



WHRDHUB
WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HUB

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Livelihood and Wellbeing Impacts of climate crisis and flooding in Kenya



Livelihood and well-being impacts of the recent climate crisis and
flooding in Kenya for Women Human Rights Defenders
Final Survey Report

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Women Human Rights Defenders Hub thanks all the stakeholders who participated in the survey, key informant interviews, and validation of this report. The Hub is also grateful to the Wellspring Philanthropic Fund and Urgent Action Fund for the financial support of the survey and production of this report. We also thank Patrick Mutahi, who researched and wrote this report.

ACRONYMS

Food and Agriculture Organization	FAO
Kenyan informant	KI
National Drought Management Authority	NDMA
National Environment Management Authority	NEMA
Women Human Rights Defenders	WHRDs
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recent flooding in Kenya has impacted Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs), disrupting livelihoods, causing property loss, increasing violence and harassment, and placing significant strain on their mental health and wellbeing. This report outlines the key findings from a survey conducted among WHRDs in Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi's informal settlements. It analyses the effects of the floods on WHRDs' livelihoods, emotional well-being, and ability to continue their advocacy work, as well as the broader implications for the sustainability of human rights work.

The flooding has disrupted the primary sources of income for an overwhelming majority (92%) of WHRDs, with 77% experiencing severe economic losses. The impacts on farming, small businesses, and employment have led to widespread financial instability, threatening food security and local economies, particularly in agricultural regions such as Meru, Kitui, and Nakuru. The loss of property and essential tools further compounds the economic stress, with 65% of WHRDs reporting a complete loss of assets and livelihoods. These findings indicate an urgent need for recovery efforts and policy interventions to support WHRDs in rebuilding their lives and livelihoods.

In addition to economic strain, WHRDs have faced significant challenges in continuing their advocacy work. The survey reveals that 38% have had to reduce human rights activities due to the flooding, and 7% have stopped altogether. This disruption in their work underscores the vulnerability of WHRDs to environmental crises, which often exacerbate existing challenges related to financial stress, lack of resources, and personal safety. 58% of WHRDs reported a significant increase in violence or harassment in the aftermath of the floods, highlighting the need for targeted protection and support for these defenders.

Community networks and women's groups, which serve as crucial support systems for WHRDs, have also been severely disrupted. 74% of respondents reported a complete interruption of activities, which leaves WHRDs isolated at a time when community resilience and solidarity are most needed. The collapse of these networks could have long-term implications for women's empowerment, social cohesion, and the ability to mobilise effectively for human rights advocacy.

Despite the active participation of WHRDs in community recovery, with 52% of respondents engaging to some degree, a significant gap persists in funding for organisational recovery. Only 14% of WHRD organisations have received financial support, reflecting an urgent need for more accessible funding mechanisms to aid recovery from the disaster's impacts. This lack of financial support is coupled with a broader challenge in preparedness—over 70% of respondents reported that their communities had not received training or education on responding to climate-related

crises, leaving them vulnerable to future disasters.

The findings also reveal that WHRDs see a direct link between climate-related disasters and their ability to advocate for women's human rights. Many respondents expect future climate events to severely hinder their human rights work, emphasising the need for integrated strategies that address climate resilience and gender advocacy. To mitigate these challenges, WHRDs identified financial resources, disaster management training, material donations, and mental health support as the most critical assistance needed for effective recovery.

Mental health challenges among WHRDs have emerged as a significant concern in the wake of the flooding. Nearly all respondents (93%) recognised widespread changes in the mental health and well-being of their peers, with 91% reporting personal impacts on their mental health. Financial stress is the most substantial barrier to emotional well-being, while the lack of professional psychological support exacerbates the problem. Many WHRDs feel unsupported by their organisational leadership, with limited access to mental health services, high costs, and geographical barriers further compounding the issue. The strain of balancing WHRD responsibilities with family obligations has also increased, with 63% of respondents reporting a significant burden, placing WHRDs at risk of burnout and decreased effectiveness in their advocacy work.

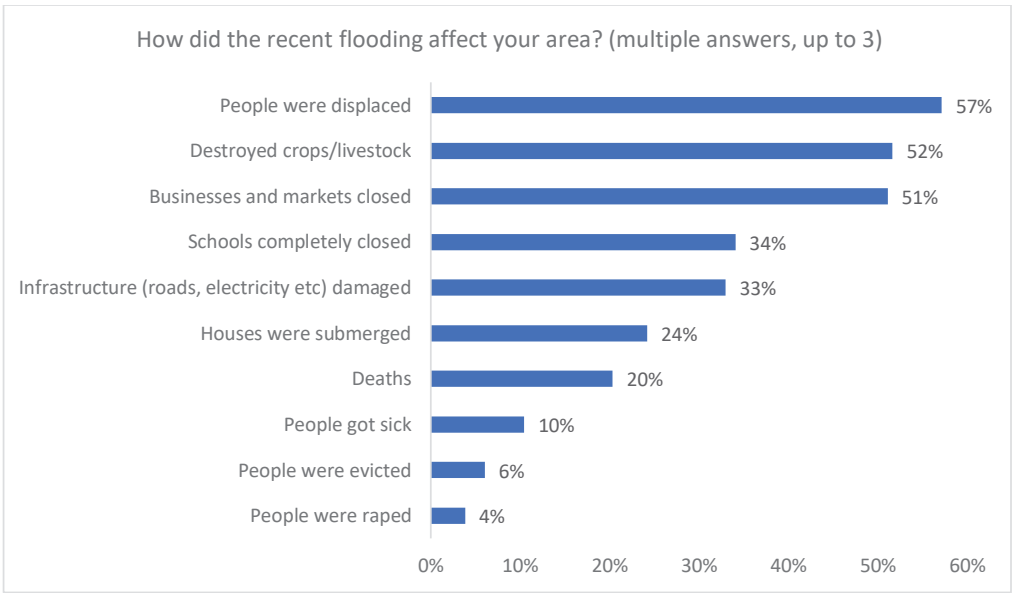
The findings of this report underscore the urgent need for comprehensive support systems, including financial aid, mental health services, and protective measures for WHRDs. The disruption caused by the floods and the ongoing climate crisis demands adaptive strategies to help WHRDs manage the escalating challenges while maintaining their crucial roles in human rights advocacy. This report calls for immediate attention to strengthening resilience among WHRDs, providing targeted aid, and enhancing disaster preparedness and response policies to mitigate future impacts on women's rights work in Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

The recent climate crisis and severe flooding in various regions of Kenya, including Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi’s informal settlements, have had devastating impacts on Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs). This report aims to illuminate the specific challenges faced by WHRDs in the aftermath of the flooding crisis and provide recommendations for strengthening the support systems they rely on. It recommends that by addressing the funding gaps, enhancing community preparedness, and integrating climate resilience into human rights advocacy, stakeholders can better equip WHRDs to navigate future crises and continue their essential work defending women’s rights in Kenya.

The survey asked respondents how the recent flooding affected their County. Displacement, destruction of livelihoods, and closure of businesses and schools were top-ranked, suggesting that the flooding’s impacts are long-term, affecting immediate survival and the broader social and economic fabric.

Figure 1: How did the recent flooding affect your area? (multiple answers, up to 3)



A significant consequence of the flooding was displacement, affecting over half of the respondents in Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi’s informal settlements. This directly threatens homes and living conditions, suggesting that entire communities were uprooted due to rising water levels or unsafe conditions.

The closure of businesses and markets (51%) and destruction of crops and livestock (52%) indicate that the flooding severely disrupted local economies. Several KI respondents noted how the floods had either submerged or swept away their homes. “Along with losing my home, we lost a lot of household items, livestock, and unharvested crops that we relied on for food and income. The floods destroyed our property and wiped out our means of sustaining ourselves” (KI, male Kisumu 07-10-24).

Submerged houses (24%) and deaths (20%) underscore the physical devastation and loss of life due to the floods. A Marsabit respondent narrated, “entire villages have been submerged, with families losing their homes, livestock, and crops—their primary sources of income. As a result, a large portion of the community now depends on aid to survive. (KI male Marsabit 03-10-24). This situation could result in long-term food insecurity and economic recovery challenges.

A third of respondents reported that schools were closed and infrastructure was damaged. As a key informant in Nakuru noted, “displacement due to the floods has forced people to relocate, often to areas far from clinics or hospitals. Many schools were damaged, and children were displaced from their homes, making it difficult for them to attend classes (KI, Female Nakuru 11-10-24).” This highlights a major setback in education and a negative impact on critical services such as electricity and transportation. This further hinders recovery and affects daily life, particularly in remote or underdeveloped regions.

Though a smaller percentage, the mention of rape (4%) raises serious concerns about safety and the worsening of gender-based violence in times of crisis. Many women have been subjected to harassment and even rape, as the crisis has created an environment where vulnerabilities are heightened and perpetrators feel emboldened to act with impunity (KI male Nairobi 24-09-24). This points to the need for more robust protection measures for vulnerable groups during disasters.

The data speaks to the realities of the flooding and the destruction in the different counties. Meru County has experienced increased flooding incidents due to changing rain patterns in the Eastern Highlands. The destruction of agricultural land, a key livelihood source for residents, has been significant. A report by Kenya Red Cross (2023) details the displacement of over 1,500 households in Meru following heavy rains in 2022, which caused mudslides and the loss of crops such as maize and beans, affecting food security. Meru’s infrastructure, including roads and bridges, has also been damaged, impacting economic activities.

In Kitui County prolonged droughts followed by sudden flash floods have engulfed the area. The National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) reported that floods in Kitui in early 2023 displaced thousands of residents and destroyed critical

water infrastructure, exacerbating water scarcity in the region. The floods worsened conditions for Kitui's already drought-stricken population, leading to increased migration and conflict over resources such as water and pasture.

In 2021, floods in Marsabit County damaged road networks connecting Marsabit to Isiolo and Ethiopia. According to Oxfam (2021), climate change has worsened flooding in northern Kenya, leading to soil erosion and damage to pastoral lands. The floods further marginalise Marsabit's pastoral communities, threatening livestock, the primary source of livelihood.

Mombasa, located along Kenya's coastline, is highly vulnerable to climate-related flooding due to its low elevation. Rising sea levels and intense rainfall have led to frequent flooding in recent years. UN-Habitat (2020) identified Mombasa as one of the coastal cities most at risk from sea-level rise, predicting that large sections of the city could be submerged by 2050. In 2023, torrential rains caused flooding in Mombasa, resulting in blocked drainage systems and displaced populations in informal settlements like Kisauni.

Kisumu is prone to seasonal floods due to its location near Lake Victoria. In 2023, flooding displaced over 5,000 households, particularly in low-lying areas such as Nyando and Ahero. The Lake Victoria Basin Commission notes that poor drainage systems and wetland encroachment have exacerbated Kisumu's flooding vulnerability. The floods also caused outbreaks of waterborne diseases such as cholera, further straining the county's health system .

The 2022 floods in Bomet County caused significant damage to crops, mainly tea, which is the county's economic mainstay. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), floods in Bomet also resulted in landslides, displacing hundreds of people and destroying homes. The county's poor road infrastructure has hampered disaster response efforts, leaving affected populations vulnerable to secondary impacts such as food shortages

Nakuru County, particularly the areas surrounding Lake Nakuru, has seen unprecedented flooding events. In 2020 and 2021, rising water levels of Lake Nakuru caused displacement of communities living along the lake's shores. Studies by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) (2022) attribute the rising water levels to a combination of heavy rainfall and land-use changes around the lake basin. Flooding has disrupted tourism and agriculture, which are key economic drivers in Nakuru, as well as destroyed wildlife habitats, putting endangered species like flamingos at risk .

Nairobi's informal settlements, such as Kibera and Mukuru, have faced chronic flooding exacerbated by poor urban planning and inadequate drainage systems. In

2023, heavy rains caused severe flooding in these areas, displacing thousands of residents and causing widespread damage to homes and infrastructure. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2022), flooding in Nairobi’s informal settlements leads to water contamination, increasing the risk of diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Moreover, the lack of proper housing exposes residents to the dangers of collapsing structures during floods.

This report highlights significant gaps in the availability and effectiveness of support for WHRDs and their communities. It examines the levels of assistance provided during and after the floods, focusing on the role of government, local authorities, families, professional networks, religious institutions, and community members. It also provides perceptions on the capacity of WHRDs and their organisations to recover from such disasters and the preparedness of their communities for future climate-related events. In the end, it makes recommendations to guide policymakers, non-state actors, and donors aimed at improving the resilience and well-being of WHRDs in the face of ongoing and future climate-related challenges.

Methodology

To achieve the study objectives, a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies, was employed. This combination allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of the climate crisis’s impacts on WHRDs, addressing the research questions’ breadth (through quantitative data) and depth (through qualitative insights).

The quantitative survey was conducted with 182 WHRDs from the eight counties.

