



Udgoon
Sustainable
Development
Initiative

Newsletter

OCTOBER ISSUE



Strengthening the capacity of the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (WWSF) in Garissa Township ward through capacity building workshops and demonstration projects.



Executive Director's Remarks

We are honored that our Project was selected for support by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. Our sincere gratitude to the High Commission of Canada in Kenya. This project seeks to strengthen the capacity of the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (W/WSF) in Garissa Township ward aimed at enabling these community-led structures to effectively collaborate with local communities in identifying their climate change vulnerabilities and formulating comprehensive adaptation plans. The project began with a comprehensive baseline assessment, gathering valuable insights from local stakeholders about the specific climate

change impacts and water management challenges facing Garissa. These findings, detailed in a newly compiled report, will guide our next steps as we move into a series of training sessions with key stakeholders. These sessions will be grounded in the data gathered from the community, enabling duty bearers to develop targeted climate and water strategies that reflect local realities. Our ultimate aim is to build a more resilient community, support sustainable water management, and strengthen the partnership between duty bearers and residents, ensuring that together, we can effectively address the most pressing challenges facing Garissa. Together, we are building a brighter, more sustainable future!

Project Manager's Remarks

We are glad to have carried out this first stage of this project, thanks to our able funding partner: The Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of climate action and water management in ensuring that people lead decent lives especially in a frontline area such as the Garissa Township ward. Our baseline assessment garnered views from 600 residents of the township, aged between 7-65. It was also of

importance to us to specifically garner views from women and girls as they are often left out in planning and community action. In this newsletter, we recap the training of enumerators and the data collection activity, read about what this experience was like from the enumerators' perspective, draw some lessons on community engagement and awareness and creation and hear the plight of the women of Garissa. Enjoy!





1.3 : Recap of the Activities

Enumerator Training Day

Early on 15th of October, the enumerators, 20 students from Garissa University show up promptly at 10 am at Lantern hotel in Garissa town. They are enthusiastic to participate in this activity and share their expectations to learn from this activity. They are introduced to the projects and its overall objectives plus the objectives the project aims to meet in this first phase. This lot, generally between the ages of 18-30 and comprising mostly young women and, are taken through a training on data collection through oral and written questionnaires, ethical practices in data collection, and a simulation exercise on data collection.

Data Collection: The recap

It is the first day of data collection: The enumerators set out to collect data in the town targeting markets, schools, eateries and individuals going about their day-to-day activities. Working in groups of twos, they are keen to leave no one behind and take their time gaining consent and even translating the questions to community members who only understand the Somali language. There is enthusiasm from

the members of the community to participate, there is also hope that the solution to the water challenges is going to be immediate. The enumerators are keen to manage their expectations while also not dimming their hopes.



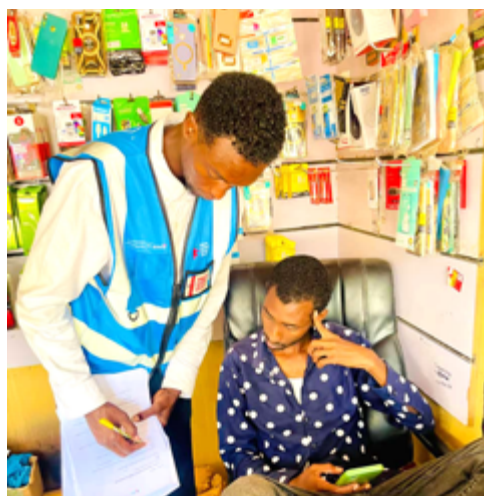


The call for help is resounding

the community is cooperative and even offer suggestions that the enumerators report back and have been included in the baseline report.

By end of the second day, the enumerators have engaged children in schools. Beyond just data collection, they take their time at the Garissa primary school and NEP girls high school breaking down climate change and water management to the children in child-friendly terms as they had been guided in the training. They observe that building children's understanding of climate change and its effects is an area that could be worked on. Meanwhile, some others are the Garissa school for the deaf and with the help of the caregivers can engage with the children and the school community.

