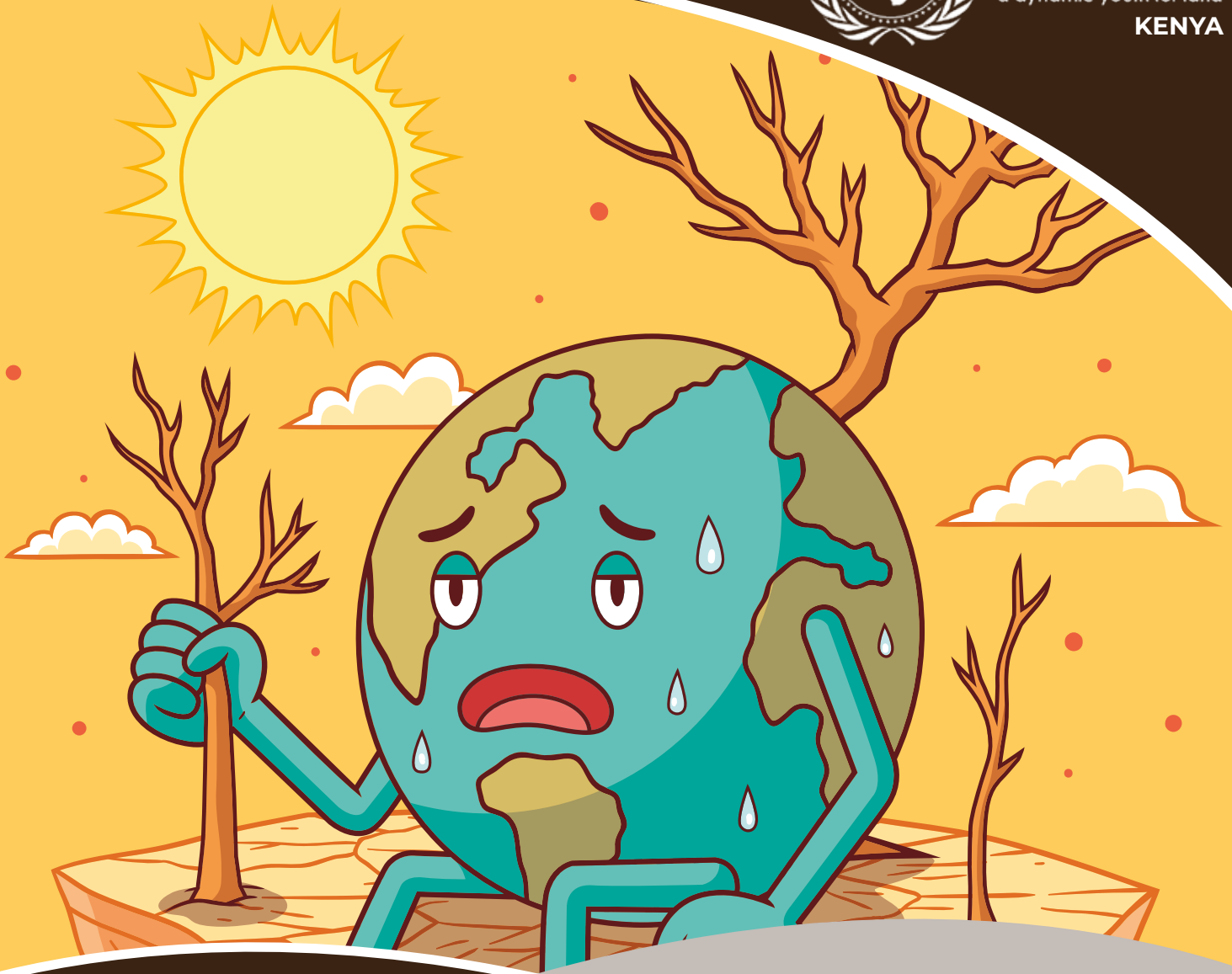




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BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Youth Awareness, Participation, and Barriers in Climate Change and Climate Justice Initiatives in Bungoma County, Kenya

Project Title : Youth Empowerment for Climate Justice and Sustainability (YECJS) Project

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► Executive SUMMARY

This baseline assessment evaluated youth awareness of climate change and climate justice, identified barriers to youth participation in climate justice initiatives, and mapped existing youth-led environmental initiatives in Webuye East, Mount Elgon, and Cheptais Sub-Counties of Bungoma County, Kenya. The baseline assessment utilized a cross-sectional mixed methods approach, the study combined quantitative and qualitative data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of youth engagement in climate action. Fisher's formula for sample size determination was used to determine the number of youth per sub county to be interviewed. Purposive sampling was used to identify government line ministry officials to participate in key informant interviews.