Figure 2: Sample distribution

Survey respondents

Total	182	100%
Meru	21	12%
Kitui	20	11%
Marsabit	20	11%
Mombasa	20	11%
Kisumu	29	16%
Bomet	21	12%
Nakuru	17	9%
Nairobi	34	19%

Key informants

County	Male	Female	Total
Bomet	2	0	2
Kisumu	3	2	5
Kitui	1	5	6
Marsabit	1	1	2
Meru	3	2	5
Mombasa	0	1	1
Nairobi	3	5	8
Nakuru	1	3	4
Total	14	19	33

The survey was designed to quantify the key trends and patterns regarding the impacts of the climate crisis and the efficacy of existing coping mechanisms. The survey was administered through telephonic interviews using Kobo Collect, a mobile data collection tool that facilitated efficient and accurate data gathering, even in remote areas.

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that respondents were representative of the diverse socio-economic and geographical contexts of WHRDs across the eight counties. This approach allowed for comparison across different demographic groups and regions.

The quantitative data can be generalised to the broader population of WHRDs in the target counties, offering valuable insights into common challenges and coping mechanisms. The structured format of the survey, with predefined questions and answer options, allowed for rigorous statistical analysis of the data. The standardization of questions also enabled the comparison of responses across different demographic groups, regions, and periods, helping to identify trends and commonalities in the impacts experienced by WHRDs.

The qualitative component involved 33 key informant interviews with WHRDs and other stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of the personal experiences, challenges, and coping strategies employed by WHRDS in the context of climate change. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring the participants' unique contexts and experiences.

Climate Crisis and Flooding in Kenya

Due to climate change, Kenya has faced increasing challenges, with floods becoming more frequent and severe. The country's geographical diversity—from coastal areas like Mombasa to arid regions such as Marsabit—presents unique vulnerabilities to

climate-induced flooding. Recent flooding has devastated communities across various counties, affecting rural and urban populations, particularly in informal settlements. This literature review explores the multifaceted impacts of flooding in Kenya, focusing on recent events, drawing on government reports, academic studies, and the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Specifically, the review highlights the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the climate crisis and flooding in Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi's informal settlements.

Kenya's vulnerability to climate change has become increasingly apparent in recent years, with the country facing a dual threat of severe droughts and devastating floods. These weather extremes are exacerbating existing socio-economic challenges, affecting millions, and impeding the country's development goals. Flooding, in particular, has become more frequent and destructive due to erratic rainfall patterns driven by global climate change.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change whose job is to advance scientific knowledge about climate change caused by human activities in its Sixth Assessment Report (2021) attributes the rise in extreme weather events, such as floods, to the intensification of the hydrological cycle due to global warming. Warmer temperatures increase the atmosphere's capacity to hold moisture, resulting in heavier and more prolonged rainfall. In Kenya, this has led to more frequent flash floods, particularly in urban areas where the absorption capacity of soils is already limited (IPCC, 2021).

Kenya's climate is characterised by a bimodal rainfall pattern, with long rains typically occurring between March and May and short rains between October and December. However, climate change has disrupted these patterns, leading to prolonged dry spells and intense rainfall in short periods, resulting in flash floods and riverine floods. The Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD) has observed a 30% increase in rainfall intensity during the short rains since 2015, a trend that continued into 2023. KMD data shows that the 2023 floods were among the worst in recent history, with several counties experiencing rainfall levels 50% higher than the historical average (KMD, 2023).

According to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters is driven by its reliance on rain-fed agriculture, high population growth, and poor land-use practices. The government's National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2018-2022 emphasises the need for climate adaptation strategies to mitigate these impacts. Still, challenges remain in implementing these measures at the local level (MoEF, 2019).

Land degradation due to deforestation, poor agricultural practices, and unregulated urbanisation has also contributed to Kenya's flood risk. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) reports that deforestation rates in Kenya are alarmingly high,

with over 70% of forest cover lost since the 1970s. This has reduced the land's ability to absorb rainfall, increasing surface runoff and leading to more severe flooding, particularly in regions like Meru and Nakuru Counties (UNEP, 2022).

Rapid expansion in urban areas, particularly in informal settlements, has destroyed natural drainage systems. The World Resources Institute (WRI) highlights that Nairobi, Mombasa, and Kisumu are at particularly high risk of flooding due to their poor drainage systems and inadequate urban planning (WRI, 2021). Informal settlements such as Kibera in Nairobi lack basic infrastructure, and during the 2023 floods, thousands of homes were submerged, displacing entire communities (APHRC, 2023).

Riverine flooding, particularly along the Tana and Nzoia rivers, has also been a recurrent problem in Kenya. A study by the University of Nairobi's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies (2022) found that inadequate river management practices, including the lack of proper flood control measures such as dykes and retention basins, have increased the vulnerability of communities living along riverbanks. The study further notes that in Kitui and Marsabit Counties, rivers that are typically dry during most of the year can swell rapidly after intense rainfall, catching residents off-guard and causing widespread damage (University of Nairobi, 2022).

The increasing frequency of floods has had devastating impacts on agricultural productivity. A 2023 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the floods destroyed over 500,000 hectares of farmland across Kenya, with significant losses in staple crops such as maize, beans, and rice. The hardest-hit counties included Meru, Kitui, Bomet, and Nakuru, where subsistence farmers lost entire harvests. FAO notes that these losses have ripple effect on national food security, exacerbating already high levels of hunger and malnutrition caused by preceding droughts (FAO, 2023).

A World Bank (2023) assessment of the impact of the 2023 floods found that the destruction of rural infrastructure, such as roads and irrigation systems, hampered farmers' ability to transport their produce to markets, further reducing their income. In some areas, the disruption of agricultural supply chains led to sharp increases in food prices, disproportionately affecting the urban poor and exacerbating inequality (World Bank, 2023).

Flooding has also led to widespread displacement, particularly in flood-prone counties like Kisumu, Mombasa, and the urban informal settlements of Nairobi. The Kenya Red Cross (2023) reported that during the 2023 floods, over 200,000 people were displaced, many of whom were relocated to temporary shelters in schools and churches. Displacement disrupts livelihoods, particularly for low-income families dependent on small businesses or daily labour. A survey by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that many displaced households lost their primary sources of

income due to flood damage to homes, markets, and businesses (IOM, 2023).

Women and children are disproportionately affected by these events. According to a study by ActionAid Kenya (2023), women, particularly in rural areas, bear the brunt of the economic burden caused by floods. In addition to losing crops and livestock, women often have to shoulder the responsibility of caring for displaced families, further straining their already limited resources. The study also found that children in flood-affected regions are more likely to miss school due to displacement or damage to school infrastructure (ActionAid, 2023).

The psychological toll of flooding also cannot be overlooked. A study by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) found that individuals displaced by flooding experienced high levels of stress and anxiety, particularly those in informal settlements who faced the dual challenges of displacement and loss of livelihoods. Mental health services in Kenya are limited, and the study emphasised the need for more significant investment in psychosocial support for flood-affected populations (APHRC, 2023).

The Kenyan government has recognised the need for comprehensive disaster risk management strategies in response to the increasing frequency of floods. The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is central in coordinating flood response efforts, including early warning systems, emergency relief, and post-disaster recovery. The government's Climate Change Act (2016) and National Adaptation Plan (NAP) outline key measures for building resilience to climate change, including flood management (GoK, 2016). The government has also partnered with international organisations to implement large-scale infrastructure projects for flood control. For example, the World Bank-funded Kenya Water Security and Climate Resilience Project (KWSCRIP) has supported the construction of dams and water storage facilities in flood-prone regions such as Bomet and Nakuru. These projects aim to regulate river flow during periods of heavy rainfall, reducing the risk of downstream flooding (World Bank, 2023).

NGOs are critical in supporting flood-affected communities and advocating sustainable flood management practices. The Kenya Red Cross has been at the forefront of providing emergency relief to displaced populations, including food, water, and shelter. In addition to immediate relief efforts, NGOs such as Oxfam and ActionAid have implemented long-term resilience-building programs. These initiatives empower communities to adopt climate-smart agricultural practices, such as using drought-resistant crops and water conservation techniques, to reduce their vulnerability to floods (Oxfam, 2023).

Community-based adaptation strategies have gained recognition as an effective approach to building local resilience to floods. In Marsabit, a county frequently affected

by both droughts and floods, local communities have adopted traditional water management systems, such as sand dams, to capture and store floodwaters for use during dry periods. A study by the University of Nairobi's Institute for Climate Change and Adaptation found that these community-driven approaches have significantly improved water security and reduced the impact of floods on livelihoods (University of Nairobi, 2023).

Climate change vulnerabilities and WHRDs

Climate change and flooding disproportionately affect women because of pre-existing gender inequalities in access to resources and decision-making. WHRDs often support women's groups or cooperatives, and the flooding has disrupted these structures, leading to increased economic insecurity. A report by the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kenya (2023) highlighted how these natural disasters exacerbate women's vulnerabilities, particularly among WHRDs in regions like Kisumu and Nakuru, where the flooding heavily impacted women's roles in agriculture and small-scale industries.

The floods in Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, and Mombasa caused massive displacement, with many WHRDs losing homes, property, and access to land that sustains their income. Many WHRDs are involved in small-scale farming and informal businesses, sectors heavily affected by floodwaters, which destroyed crops and disrupted markets. Women in informal settlements, such as Nairobi's Kibera and Mathare, faced even greater challenges as flooding intensified the economic precarity in these regions, where WHRDs often engage in small-scale trade or community advocacy work.

WHRDs are often breadwinners for their families, and the economic disruption caused by the floods has exacerbated poverty. According to Oxfam's 2023 report on climate impacts in Kenya, the destruction of agricultural land, livestock deaths, and interrupted trade routes have hit women in rural areas particularly hard, further marginalising WHRDs who rely on these income streams. Additionally, with the closure of roads and damage to transportation infrastructure, accessing markets has become difficult, reducing opportunities for income generation and deepening dependency on humanitarian aid.

Mental health issues have also been prominent. Flooding not only causes trauma through displacement and loss of livelihoods but also increases anxiety and depression among WHRDs. Many report feeling overwhelmed by their inability to help their communities effectively while also struggling with their losses. Amnesty International (2023) highlights that WHRDs often work under tremendous stress during crises, and the flooding has added to their emotional burden.

Gendered climate change vulnerabilities exacerbate existing social structural weaknesses, leading to an increase in gender-based violence (GBV). Displacement has left many WHRDs and the women they support at risk of sexual and physical

violence in makeshift shelters and overcrowded camps. The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) report (2023) on climate disasters and women's rights underscores the rise in GBV following disasters, including incidents of violence in displacement camps in Marsabit and Kisumu. WHRDs, who often serve as first responders to survivors of GBV, are facing increased demand for their services while simultaneously experiencing heightened personal risks.

For WHRDs, who advocate for these services, the closure of health facilities and legal aid centres due to flooding can make it difficult to protect and support women's rights. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2023) noted that in flood-affected areas like Bomet and Meru, WHRDs are struggling to maintain advocacy efforts, particularly in reaching rural women who are cut off from vital services due to impassable roads and infrastructure damage.

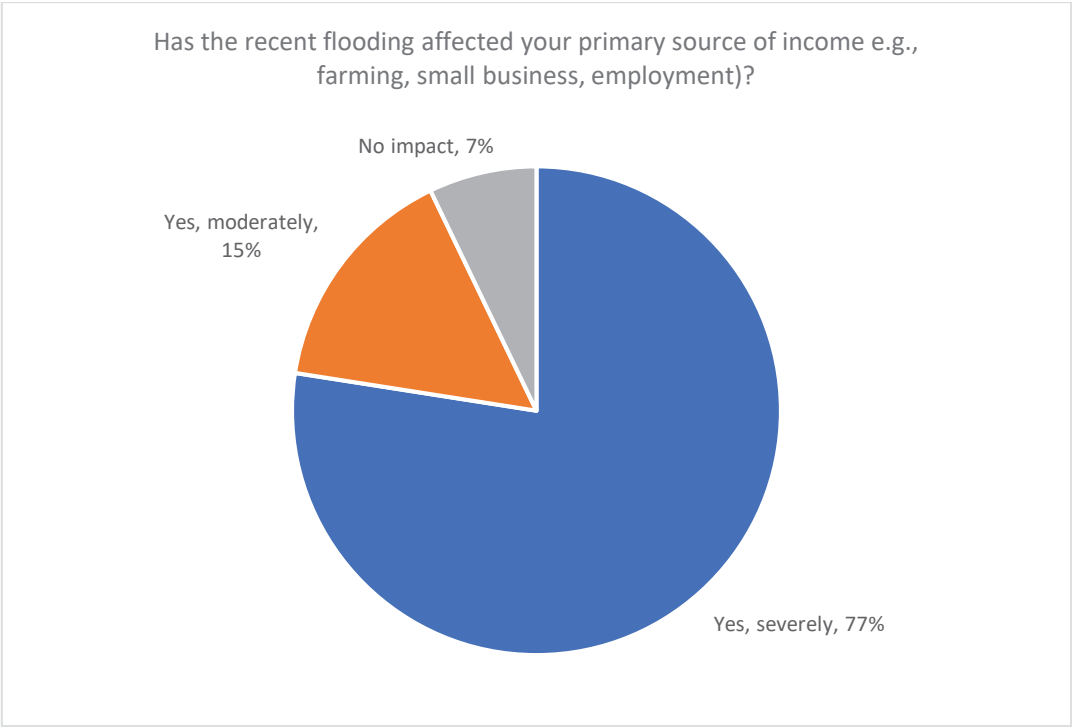
WHRDs face increased harassment and intimidation during crises as their advocacy exposes corruption and failures in disaster response. A report by Human Rights Watch (2023) documents several cases where WHRDs were targeted by local authorities and non-state actors in Marsabit and Nairobi for exposing the unequal distribution of aid and highlighting the neglect of marginalised communities. Floods often exacerbate these tensions as the scramble for resources increases, making WHRDs targets of retaliation by influential individuals and groups who feel threatened by their advocacy.

