

Mainstreaming Gender and Youths in Climate Governance: Re-imagining Resilience through Marginalized Groups Political Ecology and Decentralized Innovations in Uasin Gishu, Kenya

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Gender disparities and youth exclusion in the political ecology are significant barriers to both social and environmental resilience development in Kenya. This study utilizes a mixed-methods approach that includes quasi-experimental analysis, participatory GIS mapping, and institutional ethnography to assess how structural exclusions such as patriarchal land tenure (where just 18% of women own formal land titles) and youth and women's exclusion from policy design limit their agency in climate action. Despite such constraints, women's groups have established wetland rehabilitation programs and agro ecology, and youth groups have organized clean-up initiatives, civic education platforms, and biogas installations for reducing firewood reliance by 30–40%. However, many of these groups remain unregistered and informal, which precludes them from fully benefiting from institutional support and funding mechanisms. As a result, they are unable to access the financial resources and opportunities available within the county's climate budget, which is often directed toward formally recognized entities. Additionally, capacity development programs ignore local cultural constraints, e.g., gendered land inheritance patterns. This paper advocates for three key reforms: (1) the enforced implementation of 30% binding quotas for the representation of women and youth in decision-making bodies; (2) the establishment of climate finance mechanisms to support microloans for gender-responsive innovations; and (3) the integration of inter sectional vulnerability analysis into both the Kenya Climate Change Act and the Uasin Gishu Climate Change Act. These reforms are essential, as inclusive governance not only advances SDGs 5, 13, and 17, but also serves as a cornerstone for achieving sustainable climate resilience and advancing gender and youth equality in the long term.

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