

IDA
International
Disability Alliance



The Impact of Climate Change on Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities in Baringo County, Kenya.

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Indigenous Peoples with
Disabilities Global Network





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Executive Summary

This report on the Impact of climate change on Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities in Baringo County, Kenya, comes as a result of the International Disability Alliance's (IDA) work supporting indigenous peoples with disabilities since 2012. IDA's work over the years included several aspects of advocacy and capacity building, including trainings. During a training in Kenya, in June 2021, participants from indigenous communities raised the need for research on the impact of climate change in their communities, which originated this research.

This fact-finding report was only possible thanks to a four-day long country mission to Kenya, together with Manase Ntutu, Chair of the Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities Global Network (IPWDGN), and Christine Kandie, Director of the Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network (EIWEN) who facilitated direct discussions with different indigenous groups, including women and youth focus groups.

The report summarizes key findings from these focus group discussions with over 60 indigenous peoples with disabilities from Endorois and Ilchamus communities in Baringo County, Kenya. Both these indigenous communities navigate climate change related displacement due to repeated flooding of two major lakes in their living area. Persons with disabilities are often relegated within indigenous communities as undeserving of services or care due to traditional/cultural belief systems as well as relegated within mainstream public policies related to land, climate action, and food security, among others. Persons with disabilities find themselves navigating hostile attitudinal, communicational, and physical barriers to their full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Environmental threats are closely related to underlying inequities that already exist¹. Indigenous peoples with disabilities face intersectional discrimination, and climate change is adding to this discrimination. This study focused on the compounding effects of climate events and the responses to these events that are exacerbating the access of persons with disabilities to their rights, and consequently, the quality of life that they require.

The study focused on gathering anecdotal accounts from indigenous peoples with disabilities to record challenges that they faced or still face and navigate as persons displaced by climate change and climate action. Aside from displacement, interviewees noted a significant decline in their quality of life due to their lack of access to their land, food, water, healthcare, education, employment, and decent housing since experiencing severe climate events and the responses to those events.

¹ Wolbring, Gregor. (2008). A Culture of Neglect: Climate Discourse and Disabled People. M/C Media and Culture. 12.

Displacement has increased the problem of access to land for Indigenous peoples who migrate to inaccessible government land. Insecurity has also grown because of wars between communities over land and livestock. Interviewees also shared concerns about the spread of new diseases that they speculated were occurring due to unseasonal and excessive heat. Interviewees talked about the rise in the prices of essential commodities, the lack of viable jobs, and the ensuing hunger in their communities.

This report documents the lived experiences of indigenous peoples with disabilities, focusing on the intersections of ethnicity, gender, youth, and disability in the conditions of life, including displacement due to the impact of climate change. Our findings revolved around the environmental impact of climate change in Baringo County, which include unpredictable rain patterns that have resulted in alternating drought and flood. This is consistent with results from similar studies² in other regions.

Furthermore, our interviews and discussions revealed patterns of discrimination and non-inclusive evacuation methods that exacerbated health conditions and sometimes proved fatal to indigenous peoples with disabilities. The issues that accompanied the unplanned, short-term, non-inclusive evacuation methods were poor access to healthcare, food insecurity, availability, and accessibility to quality water, sanitation, and hygiene services (WASH), which exacerbates health conditions. Aside from navigating the sudden changes of displacement, indigenous peoples with disabilities are unable to find meaningful employment after the loss of their ancestral lands.

Indigenous women with disabilities who already tackle attitudinal barriers and a lack of protection of their rights to land ownership suffer multi-fold when they are displaced, expected to perform gender-assigned roles such as childcare and procuring, preparing, and providing food for the family while struggling to obtain basic amenities for their own needs.

The loss of lands has also meant the loss of invaluable ancestral wisdom, culture, and community bonds, all of which are essential parts of building climate resilience. Our study also revealed a general apprehension among interviewees around the subject of repeated displacement. Current approaches to mitigate climate change in Baringo County are reactive, temporary, and non-inclusive of indigenous peoples with disabilities. This 'short-term' approach also contributes to the living conditions provided for displaced persons, which are often inaccessible, unsafe, prone to conflict, and lack measures for social protection or employment opportunities. Interviewees expressed the need for more long-term, permanent solutions or considerations.

Interviewees highlighted the gaps in Kenyan laws regarding the rights of indigenous peoples with disabilities. They recommended that awareness-raising work should be undertaken to change the mentality around disabilities to reduce discrimination.

² IPCC, Sixth Assessment Report (2022) www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_TechnicalSummary.pdf access on May 2nd)

They emphasized the urgency of providing improved access to education and health services, specifically to provide equal opportunity for indigenous children and children with disabilities. Interviewees also stated the need for the State to implement cash transfers for indigenous peoples with disabilities to access their basic needs, such as food, water, housing, and support devices and persons as necessary.

The results of this study and the recommendations put forth by interviewees affirm the imperative to evaluate both emergency and development programs for disability-inclusion.

Climate action that is not inclusive of persons with disabilities is maladaptive in nature – rather than building climate resilience, it leaves the most vulnerable among us exposed and at-risk. At this juncture, we must build advocacy and action that ensures the full participation and inclusion of indigenous peoples with disabilities in mainstream climate action movements to stay at pace with the new reality of climate change.

Introduction

Climate change is the critical emergency of this century. Despite the efforts of international cooperation, global treaties and agreements echoed by States across the world, climate change and its consequences affect a larger number of people by the day. Although the Global South contributes the least to climate change³, it is exposed to a significant share of its consequences.

Climate change disproportionately affects the lives of vulnerable groups⁴. Heat-aggravated illness⁵, respiratory illness, increased transmission of vector-borne diseases⁶, poor access to safe food and water⁷, and security risks during natural disasters and extreme weather events are just some of the possible predicaments that marginalized groups find themselves more vulnerable to. Aside from this is the trauma that persons suffer from displacement, and the very threat of climate change and uncertainty causes or contributes to anxiety and depression⁸.



With their profound connection to the land and nature, indigenous peoples are markedly more affected by climate change and the resulting actions⁹. Indigenous peoples with disabilities face worsened multiple, and intersectional forms of discrimination based on gender, age, disability, indigenous status, and location, among other factors¹⁰.

Figure 1: The lands in Baringo county lay barren and dry as a result of altered rainfall patterns.

³ <https://gceurope.org/global-north-and-global-south-how-climate-change-uncovers-global-inequalities/>

⁴ Masipa TS. The Impact of Climate Change on Food Security in South Africa: Current Realities and Challenges Ahead. *Jamba*. 2017 Aug 11;9(1):411. Doi: 10.4102/jamba.v9i1.411. PMID: 29955344; PMCID: PMC6014268.

⁵ Sarofim, M.C., S. Saha, M.D. Hawkins, D.M. Mills, J. Hess, R. Horton, P. Kinney, J. Schwartz, and A. St. Juliana, 2016: Ch. 2: Temperature-Related Death and Illness. *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment*. U.S. Global Change Research Program, Washington, DC, 43–68. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7930/JOMG7MDX>

⁶ <https://health2016.globalchange.gov/vectorborne-diseases>

⁷ <https://yaleclimateconnections.org/2019/08/how-climate-change-threatens-public-health/>

⁸ <https://health2016.globalchange.gov/mental-health-and-well-being>

⁹ Indigenous Peoples and Climate Change: From Victims to Change Agents Through Decent Work www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_551189.pdf

¹⁰ Indigenous Persons with Disabilities: Achieving Rights and Inclusion in Development. A call to action. www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/indigenous-persons-with-disabilities-achieving-rights-and-inclusion-in-development-a-call-to-action.html

There is very little documented data on the impact of climate change and climate action and the responses on persons with disabilities. Climate change threatens the full enjoyment of Indigenous peoples with disabilities' universal human rights to life, education, movement, justice, property, work, social protection, leisure, and an adequate standard of living¹¹. This impact extends to the results of displacement due to climate change and actions.

In the lake region of Baringo County in Kenya, several indigenous communities have been affected by drought and floods and displaced to government land after the water levels of the lakes near their habitation rose.

In collaboration with EIWEN and IPWDGN, IDA undertook a series of focus group discussions with indigenous peoples with disabilities from the Endorois and Ilchamus communities that experience displacement related to climate change.



Figure 2: Images of indigenous peoples with disabilities from the Endorois and Ilchamus communities at the focus group discussions

¹¹ Climate Change: Protecting the Rights of People with Disabilities. www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/ClimateChange/materials/2PDisabilitiesLight.pdf

Our study focused on understanding the aspects of climate change and climate action that disproportionately affect indigenous peoples with disabilities. We interviewed and held focus group discussions with indigenous peoples with disabilities who had experienced displacement due to the flooding of Lake Baringo or Bogoria in the Rift Valley region. We began by discussing what climate change meant to them and moved to discuss how it has impacted their lives. We also sought to understand if indigenous peoples with disabilities were disproportionately affected by climate action, how their experiences were different, and why the circumstances are more adverse and increasingly difficult to navigate.

