

Localizing Climate Resilience and Adaptation in Marsabit County.

County:	Marsabit County		
Sector/s:	Climate Change	Sub-sector/Theme:	Localizing Climate Resilience
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Target Audience:	Counties, Partners		
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Introduction (**Context and Challenge**):

The global discourse on climate change encompasses a wide array of stakeholders, ranging from international organizations, both levels of government and local communities. These diverse entities are collectively mobilizing efforts to adopt and implement localized solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

In 2016, the Government of Kenya enacted the Climate Change Act. Subsequently, in 2018, the National Climate Finance Policy was adopted. Then followed the establishment of the Public Finance Management (Climate Change Fund) Regulations (2016) under the Public Finance Management Act (2012).



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This prompted devolved governments to enact the County Climate Change Act and institute County Climate Change Funds which can be funded through County development budgets, national climate funds or support from in-country bilateral and multilateral development partners.

A key collaborator in this endeavor is the World Bank, through the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA), a five-year project dedicated to implementing climate resilience measures guided by local initiatives and enhancing the capacities of County Governments to handle climate-related risks. The FLLoCA project focuses on empowering local stakeholders, including the Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs) at the ward level to expedite climate action.

The project operates through two grants. The Climate Change Institutional Support Grant (CCIS) encourages Counties to establish legal, institutional and organizational frameworks to effectively budget, plan and implement Climate Change Adaptation initiatives while the Climate Change Resilience Investment Grant (CCRI) is a performance-based funding where allocation of resources to a County for Climate Change Action (CCA) investments is contingent on its performance relative to other Counties (the higher the performance, the greater the resources allocated).



To access the grant, Counties are required to have a minimum access condition including establishing a Climate Change Act, developing a governor-approved work plan and budget for climate change activities, opening a special purpose account (domiciled in The Central Bank of Kenya) and signing the program deed agreement.

The County Governments have tailor-made different local solutions to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Marsabit County, located in Northern Kenya is the second largest County with an area mass of 66,923.1 KM². According to the 2019 census, the County is home to 459,785 residents with 95% of them being agro-pastoral and pastoral communities. The County is divided into four sub-counties namely Saku, North Horr, Moyale and Laisamis. These four administrative zones serve as political units comprising 4 constituencies, 20 wards and 100 villages.

The County experiences arid climatic conditions, causing many residents to forsake agricultural pursuits due to unpredictable rainfall and limited access to irrigation water, opting for cattle keeping.



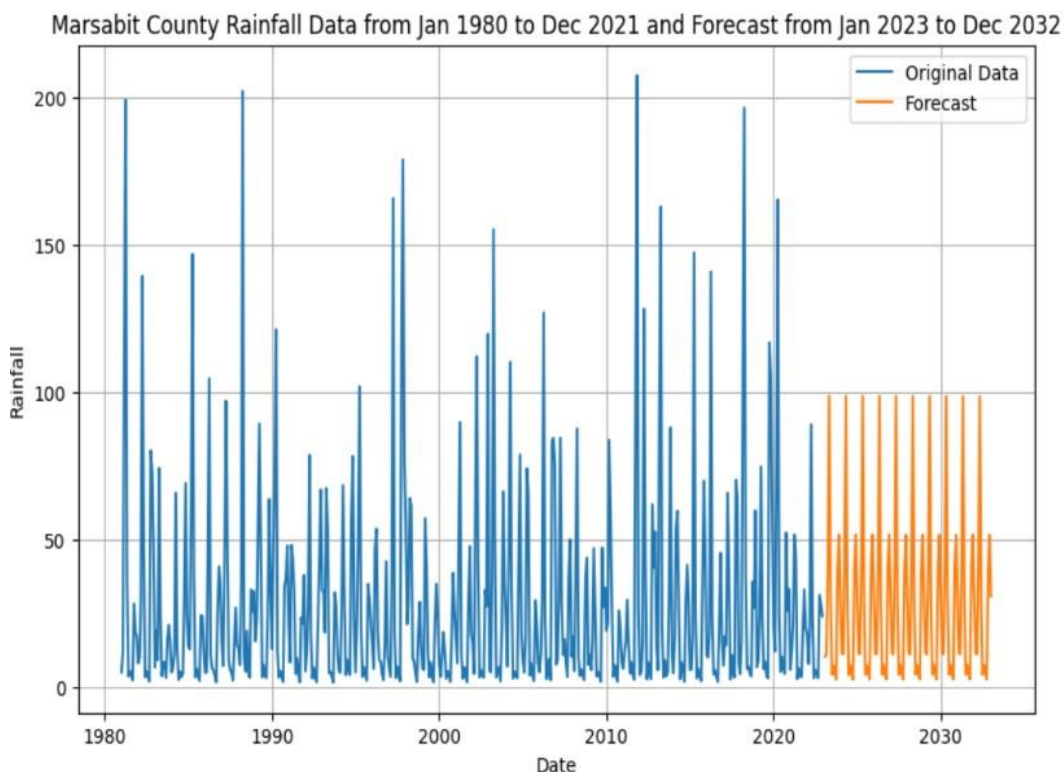
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Climate change has manifested in the region through severe droughts, resulting to loss of lives among both residents and animals. According to the Marsabit County climate change mainstreaming guidelines, only about 15% of the land in Marsabit County is under vegetation cover and the rural indigenous forests woodlands have been destroyed at a rate of 5% annually posing a threat to catchment areas and land resources.

