NATURAL JUSTICE

African Activists for Climate Justice

# Assessment of Community Engagement and Access to Climate Finance in Kenya under the FLLOCA Programme

# COMMUNITY ACCESS TO CLIMATE FINANCE UNDER FINANCING LOCALLY LED CLIMATE ACTION (FLLOCA) PROGRAMME

## Report Overview

The Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Programme represents Kenya's bold shift toward devolved climate governance, anchoring climate resilience in community priorities and ward-level planning. This assessment explores how effectively FLLoCA has facilitated community engagement, access to climate finance, and alignment with Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) principles. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study captures both quantitative outcomes and lived experiences across diverse counties. It highlights the strengths of informal community structures, such as self-help groups and water user associations, as entry points for climate action, while also identifying gaps in capacity, governance literacy, and institutional coordination. Case studies from Kenya and global comparators underscore the transformative potential of devolved finance when paired with inclusive planning, predictable funding, and inter-county learning. However, the report also surfaces critical barriers: contested definitions of climate finance, institutional bottlenecks, and limited agency for communities within FLLoCA's implementation. To fully realize the programme's promise, future cycles must embed equity, accountability, and systemic reform—ensuring climate finance is not only accessible, but shaped and governed by those most affected. The findings offer timely insights as Kenya prepares for its second round of County Climate Resilience Investment Grants, and as global climate finance debates evolve under the New Collective Quantified Goal.

What is

# FLLoCA ?

**FLLOCA (Financing Locally-Led Climate Action)** is a Government of Kenya–led programme designed to **channel climate finance directly to county governments and local communities** to plan and implement climate-resilient development actions.

- It is anchored under the **Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry**
- It is Implemented through **county governments**
- It is supported by development partners (notably the World Bank)

The core idea is **locally led climate action:** communities identify their climate risks, prioritize solutions, and receive financing to implement them through existing county planning structures.

## What are the problems with FLLOCA?

Despite its strong design, several challenges limit effectiveness:

**a) Limited community awareness**

Most communities:

- Are **not aware FLLOCA exists**
- Do not understand how projects are identified or funded
  This results in elite capture and low grassroots participation.

**b) Complex and bureaucratic access processes**

- Heavy reliance **on county-level technical committees**
- Documentation and compliance requirements are difficult for Community-based Organisations and grassroots groups
- Funding pathways favour actors with technical capacity

**c) Weak inclusion of marginalized groups**

- Women, youth, persons with disabilities, and pastoralist communities are **often under-represented**
- Participation is sometimes consultative rather than decision-making

**d) Slow disbursement and implementation delays**

- Funds flow through multiple layers
- Procurement and approvals delay urgent climate responses

**e) Limited transparency and feedback mechanisms**

- Communities often do not receive feedback on why proposals were accepted or rejected
- Monitoring data is rarely shared back with communities


# Why This Study Matters

- **Climate change** is increasingly affecting communities across Kenya through droughts, floods, water shortages, and loss of livelihoods. Although climate finance is growing globally, only a small portion reaches local communities who face the greatest risks. Many funding systems are complex and controlled at national or county level, making it difficult for communities to directly influence how resources are used.

- **The FLLOCA programme** was created to address this gap by sending climate funds to counties and supporting projects chosen through community participation. This study is important because it examines whether the programme is truly enabling locally led climate action, whether communities have real decision-making power, and whether funded projects respond to the climate risks people face on the ground. The findings help improve how climate finance is delivered so that it is more fair, effective, and responsive to community needs.

# Why is FLLoCA useful?

- Shifts climate finance closer to communities
- Strengthens county-level climate governance
- Builds community ownership and sustainability
- Aligns climate action with local development priorities
- Supports adaptation, especially for climate-vulnerable livelihoods (agriculture, water, livestock)

## How have communities used FLLOCA for climate resilience?

Communities across Kenya have applied FLLOCA funds in practical ways, including:

- **Water security projects:** water pans, boreholes, and rainwater harvesting in counties
- **Climate-smart agriculture:** drought-resistant crops, irrigation systems, soil conservation
- **Rangeland rehabilitation:** reseeding, grazing management, and pasture restoration
- **Flood mitigation:** drainage improvement, riverbank protection, early warning systems
- **Livelihood diversification:** bee-keeping, poultry, and small-scale enterprises adapted to climate stress

These interventions directly respond to locally identified climate risks, improving resilience and incomes.

