

POLICY BRIEF



Addressing Drivers and Facilitating Safe, Orderly and
Regular Migration in the Contexts of Disasters and
Climate Change in the IGAD Region

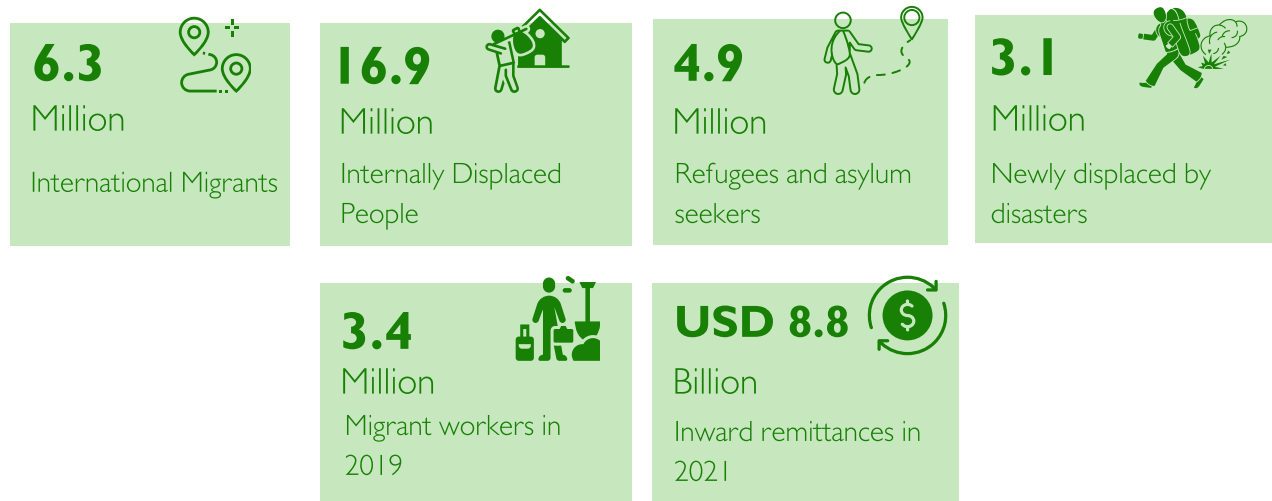
I. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON HUMAN MOBILITY IN THE IGAD REGION

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is one of the eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union, comprising the Member States of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.¹ It is home to more than 230 million people and over 80 per cent of the region's population live in rural areas and derive their livelihoods primarily from semi subsistence, rainfed, agriculture, pastoral, and agro-pastoral activities.

The IGAD region is one of the most diverse regions in the world, including areas of economic growth and investment on the one hand, and areas prone to conflict, political instability, humanitarian crises and disasters on the other. It is regarded as one of the most vulnerable regions to climate variability and change, with countries regularly affected by slow- and sudden onset extreme weather and climatic processes and events, which degrade ecosystems, reduce crop yields, and destroy habitable areas, livelihoods, jobs, business premises and other infrastructure.

Different forms of human mobility (including displacement, migration, and planned relocation) to, from and within the IGAD region reflect the complex drivers and structural factors that often compel people to leave their country or areas of origin. Action is needed urgently to stabilise vulnerable communities, to address and prevent forced migration, to facilitate regular migration for those compelled to move and to protect people who are already on the move.

Current key figures in the region



The IGAD Regional Strategy Frameworks acknowledge that mobility is both an opportunity and a concern to development in the region. Strategic interventions have prioritized the promotion of free movement of persons, including transhumance, youth skilling, decent work and provision of basic services in order to harness the full potential of mobility as a force for development. For example, in 2021, the IGAD Council of Ministers adopted the Free Movement of Persons Protocol with a specific provision (Article 16) that calls on Member States to facilitate entry and stay for people who are moving in anticipation of, during or in the aftermath of a disaster. In 2021, The [Djibouti Declaration on Labour, Employment and Labour Migration](#) in the IGAD region was adopted by the IGAD members states. In addition, in 2022, 11 Member States from the IGAD and East African Community (EAC) region agreed on the "[Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change](#)", demonstrating the urgency and whole of government prioritisation that leaders in the region and on the African continent place on this topic.

