

Muongano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub

A Story of Implementing Infrastructure in Complexity

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Photos by: KYCTV / Muongano wa Wanavijiji

Introducing Kiamaiko

Kiamaiko ward is located in Mathare Subcounty, Nairobi County. It borders Mathare North and Mathare River to the North, Outering Road and Kariobangi North ward to the East, Juja Road and Airbase ward to the South, and Huruma ward to the West. The ward consists of 20 villages and is most famous for its slaughterhouse industry, operational since 1996 (Wyban, 2022). Additionally, it hosts one of the city's first community-driven slum upgrading projects, Kambi Moto Project, implemented by Muongano wa Wanavijiji / Pamoja Trust in 2003 (Ettyang', 2011).

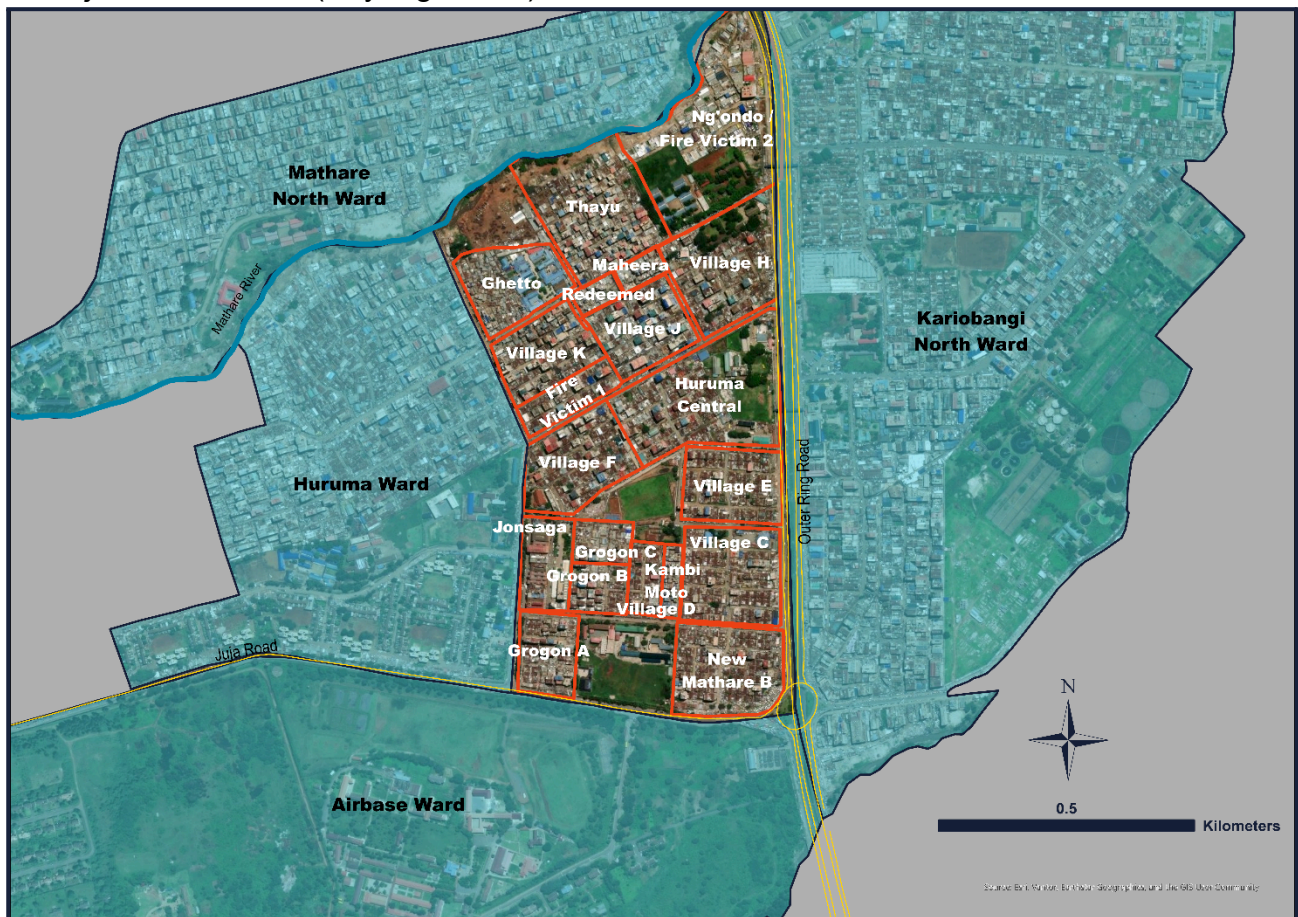


Figure 1: Kiamaiko and neighbouring wards

The story of the Muongano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub is rooted in a community-driven process of engagement, reflection, and collective decision-making. It is a journey that began not with a structure, but with conversations among the people of Kiamaiko about their neighbourhood.

