



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**  
*Denmark in Kenya*



# **Enhancing Climate Resilience through Citizen Engagement in Southeastern Kenya Economic Bloc**

**FINAL PROJECT REPORT**

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## **Acronyms**

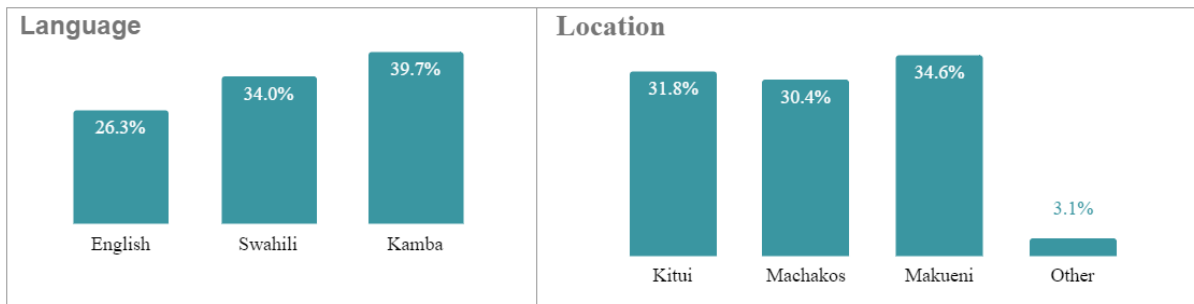
ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
AVA	Africa's Voices Amplified
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CoK	Constitution of Kenya
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
FM	Frequency Modulation (radio)
Ksh	Kenyan Shilling
PLWDs	People Living with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEKEB	South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc
SMS	Short Message Service

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

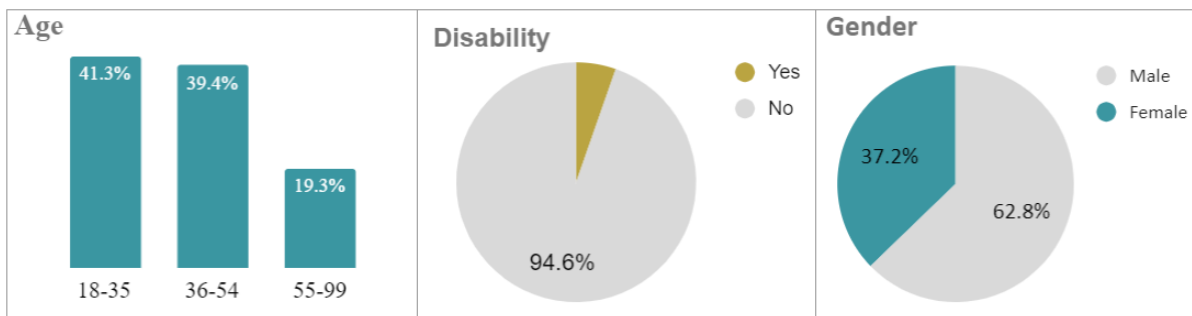
Between April 2024 and August 2024, Africa's Voices Amplified (AVA), with support from the Danish International Development Agency (Danida) through Uraia Trust, implemented the project titled "**Enhancing Climate Resilience through Citizen Engagement in the Southeastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB)**". The project sought to strengthen climate resilience in the SEKEB region by fostering citizen knowledge, involvement, and ownership of afforestation and smart agriculture methods, and ensuring their voices shape county policies and programs addressing climate change in Kitui, Machakos and Makueni Counties. The specific objectives included; (i) Build Climate Awareness and Knowledge (ii) Promote Citizen Participation and Ownership (iii) Influence County Policies and Programs.

Through a multimedia campaign, AVA broadcasted four weekly interactive live radio shows on the popular local station, Musyi FM, in the *Kikamba* language, hosted community dialogues through one participatory co-creation workshop and Sowing Sustainability Symposiums, one in each county. The co-creation workshop brought together a total of 29 participants with representatives from some local organisations implementing interventions and initiatives in the climate action space and county officials from the three counties, who helped shape the focus areas for the interactive radio programming. The symposiums organised at the county level allowed for more local organisations, organised groups and county officials to participate. The symposiums featured educating and engaging panel discussions with experts drawn from these counties. A combined total of 90 participants and 15 panellists attended the symposiums across the three counties. These provided citizens, experts and county governments an open and trusted engagement platform for citizen-led solutions in creating climate resilient communities.

A total of **3,349** individuals sent in a total of **8,201** relevant messages over the four weeks of radio broadcast, which were included in the analysis. Figure 1 below indicates the demographic breakdown of participants in the dialogue who sent messages considered relevant to be included in the analysis<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Please note that providing demographic information is voluntary and therefore some participants do not submit all, or in some instances any, demographic information. Therefore the total of participants who report their gender does not match with the total sample size of those who responded to the weekly question.