¹ <https://igad.int/the-igad-region/>

2. ADDRESSING MIGRATION, DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: THE MDCC PROGRAMME

The Joint Programme "[Addressing Drivers and Facilitating Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Contexts of Disasters and Climate Change in the IGAD Region](#)" - briefly Migration, Disasters and Climate Change (MDCC) was implemented from February 2021 to August 2023 and responded to the pressing challenges at the crossroad of climate change and human mobility in the IGAD region. Specifically, the programme's objective was to contribute to facilitating pathways for regular migration in the IGAD region and minimizing displacement risk in the context of disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation, in line with the vision and guiding principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

The joint programme, with a budget of USD 2.15 million, was a partnership between the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD) hosted under United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); IGAD Secretariat including the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC); and the IGAD Member states Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

The programme was organized across four pillars:



In particular, efforts were directed toward strengthening evidence-based and inclusive policymaking, increasing preparedness for disaster displacement; improving access to information and migrants' rights and environment preservation; as well as increasing access to sustainable livelihoods and green jobs.

The final external evaluation of the MDCC², which captures many of the insights of this policy brief in greater detail, indicated proof of concept of the programme, with many of the activities showing promise for scaling up if future interventions incorporate the lessons learnt and best practices. There is also a demand to build on the four pillars and replicate these approaches across the region.

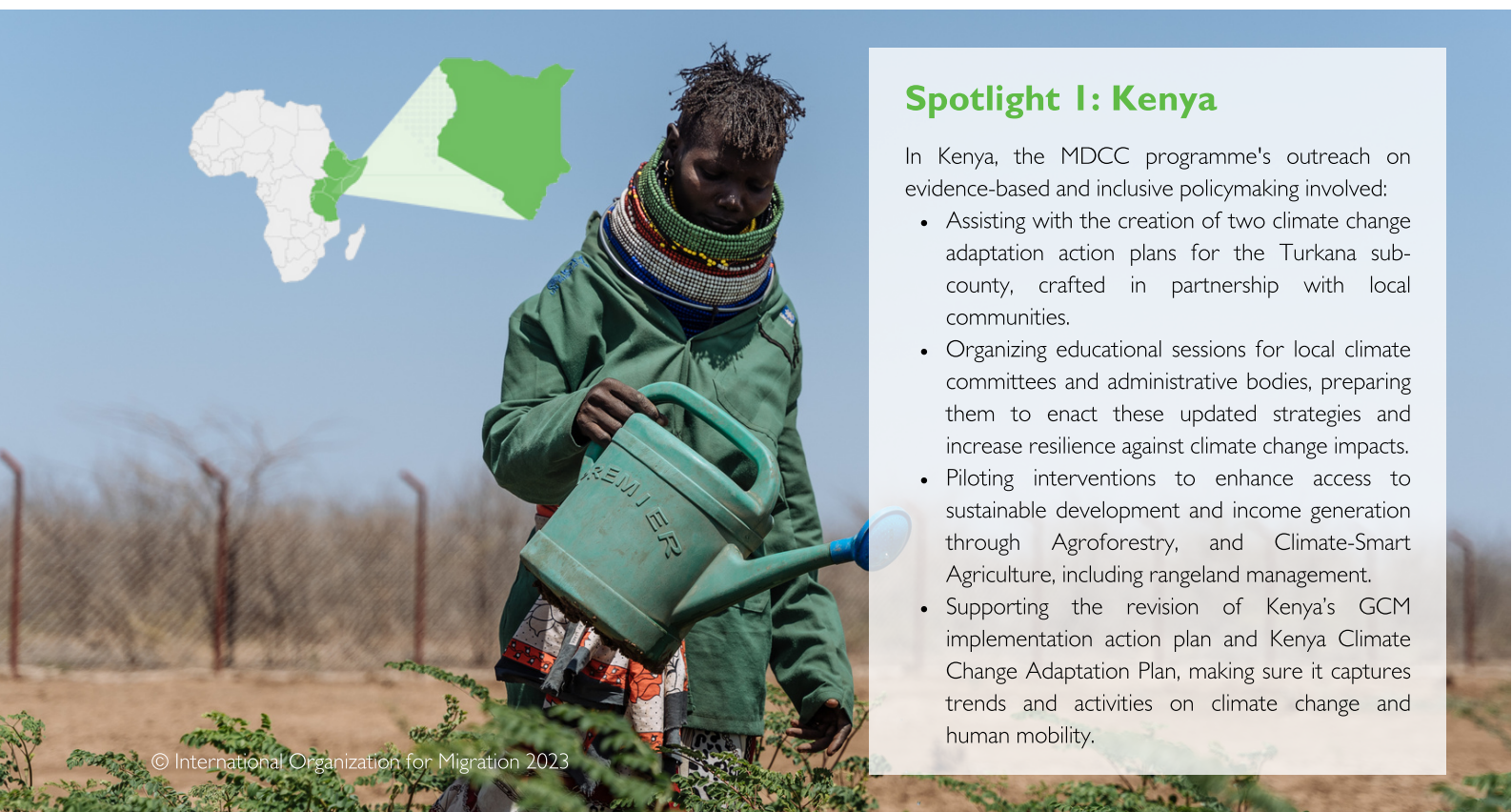
² Final evaluation: https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdll411/files/inline-files/mdcc-evaluation_mpi-axiom-me_evaluation-report_final.pdf?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=9cb720bf-2f91-4547-af41-7146b7ce9d0f