# Examples of Community Climate Projects

Communities have used FLLOCA funding to implement projects that directly respond to climate risks identified during local planning meetings. These projects focus on water access, drought resilience, flood control, and livelihood diversification.

- **Isiolo County** – Communities invested in fodder farming, fish ponds, and solar-powered boreholes to reduce the impact of drought. These projects helped pastoralist families keep livestock alive during dry seasons and created new income sources through hay production and fish farming.
- **Makueni County** – Sand dams and solar water systems were built to store water during rainy seasons and provide irrigation during drought. This allowed farmers to grow crops year-round, improved food security, and reduced the distance people travel to fetch water.
- **Makueni County (Mukaange)** – A solar-powered water purification system provided safe drinking water to several villages. With reliable water, households started kitchen gardens and small businesses, improving nutrition and income.
- **Kisumu County** – Flood control works such as river desiltation and embankments reduced crop losses and protected homes. Farmers were able to return to their land and increase production after years of flooding.

**These examples show that when communities help choose projects, the solutions are practical, locally relevant, and support both climate resilience and livelihoods.**

# How can Communities Access FLLOCA?

Communities do not apply directly to the national government. Access happens through counties:

**1. Engage at ward and county levels**
o Participate in ward climate planning forums
o Work with Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs)

**2. Project identification and prioritization**
o Communities identify climate risks and propose solutions
o Projects are integrated into County Climate Change Fund (CCCF) plans

**3. County approval and financing**
o County governments submit proposals under FLLOCA
o Approved funds are disbursed to counties for implementation

**4. Implementation and oversight**
o Projects are implemented with community involvement
o Monitoring is coordinated by county structures

Participatory Climate Risk Assessments (PCRA)

Participation Through Structured (PCRA) Planning and Committees (WCCPs and PMCs)

# Recommendations: What communities and NGOs should advocate for

To make FLLOCA more responsive and accessible, advocacy should focus on:

**a) Simplifying access and procedures**
- Reduce technical jargon and paperwork
- Allow direct participation of CBOs in implementation

**b) Strengthening community awareness**
- Drive County-led and civil society-led awareness campaigns
- Translation of FLLOCA processes into local languages

**c) Mandatory inclusion standards**
- Clear quotas for women, youth, and marginalized groups
- Participation must include decision-making power, not just consultation

**d) Transparency and accountability**
- Public disclosure of funded projects and budgets
- Feedback mechanisms for rejected proposals

**e) Faster and flexible financing**
- Streamlined approval processes for urgent climate risks
- Flexibility to adapt projects as climate conditions change

# Case Studies To Highlight Success

## Overview

This report assesses the effectiveness of the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLOCA) programme in Kenya, focusing on its ability to enhance community engagement, access to climate finance, and alignment with Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) principles. The study draws on mixed methods research conducted across five counties Makueni, Kisumu, Isiolo, Kilifi, and Nyandarua combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from communities, government actors, and development partners.

At a time when global climate finance remains insufficient and difficult to access, the report situates FLLOCA as a critical mechanism for devolving resources and decision-making to the local level, where climate impacts are most acutely felt.

# Key Findings

### 1. Strong Foundations for Devolved Climate Finance

FLLOCA has successfully established **institutional structures for climate governance** at county and ward levels, including County Climate Change Units (CCCUs) and Ward Climate Change Planning Committees (WCCPCs). These structures have enabled communities to participate in identifying climate risks and prioritizing investments. However, while participation is widespread, it is often **limited to consultative roles**, with communities having minimal influence over final funding decisions and implementation processes.

### 2. Community Engagement Exists, but Agency is Limited

Participatory Climate Risk Assessments (PCRAs) have been effective in capturing community priorities. Yet, the transition from participation to **meaningful agency remains incomplete.**

- Community members contribute to planning
- But have limited control over financing and execution
- Power remains largely centralized at county level

This gap undermines the core principle of **locally led adaptation,** which requires communities to shape, govern, and own climate interventions.

### 3. Climate Finance Access is Constrained

Despite FLLOCA's design, **communities do not directly access** funds due to legal and institutional constraints under public finance systems. This creates bottlenecks and reduces responsiveness to local needs.

