

A GUIDE TO
BRANCH MANAGEMENT FOR

POLITICAL

PARTIES

IN

KENYA

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BUILDING POLITICAL PARTIES FROM THE GROUND UP - STRENGTHENING THE BRANCH

Political party branches are one of the most critical structures of any political party, but they can often be overlooked when parties perform their main functions. In Kenya, party branches play a central role in mobilizing citizens during elections, but often, they become less active in between elections. This problem arises because of the inherent challenge that faces political parties everywhere; they are consumed by short-term demands in an ever-changing environment, making it a challenge to focus on long-term organizational development.

If political parties are to increase their relevance and visibility, branches need to play a central role in performing all the main functions of the party: (1) understanding the needs of society (2) developing relevant policy alternatives (3) recruiting, selecting and training people for political office and (4) seeking and exercising control of the government. For parties to achieve this, they need to invest in the grassroots of their party by placing branch development at the top of their priority list.

This guidebook is intended to assist Kenyan political parties to strengthen their branch structures and improve their functions. It offers branches several tools that they may use in their everyday management of administrative, organizational and political activities. It can also be used and adapted by parties when starting new branch offices or developing training programmes within their parties.

This tool was developed in cooperation with six Kenyan political parties: ANC, FORD-Kenya, Jubilee Party, KANU, Narc-Kenya, and ODM. Together, they have shared their achievements as well as their challenges when it comes to branch management. With these experiences as a foundation, the Christian Democratic Party of Norway and the Oslo Center have created this guide. The Christian Democratic Party of Norway has contributed with their practical experience from managing political party branches in Norway, while the Oslo Center provided their valuable experience with assisting political parties in Kenya.

In creating this handbook, we are truly thankful to the working group of staff from the participating parties that provided constructive input throughout the entire process: John Melita, Joshua Aluoch, Kandara Swaleh, Nicholas Meli, Reuben Ameli, Taabu Daniels, and Tony Moturi. Finally, we are grateful to the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) for the financial support needed to create this handbook.

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01.

LEGAL
FRAMEWORK
GUIDING
POLITICAL
PARTY
BRANCHES

1.1 THE CONSTITUTION OF KENYA

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, is the supreme law of the Republic of Kenya. The Constitution in Chapter One bestows the sovereign power to the people of Kenya. This sovereign power may be exercised directly or through democratically elected representatives. The sovereign power is also delegated to State organs; the Parliament and the County Assemblies, the National and County Executive and the Judiciary and Independent Tribunals.

Political parties are vital institutions in providing a platform for the sovereign power of the people of Kenya to be exercised. This sovereign power is exercised both at the national and county levels. Political parties provide representatives in an election who are then democratically elected at the national and county levels. It is imperative for political parties to have strong branches to be able to provide candidacy both at national and county levels. The Constitution also provides the avenue of representation of the people through independent candidature.

The Constitution in Chapter Four recognises the Bill of Rights as an integral part of Kenya's democratic state. It enshrines several rights and fundamental freedoms which belong to each individual and are not grantable by the State. One of these rights is Political Rights provided for in Article 38. Citizens have a right to make political choices, including participating in the formation of political parties, participating in activities related to political parties' membership recruitment and political parties' campaigns.

Article 38 also recognises the right to free, fair and regular elections based on universal suffrage. Individuals have a right to join and hold office in a political party as well as vying for an elective public office on a political party ticket whose one is a member.

Political party branches need to understand, internalise and practise these rights. Political parties are formed at the branches and no citizen should be refrained from being part of the party formation process. Political party branch officials must note the need to involve membership in political party activities, accord them opportunities to offer themselves for internal branch elections, nominations to represent the party in elections and their full involvement in political campaigns.

Chapter Seven of the Constitution deals with the representation of the people. Part 3 which entails Articles 91 and 92 are specific to political parties.

Article 91 outlines the basic requirements for political parties. It requires political parties to:

- Have a national character.
- Have a governing body elected on democratic principles.
- Promote and hold national unity.
- Abide by the democratic principles of good governance.
- Promote and practice democracy through regular, fair and free internal party elections.
- Respect rights of all persons to participate in the political process, including minorities and marginalized groups.
- Respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and gender equality and equity.
- Promote the objects and principles of the Constitution and the rule of law.
- Subscribe and observe the code of conduct for political parties.

Political parties' branches are required to observe the requirements of Article 91. They are part and parcel of the entire political party structure. Branch members and officials need to ensure that the branch governing body is elected on democratic principles, promote the unity of citizens within the branch, conduct regular, fair and free branch elections, devise and implement affirmative action to guarantee the participation of the minorities, the marginalised and the underrepresented gender. The branch members and officials should adhere to the code of conduct for political parties. If a branch contravenes the code, then the whole party is liable for disciplinary action.

Article 91 further prohibits a political party to:

- Be founded or advocate on sectional interests like religion, lingua, race, ethnicity, gender or regional basis.
- Engage in or encourage its members to participate in violence and intimidation of others.
- Establish or maintain a paramilitary force or a militia.
- Engage in bribery or other forms of corruption.
- Use of public resources to promote partisan interests of its candidates except as allowed in law.

Political parties' branches are bound by these prohibitions. Branch members and officials should promote peace and accountability.

1.2 THE POLITICAL PARTIES ACT

The Political Parties Act, 2011, governs the registration and regulation of political parties in Kenya. The Act regulates not only the conduct of political parties at their headquarters, but also at their branches. Political parties' branches are therefore bound to all provisions of the Political Parties Act. Nevertheless, there are sections in the Act which directly require the attention political parties' branches. In Part I, the Act defines a branch as a devolved unit of a political party. This means that the branch should fully function with the same equivalence to the head office within its devolved area.

Branches of political parties are very instrumental in the registration process of the individual political party. The Act in Part II, Section 7 provides conditions for the full registration of a political party. A party is required to recruit no fewer than 1,000 members who are registered voters in at least 24 counties. Party branches should actively recruit and devise ways of retaining members. Membership recruitment and retention should therefore be a continuous process conducted by the party branches. The Act further requires the membership to reflect regional and ethnic diversity, gender balance and representation of special interest groups who include: women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic minorities and marginalized communities. The obligation of political parties' branches in this case is to identify the special interest groups within their localities.

In the registration process, parties are also required to submit the location and addresses of the branch offices to the Registrar. The branches should therefore be not only on paper but their physical functional offices should be available and accessible to the public.

Political parties' branches are required to maintain party records. In Section 17, the Act requires parties to maintain in each of its county office in the prescribed form, an accurate and authentic record of:

- A register of its members in a form prescribed in the Second Schedule.
- A copy of the constitution of the political party.
- A copy of the policies and plans of the political party.
- The particulars of any contribution, donation or pledge of a contribution or donation, whether in cash or in kind, made by the founding members of the political party.
- Estimates of the expenditure of the political party in accordance with the laws relating to public finance management.

- Particulars of any property that belongs to the political party and the time and mode of acquisition of the property.
- The latest audited books of accounts of the political party which shall be in accordance with the principles of accounting having regard to the purpose of the Act, showing:
 - the sources of the funds of the political party and names, addresses and such other contact details as the Registrar may require of any persons who have contributed thereto.
 - membership dues paid.
 - donations in cash or in kind.
 - indirect contributions to the party and all receipts and disbursements, including income and expenditure transactions of the political party.
 - all the financial transactions and records of assets and liabilities of the political party.
- Other particulars that the Registrar may prescribe to the parties.

The Registrar may inspect the adherence of political parties' branches with the provisions of Section 17 as prescribed in Section 18 of the Act.