(a)



(b)



Figure 2: (a) Kiamaiiko Slaughterhouse District. Photo by Kanyi Wyban, Debunk Media (Wyban, 2022)

(b) Kambi Moto Housing Project. Photo by Christine Wambui.

About the Kiamaiiko Ward Adaptation Plan

The Kiamaiiko Ward Adaptation plan started as an informal conversation in early 2023 between John Kimani, popularly known as Jonte, (Muungano wa Wanavijiji) and the area Member of the County Assembly (MCA), Joseph Ndung'u Karanja, who is part of the Nairobi City County Government (NCCG) Environment Committee. The conversation focused on solid and liquid waste accumulation in Kiamaiiko, as well as regreening of the ward. The two men noted that the ward was not looking good and asked, “*what can we do?*” With no immediate answer.

A few weeks later, this conversation grew during a climate stakeholder workshop in Mombasa, attended by partners such as World Wide Fund for Nature – Kenya (WWF-K), SDI Kenya and Nairobi City MCAs. The goal of this engagement was to deliberate on the content of the Climate Change Act and leave with solid outputs or processes, based on the strengths of different partners. At this forum, SDI Kenya shared the locations where they were actively working, which included settlements such as Kahawa Soweto, Kibera, the Mathare Settlements and Kiamaiiko. It was at this point that the MCA of Kiamaiiko, Hon. Joseph Ndung'u, raised his hand and said, “*kama ni kuanza hizo vitu, muanze kwangu (if we are starting this work, start at my place).*”

Joseph Kimani, the Director of SDI-K, took this conversation to Muungano wa Wanavijiji. The goal became to create a ward-level climate plan that could be shared with the county and integrated into its County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), then funded by the NCCG's budget. Muungano wa Wanavijiji would lead in crafting this process, which the county could then use across different wards.



Figure 3: Meeting with Hon. Joseph Ndung'u, MCA of Kiamaiiko Ward, intended to begin shaping the Kiamaiiko adaptation plan. March 2023.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS: A REFLECTION BY JOSEPH KIMANI, SDI-KENYA

The strategic focus on climate issues started in 2017, during the Mukuru SPA process, because of gumboots. To quote Joseph Kimani, “while working on the Mukuru SPA, we always wore gumboots during the rainy season. Jack Makau, the SDI Director at the time, actually purchased gumboots for the C40 delegation when we hosted them in Mukuru. Even schoolchildren would go to school with gumboots during the rainy season. Gumboots were the adaptation strategy to constant flooding.

We explored this more deeply by capturing historical memory of risks and threats related to flooding. Then slowly began to realize that the work of slum upgrading is deeply intertwined with climate resilience. If you fix drainages, the flood risk dramatically decreases. If you address solid waste accumulation, the risk of the rivers being overwhelmed decreases. Providing adequate housing reduces exposure to heat stress and cold from rain.”

The impacts of climate change are most deeply felt by the urban poor because the systems underpinning their neighbourhoods are highly vulnerable to even the smallest climate stressor.

To quote a recent reflection by Akiba Mashinani Trust and ACRC “...informal settlements ... are simply on the frontline, bearing the brunt of a crisis that has been collectively produced.” (Nyang’wara et al., 2026)

The Process of Creating a Ward Level Climate Adaptation Plan

From the beginning, it was therefore clear that there would be a ward-level climate adaptation plan. Structuring the creation of this plan was done with the clear goal of having the Kiamaike community spearhead discussions and priorities. But how to do this?

1. **Stakeholder Mapping:** first was mapping of environment and climate change stakeholders across the ward, done in July 2023. The goal was to identify community members that SDI-K/Muongano/ the NCCG could engage with, as well as those with local influence. Those identified were **Community Health Promoters (CHPs)** (because environment issues are health issues), **village elders** (hold influence), **opinion leaders, youth leaders and waste collectors**. Around 45-50 people were mobilized to begin this conversation. Muungano wa Wanavijiji members explained the plan but there was some resistance to the process. The primary reason for this is that the stakeholders felt they had shared ward-level issues over and over again with authorities: *what difference would it make to rehash the same issues?*



Figure 4: Inception meeting for Kiamaike ward adaptation plan, July 2023

2. **Exchange to Mukuru:** the difference is that systematic conversation would help to create a plan that could then be implemented. To showcase this, an exchange to Mukuru was conducted to observe how their Special Planning Area (SPA) helped to bring development. Village elders, youth and opinion leaders noted how the plan shifted things, allowing for installation of sanitation systems in Mukuru. They understood that action could be possible if a plan was tabled. Therefore, after the exchange, the work of creating the adaptation plan began.