3. KEY FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNT

The MDCC programme piloted a wide range of activities and approaches, resulting in key findings and lessons learnt for future programming. This section outlines these by drawing on the insights and experiences gained from the MDCC programme. It presents how the programme has made strides in addressing climate change and human mobility challenges and offers insight for future interventions. Further, it highlights key policy recommendations for future programming and policymaking to address the challenges and opportunities at the intersection of human mobility and climate change in the IGAD region.

Strengthened Evidence-Based and Inclusive Policymaking

A first priority of the programme was to collect and analyse data on the impacts of climate change on human mobility pattern across the regions, as well as to strengthen inclusive policymaking. To this end, partners commissioned several studies that resulted in concrete recommendations on how to strengthen integration of human mobility across relevant climate change, disasters, green economy, national development and protection frameworks.⁴ Together with thematic trainings involving a wide range of actors across different sectors, these studies serve as a valuable resource for policymakers, urging them to recognize and take into account human mobility considerations in their decision-making. Notably, in Kenya and Somalia, recommendations were tested and refined based on feedback from pilot community projects, ensuring that they resonate with on-ground realities.



Spotlight I: Kenya

In Kenya, the MDCC programme's outreach on evidence-based and inclusive policymaking involved:

- Assisting with the creation of two climate change adaptation action plans for the Turkana sub-county, crafted in partnership with local communities.
- Organizing educational sessions for local climate committees and administrative bodies, preparing them to enact these updated strategies and increase resilience against climate change impacts.
- Piloting interventions to enhance access to sustainable development and income generation through Agroforestry, and Climate-Smart Agriculture, including rangeland management.
- Supporting the revision of Kenya's GCM implementation action plan and Kenya Climate Change Adaptation Plan, making sure it captures trends and activities on climate change and human mobility.

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³Read more about programme interventions and deliverables: <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1411/files/inline-files/joint-programme-achievements.pdf>

⁴ Study on "[Integration of human mobility in green economy and related policies in the IGAD region](#)", in collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Regional Collaboration Centre (RCC) for East and Southern (EAS) Africa
Study on "[Analysis of Human Mobility in the National and County Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Frameworks in Kenya](#)"
Study on "[Environmental Migration in Climate Change Policy in Somalia](#)"
Study on "[Policies, Laws and Practices on Admission and Stay in Disaster and Climate Change Contexts in the IGAD Region](#)"
Study on "[Human Mobility and Climate Change in the IGAD Region: a case study in the shared border regions of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia](#)"

At the regional level, the MDCC programme notably amplified the capacity of governments within the IGAD region to address disaster displacement. Joint efforts by partners led to eight future scenarios related to sudden-onset disasters, offering insights into cyclones in Somalia and broader regional flood patterns. A further significant outcome was a decision-making model simulating displacement in various flood situations. Workshops and training sessions, integral to this collaboration, fostered dialogue and knowledge sharing, with regional dialogues such as the Greater Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forums (GHACOFs) being instrumental to engage governments and institutions in bridging the gap between theory and practice. Strengthening institutions further, a Mobility Expert was introduced to ICPAC in December 2021, enhancing the integration of the human mobility dimension and ensuring more robust coordination across various sectors dealing with climate change and disaster risk reduction.

