



Promoting Policy Measures to Address Disaster Displacement at the County Level

Kilifi Climate Change and Governance Platform (KCCGP)

is an umbrella organization made up of 64 youth and women's groups that engage with issues around climate change and conservation in Kilifi County, Kenya. The Platform works on four thematic areas, namely: loss and damage, livelihoods, carbon storage, and mangrove planting, and works closely with the county government to establish and enforce policies relevant to these thematic priorities.

AREA AND SCOPE

KCCGP works across Kilifi County, with a particular focus on the coastal region.

The organization has reached more than

230 PEOPLE

in the Majaoni and Kidnundu Mtongani communities, as well as the wider Kilifi creek area.



CONTEXT

Many households and communities in Kilifi County have been, or are at risk of becoming, displaced in the context of environmental degradation and climate-related disasters. Heavy rains and flooding events impact communities living in the hills through increased erosion risk, while communities living along the creek face challenging conditions including sea-level rise, coastal flooding, and high winds from the ocean. Other activities that contribute to displacement across Kilifi County include infrastructure development and deforestation.

RESPONSES

KCCGP works with the county government to promote policy action before, during, and after displacement. It also provides funding to displaced families and communities in the aftermath of a disaster.

Before Displacement

KCCGP aims to increase awareness around disaster risk and the adverse impacts of climate change, including by informing communities when rains are coming and identifying high-risk areas for building. In doing so, the organization works with local media organizations and community leaders to ensure that early warning messages reach grassroots communities.

KCCGP also supports the implementation of relevant laws and policies at the county level, including the recently signed Climate Change Act. The organization specifically supported the county government in identifying and recommending people with relevant expertise to sit in the Ward Climate Committees established under this Act. KCCGP also seeks to promote the continuation of cultural beliefs and practices that promote environmental stewardship, including the idea that forests are sacred, through law and policy.

During Displacement

When a disaster occurs, KCCGP works with the county government and organizations such as Kenya Red Cross to enable people to evacuate to safety. The organization participates in a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to the identification and establishment of temporary shelters, recognizing that the schools and churches commonly used for this purpose are often not in good condition or adequately stocked.

After Displacement

The organization advocates for the establishment of a transparent and organized compensation policy for loss and damage at the national and county levels. This policy should play an essential role in the relocation of families and in ensuring that displaced persons do not return to unsafe areas following a disaster. It should also support interventions that address non-economic losses including psychosocial impacts, for example by providing counseling services to displaced persons.

“ *When we talk about loss and damage, the government should think about how to give people land and a safe place to stay.*”

Robert Banda Mulanya

Recognizing that many families in Kilifi County rely on fishing or agriculture for their livelihoods, KCCGP also tries to relieve some of the financial difficulties they face in the aftermath of a disaster by providing employment opportunities and monthly stipends, for example to work in mangrove nurseries, as well as small loans to start businesses.





CHALLENGES

One challenge that KCCGP faces in its work is that people do not want to move away from their communities and homes due to cultural and/or personal connections to the land, including that loved ones are buried there. Thus, even though people temporarily evacuate in the face of hazards, they continue to return to their homes with little consideration for present or future disaster risk.

Lack of financial transparency, corruption and the existence of cartels have further been identified as significant challenges, with funding often not reaching displaced persons. This is also connected to the issue of limited or inadequate due diligence amongst donors. To overcome these challenges, KCCGP encourages donors to carefully assess organizations and the impacts of their work to ensure that their money will be effectively allocated and utilized.

Similarly, KCCGP has acknowledged that the funds it provides to displaced persons to start a business are not always used for this purpose. The organization aims to address this issue by establishing monitoring mechanisms to better understand and follow the distribution of these funds.

The organization has also noted that the county government's engagement with these issues remains limited, and that while policies on disaster risk management and climate change have been enacted, they need to be reinforced and effectively implemented.



RESULTS

KCCGP's work has directly resulted in the enactment and strengthening of local policies around climate change, disasters, and displacement. KCCGP also plays a critical role in ensuring that information and early warning messages reach local communities. During El Niño, the organization collaborated with SBS Radio to broadcast early warning messages and advise people to evacuate to safer places if they were in danger, with many people following this advice. KCCGP also sent SMS messages to thousands of people to ask whether they were okay and, if not, advise them how they could seek help.

Moreover, the employment opportunities offered by KCCGP strengthen both the economic well-being of displaced communities and the resilience of their

ecosystems. For example, one of the organization's projects targets 24 displaced families and provides one member of each family with a job in a mangrove nursery, resulting in social, economic, and environmental benefits. These include supporting family incomes, increasing the number of mangroves in Kilifi County (currently around 400,000), providing hazard mitigation for coastal communities, and increasing community awareness around the ecosystem services provided by mangroves. Mangroves also provide a breeding ground for fish, meaning that fisherfolk no longer need to venture out to the deep sea in search of fish.

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The PDD implements the project to “Avert, Minimize and Address Displacement Related to the Effects of Climate Change” (PAMAD) to assist countries and communities facing the challenges of Loss and Damage and Displacement. Under PAMAD, and in partnership with the Global Network of Civil Society Organisations on Disaster Reduction (GNDR), the PDD promotes peer-to-peer learning on effective responses to displacement and climate change in Kenya. The project is supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). For more information, visit <https://pamad.disasterdisplacement.org>



With the Generous Support of:



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