

The Role of Data Governance in Development in Kenya

By Dr. Lois Musikali

Recently, there have been various attempts by the Government of Kenya, directly or indirectly, to collect data from its citizens. Amongst these are the efforts at Huduma Number registration as well as the recent call by the Communication Authority of Kenya to re-register all telephone lines. The motives behind these efforts at data collection have been shrouded in controversy with the government arguing that data collection is a necessity for economic development while a significant number of citizens have been wary that data collection by government agencies would curtail their constitutional right to privacy among other constitutional rights. The aim of this paper is to explore these two perspectives, their validity and the role of data governance in mediating this of citizen-government distrust and thereby facilitating economic development.

This paper will begin by reviewing the role of trust in general governance and development, whether governments can be trusted, and what causes citizen to distrust their governments. It will then explore the benefits of citizen-government trust for economic development. This will be followed by a consideration of the role of data governance in creating and increasing citizen-government trust and thereby making the collection of data an easier activity when the same is required for economic development. This paper will review Kenya's legal framework on data protection, particularly, the Data Protection Act, with a view to making suggestions for reform that would increase citizen-government trust during government-led data collection exercises and in so doing facilitate economic development.

Citation

Musikali, Lois “*The Role of Data Governance in Development in Kenya*”_ Paper presented at the 2nd Daystar University Annual Conference (22nd – 23rd June 2022).