In terms of future priority action, it is imperative that the strengthened evidence base is translated into action. Specifically, this requires incorporating the disaster displacement risk profiles into ICPAC's standard forecasting models, and translating these into actionable early warning scenarios. These interventions will improve timely interventions and enhance regional preparedness in disaster contexts. Given the vastness and diversity of the IGAD region, there is also a need to broaden the scope of data collection missions to enhance the accuracy and predictability of early warning systems.

Highlighted policy recommendations:

- Undertake more targeted training sessions, especially focusing on technical data challenges and operationalizing disaster displacement data within ICPAC's systems, to ensure continued capacity building specific to regional data institutions, specifically ICPAC.
- Replicate existing disaster displacement risk profiles or explore other methodologies to collate similar data. Addressing data gaps, whether thematic or geographical, and optimizing data dissemination are areas requiring attention.
- Enhance the incorporation of references to human mobility in climate change, green economy and related policies to ensure coherence. Considering the current and future trends of human mobility and climate change - and their intersectional nature- the topic needs to be addressed through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to ensure decisions inclusive and are actionable.



Increased Preparedness on Disaster Displacement

As disasters, climate change and environmental degradation continue to adversely affect communities across the IGAD region, with many being compelled to leave their homes or becoming trapped in at-risk areas, the MDCC programme prioritised action to increase preparedness on disaster displacement. As such, partners successfully developed and tested two Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which are step-by-step guides focused on admission and stay of people displaced across borders in the context of disasters. These SOPs, designed with adaptability in mind, responded to the distinct characteristics and environmental contexts of two border regions prone to floods between Kenya-Uganda and Kenya-Ethiopia.

Together with these governments, MDCC partners conducted two simulation exercises (more information [here](#)), convening participants at different levels of governments, the military, humanitarian actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community leaders, to test the effectiveness of these SOPs in practice. The successful completion of these activities highlights the strength of collaboration and underscores the importance of binational and regional coordination in disaster preparedness, as well as employing a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. Besides strengthening disaster displacement preparedness, the SOPs also contribute to the operationalization of Article 16 of the IGAD Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons, which specifically urges Member States to facilitate the entry and stay of individuals who are compelled to move in the context of disasters.

In terms of future priority action, it would be prudent to expand on the achievements of developing and testing the SOPs through simulation exercises by extending this approach to other areas of the IGAD region. Additionally, it is essential to allocate resources and enhance the capacity of countries and institutions that have participated in the simulation exercises, enabling them to implement the SOPs. Monitoring these efforts is critical to refine similar approaches in other locations.

Highlighted policy recommendations:

- Monitor and test how the existing SOPs are operationalized in future disasters, in order to see what worked and what requires improvement. National governments and local stakeholders in cooperation with the UN system and other stakeholders could lead this effort.
- Replicate the SOPs, potentially in border regions where binational relations are strong and where there are risks of future disasters, and likely alongside similar efforts to test them through simulation exercises.

Increased Access to Sustainable Livelihoods and Green Jobs

To effectively navigate the complex relationship between climate change, labour markets and human mobility, the MDCC programme has embraced market-based approaches to foster sustainable alternatives for livelihood creation in affected communities. An illustrative initiative in South Wollo, Ethiopia, involved a market system analysis to identify value chains offering potential for green job creation. This groundwork facilitated the design of targeted interventions, operationalized through the ILO tool Start Your Business (SYB). A cohort of 120 migrants, returnees and potential migrants affected by disasters and climate change received entrepreneurship and essential skills training.

