

Abstract

This study sought to establish the role played by communication in the on-going reform programmes in Kenya's public sector and, particularly, in the immigration department. In particular, it has investigated the function of the service charter as a communication tool and guide to staff in service delivery. To interrogate the above issues, the study focused on employees (service providers). Up to 50 frontline staff, including immigration officers, immigration clerks and others in the operational cadres, were selected through a simple random sampling procedure. Further, an interview schedule, with one senior official of the department, was conducted to obtain in-depth information on the topic under investigation. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the data collected from the study. All the service providers know the charter exists and almost all know the promises it makes to the customers and timelines therein. But a considerable number of the staff at the operational cadre do not use the charter as a reference point for service delivery. Nearly all employees on this cadre say they were not involved in the planning and formulation processes of the service charter nor have they been trained on implementations. The study concludes that because of lack of involvement of the operational employees in the formulation of the charter, there is lack of ownership on their part and few use the charter as reference point in service provision. For the same reason, the charter has barely influenced their behaviour and attitude in service provision. Lack of a comprehensive communication policy and a clear communication strategy in the department and in the government at large is a major hindrance to reforms.