Figure 5: Exchange in Mukuru to learn about the Special Planning Area. 24th November 2023

3. **Vulnerability Assessment:** Next, the main environmental stakeholders – primarily CHPs and waste workers, conducted a climate vulnerability assessment across Kiamaiko. The goal was to map the settlement and note climate challenges. They divided the ward into 2 areas – **Ndururuno and Kiamaiko Locations** – to do this work. The process identified 6 climate areas of concern as shown below:

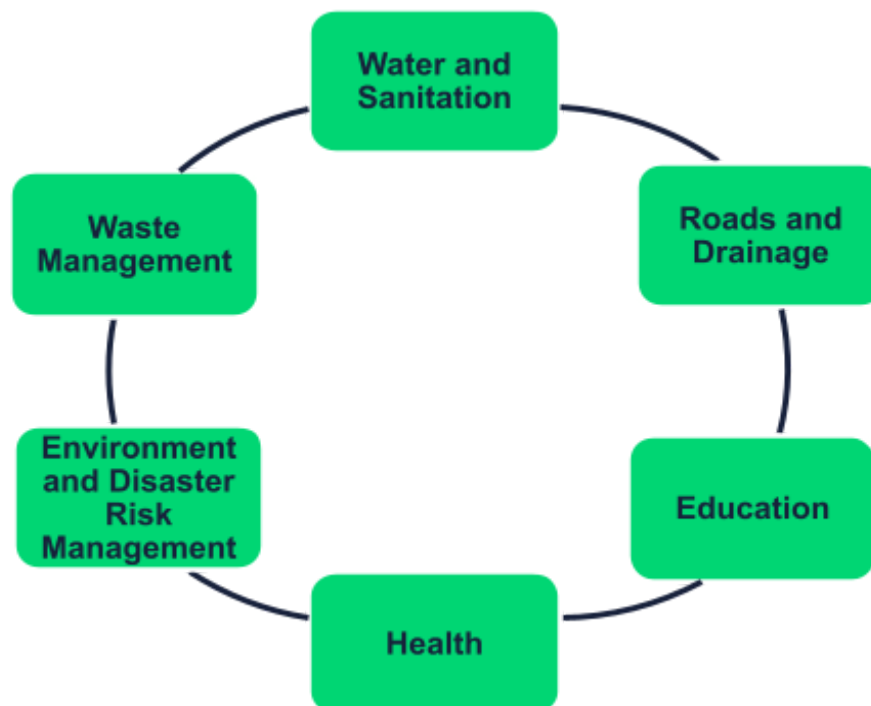


Figure 6: thematic areas identified within the Kiamaiko Ward Adaptation Plan Process

4. **Cluster Level Meetings:** the assessment created the grounds for cluster level meetings. 6 clusters across the ward, each with 3 or more villages, were identified, based on proximity of the villages to each other. After this, 1 coordinator was identified from each cluster, whose task was to convene community members to discuss climate issues centered on the 6 thematic areas.

Cluster members decided when to hold their meetings – which ended up mostly being between 4 and 6 pm, after work. Additionally, the meeting venues – which varied from local spaces to halls, were volunteered by community members.

Each cluster independently identified and prioritized the problems they faced. The cluster level conversations helped to give nuance and to *prioritize* the thematic areas. Examples are given in Table 1.

Additionally, 6 coordinators were identified per cluster, corresponding to each of the 6 thematic areas. For example, the Chairman of the Kiamaiko Environment Management Team (KEMT), Ali Abubakar, was a representative of waste management in cluster 4.

Note: How do you involve as many people as possible?

Reflection by Christine Wambui, Muungano wa Wanavijiji

“This was a continuous process. Some residents joined for a few weekly meetings, then eventually dropped out, then other residents would join. We didn’t mind when people dropped out, as long as others dropped in. The goal was to have input from as many people as possible.

The cluster conversations were structured to engage people who are not ordinarily involved in community conversations. The way this was done was through rotating locations to different areas within a cluster. Some coordinators walked door-to-door and engaged businesses directly about climate issues in the ward.”