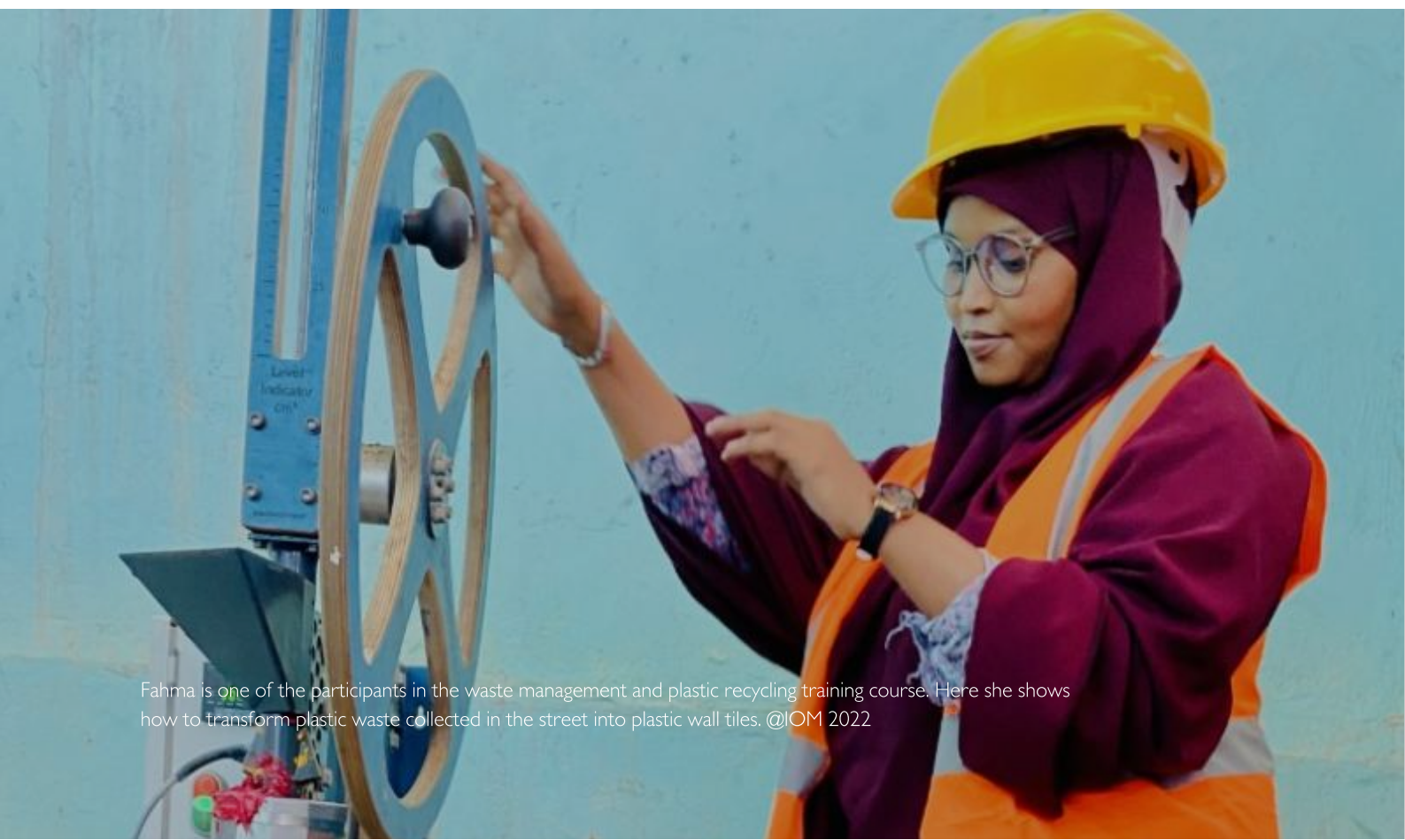
As an outcome of the training, 105 participants established green businesses in the identified value chains, marking a transition toward sustainable livelihoods that are resilient to environmental shocks. This initiative not only underscores the potential for labour market interventions to foster climate change adaptation but also exemplifies the role of skill development in strengthening climate resilience.

Furthering skills development, the programme promoted the integration of migrants into the green economy, particularly with local (internally displaced) communities in selected areas in Mogadishu, Somalia. 90 students participated in the technical and vocational education trainings and graduated at the end of December 2022, across sectors such as clean energy and waste management. A diaspora mentor provided critical career support, with a focus on empowering women. Graduates were then channelled into apprenticeships or supported with creating collective business opportunities, informed by a rapid market needs assessment.

The pilot project in Somalia demonstrates that targeted skills development and employability interventions can empower migrant communities to meet green economy needs and secure enterprises and livelihoods.

Overall, the piloted projects demonstrate a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change, while also fostering economic opportunities within migrant communities. In this context, it is essential to support regular migration pathways that recognize the importance of labour mobility to access alternative livelihoods opportunities.