Section 38 of the Act establishes Political Parties Liaison Committee (PPLC) both at the national and at the county levels. While the national membership of the PPLC is delegated to the national office of the party, the branch officials need to ensure that there is participation of their party in the county PPLC activities.

It is mandatory for political parties' branches to strictly abide by the Code of Conduct for Political Parties. Branch officials and members should ensure that their operations follow democratic principles and create a conducive environment for others to enjoy the democratic space as prescribed in the Code.

1.3 THE ELECTIONS ACT

The Elections Act, 2011 governs the conduct of elections in the country. It provides for electoral roles that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) as well as political parties should carry out. Some of the provisions that are critical to political parties' branches are: the conduct of political parties' nominations, the development of party lists membership and the adherence to the electoral code of conduct. Section 13 of the Act

lays out the conditions to be met by political parties in the conduct of nominations. It also provides for timelines for the conduct of nominations and determination of disputes arising from those nominations.

Nominations are carried out at the branches and most political parties have either devolved their elections and nominations boards or have the central board visiting the branches. Branch officials should assist the elections and nominations board to meet the requirements of section 13 by respecting its autonomy and providing it with authentic and updated membership list.

Section 23 (1) (d) requires political parties' presidential candidates to be nominated by no fewer than 2000 voters from each of a majority of the counties. This requires the lot of work by branch officials and membership to ensure that their candidate gets as many signatures as required by law within their branches.

Section 34 provides for nomination of party lists members. Political parties' branches, while respecting the elections and nominations board's autonomy, should assist it in the vetting process of the party lists membership.

Political parties are required to abide by the electoral code of conduct. Political party branches officials, candidates, agents and members must adhere to the electoral code of conduct. They should ensure that electoral campaigns are free, peaceful and devoid of intimidation. The Code also requires the participation of political parties in the consultations between the Commission and the PPLC both at the national and county level.



1.4 OTHER LAWS

The Parliament of Kenya has been passing new laws and amending the existing ones. It is therefore important for political parties and their branches to update themselves with the legislation. Apart from the Constitution and the Acts discussed in this manual, political parties and their branches need to acquaint themselves with other laws that could be relevant in their work. These laws may include:

- The Election Offences Act
- The Leadership and Integrity Act
- National Cohesion and Integration Act
- The Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act
- The Public Finance Management Act
- The County Governments Act
- The Elections (General) Regulations
- The Elections (Voter Education) Regulations
- The Elections Party Primaries and Party (Lists) Regulations
- The Elections (Technology) Regulations
- The Election Campaign Financing Act
- The County Governments Act
- The Elections (General) Regulations
- The Elections (Voter Education) Regulations
- The Elections Party Primaries and Party (Lists) Regulations
- The Elections (Technology) Regulations

1.5 PARTY INTERNAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Political Parties Act requires political parties to have a constitution and nomination and election rules.

Party Constitution

The Act in section 6(2)(d) gives a prerequisite for political parties seeking for provisional registration to file with the Office of the Registrar of Political Parties a copy of the party's constitution. Section 9 and the Second Schedule sets the content of a party constitution or rules of a political party. No political party can be registered in Kenya without a party constitution that adheres to the specific requirements of the Political Parties Act.

Members of political parties at the branch level should not leave the development of their party constitution to a few individuals or lawyers at the head office. They should actively contribute. The Constitution of Kenya and the Political Parties Act set the spirit of inclusivity in the political processes. Political parties should therefore involve all groups of people, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, ethnic minorities and marginalized communities in the development of the party constitution.

Party Nomination and Election Rules

The Act in the First and Second Schedule requires political parties to have nomination and election rules to guide the way political parties select their candidates for national elections and the way they fill in positions for offices within the party. Nominations and internal party elections not only happen at the head office but also at the branches. These rules therefore guide the head office as well as electoral processes at the branches.





02.

ORGANIZATION

AND

PARTY

STRUCTURES

The way in which a political party is organized says a great deal about the party. It gives a picture of the level of internal democracy within the party, and tells us how the party will go about implementing their core functions. A common challenge that faces all political parties is balancing the meaningful inclusion of rank and file members on the one hand, and ensuring a smooth-running organization on the other. These two issues do not necessarily need to stand in contrast to one another, but often, political parties prioritize swift decision making over consulting the lower levels of the party on important decisions.

Political party organizations need to be structured in such a way that both the central and regional organs of the organization work closely together. If there is a feeling of distance between the national headquarters and branch offices, political parties will eventually be out of touch with the real needs of their members throughout the country. This will have a negative impact on the outputs of the party, be it through the promotion of policies that are irrelevant for everyday people, or a decline in the participation of local party members.

2.1 MAIN PARTY STRUCTURES

Most political parties in Kenya have their organizational structures set out in their party's constitution. These documents also clarify the roles and responsibilities of party officials, elected officials and other party members. Although each party may have different titles for the various structures within the party, the main structures are as follows¹:

The National level

- National Delegates Conference: This is the highest decision-making body of the party, yet in Kenya, it plays a limited role due to the huge numbers who attend it and the cost of convening it. Party constitutions usually limit the congress to key decisions, such as approving amendments to the party constitution, deciding on party dissolution, approving the party's key policy documents, and electing certain cadre of candidates and party officials. If a party wants to ensure meaningful democratic influence by the members on important decisions like these, the party congress should be a real arena for decisions and discussions. This can be achieved in different ways, but it is likely to be very difficult without limiting the number of delegates. Therefore, it might be a good idea to discuss other

¹ Excerpts from *A Guide to Political Party Management in Kenya*, KRF, 2013.

ways of delegates is to have a set key based on the number of members that the party has in the county. For example, all counties might automatically receive two delegates, but they could additionally receive one extra delegate for each 1,000 paying party members in the county. In smaller parties, this number might be lower, while larger parties might set it higher. A bonus of such a system is that party representatives in the counties will have an added incentive to recruit members in order to increase the power of that county branch inside the party.

- Party Executives: Since the convention meets only occasionally, the powers to make decisions in between congresses is delegated through the constitution to an executive organ. This body is normally called the National Governing Council. In addition to and below this body, there is normally the National Executive Committee (NEC), which administers party affairs in between National Governing Council meetings.
- Party Secretariat: Many parties distinguish between administrative and political staff. The administrative staff are employees of the party and cannot seek political positions within the party structures if they serve the administrative wing. This is to ensure that there is an objective implementation of the political goals of the party.
- Party Caucuses or Parliamentary Groups: Caucuses are composed of the elected representatives to the various legislative bodies of the country who are members of the party. As a rule, parties should institutionalize their parliamentary caucuses.
- Women and Youth: Political parties in Kenya generally have their own women and youth leagues to promote the interests of these groups within the party. These leagues should have autonomous structures within the party to ensure that they can develop policy that meets the needs of these groups. Moreover, they should have devolved structures throughout the party organization.
- Election and Dispute Resolution Boards: Parties also have special bodies responsible for the conduct of their elections and party nominations listening to appeals and other internal party disputes. They are normally organs party disputes. They are normally organs of the NEC, but good practice requires that their membership be distinct from the NEC.

