INTRODUCTION

• Article 1 of the Constitution gives the people of Kenya the sovereign power, which in effect emphasizes citizen participation. Articles 34 and 35 lay out the framework to access information and the means through which that access is possible. Kenya is yet to ratify the Freedom of Information Bill (FOI)

• This study investigated possible impacts of the Kenyan Government’s open data initiative, and how it is assisting marginalized communities and groups to access key social services, engage with government, and the ways in which these users utilize open government data.

• Our study revealed that there are four categories of citizens when it comes to the open data landscape in Kenya: Those who neither know about nor look for government information; those who know that government data exists but don’t use it; those who know about government data and use it but do not know if the source; and those who know about the government data portal and use it.

• Government information forms an important part of Kenyans life. This is expressed by a variety of interests and preferences people have for government data.

Evidence and findings

• Government information forms an important part of Kenyans life. This is expressed by a variety of interests and preferences people have for government data.

• Traditional information intermediaries, especially local chiefs, play a key role in access to government information and services, particularly for communities inhabiting low income areas.

• The kinds of data needed to support service delivery in Kenya may be different from those needed in other places in the world. The findings emphasize the need to pay considerable attention to the local context when designing and implementing open data initiatives, as these factors are crucial to the success and sustainability of such initiatives.

Conclusions & Recommendations:

• Our findings suggest that Kenyan citizens do seek and use government information in different domains of their lives and that more and better government information is fundamental to enhancing effective public participation in the marginalized areas covered in this study.

• Traditional information sharing systems/institutions are crucial for enhancing the awareness, access and utilization of government data. However, there is need for building capacities for these traditional information intermediaries. Therefore, there is need to further study the information economy of the traditional intermediaries particularly in low income settlements to establish possibilities of optimizing access to open government information.