The assessment employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires administered to 1,143 youth aged 18-35 with a 99% response return rate across the three

sub-counties, alongside key informant interviews with six purposively sampled officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and Lands. Secondary data were sourced through a systematic review of records and online materials to map youth-led environmental initiatives. The sample size for youth interviews was determined using Fisher's formula, targeting 385 youth per sub-county, with data analyzed using SPSS for quantitative data where frequencies were computed and NVIVO for qualitative data where data was analyzed thematically. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, informing participants of the baseline and the intended use, safeguarding of vulnerable youth and adults were strictly observed, with permissions obtained from county and sub county authorities.

Climate justice awareness among the youth was generally low, with only 27.6% of respondents showing high awareness, 46.1% moderate to low, and 26.3% no awareness. Webuye East exhibited the highest climate justice awareness (30.8% high

awareness). Awareness of climate change was notably moderate, with floods and heavy rainfall cited as major effects in Mount Elgon (44%) and Cheptais (47%), while deforestation was most prominent in Webuye East (46%). Opportunities for youth engagement included national tree-planting campaigns, NGO support, and public forums, with Webuye East youth more engaged in policy development due to urban proximity. Key barriers included limited financial resources, land ownership issues (particularly in Cheptais due to social norms), and lack of deliberate efforts to involve youth, especially in Mount Elgon's rural context.

There existed youth-led initiatives in Webuye East and MT. Elgon sub counties. In Webuye East, a total of 10 initiatives were identified while in MT. Elgon, 12 such initiatives were identified. The initiatives in the two sub counties seemed inclusive with both youth membership and disability. No initiative was identified for Cheptais Sub County, attributable to data scarcity at the county level.



The baseline design

The baseline assessment adopted a cross-sectional mixed methods approach. The baseline assessment used both qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data on the objectives of the study. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used. Primary data collection methods were used to collect data on youth awareness of climate change and climate justice in Bungoma County and to identify key barriers preventing youth participation in climate justice initiatives. Secondary data collection methods were used to map existing youth-led environmental initiatives/groups and their challenges.

Target location

The baseline targeted Webuye East, Mount Elgon, and Cheptais Sub Counties of Bungoma County. Webuye East Sub County is predominantly occupied by the minority Tachoni sub tribe of the Luhya Community. The community/area is largely an agricultural zone with residents engaging mainly in maize and sugar cane farming. According to Kenya Population and Housing Census 2019, Webuye East had a population of 216,988 persons.

Mount Elgon Sub County, on the other hand, is primarily inhabited by the Sabaot Community, a sub tribe of the Kalenjin Community who are further divided into sub ethnic groups of Soy and Mosop. They practice agriculture and pastoralism largely in the hilly sections of Mount Elgon Sub County. Other tribes inhabiting Mount Elgon Sub County are the Bukusu and the Tes'o who primarily practice agriculture. Also in Mount Elgon are the Ogiek, who are traditionally hunters and gatherers. They reside in the forested areas around Mount Elgon. They practice crop farming and also keep small herds of cattle, adapting to the mountainous environment. According to KNBS (2019), Mount Elgon had a human population of 218,873 persons.

Cheptais Sub County, on the other hand, is largely inhabited by the Sabaot. According to KNBS (2019), Cheptais had a population of 136,035.

Target population/Sampling frame

The assessment targeted persons aged 18-35 years in the three sub counties namely; Webuye East, Mount Elgon and Cheptais Sub Counties. The table below shows the population of youth aged 18-35 in the three sub counties as per the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census.

Sub County	Population of persons 18-35
Webuye East	27, 381
Cheptais	44, 483
Mount Elgon	25, 565
Total	97,429

Source: KNBS, 2019



Sampling approach

The assessment involved mixed sampling approaches. Both probability and non-probability sampling approaches were used. Probability sampling techniques were used to sample youth 18-35, while non-probabilistic methods were used to sample county government officials for key informant interviews and youth for focus group discussions.