The County Level

- Branches: The branches are the local geographic units of the political party organization, they correspond with Kenyan counties. Branches are mandated with clear decision-making and deliberative responsibilities. Branches consist of sub-branches (ward-level) and polling station units.
- County Delegates Conferences: These are the highest decision-making bodies of parties at the county level. During these conferences, county-level delegates should develop and discuss party policy, receive reports on the work of the party in that county, elect county-level officials and coordinate the work of the party within the county.
- Branch-level Committees: There are generally three levels of committees within party branches; the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), the Sub-Branch Executive Committee (SBEC) and the Polling Station Steering Committee. The BEC is head of the branch, it is responsible to the NEC and should cooperate with the national secretariat of the party. The committee should consist of the branch officials like the branch chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and the local chairpersons for the women's and youth leagues.
- County Assembly Groups: Political parties who have elected Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) should convene all their members within the county. The purpose of this group is to coordinate the party's work within the county assembly. These bodies are recognised in the Political Parties Act and are also known as caucuses.

2.2 CONNECTING ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH THE PARTY ORGANIZATION

As a rule, parties should institutionalize their parliamentary caucuses. The Political Parties Act recognizes caucuses, including at the county level. Caucuses can be important vehicles for party organization in the various legislative bodies. While a political party should ideally define the policy of the party on any given issue, elected representatives become the voice of the party in practice. They are frequently sought out by the media, get to debate national issues, and are asked to make comments. In these situations, they

are expected—and assumed—to speak on behalf of the party.

It is important that the party structures maintain regular contact with the party caucuses and elected representatives—and vice versa. The party structure should provide for a link between the party caucuses and the party structures at the appropriate level. In the counties, the county assembly should be in close contact with the county branch of the party. At the national level, national elected representatives should be in close contact with the NEC, the Secretariat, the Secretary General, or all three levels, depending on a party's choice. The caucuses should be included in the key decisions of the party. Regular consultation will improve the role of the elected representatives as voices of the party among the public. If a party does not include the caucus in the decision-making process regarding policy, it will be missing an important voice, not only within the party, but also with knowledge of how the voters feel about the policy being considered.

Party caucuses also need to be structured and to meet regularly to discuss party positions in the legislature and how to carry out their work as legislators. Parties should consider allowing non-elected representatives from the party leadership and secretariat to attend these meetings in order to create a link between the party inside and outside the legislature. Close cooperation between the party organization and the elected representative is, in fact, a win-win issue. The parties should play a more and more important role in policy development, which implies the party structures cannot be isolated from the practical implementation of policies both at the national and county levels.





03.

BRANCH MANAGEMENT

The branch, and its members, is the foundation of any political party. If a political party is to be successful, it will need to have well managed branches that function as links between the national party headquarters, the sub-branches or wards, and other relevant party structures. The branches are responsible for recruiting and training members, nominating officials at the local and national levels, developing and debating policy, and being the eyes and ears of the party locally. Therefore, branch management and development should be at the top of political parties' priority list.

3.1. THE BRANCH OFFICE

The Political Parties Act of Kenya requires every party to have at least 24 functioning branches at the county level. This requirement was introduced to avoid the past practice of having some branches exist only in theory. For every branch, the party must have the relevant contact information for their officials, and this must be forwarded to the Registrar of Political Parties. In addition, the branch must have an operational branch office, which is a fixed office, rather than a mobile one. This is the place where party members and the public can interact with the party and its officials.

In every county office, the following documents must exist and be available:

- A register of members
- A copy of the constitution of the political party
- A copy of the party nomination rules
- A copy of the policies and plans of the political party
- Details of contributions made by founding members of the party
- Estimates of the expenditures of the political party
- The particulars of any party property
- The latest audited book of accounts
- Additional documents may be required according to the party constitution

3.2. BRANCH LEADERSHIP ROLES

The Branch Secretary

The role of the branch secretary is more than simply being an administrator. This person must have the overall picture of what is happening within the

party at the branch level. The branch secretary should work closely with the branch chair to manage the day-to-day branch activities. The roles of branch chair and branch secretary should fill each other out, not be in competition to one another. They should develop a clear division of responsibility between themselves. Although this may vary from party to party, the following is a list of suggested responsibilities for branch secretaries.

Box 3.1

The Role the Branch Secretary:

Responsibilities:

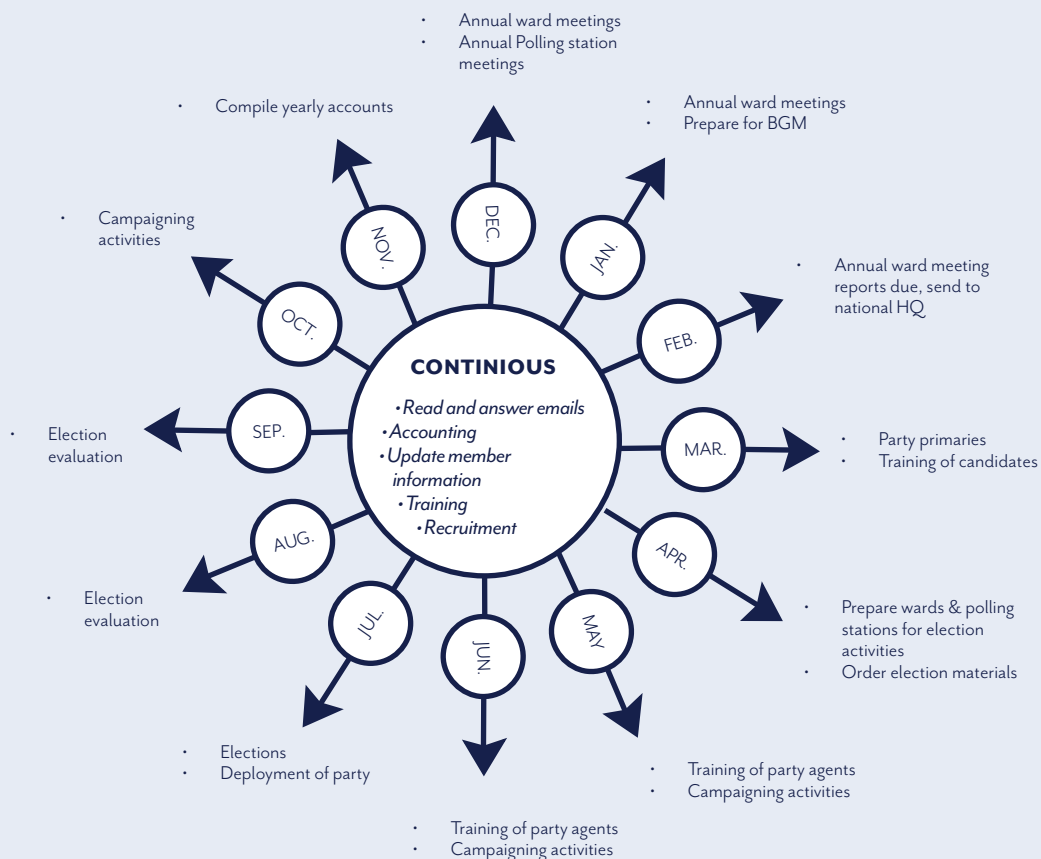
- Supervise the general administration of the branch
- Maintain close contact with the national HQ
- Deal with the correspondence of the BEC and its meetings
- Send copies of agendas, minutes etc.
- Supervise for budgeting and accounting of the branch
- Maintain contact with sub-branches, the women's wing and the youth wing in the branch
- Facilitate preparation and implementation of the branch election campaign
- Facilitate training of party officials and representatives
- Oversee the training of party agents prior to elections
- Work with communication through available media channels like newspapers, party websites, radio, television and others
- Stay oriented on political issues

Maintain and retain the following records:

- Annual reports and minutes of Annual General meetings
- Branch Executive Committee meeting minutes
- General correspondence with party structures
- Ensure that the attendance list is completed
- Feedback forms from branch events

The branch secretary has such a broad range of tasks and responsibilities that it can be difficult to keep an overview of everything that should be completed throughout the year. One way for a branch secretary to stay organized is to keep a yearly cycle of their activities close by to ensure that they fulfill their tasks on time.