In terms of future priority action, it is vital to continue strengthening labour mobility as a vital strategy for resilience and adaptation for both sending and receiving communities. The MDCC interventions have highlighted that facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration and ensuring decent work for migrants can foster positive results in addressing and adapting to the adverse impacts of climate change. It is therefore of utmost importance to promote regular migration pathways, and continuing to avert the risks associated with human trafficking and forced labour. Such emphasis will also place migrants at the heart of initiatives aimed at a just transition in the context of a changing climate.



Fahma is one of the participants in the waste management and plastic recycling training course. Here she shows how to transform plastic waste collected in the street into plastic wall tiles. @OM 2022

Highlighted policy recommendations:

- Expanding knowledge on environmental impacts of climate change on labour markets and the contributions of human mobility to a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all to guide effective policy formulation.
- Boost mechanisms that protect mobile populations and highlight labour migration as a climate change adaptation strategy. This can be realized through implementing the IGAD Protocol on Free Movement of Persons to elevate protection standards for migrant workers and developing policies that ensure safe and regular migration via social dialogue, tripartism, and a whole-of-society approach.
- Strengthen fair and effective labour migration governance while supporting resilience efforts in communities affected by climate change. This can include expanding access to education, skills development, green jobs, and green entrepreneurship in such areas and strengthening social protection systems.
- Prioritize the inclusion of mobile populations, climate-impacted communities, women, and youth in policy development and execution.
- Adopt a market-based approach to match local and regional skills needs to support a just transition with sustainable green jobs.

Migrant Workers' Improved Access to Information and Rights and Environment Preservation

The MDCC programme has taken significant steps to inform migrant communities in the IGAD region about their rights, with a particular focus on those impacted by environmental changes and disasters. In particular, the awareness raising campaign undertaken in South Wollo Zone, Kalu Woreda, Ethiopia demonstrated promising results in influencing migration decisions and improving knowledge on migrant workers' rights and available protection mechanisms. Utilizing a variety of communication methods tailored to the local context, including radio, print media, street drama, community conversation, and peer-to-peer education, the campaign reached an extensive audience, including women and youth. Specifically, the MDCC final evaluation identified peer education and community conversations as the most effective awareness raising approaches and catalysts for change. This is because they were conducted in direct contact with the participants, allowing for questions and discussions sessions, thus facilitating exchange of experiences and lessons.

This multi-channel approach allowed the campaign to meeting its objectives of sharing information on regular migration pathways, migrant workers' rights, climate change as a driver for migration, and regular migration as a positive climate change adaptation strategy. Moreover, collaboration with government agencies such as the Ministry of Labour and Skills and the Amhara Region Bureau of Labor and Training played a pivotal role in aligning the campaign with existing legal frameworks and policies, contributing to the sustainability and scalability of the efforts. As such, local authorities are already replicating peer education elements of the awareness raising campaign across other kebeles in the region. The involvement of returnee migrants in facilitating community conversations added a layer of trust and relatability, sharing first-hand experiences that resonated with community members.

Spotlight 2: Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the MDCC programme's awareness-raising campaign involved:

- Implementing an impactful awareness campaign that improved knowledge on migrant workers' rights and enhanced informed decision-making on migration.
- This included utilizing peer education and community conversations for direct engagement, facilitating an exchange of experiences and enhancing the impact of the information shared.
- Partnering with local government agencies to align the campaign with national policies, ensuring sustainability and leveraging the experiences of returnee migrants to build trust and relatability within the community.



In terms of future priority action, the continuation and expansion of awareness initiatives are essential. Building on the interventions that took place, it is key to continue leveraging diverse and integrated communication channels to reinforce the positive narrative of regular migration as a climate change adaptation strategy. Enhancing regular migration pathways and safeguarding migrant workers' rights remain central to these awareness efforts, ensuring that migrants are equipped with the necessary information to make informed decisions in the context of climate change.