Day 2 ends on a fulfilling note and an enthusiasm for the last day of the exercise. On the third day, the team of enumerators concludes the exercise by covering grounds they had not before like spots where the wazee relax at, the mosques and bus stations. The call for help is resounding, the community is cooperative and even offer suggestions that the enumerators report back and have been included in the baseline report.



My experience as an enumerator

Participating in the Baseline assessment in Garissa Township Ward

As a resident of Garissa, I was both excited and a bit nervous to take part in the recent questionnaire project on water shortages in our community, specifically within the Township area where I was assigned. My role was to engage with locals, asking questions to understand the impact of water scarcity and how people are coping with this challenge. The experience gave me a deeper appreciation for our community's resilience and the importance of tackling this issue.

Approaching people with questions about their water supply situation was insightful. Many shared their day today struggles with limited water access, often describing the tough choices they have to make to manage this essential resource. Listening to these personal stories

made me more aware of the severe effects of water scarcity on health, hygiene, and daily routines. One of the most memorable parts of this experience was observing the willingness of community members to openly discuss their challenges. Despite the difficulties they face, many offered thoughtful suggestions and voiced a strong desire for sustainable solutions that could benefit everyone in Garissa. Overall, participating in this project has been eyeopening. It reminded me that water scarcity isn't just an environmental issue; it's deeply personal and affects every part of life here in Garissa. I'm grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this project, and I hope that the insights we gathered will drive positive change for our community.



Water scarcity isn't just an environmental issue; it's deeply personal and affects every part of life here in Garissa

By Adoy Abdullahi Omar





The Importance of Community Engagement

Building Trust and Relationships: Effective community engagement fosters trust and strengthens relationships among citizens. In Garissa County, this was evident as we created opportunities for dialogue, allowing residents to voice their concerns and ideas.

Empowering the Community: Involving citizens in decision-making processes empowers them. The questionnaires, developed by the USDI organization, facilitated this empowerment, enabling residents to actively participate in shaping local initiatives and policies.

Identifying Community Needs: The questionnaires I distributed allowed us to gather valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by the citizens of Garissa County. Understanding these needs is crucial for developing effective solutions that resonate with the community.

Promoting Sustainable Solutions: Projects that emerge from community engagement are more likely to succeed in the long term. My experience demonstrated that initiatives based on the input from citizens not only received better reception but also resulted in sustainable outcomes that aligned with community values.

My Role with USDI

In my role with the USDI organization, I focused on engaging the citizens of Garissa County through the distribution of questionnaires. My responsibility was to facilitate interactions, ensuring that community members felt comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. This role allowed me to enhance my skills in communication and community outreach while contributing to a project aimed at improving local governance.

The positive response from the citizens validated our efforts, highlighting the importance of community involvement in shaping initiatives that matter to them.

Conclusion

Community engagement is not merely a task; it is a fundamental component of building thriving communities. My experience with the USDI organization in Garissa County reinforced the idea that when citizens are actively involved, we create a more inclusive and responsive society. I encourage others to seek opportunities for engagement in their own communities, as it leads to shared growth and development.



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Author: Muturi Allan Mutahi



Why Awareness creation on Water And Climate Change Is Important In Garissa County

Garissa county has been a victim of prolonged drought majorly brought about by the climate change. Despite the county's location being arid, transformation can reciprocate the current situation only when precise actions are taken and projects funded to ensure the success of the solutions decided upon. A survey by Udgoon Sustainable Development Initiative (USDI) proves that majority of the residents are not aware of climate change and the effects it has on the society. Therefore, educating the public about climate change and its impact on water reliability in the county is an important step to take. The combination of these

factors has made the situation in Garissa County particularly challenging hence leaving climate change and water awareness creation as an important procedure of enlightening the society. Awareness creation on the importance of climate action and water management creates awareness to the residents who might not be informed about climate related issues. The essence of the awareness creation is also to impact skills and knowledge on how climate change is brought about. Apart from heavy rains as a factor of climate change, drought has also had severe impacts in the county including;

