



# Final Report: Empowering Local Communities for Climate Action in Somalia

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# Executive Summary

As Somalia is grappling with significant challenges brought on by climate change, which severely impacts its most vulnerable populations—specifically women, youth, the urban poor, rural communities, and marginalized groups. These communities are especially susceptible to the detrimental effects of climate change, facing dire consequences such as droughts, floods, and extreme weather events that jeopardize their livelihoods, food security, and overall well-being.

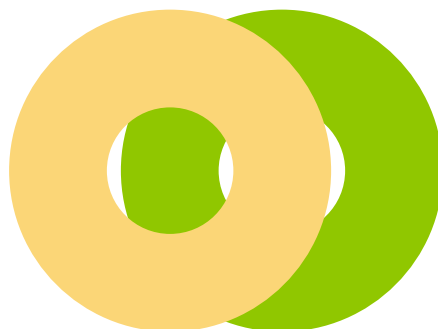
To tackle these urgent problems, there was an essential need for locally-driven climate initiatives projects that empower Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and youth-led groups like Action for Environment to take on leadership roles.

To this end, **Action for Environment (A4E)** in collaboration with **Oxfam** and the **African Activists for Climate Justice (AACJ)** executed a project on Empowering Local Communities for Climate Action in Somalia. The project included several initiatives such as Community Consultations - Facilitation of a community consultation for 65 participants from women, youth, grassroots communities, students, and activists.

Creation of Sharing Spaces - Organizing spaces for communities to share their experiences, innovations, and leadership in addressing climate challenges by establishing a platform for sharing their knowledge and experiences where community members can present their climate action initiatives. Development of Educational Materials - Creating educational materials for a children's climate education book titled “Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada” This educational material book is focused on climate change awareness and adaptation strategies for children.

Documentation - Documented locally-led climate solutions and advocated for their adoption by compiling a report on local climate solutions and innovative ideas that support these initiatives. The document was designed to emphasize the significance of documenting and promoting community-driven climate solutions in Somalia.

By promoting collaboration and knowledge sharing among diverse stakeholders—including local communities, activists, and policymakers—this project aimed to create robust, inclusive actions for climate justice in Somalia. Through a series of community consultations, educational initiatives, and advocacy campaigns, the project documented locally-led climate solutions, ensuring that they receive the recognition and adoption they deserve at broader levels.



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# Introduction

This report provides a comprehensive overview of a pivotal project aimed at empowering local communities for climate action in Somalia to tackle the pressing challenges posed by climate change. The project's primary purpose includes to enhance local leadership in climate action by fostering the capacity of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), and locally-led initiatives. This initiative specifically targets the vulnerabilities faced by women, youth, and marginalized groups who are disproportionately affected by extreme weather events such as droughts and floods.

The project commenced from June to August 2024 with a series of activities designed to achieve tangible outcomes within this timeframe. Key problems addressed by the project include the lack of local agency in climate response, insufficient awareness of climate challenges, and the absence of documented, community-driven solutions.

To achieve its objectives, the project employs a multifaceted methodology that includes community consultations to engage stakeholders directly, the creation of sharing spaces for dialogue and knowledge exchange, and the development of educational materials aimed at raising awareness about climate change among children.

By documenting and promoting locally-led climate solutions, this initiative aspires to create a sustainable framework for climate justice in Somalia, ensuring that the voices of the most vulnerable populations are heard and incorporated into broader climate action strategies. Through this report, we aim to outline our progress, impact, and the lessons learned throughout the project, providing a roadmap for future efforts in community-based climate resilience



# Activity One:



## Community Consultations Workshop

On 27th July 2024, Action for Environment Organization organized a consultation and workshop event for local communities of diverse backgrounds.



# Welcoming and Opening Remarks

Mr. Abdilatif,

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the founding director of Action for Environment (A4E), welcomed the guests and participants to the workshop and delivered the opening remarks. During these remarks, Mr. Omar outlined the training's objectives and emphasized that empowering local communities in Somalia is a promising step toward investing in their efforts to combat climate change.



In addition, Mr. Omar presented an overview of the African Activities for Climate Change project. The African Activists for Climate Justice (AACJ) Project is a five-year initiative funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aimed at strengthening climate activism throughout Africa. It emphasizes empowering local leaders and communities to combat climate change while advocating for sustainable practices. Our director also expressed sincere gratitude to OXFAM for their support of the consultation workshop.

Finally, Mr. Omar expressed gratitude to the participants for accepting our invitation. The participants represented a diverse group from the local communities, including CSOs, youth, women, environmental students, media representatives, individuals with disabilities, and marginalized groups.



