



Udgoon
Sustainable
Development
Initiative



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NEWSLETTER

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.



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Executive Director's Remarks



Abdullahi Mohamed Hassan
- Executive Director, USDI

As we move through this phase of our project, we are proud of the impact we are making, thanks to the support of the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI). A huge thank you to the High Commission of Canada in Kenya for being such an invaluable partner in strengthening the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (WWSF) in Garissa Township Ward.

Our focus has been on empowering community-led structures with the knowledge and tools they need to tackle climate and water challenges. This journey started with a baseline assessment, which helped us identify the specific climate change impacts and capacity gaps within local committees.

In response, we have been delivering targeted training sessions on sustainable water management, climate adaptation, and inclusive community engagement.

But this is more than just training—it is about laying the foundation for long-term, community-driven solutions. Participants are gaining practical skills to assess vulnerabilities, design solutions, and lead inclusive planning processes. We are especially excited to see more women and youth stepping up, making their voices heard, and shaping sustainable strategies for the future.

Our commitment remains strong. By strengthening local leadership, we are ensuring that Garissa's communities are not just adapting to climate challenges but are also thriving despite them.

Together, we are building stronger, more empowered committees that will continue driving real, lasting change .

Project Manager's Remarks: Reflecting on Progress & Looking Ahead



As we reach the midpoint of this project, it is a great time to reflect on how far we have come. One of our biggest achievements so far has been developing a training manual, shaped by insights from our baseline assessment. This manual has been guiding our interactive training sessions on climate change impacts, water management, and inclusive planning—all critical elements in shaping the Ward Water and Climate Strategy.

Through hands-on workshops, we have been bringing together committee members, trainers, and community stakeholders to identify priority issues and design practical solutions tailored to local needs. This collaborative approach is ensuring that the strategies being developed are community-owned and truly sustainable.

But we are not stopping here. The next big step is reviewing and finalizing the draft Ward Water and Climate Strategy to make sure it reflects community voices and is ready for implementation. We are also ramping up public awareness, advocating for sustainable water solutions, and continuing to push for more involvement of women and marginalized groups in decision-making.

We are incredibly grateful to CFLI for their continued support and to every participant who has been dedicated to making this initiative a success.

We are looking forward to seeing the real impact of these efforts in 2025 and beyond !

RECAP OF ACTIVITIES

Baseline Assessment Recap and Capacity Building Recap

This project is focused on enhancing the capacity of the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (WWSF) in Garissa Township by equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle climate change vulnerabilities and formulate adaptation plans. Through targeted training, baseline assessments, and capacity-building workshops, the project engaged local communities, ensuring their voices were integrated into broader county planning processes. This report highlights the activities carried out during the baseline assessment conducted in October 2024 .

Project Objectives at this Phase

At this stage, the project had three main objectives:

- ✔ To assess the level of awareness and understanding of climate change and its impacts among residents of Garissa Township, focusing on their knowledge of local climate change planning committees.
- ✔ To evaluate residents' perceptions of the effectiveness of local initiatives addressing water challenges and identify barriers they face in accessing clean water.
- ✔ To identify specific actions and strategies that community members believe should be prioritized to improve water management and mitigate water scarcity in Garissa Township.



Training of Enumerators



On November 15th, 2024, a one-day training session was held for 20 enumerators, primarily young women aged 18-30. The training focused on data collection techniques, ethical conduct in research, and effective use of questionnaires. Enumerators were introduced to the project's objectives, and the importance of the baseline assessment. They also participated in a simulation exercise to practice data collection, ensuring they were well-prepared for fieldwork.

Baseline Assessment

From October 16th to 18th, 2024, a three-day baseline assessment was carried out in Garissa Township, involving **600 respondents**, with **57% women**. The assessment sought to identify climate vulnerabilities and water management challenges. It covered diverse demographics, including men, youth, children, and persons with disabilities. Enumerators worked in pairs, ensuring proper consent was obtained and offering translations for Somali speakers. They engaged with residents in markets, schools, eateries, and public spaces.