Sample size determination Youth Questionnaire

For the youth interviews, Fisher's formula was used to determine the sample size of youth to be interviewed in each of the three sub-counties.

Cochran Formula

$$No = \frac{Z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$$

Where;

n_o = desired sample size

z = standard normal deviate at the required confidence level

d = the marginal error allowed or degree of accuracy desired (in our case 95% confidence limit, thus marginal error allowed, d=0.05).

p = the proportion of the target population or the estimated characteristics being measured Thus;

$$n_o = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{(0.05)^2} = \mathbf{385 \text{ Youth}}$$

Thus, 385 youth were interviewed in each of the three sub-counties.

Key informant interviews

Sub County	Ministry of Agriculture	Min of Environment officials	Total
Webuye East	1	1	2
Cheptais	1	1	2
Mount Elgon	1	1	2
Total	3	3	6

A total of six participants were purposively sampled as key informants for the baseline assessment. These participants were Ministry of Agriculture Officials in each of the sub-counties and Ministry of Lands officials in the targeted sub-counties.

Systematic secondary data review.

There was a systematic secondary data review of existing records and evidence to map existing youth-led environmental initiatives/groups and their challenges in the three sub-counties targeted by this assessment. This involved looking at records within the line ministries at the county level as well as existing online material on the youth-led initiatives

Data collection tools

Quantitative data was collected using structured questionnaires administered to youth aged 18-35 years in the three sub counties. The questionnaires were used to collect data on youth awareness of climate change and climate justice and identifying key barriers preventing youth from participating in climate justice initiatives. Key informant guides were used to gather data from line government ministry officials on the barriers to youth participation in climate justice initiatives as well as recommendations on actionable strategies to enhance youth participation in climate justice initiatives.

Pre-testing of data collection tools

Pre-testing was undertaken in Webuye West Sub County. The pretesting was done at Webuye West sub county since it exhibits characteristics almost similar to those in the targeted Sub Counties. The A total of 31 (10%) of the respondents were used in Pre- test of the research tools. Results and feedback from this pre-test were used to improve the data collection tools before actual study.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data submitted was downloaded from KOBO Collect toolbox server into .XLS Format and imported into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0. Descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency was used. Frequencies, means were used to measure awareness levels on climate change and climate justice. The data was presented in tables with frequencies and percentages.

NVIVO was used to analyze qualitative data which was then used to enhance more understanding in the description of the quantitative figures guided by the aims and objectives of the study. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically to respond to specific objectives related to barriers to youth participation in climate justice initiatives and mapping out actionable strategies for youth involvement in climate justice initiatives.

Ethical considerations

Ethical research practices were observed throughout the study. Permission was first sought from the Office of the County Commissioner. At Sub Sub-Sub-County level, permission was sought from the Deputy County Commissioners. Information about the assessment was provided to the participants sampled, importance of the work, implications for the future, and potential benefits to climate justice-related work. Participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary. Informed consent was sought from the participants. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the information provided. All data that could uniquely identify a participant was handled as per the Data Protection Act.

► Baseline RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the baseline findings, which were discussed as per the thematic subheadings and sections in line with the study/baseline questions. This discussion involves the demographic information of respondents, and descriptive data are presented based on research questions. Results from qualitative analyses are also presented here. Response rate was at 1143/1155 (99%) owing to proper mobilization, replacement procedures, and timing of the interviews.

Response return rate by sub-county

The response return rate was impressive at 99%. In Webuye East Sub County, out of the expected 385 participants, 381 representing 99% were interviewed. In Cheptais Sub County, a total of 385 respondents were interviewed translating to 100% return rate while in Mount Elgon Sub County, 377 respondents were interviewed representing 88% of the expected return rate.

