



© Juozas Cernius / WWF-UK

VOICES FOR JUST CLIMATE ACTION KENYA

Factsheet

Be one with nature

VCA CONTEXT, IMPLEMENTATION AND GOALS

The VCA alliance members WWF, Hivos, SDI, SSN and AMwA work together with 24 local partners to carry out interventions in **Kenya** counties: **Turkana, Narok, Nakuru, Samburu, Kwale**.



POPULATION

The total population of Kenya is over 54,000,000 people, and it is rapidly increasing. The fertility rate within Kenya is 3.416 births per woman. Whilst this rate has gone down (from 8.1 births per woman in 1977), the population of Kenya is predicted to exceed to 60,000,000 by 2030.

Turkana is Kenya's largest county by land area and is bordered by the countries of Uganda, South Sudan and Ethiopia. The 2019 census reported a population of 926,976 in Turkana. It is home to third largest Nilotic ethnic group in Kenya. Narok County stretches across 18,000 square kilometres and has a population of 1.2 million people. Nakuru, the 3rd most populous county has a population of 2.162 million people. Samburu county has a land area of approximately 21,000 square kilometres with a population of 310,327 inhabitants. Kwale county covers an area of 8270 square kilometres and has a population of 783,000.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

Kwale, a county along the coast of Kenya is rich in biodiversity with the coastal forests holding more than half of Kenya's rare plants and more than 11,000 species of marine life. The ecosystems in coastal Kenya have up to 35 ecologically or biologically significant areas and several world biodiversity hotspots. These ecosystems provide ecosystem services as well as avenues of economic livelihood including agriculture, fisheries, livestock, tourism, and mining.

Nakuru county is home to the lake Naivasha basin, a freshwater lake in the Rift valley. It is a wetland of international importance and was declared a Ramsar Site in 1995. It also forms part of the Aberdares, one of Kenya's major water towers. Its economy is anchored on the horticultural sector which employs over 50,000 people directly and indirectly.

CLIMATE CRISIS

The climate change situation in Kenya is complex and variable. The country ranks number 151 out of 181 in the vulnerability list worldwide (181 being the most vulnerable). Increasing incidences of flooding and droughts are among the most notable and widespread effects of climate change. While most climate models predict an increase in average annual rainfall, overall variability in rainfall is likely to decrease. Importantly, with higher temperatures evapotranspiration will also increase, resulting, in many areas in greater aridity regardless of any increases in average annual rainfall. These effects are likely to be more severe in the highland areas than in the lowlands, but will be felt throughout all of Kenya, nevertheless. The duration of dry spells is likely to decrease somewhat but the severity of dry spells will increase.

Recurrent droughts affect agricultural production—both crop farming and livestock keeping—and have the greatest impact on the livelihoods of farmers and pastoralists, although also potentially having knock-on effects in terms of higher food prices affecting the urban poor particularly. Among rural populations, smallholders' farmers practicing rain-fed farming are likely to be the worst affected by climate change. Those with access to irrigation can be somewhat buffered from the effects of dry periods, depending on the sources of their irrigation water.

Climate change induced natural calamities (flooding, drought and sea level rising) and socio-political processes can be great stressors affecting the marginalised groups of society. Coastal communities like those in Kwale are likely to experience rising sea levels, which threatens their livelihoods. This often comes with a potential for emergence and spread of contagious water-borne diseases.

SCOPE OF THE VCA PROGRAM

VCA alliance members (WWF, Hivos, SDI, SSN and AMwA) are collaborating with state and non-state actors to amplify the voices of civil society organisations in Kenya to set the agenda and movement in climate action, co-create climate solutions and influence policies and financial flows towards local challenges and solutions to climate change.

WWF has supported the development of county climate change policies and public participation of local communities. There has been strong emphasis of ensuring the policies are contextualised to the local climatic situation as opposed to generalising the policy. This was informed by the changing climatic conditions observed and the limited engagement of stakeholders in policy making processes at county level.

In Kenya, youth have been pro-active in taking up space to present their issues. VCA partners have been instrumental in platforming youth voices at various national and global events and implementing youth-targeted capacity development. Hivos and SDI supported the implementation of the Local Conference of Youth both materially and through supporting side events and the participation of youth from informal settlements. Hivos played a linking role between youth activists and the Swedish Embassy in Kenya leading to youth being invited to the Embassy's launch of Stockholm+50, which is jointly co-hosted by Government of Kenya and Sweden. Additionally, the VCA Alliance Partners in Kenya have an open and collaborative relationship with the Embassy of the Netherlands, who frequently reaches out to both Hivos and WWF for information-sharing, and other purposes including site visits, and linkages to stakeholders.

KENYA IN 2026: WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE THROUGH THE VCA PROGRAMME

By 2026 it is hoped that through the work of VCA alliance members and local partners that Kenya would have achieved an expanded civic space where civil society voices indigenous and marginalized populations are heard on climate action. It is envisioned that locally led solutions will be funded by external sources both within and outside Kenya.