The breakdown illustrates contributions from a diverse range of participants, including women (37.2%), youth (41.3%), and persons with disabilities (5.4%). This demonstrates the effectiveness of the interactive radio methodology in reaching marginalised groups who may have limited access to formal decision-making processes in SEKEB counties and across Kenya.

The project contributed the following outcomes;

- **Increased Community Engagement on Matters Climate Change:** Over 63.8% of the participants reported being more involved in discussions and initiatives focused on addressing climate change, driven by heightened awareness of environmental issues such as tree planting and water conservation. However, a notable gap remains, with 25.2% unsure about their involvement and 11% having never participated, highlighting the need for continued outreach efforts to enhance understanding of environmental issues and the importance of participation
- **Specific Actions Implemented:** More than half (56.9%) of participants reported that they are taking part in tree planting activities while 14.7% reported having adopted sustainable water harvesting techniques, and others engaged in climate-smart agricultural practices, including terracing, conservation farming and planting drought-tolerant crops. These practices demonstrate an enhanced understanding of climate adaptation methods.
- **Afforestation Initiatives:** A significant portion of the community emphasised the importance of continuous tree planting (35.4%), citing personal motivation and group involvement as critical factors for long-term engagement. However, challenges such as animal grazing, water shortages, and termite infestations present obstacles to success, indicating a need for more resources and training.
- **Climate-Smart Farming:** Participants mentioned adoption of various climate-smart farming methods, including irrigation (18.8%), livestock keeping (17.3%), and conservation agriculture (17.1%), this reflects increased ownership of sustainable agricultural practices. Despite these successes, limited water access and inadequate farming tools remain barriers that require systemic solutions.
- **Water Availability:** The citizen-generated data reveals significant water accessibility challenges, with 38.3% of participants relying on inadequate sources like shallow boreholes. Citizens highlighted the urgent need for expanding water infrastructure, including additional boreholes (30.8%) and rainwater harvesting systems (27.8%). This underscores the necessity for county-level interventions to improve water availability to address these critical challenges.
- **Sand Harvesting Regulation:** The project raised awareness about the environmental impact of illegal sand harvesting, with 61.5% of respondents supporting community-led surveillance efforts to curb this practice. However, citizens reported challenges such as corruption and economic reliance on sand harvesting as barriers complicating enforcement, necessitating stronger regulatory frameworks and

public education.

The project successfully raised awareness of climate change issues, increased community engagement in climate action, and promoted the adoption of sustainable practices like afforestation, climate-smart agriculture and vigilance in curbing illegal sand harvesting to the residents of SEKEB. This citizen engagement directly contributes to SDG 13 on Climate Action by empowering local communities to adopt climate-resilient practices and mitigate climate risks. By involving diverse groups such, youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and collaborating with local governments, community organisations, and experts, the project enhanced its impact and promoted more inclusive climate resilience efforts. Finally, the project seeks to influence local policies and programs by submitting evidence-based recommendations on climate change from the citizens' voices. By sharing findings with local governments and stakeholders, the project has the potential to influence local policies and programs, driving more effective and sustainable climate adaptation efforts.

However, several challenges were highlighted by the participants such as gaps in knowledge dissemination whereby they lack knowledge on the right kind of climate resilient trees and crop species to plant, resource constraints such as money to buy seedlings or build water harvesting and storage structures, and weak enforcement of environmental regulations. All these require community and county governments concerted and consultative efforts.

## **Lessons learnt and Recommendations**

### Lessons Learned

#### **1. Continued Awareness Creation is Essential**

One of the key takeaways from the project is the need for ongoing awareness campaigns, particularly around climate-smart practices such as tree planting, selecting drought-resistant species, and organic methods for pest and disease control. The engagement of citizens in these areas improved their knowledge and action toward climate resilience, but there is still a need for sustained efforts to deepen and expand this understanding across all communities.

#### **2. Inclusive Collaboration Strengthens Project Impact**

The involvement of various local actors is crucial for the success of climate change interventions. Bringing together different stakeholders including local government, community-based organisations (CBOs), and private sector actors, enriched the project design and ensured broader ownership of the findings and recommendations. Such collaboration not only strengthens the outcomes but also fosters collective responsibility for climate resilience.

#### **3. Inclusivity is Key to Sustainability**

The inclusion of diverse groups, youth (41.3%), women (37.2%), and people living with disabilities (PLWDs) (5.4%), engaged with us. It is essential to consult with these groups for the project's sustainability. Youth, in particular, are the future custodians of climate solutions, while women and PLWDs often bring unique perspectives that enrich discussions and ensure that solutions are truly community-owned.

#### **4. Improved Communication Between Stakeholders and Citizens is Critical**

Despite numerous ongoing strategies, structures, policies and activities related to climate adaptation and mitigation, it emerged from the county symposiums that many citizens were unaware of the

efforts led by the county government and other stakeholders. This gap in communication limits citizen engagement and participation in these initiatives or even in the shaping of the intervention which are meant to assist them. Effective communication channels between citizens, county governments, and organisations leading climate action need significant improvement. This was evident through the increased number of requests from listeners for contact details of radio guests who were subject matter experts, indicating a clear demand for more accessible and direct sources of information.