Socio-Demographic Attributes of respondents

Respondents' sex

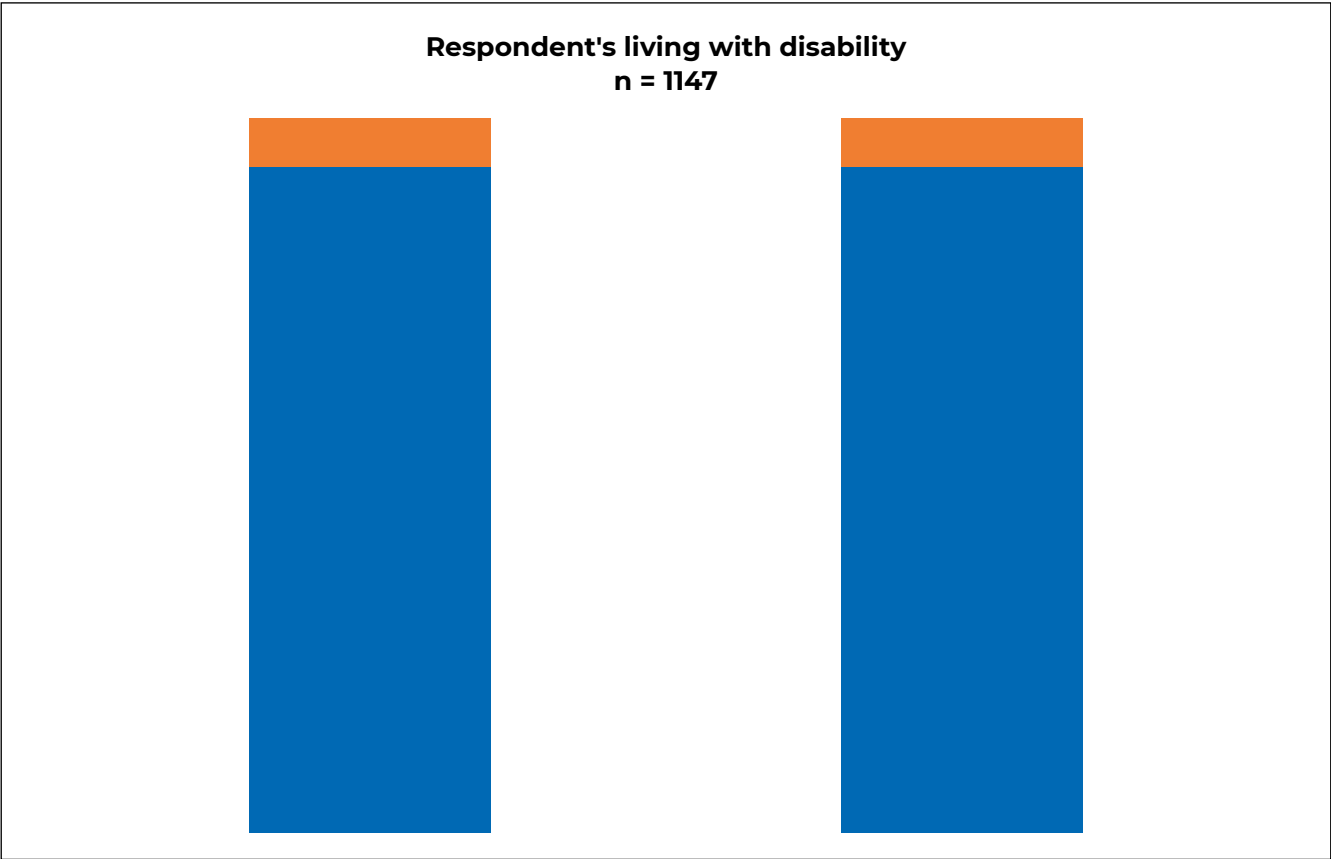
Majority of respondents (56%) were male while 44% were female. In all the sub counties, more male respondents were interviewed compared to female respondents. The table below shows the distribution of respondents by sex in each of the targeted sub-counties.

Sub County	RESPONDENT'S SEX		Total
	Female	Male	
Cheptais	39.24%	60.76%	100%
Mt Elgon	48.19%	51.81%	100%
Webuye East	44.32%	55.68%	100%
Grand Total	43.88%	56.12%	100%

Source: baseline, 2025

Disability status of respondents

Majority of respondents (94.7%) had no disability while 5.3% of respondents reported to be living with disability. The graph below indicates the percent of respondents living/not living with disability.