On the second day, the enumerators visited local schools, including Garissa Primary School and NEP Girls High School, where they educated children about climate change and water management in child-friendly terms. This interaction revealed a gap in children's understanding of climate change, suggesting an area for future improvement. They also worked with the Garissa School for the Deaf, where caregivers assisted in engaging students. On the final day, the enumerators covered additional areas, such as local mosques, bus stations, and meeting spots for elderly men, gathering crucial insights from these diverse spaces.



Outcomes

- ✓ **Enumerator Training:** The enumerators were successfully trained in data collection and ethical research practices, which contributed to the success of the baseline assessment.
- ✓ **Baseline Assessment Results:** The data collected provided valuable insights into the community's vulnerabilities related to climate change and water management, ensuring that the feedback was inclusive and represented various community members. This assessment highlighted key areas of concern and will guide the next steps in the project.

Lessons Learned

1. Continuous engagement with community members is vital for understanding their unique challenges, ensuring that climate action strategies are effective.
2. The success of the enumerator training emphasized the importance of equipping local individuals with the skills needed for conducting assessments and interventions in future phases.
3. Integrating baseline assessment findings into capacity-building workshops will enhance the relevance of the training and ensure the effectiveness of future initiatives.



NEXT STEPS

Building on the baseline assessment, the next phase will involve conducting a workshop with 50 members from the WCCPC and W/WSF to address emerging needs and strengthen their ongoing efforts. Following this, the committees will collaborate to develop and implement adaptation plans based on the workshop outcomes and baseline findings.

Conclusion

This phase of the project played a significant role in empowering the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (W/WSF) in Garissa Township. By gathering community perspectives, this baseline assessment lays a solid foundation for future capacity-building efforts that aim to promote sustainable climate adaptation and improve water management practices in the region.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Recap of the Capacity Building Workshop on Climate Adaptation and Water Management

The Capacity Building Workshop on Climate Adaptation and Water Management, held from November 20th to 22nd, 2024, in Garissa Township Ward, Garissa County, addressed the recurring climate challenges that threaten local livelihoods, including droughts, floods, and water scarcity. These challenges exacerbate resource conflicts and hinder the development of sustainable practices in the area. Organized by Udgoon Sustainable Development Initiative (USDI), the workshop brought together 45 members of the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC) and the Ward Water Stakeholders Forum (WWSF), which included community elders, women leaders, youth, and marginalized groups. The primary aim was to equip local stakeholders with the knowledge and tools necessary to address climate adaptation and water management issues effectively.



The workshop's objectives were to enhance participants' understanding of climate change impacts and water management challenges in Garissa Township Ward, provide practical skills for implementing sustainable climate adaptation strategies, and foster collaboration by integrating gender and marginalized perspectives. Key activities during the workshop included mapping exercises to identify vulnerabilities such as droughts, floods, and rising temperatures, which helped create a vulnerability map highlighting areas requiring urgent intervention. The participants also reviewed local climate and water laws, such as the County Water Management Act and the Climate Change Act (Amendment) 2024, noting the challenges of limited awareness and insufficient facilitation for local committees to perform their roles effectively. The importance of advocacy and capacity-building to improve compliance with these laws was emphasized.



Recap of the Capacity Building Workshop on Climate Adaptation and Water Management

Another key session focused on addressing water management challenges, with discussions on practical solutions such as constructing water retention ponds to mitigate flooding and store water during dry seasons, initiating community-led water purification projects to address contamination, and ensuring equitable resource allocation through community-based management. The integration of gender and marginalized perspectives was stressed, with participants proposing the formation of women-led water committees and the empowerment of marginalized groups through targeted support. These discussions culminated in actionable recommendations that included stronger policy enforcement, investment in drought-resistant crops, and the upgrading of water infrastructure for better access and efficiency.

Challenges identified during the workshop included limited resources for local committees to implement their mandates, insufficient community awareness of existing regulations, and competing priorities among stakeholders, which hindered collaborative efforts.

As a result, the next steps outlined included follow-up capacity-building sessions to deepen understanding and skills, the establishment of monitoring frameworks to track the progress of implemented solutions, and the strengthening of partnerships with local and county authorities to ensure sustained support for the initiatives.