Flooding and displacement have also compromised the digital security of WHRDs, as they rely heavily on mobile phones and internet connectivity for organising and advocacy work. Many WHRDs lost digital equipment during the floods, while others have found it difficult to maintain secure communication due to damaged infrastructure. According to the Digital Security Coalition (2023), there has been a rise in cyber-attacks targeting WHRDs during the climate crisis, mainly through phishing and surveillance, as they attempt to mobilise resources and aid for affected communities.

Findings per objective

Objective 1: To identify specific challenges faced by WHRDs due to the climate crisis. The recent flooding has significantly impacted WHRDs primary sources of income.

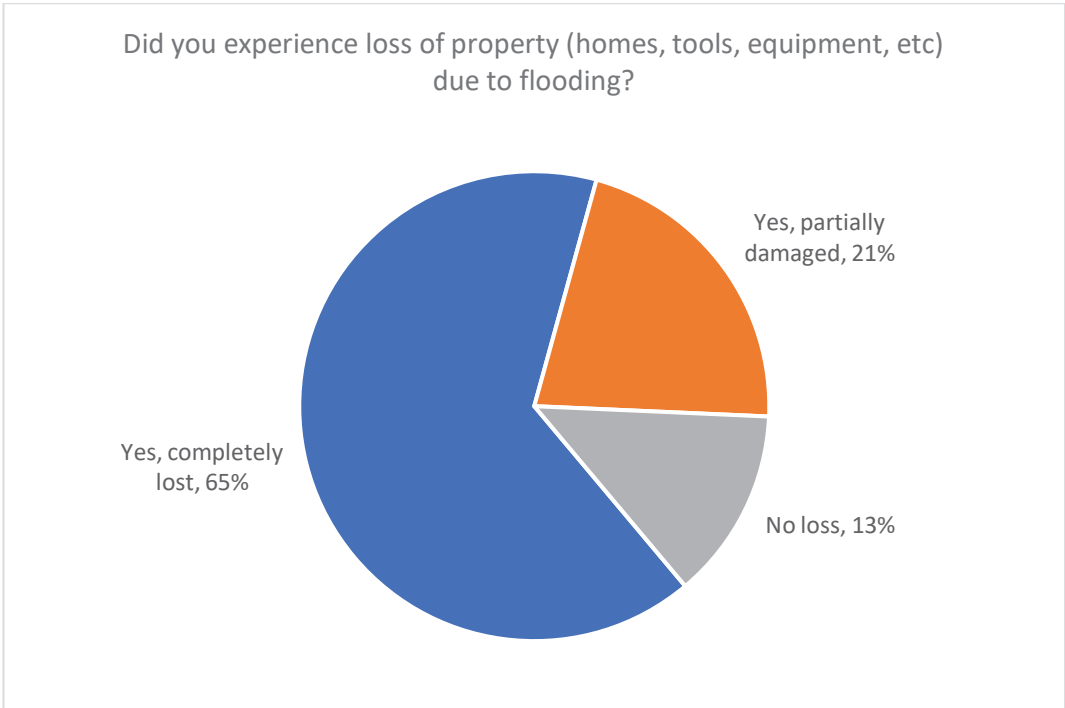
Figure 3: Has the recent flooding affected your primary source of income, e.g., farming, small business, employment)?



Most (92%) have been affected, with 77% experiencing severe and 15% moderate effects. Only 7% reported no impact. “We operate an economic empowerment centre, which includes a shop. The heavy rains, compounded by our poor drainage system, led to water inundating our shop, resulting in substantial financial losses for both our organisation and the individuals we serve. Many of the women and girls we work with experienced similar challenges, which made it difficult for them to access government aid, especially those who lacked identification documents” (KI, Female Nairobi 24-09-24). Another KI echoed a similar experience. “The recent flooding has had a devastating impact on the economic empowerment of women in my community. Many local shops were completely washed away, disrupting livelihoods and making it difficult for women to sustain their businesses” (KI Female Nairobi 24-09-24).

Many WHRDs interviewed said they had experienced disruptions to their primary income sources due to recent flooding. “During the heavy rains, many businesses came to a standstill because of the floods. People, including myself, couldn’t run their usual economic activities,” said a key informant from Bomet (KI, female Bomet 25-09-24). This suggests potential economic instability in the affected areas, with severe implications for livelihoods, food security, and local economies. Many of the WHRDs may, in the long run, face significant financial challenges, potentially leading to increased poverty levels.

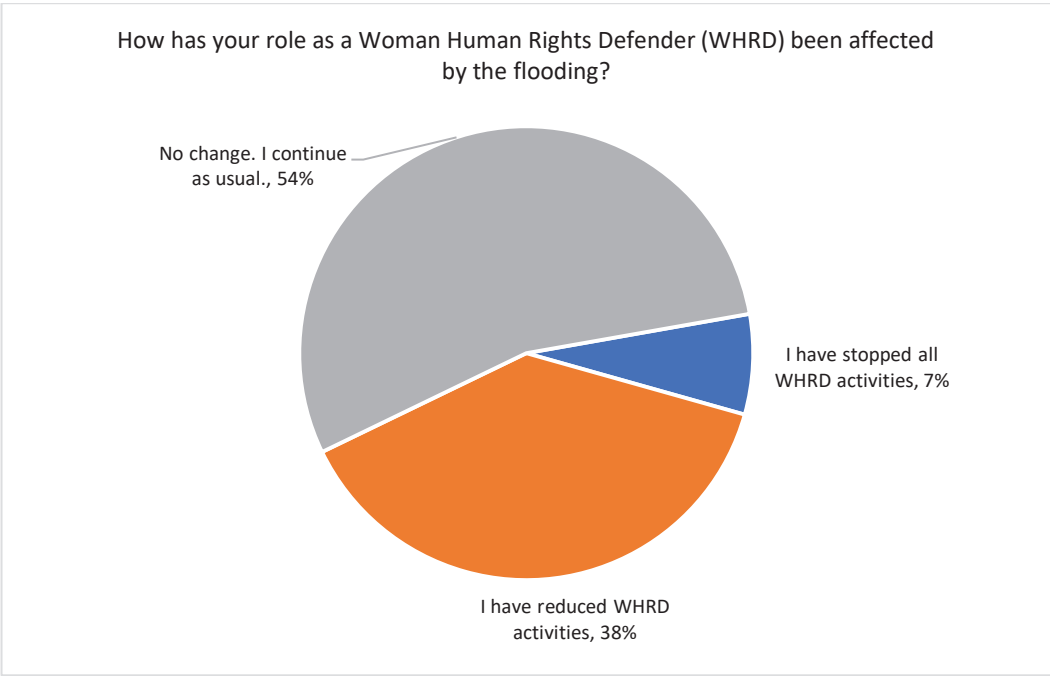
Figure 4: Did you experience loss of property (homes, tools, equipment, etc) due to flooding?



Most WHRD respondents (65%) reported complete property loss, 21% experienced partial damage, and only 13% reported no loss. With 65% of respondents reporting complete loss, the floods severely impacted the WHRDs’ assets and livelihoods. A Kisumu respondent noted, “My computer and some essential tools were ruined when water entered my house, which was devastating for me as a journalist. Losing my equipment hindered my ability to work and affected my overall productivity and creativity” (KI female Kisumu 07-10-24). In Kitui, another female noted that many houses in her area were destroyed, and essential facilities, such as toilets, have been rendered unusable. The soil erosion caused by the heavy rains led to the collapse of structures (KI female Kitui 25-09-24). “While I, fortunately, didn’t suffer catastrophic losses, several pieces of furniture and household items were damaged. The water seeped into my home, affecting various areas” (KI female Mombasa 03-10-24). The loss and damage suggest a need for substantial recovery efforts and support to mitigate future flooding damage. The data highlights the importance of targeted aid and policy interventions to support the WHRDs most affected.

Flooding has varying degrees of impact on WHRDs, underscoring the importance of resilience and support systems in maintaining human rights advocacy during environmental challenges.

Figure 5: How has your role as a Woman Human Rights Defender (WHRD) been affected by the flooding?

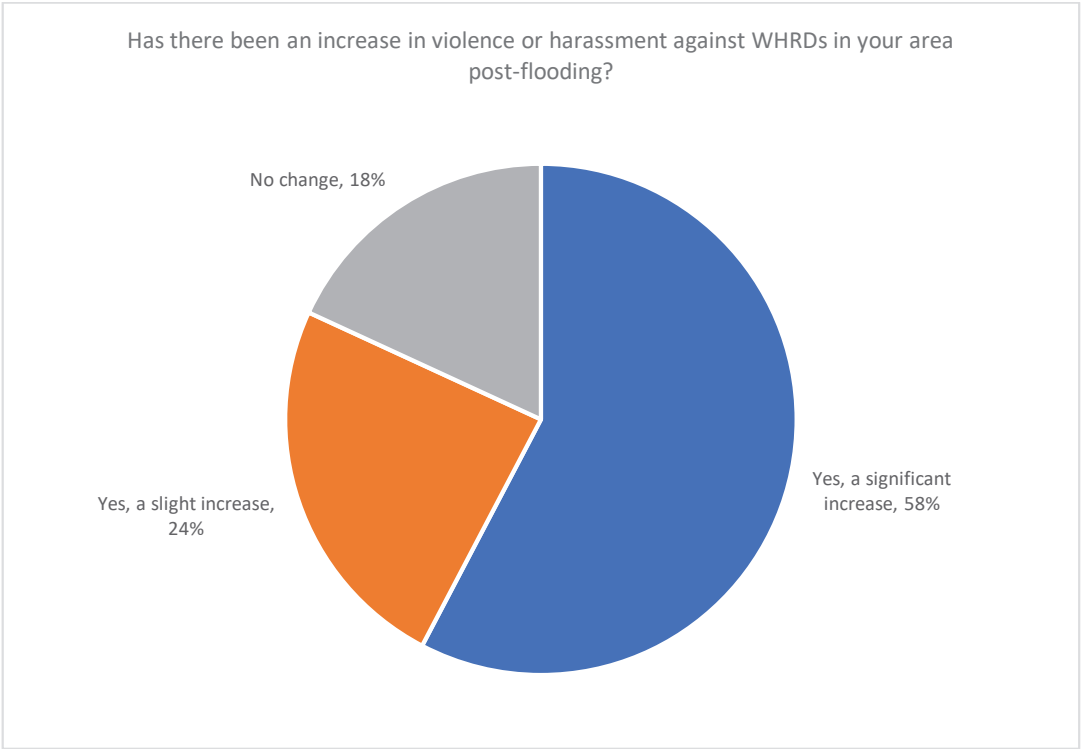


Most (54%) of WHRDs have maintained their roles despite the challenges posed by flooding, indicating resilience and a strong commitment to their work. They continue their activities as usual. “The flooding has added a new dimension to my work as a WHRD. It has provided an opportunity for me to support other women human rights defenders and community members through debriefing sessions, which are often overlooked but are essential for emotional recovery. The crisis has also prompted me to shift my focus towards more holistic advocacy, incorporating mental health and disaster preparedness into our human rights work (KI female Nakuru 11-10-24). A writer and women human rights defender in Kisumu said the flooding experience has motivated her to shed light on the adverse effects of floods and climate change on vulnerable populations. “For instance, the alarming rise in teen pregnancies due to displacement and the breakdown of community structures is particularly concerning. My role now includes not just reporting on these issues but also advocating for solutions and raising awareness about the urgent need for support” (KI female Kisumu 07-10-24).