Figure 3.1
Branch Yearly Cycle in an Election Year



The Branch Chairperson

The branch chairperson has a crucial leadership role in representing the party within the constituency. They are the face of the party in that region and are 100% responsible for the work of the branch. With this role comes a large amount of responsibility and expectations from those who he or she will work with. Therefore, the branch chair should be highly a highly trusted person who is motivated to lead the branch.

Box 3.2

The Role of the Branch Chairperson:

- Keep up to date on matters that are addressed in the NEC and at the national HQ
- Keep up to date on political and organizational work of the branch
- Develop routines for regular reporting on the work of the branch officials
- Keep in touch with members of the national assembly from their region
- Lead the meetings between branch officials and ordinary member meetings
- Seek advice from national HQ on statements about political issues to the media
- Be a loyal and constructive contributor to the national board of the party
- Develop good procedures for cooperation and communication with the branch secretary

The branch chairperson should also keep themselves updated on the party's political decisions and issues that will be raised in NEC. Moreover, they should maintain correspondence with the members of the national assembly that the party may have from the region. By doing so, the chair will be able to be a link between the local and national levels of the party organization.

3.3 BRANCH MEETINGS

The number and type of branch-level meetings will no doubt vary from party to party and branch to branch. Branches should always consult their party constitution to ensure that they are acting in accordance with their party laws. Nevertheless, political parties are required to conduct meetings at the

branch level as the Political Parties Act outlines:

“A fully registered political party shall hold meetings of the party organs at national and county level in accordance with the party constitution” (The Political Parties [Amendment] Act No. 21 of 2016).

Branch-level meetings can often be neglected by parties, or they may only take place when there is a crisis to manage. However, by prioritizing branch meetings on a regular basis and developing good routines for running them, you will ensure that members are united together through local work of the party branch.

How to Conduct Branch General Meetings (BGM)

Purpose. The purpose of conducting Branch General Meetings is to involve local members in the work of the political party. One of the reasons for such a meeting may be to discuss the decisions related to the party campaign, or to elect party representatives at the branch level. Your local branch members are engaged in the current political issues, BGM's are one way of understanding how these issues affect them. Moreover, these meetings can be a good time to conduct training on certain policies and programmes for your local members. BGM's are also a way to introduce potential new party members to the political party.

Time and Location. Your branch should establish a goal of a certain number of branch meetings per year. A good place to start would be a minimum of 3-4 meetings per year, or in very active branches you may want to meet more than this. Pick a location for the meeting that is central and accessible for most of your members, and keep this location for your future meetings so people will always know where your meetings will be.

Meetings should take place after working hours to ensure that people will find time to attend. You should aim to keep meetings to a maximum of 2 hours. No one likes meetings that last too long, and eventually people will start arriving late or not prioritizing the meetings.

It may also be desirable to have small refreshments or a tea break during the meeting. If your branch does not have the resources to contribute to this, try dividing the responsibility for making refreshments between active branch members, or ask your party HQ, or a party MP for some support.

Agendas. The overall responsibility for planning and implementing branch meeting lies with the branch officials. Together, they should develop a clear agenda for the meeting and delegate responsibility accordingly. The agenda should be sent out to branch members together with the invitation to the branch meeting. Ensure that agendas are sent out plenty of time before the date of the meeting, in accordance with the constitution of your party, usually 2-3 weeks beforehand.

The leader of the meeting should be the branch chairperson. At the beginning of the meeting the chairperson should ask if there are any new members present. If so, welcome them and allow them to introduce themselves to the branch. A good branch meeting depends greatly on how the chairperson leads the meeting. He or she should ensure that the branch officials do not control the meeting, but that ordinary members, and especially new members, feel that they can participate and valuably contribute.

Branch meetings can also be a way to introduce new members to the party. Therefore, you should also strive to ensure that branch meetings do not become a boring place where reports are simply read and processed. Instead, aim for the meetings to be engaging and energetic; ensure that the political topics of discussion are relevant and interesting for potential newcomers.

Box 3.3

Tips for a Good Branch Meeting:

- Plan well
- Think about what your members want
- Ensure participation and dialogue for members
- Be creative when it comes to the form of the meetings
- Discuss relevant local political issues
- Be informative and engaging
- Cooperate with other local actors and organizations
- Use the local media
- If in doubt, ask the national HQ for help

Box 3.4

Template for Invitation and Agenda

Depending on the means of communication that best suits your branch, you may want to send the invitation and agenda by e-mail, WhatsApp or SMS to branch members. Here is a template invitation:

Date

Dear members of “political party X” in “Branch X”,

*You are hereby invited to a member meeting for “political party X”
in “Branch X”.*

Time: Wednesday, XX.XX.20XX from 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Location: Branch offices

Agenda:

- 1. Opening remarks, welcome old and new members.*
- 2. Written registration of members who present.*
- 3. Presentation of minutes from last branch meeting.*
- 4. Political topic or training session followed by the discussion.*
- 5. Report from a county-level or national-level elected official on local issues.*
- 6. Report from branch officials on relevant local issues for the party.*
- 7. Summary and way forward.*
- 8. Conclusion.*

Looking forward to seeing you there!

*Best regards,
County Branch Officials*

Writing Minutes for a Branch Meeting

Keeping a detailed record of meetings is an essential task for political parties. By having a good record of the main points from branch meetings, we will be able to recall the issues that need to be followed up later. Minutes that represent the view of all those present ensure that there will be no arguments or misinterpretation of what happened during the meetings at some point in the future. Furthermore, good minutes enable political parties to learn from their past mistakes and accomplishments.

The branch secretary is normally the person who is responsible for taking the minutes, but this responsibility can be delegated if needed. All minutes should be kept in a record book, either written or electronically. This record should be stored safely at the branch office and handed over to new branch officials, or new branch secretaries as needed.

It is also important to develop standardized routines for taking minutes in political parties. Different ways of taking minutes may create confusion when new officials are elected and need to refer to past records. Parties should ensure that they train branch officials on how to properly take minutes.

Box 3.5

Checklist for Good Minutes

- Branch name, date, time and location
- Names of members present, names of guests
- Apologies (those who are not present)
- Update on last meeting
- Decisions made and tasks to be completed

Box 3.6
Sample Minutes from a Branch Meeting

Minutes

for “Political party X” branch meeting. Held at 7:30 pm on “XX.XX.20XX”

1. Present: Faith, Winnie, John, Anne, James, Kelly, Robert, Sharon, Michael
2. Apologies: Joan, Victor, Mark
3. Minutes of the previous branch meeting: Correct item number 5 on page 2 to read “The meeting agreed that no be follow-up required on this issue”
4. Political topic: Members received training on the new party manifesto and recruitment strategies at the sub-branch level.
5. Report from elected officials:

Issue discussed	Decision	Who and when
MP from the county asked for input regarding a proposed food waste bill to be addressed in the parliament.	Members suggested to make it mandatory for local restaurants to give extra food to orphanages. Branch officials will work on the detailed suggestion and send to the MP.	Branch officials by the following week.
Member of the County Assembly gave an overview of current political issues at the county level.	Questions only.	No tasks.

