



Policy Brief

CLIMATE ACTION FOR RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURES IN KENYA

CHOICE KENYA PROJECT

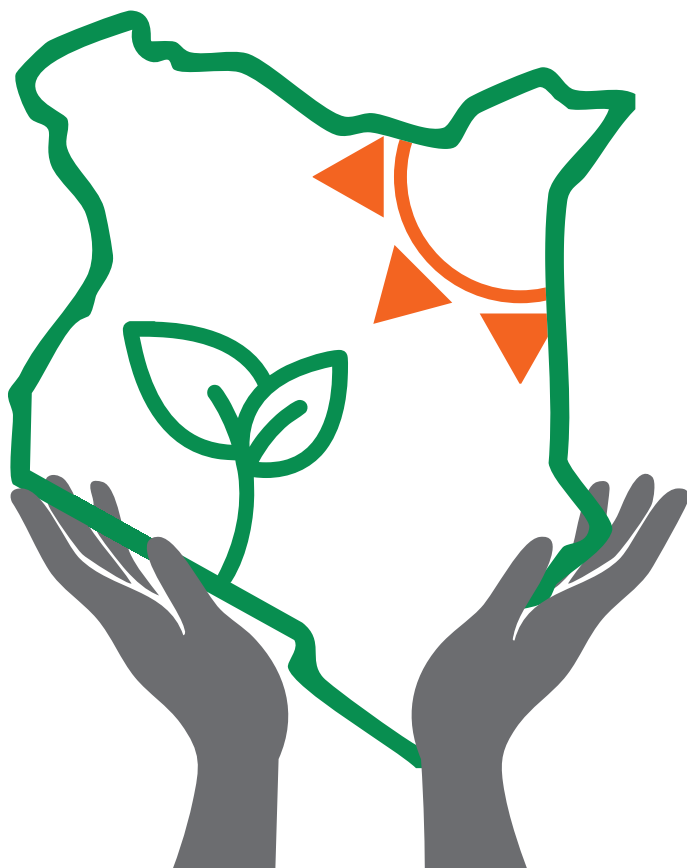


THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POPULATION HEALTH
CHOICE PROJECT, KENYA

Policy Brief

Climate Action for Resilient and Sustainable Futures in Kenya

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(Refer to list at the end of this document)



Key Messages

01

Kenya's climate resilience efforts are critical to safeguarding its people and ecosystems while advancing SDG 13 and other interlinked goals.

02

Gender-responsive climate finance is key to reducing inequalities and supporting vulnerable groups such as women, PWDs, youth, and marginalized communities.

03

Emerging technologies like AI, GIS, and Machine Learning can close data gaps and provide real-time data to inform climate decisions.

04

Coordinated, multisectoral approaches integrate climate, health, and gender priorities, improving the effectiveness of climate policies and legislation.

Introduction

Climate change threatens Kenya's sustainable development, impacting essential sectors such as health, agriculture, infrastructure, water, and gender equity. Its direct effects—such as prolonged droughts, unpredictable rainfall, and rising temperatures—are already felt across communities, aggravating food insecurity, water scarcity, deteriorating public health, and widening socio-economic disparities and inequalities. Addressing climate change is thus essential in advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 13 (Climate Action), 1 (No Poverty), 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), and 5 (Gender Equality), 14 (Life below water), 15 (Life on land) and 17 (Partnerships).

Kenya's vulnerability to climate change, rooted in its reliance on climate-sensitive sectors, has significant socio-economic and health implications. Kenya faces a “double burden” as it confronts both climate-induced disasters and limited healthcare access, especially in rural areas. As climate change intensifies, these impacts are disproportionately felt by women, children, youth, and marginalized communities, making gender equality, health and nutrition fundamental to climate resilience. Thus, the Consortium to Address Climate Change, Inequality, and Other Complex Challenges Influencing Human Health (CHOICE project) emphasizes the need for a data-driven and inclusive response to climate change that prioritizes local adaptation measures while ensuring equitable health services and gender-responsive strategies. Hence, through this brief, we outline critical areas for improving Kenya's climate resilience with integrated actions in health and gender. The Kenya CHOICE project thus champions an intersectional approach, advocating for policies that leverage climate action to enhance health outcomes and advance gender equity. This brief targets policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders in health and environmental advocacy to encourage a multistakeholder and holistic approach towards climate action.







Kenya's Key Findings on Climate Action/Change

Key Progress and Achievements

1. Adoption and commitment to National and International Commitments:



Kenya has operationalised frameworks such as the Green Economy Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016–2030); Kenya’s National Adaptation Plan 2015–2030; National Climate Change policy (2016); and the Kenya Climate Change Act (2016), demonstrating its commitment to tackling the adverse impacts of climate change. These policies and legislation align with the Paris Agreement and the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032), emphasizing sustainable development and resource management for climate actions. For instance, Kenya also launched the Climate Change Action Fund.