Additional barriers include:

- Limited climate finance literacy at community level
- Institutional capacity gaps at ward level

- Weak transparency and documentation systems

### 4. Inclusion Gaps Persist

Although vulnerable groups are identified during planning processes, their needs are not consistently reflected in funded projects. Marginalized groups including women, youth, and pastoralist communities still face barriers in influencing outcomes.

### 5. Governance is Still Largely Top-Down

While FLLOCA operates within Kenya's devolved system, decision-making power remains skewed upward. Effective devolution requires not just resource allocation, but transfer of authority and control to local institutions.

# Case Study Insights

To illustrate the real-world impact of FLLOCA and comparable models, the report highlights a set of local and global case studies, which provide practical evidence of what works.

### A. FLLOCA Impact Case Studies (Kenya)

**Isiolo County – Building Resilience Through Livelihood Diversification**
Pastoralist communities that suffered massive livestock losses due to drought transitioned to diversified livelihoods through fodder production, fish farming, and agribusiness support. These interventions created **stable incomes, improved nutrition, and strengthened resilience to future shocks.**

**Makueni County – Water Security as a Catalyst for Transformation**
Investments in sand dams and solar-powered water systems significantly improved access to safe water, reducing the burden on women and enabling **agriculture, income generation, and improved health outcomes.**

**Kisumu County – Turning Flood Risk into Opportunit**y
Flood control interventions, including river desiltation and embankments, transformed previously flood-prone areas into productive farmland, resulting in **increased agricultural output and improved community stability.**

### B. Comparative Global Case Studies

The report also examines international models of devolved climate finance, including:

- Community-driven funds that channel resources directly to grassroots organizations
- National systems that transfer funds to local governments for participatory allocation
- Hybrid financing models that prioritize flexibility and local ownership

These examples demonstrate that **effective climate finance systems are those that prioritize community ownership, transparency, and flexibility.**

## Cross-Cutting Insight

Across all case studies, a consistent finding emerges:
**When communities are empowered to lead, climate finance becomes more effective, inclusive, and sustainable.**

# Key Conclusions

1. **FLLOCA is a strong and promising model** for devolved climate finance in Kenya.
2. **Tangible impacts are evident,** particularly in water access, livelihood diversification, and ecosystem resilience.
3. **However**, **structural and governance challenges limit its full potential,** particularly in relation to community agency and direct access to funds.
4. **The** programme currently achieves **participation**, but must evolve toward **true community ownership and control.**

# Recommendations

To strengthen FLLOCA's effectiveness and alignment with LLA principles, the report recommends:

**1. Shift from Participation to Agency**
- Empower communities with decision-making authority
- Strengthen WCCPCs and local governance structures

**2. Reform Financing Mechanisms**
- Explore legal and policy reforms to enable **direct or more accessible funding to community institutions**
- Simplify fund access processes

**3. Strengthen Institutional Capacity**
- Build technical and financial management capacity at ward and community levels
- Improve transparency, documentation, and oversight systems

**4. Enhance Inclusion**
- Ensure investments are aligned with vulnerability assessments
- Strengthen representation and influence of marginalized groups

**5. Deepen Devolution**
- Extend climate governance beyond county level to wards and communities
- Embed climate priorities into planning and budgeting processes

**6. Community participation exists but influence is limited**
- Structures for participation are in place, but communities do not always have full power to decide which projects receive funding.

**7. Climate finance is still partly top-down**
- Decisions on budgets and approvals are often made at higher levels, even when priorities are identified locally.