The 38% who have reduced activities suggest that the flooding significantly impacts on the ability of WHRDs to carry out their work, affecting advocacy and support for human rights. The 7% who have stopped activities altogether highlight the severe impact that environmental factors like flooding can have on human rights work, possibly due to resource constraints or personal safety concerns. For example, in Nairobi, a WHRD narrated that they were compelled to pause and postpone many of their initiatives

to ensure their safety and that of their community members. “Once the rains began to subside, we resumed our interventions, focusing on supporting our community in recovery and advocacy efforts” (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). Due to the poor state of the roads, a WHRD in Kitui said she could not access certain areas that most needed help. “This has hindered my ability to assist families and document their struggles, which is essential for advocating on their behalf. It has been frustrating, as my role requires me to be on the ground, but these logistical challenges have made it difficult” (KI female Kitui 08-10-24). The same was reported by a Marsabit WHRD who said the damage of roads had increased demands on her time and resources, stretching her capacity to continue advocacy efforts (KI female Marsabit 03-10-24).

Figure 6: Has there been an increase in violence or harassment against WHRDs in your area post-flooding?



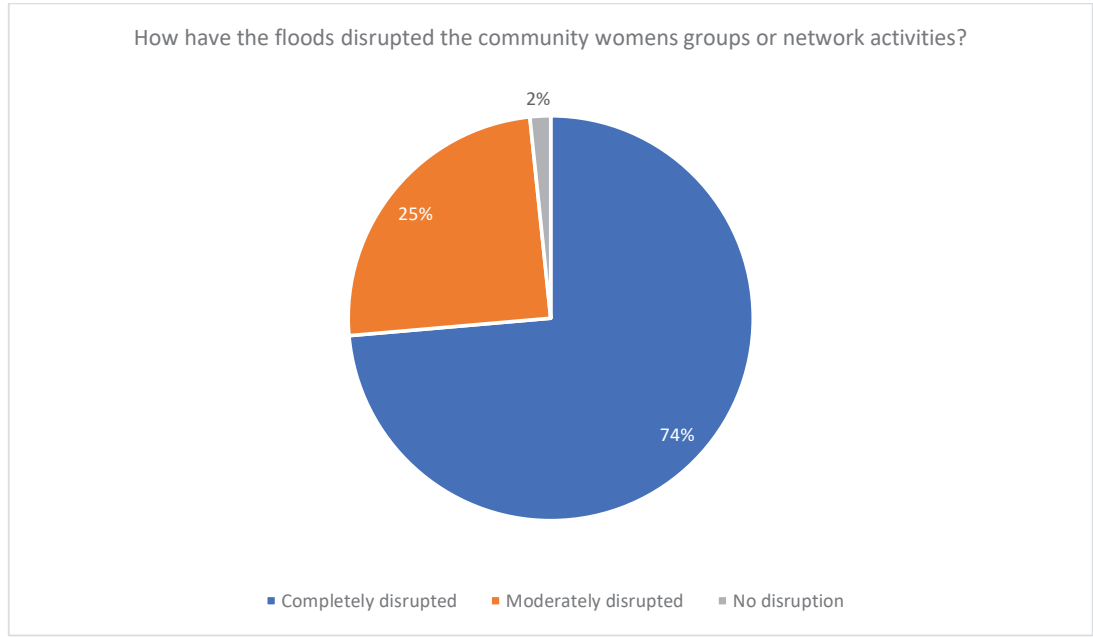
58% of WHRD respondents observed a significant increase in violence or harassment against them and their colleagues after the flooding stopped. Combining both “significant” and “slight” increases, 82% of respondents noted some level of increase in violence or harassment. Only 18% reported no change in the situation. “Yes, there has been an increase in harassment, particularly in the camps where displaced families are living...In some cases, women have been subjected to violence, and there have also been reports of harassment within the temporary shelters. This has already made a difficult situation even worse for women,” noted a male key informant (Kitui

08-10-24). A Nakuru-based female KI argued that the aftermath of the flooding has created a highly emotional and vulnerable environment within the community, adding that there have been smear campaigns and verbal harassment against some WHRDs (KI female Nakuru 11-10-24). In Kisumu, some women defenders face backlash when they try to raise their voices and demand their rights during crises like the floods, often from men. (KI male Kisumu 07-10-24).

The loss of income due to flooding and increased cost of living has increased vulnerabilities for women. “When women request financial support from male counterparts, it can lead to violence and heightened cases of gender-based violence (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). The stress and instability caused by the floods have exacerbated tensions within families and communities, leading to more reports of gender-based violence in Mombasa (KI female Mombasa 03-10-24).

The WHRD networks and community groups have been severely disrupted.

Figure 7: How have the floods disrupted the community women’s groups or network activities?



The floods have devastated women’s ability to participate in community groups and networks, with 99% of activities facing some level of disruption (74% completely and 25 moderately disrupted). Some informants noted that many women have been displaced, making it difficult to continue meeting regularly. This has weakened the bonds that generally hold these networks together. Women’s groups have been stretched thin as they work to raise funds and provide support to members who have lost their homes or livelihoods. Some members of these groups have lost family

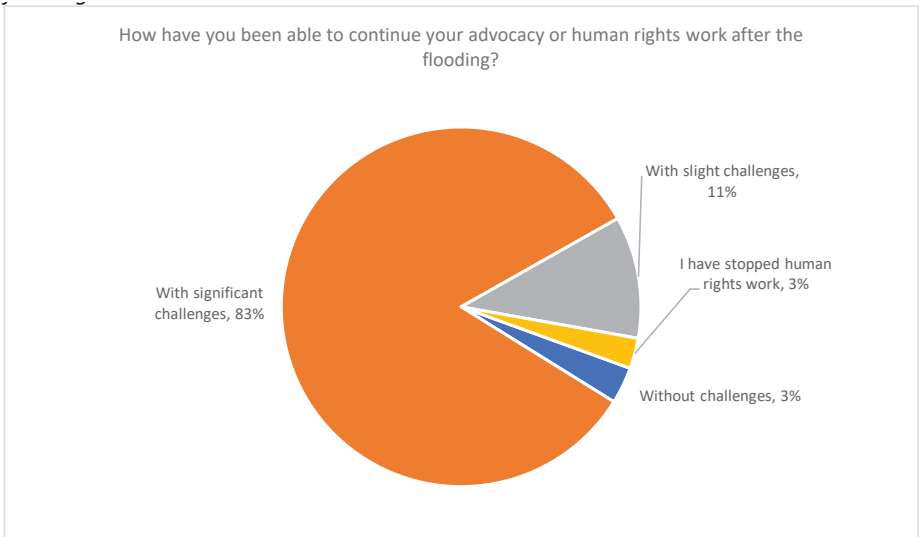
members, further straining their ability to participate in collective activities. The emotional and financial toll of the floods has made it challenging for women to come together in the same way they did before (KI Female Nakuru 11-10-24; Female Nairobi 24-09-24).

The flooding has adversely affected community networks and women’s groups. During this crisis, resources were heavily redirected toward addressing the immediate challenges posed by the floods. As a result, many initiatives focused on empowering women and girls in areas like economic development and climate change have faced setbacks (KI Female Nairobi 24-09-24). Other initiatives, such as savings groups or table banking, have stopped operating (KI male Kitui 08-10-24; female Kisumu 07-10-24; male Marsabit 03-10-24; Female Mombasa 03-10-24). Many of these groups rely on small businesses and savings contributions, but the floods destroyed the women’s livelihoods. “Businesses were wiped out, and women struggled to meet financial obligations, such as repaying loans. As a result, the groups could not function as they usually would, and it would take time to recover financially (KI Male Kisumu 07-10-24).

These disruptions mean that women defenders have lost access to crucial support systems, potentially affecting their social connections, opportunities, economic activities, and overall well-being. The breakdown of these networks may leave WHRDs more isolated and vulnerable during a crisis when support is most needed. If these disruptions persist, they could have long-lasting negative impacts on women’s empowerment, community resilience, and social cohesion.

Correspondingly, the flooding has significantly impacted human rights and advocacy work in the Counties.

Figure 8: How have you been able to continue your advocacy or human rights work after the flooding?



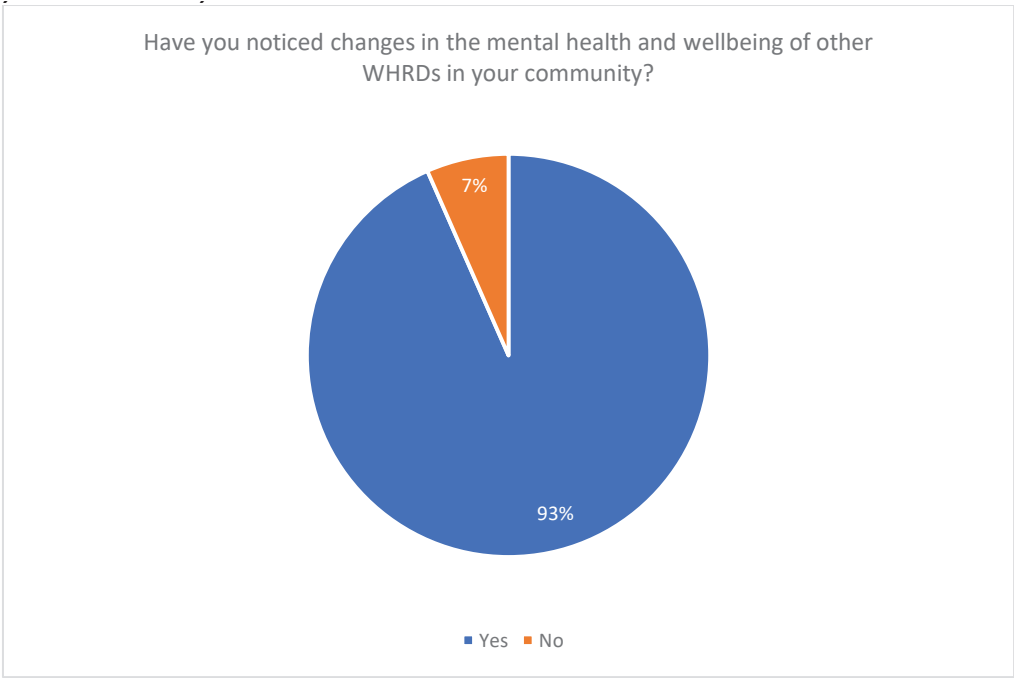
Most respondents report continuing their advocacy or human rights work with significant challenges. Very few WHRDs have been able to maintain their work without disruption. This indicates that the flooding has substantially impacted their ability to carry out their work effectively. “Our advocacy work was temporarily disrupted following the flooding, as we had to pause our activities to assess the situation and prioritise the safety of our community” (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). A journalist in Kitui said, “I have been able to continue my work, but it has been much more challenging due to the displacement of families and the difficulty in accessing affected areas. I still follow up on stories, especially for the most vulnerable, but the logistics of reporting have been difficult (KI female Kitui 08-10-24).

3% of the WHRDs interviewed have stopped their human rights work entirely, highlighting the severe effects on some individuals or organisations. Some noted that the overwhelming focus on survival has made it challenging to engage people in discussions about human rights and advocacy. “While I continue to advocate wherever possible, the scope and impact of my work have diminished. The urgent needs of the community have taken precedence, and I find myself needing to prioritise immediate relief efforts over long-term advocacy (KI female Mombasa 03-10-24). Displacement and the change in living conditions have made it difficult for doing human rights advocacy. Many groups are struggling to adapt to the new challenges posed by the floods, which disrupt their usual operations and limit their ability to provide support (KI male Meru 24-09-24). Many WHRDs who used to be active in the community have also been affected, with some unable to continue their work due to the displacement and emotional toll (KI male Kitui 08-10-24).

Targeted support and resources are needed to help those facing significant challenges. These could include financial aid, logistical support, or mental health services. Advocacy for better disaster preparedness and response policies could help mitigate the impact on women’s human rights work in similar situations.

Mental health changes among Women Human Rights Defenders are a significant concern post-flooding.

Figure 9 Have you noticed changes in the mental health and well-being of other WHRDs in your community?



The overwhelming majority (93%) indicates a widespread recognition of changes in mental health and well-being among WHRDs. This suggests that mental health issues are prevalent and noticeable within this community. The changes are due to increased workload, exposure to traumatic events, lack of support, or societal pressures.

Women, in general, have been more affected than men because they bear the responsibility of caring for their families, homes, and livelihoods. Many women were overwhelmed by the losses they faced—their homes, belongings, and children’s safety were at risk. This led to heightened stress and, in some cases, depression. While men also suffered, women were disproportionately affected because they had more to juggle and worry about, according to a male KI in Kisumu (07-10-24).