Further, the guidelines indicate that waste is managed by County authorities only at sub-County headquarters through heap burning which accounts for about 20% of the waste generated in urban centres, with majority of households resorting to backyard waste burning. In the County, only 20% of the households have access to pit latrines with the majority 78% practicing open defecation which causes diseases like cholera especially when it floods.

Rainfall ranges between 200 mm and 1,000 mm per annum and its duration, amount and reliability increases as altitude rises. The lowest part of the County like North Horr (550 m asl) has a mean annual rainfall of 150 mm.





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The County has experienced the following climate hazards over the years,

Year	Climate Hazard	Impact
1990-1992	Drought	Livestock deaths, human starvation, conflicts and migrations
1993-1994	Conflict, movement and displacement due to climate change.	Displacements, loss of life and property
1997-1998	El –Nino	An outbreak of livestock diseases, destruction of infrastructure, shortage of food supplies, interrupted communication channels and loss of livestock.
1999-2000	Human diseases (Cholera outbreak)	Loss of human lives, closure of schools and business medicine stock-out at major health facilities
2001- 2004/5	Drought	Conflicts, outbreak of diseases livestock diseases and shortage of food.
2005-2006	Conflict (clan feuds due to shortage of resources e.g access to pasture)	Loss of lives and displacement
2008-2020	Severe Draught	Loss of animals and outbreak of diseases
2019-2022	Desert locusts, Fall armyworms	Destruction of crops and vegetation cover
2022	Severe drought	Massive livestock deaths, estimated at over 50% of the total herd. Led to the development of national steering committee on drought response bringing together the public and private sectors at the national level

2023	Floods	Destruction of farmland /crops/rangeland. Human and livestock deaths
<p>Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):</p> <p>To cushion key sectors against the impact of climate change the County in partnership with different stakeholders has developed the Marsabit County Climate Change Action Plan (2023-2027). The Plan outlines sectoral adaptation needs, specific sectoral action plans, key implementing partners and indicative costs.</p> <p>The following are the proposed action plans;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upscaling production and promotion of drought tolerant, pest resistant and early maturing/drought escaping crops varieties 2. Promotion of climate-smart agriculture, flood-based irrigation and promotion of agro-forestry, livelihood diversifications and public education on climate change. 3. Supporting the development of water infrastructure through improved water harvesting techniques and rehabilitation of existing ones; water catchment protection and strengthening community capacity to manage water schemes. 4. Improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities to limit outbreaks of water-borne diseases. 5. Reducing effects of drought and climate change on vulnerable communities for resilience building through strengthening strategies used by communities to adapt to climate variability for reduction and management of risks. 6. Reforestation of degraded forests; restoration of forests and woodlands and promotion of suitable tree species as well as in-situ conservation. <p>On 26th November 2020, the County Assembly of Marsabit passed an act to establish the County Climate Change Fund Bill to facilitate and coordinate financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation activities. The fund is financed through resources appropriated by the County Assembly, constituting up to 2% of the County revenue account in a financial year.</p> <p>In 2023, under the FLLoCA initiative, the County organized awareness and training workshops, educating communities on the planning processes for climate change mitigation and adaptation measures. From this partnership, the County has developed a climate change training manual that dictates different subjects including the identification of climate hazards and adaptability measures.</p>		

