12 to cooperatives.

**Financial Inclusion**

The study further sought to establish whether the CIDP contained financial inclusion intervention to improve on the synergy between SDG and cooperative societies in the devolved units. The results are as shown in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Financial Inclusion**

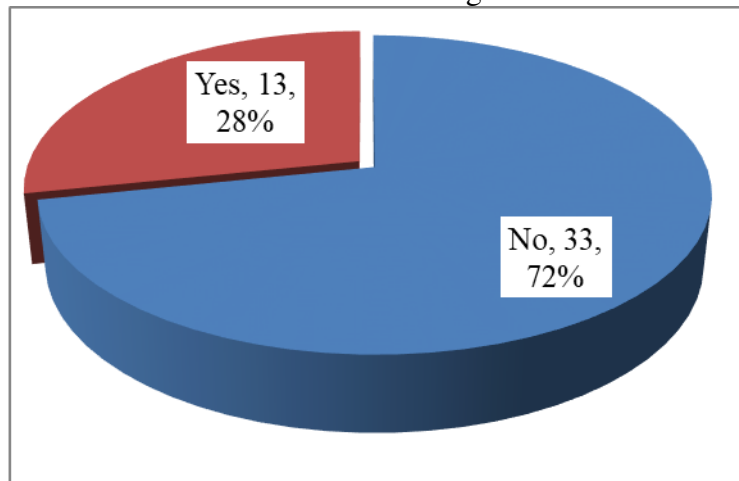
**Source: CIDPs 2018-2022**

From Figure 3, only 36.0% (17) of the counties CIPDs have statement on financial inclusion as compared to 64.0% (30) of the county governments in Kenya. For instance, in Bungoma, Isiolo, Kisii, Kitui, Kwale, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia County, there is effort to improve access to financial services for the co-operative institutions and promote collective and marketing. In Kiambu, Elgeyo Marakwet, Busia and Laikipia County, there is need to establish revolving fund among cooperatives. Some counties such as Embu, Uasin Gishu, Kilifi and Busia are providing low interest rate loans which enable the members to improve their businesses and increase the farm production. Other counties such as Nandi and Nairobi Counties have promoted saving for easy loan access.

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### **Knowledge Management**

The study further sought to establish whether the CIDP contained knowledge management intervention to improve on the synergy between SDG and cooperative societies in the devolved units. The results are as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Knowledge Management**

**Source: CIDPs 2018-2022**

From Figure 4, only 28.0% (13) of the counties CIDPs have statement on knowledge management as compared to 72% (33) of the county governments in Kenya. In Bungoma, there is statement on the establishment and strengthening of the cooperatives information systems. In Wajir County, there is a statement on the building of a database on the scope, capacity and structures of the existing cooperatives across by the county. In Trans Nzoia, there is statement on the establishment of ICT services. In Mombasa County, there is need for development of a business information centre. Counties such as Busia, Kiambu, Kilifi, Kisii, Laikipa, Kwale, Lamu have CIDP which contains training and capacity building for cooperative societies

### **Discussion**

The paper has established that most of devolved government in Kenya their county integrated development plan with sustainable development goals. This indicated that, the county governments have identified their significant role in achieving sustainable development goals. This confirms Reddy (2016) who indicated that there is need for local government anchorage so as to achieve sustainable development goals.

The paper further established that through their CIDP, county governments have formulated various policies to support development of cooperative and saving societies in Kenya. All counties were found to have department of cooperative societies to support their operationalization. However, each of the counties has prioritized which type of cooperative societies to support their development. Most of rural counties have discussed a lot about agricultural based cooperative societies while urban counties have focused on financial and

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transport based cooperative societies. This implies, county government policies on cooperative societies will differ from one county to another.

According to Aransi (2017), local government plays a pivotal role in the realization of any form of development. This is so, given the fact of its proximity and potentials for quick and efficient service delivery at the grassroots where poverty is most ravaging. The county government plays a key role in the achievement of SDGs through integrating the SDGs into its development planning process, availing adequate resources to the sectors with programmes addressing SDGs and monitoring and evaluation of key SDGs indicators. The SDGs have been mainstreamed in the Second County Integrated Development Plan (2018- 2022) and would continue to be mainstreamed in future county integrated development plans.

However, few of the counties have linked cooperative societies to sustainable development goals an indication devolved governments in Kenya are yet to identify roles played by cooperatives in achieving the SDG goals. Cooperatives societies, as indicated in various empirical studies and reports, have the capacity to achieve various targets of SDGs if property supported. For instance, cooperative societies have the capacity to aid in attainment of all 17 goals. This is borne out cooperative societies principles. This contradicts Wanyama (2016) who found that cooperatives are highly relevant and important in the realization of the sustainable development goals. Cooperatives are already present in all the areas that the Sustainable Development Goals envisage the direction the world will take to make sustainable development a reality.

Aris et al (2018) asserted that although cooperatives are central to the realization of sustainable development around the world, with their focus on members and local needs, they have not always been proactive in national and international debates. With little visibility at national and international levels, the potential and importance of the contribution that cooperatives can make to the design and realization of SDGs seems to have been missed by policy makers at respective levels. This explains the relatively limited visibility and attention that cooperatives have received in the debate on the post-2015 development agenda.

## **Conclusion**

The study has highlighted the gap existing in the view of using cooperatives as a tool of achieving SDG 1,8,12. In as much as all counties have established the ministry of trade Industrialization and Cooperatives, very few in their CIDP have adopted the Cooperative as a vehicle to achieve CIPDs. This may have a negative effect on the realization of sustainable development goals as well as development of cooperative movement in the county governments which were devolved from National Government after promulgation of 2010 constitution of Kenya.

## **Recommendations**

Eradication of poverty, hunger and provision of employment opportunities can be easily achieved through cooperatives by revamping them and clearly recognizing them as vehicles to achieve the SDGs. Designing CIDPs and identifying Cooperatives as tools to achieve this goals

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will allow its use as a measurement tool to evaluate the extent to which local communities, enterprises and individuals are participating in its achievement.

There is need to achieve SDGs from the grass root level by involving both communities and individuals. This ensure that as SDGs are achieved the livelihoods of individuals and communities at large are also improved. Inculcating SDGs as part of knowledge management will increase awareness of its purpose and ownership of all citizens to participate in its overall achievement. Cooperatives will also be able to appreciate and actively participate in achievement of SDGs.

Cooperatives should be proactive by getting involved in discussions at all levels (local, national, regional and international) on the post- 2015 development agenda in order to secure the opportunity to share their experiences on the realization of sustainable development.

The implementation of SDGs will depend on a global partnership for sustainable development with the active engagement of governments, as well as civil society, the cooperative societies, and the United Nations system. Therefore, county government should continue promoting open engagement with all other stakeholders as well as free flow of information as it implement the SDGs. Most importantly, County governments in Kenya should link cooperative societies with all 17 sustainable development goals as well as formulate policies and regulation on development of cooperative societies anchored on SDGs. This will enhance the Synergy between the Cooperative Movement and Devolved Units in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya

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