6. Report from branch officials on relevant issues for the party

Issue discussed	Decision	Who and when
The branch women’s wing needs additional administrative support .	Branch office commits to take on accounting and other administrative tasks for the woman’s wing.	Branch secretary, starting from today.
Membership is seen to be declining in the branch.	An ad-hoc recruitment group is formed and will target young people.	Branch Secretary and Youth Wing leader to convene a meeting in 2 weeks time.

3.4 RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS AND KEEPING THEM ACTIVE

Branch offices are the basic units in political parties in Kenya and all members within a political party should belong to a branch. Membership is a requirement for party registration and the list of members is supposed to be continuously updated, and a copy of the records submitted to the registrar of political parties. Therefore, members are the bloodline of any branch and it is important that political parties work to retain the membership they have while and recruit new members.

Recruitment of members is one of the core tasks of the branch. There are a variety of methods for recruitment of members, the methods identified to recruit members will depend on a party's resources and circumstances. A branch that wants to conduct a membership recruitment exercise should develop a recruitment plan, budget, timeline and goals.

Do not start recruiting members until you are clear about what members your branch wants and needs. You only want to recruit people who agree with the political party's goals and policies. You may need to target different groups such as young people in college and university, professionals, farmers, teachers, women and youth. For example, teachers could simply go to all schools in the ward or to universities, colleges and county polytechnic institutions within wards.

Decide on a target number for how many members you want to recruit and where you are most likely to find them. For example, the branch can set a target number of people they want to recruit at the polling station and can be done within a given timeline.

Your branch must also decide the message you want to communicate to potential members. Why should anyone join your branch in the first place? Unless recruiters can answer this question, they will not be able to persuade people to join. Discuss what you can offer your target constituency and how you will persuade them to join.

Each party constitution is required to outline criteria for membership. Your branch should be sure to consult these criteria to ensure that membership recruitment strategies are in line with the party constitution. Moreover, new member should be informed of these criteria prior to joining the party.

Things that should be considered are:

- The eligibility criteria.
- Subscription fees for joining the party and for being a member of the party.

- The criteria for resignation from party membership or ceasing to be a member.
- The rights and duties of members of the party
- Membership details to be contained in the register including identification details, region, ethnicity, gender and county.

Methods of Recruitment

The branch should identify the most suitable way of recruiting members to join the party. Work out whether you should recruit by calling a public meeting, by going from door to-door, or by approaching organizations and sectors and going to their meetings and events, or through sending recruiters to busy public places such as; a market day; sports tournaments; auction markets popularly known as “mnada”; church groups; universities and colleges; social media campaigns; county agricultural exhibition shows; cultural events and political rallies. Branches should also take advantage of political rallies to convert supporters to party members. Branches should ensure that branch members are notified of the any membership recruitment exercises being undertaken by the party to assist in recruiting of new members.

During recruitment, the party must ensure that it collects information on the members being recruited. This can be done through a membership sign in sheet or a membership mobile phone application which can assist the party to generate a membership list for the party. Membership lists are party’s most important assets. A well-organized membership list can be used for variety of purposes including; party nomination exercises, fundraising, gaining volunteers and recruitment. The list should be updated regularly and should be held in strict confidentiality.

Keeping Members Active

Party membership in Kenya is very fluid. Many branches lose members as fast as they recruit them and parties are frequently faced with members that resign to other parties. Moreover, branch members are rarely active outside of election periods. Branches therefore are faced with the challenge of keeping members involved and active in the party, throughout the whole electoral cycle. To keep members active, branches must first identify the main challenges that their members are facing.

Why Members Do Not Participate;

- There are no regular branch meetings and when they happen they are for a select few.
- Members do little other than to listen to leaders talk.
- A small clique has all the power and does not encourage others to get involved.
- Members are not valued and are never thanked or praised for the work they do.
- Members feel useless or frustrated because their skills are not being utilized.
- The branch has no projects that members can be involved in.
- Members feel that they are getting nothing out of the branch.

Strategies for Keeping Members Active;

- Find out what motivates the member of your branch.
- Make members feel that they are valued contributors to the political party.
- Give members opportunities to learn new skills or to get education about issues that interest them.
- Encourage member participation in party activities such as political rallies, branch activities, party nominations and campaigns.
- Ensure that the branch is working on political issues that will improve their lives or the lives of their families and communities.
- Create a culture of feeling part of a team in the branch.
- Introduce rewards in terms of status, personal development or access to employment opportunities.
- Start an introductory workshop for all new members.
- Send a welcome letter signed by the party leader of the party to all new members.

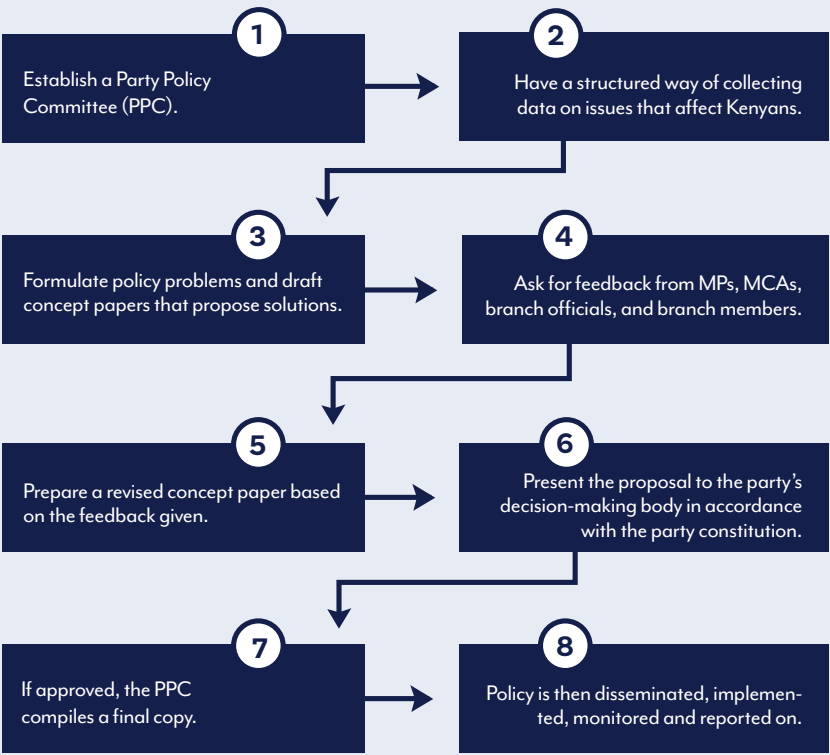
3.5 BRANCHES AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Political parties in Kenya are sitting on a gold mine of local knowledge that can provide new policy ideas: the branch and their members. Including members and party branches in policy development is important for real internal party democracy, but it also has the positive side effect of making it interesting and meaningful to be a party member outside of election time.

Party policy development in Kenya is a highly centralized process. Therefore, much of the responsibility to allow for a more inclusive culture currently

lies with the central party leadership. Branches need to be included in a reciprocal process of reviewing important party policy before it is decided upon. Establishing a Party Policy Committee (PPC), and including branch members in it, is one way of achieving this.