The same year, the County established the Marsabit County Steering Committee comprising of the following members,

1. County Executive Member- Chair of the committee
2. Chief Officer, Environment – Secretary
3. The Fund Administrator
4. County Executive Member in charge of Treasury
5. County Executive Member in charge of Livestock and Fisheries
6. County Executive Member in charge of Health
7. A business community representative
8. Youth representative
9. Representative of PWDs
10. A representative of Public Benefit Organizations

The steering committee is responsible for approving climate change projects and overseeing the implementation of climate change finance framework in the County.

To monitor projects at the ward level and consult with the communities on relevant climate finance activities as well as receive project proposals, the County has established a Ward Planning Committee comprising of a chairperson who is not a public officer but a resident of the specific ward, a representative of the ward-based public benefit organizations, three ex-officials members including ward administrator a representative of each of the key economic activities in the ward and four people representing interest groups including the youth, women, PWDs and representative of the elders.

The Ward Planning Climate Change Committee encourages the local community to explore indigenous techniques for preserving food, such as the drying of meat and vegetables, to prevent starvation during drought periods.

In 2022, the County, through its Ward Planning Committee, initiated community conversation groups at the village level, focusing on critical discussions around the impacts of climate change in the area, early warning indicators and local solutions to the challenges identified. A significant issue was the death of cattle due to insufficient pasture, particularly during the dry seasons.



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A photo of an ongoing village conversation group meeting.

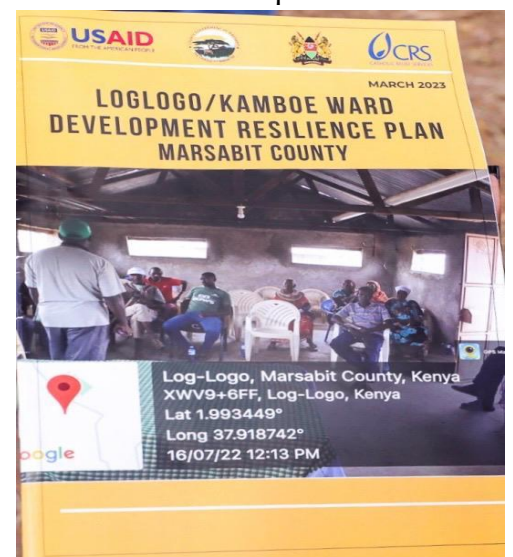
To address this, various wards have developed a strategy aimed at educating herders and pastoralists in adjacent wards on the benefits of adopting rotational grazing on rangelands. This approach entails temporarily closing off sections of the rangeland for three to four months, allowing grass to regenerate and grow. These areas are then reopened for grazing when other parts become arid, ensuring a continuous feed supply for the cattle. This strategy not only mitigates the problem of pasture scarcity during droughts but also promotes sustainable grazing practices that can enhance the resilience of local communities to climate change.