Figure 7: Cluster level conversations, Roundabout C (Village C) and Kanasa (Kambi Moto)

Table 1: Nuanced examples of climate-related issues, at the village level

Grogon A	Grogon A has a cottage industry for manufacturing coffins. The manufacturing process creates air pollution in 2 ways: first is that the waste wood shavings burned and the smoke impacts people. Second is that the process of spray painting the coffins creates fumes which affect people.
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New Mathare B	The main complaint from residents of this area was the insecurity created by people drinking openly in the village. The place is a “drinking base.” Residents also spoke about how <i>matatus</i> (the Sheng’ word for the city’s Public Service Vehicles (PSVs)) park along the streets at night, taking up space, all the way to people’s houses.
Village C and Village H	Talked about unfinished road projects. The previous MCA, Hon. James Mwangi aka Kagis had started a road project that was halfway finished. This resulted in lots of chipped stones all along the road.
Village K	This area hosts the slaughterhouse industry. Residents spoke in length about crime and education. There are many children out of school who worked at the slaughterhouses. They have been traditionally engaged to ferry meat to the main terminuses at Outer Ring Road and Rounda. Since then, advocacy against child labour has reduced the number of children working there. Additionally, the proliferation of <i>nduthis</i> (motorbikes), reshaped how meat is transported. Nduthis now do this work at the same price. Since children cannot access licenses for motorbikes, their role in this industry has significantly reduced.
Thayu	This village is located next to the river and gets flooded frequently because effluent from drainages upstream flow down to them. Additionally, the drainages receive a lot of solid waste and animal waste and bodies from the slaughterhouse district.¹
Redeemed and Mahira	the issue was planning and drainage. Planning because the settlement is highly congested and therefore inaccessible during disasters. Drainages were filled with liquid waste from houses, then the sewer infrastructure cannot support the population and is not connected to the trunk infrastructure.
Central	explained that solid waste accumulation caused a big health hazard. When it would rain, the waste would enter people’s houses to the extent that they became uninhabitable. Lots of landlords were losing tenants. The area was filled with flies. Adjacent to the holding ground.

Altogether, these processes helped to create and fine-tune the [Kiamaiiko Ward Adaptation plan](#). The work was supported by Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA).

¹ Noting that this effluent from the slaughterhouses has been the cause of a back-and-forth with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the NCCG and the Kiamaiiko Slaughter District from as far back as 2018. Inspectors have reported that solid waste such as condemned meat, dung, skins and carcasses are disposed into the drains and recommended moving the slaughterhouses. The industry has slowly taken steps to slowly address these issues. See: [Report of the Sectoral Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on the Consideration of the Environment, Water and Energy Sector Report on the Closure of Kiamaiiko Abbatoirs](#) by the Nairobi City County Assembly, 18th November 2021.



Figure 8: Villages, Locations and Main bus terminals of Kiamaiko



Figure 9: (a) Coffin manufacturing industry. Photo taken by Christine Wambui

(b) Process of creating a community-informed ward level climate adaptation plan



A Note on the Kiamaiko Environment Management Team (KEMT) **Reflection by Ali Abubakar, Chairman of KEMT**

KEMT is an umbrella organisation of 19 waste groups across the ward, formally registered in 2019. The Kiamaiko Adaptation Plan strengthened KEMT. First because KEMT manages the holding ground, located next to Masinde Muliro Grounds, which has been a source of complaints from the community, especially when waste is left uncollected.

The cluster level conversations created space to talk about the management of the holding grounds, with the proposed solution being reducing household level waste – a solution within the control of the Kiamaiko residents. The current contractor removes waste from the holding ground 1 – 2 times a month, also ensuring that the waste does not become a menace.

Drainages were also a discussion, since they overflow due to clogging of solid waste. Mostly household members who did not pay for garbage services then threw it into the drainage. Drainage causes health issues for children, and the dirty water enters people's houses. KEMT members then used the cluster meetings to identify households that did not collect waste. These meetings brought out different reasons from residents for non-payment: people either don't want to pay for garbage collection, or burn their waste, or claim that they don't produce sufficient waste to pay for garbage collection.

The conversation became a negotiation, then ended with residents allowing waste collectors to take their waste on Wednesdays and Saturdays. We currently charge a sliding scale of 100 – 150/- monthly depending on the household type.

Waste entering the drainages has noticeably decreased since these conversations.

Additionally, drainage cleanups have changed. KEMT was responsible for listening to cluster level conversations and co-creating solutions. Even Kazi Mtaani / Green Army would clear the drainages then leave the waste at the side of the drainage themselves, which would then just end up back inside the drainages. The cluster conversations allowed people to discuss and create solutions. Now, it is known that any cleanup, regardless of the day, must take waste from the drainage to the Kiamaiko Holding Ground.

