



Practices at the Community Level in Kenya to Address the Intersection between Displacement and Climate Change Impacts: Key Messages from Mapping Sessions Held in Nairobi on the 29th and 30th of August, 2023

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FOLLOW-UP TO THE NANSEN INITIATIVE



Global Network of
Civil Society Organisations
for Disaster Reduction

The Context

In December 2021, the Project to Avert, Minimize, and Address Disaster Displacement (PAMAD) was initiated by the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). Its primary objectives are to enhance understanding of displacement within the context of losses and damages linked to climate change and to support initiatives that aim to prevent, mitigate, and address displacement and its effects on vulnerable individuals and communities.

The project is centered on the practical implementation of global policy recommendations concerning Loss and Damage and Displacement, with a particular focus on the following priority areas:

- I. Knowledge Enhancement
- II. Assessment of Displacement Risks
- III. Preparedness for Disaster Displacement
- IV. Integration into Planning Processes
- V. Access to Financial Resources

The project's geographical scope covers four countries: Fiji, Bangladesh, Kenya, and Guatemala. PDD has been developing comprehensive national implementation plans in collaboration with governmental and non-governmental partners. These plans outline how the five global priority areas can be effectively implemented in each of the countries mentioned above. The programs are designed to identify concrete measures that address locally recognized priorities related to the prevention and mitigation of the impacts of climate-related disasters while addressing existing policy, operational, and capacity gaps.

On the 29th and 30th of August 2023, the first meeting for mapping displacement-related practices being undertaken by Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in Kenya was held in Nairobi, primarily targeting CBOs in Nairobi, Central, Northern, and Eastern Kenya.

A collaboration between GNDR and PDD

This Information Note, crafted by the Global Network of Civil Society Organizations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR), presents a compilation of key messages from the mapping sessions held in Nairobi. The key messages are a record of discussions and should not be construed as the official position of GNDR or PDD.

Drought is the primary cause of displacement among pastoralist communities.

- Communities in Kenya's pastoralist areas, who rely primarily on cattle as a source of livelihood, occasionally travel to neighboring counties or countries like Tanzania and Ethiopia in search of water and pasture in order to ensure the survival and well-being of their animals.
- The rain patterns in pastoralist-inhabited areas are particularly difficult to predict. As a result, pastoralist groups face unique challenges in managing and mitigating the effects of drought.
- Ineffective communication and marginalization in governance make it difficult for pastoralist communities to participate in policymaking. Their specific needs and concerns are often overlooked in drought preparedness and mitigation strategies, leading to the enactment of policies that are poorly tailored to their needs. Other policies (e.g. on migration or natural resource management) might hinder their ability to move freely, pursue traditional livelihood strategies, and adapt to climate impacts.

The displacement of residents in Nairobi's informal settlements is predominantly driven by flooding, a challenge further exacerbated by the cyclical occurrence of the El Niño weather phenomenon.

- In most of Nairobi's informal settlements, buildings constructed along riverbanks are susceptible to being swept away by powerful water currents during the rainy seasons. The lack (or insufficient implementation) of proper road networks, drainage systems, waste management and housing regulations aggravates the-

problem. Heavy rains have the potential to quickly turn these locations into disaster areas, displacing families, causing property damage, and endangering lives.

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- Disasters disproportionately impact women in the informal settlements as most households are headed by women.
- The prevailing perception that only men should actively participate in local public forums and decision-making processes amplifies the challenges faced by women in such disaster situations. This gender bias restricts women's access to information, resources, and opportunities to contribute to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.
- Preparedness efforts focus mostly on early warning systems as a proactive approach to disaster risk reduction. These systems involve monitoring and disseminating weather forecast information broadcasted by the Kenya Meteorological Department to the at-risk communities in the informal settlements.
- Relief and response efforts involve giving displaced or vulnerable populations urgent support by ensuring access to food, clean water, shelter, and medical care.
- Throughout relevant prevention, preparedness, and response work, women empowerment is prioritized. Women are encouraged to engage in table banking, a collective funding approach involving women-group members convening periodically to pool their savings, loan repayments, and other financial contributions, to build a financial safety net for emergencies and facilitate the acquisition of land in locations distant from the perilous riverbanks.
- Addressing the issue of flooding in Nairobi's informal settlements is a critical imperative for local authorities and international and non-governmental organizations, as it-

involves providing immediate relief and implementing sustainable urban planning and infrastructure improvements to reduce the risk and impact of future floods.

The displacement caused by climate change presents a multifaceted challenge, as it can increase competition for scarce resources, strain social services, and exacerbate the vulnerability of marginalized populations.

- Severe drought causes inhabitants of the affected regions to relocate to neighboring counties. A drought situation can lead to the deaths of 70% of livestock belonging to local communities. The loss of this substantial portion of livestock profoundly impacts displaced persons' economic stability. Additionally, the few livestock left are often emaciated: the market value of a once valuable livestock, typically commanding prices of up to Ksh. 50,000, can plummet to a mere Ksh. 1,000. This dramatic drop in the value of livestock compounds the economic hardships the affected communities face.
- The influx of displaced populations into an area brings many challenges, including heightened competition for limited resources, potential contamination of water resources and conflicts between host and displaced populations. It also creates a pressing need for essential support such as food, shelter, and ongoing medical treatment.
- The issue of displacement caused by climate change requires a holistic approach that encompasses both short-term relief efforts, such as the provision of shelter, food, clean water, and healthcare to affected individuals, as well as long-term strategies that focus on sustainable land management, the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, and the climate-proofing of livelihoods.
- Collaboration between national and international stakeholders is essential to ensure the protection and well-being of displaced individuals and to address the root causes of climate-induced displacement in Kenya, ultimately fostering more resilient and sustainable communities.

Connecting with diverse organizations that provide services such as mental health and psychosocial support contributes to reducing socio-economic vulnerabilities experienced by individuals displaced in the context of the adverse effects of climate change.

- Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) and Community Health Assistants (CHAs) in under-served areas help identify households in need of mental health and psychosocial support services.
- People's exposure to hazards and the demand for referral to other service providers remains persistent due to the lack of viable and affordable housing options for poor individuals, who often end up living in at-risk areas rather than relocate to safer (but more expensive) locations in places less prone to flooding.

The availability of water for domestic use significantly alleviates climate-induced disaster displacement.

- Implementing water storage solutions like rainwater harvesting tanks in areas prone to drought helps reduce climate impacts, including displacements.
- Small dikes that slow down the flow of rivers and streams help raise the water levels in seasonal rivers and contribute to water infiltration and raising of the water table, thus improving borehole siting efforts.



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