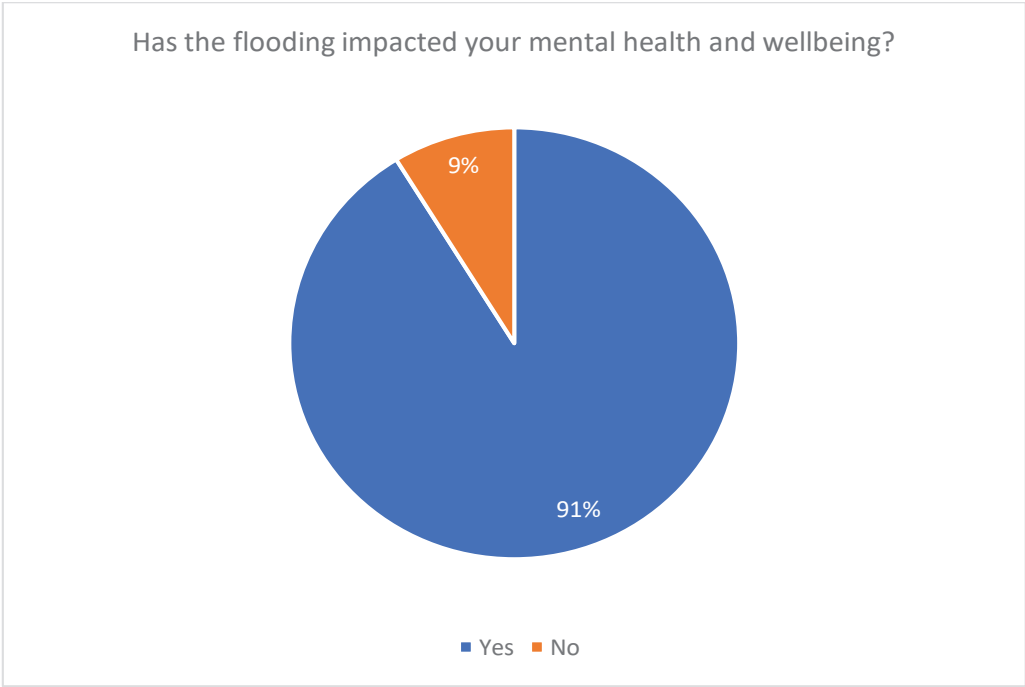
Others noted that many women human rights defenders are experiencing burnout due to the increased pressure from the community. The demands on them have risen sharply as people look for guidance and support after the floods. This has led to stress, exhaustion, and emotional strain among WHRDs. (KI Female Nakuru 11-10-24; Male Kitui 08-10-24).

Some individuals have exhibited behavioural changes, such as reluctance to engage in new activities or initiatives. The stress and trauma of the flooding have impacted their motivation and energy levels, leading to a general sense of uncertainty and anxiety (KI Male Meru 24-09-24; male Marsabit 03-10-24). “Seeing the devastation in my

community and feeling powerless at times took a toll on me emotionally. The stress of trying to help others while also dealing with my losses was overwhelming. It’s been hard to process everything, and at times, it feels like I’m carrying the weight of the entire community on my shoulders,” noted a KI in Kisumu (07-10-24).

The mental health of WHRDs is crucial as it can affect their ability to advocate for human rights effectively. Poor mental health can lead to burnout, reduced productivity, and withdrawal from activism.

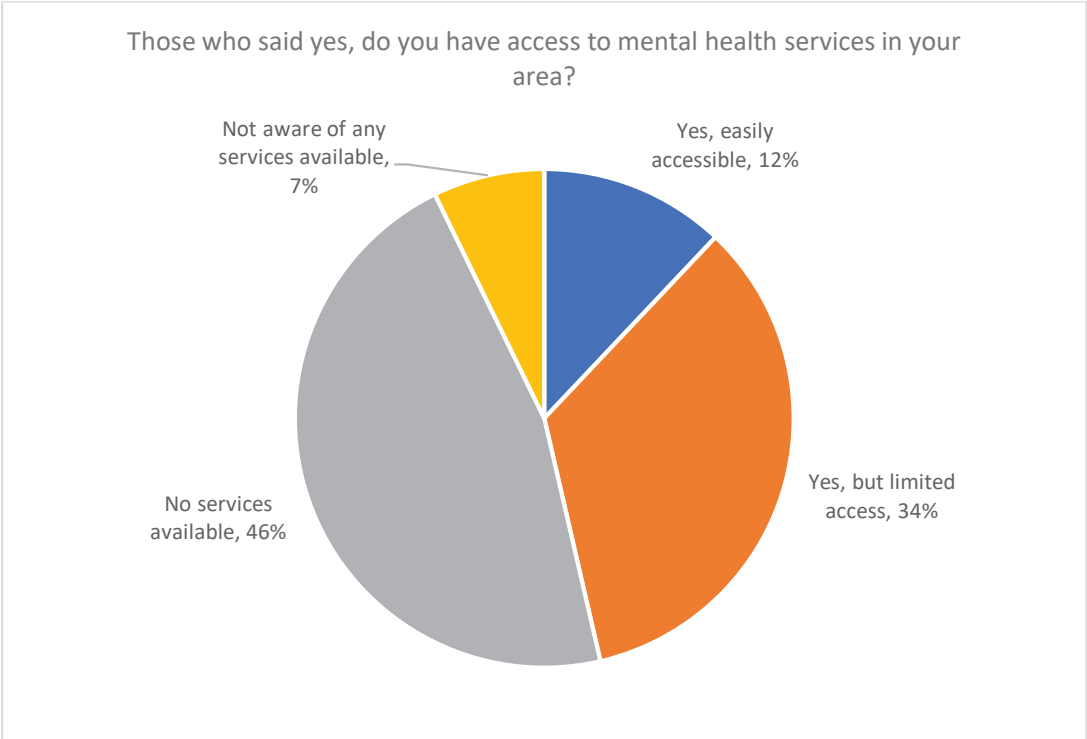
Figure 10: Has the flooding impacted your mental health and wellbeing?



The survey indicates an overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents reported that flooding has impacted their mental health and wellbeing, while only a tiny minority (9%) reported no impact. The stress of dealing with the aftermath of the floods has been overwhelming. Balancing personal responsibilities with the demands of human rights work has been difficult, and the constant need to be available to others has taken a toll on WHRDs mental health. “The community has high expectations of me as a WHRD, and this has added pressure, leading to feelings of anxiety and emotional strain (KI Female Nakuru 11-10-24). In Kisumu, a WHRD said, “The emotional burden of seeing friends and community members suffer, coupled with the uncertainty of the future, has caused me to feel anxious and overwhelmed at times (KI Female Kisumu 07-10-24). This was echoed by a Marsabit KI, who lost friends and colleagues during the crisis, making coping even harder. (KI Male Marsabit 03-10-24). A Mombasa KI noted she feels anxious and emotionally drained, as the weight of personal and community responsibilities can be heavy (KI female Mombasa 03-10-24).

Given the high percentage of people affected, there may be long-term mental health consequences for the WHRDs, which could persist even after the immediate flooding crisis has passed. Mental health issues can affect productivity, social relationships, and overall community resilience, potentially leading to broader economic and social challenges and human rights violations. This is dire in situations where most of the WHRDs do not have access to mental health services in their area.

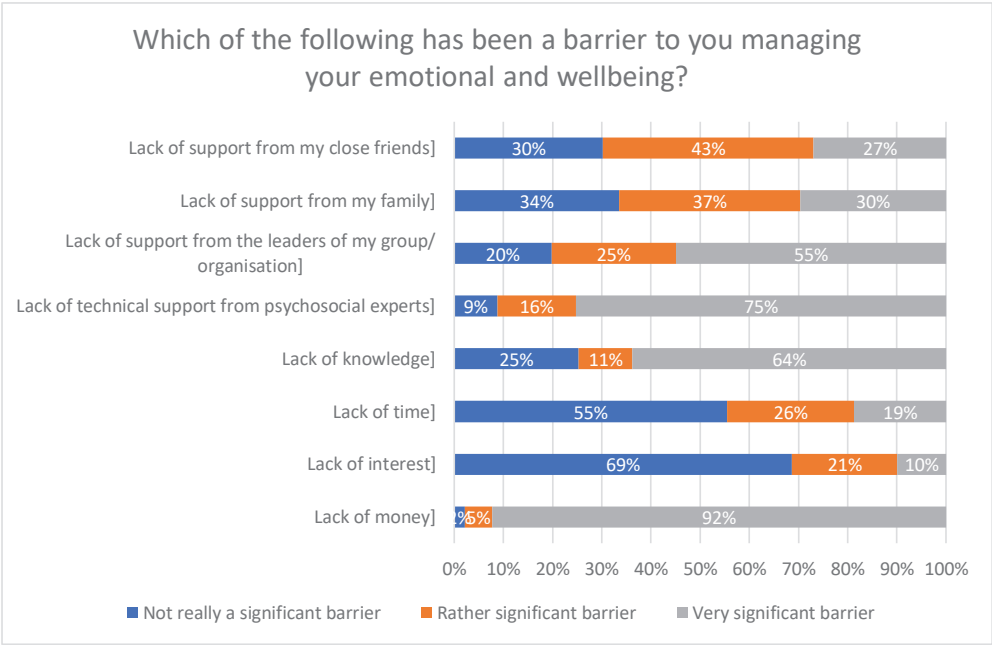
Figure 11: Those who said yes, do you have access to mental health services in your area?



Most of the WHRDs have no access, limited access, or are unaware of mental health support services. With 46% reporting no services available, there is a critical shortage of mental health resources. Even where services exist, 34% report limited access. “This lack of support highlights a critical gap in our community’s response to the mental health needs of those affected by climate crises”, argued a KI (female Nairobi 24-09-24). In Kitui, a journalist said mental health services are unavailable, though desperately needed (KI male Kitui 08-10-24). “Many in my community are grappling with trauma and stress but have no formal outlets to seek help. The absence of such services has made it difficult for individuals to process their experiences and cope with the emotional toll of the crisis (KI female Kisumu 07-10-24). Only 12% report easy access to mental health support, which they deem as valuable. “I was fortunate to receive mental health and psychosocial support from the Kenyan Counsellors and Psychologists Association...their assistance was invaluable, helping many of us process

the grief and trauma we were experiencing” narrated a KI female in Nakuru(11-10-24). The data shows a severe gap in mental health provision or awareness. Lack of support could leave WHRDs vulnerable to stress, burnout, and other mental health challenges, which can hinder their ability to engage in advocacy and activism effectively.

Figure 12: Which of the following has been a barrier to you managing your emotional and wellbeing?



Financial stress is overwhelmingly the biggest obstacle to emotional well-being for the WHRDs interviewed in the survey. Social support (from friends and family) is the next most significant barrier, yet it plays a crucial role in emotional management. If WHRDs do not have a solid social support system, they may feel isolated, amplifying emotional struggles. This gap can make it difficult for them to process and manage the mental strain that often accompanies human rights work, which can be emotionally taxing.

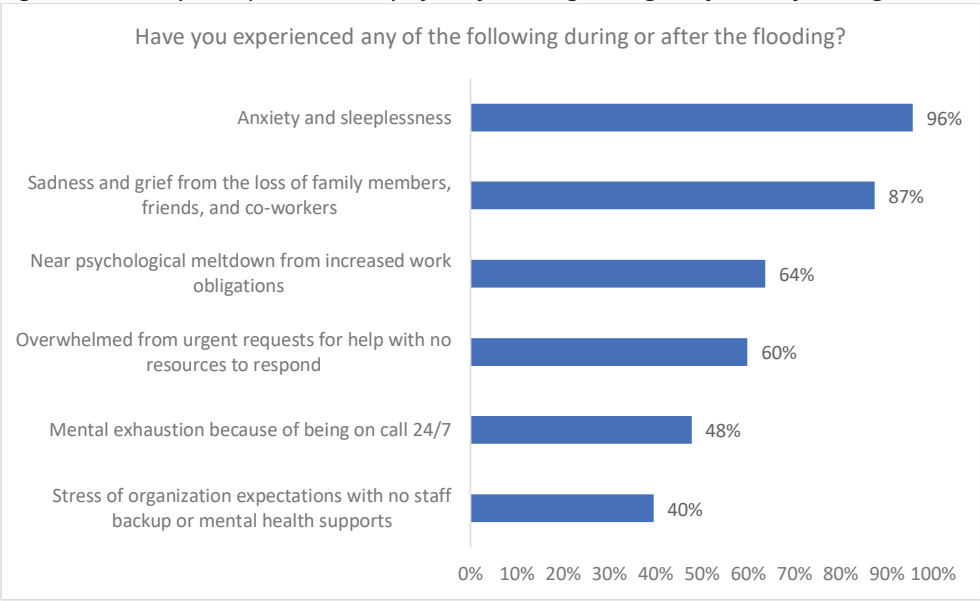
More access to professional psychological support is needed. Many individuals feel they need more support by their organisational leadership in managing their well-being. Time constraints are a moderate barrier for about half the respondents.

Interestingly, lack of interest is the least significant barrier, suggesting that most WHRDs are motivated to manage their emotional well-being. However, they face external obstacles, such as a lack of resources or support and inadequate organisational backing.

The extremely high rates of anxiety, sleeplessness, and grief indicate mental health

issues among WHRDs affected by the floods in Meru, Kitui, Marsabit, Mombasa, Kisumu, Bomet, Nakuru, and Nairobi’s informal settlements.