In other good news, KEMT applied to the NCCG in November 2025 for permission to use part of the holding ground as a buyback centre. They were approved on 9th February

2026 by the Built Environment and Urban Planning Department! One more approval is still pending from the Environment Department. We are celebrating the go-ahead nonetheless.



Figure 10: the Kiamaiko Holding Ground. Photo taken by Ali Abubakar.

The 2024 Floods: a Critical Gap Becomes Evident

As cluster level conversations continued, the 2024 March – May long rains began, culminating in the floods of April 24th, 2024. The scale of destruction took Nairobi City by surprise, because residents and officials had assumed that the city would experience “typical flooding” – that is, localized flooding events in informal settlements and swampy locations like South C. Instead, homes were suddenly submerged, leaving many instantly homeless. The floods also destroyed business inventories and cut off residents’ access to basic necessities like food and clothing. Moreover, the water drenched children’s school supplies, creating additional headaches because of the upcoming back-to-school season. Nairobi was quickly overwhelmed.

What made the 2024 Floods so Devastating?

Outside of the city’s control were global climatic shifts. An El Nino event was occurring, alongside a positive Indian Ocean Dipole event. In both instances, warm air is pushed into East Africa, resulting in higher-than-usual rainfall. Added to this is climate change itself, which causes increased global temperatures. This increased the amount of moisture available to fall as rain in Kenya (Kenya Meteorological Department, 2023). In fact, 2024 was the hottest year on record – reaching 1.6°C above pre-industrial levels for the first time in human history (Copernicus & European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, 2026). In short, natural climate phenomena, worsened by climate change, led to unprecedented levels of rainfall across Kenya.

While global factors caused the heavy rainfall, local conditions set the stage for disaster across the city. Locally, the Nairobi River basin runs across the city. Additionally, over 50% of the city’s population live in informal settlements – and *all* of the city’s major informal settlements are located adjacent to the Nairobi Rivers (including Kiamaiko). The combination of poor drainage systems, nonfunctional solid waste management, liquid waste discharge into drainages and rivers, concretizing of the city – which leaves less earth to absorb rainfall - and encroachment onto riparian reserves mean that the city was not at all prepared for the 2024 rains (Rukanga, 2024).



Figure 11: (a) Flooding in Kiamaiko. Photo taken by Humphrey Omukuti
(b) Aftermath of the floods in the Mathare Settlements.

In Kiamaiko, the Mathare River burst its banks at midnight on April 24th 2024, and the swelling waters began carrying people, animals and homes away. The local Chief and Area Officer Commanding Station (OCS) arrived on-site almost immediately, but their support was limited without rescue equipment. Since the whole city was in emergency response mode, they could not redirect central resources back to Kiamaiko ward or Mathare Subcounty.

Instead, information about the floods was passed out through a local Whatsapp group called **Kiamaiko We Want**. First responders reported that 87 families had been affected that first night. Next, group launched a local fundraiser, with residents contributing 50/- or 100/- to support relief efforts. A local school, Valley Bridge, opened its doors to shelter displaced families. Later, this grassroots organising grew into structured fundraising.

Photos and videos taken through *Kiamaiko We Want* soon went viral. The digital outcry reached senior government officials who brought temporary state attention to the crisis, as well as much-needed supplies. **Then-DP Rigathi Gachagua** visited Kiamaiko, followed by then-**CS of Public Service, Performance and Delivery Management Moses Kuria**.

Later, a combination of civil society and county government stepped in to provide support. **Muungano wa Wanavijiji**, which had paused all of its activities to focus on emergency response for slum dwellers, donated relief packs to 150 families from Kiamaiko. **World Vision, Dishi na County** and **Red Cross** then established a centralized relief hub at the Huruma / Masinde Muliro Grounds, relocating families from Valley Bridge School so that the school could reopen for the new term.



Figure 12: Displaced residents of Kiamaiko in a tent at the Masinde Muliro Grounds.
Image courtesy of Ghetto Radio.

A WhatsApp Group for Disaster Response

Kiamaiko We Want is a WhatsApp Group with slightly over 470 Kiamaiko residents. It was started by the former MCA, Hon. James Mwangi Wambui, popularly known as “Kagis”. To directly quote one Kiamaiko resident, “hizo chat ni ya siasa, kuchochana na kuwasha moto. Lakini shida ikitokea tunawachana na tusiasa twetu, ndio tusaaidiane (*the chat is for politics, causing trouble and lighting fires. But if a problem arises, we set aside our politics and help each other*).”