Climate action is often not inclusive of persons with disabilities¹⁰, and the measures of climate change related evacuation, distribution, social protection, welfare, and access schemes practiced with these communities during climate impact as a result of the sudden and rapid expansion of lake waters in the region have not proven to be an exception.

Our preliminary findings showed that evacuation protocols are not inclusive of persons with disabilities, who are often left behind, not provided for, and unable to access many of the social protection measures that their counterparts without disabilities receive.

Our study provided several recommendations from our interviewees on how governments can be more inclusive of indigenous peoples with disabilities, specifically around the inclusion of indigenous peoples with disabilities in building reliable and accessible sources of information for indigenous peoples about climate change related displacement, measures for social protection, safety, access to land, healthcare, and other vital issues.

Objective

Key objectives of this fact-finding study were to deepen our understanding of the situation and obtain information related to the:

1. **Impact of climate change and associated actions on indigenous peoples with disabilities in Kenya,**
2. **Climate change and climate action in Endorois and Ilchamus communities,**
3. **Displacement of indigenous peoples with disabilities in Kenya's Baringo County, particularly women and youth with disabilities,**
4. **State mechanisms to mitigate the situation and make support available to persons with disabilities in the Endorois and Ilchamus communities.**



Figure 3: An indigenous woman reviews IDA's documents before participating in the discussions.

Part I: Background and Existing Research

Literature Review

Absence of prior research

The 2019 Kenyan census integrated approaches and questions from the Washington Group on Disability Statistics¹² into their data collection process. This data is not disaggregated by ethnicity. An attempt to find studies that focused specifically on the experiences of indigenous peoples with disability proved challenging, with almost no prior research that addressed the specific challenges of indigenous peoples with disabilities in the context of climate change, action, and related adversities.

With this background, we focused our literature review on:

- Legal frameworks and climate justice
- Unequal impacts of climate change
- Climate change's impact on the environment

Legal Frameworks and Climate Justice

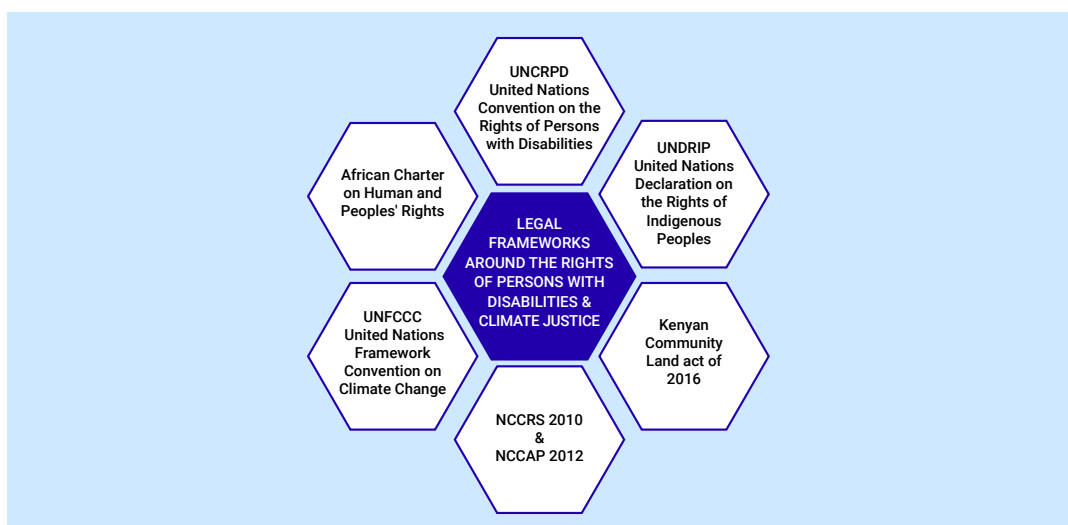


Figure 4: Legal frameworks and Climate Justice.

¹² www.washingtongroup-disability.com/

UNCRPD

While the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) did not adopt a stand-alone articles on indigenous peoples, its preamble, which defines the general terms, purposes and considerations of the Convention, recognizes conditions faced by persons with disabilities who are subject to multiple or aggravated forms of discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic, indigenous, or social origin, property, birth, age, or other status.

Article 11 is relevant as many indigenous peoples live in remote and conflict-prone areas. Other relevant articles of the UNCRPD relate to equal access to justice (Articles 12 and 13), equal dignity and physical integrity (Articles 15 to 17), the right to education and health (Articles 24 and 25, respectively), the right to adequate standard of living and social protection (Article 28) and the right to participate in society, including in public and cultural life (Articles 19, 29, and 30). In the UNCRPD's general comment 7¹³ on article 4 (3) and 33 (3), on the participation of persons with disabilities in the implementation and monitoring of the UNCRPD, the UN CRPD Committee states that there continues to exist a gap between the goals and the spirit of articles 4 (3) and 33 (3) and the degree to which they have been implemented. This is due, in part, to the lack of meaningful consultation with and involvement of persons with disabilities, through their representative organizations and in the development and realization of policies and programs.

Kenya was one of the first countries that ratified the UNCRPD in 2008. In 2010, Kenya adopted a new Constitution that marked a step forward for the rights of persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples by recognizing "marginalized minorities" (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

CEDAW

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women¹⁴ (CEDAW) recognizes the rights of indigenous women to land, territories, and natural resources in Articles 13 and 14.

CEDAW's general recommendation no. 39 from 2022 describes the rights of indigenous peoples and women to individual and collective ownership of their land, control over lands encompassed by their customary land tenure systems, and the right to develop policies and laws that adequately reflect this recognition in the local and national economies.

¹³ www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no7-article-43-and-333-participation

¹⁴ UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

It also notes that State's parties require the free, prior, and informed consent of indigenous women and girls before authorizing economic, development, extractive, and climate mitigation and adaptation projects on their lands and territories and affecting their natural resources. It is recommended to design free, prior, and informed consent protocols to guide these processes and adopt a comprehensive strategy to address discriminatory stereotypes, attitudes, and practices that undermine Indigenous women's rights to land, territories, and natural resources.

Articles 12 and 14 of the CEDAW recognize the rights of indigenous women to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. In the general recommendation, the CEDAW states that indigenous women and girls refer to "Mother Earth", a concept that reflects the vital link that they have with a healthy environment and their lands, territories, and natural resources. The general recommendation also states that State's parties must ensure that laws and policies related to the environment, climate change, and disaster risk reduction reflect the specific impacts of climate change and other forms of environmental degradation and harm, including the triple planetary crisis¹⁵.

Additionally, State's parties must ensure that indigenous women and girls have equal opportunities to meaningfully and effectively participate in decision-making related to the environment, disaster risk reduction, and climate change.

UNDRIP & African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), adopted in September 2007, emphasizes the rights of indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures, and traditions and to pursue their development in accordance with their needs and aspirations. It sets an essential standard for eliminating human rights abuses against indigenous peoples worldwide¹⁶. It defines the need, the right to consultation with indigenous peoples in the agreement process, and the right to participate in decision-making¹⁷. Article 21 of the UNDRIP recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples with disabilities to the improvement of socio-economic conditions, education, employment, housing, sanitation, health, and social security without discrimination. Article 22 guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination. Articles 21 and 22 together mandate that States pay special attention to the rights of indigenous elders, women, youth, and children with disabilities.

The Organization of African Unity (today, the African Union) put forth the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1979, which Kenya ratified in 1981.

¹⁵ What is the triple planetary crisis
https://unfccc.int/blog/what-is-the-triple-planetary-crisis?gclid=CjwKCAjw9pGjBhB-EiwAa5jI3Jc9IB4F8W_AuHx_K7zdevyWtFVbQTeShs8_QmfVtjlvh_Use7eQERoCT9kQAvD_BwE

¹⁶ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Resolution, adopted by the General Assembly, September 13, 2007

¹⁷ C169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---normes/documents/publication/wcms_205225.pdf

A recent resolution¹⁸ establishes a working group whose mandate is to study implications for the African Charter regarding the promotion of cultural development and identity.

UNFCCC

The Paris Agreement, part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)¹⁹, builds an international response to address climate change. It also states that no human rights should be violated by acknowledging the existence of, “the rights of indigenous people, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities, and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity”.

NCCRS & NCCAP

In 2010, Kenya developed a National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS)²⁰, which recognized climate change on the country’s development. This was followed by the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) in 2012, which provided a means for implementation of the NCCRS, highlighting several agricultural adaptation priorities²¹. Disability is not mentioned in these strategies.