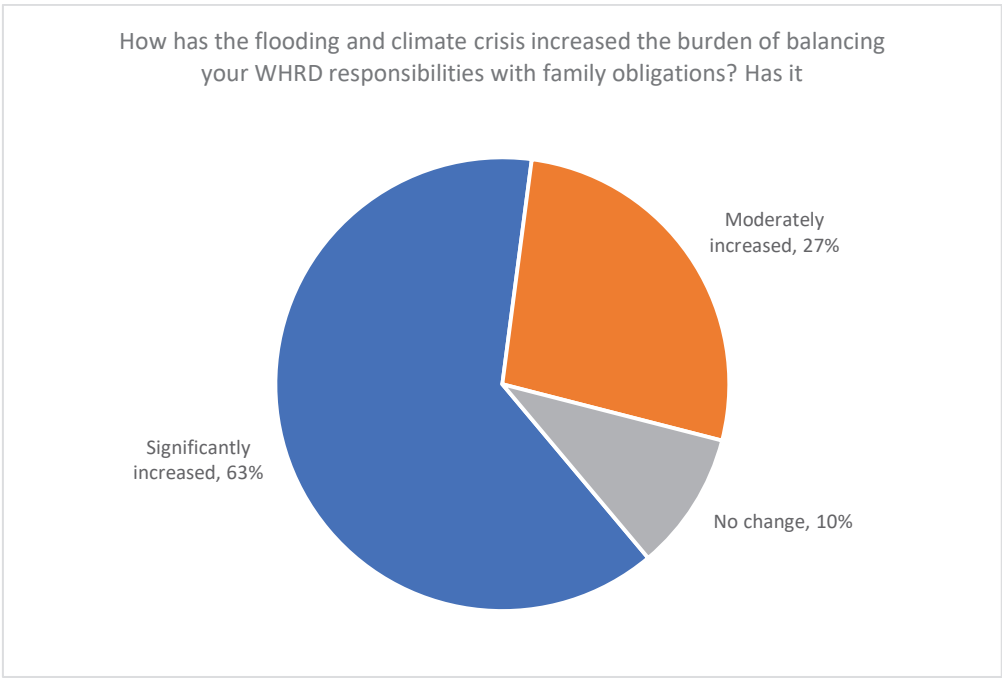
Figure 13: Have you experienced any of the following during or after the flooding?



The flooding has caused widespread trauma in the WHRD community, with 87% experiencing sadness and grief from loss. The high percentages for work-related stress (64% near meltdown, 60% overwhelmed) suggest that response systems and organisations are severely strained. The lower but significant percentages for being on call 24/7 (48%) and lack of staff backup (40%) indicate insufficient support structures for WHRDs responders. As the key informants noted, many problems arising from the crisis have led to increased stress and anxiety because the community has high expectations of me as a WHRD. The overwhelming nature of the situation has slowed down daily activities, and many feel helpless (KI male Meru 24-09-24; female Nakuru 11-10-24; female Kisumu 07-10-24).

Without proper intervention, these experiences could lead to long-term mental health issues, including PTSD, depression, and anxiety disorders. Comprehensive support and adaptive strategies are thus needed to assist WHRDs in managing the increasing challenges posed by the climate crisis while maintaining their human rights work. This is crucial since most respondents (90%) reported increased work balancing WHRD responsibilities with family obligations.

Figure 14: How has the flooding and climate crisis increased the burden of balancing your WHRD responsibilities with family obligations?



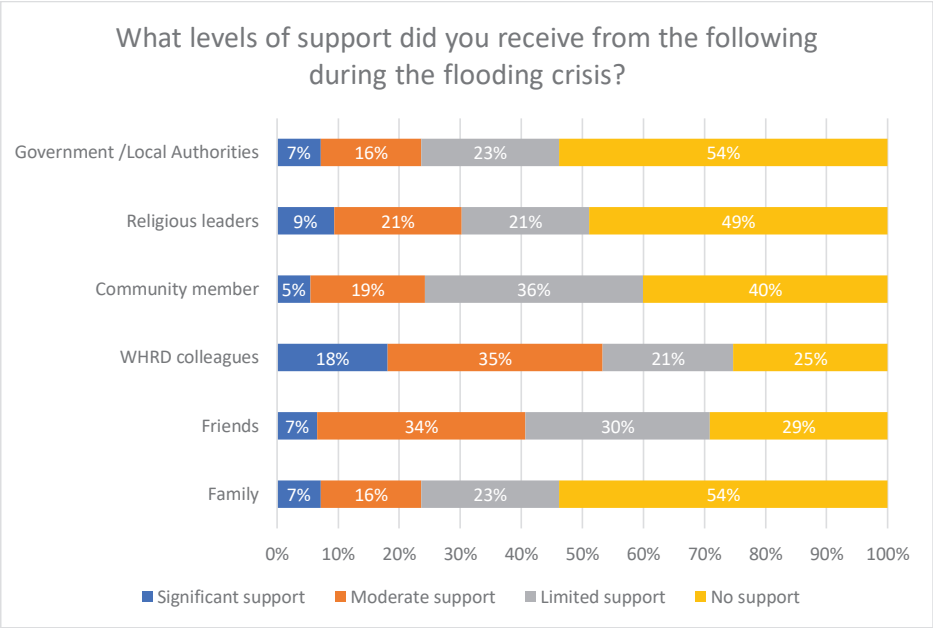
Nearly two-thirds (63%) reported a significant increase, which is a substantial proportion. The combined percentage of those reporting a significant or moderate increase is 90%, indicating a widespread impact. “This balancing act has been exhausting, and there are times when I’ve felt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of work that needs to be done. Finding a balance has been one of the biggest challenges I’ve faced during this crisis,” said a KI WHRD in Nakuru (11-10-24). This was echoed by a WHRD in Nairobi who noted she is stressed and is challenging to find a balance. (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). In Mombasa, a KI argued that “the absence of accessible childcare options further complicates their (WHRDs) ability to engage fully (KI female Mombasa 03-10-24).

The data strongly suggests that the flooding and climate crisis are having a major effect on the personal and professional lives of WHRDs. The high percentage of respondents reporting increased burden implies a growing challenge in balancing work responsibilities with family obligations. With such a high proportion of respondents experiencing increased burdens, there is a risk of burnout or decreased effectiveness in their WHRD roles. The survey suggests that WHRDs need more resources and support to manage their increased burdens.

Objective 2: To evaluate the effectiveness of existing coping mechanisms and support systems

The analysis of support levels during the flooding crisis reveals significant gaps. The data highlights the need for improved government response, more robust community networks, and better use of professional and religious support systems.

Figure 15: What levels of support did you receive from the following during the flooding crisis?



Government/Local Authorities and Families show identical patterns, with the highest percentage (54%) offering no support. According to some of the key informant respondents, the government and local authorities made some efforts to respond to the needs of women during the floods, but there is a lot of room for improvement. For instance, while warnings were issued about the impending floods, the actual response was slow and inadequate. Relocation efforts took longer than necessary, and compensation for those who lost property was delayed (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24; KI female Mombasa 03-10-24). Women, in particular, faced challenges as their needs for safe and dignified temporary housing were not sufficiently prioritised. Issues like protection against gender-based violence in emergency shelters, access to sanitary products, and maternal healthcare were overlooked in many cases. More attention must be given to ensuring that women and children receive the care and protection they need during such crises (KI Female Nakuru 11-10-24).

WHRD colleagues provided the most consistent support, with 53% offering significant or moderate support. This implies strong professional solidarity during the crisis. For instance, in Kibera, a WHRD key informant said they received financial assistance, food and sanitary towels to help mitigate the flood impacts. This support has been crucial in helping the community recover (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). The importance of the

support was also highlighted by a WHRD in Marsabit, who notes, “The support I’ve received from my peers and fellow WHRDs has helped me cope with the stress and trauma” (KI female Marsabit 03-10-24).

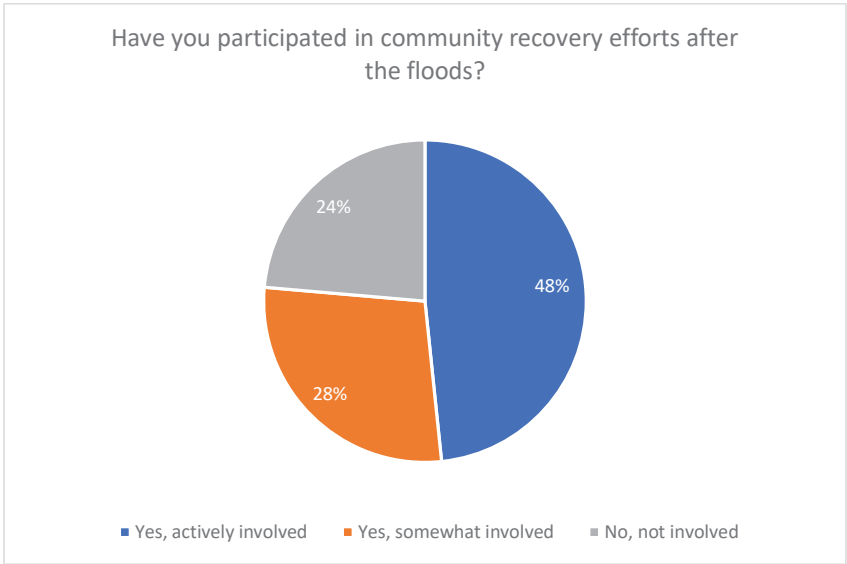
Friends offered more moderate and limited support than other groups, indicating they played a middle role in crisis assistance. Religious leaders showed a mixed response, with 30% providing significant or moderate support and 49% offering no support. Encouraging religious institutions to serve as community support centres during emergencies is essential. Community members offered more limited support than other categories, suggesting potential strain on community resources or a need for more organised community response.

Figure 16: Has your organisation or advocacy group received funding to recover from the flood impacts?



Only a small portion (14%) of the WHRDs organisations have received funding to recover from flood impacts. The data suggests a substantial funding gap for organisations affected by floods. This could indicate a need for increased financial support or more accessible funding mechanisms. This will bolster the community recovery efforts. Key informants, however, cited in-kind support from organisations such as the Kenya Red Cross, Kenyan Counsellors and Psychologists Association and the Lions Club of Kenya.

Figure 17: Have you participated in community recovery efforts after the floods?

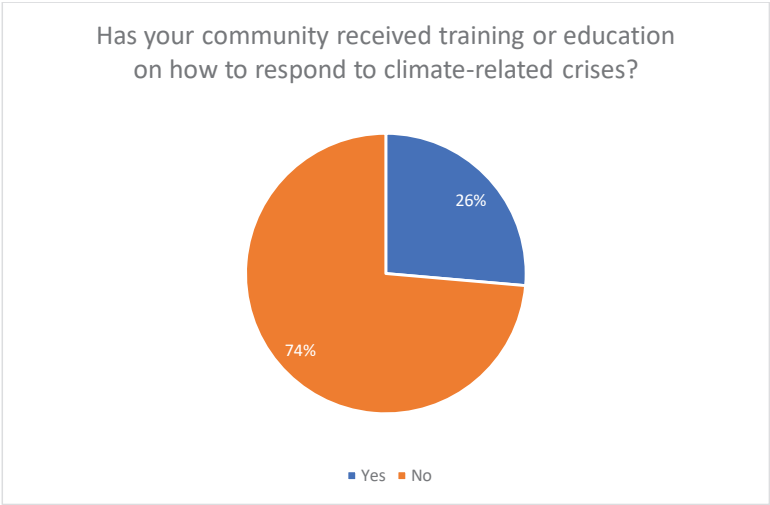


Most WHRD respondents (52%) have participated in community recovery efforts to some degree. This suggests a strong sense of community and willingness to help in times of crisis. It bodes well for the community’s resilience and ability to recover from natural disasters. The active involvement of a large portion of the WHRDs is likely to strengthen social bonds and networks, which can be crucial for human rights advocacy and activism.

Nearly half (48%) of all respondents were not involved in community recovery efforts. According to key informants, systemic exclusion from decision-making spaces is one of the most significant barriers preventing women defenders from fully participating in climate resilience efforts. Campaigns and committee nominations are often dominated by individuals with personal interests, leaving little room for genuine participation by women defenders (KI female Nakuru 11-10-24). Additionally, the patriarchal structure in many communities means that women’s voices are often not heard (KI female Kitui 08-10-24; Kisumu 07-10-24)). Further, local authorities do not support women-led initiatives, hindering their ability to contribute to climate resilience efforts. There is a need for structural changes that promote gender equity in leadership roles and decision-making processes related to climate resilience and disaster recovery.

Lack of information and awareness about climate issues limits engagement in community recovery efforts (KI female Nairobi 24-09-24). Women defenders need more training and access to resources that will enable them to lead effectively. For instance, they could be assisted in connecting how sexual and reproductive health or economic empowerment are interconnected with climate change. Others noted that they are unaware of the resources and support the government and other agencies offer, preventing them from participating in recovery efforts (KI female Kitui 08-10-24).