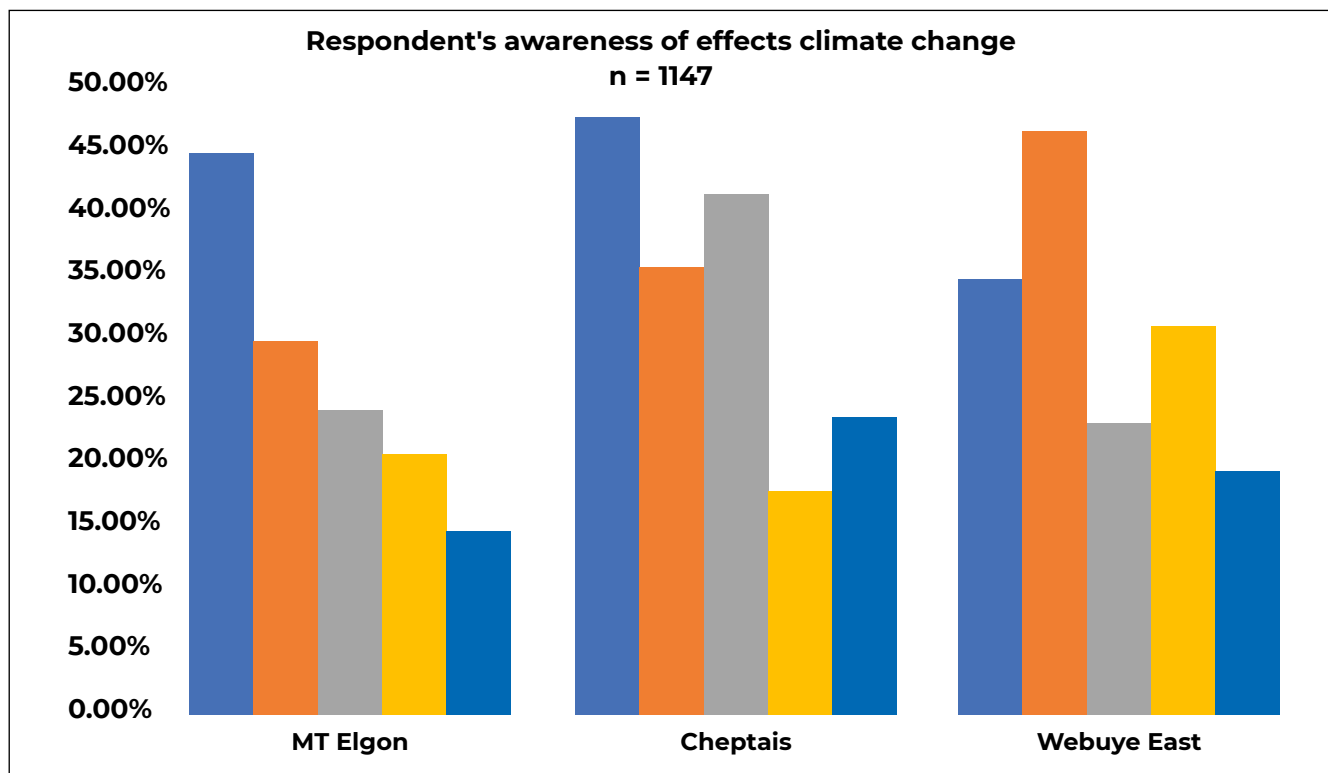
Source: Baseline survey, 2025

Respondents’ awareness of climate change and climate justice

The baseline assessment measured awareness among respondents on climate change. This included the ability to define climate change, awareness of weather patterns, global warming, and those applying climate-resilient natural resource management practices