The relief process, being reactive and proactive but uncoordinated, inevitably bred conflict. Mutual accusations of theft of supplies arose between the first responders and the chief's office. Rumours circulated that local businesses were selling relief food for profit, while verified accounts spread that some of the most vulnerable families received no aid at all.

Tension escalated until disillusioned first responders voluntarily withdrew from the support process altogether. Interestingly, this conflict, lack of coordination and lack of accountability over donations were the sparks that started the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub

The Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub Takes Shape

The idea for the resilience hub therefore started as another informal conversation. Specifically, it began as a provocation in the *Kiamaiko We Want* group chat in July 2024, when John Kimani asked about accountability regarding the donations. Wanting to defuse the tension, the area chief, Chief Maroa (pronounced Marwa), asked for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the issue further. In person, he spoke in length about the conflict around donations, sheer confusion, items disappearing... then asked: *“how can we move forward? What do we need for full accountability in the event of another disaster?”* The solution became: having a dedicated group for disaster and risk management.

Coincidentally, around the same time, the Deputy County Commissioner (DCC) engaged Chief Maroa about creating a centralized disaster management team. The administration subsequently created two teams across Mathare Subcounty: one in Hospital Ward and one in Kiamaiko Ward. They were then given the go-ahead by the DCC to coordinate disaster and risk management. Then the question became: *“where can this disaster team work from?”*

Parallel to this, Muungano wa Wanavijiji members, reflected on the floods and noted two key things. First, how unprepared everybody was to respond to the scale of the 2024 floods. Second, while the Kiamaiko Adaptation Plan was centered on mid-to-long term climate adaptation, immediate disaster response is pivotal to climate adaptation. They noted the criticalness of Environment and Disaster Risk Management as a thematic area. Muungano / SDI-K, in collaboration with the chief’s office, began discussing the creation of a resilience hub – a space from which the ward’s emergency response team could work.

Thoughts from Joseph Kimani on the Resilience Hub

“Communities have already demonstrated climate resilience. There are people doing environmental work, using their own resources to navigate complex challenges, creating adaptation solutions and eking out livelihoods from the environment. Even during the 2024 floods, before the government and development partners appeared, community members were already responding to emerging needs. They fundraised, provided mental health support and counseling to impacted members and advocated for people who were left out of outreach processes.

The resilience hub, at its core, functions to coordinate and connect all of these efforts. It creates space and structure for volunteers to continue responding to community needs.”

The Kiamaiko Emergency Response Team

The central disaster team was created with the following groups of community members:

1. **Community Health Promoters (CHPs)** → CHPs were identified because they possess household level data and can accurately speak to the number of impacted

households. Additionally, they are trained in responding to disease outbreaks that often follow flood-related disasters. Because they monitor both communicable and non-communicable diseases, such as arthritis, HIV, TB, high blood pressure and diabetes, they can effectively conduct welfare checks on residents. When a disaster occurs, these conditions can worsen for residents because of exposure to cold or their medicines were washed away.

The Intersection of Health and Disasters - Christine Wambui

Disasters are closely linked with health issues. For example, during the 2024 floods, there was a cholera outbreak.

More recently, during the March 6th, 2026, flash floods, there was a dysentery outbreak in Thayu and Ghetto villages, because effluent from upstream washed down into homes, exposing residents to liquid waste. Because CHPs have information on existing sanitation facilities, they can predict how an outbreak is likely to spread. They can therefore act by engaging community members and advising those at high risk of exposure to go to hospital.

2. **Environment team** → this team consists of representatives from waste and environmental Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Their inclusion is vital because flood events are exacerbated by the accumulation and poor disposal of solid waste. Their role would be disaster preparedness and prevention, to reduce the overall severity of future events.

3. **People Living with Disabilities (PWDs)** → PWDs were identified as a key group because they were overlooked during the April 2024 flood response. Moreover, physical disabilities make it more difficult to react quickly in an emergency where immediate movement is a matter of survival, while residents with hearing impairments may not hear the initial alarms or cries for help. Their role as part of the team is to ensure that disaster preparedness and response strategies are actively attuned to the needs of PWDs.

PWDs Navigating Kiamaiko Ward Observations by Jonte Kimani

“Kiamaiko is not PWD-friendly in general. For example, the police station has its main activities upstairs – including fingerprinting, the crime unit and office of the deputy OCS. However, the first floor is not accessible via ramp or a lift. Additionally, sections of the roads, especially where encroached by businesses, are difficult to manoeuvre for those who use wheelchairs. In general, the ward has not grown in a way that is conscious of the needs of PWDs.”