Rangeland Management

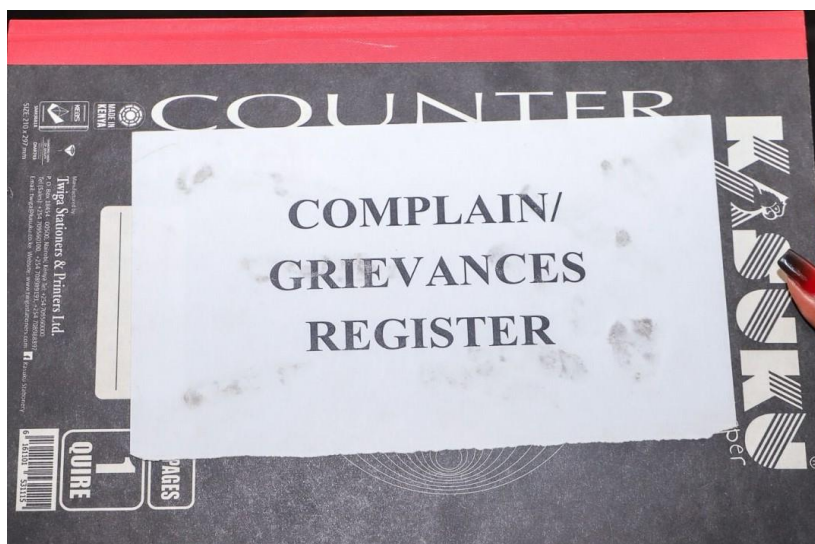
In addition to offering solutions to local climate change challenges, the County, through the village conversation groups, has empowered residents to formulate their own ward-based resilient development plans. Specifically, in Loglogo Ward, these discussion forums have not only allowed the community to pinpoint challenges but also to draft proposals addressed to various partners.

A noteworthy success story emerged from a Loglogo Ward conversation group, where the pastoral community recognized the need to educate neighboring wards about the significance of rotational grazing for their strategy to be effective. Consequently, the group crafted a proposal seeking support from partners to fund a three-day initiative. This initiative involved traveling to neighboring Counties, meeting with chiefs and elders and enlightening them about the risks associated with grazing in areas designated for the dry season. Through these discussions, the two villages established a system that imposed fines for anyone found grazing in restricted lands. Additionally, the ward has implemented various water projects with the support of diverse partners, a



result of the training provided by the County through the FLLoCA project on the skill of proposal writing.

To disseminate information such as impending droughts, floods or pest invasions to all 100 villages, the County issues a monthly bulletin. This bulletin is distributed to all representatives from different Ward Planning Committees, ensuring it reaches the village conversation groups. Subsequently, these groups convene meetings to formulate solutions and coping mechanisms in response to the information provided.



As a mandatory component of the FLLoCA program, the County maintains a grievance register, providing residents with a platform to report climate hazards and bring them to the attention of the County authorities.

The sustainability of this distinctive phenomenon in Marsabit, encompassing Village Conversation Groups and the responsibilities of the Ward Planning Climate Change Committee, is anchored in various legal documents, including the Marsabit County Climate Change Act and Policy. Further, the County has established Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines outlining specific roles and considerations for women in ensuring the effectiveness and inclusivity of these initiatives.

Results of the practice

- The village conversation groups have led to the creation of local solutions for various challenges, such as raising awareness among neighboring wards about the benefits of rotational grazing.
- Climate change resilience and adaptation strategies have been integrated at the ward level, where wards have formulated their own resilience development plans after identifying their critical issues.
- The proposal writing skills provided by the County in collaboration with FLLoCA has empowered the Ward Planning Climate Change Committee to effectively advocate for and secure support from various partners for numerous water projects.



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A water project in loglogo ward in Marsabit County, revived from a proposal submitted by the Ward Climate Change Committee

Lessons learnt:

- The use of performance-based grants (CCRI) to incentivize Counties based on their relative performance is an effective strategy to encourage and reward effective climate action and investment in resilience.
- Customizing the Ward Climate Change Planning Committees to align with the unique cultural aspects of Marsabit and diverse communities has proven instrumental in effectively disseminating messages about disaster preparedness. This approach has facilitated the development of local solutions to address the challenges posed by climate change.
- Establishing fines for individuals caught grazing at the secluded areas has fostered accountability, compelling everyone to adhere to rotational grazing practices and embrace locally defined regulations, thereby promoting climate adaptation.

Recommendations



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The Marsabit County initiative to provide solutions to climate change through the village conversation groups underscore the effectiveness of localized culturally sensitive approaches in addressing climate change challenges. By tailoring the Ward Climate Change Planning Committees to align with the specific needs and traditions of communities, there has been a significant increase in community engagement and the successful implementation of adaptation strategies. The introduction of fines for non-compliance with community-agreed practices, such as rotational grazing, illustrates a commitment to enforcing and adhering to these strategies, ensuring that local solutions are not only proposed but actively practiced.