5. **Sustained Citizen Engagement is Essential for Lasting Solutions**

Sustained citizen involvement is vital in ensuring the long-term success of climate adaptation efforts. Engaging citizens in identifying and addressing climate-related impacts leads to more robust, locally-driven solutions. Continuous dialogue between citizens, state, and non-state actors promotes ownership of the solutions and enhances their sustainability.

## Recommendations

1. **Expand and Sustain Awareness Campaigns**

Continued education and awareness programs focusing on climate-smart agricultural practices, drought-resistant tree and crop species, and organic pest control methods should be prioritised. These programs should target a wide audience and utilise various media platforms to ensure comprehensive community outreach.

2. **Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration**

Climate change interventions should prioritise the involvement of all relevant local actors, from government to community groups and the private sector, in both the design and implementation stages. This collaboration will enhance the richness of the interventions and ensure ownership of both the project process and its outcomes.

3. **Ensure Inclusive Participation in All Stages of the Project**

Special emphasis should be placed on involving youth, women, and marginalised groups such as PLWDs. Their inclusion is critical for inclusive and equitable solutions. Platforms such as the interactive radio series ensure the voices of these groups are amplified and included.

4. **Improve Communication Between Climate Actors and Communities**

It is essential to establish clear and consistent communication pathways between the county government local and community not-for-profit organisations, other stakeholders such as, organised youth, women and PWLDs groups, business owners, teaching, training and religious institutions and the community. This will ensure that citizens are fully informed about ongoing climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and can participate effectively. Information could be provided to the local administrative or chief's office or institutions like churches and schools for wider dissemination.

5. **Institutionalise Citizen Participation in Climate Adaptation Efforts**

Citizen engagement must be a continuous process, not just a one-off activity. State and non-state actors should institutionalise citizens consultations in climate solutions, ensuring that citizens are not only part of the consultation process but also actively involved in the implementation and monitoring of climate initiatives.

## 2.0. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The Kenyan Constitution of 2010 (CoK) enshrines public participation as a core principle of governance. Articles 10 (2), 174 (c), and 232 (d) emphasise the citizens' right to be actively involved in decision-making processes, ensuring that authorities are accountable for decisions impacting the public<sup>2</sup>. This constitutional mandate extends to county governments, requiring them to establish mechanisms for citizen participation, as outlined in Article 191 (1). These



frameworks are crucial for promoting transparency, accountability, and the protection of human rights, as highlighted in Articles 28 and 43, which underscore the importance of upholding human dignity for all citizens<sup>3</sup>.

Kenya's legal framework, particularly the Climate Change Act of 2016, mandates the integration of climate adaptation and mitigation strategies at all levels of government<sup>4</sup>. This legislation recognizes the critical role of citizen participation in shaping and implementing climate policies, ensuring that community input informs efforts to build resilience against climate shocks. The target counties of Kitui, Machakos, and Makeni, are predominantly Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) and face severe water stress, which hinders social and economic development.

In 2023, AVA launched the first climate-change-focused citizen engagement project titled **"We Need Collective Action: Public Participation to Support Climate Change Adaptation in the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB)."** This interactive radio series aimed to assess community understanding

of climate change, identify barriers to adopting climate-friendly practices, and gather community-driven solutions for adaptation. Season I, implemented in August 2023, revealed that 72% of participants attributed the climate change impacts in SEKEB to deforestation, underscoring the urgent need for afforestation and reforestation efforts. Citizens strongly advocated for environmental restoration, with 44.7% prioritising proactive measures such as tree planting and curbing deforestation. These findings informed the development of Season II, which aimed to strengthen climate resilience in SEKEB by enhancing citizen knowledge, engagement, and ownership of afforestation and smart agricultural practices, while ensuring that their voices influence county climate policies and programs.

The specific objectives of Season II, titled **"Enhancing Climate Resilience through Citizen Engagement in the Southeastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB),"** were threefold: (i) Build climate awareness and knowledge, (ii) Promote citizen participation and ownership, and (iii) Influence county policies and programs. The project targeted key stakeholders, including residents of the SEKEB region (special consideration to

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<sup>2</sup> [The power and Necessity of Effective Public Participation, international Commission of Jurists \(ICJ\) Kenya Section](#)

<sup>3</sup> [The Constitution of Kenya, 2010](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Kenya Climate Act 2016](#)



women, youth and PLWDs), county government officials (from water, agriculture, environment departments and intergovernmental relations) from Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni, the SEKEB bloc, community-based and civil society organisations, community groups, academia, religious institutions, and local climate change experts.

During project implementation, Kenya experienced significant youth-led country-wide protests demanding the government to withdraw the controversial Finance Bill 2024. These protests, driven by public discontent, disrupted daily life, including in the project's target areas. However, AVA's interactive radio and SMS methodology proved resilient, allowing citizens to continue participating in the project safely and at no cost, despite the unrest. This demonstrates the robustness of the methodology and its ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges. Importantly, no significant risks or challenges were encountered during the citizen engagement or ground activities of the project.