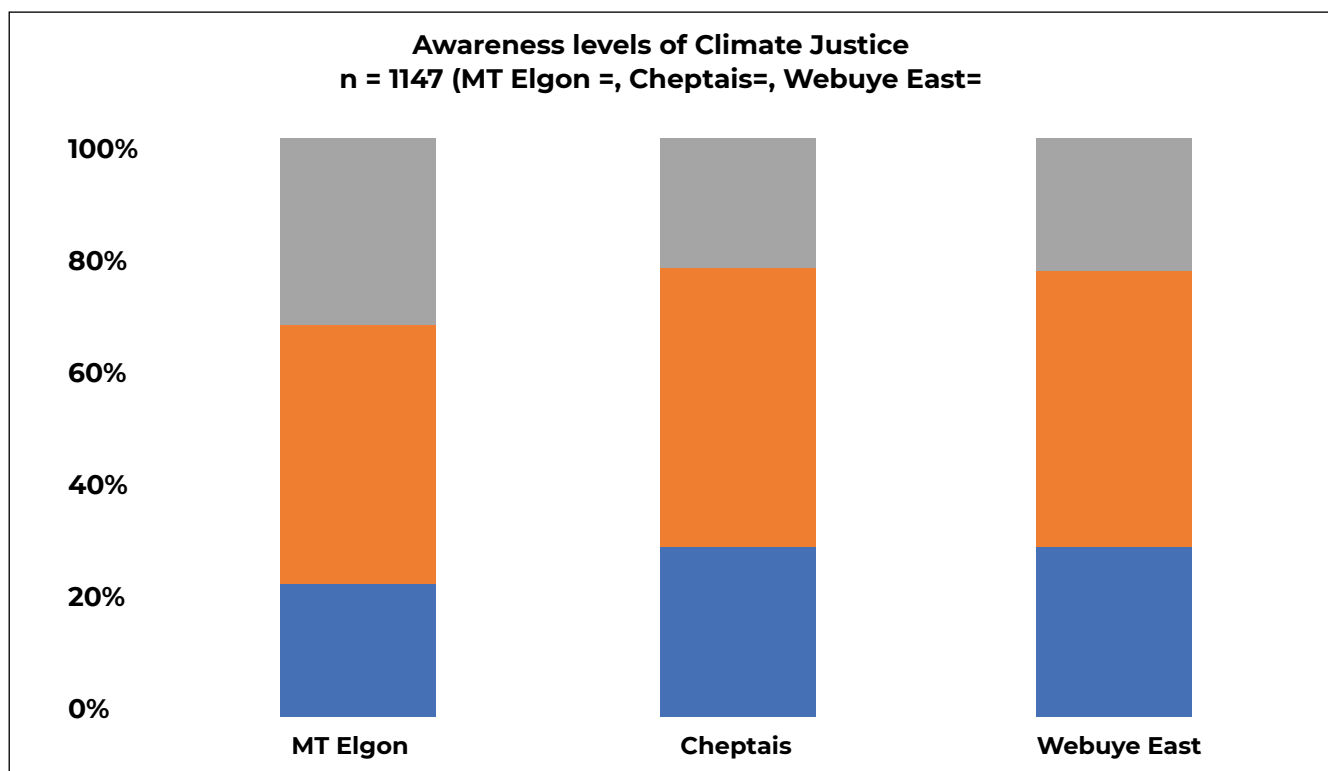
Awareness of climate change

According to the World Bank, climate change is the significant variation of average weather conditions becoming, for example, warmer, wetter, or drier over several decades or longer. It is the longer-term trend that differentiates climate change from natural weather variability. The baseline explored respondents’ awareness of climate-related challenges in Bungoma County, which were mainly floods, drought, soil erosion, and deforestation. The graph below summarizes respondents’ awareness of the effects of climate change by Sub County.



Source: Baseline survey, 2025

Floods and heavy rainfall were highlighted by 44% of respondents in Mount Elgon and 47% of respondents in Cheptais Sub-Counties as the main effect of climate change. In Webuye East, on the other hand, deforestation was the most mentioned effect at 46%. In Mount Elgon, deforestation was the second most mentioned effect of climate change, most likely tied to poor agricultural practices, land use, and population pressure. The other effects mentioned across the sub-counties were: pollution, food insecurity