2. Climate resilient Adaptation Programs:



Kenya has made strides with community-driven projects like the Kenya Climate-Smart Agriculture Project (KCSAP) and Kenya Water Towers Protection and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Project, which focus on sustainable practices to bolster food security and water conservation. These programs strengthen local resilience to climate impacts and contribute to SDG 3 by addressing public health risks associated with climate change.

3. Climate Literacy and Capacity Building:



Through initiatives such as Locally-Led Climate Action Programs and the 15 Billion Tree Planting Plan, communities, policy makers and technocrats are engaged in conservation efforts. Increased climate literacy enables communities to contribute meaningfully to climate resilience while fostering a sense of ownership in environmental conservation.



4. Programmes and projects promoting adaptation and low carbon development pathways in the health sector exist.



5. Establishment of climate relevant institutions and focal points: climate change focal points in health institutions.

Challenges and Bottlenecks

1. Insufficient Climate Finance:



Limited funding hinder the full implementation of Kenya's climate policies. Although climate finance mechanisms exist, the need for more robust funding remains, particularly for localized climate resilience and gender-responsive projects.

2. Climate data Gaps and Monitoring Challenges:



Kenya faces data limitations that restrict effective climate policy monitoring. This hampers the country's ability to evaluate progress on key indicators, especially concerning gender-disaggregated data and health outcomes associated with climate change.

3. Fragmented Policy Coordination:



Climate-related initiatives often operate in silos across multiple ministries without centralized coordination, reducing efficiency and wasting resources. Clear roles and unified strategies are essential for effective policy execution across national and local levels.

4. Limited Inclusive adaptation and mitigation frameworks:



Women and girls, especially in rural regions, are more vulnerable to climate-related adversities due to their roles in agriculture and family care. Climate-induced challenges exacerbate health risks, particularly maternal and reproductive health, emphasizing the intersection of SDG 3 and SDG 5 in climate action. Hence there's a need for strengthening and having inclusive adaptation and mitigation frameworks that are responsive and youth inclusive to tackling help overcome climate impacts.





Recommendations and Conclusion

Recommendations

To build Kenya's climate resilience and support SDG 13, while simultaneously advancing SDG 3 and SDG 5, the following actions are critical:

- i. **Expand Climate Finance with a Gender Focus:** Increase climate funding for projects targeting vulnerable groups, especially women, and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) such as PWD , Youth and marginalized communities. By incorporating gender-responsive budgeting, Kenya can address the unique climate risks women face while empowering them as agents of change.
- ii. **Strengthen Data Collection and Monitoring:** Adopt advanced tools like GIS, AI, and machine learning to track environmental data in real-time and improve data reliability. Gender-disaggregated data is crucial for informed decision-making and must be prioritized to measure the specific health and social impacts of climate change on women.
- iii. **Promote Public-Health-Centered Climate Adaptation:** Embed climate adaptation into Kenya's public health systems to mitigate health impacts associated with climate change. Develop community-based healthcare interventions that address specific risks like heat-related illnesses and malnutrition, especially for women and children in rural areas.
- iv. **Implement Community-Led, Gender-Specific Interventions:** Support community-based climate initiatives that directly involve women and vulnerable populations in developing climate-resilient practices, such as sustainable agriculture and water management. This can boost local economies while reducing health risks related to food and water security

- v. **Support for Carbon Markets and Regulation:** Implement a structured Carbon Markets Regulation Framework to facilitate carbon credit trading, thereby incentivizing sustainable practices. This will generate revenue for local conservation and adaptation projects and align with Kenya's international climate commitments
- vi. **Actively involve youth in climate change adaptation and mitigation** by integrating them into decision-making processes, supporting youth-led initiatives, providing climate education and capacity-building, ensuring access to funding, and leveraging frameworks like the National Climate Change Action Plan and Vision 2030 to mainstream youth participation.

Conclusion

Climate action in Kenya is a multi-dimensional issue intersecting with health and gender equality. Strengthening climate resilience demands a holistic approach that integrates SDG 13 with SDGs 3 and 5. Kenya's climate resilience efforts are critical to safeguarding its people and ecosystems while advancing SDG 13 and other interlinked goals. Increased climate finance, improved data tracking, stronger policy coordination and fostering community engagement will enable Kenya to mitigate climate impacts and strengthen its adaptive capacity. The CHOICE project urges policymakers, community leaders, and international stakeholders to embrace this integrated approach, focusing on solutions that serve both people and the planet. Only by addressing climate, health, and gender concurrently can Kenya achieve resilience and equity for all its citizens now and for the generations to come.

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Note: The Think Tank team comprises experts and academia with mental health, gender, climate change, SDGs and Data backgrounds. The brief is aimed at supporting advocacy efforts and policy development for robust climate actions and advancing SDGs related commitments in Kenya.

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