The project successfully created open and trusted dialogue spaces that saw 3,349 participants engaging with us by sending a total of 8,201 messages that were included in our social science quantitative and qualitative analysis to glean key findings and insights which informed the development of a detailed analysis report.



### 3.0 PROJECT PERFORMANCE

#### 1.1. Project outputs

Result Level	Log frame Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress against target	Assessment: i) Exceeded target (10% above target); Met target; Did not meet target
<b>Output 1:</b> Interactive Radio Engagement	<b>Output Indicator 1.1</b> # of interactive radio programs	4	4	The first radio show was on enhancing afforestation efforts in SEKEB, the second show was on adoption of climate-smart agriculture and modern animal keeping techniques, the third was on water harvesting and preservation strategies, and finally the fourth radio shows on curbing illegal sand harvesting in the SEKEB region.	Met target
	<b>Output Indicator 1.2</b> No. of citizen who engaged during the interactive series climate change, afforestation, and smart agriculture		1500	Although our initial target was to engage at least 1,500 people across the SEKEB region, we successfully engaged 3,349 participants, surpassing our goal.	Exceeded target by 11.6%
Result Level	Log frame Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress against target	Assessment: i) Exceeded target (10% above target); Met target; Did not meet target
<b>Output 2:</b> Community Dialogues and SMS Surveys	<b>Output Indicator 2.1</b> # design workshops	0	1	The co-design workshop happened on the 11th of June, attended by the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB), which convenes Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni counties and the local climate action organisations who helped in shaping the research focus areas, but also offered	Met target

				a platform to create awareness of the radio shows to their platforms and with their networks.	
	<b>Output Indicator 2.2</b> # of people engaging in series by sending an SMS message	0	1500	A total of 3,349 people sent an SMS during the 4 radio shows aired.	Exceeded target by 11.6%
	<b>Output Indicator 2.3</b> # sowing resilience symposium	0	3	AVA organised three Sowing Sustainability Symposiums, one in each county—Machakos, Makueni, and Kitui. These symposiums targeted grassroots organisations and local CSOs, along with women-led, youth-led, and PLWD-led groups actively involved in climate action initiatives.	Met target

### Key points

We successfully met all our targets, highlighting the exceptional success of the interactive radio dialogue platform. Our engagement numbers surpassed expectations by 11%, with more people sending in messages than anticipated. The co-design meeting was key to this success, as bringing the right stakeholders ensured that critical community issues were prioritised, fostering buy-in and long-term sustainability. The county-level symposiums also brought together representatives from various government sectors, local CSOs, women-led, youth-led, and PLWD-led groups, along with community members with practical climate resilience knowledge, further enhancing our impact. We also disseminated and validated findings from the series and incorporated relevant recommendations from each county, Machakos, Makueni, and Kitui, to ensure that the changes remain truly citizen-driven.

Result Level	Log frame Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress against target	Assessment: i) Exceeded target (10% above target); Met target; Did not meet target
Output 3: Empowered	Output Indicator 3.1	0	78	We hosted three symposiums, one in each county of the SEKEB region, engaging a total of	Met target

Citizens	# of PLWDS, youths and women participants in the symposium			6 people with disabilities, 37 women, and 44 youth. These events ensured their voices were included in county-level discussions on climate change issues.	
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## 1.2. Project outcome(s)

Result Level	Log frame Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress against target	Assessment: i) Exceeded target (10% above target); Met target; Did not meet target
Outcome 1: Enhanced Citizen Knowledge and Engagement	<b>Outcome Indicator 1</b> Improved awareness and understanding of climate change and adaptation strategies among SEKEB citizens.	Current awareness and understanding of climate change and adaptation strategies, including knowledge of climate change impacts and mitigation measures.	Increase in correct responses to climate change knowledge questions, the number of participants identifying adaptation strategies, and the growth in community engagement in climate discussions and training sessions.	There is a significant change in citizens' awareness and adaptation of climate change from 2023 to 2024. Compared to 2023, 37.4% of participants mentioned being unaware of climate initiatives, while in 2024 participants demonstrated substantial progress, with 63.2% of respondents actively being engaged in climate discussions. This suggests that efforts to improve communication and awareness, including radio shows and public forums, are beginning to take effect, enabling citizens to play a more active role	Exceeded target
	<b>Outcome Indicator 2</b> Increased participation and	0	At least 50% of participants should confirm their participation in public climate related discussions	Over 63.2% of the community reported being more involved in discussions and initiatives focused on addressing climate change, driven by heightened awareness	Exceeded target by 13.2%