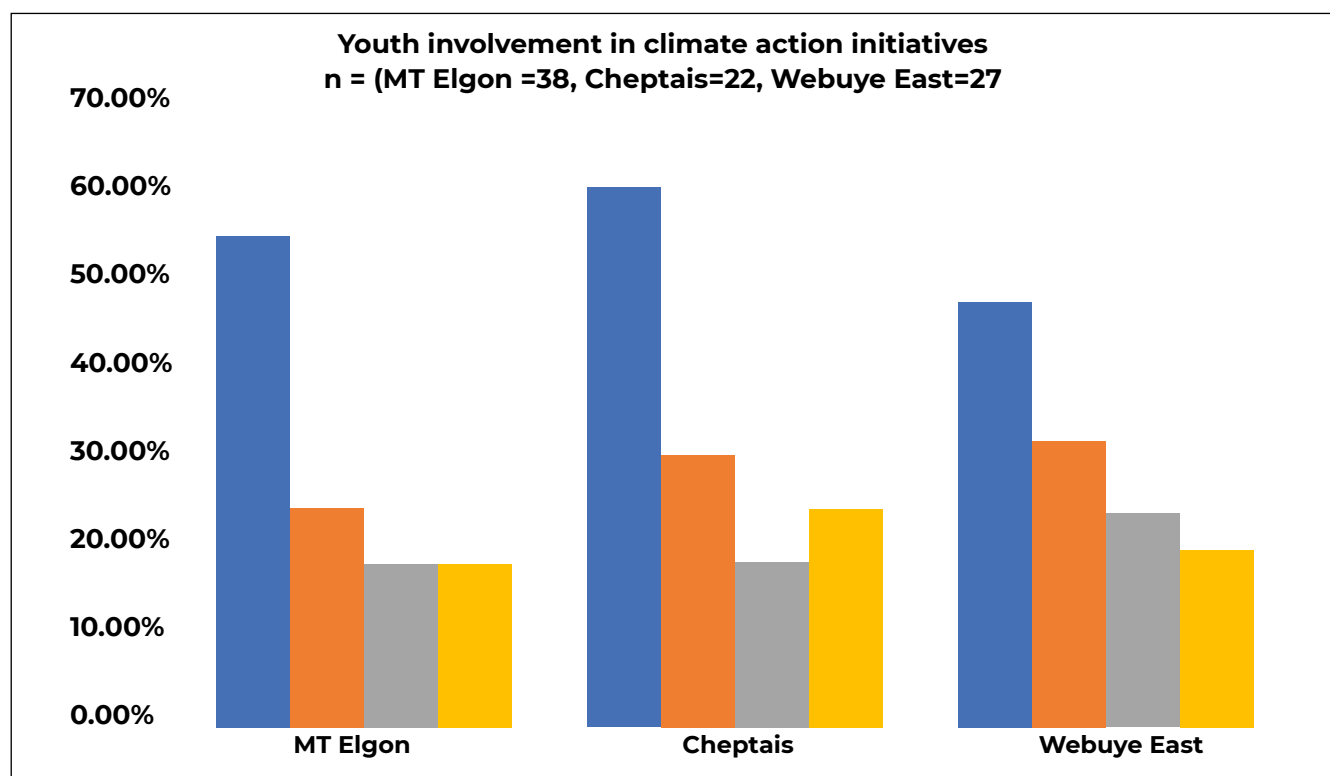
Source: Baseline survey, 2025

Awareness of climate justice

The majority of respondents exhibited no awareness little to/moderate awareness of climate justice. Overall, 27.6% of the respondents reported high awareness levels, 46.1% showed moderate to low awareness, while another 26.3% demonstrated no awareness of climate justice. In MT. Elgon Sub County, 23.5% had high awareness levels while 44% had low to moderate awareness levels. In Cheptais Sub County, 29.5% had high awareness while 47% had low to moderate awareness levels. In Webuye East, 30.8% reported high awareness levels while 46.2% had low to moderate awareness. Webuye East, although it had low awareness levels, exhibited the highest awareness levels of the three sub-counties.

Youth participation/involvement in climate action

This section analyzed how youth are currently involved in Climate action in the three sub-counties. This included their involvement in addressing the climate change challenges in their respective sub-counties. Respondents mentioned initiatives like tree planting, awareness campaigns, community initiatives like building gabions to prevent soil erosion, community clean-ups, among other activities. The graph below summarizes youth involvement in climate action by sub-county.



Source: Baseline survey, 2025

In all the sub-counties, youth participation in climate action activities was low. In Mount Elgon, 38 respondents reported to be involved, in Cheptais, only 22 respondents reported to be involved, while in Webuye East, 27 respondents reported to be involved. Among those that reported to be involved, the majority across the sub-counties were involved in tree planting (MT. Elgon = 53%, Cheptais = 58%, Webuye East = 46%). Youth were also involved in awareness campaigns, including seminars, social media climate activism, community initiatives, including building gabions, community clean-up exercises, constructing drainages/clearing of drainages to mitigate the impact of flooding, etc.

Opportunities and barriers to youth participation in climate action

This section analyzed the existing opportunities and barriers to youth participation in climate action in the three sub counties. From the Key informant interviews, there have been no deliberate efforts to promote youth participation in climate action. There a nation-wide tree planting campaigns that encourage youth to participate. Other opportunities are pegged to NGO support. The table below presents the opportunities and barriers to youth participation as reported by the respondents.