# Insightful Presentations

The consultation workshop included insightful presentation from expertise with different backgrounds. Beginning the training,



**Hani Asad Yasin** The Director of Climate Gender Lens Advocacy at Action for Environments, delivered an insightful presentation on the significance of green events. This discourse elucidated the various factors contributing to climate change, emphasizing how conventional practices exacerbate environmental degradation.

Additionally, the presentation included the implementation of green meeting checklists that served as a practical guide for effective waste management, empowering stakeholders to adopt environmentally conscious habits. Collectively, these initiatives reinforce the paramount importance of integrating sustainability into event planning, ultimately contributing to the global effort to combat climate change.



**Mr. Abdirahman Mohamed Dahie** also delivered an enlightening presentation on the invaluable role that social workers play in addressing climate action. His discourse illuminated the unique skills that social workers possess, which are particularly applicable to tackling the pressing environmental challenges of our time.

Mr. Dahie emphasized how social workers are well-equipped to empower marginalized communities who are disproportionately affected by climate change. By focusing on social inclusion and equity, they facilitate meaningful engagement and dialogue within communities, thereby enhancing awareness of environmental issues.



**Mr. Abdullahi Ahmed Ali** the National Coordinator of the Najib-NDC, delivered a comprehensive presentation on Somalia's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), highlighting critical sector gaps and implementation challenges. He began by outlining the observed and projected changes in Somalia's climate, providing a timeline that underscores the urgency of addressing these issues. His analysis emphasized the need for a robust framework to guide the NDC preparation and development process, ensuring that Somalia's climate commitments align with the realities faced by communities across the country.

Focusing on the revised SOM-NDC, Mr. Ali elaborated on the specific targets and priorities essential for effective implementation. He discussed the dual approach of mitigation and adaptation strategies, emphasizing the importance of integrating these means into national and local planning efforts. By addressing the existing gaps and challenges, his presentation aimed to foster a collaborative environment among stakeholders, paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable response to climate change in Somalia.



**Hafsa Abdullahi Omar** the Director of Climate Change at the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change (MoECC), delivered also a comprehensive presentation on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) for Somalia. The presentation highlighted the pressing environmental challenges faced by Somalia and the importance of a structured approach to climate adaptation.

Hafsa highlighted Key Environmental Challenges in Somalia. Somalia confronts a multitude of environmental challenges, which are exacerbated by its semi-arid landscape. Critical issues include land degradation that results from soil erosion, deforestation, and overgrazing, significantly compromising the land's productivity and ecological health. While these challenges are significant, Hafsa emphasized that they are compounded by the effects of climate change.





# Group Discussions

Right after the presentation, brainstorming group discussion sessions for the participants were organized. These discussions primarily focused on the role of local communities in climate actions. The groups consisted of CSOs, women, social workers, health workers, media representatives, people with disabilities, and environmental students. They exchanged their roles in climate actions, deliberately sharing unique perspectives and insights regarding the challenges of climate action in Somalia.

The local community groups emphasized that there is a significant gap between civil society organizations and the government concerning climate action. They argued that the role of civil society as a bridge between the people and the government in Somalia for climate action is ineffective. They proposed a framework for cooperation to clarify their role in raising awareness and educational advocacy in Somalia, highlighting the importance of collaboration among local communities in climate action.



# Panel Discussions

The consultation training included panel discussions. The panel discussed “Grassroots climate solutions: Empowering local communities in Somalia. This insightful panel was moderated by Abdishakur Daaha- Climate Communication Specialist.

The panelists were Nafisa Mohamed Abdirahim- Children’s Climate Representative at COP28, Najma Khalif Mohamed-Director of Somali Women in Environment and Climate Change (SWECC), Ismail Abdulqadir Ali- Activist for People with Disabilities and Ahmed Absie- Journalist, Trainer and Director of Green Media Initiatives.

The discussion was fruitful, featuring wonderful exchanges of ideas and perspectives. The panel proposed various climate solutions aimed at empowering local communities, highlighting the importance of grassroots efforts in addressing climate challenges in Somalia.



# Call to Action: Climate Justice Protest

Finally, the program concluded with a call to action from the participants, showcasing a strong voice for inclusive climate justice and demanding urgent action for vulnerable communities in Somalia.

The participants urge local and international stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and private sector entities, to unite in supporting youth initiatives in Somalia. They emphasized that investing in Somalia's youth is not merely an act of charity; it is a strategic investment in the country's future. By supporting youth initiatives, we can cultivate a new generation of leaders who will contribute to peace, stability, and progress in Somalia.