	active involvement of citizens in public climate-related discussions and initiatives.			of environmental issues such as tree planting and water conservation.	
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Integrated Citizen Perspectives in Policies	<b>Outcome Indicator 1</b> Evidence-based recommendations influencing SEKEB county governments to adopt citizen-driven policies.	0	3, one per county within SEKEB	Although we have not yet fully achieved the integration of citizen perspectives into SEKEB county policies, we have actively engaged county officials through public forums, and presenting citizen-led findings. Additionally, we will be submitting a report to the governor's office for adoption, both in printed form and via email. This is a crucial step we would like to take to ensure the findings are considered. We will also continue collaborating with like-minded stakeholders to further influence county governments and encourage the incorporation of these findings into their policy formulation processes.	Not met
	<b>Outcome Indicator 2</b> Strengthened collaboration between citizens and county administrations for sustainable climate change interventions.			We established forums that united citizens and county administrations, enhancing collaboration for sustainable climate change interventions. This effort is ongoing as we continue to facilitate public conversations on climate change throughout the region.	Met target
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Climate-Resilient SEKEB Communities	<b>Outcome Indicator 1</b> Implementation of sustainable afforestation and smart agriculture			In 2023, 72% of participants identified deforestation as a major climate change driver in the SEKEB region, leading to strong support for afforestation. By 2024, citizen engagement in sustainable practices had notably increased, with	Met target

	practices by citizens.			35.4% advocating for continued afforestation and enhanced tree maintenance. Additionally, adoption of climate-smart agriculture rose significantly, with many farmers now using irrigation, conservation methods, and drought-resistant crops, reflecting a growing understanding of sustainable practices.	
	<b>Outcome Indicator 2</b> Follow-up meetings, established partnerships, and engagement with county governments and relevant Civil Society Organizations working on climate change, afforestation, and smart agriculture in the SEKEB region.			We have conducted numerous formal and informal follow-up meetings, established partnerships, and engaged with county governments, relevant Civil Society Organizations, and local entities involved in climate action. This ongoing effort includes collaboration with county officials from the three SEKEB counties, focusing on afforestation and climate-smart agriculture initiatives, and will continue to evolve and expand.	Met target
	<b>Outcome Indicator 3</b> Increased resilience of SEKEB communities to the adverse effects of climate change through collective action and ownership.			In 2023, 72% of the community recognized deforestation as a key climate change issue, but limited coordination and 37.4% of citizens' lack of awareness about resilience initiatives hindered collective action. By 2024, community resilience improved significantly, with 63.8% more actively engaged in climate initiatives. This shift has led to greater adoption of sustainable practices, such as tree planting and climate-smart agriculture, enhancing local resilience.	Met target

## Key points

The project successfully achieved its key outcomes by enhancing climate resilience through increased community engagement, knowledge dissemination, and adoption of sustainable practices. With more than half of the participants engaging in tree planting and sustainable water harvesting, while others adopted climate-smart agriculture practices. These outputs contributed directly to the project's goals of building climate awareness, promoting citizen ownership, and influencing county-level policies.

However, some obstacles were encountered. Despite the progress made, 25.2% of respondents remained uncertain about their involvement in climate resilience initiatives, highlighting the need for continued outreach and education. There were also challenges in the form of limited resources, such as water shortages which hampered the full realisation of the project's goal.

The unexpected outcome was the heightened community-driven vigilance against illegal sand harvesting. Over 61.5% of respondents supported community-led efforts to regulate sand harvesting, demonstrating a shift towards environmental stewardship. However, economic dependence on the sand is a major barrier of sand harvesting and corruption, this shows there is a need for stronger regulatory frameworks and public education.



### 1.3 Progress towards achieving project impacts

Result Level	Log frame Indicators	Baseline	Target	Progress against target
<b>Impact:</b> Overall the expected impact of the project is a strengthening of public participation in political decision making in the SEKEB region, particularly regarding climate change policy and programming. By listening and responding to citizen concerns via interactive radio, county administrations will build trust with their constituents, increasing accountability and thereby encouraging greater public participation in future.	% of participants who have increased knowledge on afforestation and smart agricultural methods			<p>Over 63.2% of the community has increased their engagement in climate change discussions and initiatives, reflecting a heightened awareness of environmental issues such as tree planting and water conservation. Despite this progress, 25.2% of the community remains uncertain about their involvement, and 11% have not participated, indicating a need for ongoing outreach to further educate and involve these individuals.</p> <p>Specific actions implemented show promising results: 56.9% of participants are actively involved in tree planting, 14.7% have adopted sustainable water harvesting techniques, and others are practising climate-smart agriculture, including terracing, conservation farming, and planting drought-tolerant crops. These activities highlight a growing understanding and application of climate adaptation methods.</p>

#### Key points

The project observed significant progress towards its expected impact of enhancing public participation in climate-related decision-making within the SEKEB region. With a significant number of participants from the community demonstrated increased engagement in climate discussions and initiatives, a notable improvement from previous levels of awareness. The adoption of sustainable practices like tree planting, water conservation, and climate-smart agriculture also grew, reflecting a deeper understanding of climate resilience methods among citizens. This shift indicates that the project has been successful in raising awareness and motivating action at the community level.