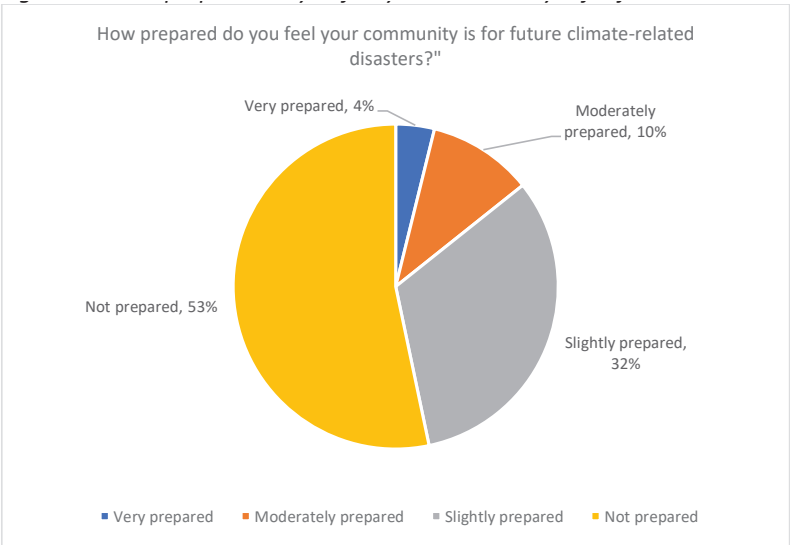
Figure 18: Has your community received training or education on how to respond to climate-related crises?



74% of the WHRD respondents indicated that their community members have not received training or education on responding to climate-related crises. This suggests a potential gap in preparedness and awareness. The lack of training indicates a need for increased efforts in education and preparedness to enhance community resilience. Communities without training may be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate-related crises, potentially leading to higher risks and damages.

Correspondingly, slightly over half of the respondents do not feel their community is prepared for future climate-related disasters.

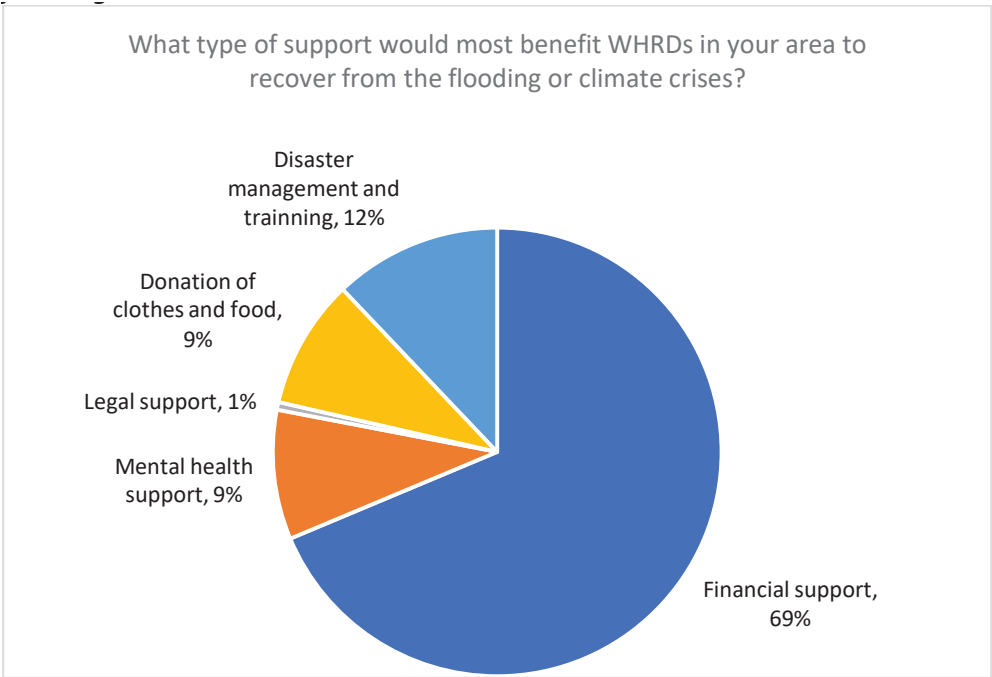
Figure 19: How prepared do you feel your community is for future climate-related disasters?"



The responses suggest that people know the potential for climate-related disasters, a positive starting point for improvement. Some who said they are slightly/ moderately/ very prepared said they had been proactively seeking knowledge online about flooding, recovery strategies, and how to prepare for future climate impacts (KI female Kisumu 07-10-24). Another WHRD narrated how her professional experience advocating for resilience and preparedness has reinforced her skills in being proactive and adaptive in the face of climate challenges. (KI female Kisumu 25-09-24). In Marsabit, a WHRD opined how they have been conducting workshops to raise awareness about disaster preparedness and climate resilience so that communities are better equipped to handle future crises (KI female Marsabit 03-10-24).

Overall, there is a clear need and opportunity for all stakeholders to take action to improve community preparedness. Only 14% of the WHRD respondents feel their community is moderately or very prepared. The low level of perceived preparedness suggests communities may be highly vulnerable to climate-related disasters. Due to a lack of readiness, future climate events could have severe consequences. The widespread feeling of unpreparedness may increase anxiety and stress in the community during disasters. Unprepared communities may face higher economic costs in the aftermath of climate-related disasters.

Figure 20: What type of support would most benefit WHRDs in your area to recover from the flooding or climate crises?



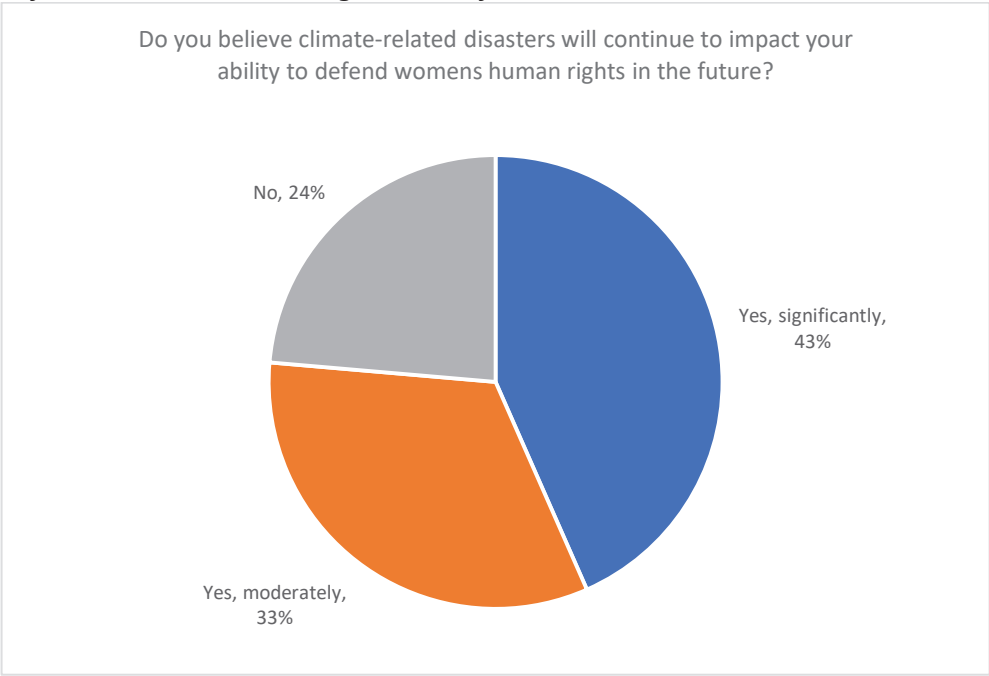
WHRDs primarily need financial resources to recover from flooding or climate crises, suggesting that direct monetary aid could be the most effective assistance. Access to funding and materials would significantly enhance their ability to rebuild and recover and create a more resilient community. Without financial aid, it will be tough for them to rebuild their livelihoods (KI female Meru 24-09-24; KI female Kisumu 07-10-24).

The focus on disaster management and training (12%) indicates recognition of the importance of preparedness and knowledge. WHRDs need access to training support to prepare the community for future disasters. This will focus on long-term resilience and sustainability, ensuring communities can better withstand future crises (KI female Kitui 08-10-24; KI female Kisumu 07-10-24; KI female Mombasa 03-10-24).

The equal emphasis on material donations (clothes and food) and mental health support suggests a balanced view of physical and psychological needs during crisis recovery. The very low priority given to legal support might indicate either a lack of legal issues arising from the climate crises or a perception that other needs are more immediate and crucial.

A significant majority of respondents believe climate-related disasters will impact their ability to defend women’s human rights. This underscores the need for integrated approaches addressing climate resilience and human rights advocacy.

Figure 21: Do you believe climate-related disasters will continue to impact your ability to defend women’s human rights in the future?



There is a strong perception that climate-related disasters threaten the defence of women's human rights—43% expect a significant impact, and 33% a moderate one. To prepare adequately, organisations should consider integrating climate resilience into human rights strategies and advocating for policies that address climate change and gender equality.

Resources will be needed to address the intersection of climate change and human rights advocacy. Increased funding for initiatives that support women in climate-affected regions is of utmost importance.

CONCLUSION

The recent flooding has had profound and far-reaching effects on WHRDs, particularly impacting their livelihoods, property, and ability to continue their advocacy work. The survey data reveals that most WHRDs have faced disruptions to their primary sources of income, notably in agricultural areas like Meru, Kitui, Kisumu, Bomet, and Nakuru. These disruptions pose significant risks to local food security and economies, potentially driving increased poverty.

Property loss has been widespread, with respondents experiencing complete losses, exacerbating financial instability and threatening their capacity to recover. Alongside the economic and material losses, WHRDs have faced rising levels of violence and harassment in the aftermath of the floods, further complicating their advocacy efforts. The destruction of community networks and support systems has left WHRDs isolated, with most reporting disruptions in group activities, impeding their resilience and recovery.

Mental health has emerged as a critical concern, with most WHRDs reporting negative impacts on their well-being due to the flooding. The lack of mental health services highlights an urgent gap in support, which is compounded by financial stress and insufficient social and organisational backing. Furthermore, the burden of balancing WHRD responsibilities with family obligations has grown significantly, with 90% of respondents reporting increased strain. WHRDs are at risk of burnout without adequate resources and targeted interventions, reducing their ability to engage effectively in human rights advocacy.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for comprehensive support measures, including financial aid, mental health services, and disaster preparedness policies to ensure WHRDs can continue their crucial work in the face of escalating climate challenges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Government:

1. Inclusive Disaster Preparedness Planning:

- o Involve WHRDs and women's organisations in developing and reviewing disaster preparedness and climate resilience policies to ensure that gender-sensitive strategies are implemented at the local level.
- o Develop community-led disaster management committees that include WHRDs to foster government and civil society collaboration and ensure localised responses to future climate-related crises.

2. Support for Human Rights Work and Safety:

- o Enhance protection mechanisms for WHRDs by protecting them from increased violence and harassment by prosecuting those who attack them.
- o Establish safe spaces for WHRDs to continue their work despite environmental challenges, ensuring their safety and security during emergencies.
- o Consider having separate shelters and rescue centres for the women, children and elderly persons affected by disasters.

3. Social Protection Programs:

- o Expand social protection schemes like cash transfers or public works programmes to support WHRDs and other vulnerable groups in flood-affected areas. These programmes should prioritise women-headed households and those whose livelihoods have been disrupted.

4. Environmental Protection and Climate Change Mitigation:

- o Implement reforestation, water management, and sustainable land use policies to reduce the likelihood of future flooding. Governments should work with communities to restore ecosystems that naturally mitigate flood risks, such as wetlands and forest buffers.
- o Enforce regulations that prevent unsustainable agricultural practices or construction in flood-prone areas, reducing future disaster risks for WHRDs and their communities.

For Non-State actors

1. Sustainable Livelihood Diversification:

- o Work with WHRDs to promote alternative livelihoods, such as eco-friendly small businesses less susceptible to flooding and climate shocks. For

instance, offer training on climate-resilient agricultural practices or non-agricultural income sources.

- o Support women-led cooperatives focusing on resilience-building through savings groups, community lending, and shared resources, allowing WHRDs to pool funds for recovery or new ventures.

2. Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response:

- o Create programmes that provide protection and legal support for WHRDs who experience increased violence or harassment post-disaster. NGOs should partner with legal aid organisations to offer free or subsidised services to women in crisis situations.
- o Establish safe shelters or temporary accommodations for WHRDs at risk of violence during or after climate-related disasters. These shelters should also provide psychosocial support, legal advice, and reintegration services.

3. Digital Tools and Communication Strategies:

- o Utilise digital platforms to maintain and strengthen WHRD networks during periods of disruption. This includes creating online forums, social media groups, and mobile apps that allow WHRDs to stay connected, share information, and access resources during emergencies.
- o Implement SMS-based or mobile alert systems that provide early warnings for floods and other environmental risks to WHRDs, particularly in remote areas with limited access to information.