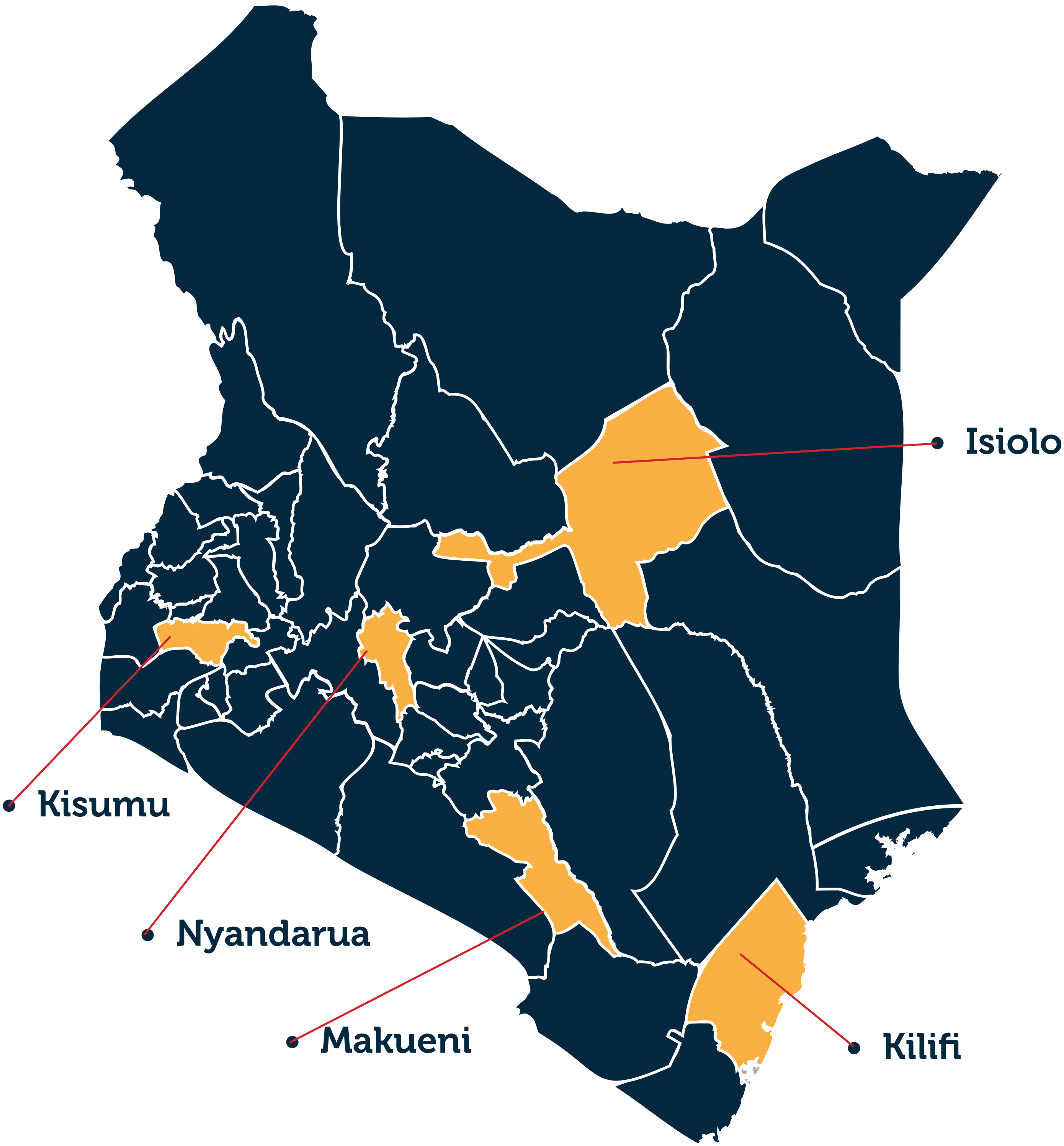
**8. Vulnerable groups are not always reflected in funded projects**
- Women, pastoralists, and other high-risk groups are identified in assessments, but projects do not always match their needs.

**9. Community priorities are not always included in county plans and budgets**
- Climate projects proposed at ward level sometimes fail to appear in official county planning documents.

**10. Capacity and transparency differ across counties**
- Some counties have strong systems for accountability and community feedback, while others still need more training, information sharing, and technical support.

**Overall, the study shows that FLLOCA is a strong step toward locally led climate action, but more work is needed to give communities real authority and ensure funds match local priorities.**

# Study Counties



# Final Reflection

The FLLOCA programme demonstrates that **devolved climate finance can deliver meaningful, locally relevant adaptation outcomes.** However, its long-term success depends on a fundamental shift: From a system where communities are consulted
To one where communities lead.

# What Decision-Makers Should Do Next

1. Simplify access requirements for grassroots actors
2. Fund county-level awareness and translation efforts
3. Enforce inclusion quotas with real decision-making power
4. Publish funded projects and feedback publicly
5. Fast-track approvals for urgent climate risks

**Contact**

**Email: info@naturaljustice.org**

**Telephone: +254 799 403013**

**NJ Nairobi Office, Nairobi**

For the Full Report Scan this Code.

NATURAL JUSTICE