However, there are still persisting challenges, particularly around water availability and resource constraints, which limits the full implementation of climate adaptation strategies. Additionally, having more citizens still expressing their uncertainty about their involvement, emphasising the need for continued outreach to involve everyone in the community.

The groundwork laid by the project shows strong potential for continued impact even after its closeout. Interactive platforms, such as the radio shows and symposiums fostered a sense of ownership among community members, which is pivotal for sustained climate action. The partnerships and collaborations established with local CSOs, county governments, and community groups also provide a solid foundation for future initiatives.

Moreover, the integration of citizen-driven solutions into ongoing discussions and policies at the county level further enhances the likelihood of long-term success. The project's emphasis on citizen participation ensures that there are more community-led interventions in the future.



## 4.0 DELIVERY APPROACHES

### 4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

No major adjustments were made during the setup and implementation of the interactive citizen engagement project. AVA's project team initiated the process with an internal kick-off meeting where the project's objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, and desired outcomes were thoroughly discussed. Following this, the team attended a partner synergy meeting organised by Uraia for partners to identify synergy points with one another. Simultaneously, the data and technology team began setting up the data pipeline, an internal system that allows us to receive SMS responses to weekly radio questions, as well as questions from participants addressed by

expert guests in the studio. A literature review was also conducted to identify knowledge gaps and intervention needs related to climate change adaptation and mitigation in the target region.



A co-creation workshop was organised, during which the thematic areas for the radio series were collaboratively defined. This step allowed for the completion of the communication framework which includes the development of radio questions. The radio questions were then tested with local residents to ensure clarity,

accessibility, and avoidance of jargon or multiple interpretations. Once validated, the interactive radio series commenced.

Following the radio series, a preliminary analysis was conducted to develop key findings and insights, which were later presented during the planned symposiums. These symposiums were successfully conducted as scheduled. Afterward, a deep-dive analysis of the collected data was performed, leading to the development of a comprehensive final report.

### 4.2 Strategic partnerships

From the outset of the project, AVA prioritised the establishment of strategic partnerships to enhance the project's design, ensure its relevance to local communities, and support the sustainability of its outcomes. These partnerships were essential in aligning the project with the priorities of local actors, fostering collaboration, and facilitating the long-term impact of the project.

## **Collaboration with the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB)**

One of the key collaborations was with the South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB), which brings together Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni counties. This partnership significantly streamlined communication and coordination with the counties, eliminating the need for separate bilateral agreements. A crucial briefing meeting with the acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SEKEB provided an overview of the project's objectives, structure, and the support required for success. This early engagement ensured that county officials were involved from the beginning, particularly in the co-creation workshop and the Sowing Sustainability Symposiums, facilitating their active participation throughout the project's duration.

## **Partnerships with Local Climate Action Organisations**

AVA also fostered strong relationships with local climate action organisations, including Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and various community-organised groups. These partnerships played a pivotal role during the co-design workshop, where they provided critical input that helped shape the thematic focus areas for the project. Additionally, these organisations were instrumental in raising awareness about the radio shows by sharing visually engaging e-posters through their networks, boosting both listenership and community engagement. Their deep-rooted connections within the local communities also enabled them to identify and recommend suitable guests for the radio talk shows, ensuring that the discussions were relevant and informed by local expertise.



During the Sowing Sustainability Symposiums, these partnerships were further leveraged to invite other local organisations to participate in the events. This expanded network allowed for broader participation, ensuring that a wide range of stakeholders were involved in discussions on climate resilience. Project findings and insights were shared during these symposiums, and action-oriented recommendations were collaboratively developed. These recommendations provided practical solutions that both local actors and county governments could implement, further cementing the project's relevance and applicability to the region's climate challenges.

## **Leveraging Partnerships During Sowing Sustainability Symposiums**

During the Sowing Sustainability Symposiums, these partnerships were further leveraged to invite other local organisations to participate in the events. This expanded network allowed for broader participation, ensuring that a wide range of stakeholders were involved in discussions on climate resilience. Project findings and insights were shared during these symposiums, and action-oriented recommendations were collaboratively developed. These recommendations provided practical solutions that both local actors and county governments could implement, further cementing the project's relevance and applicability to the region's climate challenges.

## **Growing AVA's Network of Climate Change Experts**

Through these strategic partnerships, AVA's database of local climate change experts also grew, adding valuable contacts for future climate-related citizen engagement initiatives. These experts represent a diverse range of perspectives and technical knowledge, enhancing AVA's

ability to deliver well-informed and locally relevant climate solutions in future projects. This growing network will be an important asset in ensuring the sustainability and expansion of AVA's work in climate resilience.