Sub County	Opportunity	Barriers
Webuye East	Community initiatives through youth groups that engage in tree planting. Youth engagement in policy forums – While this is not so common, in the few instances youth have been involved, it has been a great platform to incorporate youth perspectives on climate change and climate justice.	• Lack of finances for youth to support climate change mitigation initiatives. • • There is little awareness among the youth of climate change and climate justice, thus limiting their participation. • • Political interference and cultural norms limit youth participation
Cheptais	Community tree planting initiatives are supported by government and development actors, as well as local CBOs. Training and education on climate change and climate justice.	• Land ownership issues • Youth rarely own land. • Lack of financial resources • Lack of awareness of climate change.
Mount Elgon	Community initiatives, i.e, tree planting.	Financial barriers
	Local public participation forums	• Gender/Cultural barriers, i.e. Young women are barely involved. • Lack of awareness.

Key to note is that residents of Webuye East were more likely to be engaged in policy development work primarily due to their proximity to urban area compared to those in Cheptais and Mount Elgon. Budgetary/Financial short comings strongly negate this opportunity.

Land ownership remains a unique issue in Cheptais making participation/involvement of the youth limited. This is linked to social norms.

Public forums are an opportunity across the three sub counties. These are either community led, NGO/CBO supported or government initiatives.

Mount Elgon had the highest number of respondents citing no opportunity, reflecting the rural setup challenges.

CONCLUSION

The baseline assessment reveals that youth awareness of climate change in Bungoma County is moderate, but awareness of climate justice remains low across all three sub-counties, with only 27.6% of respondents demonstrating high awareness. While youth are engaged in limited climate action activities, primarily tree planting and occasional awareness campaigns, their participation is hindered by financial constraints, cultural norms, land ownership challenges, and a lack of deliberate inclusion in decision-making processes.

Opportunities for youth engagement do exist, particularly through community-based initiatives, national tree planting campaigns, NGO support, and public forums. However, the uneven distribution of such opportunities, especially the absence of identified youth-led initiatives in Cheptais, highlights gaps in resource allocation and information flow. Webuye East benefits from proximity to urban centers, enhancing policy engagement, whereas



Mount Elgon and Cheptais face more structural and socio-cultural barriers.

The presence of inclusive youth-led environmental initiatives in Webuye East and Mount Elgon demonstrates potential for replication and scaling. Ad-

ressing barriers such as low awareness, inadequate funding, and restrictive socio-cultural practices is critical for fostering equitable and impactful youth participation in climate justice efforts across the county.





RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Enhance Awareness and Education

- Implement targeted climate justice awareness campaigns using youth-friendly communication channels such as social media, community radio, and school-based programs.
- Integrate climate justice concepts into existing climate change education programs to deepen understanding and link environmental issues with social equity.

2. Strengthen Youth Capacity and Leadership

- Provide training in climate action planning, advocacy, and resource mobilization for youth leaders.
- Facilitate mentorship programs linking experienced environmental practitioners with youth-led groups.

3. Expand Access to Resources and Opportunities

- Establish dedicated county-level climate action funds accessible to youth groups for initiating and scaling environmental projects.
- Partner with NGOs, private sector actors, and government agencies to support provision of seedlings, tools, and technical expertise for community-led initiatives.

4. Address Structural Barriers

- Advocate for youth-friendly land tenure policies in Cheptais and similar contexts where land ownership is a barrier to environmental engagement.
- Promote gender-sensitive approaches to ensure equitable participation of young women in climate justice activities.

5. Strengthen Networking and Collaboration

- Create a Bungoma County Youth Climate Action Network to connect youth-led initiatives across sub-counties, enabling knowledge sharing and coordinated advocacy.
- Facilitate regular youth engagement in county and sub-county policy forums on climate and environmental governance.

6. Data and Monitoring

- Develop a centralized database of youth-led environmental initiatives to improve visibility, attract support, and monitor impact.
- Conduct follow-up assessments every 2–3 years to track progress in awareness, participation, and barrier reduction.

By implementing these recommendations, Bungoma County can unlock the potential of its youth to become active, informed, and influential actors in advancing climate justice and sustainable development.





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