The Community Land Act

The Community Land Act of 2016 allows indigenous peoples to self-organize and own their community land²². The eviction of the Endorois Peoples of Lake Bogoria to create the Lake Bogoria National Reserve, or the eviction of the Ogiek Peoples from Mau Forest to appropriate natural resources, caused the significant displacement of the population²³. As a result of these evictions, Kenya has faced a wave of “conservation refugees”. This term refers to peoples - the majority being indigenous - who have been evicted from their land under the guise of a natural resource conservation project or a development project such as the construction of a dam²⁴. While the African Court of Human Rights has recognized and ordered the Kenyan government to restore peoples’ access to their ancestral lands, no implementation of this decision has yet been observed²¹.

¹⁸ African Charter’s Minority Rights Under The African Charter On Human And Peoples’ Rights

¹⁹ United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, May 9, 1992, S. Treaty Doc No. 102-38, 1771 U.N.T.S. 107. https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/english_paris_agreement.pdf

²⁰ National Climate Change Response Strategy https://cdkn.org/sites/default/files/files/National-Climate-Change-Response-Strategy_April-2010.pdf

²¹ National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), 2012 Available at www.kccap.info/

²² Kameri-Mbote, P. & Nyukuri, Elvin. (2013). Climate Change, Law, and Indigenous Peoples in Kenya: Ogiek and Maasai narratives. *Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples: The Search for Legal Remedies*. 535-560.

²³ The Indigenous World 2022

²⁴ Cournil, Christel, Emergence and Feasibility of Protections About ‘Environmental Refugees’ at Issue (September 28, 2010). *Revue Tiers-Monde*, pp. 35-54, December 2010, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1994355>

Climate/Environmental Refugees

Following the aggravation of drought and flood, particularly in the Rift Valley, Kenya faced a growing number of “climate refugees”. This term, although real, is not legally relevant as climate change is not a legally recognized reason for forced migration. Although the issue of the definition and protection of climate refugees is becoming increasingly important in the scientific world and among the UN no legal instrument exists, leaving displaced persons in a legal gap that does not allow them to benefit from the protection of international institutions²².

To respond to the growing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), the Kenyan government established the Kenya Act 56 on the Prevention, Protection, and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and Affected Communities per the principles of the Kampala Convention. IDPs are defined as “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, large scale development projects, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border”²⁵.



This act has a specific article related to the protection of indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities which acknowledges that states are under a particular obligation to protect against the displacement of indigenous peoples, minorities, peasants, pastoralists, and other groups with a special dependency on and attachment to their lands (Principle 9). Additionally, the act ensures the safe location of internally displaced persons, in satisfactory conditions of dignity, hygiene, water, food, and shelter, away from areas of armed conflict and danger, and having regard for the special needs of women, children, the vulnerable, and persons with disabilities (Article 4).

Figure 5: An internally displaced indigenous man at a focus group discussion.

²⁵ Kenya: Act No. 56 of 2012, The Prevention, Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons and Affected Communities Act, 2012 [Kenya], 4 January 2013, available at: www.refworld.org/docid/511219962.html [accessed 1 May 2023]

Unequal Impacts of Climate Change

While the effects of climate change are more substantial in the Global South²⁶, most of the research on climate change is centered in the Global North²⁷. Climate change is usually analyzed through an environmental lens and not studied sociologically²⁸.

The few studies that do look at the impact of climate change on diverse groups of marginalized persons do not generally use an intersectional approach in their methodology. Through increased exposure to extreme weather events such as floods and droughts that will increase the risks of disease and ill health, inadequate drinking water and food scarcity, loss of livelihoods, migration, violence, and conflict, climate change can have serious negative effects on human well-being, development, and security. Nations in the Global South have less capacity to absorb the risks posed by climate change, with limited means to educate their populations, build adequate infrastructure, and implement relevant strategies. Thus, they are unfairly more exposed and less resilient to climate change²⁹. In addition to these inter-country inequalities, there are also intra-country inequalities based on multidimensional discriminations that prevent them from thoroughly enjoying their human right and make climate change a fundamental issue of human rights and social justice.

Additional considerations should be taken on the unequal impacts of climate change on indigenous women and girls with disabilities. Often, women and girls with disabilities face more barriers in accessing services in terms of their availability and their quality, compared to other persons and other persons with disabilities.

In addition, the general lack of accessibility (in its diverse dimensions) of services, as well as lack of access to alternate and accessible formats, sign language interpretation, plain language, support services, and assistive technology, come to restrict access to services based on disability.³⁰

Indigenous women face the consequences of climate change due to their dependence on and their relation to the environment and its resources. In the case of women and girls with disabilities, the impacts of climate change, such as the extreme weather events and its effects on agriculture, forest, and water availability, have a more adverse effect on women. As the primary caregivers of children with disabilities, they must spend additional time and energy in managing water, farm, food, and energy resources.

²⁶ Aleksandra Kosanic, Jan Petzold, Berta Martín-López, Mialy Razanajatovo, An Inclusive Future: Disabled Populations in the Context of Climate and Environmental Change, *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, Volume 55, 2022, 101159, ISSN 1877-3435, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2022.101159>.

²⁷ <https://gceurope.org/global-north-and-global-south-how-climate-change-uncover-global-inequalities/>

²⁸ The Impact of Climate Change on People with Disabilities Report of the e-discussion hosted by The Global Partnership for Disability & Development (GPDD) and The World Bank (Human Development Network - Social Protection/Disability & Development Team
http://www.dpiap.org/resources/pdf/Impact_Climate_Change_on_Disability_Report_10_02_15.pdf

²⁹ Levy BS, Patz JA. Climate Change, Human Rights, and Social Justice. *Ann Glob Health*. 2015 May-Jun;81(3):310-22. Doi: 10.1016/j.aogh.2015.08.008. PMID: 26615065.

³⁰ E/C.19/2013/6. Study on the Situation of Indigenous Persons with Disabilities, with a Particular Focus on Challenges Faced with Regard to the Full Enjoyment of Human Rights and Inclusion in Development, EMRIP, 2013, para 30
https://www.un.org/en/ga/69/meetings/indigenous/pdf/IASG%20Thematic%20Paper_Disabilities.pdf

The hardening of soil due to long spells of dry weather requires more labor to prepare the farmlands, as well as an increase of new and aggressive pests both in farms and in storage which results in increased time and energy from farm workers, but also causes loss of food and income³¹.

Another group of persons who find their fundamental rights violated by discrimination is indigenous children with disabilities. In many indigenous communities, children with disabilities never leave home in order to avoid being seen. Some children may never leave their bed, while some are even chained³² due to their condition. It is safe to assume that these children are not counted, accounted for, or considered during climate change-related evacuation or preparedness.



Figure 6: Children of participants at the focus group discussion communicate with one another.

³¹ Submission for the CEDAW Committee on the Rights of Indigenous Women and Girls, IDA and IPDGN (June 2021)
https://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org/sites/default/files/jpwdgn_ida_submission_for_dgd_cedaw_final.pdf

³² The Situation of Indigenous Children with Disabilities, EP/EXPO/B/COMMITTEE/FWC/2013-08/Lot8/15 EN December2017-PE 603.837

Impact of Climate Change on the Environment

In Kenya, 70% of natural disasters are linked to extreme climatic events³³. Twenty-eight droughts have been recorded in the past 100 years, with significant droughts approximately every ten years and moderate droughts every three or four years.

This is exacerbated by the rise in temperature that will reach 1.7°C by the 2050s and approximately 3.5°C by the end of the century. Arid and semi-arid areas are the most impacted by the drought, severely impacting the agricultural sector¹⁹.

In Kenya, rainfalls are disrupted, and the period of rain is uncertain. Major flooding events are expected to increase as the short rains occur between October and December, except in the arid zone. If rainfall events are expected to increase in frequency, duration, and intensity, the period between the two events will increase¹⁹. Intense rainfall and flooding may increase the likelihood of mudslides and landslides and cause additional soil erosion.

The drought-flood cycles significantly impact the population's livelihood and quality of life, especially indigenous communities that live in the most exposed areas. Food insecurity increases with agricultural loss, livestock death, and water shortage. Insecurity has also grown because of conflict between communities over land and livestock³⁴.



Figure 7: Drought-ridden land bears very little food crops and is hard to plow.

³³ The World Bank Annual Report 2021 From Crisis to Green Resilient and Inclusive Recovery

³⁴ Sabogu, Adams & Théophile, Bindeouè & Nassè, Théophile & Osumanu, Issaka. (2020). Land Conflicts and Food Security in Africa: An Evidence from Dorimon in Ghana. *International Journal of Management & Entrepreneurship Research*. 2. 59-73. 10.51594/ijmer.v2i2.126. <https://fepbl.com/index.php/ijmer/article/view/126/219>

Part II: OPD Consultation and Focal Groups Discussions

Context of the Study

As part of the International Disability Alliance's twin-track approach, we both include the identities of indigenous peoples within the disability movement, as we influence the indigenous movements to be more inclusive of indigenous peoples with disabilities. In our efforts over the last decade, we have organized specific trainings and opportunities for exposure for indigenous peoples with disabilities in countries such as Kenya, that have active movements of indigenous peoples with disabilities.