### **Partnership with Musyi FM for Broad Community Reach**

Lastly, AVA partnered with Musyi FM, a popular vernacular radio station with broad coverage across the target counties. This partnership was crucial for the success of the radio programs, as Musyi FM’s popular morning segment, hosted by a presenter well-versed in regional climate issues, provided a highly engaging platform for discussions. The presenter’s ability to lead dynamic discussions with guests helped drive significant listener participation, making the radio shows both informative and widely accessible to the public. This partnership with Musyi FM ensured that the project’s messages reached a large audience, fostering greater community involvement in climate resilience efforts.

### **Potential for Long-Term Partnerships with Danida and Uraia Trust**

As the project evolves, Danida and Uraia Trust, which provided the initial funding, remain critical partners for future initiatives. Their involvement in the early stages of the project has positioned them to continue supporting longer-term citizen engagement and climate action programs. AVA can leverage these partnerships to secure resources for future projects, ensuring that these important climate conversations remain ongoing and continue to drive sustainable community-led solutions across the region.

### **4.3 Sustainability**

Sustainability was central to the project’s design, implementation, and dissemination phases. From the outset, local actors—including community-based organisations (CBOs), civil society organisations (CSOs), and county government officials from Kitui, Machakos, and Makueni were actively involved in co-designing the project. This approach fostered a strong sense of ownership among stakeholders, ensuring that the project was closely aligned with the priorities and realities of the region.

### **Stakeholder Involvement and Actionability**

By engaging these stakeholders early in the process, the project ensured that its outcomes were not only relevant to the local context but also actionable. Stakeholder involvement helped tailor the project to the needs of the communities, promoting practical, local-level solutions for climate resilience. This collaborative model increased the likelihood that the project’s results would be adopted and sustained by local actors.



### **Knowledge Products for Future Use**

As part of the sustainability strategy, a range of knowledge products were developed and shared with strategic partners. These include a detailed analysis report, a summary report, and an infographic capturing key insights and recommendations. These resources provide evidence-based guidance and citizen-driven solutions that local actors can use to shape future climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives. Additionally, these materials can influence the development of local policies in response to climate challenges.

## **Long-Term Stakeholder Engagement**

The sustainability of the project’s impact will largely depend on the ongoing willingness and capacity of key stakeholders—such as local governments, CBOs, and CSOs—to implement the recommended actions. Continued engagement with these groups will be necessary to maintain momentum and ensure the integration of the project’s findings into broader regional efforts.

## **Strengthening Implementation Capacity**

While the project has laid a solid foundation for future climate resilience efforts, the ultimate success will depend on strengthening the capacity of local actors to implement the solutions provided. Ensuring that these stakeholders have access to the necessary resources, training, and support will be crucial in translating the project’s recommendations into lasting actions.

## **5.0 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Lessons learned**

#### **Importance of Local Partnerships**

Partnering with county governments and local organisations and institutions proved instrumental in identifying and securing knowledgeable experts for the radio discussions. Both existing and new networks provided access to qualified guests, while also raising awareness about upcoming radio shows, significantly boosting engagement and listenership during live broadcasts. This highlights the critical role of local connections in enhancing both the quality of the content and the overall reach of the project.



#### **Stakeholder Engagement for Sustainability**

Engaging key stakeholders in the design of the interactive radio programs was vital to ensuring the project’s sustainability. Their involvement helped align the thematic focus with local priorities, fostering a strong sense of ownership among participants. This collaborative approach increased the likelihood that project outcomes would be accepted and integrated into future initiatives, ensuring the project’s impact would extend beyond its conclusion.

#### **Role of Citizen Engagement and Indigenous Knowledge**

The project underscored the essential role of ongoing citizen engagement in developing lasting solutions to the climate impacts affecting their lives. The radio shows were designed to raise awareness on specific thematic areas, though some topics could not be fully addressed by a single program. By using interactive radio and other outreach methods, local citizens were able to share their indigenous knowledge and offer locally relevant solutions. This incorporation of indigenous knowledge not only enhanced the relevance of the discussions but also strengthened the sustainability of the proposed climate adaptation strategies.

## **Challenges of Sustained Engagement**

Despite the success of the initial phase, the project revealed challenges in maintaining continued engagement from participants who had actively taken part in Season I. When Season II was introduced via SMS, some participants did not re-engage. This points to the need for sustained efforts to keep citizens involved over time and suggests the importance of ongoing outreach through radio programs.

## **Foundations for Future Citizen Engagement**

The project's findings, insights, and recommendations offer a strong foundation for future citizen engagement in climate change adaptation. With further refinement and expansion, there is significant potential to build on the success of this project and explore deeper community-driven solutions to climate impacts. Increasing the number of interactive shows in future initiatives could allow for a more comprehensive coverage of the issues.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

### **The Need for Sustained Engagement**

While the short-term interactive radio series successfully raised awareness, achieving lasting behavioural change in relation to climate change requires sustained and consistent engagement. Raising awareness is only the first step; long-term change occurs when individuals and communities are consistently engaged in discussions, actions, and reflections around climate adaptation and mitigation. Future programs must therefore focus on developing platforms that not only inform but actively engage citizens over an extended period.