4. Strengthening Community Networks:

- o Facilitate remote and in-person gatherings to prioritise rebuilding disrupted women's groups and WHRD networks and ensure the quick re-establishment of these support systems.
- o Support peer-to-peer learning and leadership programs to ensure WHRDs continue their advocacy work, even under challenging circumstances like floods.

5. Mental Health and Wellbeing:

- o Provide mental health and well-being workshops and support programmes tailored to WHRDs, recognising the emotional toll of both human rights work and environmental crises. This could include counselling, stress management sessions, and trauma-informed care.

- o Establish mobile mental health clinics to reach remote areas and offer immediate support to WHRDs facing mental health challenges post-disaster.

6. Advocacy for Disaster Preparedness:

- o Advocate for more inclusive disaster preparedness strategies that account for the specific needs of WHRDs and marginalised communities. NGOs can work with governments to influence policy changes, prioritising gender-sensitive approaches to disaster resilience and recovery.
- o Partner with local governments and communities to provide immediate relief to WHRDs affected by floods, including food aid, temporary shelter, and replacement of lost tools and equipment critical to income generation.

For Women Human Rights Defenders Hub

1. Provide Psychosocial Support and Well-being Services:

- o Integrate ongoing psychosocial support and well-being programmes as a core component for WHRDs, helping them address stress, trauma, and burnout associated with disaster response work.
- o Organize regular retreat sessions for WHRDs after their involvement in disaster recovery events. These retreats will offer a structured space for unwinding, emotional release, and peer support, helping WHRDs to restore their energy and resilience.

2. Conduct Capacity-Building Workshops on Resource Mobilization:

- o Organise capacity-building workshops focused on effective resource mobilisation strategies. These sessions will equip WHRDs with skills to secure funding and resources needed to support their work, especially in crises.
- o Design a structured capacity-building programme with regular follow-up feedback sessions to ensure skills development is reinforced over time. This approach will allow WHRDs to continuously improve their response capabilities and adapt to evolving disaster scenarios.

3. Conduct Independent Research:

- o Commission research on the unique impacts of climate change on women, especially in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL) regions. This research should focus on how disasters (such as droughts, floods, and fires) affect women's rights and livelihoods, providing insights that can inform tailored interventions.

4. Promote Inclusivity in Climate Programming:

- o Ensure all programming responding to flooding and other climate-related disasters includes sexual minorities, persons with disabilities, and other marginalised groups. This includes adopting inclusive sampling, engagement, and data collection processes so that interventions are representative and supportive of all affected individuals.

5. Create an Emergency Support Fund:

- o Establish an emergency fund to aid WHRDs and their families who have been significantly impacted by disasters. Such financial support will alleviate psychological strain and enable WHRDs to focus on recovery without compromising their mental health or quality of life.

6. Enhance Community Disaster Preparedness:

- o With other partners, such as the Kenya Red Cross, religious leaders, and institutions, conduct awareness campaigns and training at the community level to enhance disaster preparedness and recovery knowledge. These sessions should cover actions to take before, during, and after a disaster to foster resilience within local populations.

For Donors

1. Rapid Response Funding:

- o Establish rapid response funds WHRDs can access during climate crises to address urgent needs such as housing, food, and tools for rebuilding their livelihoods. This funding should be flexible, allowing recipients to allocate resources based on immediate needs.
- o Establish an emergency fund specifically for mental health services, offering financial support to WHRDs seeking counselling or other mental health resources in the wake of climate disasters.

2. Climate Adaptation and Advocacy Grants:

- o Prioritise funding for projects that address the intersection of gender and climate change, recognising that WHRDs are often disproportionately affected by environmental crises. This includes supporting feminist climate justice initiatives that promote women's leadership in climate resilience and disaster recovery.

- o Fund advocacy programs led by WHRDs that push for climate justice and equitable disaster response policies. These grants can support campaigns to hold governments and companies accountable for climate-related damages.
- o Support long-term climate adaptation projects, focusing on community-based approaches that empower WHRDs to lead initiatives around water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and disaster-proof infrastructure.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation Support:

- o To develop strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks and provide technical assistance and funding for NGOs and community organisations. This helps track the impact of climate interventions on WHRDs and informs future programming adjustments.

4. Long-term Financial Support for Resilience:

- o Increase funding for long-term recovery and resilience programs that focus on WHRDs. This should include support for rebuilding livelihoods, restoring community networks, and promoting economic stability in flood-affected areas.
- o Support initiatives that improve the organisational resilience of NGOs working with WHRDs, ensuring they can continue operations and advocacy during times of crisis.

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ANNEX

Survey Questionnaire

Introduction

Welcome to our survey on the livelihood and wellbeing impacts of the recent climate crisis and flooding in Kenya. This survey is being conducted by the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub (The Hub) to gather insights from Women Human Rights Defenders in the target counties. Your participation is crucial in helping us develop a toolkit that will support ongoing efforts in these regions.

Consent: Are you willing to proceed with this survey?

1. Yes
2. No

1. Please tell me how old you are as of today.

1. Below 18 years – (TERMINATE)
2. 18 – 24 years
3. 25 – 34 years
4. 35 – 44 years
5. 45 – 54 years
6. 55+ years

2. What is the highest level of education you achieved so far?

1. No School
2. Some primary education
3. Primary education completed
4. Some secondary education
5. Secondary education completed
6. Some middle-level college (not university)
7. Completed mid-level college (Not University)
8. Some University education
9. University education completed
10. Postgraduate (Masters, MBA, PhD)
11. Other (specify)

3. What do you currently do for a living? [DO NOT READ OUT; SINGLE RESPONSE]

1. Business/ Self-employed
2. Salaried/employed
3. Casual labourer
4. Not employed

5. Student
6. Don't know (DK)

4. Current County of residence?

1. Meru
2. Kitui
3. Marsabit
4. Mombasa
5. Kisumu
6. Bomet
7. Nakuru
8. Nairobi
9. Other _ Specify

5. How long have you been involved in Defending Women's Human Rights?

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1-3 years
3. 4-6 years
4. More than 6 years

6. How did the recent flooding affect your area? (multiple answers, up to 3)

1. Infrastructure (roads, electricity etc) damaged
2. Destroyed crops/livestock
3. People were displaced
4. Schools completely closed
5. Businesses and markets closed
6. People got sick
7. Others (please specify)

7. Has the recent flooding affected your primary source of income e.g., farming, small business, employment)?

1. Yes, severely
2. Yes, moderately
3. No impact

8. Did you experience loss of property (homes, tools, equipment, etc) due to flooding?

1. Yes, completely lost
2. Yes, partially damaged
3. No loss

9. How has your role as a Woman Human Rights Defender (WHRD) been affected by the flooding?

1. I have stopped all WHRD activities
2. I have reduced WHRD activities
3. No change. I continue as usual.

10. Has there been an increase in violence or harassment against WHRDs in your area post-flooding?

1. Yes, a significant increase
2. Yes, a slight increase
3. No change

11. How have the floods disrupted the community women's groups or network activities?

1. Completely disrupted
2. Moderately disrupted
3. No disruption

12. How have you been able to continue your advocacy or human rights work after the flooding?

1. Without challenges
2. With significant challenges
3. With slight challenges
4. I have stopped human rights work

13. Have you noticed changes in the mental health and wellbeing of other WHRDs in your community?

1. Yes
2. No

14. Has the flooding impacted your mental health and wellbeing?

1. Yes ☐ Go to Q15
2. No ☐ Skip to Q16

15. Those who said yes, do you have access to mental health services in your area?

1. Yes, easily accessible
2. Yes, but limited access
3. No services available
4. Not aware of any services available

16. Which of the following has been a barrier to you managing your emotional and wellbeing? (Read out).

	Very significant barrier	Rather significant barrier	Not really a significant barrier
a) Lack of money			
b) Lack of interest			
c) Lack of time			
d) Lack of knowledge			
e) Lack of technical support from psychosocial experts			
f) Lack of support from the leaders of my group/organisation			
g) Lack of support from my family			
g) Lack of support from my close friends			
h) Others (Please enter your answer):			

17. Have you experienced any of the following during or after the flooding?? (Read out; tick all)

1. Anxiety and sleeplessness
2. sadness and grief from the loss of family members, friends, and co-workers
3. near psychological meltdown from increased work obligations
4. overwhelmed from urgent requests for help with no resources to respond.
5. mental exhaustion because of being on call 24/7
6. stress of organization expectations with no staff backup or mental health supports

18. How has the flooding and climate crisis increased the burden of balancing your WHRD responsibilities with family obligations? Has it...

1. Significantly increased
2. Moderately increased
3. No change

19. What levels of support did you receive from the following during the flooding crisis?

	significant support	moderate support	limited support	No support
Family				
Friends				
WHRD colleagues				
Community member				
Religious leaders				
Government /Local Authorities				

20. Has your organisation or advocacy group received funding to recover from the flood impacts?

1. Yes
2. No

21. Have you participated in community recovery efforts after the floods?

1. Yes, actively involved
2. Yes, somewhat involved
3. No, not involved

22. Has your community received training or education on how to respond to climate-related crises?

1. Yes
2. No

23. How prepared do you feel your community is for future climate-related disasters?

1. Very prepared
2. Moderately prepared
3. Slightly prepared
4. Not prepared

24. What type of support would most benefit WHRDs in your area to recover from the flooding or climate crises?

1. Financial support
2. Mental health support
3. Legal support
4. Donation of clothes and food
5. Other (please specify)

25. Do you believe climate-related disasters will continue to impact your ability to defend women's human rights in the future?

1. Yes, significantly
2. Yes, moderately
3. No

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

For Key informants' questions to assess the livelihood and wellbeing impacts of the recent climate crisis and flooding in Kenya for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs)

Consent

My name is _____, and Women Human Rights Defenders Hub (The Hub) has contracted me to conduct a baseline survey to assess the livelihood and wellbeing impacts of the recent climate crisis and flooding in Kenya for Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs). This survey is intended to assist The hub in developing tools and interventions to address the well-being status of women human rights defenders.

Your answers to this discussion will be kept confidential. No one will be informed that you participated or have access to the information you will provide other than the Women Human Rights Defenders Hub. Your name will not be used or appear in any part of this research. You have the right to not respond to any question that you do not wish to answer.

Some topics may be difficult to discuss with us, but we hope you will find it useful to have the opportunity to talk about them. Your participation is voluntary, but your experience will increase our understanding of the impacts of the recent climate crisis and flooding in Kenya for WHRDs. Kindly note that there are no right or wrong answers in this discussion. What is important is that we hear your opinion.

Introduction

- ♦ What kind of human rights work are you doing? (*explore for the general themes and issues*)
- ♦ How long have you been doing this human rights work? (years)

Livelihood and daily impact

1. How has the recent flooding affected your primary source of income?
2. Have you experienced loss or damage to personal property (homes, tools, equipment) due to the flooding? What happened?
3. Have you received any financial assistance or any form of emergency relief (food, clothing, shelter) during or after the flooding? If yes, from which sources?
4. How accessible are relief resources (food, clothing, shelter and healthcare) to women during flooding events?
5. Are there institutions that provide specific support to women during and after floods? If yes, which ones?

6. Do you feel that the government or local authorities adequately address the needs of women during floods?
7. How has the flooding affected your access to clean water and sanitation facilities?
8. How has the climate crisis impacted your access to health services (e.g., clinics, hospitals)?
9. Have there been disruptions to transportation or road networks due to flooding in your area? Please explain
10. How has the climate crisis impacted access to education for children in your household or community?
11. How has the availability and cost of food changed in your area since the floods?
12. Have you or members of your household had to skip meals or reduce food intake due to the crisis?

WHRD impact

13. How has the flooding impacted your role and activities as a WHRD?
14. Have you witnessed an increase in violence, discrimination, or harassment against women and WHRDs in the aftermath of the flooding?
15. How have community networks or women's groups been affected by the crisis?
16. How have you been able to continue your advocacy or human rights work following the climate crisis, or has it been disrupted?

Wellbeing and Mental Health

17. How has the recent flooding affected your mental health and wellbeing?
18. Have you had access to mental health or psychosocial support services during or after the flooding? Who provided the support?
19. How has the stress of the crisis affected your ability to balance personal responsibilities and human rights work?
20. Have you observed any changes in the well-being of other WHRDs or community members due to the climate crisis? What are the changes?

Coping Mechanisms and Resilience

21. What coping mechanisms have you or your community employed to recover from the flooding and climate impacts?
22. What support do you feel is most needed to help WHRDs and their communities recover from the effects of the recent climate crisis and flooding?
23. How do you see the role of women defenders in leading climate change adaptation and disaster recovery efforts in your community?
24. What are the biggest barriers preventing women defenders from actively participating in climate resilience efforts in your community?



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