Figure 3.2
Internal Party Policy Making Process



As shown in phase 8, branches play a key role in monitoring how policies are implemented throughout the county. Branches could introduce local meetings after policies are introduced by the county assembly to get feedback on how well the policies are being implemented. Alternatively, branches that

have developed manifestos can monitor how these have been implemented in the lower levels of the branch, this will also help strengthen the accountability of the party towards voters. The following is a list of other ways branch member can become involved in the policy development process:

- Collecting data on policy needs of the citizens (make a list of questions to administer in your meetings with citizens in public barazas or organized focus groups)
- Providing policy ideas that needs to be prioritized
- Be the eyes, ears and mouth of the party locally
- Scrutinizing and enriching draft policy papers
- Dissemination of policy
- Monitoring the performance of party policies
- Engaging elected leaders at county level
- Reporting on the reception of policies at grassroots level

3.6 BRANCHES AND ELECTIONS

Intra-party Elections

One of the keys to a successful election is generating lists with good candidates for the party. Political party branches are the eyes and ears of the party at the local level, and they should play a central role in choosing the right candidates for any political party. The Elections Act of Kenya requires political parties to develop their own rules for selecting candidates at the branch level, these must be submitted to the IEBC six months before nominations. The rules for each party should be set out in their constitution and structures. Although political parties in Kenya have their procedures set out in party laws, they nevertheless face challenges when selecting candidates at the branch level. Some of these challenges are:

- Choosing the highest calibre of party officials
- Achieving a balanced list
- Ensuring candidates have the right motivation
- Organizing good election structures in the branches
- Logistics between the national HQ and the branch offices
- Ensuring that election processes are performed in a timely manner

How to Choose the Best Candidates

Political parties need to involve members in candidate selection. One of the

benefits of being a member of a political party branch is that you should have a say in who represents you in political office. The opinion of members needs to be heard when political parties begin to compile their election lists, and this process should be reciprocal, from the county-level and downwards.

Election Boards

One way to ensure that members are heard through the list making process is to establish an election board at the county level. This board should have the responsibility for identifying, vetting, and selecting candidates for the party. It is important that the members appointed to the election board are aware of the important role they have, and strive to remain as objective as possible throughout the candidate selection process. The board should reflect the broader membership of the political party, therefore there should be a good balance of gender and age. It may also be necessary to ensure that different geographical regions, and different political factions within the party are represented, so that these will be reflected in the party lists.

Women and youth are underrepresented in Kenyan political parties. One of the reasons for this is the fact that they receive fewer nominations to party positions than men. Until the gender and youth gaps are filled, branches should consider placing quotas on the number of women and youth that are present in election boards. Statistically, men tend to nominate more men, thus by balancing the election board women will have a greater chance to become nominated.

The first order of business for an election board is to develop candidate criteria. The board should ensure that the candidates are in line with the legal requirements set out in the Constitution and the Elections Act. Remember that selecting good candidates is about more than just legal requirements, the election board should also develop criteria for what they believe is an all-around good candidate.

Based on the candidate criteria, the board should develop a first draft of names for the party list. When this is complete, they must confirm with each of those candidates that they are willing and motivated to run for elections. Next, the lists should then be sent to the lower bodies of the party organization to hear the opinion of members. Ask branches, sub-branches and polling stations to provide written feedback on their view of the candidates on the party list. It will be up to the election board, as much as possible, to balance the list according to the feedback from the members. This process ensures that members feel valued as they have their views considered on who will be representing them.

When the election board has finalized the names on the list, these will

need to be submitted to party headquarters to inform them of them of who has been chosen. Finally, the lists will be submitted to the IEBC four months prior to the election date. The following three lists provide a starting point for election boards when setting out to find the best possible candidates for their party:

Box 3.7

Legal Checklist for Candidate Selection for Members of the County Assembly

- Must be a registered voter
- Must hold a degree for a university recognized in Kenya
- Must meet the moral and ethical requirements prescribed by the Constitution
- Is nominated by a political party or supported by at least 500 voters in their ward
- Can not be a State or public officer, other than a member of the county assembly
- Cannot hold a position at the IEBC up to five years prior to the election
- Must be a citizen of Kenya for at least ten years prior to the election
- Must be of a sound mind
- Cannot be bankrupt
- Cannot be serving a prison sentence of more than six months
- Cannot have been found misusing State or public office according to chapter six of the Constitution

Box 3.8

Qualities of a Good Candidat

- Knowledge of relevant political issues
- Professional competence
- Leadership ability
- Honesty and reliability
- Fair-mindedness
- Party loyalty
- Well thought of in the local community
- Charisma and communication skills
- Ability to perform in the media
- Active in the party's work locally
- Connection to, and understanding of, certain target groups
- Active in charity organizations or local Civil Society Organizations

Risks to be Aware of During Candidate Selection

- **Nepotism**: Is the candidate someone who has practiced nepotism in their previous place of work? When those with power or influence practice nepotism, for example by giving jobs or benefits to friends or family without regard for their merit, they are acting in an immoral way and ultimately undermining the Constitution.
- **Conflicts of interest**: Parties should be aware of candidates who have an obvious conflict of interest between their personal life and a potential public role. Such conflicts don't necessarily mean that a candidate is unfit for office, but they will be required to declare any personal interest that may compromise their public position.
- **Financial misconduct**: Parties should be weary of selecting candidates who have been found of financial misconduct in the past. Financial disclosure is regulated for political officials in the Kenyan Constitution. Among other things, it restricts politicians from having a foreign bank account.
- **Corruption**: Politicians who are found guilty of practicing corruption will be banned from taking up public office in Kenya. Political party candidates will also be vetted by the IEBC and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC).
- **Ethnicity**: A candidate who is from a tribe that is a minority within their county will face different challenges than someone who is part of the majority. Branches need to identify and be aware of these challenges in order to ensure that all candidates are treated equally, no matter what ethnicity they have.

Logistics During Party Elections

Political party branches should remember that nominations pose serious logistical challenges. Developing a logistical plan in advance, helps avoid the chaos and confusion that normally haunt party primaries. This plan should be developed together between national party HQ and relevant branch officials. If possible, the branch should also aim to have a temporary branch coordinating office during party primaries. Party branches should agree on and procure:

- A register of eligible members to participate in nominations
- Nomination materials, including ballot papers and boxes
- Distribution of materials
- Trained election staff
- Resources to support the nomination process
- Transportation arrangements
- Venues for nominations
- Security arrangements
- Nomination and counting procedures

3.7 TRAINING OF PARTY MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS

Why Should Branches Prioritize Training?

It is the political responsibility of the branch to conduct training for members and officials. Sometimes party officials may speak or act in a way that is not in line with what the party stands for. Other times they may be invisible, or even viewed negatively in the media. Building the capacity of your branch will give your party an advantage when election time comes. This is because well-trained members and politicians will have the right answers to questions people ask about your party, and they will know how to interact with the media in a good way. In addition to gaining competent and confident party members, capacity building will enable them to be actively involved in the organization and to use their competence to help the party – two highly important motivation factors.

How to Organize Training

The branch needs to organize a system of training throughout the party organs; from the county level all the way down to the polling station level. Each branch should therefore delegate the overall responsibility to an experienced member of the branch executive committee in cooperation with the branch secretary. This official should have experience working with the party and know the organizational structure and party policy in and out. They should be able to conduct trainings themselves, or delegate responsibility to other capable party members.

Branch officials should agree on dates, times and locations of training sessions at the beginning of each year, and send invitations to those who should attend. If necessary, branches should send out reading material to participants beforehand. Moreover, the branch should stay in close contact with their party HQ to coordinate training sessions with officials from the national level.

Training should be targeted to the different groups within the political party. The three main groups we will focus on here are; new members, party officials, and elected officials.