### **Engaging, Accessible, and Interactive Platforms**

To ensure a lasting impact, future programs should prioritise creating engaging, accessible, and interactive platforms. These platforms should facilitate open dialogue between citizens, state actors, and non-state actors such as community organisations and experts. Interactive formats like radio shows, webinars, or community dialogues that encourage real-time participation and feedback from citizens can help bridge the gap between policymakers and the public. Ensuring that these platforms are inclusive and easy to access—whether through radio, mobile phones, or in-person forums—will be crucial in maintaining citizen interest and involvement.

### **Entertainment and Education for Sustained Interest**

Designing talk shows and other communication platforms that are both educational and entertaining can help maintain long-term audience engagement. Monotony in programming is a risk, especially when discussing complex topics like climate change. By integrating storytelling, humour, or relatable examples within the shows, AVA can ensure that the content remains engaging without losing the educational value. Creative formats such as guest appearances from community leaders, Q&A sessions with experts, or practical tips on sustainable practices could further enhance the appeal.

### **Allocating Resources for Long-Term Citizen Engagement**

For meaningful and sustained engagement, resources are essential. Uraia could consider allocating more resources toward supporting longer-term citizen engagement initiatives. With additional funding and time, programs could allow for deeper, more in-depth discussions on climate change issues. This would also create opportunities for citizens to engage directly with local leaders and experts, contributing to the development of more citizen-led solutions. More resources would enable AVA to expand its outreach, run more frequent

programming, and include follow-up activities that reinforce key messages over time.

### **Leveraging Local Champions**

Working with local champions—individuals who are trusted and respected within the community—would be advantageous in reaching a broader audience.

These champions should be able to clearly articulate climate change issues in the local language and context, making the discussions more relatable and understandable to the general public. Local champions, whether they are community leaders, farmers, or environmental advocates, can personalise the message, making it easier for the community to connect with and act upon the information being shared.

### **Showcasing Success Stories to Inspire Action**

Identifying and sharing success stories from individuals or communities who have implemented their own climate resilience interventions can have a powerful impact on motivating others to take action. AVA will, in future programming, highlight these success stories—showcasing examples of individuals who have adopted sustainable practices like water harvesting, afforestation, or climate-smart farming. Infusing these stories into the radio programs or other media can serve as practical examples that encourage other residents to follow suit. These real-life examples can act as a catalyst, showing the tangible benefits of taking action and fostering a sense of community-driven solutions.

## 6.0. ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: Most Significant Change Stories

When participants were asked to share the actions they have taken since the project's inception to adapt to climate change, one participant described how the intervention inspired her to take tangible actions, such as fixing gutters on every roof, to collect rainwater. Additionally, she has planted a variety of tree species and helped establish a group dedicated to repairing roads and educating others in their community.

*"I have fixed gutters on every roof including the toilet roof to collect rain water. I have planted many tree species and we have established a group to repair our roads and to educate people"* Woman, 48, Makueni

Another participant mentioned that he has implemented water-harvesting techniques for his farm and he's also taken on a leadership role by coordinating a cooperative of fruit farmers. This group focuses on growing and selling drought-tolerant fruits like passion, mangoes, and pawpaws. By organising the cooperative, this participant not only increased their own resilience but also supported other farmers in adapting to the effects of climate change.

*"I'm harvesting running water to my farm. I'm coordinating farmers in forming fruit farmers cooperative selling passion, mangoes & other drought tolerant fruits like pawpaw's."* Man 48 machakos

Another participant highlighted the transformative power of collective action within a group. Through the group's efforts, they have planted numerous trees and dug terraces for water conservation, contributing to local afforestation and the preservation of vital water resources. Beyond their environmental initiatives, the group has embraced financial empowerment by saving money together with the goal of purchasing 10,000-litre water tanks for each member. This proactive approach to water harvesting will not only enhance the resilience of their homesteads but also strengthen the group's long-term sustainability, showing the impact of combining environmental and economic solutions for lasting change.

*"We have planted lots of trees and dug terracing for water conservation. We are saving money as a group (Wendo wa Mbyani Self Help Group) in order to purchase a ten thousand little tanks for every member of the group for water harvesting in our homesteads."* Woman, 63, Makueni

These and more stories illustrate how the intervention has empowered individuals and communities to take concrete steps toward climate resilience by adopting sustainable practices, leading cooperative efforts, and solving local challenges

## **ANNEX 2: Photos and other project deliverables**

1. Detailed Analysis Report (This is attached on email)
2. [Co-creation Workshop Photos](#)
3. [Radio Promos and Live Talk Shows Scripts](#)
4. [Radio Promos and Live Talk Shows Audio Files](#)
5. [Symposiums Photos](#)
6. [Sowing Sustainability Symposiums Report](#)
7. [Lists of Participants \(Co-creation and Symposiums\)](#)
8. [High Level Summary Report](#)
9. [Infographic](#)