In our workshops around the world, as well as in international fora, the issue of the impact of climate change on indigenous peoples with disabilities was repeatedly brought up. In Kenya, in 2021, the specific impact of the flooding of the Lake in Baringo County was raised by the OPDs of indigenous peoples in the area at our workshops. This prompted the study to look at one specific case (Rift Valley, Baringo County) and the impact upon the diversity of the persons with disabilities living there.



Figure 8: IDA's OPD consultation with indigenous peoples in Rift Valley, Baringo County, August 2022

Rising water of the Lakes in Baringo County

Lake Baringo is internationally acclaimed for its biodiversity but is also important to the communities in its basin as a source of water for domestic and agricultural uses. It has traditionally also offered revenue in the forms of tourism and fishing. Three indigenous human communities live in the basin: the Ilchamus, Pokots, and Tugens. Lake Baringo is a freshwater lake in the center of Rift Valley. Lake Baringo had a water area of 118 km² in 1995, the lowest value from 1984 to 2020. The water area expanded by over 52% in the years 2014 and 2020 to reach 195 km².³⁵

Since 2010, Kenya has received more rainfall than it typically does each year. The yearly average in 2010 was 650mm, and rainfall has been higher than then almost every year since³⁶. In 2019, Kenya received the third most rainfall it had ever recorded. Over the years, the rising water of Lake Baringo has resulted in the loss of 139.98 square km of the river and impacted approximately 3,087 households within the communities living around the lake. This lake is one of the most affected in the Rift Valley, flooding an estimated area of 108.57 square km between 2010 and 2021, especially in the southern and western parts.

The expansion of Lake Baringo has resulted in the destruction of property, displacement of communities, and the loss of animal and human lives³⁷.

In 2020, the flooding of the lake was responsible for the displacement of approximately 30,000 persons³⁸. We can assume that most of them were indigenous peoples, including indigenous peoples with disabilities, as many communities live on the shores of the lake and on the island in the middle of the lake, where destruction has been recorded. The little land owned by these communities is now underwater. Preliminary reports say that markets, shops, and tourist businesses have been submerged. Six health facilities have also been flooded.

³⁵ Mathew Herrnegger, Gabriel Stecher, Christian Schwatke, Luke Olang, Hydroclimatic Analysis of Rising Water Levels in the Great Rift Valley Lakes of Kenya, *Journal of Hydrology: Regional Studies*, Volume 36, 2021, 100857, ISSN 2214-5818, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejrh.2021.100857>.

³⁶ <https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/kenya/climate-data-historical>

³⁷ UNDP Annual Report 2021: Rising water levels in Kenya's Rift Valley Lakes, Turkwel Gorge Dam and Lake Victoria.

³⁸ Global Report on Internal Displacement, 2021

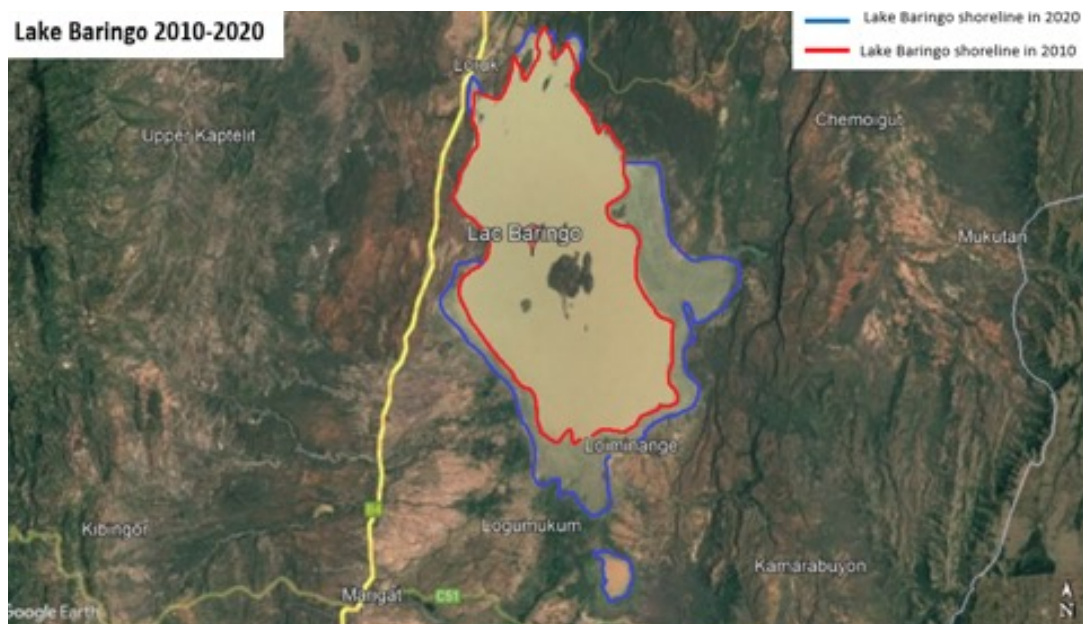


Figure 9: Image of the expansion of Lake Baringo between 2010 and 2020

Lake Bogoria is located in a deep depression with comparatively steeper slopes than Lake Baringo. Most geothermal springs associated with the lake region and a prominent touristic attraction have been submerged³⁹. With increasing water levels of Lake Bogoria, there is renewed concern that the alkaline lake will overflow and merge with the freshwater Lake Baringo located about 20 km to the North, thereby causing severe cross-contamination.

The area most impacted by the rising water in Lake Bogoria is shown in *Figure 9*. The lake is flooding towards the north and has started to submerge the village nearby settled in the plains. As with Lake Baringo, many facilities, settlements, homes, schools, and health centers have flooded. The water of the lake is polluted since the floods. Public washrooms have been washed away, so there is a considerable risk of waterborne diseases.

³⁹ Robin W. Renaut, R. Bernhart Owen, John K. Ego, Geothermal Activity and Hydrothermal Mineral Deposits at Southern Lake Bogoria, Kenya Rift Valley: Impact of Lake Level Changes, *Journal of African Earth Sciences*, Volume 129, 2017, Pages 623-646, ISSN 1464-343X, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jafrearsci.2017.01.012>.

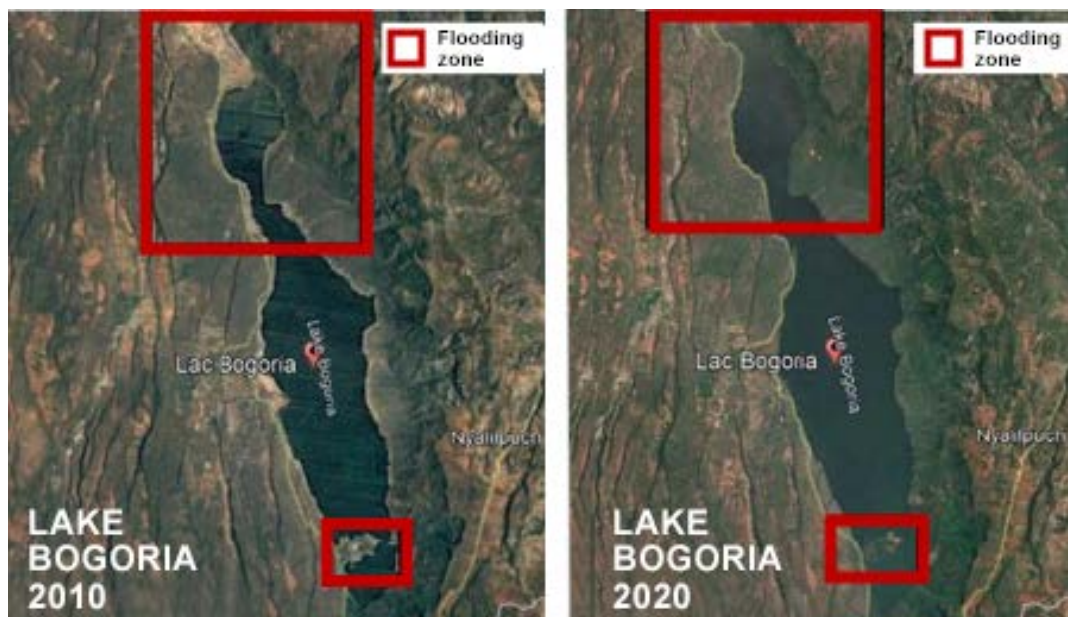


Figure 10: Image of the expansion of Lake Bogoria between 2010 and 2020.