The workshop also addressed underlying climate and water management issues specific to Garissa Township Ward. These included recurrent droughts, floods, temperature fluctuations, reduced agricultural productivity, desertification, water scarcity, poor water infrastructure, inadequate drainage systems, health risks from contaminated water, conflicts over limited recommended actions such as establishing water retention ponds, promoting drought-resistant crops, upgrading water infrastructure, implementing tree-planting campaigns, and encouraging rainwater harvesting. These actionable recommendations aim to mitigate the impact of climate change and improve water management in the ward, ensuring that the community is better equipped to tackle the challenges they face.



Review of the strategy drafts

Garissa Township Ward is facing significant challenges due to climate change and water scarcity. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and prolonged droughts are putting immense pressure on livelihoods, especially in agriculture and pastoralism. At the same time, flash floods are damaging infrastructure and making access to clean water even more difficult, adding to an already fragile situation. So, what are we doing about it? Our strategy is focusing on sustainable water resource management and boosting climate resilience. This includes improving water security by developing boreholes, water pans, and rainwater harvesting systems. We are also promoting integrated water resource management (IWRM) and conservation efforts to ensure that available resources are being used efficiently.

Beyond water, we are working to strengthen community resilience through climate-smart agriculture, disaster risk reduction, and training programs that equip people with the skills they need to adapt and thrive. Collaboration is key—lasting change depends on strong partnerships between the government, local organizations, and the private sector to turn plans into action.

“By keeping climate adaptation and responsible water management at the heart of this strategy, we are working toward a future where clean water is accessible, and communities can thrive despite the challenges ahead.”



SUCCESS STORIES

Empowering Communities for Sustainable Water and Climate Solutions in Garissa

In Garissa Township Ward, the challenges of water scarcity and climate change affect daily life, making community-driven solutions essential. Recent initiatives, including a baseline assessment, capacity-building workshops, and increased community engagement, have highlighted the resilience of local residents and the importance of inclusive decision-making.

During a baseline assessment on water shortages, enumerators engaged with residents to understand their struggles. Many community members shared their daily challenges in accessing water, from walking long distances to making difficult choices on how to allocate limited supplies. Despite these hardships, there was a strong willingness to discuss solutions, demonstrating the community's commitment to change.

Building on these findings, a capacity-building workshop organized by the Udgoon Sustainable Development Initiative (USDI) and supported by the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI) brought together local leaders, including members of the Ward Climate Change Planning Committee (WCCPC). The workshop emphasized the need for proactive planning, such as community-led water management strategies and climate adaptation measures. It also reinforced the importance of inclusion, particularly of women and youth, in decision-making. Participants recognized that sustainable solutions must reflect the diverse experiences of the community, ensuring that all voices are heard in shaping the Ward Water and Climate Strategy Paper.

For women like Ismahan Abdi Ali, the workshop was transformative. Women play a critical role in managing water resources at the household level, yet they are often excluded from policy discussions. Through this initiative, Ismahan and other women saw the potential of their leadership in climate and water management. From championing water purification efforts to advocating for better drainage systems, their involvement can drive practical and lasting solutions.

These combined efforts mark a shift towards greater community participation, knowledge-sharing, and inclusive planning. By working together, the people of Garissa Township Ward are not only identifying challenges but also leading the way toward sustainable solutions, ensuring a better future for all.



GARISSA HIGH SCHOOL

Administration Block



NEXT STEPS

As we look forward to the Launch of the Garissa Township Climate Action and Water Management Strategy, we are excited to hand it over to the community who are the true owners of the strategy and encourage the cooperation of the County Government of Garissa and the residents of Garissa in seeing its realization. We look enthusiastic about the launch, as it marks a significant step in this project, one that everyone so far, has been involved in. We are grateful to the Canadian Fund for Local Initiatives for the support this far and extend our sincerest gratitude to the WWSF, the WCCPC, and the people of Garissa Township Ward for taking ownership of this project so far and ensuring its successful implementation. We forge on stronger!



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