Training New Members

When someone becomes new member of a political party is often the best time to offer them training. This is because people are often the most interested and curious in the political party as soon as they take the step to join. Organizing an introduction course for a group of new members can be an effective way to engage new members party activities. Some of the topics branches can cover in such are course are:

- Roles and responsibilities of party officials
- Further training on the party's main policies
- The organization and structure of the party
- Policy development
- Leadership and mentor training
- Party activities and member follow-up
- Administration and finances
- Communication channels within the party

Training Elected Officials and Top Candidates

Finally, the party's elected officials need to have different training than others within the party. They are the ambassadors of the party in the media, and they are required to have knowledge and insight at a higher level than others in the party. The only way for them to achieve this is to ensure that they have the knowledge they need, and that they receive the necessary feedback on how they represent the party in different situations. This training should start in the candidate phase while they are running for office, and continue after they are elected. Topics parties should consider training their elected officials on are:

- The role of elected officials in Kenya
- What to do when meeting voters
- How to be seen in the media
- Social media
- Radio, television and newspaper interviews
- Debating
- Speech techniques
- Specific policy areas
- Negotiations after elections



04.

COMMUNICATION

4.1. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Internal communication is communication within the party, focusing on the membership, structures, officials and staff. Good internal communication gives everyone who contributes to the party the information they need, and it enables everyone to have the same understanding of who the party is so that they will all speak with the same voice.

For Kenyan political parties, communication structures are set out in the parties' constitution and organizational structures. However, for any political party, good internal communication should be both bottom-up and top-down. The top-down communication mechanisms allow the party leadership to communicate to the members on party positions and decisions. Unless this mechanism exists, members will not know what decisions have been made in the party and what the party positions are, and, consequently, there will be a disconnect.

Apart from its obvious democratic challenges, a skewed focus towards top-down communication within the party will likely also lead to disquiet and lack of engagement by the party members. It will also be difficult for party leaders to respond to the challenges and needs of party members. For these reasons, every internal party mechanism must also include a bottom-up communication channel, providing party members with the opportunity to communicate their views, inputs, and concerns to the party leadership. Unless a party maintains a two-way communication channel between the party leaders and members, it will soon result in a dysfunctional, weak, and disconnected party.

In addition to vertical, two-way communication channels, parties should also have horizontal communication channels, including between the party secretariat and the elected members' caucuses, between the youth and women's leagues, or between different counties. Such horizontal communication will help improve the party's processes.

4.2. BRANCHES AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

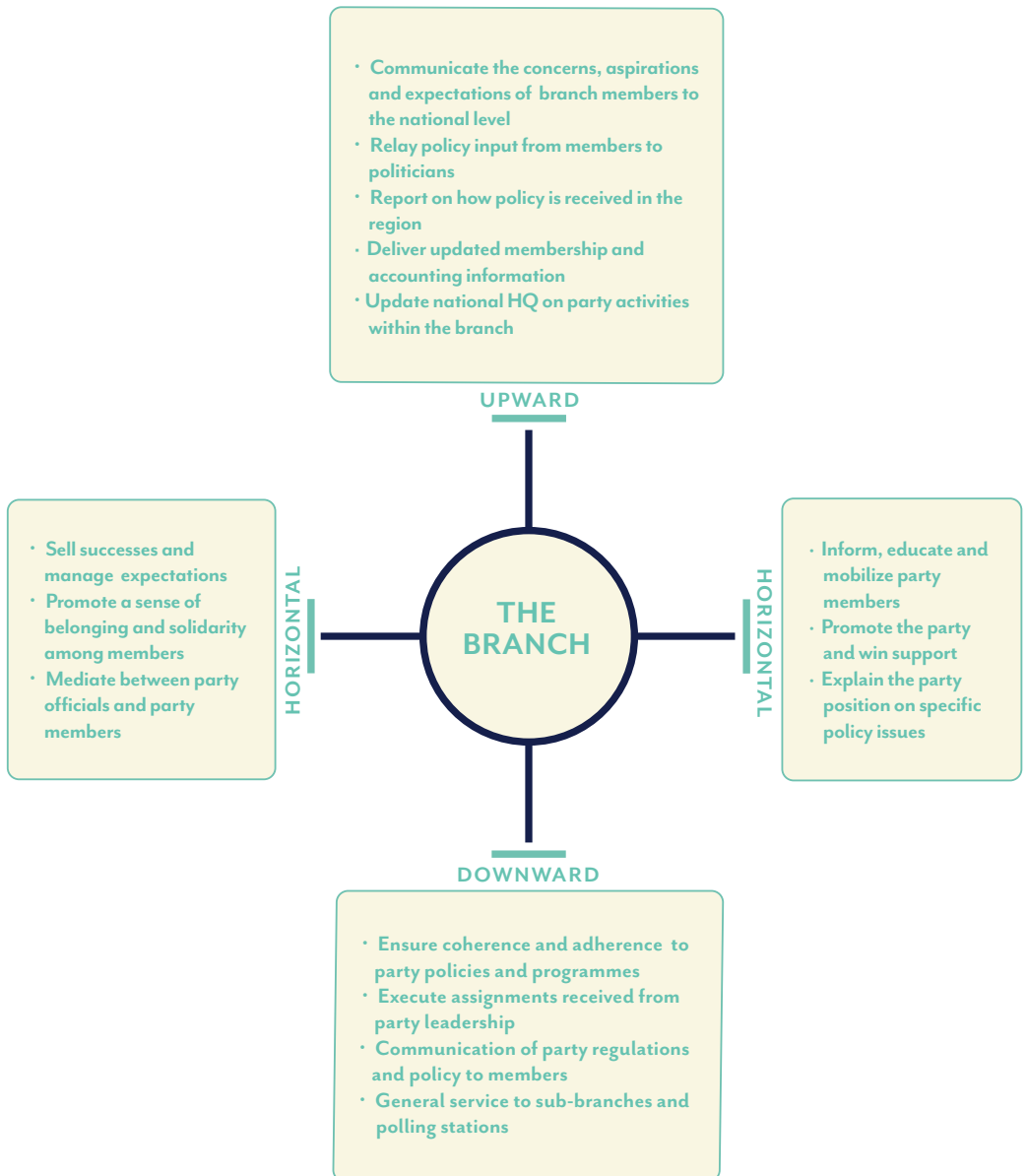
The branch office is most important link between the local and national party organizations. It is responsible for building bridges between the national and county levels, and including the grassroots levels in the different processes of the party. This means that the branch has vertical communication responsibility; upwards to the national level and downwards to grassroots level of the party.

Similarly, branches are horizontal links to other party organs like youth wings, women's wings, intra-party forums, or simply other branches. There must be effective and functional communication channels between these organs and the branches. Sharing of information between the various party organs will lead to a spread of ideas and hopefully inspire party members. Parties must remember that information is power, and withholding information from certain parts levels of the party will hinder internal democracy.

The following diagram (figure 4.1) shows the different communication flows from branches to other areas of the party.



Figure 4.1
Internal Communication Flows in Party Branches



Internal Communication in Practice

Every political party should have their own internal communication strategy. It should be anchored in the party's constitution and organizational structures. The branch officials should be responsible for creating and implementing this strategy. When developing a strategy, the best place to start should be developing the overall goals for internal communication.

Goals for internal communication:

- Provide all party structures with the information they need at all times
- Achieve a common understanding of our party, so that everyone speaks with the same voice
- Create good party ambassadors that feel like they are part of a team

Preparation

Implementing your party's strategy should start with making a yearly plan for the internal communication. This should be centered around the yearly activities of the national party, the branch and the underlying wards and polling stations. If your branch secretary is responsible for internal communication, he or she should start the year by mapping out the different information the current information that is sent out to party members and how it is sent out. From there, he or she can identify what remains to be sent out to the various party organs. The branch secretary should do these things in cooperation with the national HQ and the parliamentary group. It is also important to create awareness about the different information channels that will be used to spread information within the party, to make sure that the information reaches the right persons.