Affected communities have endured disruptions to their livelihoods and have reported that they have “lost assets such as homes, grazing lands, and farming fields.” The rising water levels are also responsible for the destruction of social amenities such as primary and secondary schools, health facilities, markets, fish landing⁴⁰ and processing facilities, hotels, curio shops, resorts, lodges, electricity lines, water supply, and sanitation units²⁵.



Figure 11: Image of the expansion of the north shore of Lake Bogoria between 2010 and 2021, with submerged infrastructures.

⁴⁰ The part of the caught fish that is put on the shore, providing a record of the catch.

No major scientific studies⁴¹ have yet been published explaining the recent increase in water levels. A variety of theories currently circulate among locals and the scientific community for the rapid expansion of the lakes. One of them is that since the lakes are almost all positioned along the eastern branch of the Great Rift Valley, human activity digging deep into the earth's crust could be triggering this overflow.

Another is an increase in unseasonal rainfall. Some reports say that the pressure from geothermal exploration makes water rise. Regardless of the reasons, the expansion of these lakes remains an undeniable threat to the humans and animals who lived on their shores.



Figure 12: Image of Center Rift Valley, an at-risk location threatened by the rising of Lakes Baringo and Bogoria.

For the future, the possible confluence of Lakes Baringo and Bogoria is a central concern. In 1994, following significant flooding, a new lake (named Lake 94) appeared to the South of Lake Baringo. In 2020, it merged with Lake Baringo, dangerously close to the waters of Lake Bogoria.

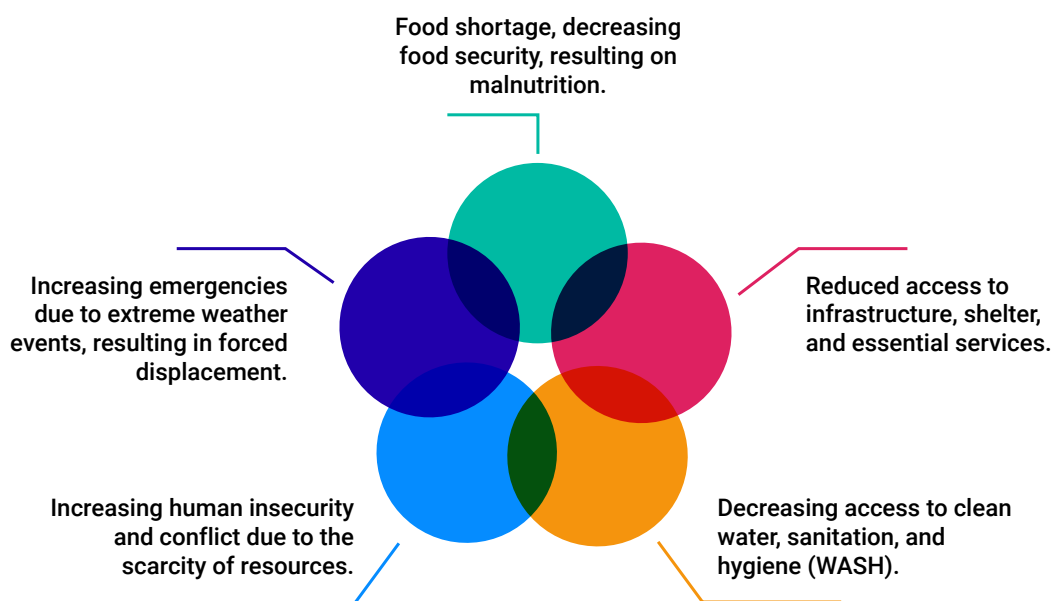
The meeting of the two lakes, one with fresh water and the other with salt water would significantly impact the ecosystems and indigenous communities' livelihoods. It would also cause new displacement of populations and destruction of infrastructures.

Figure 12 illustrates this at-risk zone located on the rift that might be submerged by the waters.³⁷

⁴¹ <https://allafrica.com/stories/202101110248.html>

Studying the impact of climate change on indigenous peoples with disabilities

The impacts of climate change intersect with all key current concepts and priority areas of development, such as food security, WASH services, resource distribution, public health, education, gender, ethnicity, and disability. We focus our research on five key critical areas, as follows:



Methodology



Figure 13: Separate focus group discussions with women and men with disabilities from the Endorois community.

Five Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with over 50 indigenous people with disabilities to understand their experiences and the impact of climate change and action in their lives.

On June 7, 2022, the fact-finding team made two home visits and three FGDs in the Endorois community near Lake Bogoria. On June 8, 2022, three home visits and two FGDs were made in the Ilchamus community Ngambo IDP (internally displaced people) camp, ensuring that indigenous peoples from underrepresented groups be also included in the research (for example, persons with deafblindness and psychosocial disabilities). Furthermore, key informant interviews were undertaken with key community leaders from both communities.

In order to respect cultural customs, some FGDs were held separately for women and men. Special consideration was given to ensure a safe space for interviewees and their freedom of expression was maintained. Additionally, a particular thematic focus was given to women and youth indigenous peoples with disabilities.



Figure 14: A focus group discussion with indigenous men with disabilities.

I Key findings

The study focused on collecting and recording data on the impact of climate change and climate action on indigenous peoples with disabilities, including displacement, food security, inclusive healthcare and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services, and the mainstreaming of disability-related services.

However, during the discussions, interviews, and visits, other important aspects came to light, such as the loss of community bonds, the intersectional issues of women and youth with disabilities, and the disruption of access to land and livelihood, among others. These findings are included below:

A. Impact of Climate Change on the Environment

Interviewees observed that rain cycles are increasingly unpredictable and disruptive, leading to alternating drought and flood. Increasing heat waves and lack of rainfall cause desertification of the land and have contributed to lower food production and water shortages. Some interviewees believed that these signs of climate change resulted from magic or divine punishment. The leaders of the Endorois community emphasized the role of human action as an aggravating factor in natural events. They pointed to deforestation, increased industrialization, and lowered soil fertility as causes.

Opinion leaders stated that the pressure from geothermal exploration makes water rise, examples of which are seen in Lake Nakuru, Lake Bogoria and Lake Baringo. This includes changes in rain patterns, higher temperatures, and desertification of the land due to increased agriculture and industrialization.”

B. Displacement of Indigenous Peoples

The biggest concerns of indigenous peoples in Baringo County are the rising waters of lakes Bogoria and Baringo, which have flooded their lands and homes and led to their displacement. Interviewees shared that they were forced to leave their ancestral land and relocate to government land. They explained that water could rise very quickly during the rains, sometimes flooding hundreds of meters of coastline in a few minutes.



Figure 15: Houses destroyed by water in Lake Baringo.

Displacement of Indigenous Peoples with Disabilities

Interviewees shared that many persons with disabilities in their communities tend to live closer to the lakes for accessibility reasons; the land is flatter, without rocks and stones, and provides better access to water. Hence, during floods, persons with disabilities are often the most vulnerable to death and/or destruction of property.

Alongside these structural issues, indigenous peoples with disabilities often face attitudinal barriers to safety and protection during crises. Some indigenous cultures such as the Masai, of which the Ilchamus peoples are a part, think of disability as a curse to be borne to atone for one's sins. Although attitudes are changing, persons with disabilities are still perceived as burdens and not prioritized during rescue and evacuation operations.

An Ilchamus woman testified that peoples with disabilities are the last priority for these operations when the water rises. She stated that some persons were trapped in their flooded houses for several days because of the lack of preparation and inclusiveness of public evacuation protocols, and this wait proved fatal for many.

Once evacuated, indigenous peoples are directed and settled on government land in the Park-Lake Bogoria National Reserve for Endorois peoples and internally displaced people (IDP) camps, including the Ngambo, the IDP camp for Ilchamus peoples.

Interviewees expressed that some Ilchamus community with disabilities have been evacuated from the shores of Lake Baringo by plane and taken to a Sintam IDP camp - an unsafe camp that is prone to violence; being treated differently by the government than those without disabilities.

Interviewees (indigenous peoples with disabilities) from the Ngambo IDP camp shared that they are still trying to find someone that can host them. Due to attitudinal barriers, it is much easier for people without disabilities to find hosts in the community in the surrounding areas. Sometimes, persons with disabilities are locked or hidden in the house by their family members, so that they can find hosts without the stigma of being the family of a person with a disability.

C. Impact on Health

Interviewees expressed that climate change has a direct impact on their health, notably because of new waterborne disease challenges and modifications in food composition. Some floods bring salty water that makes agricultural⁴² products extra salty, which leads to diseases.



Figure 16: The camps are distant from health centers and schools, disrupting the education and needs of children with disabilities.