4. **Refugees** → refugees in Kiamaiko Ward have integrated well with the ward’s existing Cushitic communities (Boranas, Burjis and Somalis), because they are primarily Ethiopian and Somali. However, they struggled to receive support during the 2024 floods. First, they faced language barriers. Many lost their legal documents, and there existed no official framework for non-Kenyans / refugees to receive structured support from the county government. Therefore, their role in the team is to directly engage refugees across the ward and communicate the kind of assistance that is available to them during a disaster.

A Multipurpose Community Space

In addition to disaster response and management, the resilience hub was also envisioned as a multipurpose space serving different community members, featuring the following dedicated areas:

- **Refugees Desk:** To support refugees who often miss out on opportunities and lack access to information and networks.
- **Health Desk (staffed by CHPs):** To address health-related issues, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) support and referrals for PWDs and other vulnerable cases.
- **Environment Desk:** To provide the community with direct access to the ward Environment Officer.
- **Board Room:** For hosting small community meetings and engagements.
- **ICT Hub:** A youth-friendly space for digital learning and information access.
- **Storage Space:** To provide a centralized point for storing community resources, especially for rapid emergency response.

Identifying Land to place the Hub – A Complex Journey

After agreeing on the idea, the next step was identifying a suitable location. The community identified key requirements for the space:

- **Security**
- **Accessibility for all**, especially vulnerable groups
- **Proximity to essential services** such as roads, electricity, and sanitation

Initially, renting a plot was considered. However, concerns about sustainability arose, since the hub would be community-run. Paying rent long-term would become a challenge.

John Kimani posted in the *Kiamaiko We Want* group chat to kickstart this search. Residents proposed multiple spaces across the ward, which were evaluated against the core requirements:

- **Ghetto Village:** one location in Ghetto was proposed but the space for entering and exiting the container was insufficient, especially in the context of ensuring the container would be PWD accessible).
- **New Mathare B Village:** A location next to **Ndururuno Primary school** was suggested. However, it receives little traffic during the evenings, which was a security concern.
- **Kambi Moto Village:** this was considered, but its village elders explained that they are currently upgrading their drainage, cabro paving and street lighting in collaboration with the Kenya Informal Settlements Improvement Project (KISIP) and so their villages elders asked to wait until the upgrading process was done to see how the space would look.
- **Grogon A Village:** a park space opposite the Huruma Police Station was proposed. The Mathare Subcounty Environment Office seconded this choice to prevent further encroachment of the park, because a resilience hub would result in additional support and resources, preventing future encroachment or grabbing of the road reserve.

The Grogon A Park Space A Brief History by Humphrey Omukuti

Before 2012, this piece of public land, located on a road reserve, was full of small businesses. In 2012, once Hon. Kagis became the MCA, city council officers started collecting daily fees for temporary business licenses at prices ranging from 10/- to 50/-. This was done informally, with different businesses paying different rates. Kiamaiko residents felt that the funds were collected with little accountability. This led to a fight between the county officers and businesspeople, which escalated until all the businesses were evicted.

Following the evictions, the question arose: *what should the space be used for?* A parking lot for PSVs was proposed, but there was a fear that informal structures would just pop up again, since PSVs only park at night, leaving the space empty during the day. Then came a proposal to create a community park. Humphrey Omukuti, from Ghetto Farmers CBO, secured seedlings from City Hall and planted them. And just like that, the park was born.

After identification of the Grogon A park space came a multi-sectoral meeting with NCCG officers from the Department of Planning, Public Health and Environment, alongside the Ward Administrator, to discuss the proposed site of the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub. The Ward Administrator, James Kihuro, explained that 4 different groups had already made applications to City Hall for use of the space. He advised Muungano wa Wanavijiji / SDI-K to identify a different space.

In response, Hon. Joseph Ndung'u proposed an alternative location in **Central Village** and even wrote letters to City Hall for approval. In the application, he explained that its use would be for the community, City Hall ultimately approved use of the Central Village space for a resilience hub. However, the move created strong opposition from Central residents, who were suspicious that it was a plot to grab their land! So the team went back to the drawing board and decided to focus on the Grogon A park space. Hon. Joseph Ndung'u invited the County Surveyor to survey the land. The surveyor came, took measurements and forwarded these recommendations to the Environment Department. John Kimani followed up with the surveyor frustratingly for up to 5 months. After this, Hon. Joseph Ndung'u intervened and obtained the Surveyor's drawings by directly engaging the County Department for Lands and Physical Planning. He then used the drawings to apply again to City Hall for approval for the space.