Channels

Parties have several tools at their disposal to secure good internal communication. The table on the following page (Table 4.1) shows some ideas for your branch to use in communicating with other party structures.

Table 4.1
Internal Communication Channels

CHANNEL	SEND TO	CONTENT	MEDIUM
Weekly circulars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National HQ • NEC • Ward leaders • Branch officials and branch staff each week 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agenda for the week • What is happening in the near future • News about the branch • Invitations to branch meetings • Reminders and schedule for branch chairperson 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WhatsApp • E-mail • SMS • Social media outlets
Letters to sub-branches and polling stations	Sub-branch and polling station leaders 3 – 4 times per year	<p>The first letter should be sent out at the beginning of the year and include a yearly calendar for the for sub-branch or polling station.</p> <p>Other things to include in these letters can be: deadlines, training and conferences, political issues to follow up locally, campaigns, nominations, tips for local work and other information to be shared with local members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail • WhatsApp • E-mail • SMS • Social media outlets
Newsletters	All members registered within the branch, once a month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political issues during the month • Campaigns • Member events and other information about the party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail • WhatsApp • E-mail • SMS • Social media outlets
Internal web pages	All members of the political party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal news • Useful documents • Online courses • Information and registration for conferences • Other relevant information about the organization 	Create an internal protected page within your party's website. This page should be accessible only to members of your party
Video greeting from party leadership	All members of the political party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A greeting to all members on political issues • Relevant matters for the party • Challenges to party members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media • WhatsApp groups • Party website • E-mail • During meetings or conferences.

4.3. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

External communication refers to the part of the communication that focuses on the wider public, for example through newspapers, TV or radio. External communication plays an important role in building and organizing a successful party. Through it, a party can relay its policies to the public, help shape public decisions, improve its image, and recruit new members. It also provides a party with the channel to convince voters to choose its candidates and policies during an election. In addition, it is a vehicle through which the party can interact with and receive feedback from citizens and other interest groups.

4.4. BRANCHES AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Any successful communication strategy developed by political parties should be built from the bottom up, and developed using a participatory approach. This will ensure that party branches will communicate in a relevant way to their local constituencies and members. Certain aspects of the communication strategy at the branch level will be of national relevance, things like political news from the Party Parliamentary Group, national-level campaigns, presidential election issues, leadership changes or national conferences. However, most of the issues communicated from the branch should be issues of local importance:

- Promoting the branch manifesto
- Profiling party MP's from the constituency
- Relaying relevant local political issues
- Reporting on MCA's work

The responsibility for external communication at the branch level can be given either to the branch secretary, a communication or public relations committee, or another party official at the branch level. It is important that these individuals are clear on the possibilities and limitations of their task. A key in achieving this clarity is to have open channels of communication between the branch officials and the party spokesperson at the national level.

Channels

Branches should select those channels or tools that will best help them reach their aim of communicating the issue at hand. Things to be taken into

consideration are; who you are trying to reach with this message (the target audience) and what the advantages and disadvantages are of the medium. Table 4.2 on the following page shows some examples that branches can utilize in their external communication.



Table 4.2
Channels for External Communication

CHANNEL	TARGET AUDIENCE	ADVANTAGES	DIS-ADVANTAGES
• Radio	General public, can also target specific groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for straightforward messages and slogans • Sparks interest in the issue • Possible to get audience feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of visual communication • Times may be inconvenient
• Television	General public, can also target specific groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio and visual • Good for straightforward messages and slogans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little room for interaction • Expensive • Times may be inconvenient
• Newspaper articles	Literate public, can target certain groups in different newspapers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to give more in-depth information to target group • Easy to review and re-read to ensure correctness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required literacy • Limited control of final product
• Posters • Brochures or leaflets	Can target geographic areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for straightforward messages and slogans • Inexpensive and can be produced by the party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a lot room for detailed messages • Hard to target broader audiences
Promotional Items; • Mugs • T-shirts • Pens • Hats • Bags	Can choose item based on target audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good for making a statement or being visible • Popularity 	Can be expensive, but it is possible to partner with a local business
• Websites • Blogs • E-mail • Social media	Anyone with access to the internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full control over the content • Inexpensive • Can use audio and visual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer may not be widespread in all areas • Requires technical expertise • Requires constant follow-up
Mobile phones; • SMS • WhatsApp	Can target specific groups, especially youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large reach in rural areas • Inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages must be short • Can be viewed as spam • Should be linked to other communication processes



05.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

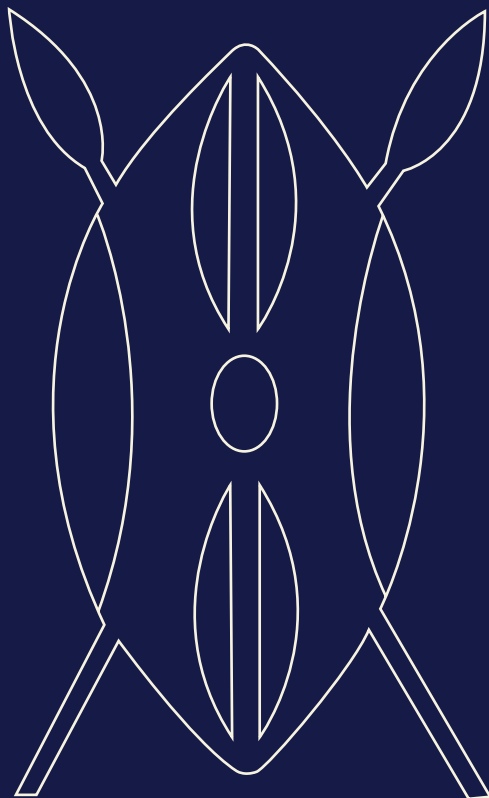
Kenyan political parties are sitting on vast resources throughout the entire country, namely their members and the branches that they are a part of. Branches represent the bedrock of any successful political party. Therefore, Kenyan political parties should aim to strengthen the role of branches in political processes that affect them the most. Branches must play a meaningful part in guiding the future direction of the party rather than feel that their opinions are not heard or underappreciated. In practice, this means that branches must be agenda setters for important party processes: (1) understanding the needs of society (2) developing relevant policy alternatives (3) recruiting, selecting and training people for political office and (4) seeking and exercising control over the government.

When branches feel like they are contributing to a political project that is bigger than themselves, it will motivate them to be better ambassadors for the party locally. The central parts of the party must ensure good internal channels of communication within the party for this to happen. This will give the party leadership access to reliable information for policy development through the eyes and ears of the local party. At the same time, it will provide meaningful participation to the grassroots of the party.

The Constitution and the Political Parties Act give political parties responsibility as gate keepers of democracy in Kenya, however there are still holes in the legislation regarding the lower levels of the party organization. Currently, Kenyan law does not provide adequate resources for party development at the branch level. Funding needs to be proportionately devolved for party branches to organize themselves in a meaningful way. Their lack of resources has left many party branches frustrated in their attempts to participate in the political activities of their party.

We hope that this guide book can help lighten the burden on branches by providing branch office staff, branch officials and branch members with practical tools they can use in their everyday political work. This guide is not meant to present parties with all the answers, rather, it will hopefully provide inspiration for finding new and innovative ways to manage your own branches and include members in the work of the branch. Nevertheless, political parties will always need to ensure that they are in line with the laws that govern their activities as they seek political office, that they act with integrity and that they are accountable towards Kenyan citizens.





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