



## Community advocacy champions

### Summary

Through the Alliance, Concern Worldwide has been supporting communities in Tana River County, Kenya, who are striving to increase the implementation of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and flood resilience measures. Previously, communities struggled to influence the government, and community-prioritized activities were not implemented. Community advocacy champions were selected by communities and trained by Concern Worldwide to advocate for their communities' priorities. A stakeholder workshop was organized by Concern Worldwide to support the community advocates. The community advocacy champions continue to support community lobbying.

### Our approach

The implementation of the Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC), which has evolved into the Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRMC), highlighted that communities had limited involvement in government decision-making beyond the individual level and lacked the ability to influence DRR planning or budget allocation decisions.

To address this, the project focused on equipping community leaders with training in advocacy and lobbying. The goal was to strengthen their knowledge and ability to engage in these processes, empowering communities to have a greater influence and improve their overall resilience.

### Facts and figures



**Cost of advocacy champion training:**  
US\$4,800



**Cost of advocacy materials:**  
US\$2,100



**Cost of stakeholder's workshop:**  
US\$1,000



**Ongoing cost and maintenance:**  
None



**Time taken to set up:**  
Selection and training take two months, after which the advocacy champions determine how much time to dedicate to their advocacy work, engaging with various stakeholders as opportunities arise



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## What was the problem?

Flooding poses a significant risk to many communities in Tana River County, Kenya. However, as revealed by the FRMC, the government had mainly focused on flood response rather than prevention. Communities lacked knowledge on how to advocate for resources, were unaware of their rights, and did not know how to access or influence government processes. As a result, community-prioritized resilience measures, like solar-powered irrigation systems and metal bridges, were not considered. This lack of action, stemming from the government's unawareness of these priorities, led to diminished trust in governmental processes among the affected communities.

## What was the solution?

Concern Worldwide collaborated with communities to address vulnerabilities identified in the FRMC by establishing community advocacy champions. Between March 2021 and July 2023, Concern Worldwide worked with 13 communities to identify and build the capacity of 39 community advocacy leaders – three per community, ensuring that women were included within each community and that each group was inclusive of various ages and people with diverse needs. These champions were trained in advocacy and public participation, covering the following key topics: county devolution structures, county budget and planning cycles, and social accountability tools.



A water pump in Handaraku Village in Tana River County. Photo: Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, Concern Worldwide

The champions, selected for their commitment to community empowerment and diverse socio-economic and demographic representation, were tasked with leading advocacy efforts. They presented community priorities – such as irrigation schemes, footbridges, and bore-holes – to the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) Committee for inclusion in the five-year county budget.

Concern Worldwide also facilitated collaboration between the communities with government counterparts and DRR committees to highlight the role of the champions. Part of this collaboration ensured that communities developed action plans detailing activities, methodologies, budgets, potential funding, and timelines aimed at enhancing resilience and reducing flood risks.

## How does it increase resilience?

Community advocacy champions played a crucial role in obtaining funding for interventions, which were selected by the community based on FRMC results. They provide a unified voice and implement a systematic approach to present priorities to stakeholders. As members of the communities they represent, this solution contributes to the sustainability and continuity of interventions.



Footbridge constructed by the community in Tana River. Photo: Concern Worldwide

### Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRM)

The Climate Resilience Measurement for Communities (CRM) is a data-driven process, complemented by a web-based tool and mobile app, which helps communities to evaluate and measure how resilient they are to climate hazards. Using the results, they can identify and implement resilience-building interventions and run additional measurements to track improvements.

Find out more: [ZCRAlliance.org/crmc](https://ZCRAlliance.org/crmc)

Their advocacy resulted in the inclusion of at least one resilience priority per community in the CIDP, and the county budget for disaster went from 2 per cent to 10 per cent of the total annual budget. Of the disaster budget, 1.4 per cent was allocated specifically to flood preparedness and DRR, thereby increasing the overall investment in resilience.

Concern Worldwide is also seeing increased community empowerment and government recognition as a result of the champions' successes. Additional community members are advocating to the government on behalf of their communities, and the Sub-County Administrator acknowledged their role and requested the approach be replicated.



Village elders discuss interventions.  
Photo: Euniah Miruka, Concern Worldwide

## Common conditions for success:

**Q:** *Is this intervention appropriate for other communities?*

**A:** Yes, the community advocacy champions are from the specific community that they are advocating for and work on a voluntary basis.

**Q:** *What conditions are needed for the intervention to be appropriate?*

**A:** Community members that are passionate about advocacy and can present community interest to different stakeholders on a voluntary basis, and training on social advocacy from the relevant organization.

**Q:** *Was there anything special about the communities where this was most effective?*

**A:** Development in the community was low because community members did not participate in the budget-making processes and were not aware that they could lobby for resources from different stakeholders to support them in implementing their priorities. (This refers to the precondition of this community, which made the intervention particularly effective.)

## Success story

Maulid Diwayu, a 65-year-old man from Mitapani, was nominated to be a community advocacy champion because of his passion for environmental issues and community empowerment. Maulid appreciates Concern Worldwide's multilevel approach to stakeholder engagement, introducing the champions at various levels of formal/informal governance.

***The community is using the knowledge gained from the advocacy training to lobby for resources. Groups have approached organizations to ask for support and have received two shallow wells at a local farm, which led to the construction of a road by the community that leads to the farms"***

*Maulid Diwayu, community advocacy champion*



Community meeting in Handaraku village in Tana River County.  
Photo: Concern Worldwide



## Expert view

Previously, communities were not involved in government projects, and during public participation forums, very few community members attended. If they did attend, they would sit down, listen, and leave after the presentations without contributing to what was presented.

The communities have now realized the importance of their participation in the government forums and attend in large numbers, advocating for their priorities to be adopted.



**Dakana Huko,**

Cohesion Response Officer (DRR Officer),  
Concern Worldwide, Kenya



Handaraku Community Meeting, Tana River County, Kenya.  
Photo: Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance, Concern Worldwide

## ! Lessons learnt

- Through targeted training in advocacy and governance processes, communities can effectively engage with government structures and influence decision-making.
- When communities have the knowledge and tools to articulate their needs, they can ensure their priorities are included in local and regional plans.
- This approach not only strengthens community resilience but also fosters trust in governance, creating more sustainable, community-driven development outcomes.

## Get in touch

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