# Activity Two:



## Creation of Sharing Spaces

On August 19, 2024, A4E organized a platform for local communities to share their experiences, innovations, and leadership in addressing climate change challenges. Participants included local leaders, environmental experts, marginalized groups, camp leaders, and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The discussion centered on the effects of climate change on displaced individuals and potential solutions.

Our primary objective was to listen to the IDPs' experiences and understand how climate change impacted their lives. We heard poignant stories from local communities, especially the IDPs, and explored ways to empower these displacement-affected and marginalized groups to engage in decision-making related to climate solutions.

This event featured community members presenting their climate action initiatives and sharing their experiences regarding the direct impact of climate change on their lives. Creating a space for human-centred solutions was a novel idea for addressing the challenges faced by IDPs, particularly those within displacement-affected communities. During the event, we also facilitated interactive sessions aimed at fostering collaboration among participants.

These sessions allowed for the exchange of ideas on adaptive strategies and innovative practices that the communities had already implemented in response to climate adversities. The atmosphere was charged with a sense of urgency as the stories unfolded. Many IDPs expressed feelings of powerlessness, yet within their narratives also emerged a profound resilience and determination to reclaim their agency. We recognized that their experiences, while fraught with challenges, also contained the seeds for building stronger, more inclusive climate action frameworks.

As we were deep in the sharing space, we realized that there is a need to develop a human-centered design approach to develop policies and solutions that reflect the needs and experiences of minority IDP groups. Human-centered policy-making and programming involve engaging them regularly, gathering data and feedback, and adjusting programs and services accordingly.

Lastly, the session provided a valuable platform for IDPs to share their experiences and insights regarding the impact of climate change on their lives and locally-led climate solutions. The themes discussed highlight the urgent need for targeted humanitarian aid, skills training, and support for vulnerable communities. By addressing these issues, stakeholders can contribute to empowering local communities in Somalia to take meaningful action against climate change and build a more resilient future.



# Activity Three:



## Development of Educational Materials

On 12th September, Action for Environment (A4E) organized a significant book exhibition centered around the children's climate education book titled "Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada." This event was part of our ongoing project aimed at empowering local communities to engage in climate action. The exhibition served as a platform to raise awareness about climate change and its impacts, particularly focusing on educating the younger generation.

The book exhibition took place at Istanbul Hotel, attracting a diverse audience that included children, parents, educators, and community leaders. The primary objective of the event was to introduce "Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada" as an educational resource that can help children understand the complexities of climate change and inspire them to take action in their communities.

The event featured engaging activities, including live book readings by local authors and educators, allowing children to immerse themselves in the narrative while learning about pressing environmental issues. Attendees received informational pamphlets on climate action initiatives, fostering a sense of community involvement. Keynote speakers, emphasized the importance of equipping children with climate knowledge to empower them as future leaders. They also highlighted the intersection of social justice and environmental justice, underscoring the book's role in making climate education accessible to all, particularly to children.

The feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with parents appreciating the book's ability to simplify complex climate concepts for children. Educators expressed interest in incorporating "Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada" into their curricula, recognizing its potential as a vital teaching tool.

Following the exhibition's success, Action for Environment plans to continue promoting children's literature focused on environmental education and to organize similar events in other communities, aiming to expand their reach and impact in fostering climate awareness among the younger generation.

Participants emphasized the significance of the book as this book was the first of its kind in Somalia, written in our Somali language and designed specifically for children. Participants indicated that it is an invaluable resource that simplifies complex concepts in a way that our children can understand and benefit from. By making climate education accessible, we are fostering a generation of informed advocates who can articulate their experiences and fight for their rights and their environment.

In conclusion, the book exhibition for “Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada” successfully highlighted the importance of educating children about climate change while fostering community involvement. By empowering local communities through literature and interactive learning experiences, we are taking meaningful steps toward building a more environmentally conscious future



# Activity Four:



## Documentation on Locally-led Climate Solutions in Somalia

The document outlined the critical need for documenting and advocating for community-driven climate solutions in Somalia, a country highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With prolonged droughts, erratic rainfall, and frequent flooding threatening the livelihoods of many, it becomes essential to harness and highlight the innovative, localized solutions developed by Somali communities.

By facilitating dialogue among stakeholders—local communities, policymakers, and the media—this initiative aims to empower these communities by providing them with a platform to share their experiences and successful initiatives. It underscores the necessity for these grassroots solutions to be integrated into national climate policies, ensuring that the voices of those most affected by climate change are heard in relevant decision-making processes.