- ▶ Livestock losses
- ▶ Food shortages
- ▶ Migration
- ▶ Health issues such as malnutrition
- ▶ Awareness creation a matter of fact plays a crucial role in changing the society since it;
- ▶ Enables individuals share ideas and experiences that gives a better understanding of climate change and it's connection to unavailability of water .
- ▶ Through awareness creation residents of Garissa county can collaboratively find solutions to problems by considering different perspectives and approaches .
- ▶ Awareness creation also enables individuals to analyze, evaluate and synthesize information .
- ▶ Awareness creations foster communication and understanding between the people hence strengthening relationships and promoting cooperation.
- ▶ By engaging in awareness creation , residents of Garissa county can incorporate diverse view points and expertise.

In conclusion, awareness creation in Garissa county is particularly valuable for addressing challenges such as the impacts of climate change .It can also help in planning and implementing effective strategies for resilience and recovery.

By Otieno Steveostine



The Plight of the Women of Garissa Town

Women and children are the most vulnerable in this community because of climate change. Garissa county is among the counties affected by the recurrent drought. Currently, we are in the rainy season, but it seems it will be another dry season since the rains, which we expect in October to November, have not come yet. County government intervention in terms of basic services and responding to the community needs has also been minimal. Water is lacking as the taps are dry in every household. People depend on waterboosers, which are expensive, costing about Ksh.7,000.

The women disproportionately suffer the effects of climate change. This is because women take care of their livestock, fetch water, and firewood for the family. The sun is too hot, and the temperature is very high; the soil is no longer fertile. "We are requesting to be given grants to start alternative programs, e.g. agriculture." This is the rhetoric of most women here at the market. "The community has lost many of their animals during the droughts; the few remaining may be swiped if the rains don't come this year." Echoes Khadija with a frown. Women

in the community know they want to engage themselves in other sources of livelihood other than pastoralism. They want to practice in the kitchen gardening, livestock selling, and selling clothes. Mama Halima says, "The droughts have become recurrent every year; either dry periods or floods carry our animals. I decide to move to town and sell vegetables to support my family. My children have gone to school, but they have not got jobs, so I'm the only breadwinner for my family."



Women in the community know they want to engage themselves in other sources of livelihood other than pastoralism. They want to practice in the kitchen gardening, livestock selling, and selling clothes.

We do not want to always complain and depend on aid when drought or floods strike. We, as the women of Garissa township can be resilient in the face of climate change, we just need some help doing that

Kaltuma Shale Mohamed

The Findings...

The CFLI survey in Garissa Township Ward explores local concerns around climate change and water issues, involving 504 residents across different age groups. The study reveals broad awareness of climate impacts, with deforestation, human activities and poor management identified as main causes of water scarcity. Younger respondents rely on online sources for information, while older groups gain insights from community meetings. Despite high awareness, involvement in local programs is low, especially among women and younger people. The survey also highlights disparities in gender participation, with barriers limiting women's roles in decision-making processes.

Key recommendations focus on upgrading water infrastructure, boosting climate change education and expanding community participation. Suggested actions include improving water storage, promoting sustainable farming and initiating reforestation projects. The report emphasizes the need for stronger local leadership and clearer action plans to tackle these challenges. It calls for more inclusive community engagement and policy adjustments to support long-term climate resilience and secure water resources for Garissa.

Mohamed Aden Hassan
Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer.



Next steps....

As we prepare for the next phase of this project where we will build the capacities of the members of the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum and the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee, using the data collected, we are encouraged that we will meet the goals of this project and ultimately enhance community resilience and improve collaboration between these committees and the community. Heartfelt gratitude goes out to our funding partner the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives(CFLI) without whom this exercise would not have happened, the Garissa University students who volunteered as enumerators and the Garissa township community who this exercise was for and about.

Vanessa Ngunjiri
Project Manager

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Canada 

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through capacity building workshops and
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