⁴² All the activities developed by humans, whose purpose is to transform their natural environment in order to produce the plants and animals that are useful to them, in particular, those necessary for their food. www.thesaurus.gouv.qc.ca/tag/terme.do?id=10069

The contamination of freshwater has caused people to have brown teeth and weak bones due to high sulfur. Flooding and stagnant water have also led to an increase in the incidence of malaria, especially among children, which can result in further disabilities⁴³. Increased temperatures during heat waves cause fatigue, often exacerbating disability⁴⁴.

An elderly woman who was hard of hearing, being unable to hear in one ear, fell sick because of the heat leading to a complete loss of hearing.

The floods have destroyed over six health centers and schools that also benefited children with disabilities. Before their internal displacement from their ancestral lands, they lived closer to these health centers and had community assistance. Access to healthcare has become a considerable challenge for peoples with disabilities from the Endorois and Ilchamus communities, mainly because of the distance from the health centers that are still active. The health center of the Endorois community was submerged by Lake Bogoria.

To see a doctor, people must travel to the city of Marigat, which is over 20 km away. Medication is expensive and transport costs compound the financial burden of accessing medical aid. This need for travel presents aggravated obstacles for persons with disabilities.

D. Food Security and Access to Water

Participants in the focus group discussions shared that climate change has made predicting rain cycles harder, which negatively impacts agricultural efforts. During drought, farmers face water shortages to irrigate their fields and during unseasonal rainfall, crops are flooded. Due to this desertification, livestock are unable to graze, and many cattle die hot, hungry, and thirsty. Food production is thus affected by climate change.

⁴³ Brewster DR, Kwiatkowski D, White NJ. Neurological Sequela of Cerebral Malaria in Children. *Lancet*. 1990 ; 27:1039–1043.

⁴⁴ www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-extreme-weather-threatens-people-with-disabilities/



Figure 17: Photo of the dry river near Ngambo IDP camp.



The river, which used to be permanent, is now seasonal. This is the third time we have not harvested because of a dry river.

Leader of the Endorois community, Baringo County.



I had plowed land, 5 acres of maize, and the floods submerged everything. When the waters dropped, our plants and wildlife destroyed everything again. We raised the issue with the county government. We reported the matter to the Kenya Wildlife Service, and nothing was done. We spent money until we had nothing to spend, and now, we are running out of food and money.

A participant with a physical impairment from the Endorois community, Baringo County.

Food insecurity is higher for families that depend on farming for food and as a source of income. Climate change has caused the cost of food to be higher with a lower supply, and many households can no longer meet their needs.

Interviewees shared that persons with disabilities are among the first to suffer from malnutrition and dehydration because of their social status in the household.



Persons with disability cannot go to fetch water and look for food. They cannot go to the farm. When they are sick, they cannot go out of the house until they are woken up.

An elderly man with a physical disability from the Ilchamus community, Baringo County

E. Social protection and access to employment

The scarcity of resources and inflation have caused people to lose their livelihoods. With fewer people being able to afford goods, persons with disabilities who previously sold jewelry, clothes, or honey on the market find themselves unable to contribute to the household income. The general impoverishment of the community has rendered sellers of goods with no viable market in which to sell their products. Persons with disabilities who previously contributed financially to the household and family are consequently perceived as a burden by family members. These challenges are amplified for women with disabilities who are heads of households⁴⁵, because they are also responsible for the rest of the family and are expected to perform assigned gender roles of procuring food and water.



I am a tailor and I used to get income by making clothes. Now, my customers do not have money to buy clothes.

A participant with a physical impairment from the Endorois community, Baringo County.



Figure 18: Interviewees from the Ilchamus community.

⁴⁵ A female-headed household is a household where an adult female is the sole or main income producer and decision-maker.

F. Conflict

Interviewees reported that dwindling natural resources have led to increasingly violent conflicts among indigenous communities and tribes. What began as with cattle rustling⁴⁶, and theft of grain has escalated to looting, arson, and violent confrontations. Women and children who stay home while their husbands' work are often targets of violent attacks.

Sometimes, women are sexually assaulted, abducted, or held against their will. Interviewees shared that women with disabilities are the most vulnerable during these attacks because they cannot escape. Many people will come out of these incidents with a disability, whether physical due to injury or psychosocial injury due to psychological trauma.

G. Loss of Land, Culture, and Community Bonds

Indigenous knowledge is a model for resilience, especially in agroecological studies. The displacement of community members prevents them from benefiting from these centuries-old strategies and teachings. The elders and the youths of the Ilchamus community also regret the fragmentation of community ties.

As the community splits up, traditions are foregone, celebrations are disregarded, and land languages are forgotten.



Figure 19: An elder in traditional clothes greets the IDA research team.

⁴⁶ Cattle theft is dubbed rustling, while an individual who engages in it is a rustler.



Figure 20: Indigenous persons with disabilities from the Endrois community in their traditional attire.

Indigenous peoples with disabilities suffer the loss of community connection, and displacement impacts their support systems. They may be dependent on others for food and water, or they may rely on their families or community well-wishers to provide for them.

Displacement has led to the separation of families and communities. Some lost family members to flooding or drought and others were separated when their family relocated to different IDP camps. Unable to move, some persons with disabilities have remained alone, living near the lakes. Even those who have received help and reached the camps are often far from having the support they had before. The weakening of these ties intensifies the isolation in which persons with disabilities already find themselves.

Displacement due to climate change in Baringo County has negatively impacted the access to community support, social bonds, and community life for persons with disabilities. They find themselves invisible, and the system fails to give them the support to which they have the right.

❖ *I left home with no caregiver. As a woman with a physical disability, I am always left behind during evacuations when the water rises. I cannot get government bursaries, cannot get a job, and have children to look after. The voter card does not recognize my disability.*

A woman with a physical disability from the Ilchamus community, Baringo County.

H. Living Conditions in Government Land

Temporary Housing and WASH Amenities

Displaced Endorois and Ilchamus peoples are relocated to government land, and as it is not their land, they cannot build anything permanent. This is the main reason why their living conditions are so poor. Their houses are built using iron sheets, scrap wood, and bedding.



Figure 21: Temporary housing in an IDP camp.

During the rains, water infiltration and the heat waves make the iron hot and the houses almost uninhabitable. The Ngambo IDP camp is near the Red Cross office, so some Ilchamus peoples have benefited from their help and were provided with shelter. However, due to the inaccessibility of transportation facilities, interviewees shared that persons with disabilities did not benefit from these measures.



Figure 22: The Ngambo IDP camp.

While Ilchamus peoples reported that they have access to water tanks in the camp, Endorois peoples in camps are forced to walk very far to find fresh water or buy it. Interviewees also highlighted that they could not build proper washrooms, which has caused hygiene issues, leading to the development of temporary areas and amenities. Most of these temporary structures are not accessible, which leaves those with disabilities excluded from toilettes and clean water and exposed to infections, sexual abuse, violence, or further impairments.

The Arabal River has fresh water. The long-term strategy would be to pipe water from the Arabal River to the community which would be the plan. For now, we buy 20 liters of fresh water for less than a dollar- 60 Kenyan Shillings which is an added cost. Another longer-term plan would be to purchase big water tanks that can hold many liters of water for the community so that when it rains, we can store water.



Figure 23: Interviewees sit near the water tank at the IDP camp.

Livelihood

IDPs in government land are not allowed to use the land for farming or growing food, limiting their means of livelihood. People are dependent on finding ways to be employed (other than agriculture) if they want to have some money and access to food and water.

Still, accessibility issues make it much more difficult for persons with disabilities to find work. It is tougher to move around the area with crutches, wheelchairs, or with a white cane because of the rocky roads, environment or man-made barriers, and the long distances. These conditions are worsened during the rains when the ground becomes muddy.

Speaking about his experience, a man with a physical impairment shared that his old home was frequently flooded by water and trapped him indoors. By the time he moved to the IDP camp, he was weak, he slipped fell, and became paralyzed. He said he was still young and could find work to meet his basic needs, but he needs a wheelchair since he doesn't have one. The absence of a wheelchair prevents him from going to find work.



Figure 24: Food insecurity remains a primary concern for the displaced indigenous peoples with disabilities in Baringo County.

Safety

There exists a threat of violence both from wildlife and other tribes on government lands to which IDPs are relocated. While the Ngambo IDP camp is far from the conflict zone, they are still vulnerable to attacks, especially at night. Children with disabilities are the most susceptible to these attacks because they are left at home alone when parents go to work due to the lack of access to safe childcare. Endorois peoples in the national park can be attacked by wild animals.

I live in the 'Mukutanio ward' in Arabal. The Mukutanio ward has four (4) wards, but the Kiserian ward is where most people stay. Kiserian land is fertile, that is where we cultivate land together with the police. The other three (3) wards have no people, they are totally displaced. Due to insecurity from 2005-2016, we have been IDPs in Eldume.