While this was ongoing, conflict brewed in Grogon A. The business community located next to the park space became suspicious, fearing it was also a plot to grab land. Interestingly, the businesspeople in the coffin manufacturing industry primarily live outside of Kiamaiko, only entering the ward to work. Consequently, they were unintentionally left out of cluster level conversations and the Kiamaiko We Want group chat. Their lack of understanding of the process fueled their suspicions. This matter was eventually escalated to the Assistant County Commissioner (ACC). The back-and-forth ended with a resolution to hold a joint meeting with the business community and Kiamaiko Adaptation stakeholders, with the ACC mediating. However, on the day of the meeting, the business representatives failed to show up, despite multiple prompts. The ACC threw up his hands and told the adaptation team to continue with development!

After resolution of these issues, City Hall finally approved the space in February 2026, allowing Muungano wa Wanavijiji / SDI to proceed with installation of the hub! The hub was then installed and officially launched on 10th April 2026. We celebrate this key milestone, which represents movement from a community vision into tangible infrastructure.



Figure 13: Opening of the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaike Resilience Hub

The Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaike Resilience Hub is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, through the regional project Resilience Initiative Africa (RIA).

Resilience Hub Management Committee: Government Oversight

The entire adaptation plan and resilience hub has grown with the consistent support of the local government. In the same spirit, a community management structure entailing government and community representatives was established to oversee hub activities. This committee includes key leadership and security representatives such as:

- The Sub-County Ward Administrator
- The Kiamaike Chief
- Subcounty Enforcement commander
- OCS of the Huruma Police station.
- One member of Muungano wa Wanavijiji
- One staff member
- 9 community representatives
- One representative from the business community



Figure 14: Government Officers at the Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaike Resilience Hub. From left to right: Chief Maroa, Mathare Environment Officer Kelvin Mwarania, Kiamaike MCA Hon. Joseph Ndung'u, Mathare Enforcement Commander Madam Nancy Thuku, Kiamaike ACC Madam Flora, Ndururuno Location Assistant Chief Madam Asha and Mathare Subcounty Compliance and Enforcement Officer Mr. Lagat.

Conclusion

The Muungano Wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub is the result of a deeply participatory and community-led process that began with conversations about the state of the ward.

From climate vulnerability assessments to cluster-level discussions and adaptation planning, from lessons learned during the 2024 floods to navigating land challenges and stakeholder engagement, the journey reflects strong community ownership and collaboration with local government.

It stands today as a foundation for coordinated action, shaped by lived experiences and collective effort, and moving towards full operationalization. The Resilience Hub reflects the continuation of a process built by the community and supported by the government.

Currently, the space is being used as a coordination center for CHPs, PWDs, refugees and environment groups including KEMT and the county environment office. The ICT hub is also being used to train youth and CHPs on AI. Given that Kiamaiko may experience higher-than-usual rainfall due to the forecasted 2026 El Niño phenomenon, and that extreme weather events are becoming more common, we look forward to seeing how the space will be used for coordinated and inclusive disaster response and management.



Figure 15: The Muungano wa Wanavijiji Kiamaiko Resilience Hub

Prioritising Community Knowledge in Development Work

Community knowledge refers to the information, interpretations and lived understanding held by people within a place. Implementing climate infrastructure in a low income / informal settlement neighbourhood in Nairobi is complex. Community knowledge creates space for development practitioners to navigate and respond proactively to complex situations.

What would it take for a Nairobi City MCA to invest in a community project? For residents, Hon. Ndung'u being part of the Nairobi City County Environment Committee made all the difference for them.

Who do you need to involve in creation of a ward level plan? Muungano wa Wanavijiji members already had linkages and existing relationships to village elders, CHPs and environment stakeholders, who they immediately onboarded into the adaptation process.

What if there is resistance to the plan? In this instance, the resistance was due to fatigue from speaking continuously about local issues with no resolution. The exchange to a Mukuru, a similar community, helped to shift this resistance. Village elders saw practically how a plan could bring change.

What issues are we experiencing? The cluster level coordinators figured out how to genuinely engage residents across the ward, and document local climate issues. This

gave nuance and color to the adaptation plan.

What do we do when disaster strikes? Residents of Kiamaiko came together, mobilising via a group chat, to respond immediately to the 2024 floods.

How do we prevent future conflict around donations? A common issue in Nairobi, this became a multi-stakeholder conversation, built upon the lived experiences, conflicts, complaints and frustrations of Kiamaiko residents and first responders.

The story of the Kiamaiko Adaptation Plan and Resilience Hub reflects the role of local knowledge in navigating complex development work, as well as the depth of change that is possible when non-governmental and government partners listen keenly and prioritise community needs.

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