Highlighted policy recommendations:

- Continue engaging with local authorities to scale up effective awareness-raising models. The active participation of local governments can extend the reach of campaigns beyond initial targets, as evidenced by the expansion in Ethiopia. Their involvement is crucial for discussing regular migration pathways and livelihood opportunities.
- Amplify peer education and community conversation methodologies in awareness-raising sessions. These approaches have been proven effective in the Ethiopian context and can be adapted to other regions to facilitate discussions on safe and regular labour migration and workers' rights, ensuring that the message resonates with the target audience.
- Institutionalize the development and dissemination of awareness-raising materials in collaboration with local authorities. This ensures that content is contextually relevant, culturally sensitive, and aligned with local policies, thereby increasing sustainability and local ownership of the campaigns.

Addressing Cross-Cutting Elements: Gender, Human Rights, and Whole-of-Society Approaches

The MDCC programme aligned its activities with the objectives and guiding principles of the GCM, particularly with regard to human rights, gender responsiveness, and whole-of-society approaches.

The programme adopted a whole-of-society approach through closely engaging different international, regional, national and local stakeholders, particularly community leaders, women and youth groups, local community members, local civil society organizations (CSOs), as well as through interacting with, private sector actors, local authorities, workers' and employers' organizations, academia, diaspora members, the National Coordination Mechanisms on Migration, and UN networks on Migration.

Gender mainstreaming was actively pursued in local initiatives, with women playing a pivotal role in decision-making processes and economic empowerment activities. This is reflected, for example, in the increased participation of women in community committees.

Despite the absence of activities designed solely to promote gender equality, the MDCC programme's approach to gender mainstreaming across multiple pillars of work has been evident, with women surpassing participation targets in Kenya and Ethiopia. This increased involvement has been a by-product of community-centric interventions that have encouraged women to join and participate in committees addressing daily challenges related to climate change within their communities. At times, however, MDCC had difficulty in identifying women to participate in capacity enhancement or regional dialogues.

Reflecting on the MDCC programme's experiences, future policy actions may build upon the established steps toward increasing women's active participation through local initiatives. This includes continuing to help ensure that women are not only included but are central to decision-making processes, especially in community governance structures where their representation has already shown positive trends.

The programme's alignment to human rights principles, established through preliminary national human rights analyses, highlights the importance of grounding activities within a rights-based framework.

Highlighted policy recommendations:

- Leverage the objectives and guiding principles of the GCM to ensure that new programmes have a shared set of goals and considerations, particularly around gender inclusivity, child sensitivity, and engagement that spans across all levels of government and society.
- Allocate specific resources and activities aimed at promoting gender equality, going beyond mainstreaming gender as a cross-cutting theme and investing in targeted interventions that address gender inequality, especially in the context of the gendered impacts of climate change and migration, and enhance gender responsiveness.
- Reinforce the rights-based approach in skills development and employability interventions.

4. CONCLUSION

The MDCC programme tackled pressing issues related to disasters, climate change, and human mobility across the IGAD region. It was highly relevant to regional priorities and IGAD policies, and met the needs of national and local stakeholders. The programme's strengths lay in enhancing policy coherence and evidence-based and inclusive policymaking; increasing preparedness on disaster displacements; improving awareness on migrants' rights and environment preservation; as well as increasing access to sustainable livelihoods and green jobs thereby promoting a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. By forging strong partnerships with local and national stakeholders, and aligning closely with the GCM and other frameworks, the programme has enhanced regional capabilities to anticipate and respond to the challenges at the intersection of climate change and human mobility.

Alongside these strengths, the programme also identified critical areas for improvement and further development. For example, there is a need to further support long-term approaches to diversify income-generating opportunities and support businesses and entrepreneurs that have potential for green job creation and green business practices. At the same time, it will be crucial to strengthen resilience to the impact of climate change through inclusive social protection systems and expand existing social safety net models. The active involvement of communities and local authorities has been instrumental, suggesting that future efforts should continue to prioritize local engagement and capacity-building to foster long-term resilience and self-sufficiency.

Finally, despite the programmatic successes, challenges in sustainability remain. A key achievement has been the transfer of knowledge and skills to regional institutions, exemplified by the integration of displacement data into ICPAC's data services. To ensure the longevity and scalability of such efforts, further support is essential. This is particularly pressing as local entities take ownership of the outcomes developed, ranging from climate action plans to SOPs. The need for sustainable funding and continued capacity-building support is vital to maintain the momentum and enable governments in the IGAD region to effectively address the evolving dynamics of human mobility, climate change, and disasters.

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