We never went back home but went to live as IDPs near the forests, military camps, and police camps for our security. When persons from another community invaded ours, they stole our livestock until there was nothing to steal left in their land. We farmed with an escort from the police, but cows belonging to other communities ate the harvest. Children are taken to school by the police in shifts, the police also guard the school in shifts. When there are gunshots in the community, children lose their mothers and mothers lose their children because everyone is trying to find safety. Around ten (10) children and ten (10) women were recently butchered to death. There is no peace. There have been cases of rape because of the cattle rustling.

Women do not have weapons; we also cannot fight, so we are victims. Cases are delayed once they are reported at the police station.

A woman who was displaced by cattle rustling in Baringo County.

The Threat of Repeated Displacement

The main concern that interviewees shared was the threat of another displacement, which arises from the government's repeated reminders that they could be evicted at any time. The government land to which the Ilchamus peoples have been relocated is purported to be built on an airstrip. This uncertainty is harder for indigenous peoples with disabilities because they would have to experience all the challenges they faced during their previous displacement.

An elderly person from the Ilchamus community calls for government intervention. According to him, because of the rains, both Lake Baringo and Bogoria will continue increasing, and as the camp is in the middle, they will have nowhere to go. Most of the indigenous ancestral lands will be submerged, and only government land will be left. They need a permanent place to settle where their children can go to school.

Government Support for Persons with Disabilities & Associated Cost of Benefits

During displacement, indigenous peoples with disabilities say that persons without disabilities received some food, water, and shelter from the government and generally agreed that people with disabilities have not.

Even within families, the amount of food/water is low, and persons with disabilities are often the last priority to be supported and have very little access to food or water.

After displacement, the Kenyan government supported the displaced peoples by providing them with shelter facilities, or emergency cash transfers have been implemented to assist people during displacement. However, there was a lack of access to this information for persons with disabilities.

Cash transfers under the Ministry of Interior through the National Safety Net Program (NSNP) are divided into three categories:

- a. **Persons who are 70 years and above,**
- b. **Persons with severe disabilities, and finally,**
- c. **Orphans and vulnerable children.**

During the FGDs, most indigenous peoples with disabilities shared that they had never heard about these cash transfers, so very few benefitted from them.

To be a beneficiary of the program, one must get a disability card through the National Council for Persons with Disabilities. This card also provides other benefits such as access to a free wheelchair. To procure this card, one must register in some offices and consult only approved doctors in a large city like Nakuru, which is over 120 km away.

The cost of transportation and medical consultation is high, and the process takes almost two years on average. Hence, not all indigenous peoples with disabilities have access to apply for this. Additionally, to receive the cash transfer, one must travel at least 120 km to Marigat, but inaccessible transport often forces persons with disabilities to be dependent on family members to collect it for them. This could explain why indigenous peoples with disabilities without support have a reduced amount of access to cash transfers.

Focus: Women with Disabilities

Gender roles

Indigenous women are expected to play traditionally accepted gender-specific roles in society as well as in their households. Usually, they are responsible for household chores such as cleaning, doing the laundry, and cooking. They are also expected to perform the duties of childcare and farm work. In general, finding water and food for the household is considered the responsibility of the woman. Women with disabilities are not exempt from these gender roles irrespective of their impairments and barriers.



Figure 25: Water is scarce, and the land is dry near the IDP camps.

As observed previously, water is scarce, and women need to walk much further to access it. Women with disabilities testify that these long walks to procure water are dreadful since they must suffer them alongside other household tasks. With no land or livelihood, many women with disabilities are forced to beg, in the likelihood that they are pitied by well-wishers. Leaving the family or living in inaction is not an option for women with disabilities; both of which are socially acceptable options for men with disabilities.

An elderly Endorois blind woman was displaced with her husband. As she cannot walk alone, she depends on support from family members who have other duties like work. She cannot go to everyday work due to the barriers to her mobility in the environment. She is therefore forced to stay at home alone the whole day. She performs household duties for the husband (cooking, washing, and looking for firewood). She used to beg for water and sometimes went without food for many days. She tries to harvest water using iron sheets during the rainy season, but her house is infested with termites, so the water is not very sanitary.



Figure 26: Childcare is often considered the role of the women in the household.

Interviewees also stated that many women with disabilities are not married, due to a negative mindset that many men have. Oftentimes, men believe that a woman with disabilities cannot do domestic chores or care for the family, and do not want to marry them.

Another reason for women with disabilities to live a lifetime of aloneness is that Maasai culture says women with disability are curses, and men do not want to marry a curse. They are forced to remain single and have no one to find food for them, as opposed to women without disabilities, who can marry more easily.



Figure 27: Women share their experiences at the focus group discussion.

Access to Land

Indigenous women usually have two ways to own land: they can inherit the land either from their fathers or their husbands. However, indigenous women with disabilities are denied their inheritance rights that are recognized by the law. They can have access to land, but it will never be theirs. Many women with disabilities are not married due to attitudinal and cultural barriers. In some indigenous traditions, persons with disabilities are considered cursed, being, in the collective mind, a sign of dishonor.

To other groups, the community may believe that a mother will pass on her disability to her child. Additionally, men tend to think that women with disabilities cannot work or do household chores, so they will not be good wives or mothers. Hence, women with disabilities are often single, never married, or widowed, and this prevents them from becoming landowners.



Figure 28: Several legal instruments recognize the rights of women to land ownership, but this remains an elusive dream for the internally displaced women with disabilities in Baringo county.

When lands were flooded by the lakes, a lot of indigenous women lost their inherited land, and women with disabilities whose husbands had died lost their homes. With the displacement, they are unable to return to the situation they were in before.



Some women in the group have gardens they can access and farm, though the gardens belong to the man. If one is not married or widowed, in the best-case scenario, she stays at her father's house, where you're given a house.

Women from the Ilchamus community, Baringo county

In the Ilchamus community, women with disabilities organize themselves into groups so that when one of them is in trouble, they can visit and help. They also have merry-go-round groups where they contribute money to assist each other. Each woman in the group regularly contributes a small amount of money. Each time the money is collected, the whole amount is paid to one of the group's women. All the women in the group take turns receiving the proceeds of the collection until they have all received it the same number of times.

Childcare

Indigenous women often care for children and do not have adequate interpersonal and systemic support to care for their children with disabilities. Mothers with disabilities find it much harder because they do not have their own needs met before they can help and support their children. This situation can hugely impact women-headed households as the women have to do their work, and the men's work as well.

After displacement, women have needed to dedicate more time to getting food and water because of the distance of government land. So, they must choose between taking care of their children as before and taking the risk of not being able to feed the family or go and find food and water.

An Endorois woman living with her sister and her son, who is a youth with a psychosocial disability, now resides in Lake Bogoria National Reserve on government lands as her home was flooded a few years ago. Since she is a widow, she had to ask other people to host them on their land. They agreed, but they made boundaries with stones between the two houses to show them they were not welcome because of the son's disability. She no longer has land to cultivate, so they have no food leading to hunger and poverty. As the breadwinner, she is responsible for taking care of the livestock and providing food, which is an extra burden on her. She used to go to work with her son, but her fellow workers discriminated against them. They tend to think the son uprooted plants at the farm. Now she prefers to stay at home with him because she is afraid that he will drown while she is away, since the water of the Lake is close. She also wants to prevent others from attacking their home and her son. It has already happened that boys steal from them or beat her son. The problem is that if she doesn't work, there is no food for the family. The dispensary they were going to was flooded, so now they are forced to travel to Marigat town to access expensive health services at private clinics. They also cannot afford the cost of transportation.



Figure 29: An Endorois woman living with her sister and her son.

Focus: Youth with Disabilities

Lack of Access to Education and Employment

During the FGDs, youth and children with disabilities highlighted their difficulties in accessing appropriate education. For the youngest, there are not many accessible schools due to flooding, and since the displacement, they do not have access to the education they had before. In addition, the camps are remote, and the schools are far away. School fees are a considerable expense; with the loss of a source of income leading to poverty, families can no longer pay fees. Young persons with disabilities find it harder than their counterparts to obtain scholarships. Most did not yet get to form 4 (grade 10) in secondary school when access to schools was cut off.

A mother of an 8-year-old child with a disability said that her child has never been to school, because the local area does not have integrated schools that accommodate learners both with and without disabilities. Integrated schools are in Marigat town, which is costly for her to take the child. She also must pay close attention to the child especially when it rains, so that they are not swept by the floods. Her child is also prone to flu and malaria.



Indigenous youth with and without disabilities who have access to education find it difficult to pursue their studies; the universities are in big cities and sometimes in other counties, so they would have to move and cut themselves off from their families and communities to have a better future. They wish they could do this closer to home to continue to have support from their families and to live according to their traditions.