Our platform involved adopting a people-centred approach, which entails developing solutions and strategies that prioritize the perspectives of the end users. To achieve this, we engaged with local communities. We listened to their personal stories through group discussions and one-on-one conversations. We reaffirmed our commitment to amplifying the voices of those most affected.

We left with a shared vision that true climate solutions must be inclusive, driven by those who are often sidelined yet are at the forefront of these challenges. As we move forward, we envision a future where local communities, are not just recipients of aid but active leaders in the fight against climate change, shaping resilient ecosystems and thriving communities for generations to come.

Recognizing the significant socio-economic risks associated with climate impacts and the inadequacies of current crisis management approaches, the document advocates for a paradigm shift towards local-led climate action.



It stresses the importance of engaging local populations in adapting to climate challenges, harnessing their insights to develop effective, sustainable solutions. The comprehensive methodological approach used in the study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods, including literature reviews, focus group discussions, and policy analyses, aimed at identifying key themes relevant to Somalia's local climate strategies. By documenting these community-led efforts, the initiative seeks to cultivate a more inclusive and effective approach to climate action, ultimately contributing to a more resilient future for Somali communities.

Finally, putting ‘frontline communities’ at the center of climate action will need to be one of the central themes underpinning the discussions and agreements related to climate solutions. To enable this to happen, we have pointed out five essential suggestions for supporting locally-led adaptation for humanitarian and climate practitioners to take to support people-centered climate change action.

This includes advocate for flexible funding and greater support for locally-led solutions that reduce the humanitarian impact of climate change, highlight the importance of local leadership in climate change adaptation, ensuring local group representation in risk assessments, planning and funding, advocacy for policy changes in locally-led climate solutions and the need for transparency and accountability in climate finance.



# Conclusions

The document outlines a significant initiative aimed at empowering local communities in Somalia to address the pressing challenges posed by climate change. Through a series of well-structured activities, including community consultations, the creation of sharing spaces, the development of educational materials, and the documentation of locally-led climate solutions, the project seeks to enhance local leadership and foster a collaborative approach to climate action.

The findings highlight the urgent need for targeted interventions that prioritize the voices and experiences of the most vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and marginalized groups. By engaging these communities in meaningful dialogue and providing them with the tools and resources necessary for climate action, the project aims to bridge the gap between civil society organizations and government entities, ensuring that local perspectives are integrated into national climate policies.

The emphasis on education, particularly through the children's climate education book "Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada," underscores the importance of fostering a generation of informed advocates who can articulate their experiences and advocate for their rights and the environment. The positive feedback from the community indicates a strong desire for continued engagement and support in climate education and action.

Moreover, the documentation of locally-led climate solutions serves as a vital resource for promoting grassroots initiatives and ensuring that these solutions are recognized and adopted at broader levels. The call for a paradigm shift towards local-led climate action reflects a growing understanding of the socio-economic risks associated with climate impacts and the inadequacies of current crisis management approaches.

Throughout the entire period of the project, the team at Action for Environment demonstrated a strong commitment to preserving the environment by implementing all activities in an eco-friendly manner. From the outset, we prioritized sustainable practices, such as including the use of reusable water bottles, utilizing digital platforms for community consultations to minimize paper waste and organizing events that adhered to green meeting principles, including effective waste management and resource conservation.

The book exhibition for "Dhaxalside: Ubadka iyo Isbedelka Cimilada" was designed to be environmentally conscious, featuring recyclable materials and promoting the use of sustainable resources. Additionally, our team actively encouraged participants to adopt environmentally friendly practices in their daily lives and community initiatives.

By embedding eco-friendly principles into every aspect of the project, we not only addressed the immediate challenges posed by climate change but also reinforced our dedication to fostering a culture of environmental stewardship within the communities we serve. This holistic approach ensures that our efforts contribute to both climate action and the preservation of Somalia's natural resources for future generations.

In conclusion, the project represents a critical step towards building a more resilient future for Somali communities by empowering them to take an active role in climate action. By prioritizing local leadership, fostering collaboration, and advocating for inclusive policies, the initiative aims to create a sustainable framework for climate justice that addresses the unique challenges faced by frontline communities in Somalia. The lessons learned from this project will serve as a roadmap for future efforts in community-based climate resilience, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and sustainable response to climate change in the region.





## Contact Us

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☎ (+252) 612222200

✉ [info@a4environment.org](mailto:info@a4environment.org)

🌐 [www.a4environment.org](http://www.a4environment.org)

📍 303 Muna Apartment,  
Taleh Street, Hodan District,  
Mogadishu Somalia

✂ [action4enviorn](#); [f action4environ](#)

📷 [action4environ](#)