Figure 30: Indigenous youth participate in the focus group discussion

"I am educated. It was hard, but I am, but I cannot get work at any government or private office. Recently the National Council for Persons with Disability was hiring enumerators. Still, I could not get the job because the requirement for the position was a C+ grade at secondary school, and I only attained a C grade. No person with a disability got the enumerator job. We are left behind, we have no information of any services, and the government does not support us, not even the part of the government that is supposed to fight for our rights."

A youth woman with disabilities from the Ilchamus community, Baringo county.

Susceptibility to Violence

Indigenous youths with disabilities are more exposed to violence during conflict. The girls with disabilities who stayed at home with their mothers were the first to be killed when villages were attacked because they could not run away. Indigenous youth boys are assigned the traditional, gendered role of household security and guarding the land and livestock, so they are more exposed to the fight for resources. Boys who look after livestock are in the front-line during cattle rustling. If they cannot run or fight, they are often killed. Many interviewees shared that they were injured during the conflict, which led to further disabilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The fact-finding field mission enabled IDA, the IPWDGN, and the Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network to have an overview of the consequences of climate change on indigenous peoples with disabilities in Kenya, including related to displacement. Access to water, food security, and resettlement were the first major issues highlighted in the focus group discussions. This was followed by a lack of access to health services, education, community maintenance, lack of security, and support services.

Interviewees highlighted the gaps in Kenyan laws regarding the rights of indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Indigenous peoples live for years in a place they are not welcome in, without any possibility of making it their home after the loss of their properties, while persons with disabilities are perceived as a burden or a curse by their communities.

Indigenous peoples with disabilities are subjected to intersecting forms of discrimination based on the barriers related to their identities, being both indigenous and persons with disabilities at the same time.

Awareness-raising work should be undertaken to change the mentality around disabilities and thus work towards reducing the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in and outside indigenous communities. The issue of access to land for indigenous peoples takes precedence. If all their land disappears under the waters because of climate change and climate actions, it becomes urgent to create mechanisms to enable them to regain ownership.

This would allow them to build decent houses, have permanent sanitation structures, be able to till their fields and produce their food, build water access mechanisms, and rebuild their community spirit. The right of access to the land must be equal for men and women, including those with disabilities.

In addition, improved access to health and education services are urgent essential services that must be provided. Health centers and schools that have been destroyed and flooded should be rebuilt and made accessible for persons with disabilities. People injured by climatic events and displacement and persons with disabilities requiring a particular service should be able to access appropriate health services quickly.

Regarding schools, equal opportunity for indigenous children and children with disabilities should become central to enable them to integrate into society and find the work they want.

Globally, additional support for indigenous peoples with disabilities is required; support persons allow for better access to information, especially regarding their rights, access to schools and medical or technological devices.

The top priorities expressed by interviewees were to meet their basic needs, such as food, water, housing, and land. To facilitate access, they suggest implementing cash transfers for people with all types of disabilities to support the need for a caregiver. The cash transfer systems should be based in their communities or should reach them in their communities.

Specific examples of indigenous peoples who are blind or have a relative with a psychosocial disability were cited as those who could benefit from this option. These examples assured us that these measures would also benefit persons with other impairments. Interviewees felt that parents would be relieved by allocating a support person to help with administrative procedures and give them time to work.

Leaders of communities also ask for aid in procuring assistive devices like wheelchairs, hearing aids, and other devices that cater to different categories of disabilities. Social protection programs need to be designed such that they are inclusive of persons with disabilities who have access to basic amenities, but they should also include aspects like personal assistants and other support services. Since many interviewees do not receive adequate social protection, they work out methods of informal social protection like the merry-go-round groups organized by women with disabilities. These practices can be studied, scaled up, and made more equitable for all interviewees.











	Raising awareness to change the mentality around disability.		Building accessible schools at proximal conditions.
	Immediate improvement of access to food in IDP camps.		Permitting agriculture and land access.
	Immediate betterment of permanent housing for internally displaced persons.		Providing sufficient access to support persons.
	Immediate improvement of water access.		Providing access to assistive devices.
	Provision of health and medical services.		Effective inclusion in social protection programs.

Table 1: A list of recommendations for inclusive climate action from OPD consultation.

Finally, a critical gap highlighted in the focus group discussions is the lack of preparation and access to information for indigenous peoples about climate change-related displacement. Disability-inclusive climate action that incorporates indigenous knowledge to navigate climate change related displacement will be a step in the right direction. So, any consultations around climate change or disaster risk reduction must include the diversity of the disability movement including indigenous peoples with disabilities. The wisdom from community-based support and solidarity needs to be incorporated into disability-inclusive climate action that incorporates indigenous knowledge.

Perhaps most importantly, indigenous peoples with disability are only seen as victims of climate change. Instead, they need to be seen as stakeholders who bear knowledge and skills that can help address the impact, incorporate indigenous knowledge, and build strategies that are disability-inclusive for climate and humanitarian action.



Annex 1: Focus group discussion questions

Focus Group Discussion discussion

Name of the facilitator	Ethel
Name of the note taker	Ethel
Date of discussion	7 th and 8 th June 2022
Village/Community	Endorois and Ilchamus
Focus group participants (gender, age, disability...)	A mixture of participants of various ages, a mix of genders and persons with and without disabilities

Conducting the FGD

- 1. WELCOME THE PARTICIPANTS:** Thanks for agreeing to be part of the focus group. We appreciate your willingness to participate...
.....
- 2. INTRODUCE YOURSELF:** Hello. My name is ... and I work with the International Disability Alliance. International Disability Alliance is an alliance of networks of organization of people with disabilities and their families. IDA promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities across global efforts to advance human rights and sustainable development. We support organizations of persons with disabilities to hold their governments to account and advocate for change locally, nationally, and internationally...
.....

3. **EXPLAIN THE PURPOSE OF FOCUS GROUPS:** IDA is currently doing research on climate change, and the purpose of the focus group discussion (FGD) is to assess the situation in the communities. The point is to understand the impact of climate change on the communities and especially on indigenous people with disabilities, and how they have adapted to it. The same FGD will be conducted with different groups of persons so I can highlight the specific barrier faced by vulnerable groups such as women or youth with disabilities...
-

Main objectives:

- ➔ Understand the impact of climate change on indigenous communities and particularly on indigenous with disability.
 - ➔ Highlight the specific barriers faced by indigenous people with disabilities and especially, youth and women with disabilities to access basics services/ meet their basics needs.
 - ➔ Understand the impact of displacement on indigenous people with disabilities.
 - ➔ Understand how indigenous people with disability cope with these challenges.
-
4. **ESTABLISH GROUND RULES:** We would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I haven't heard from you in a while. Please feel free to communicate with us. If there is anything we can do to make this space safer, let us know. We want you to feel welcome and comfortable as you share your experience with climate change, and we are thankful for your time. We are not judging your answers, every person's experiences and opinions are important. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the points made. We want to hear a wide range of opinions. Participation in the survey is by choice and you are free to refuse to answer any or all of the questions. We trust each other. We have come together to discuss this important subject and we hope that we can all respect each other's need for confidentiality and maintain it. We will be recording the group discussions. To help us ensure competent documentation the recorders will be taking notes. This will help us write the final report. We will delete all of them once the report is complete. However, if you do not want your input to be recorded, please let us know.
-

CLIMATE CHANGE – 3 questions (What changes in your life? Main consequences? How did you adapt?)

- Do you know what climate change is? What are the signs of climate changes in your community? Why/How do you think climate change happens?
→ **Defining climate change together so we are in the same page**
- What are the consequences of climate change on your daily life?
- What has changed since the floods/drought in terms of living conditions? How do you cope with having access to basic services (food, water, health services, education, hygiene products...)? (Top 3)
- What coping mechanisms (defining) and strategies have you been applying?

DISPLACEMENT

- In your opinion, why are you getting displaced?
- What challenges do you face during displacement? What was the displacement experience for people with and without disabilities? Were there any differences?
- Did anyone help you in the process? Family members, community members, NGO, government?
- Is the new location friendlier? What are the new challenges?
- Compared to before displacement, what are the differences in accessing services, like health, education, marketplace...?
- What could have helped you during displacement/new location?

SPECIAL CHALLENGES

- As a youth/women/displaced person with disability, what specific barrier do you face to meet your basic needs (food, water, housing, livelihood, sanitary and sexual product, health...)?
- As a woman, what specific challenges do you face that men don't? What is the difference between your condition and them?
- Do you think your age brings new challenges to face?
- As a mother, is climate change bringing issues for parenting? What are the difficulties faced by your children? (Disease [malaria], malnutrition, decolorization...).

OPPORTUNITY OF SUPPORT

- Given the opportunity, what are the three (3) main priorities that you would suggest for improvement to meet your needs?
- Do you know if there is any government mechanism in place to help you (money, food, water shelters...)? If there is, as a person with a disability do you face issues to have access to it?

