

HILLARY MARK NYAGAYA_DAY 5_GREENEST_2025_MOI UNIVERSITY

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WATER IN CRISIS: A STORY FROM SOUTH NYANZA

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By Hillary Mark Nyagaya, School of Business and Economics Moi University

**Theme:**

#PGC2025

From drought to floods, Kenya's water story is one of extremes. But through awareness, action and innovation, we can restore balance



An image of a homestead affected by floods in the Central Karachuonyo, Homa Bay County, on May 13, 2025.

URGENCY

In South Nyanza, water is both a gift and a struggle.

Droughts scorch fields and dry up rivers, while flash floods like the May 2025 disaster that displaced over 200 households, washed away homes, crops and hope

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As rains grow unpredictable, small-scale farmers face crop losses and starving livestock. Children miss school, women walk miles daily for a single jerrycan.

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In Kenya, about 80 % of households have access to improved drinking water sources, which means nearly 20 % still depend on unsafe or unimproved sources, especially in rural areas. Around 44 % of rural households use unimproved sources for drinking water.

(Kenya DHS, 2022)

POSSIBILITY

Yet, change is flowing — communities are building rainwater harvesting systems, restoring wetlands, and training youth in climate-smart farming.

Projects like Water for Life Kenya, Amref's WASH programs and UNESCO's Clean Water Initiatives are turning awareness into real solutions.

Every action counts — fixing leaks, planting trees, supporting clean water campaigns

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CALL TO ACTION

Water justice begins with us.



Join local cleanup drives



Support sustainable water laws



Tag and share to raise awareness

@turninggreenorg @waterislife

@environmentalworkinggroup

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hillarymarkleon Water is life yet millions in Kenya still live without safe, clean water. Pollution, climate change and unequal access have turned what should be a human right into a daily struggle. In Nyanza climate extremes are reshaping lives. Droughts dry up rivers, while floods wash away farms and homes. In May 2024, more than 55,000 households across Kenya were displaced by floods, including tens of thousands in Kisumu County (UNICEF & World Resources Institute, 2024). When the waters rise, children miss school and families lose everything. When drought returns, mothers walk miles for a single jerrycan. Kenya's renewable freshwater has dropped below 1,000 m³ per person per year, placing the nation among the world's most water-scarce countries (World Bank, 2023). Rivers and wells are increasingly polluted by agricultural runoff, industrial waste and poor sanitation exposing millions to illness and hunger.

Those most affected?

Children - missing school and stability during crises.

Women- carrying the burden of caregiving and long walks for water.

Small-scale farmers - losing crops and livestock with every failed season.

These challenges are not random. They stem from climate change, weak water infrastructure and decades of uneven investment that have left rural

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👤 Women- carrying the burden of caregiving and long walks for water.

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These challenges are not random. They stem from climate change, weak water infrastructure and decades of uneven investment that have left rural areas far behind in planning and access.

But there's hope. 🌱

Local champions like Friends of Ondiri Wetland Kenya (FOWK) @ondiriwetlandke are restoring natural water sources. Organizations such as Water.org and county WASH programs are improving rural access through community pipelines and sustainable systems. Across Kenya, youth advocates and smallholder farmers are uniting to demand that clean water be recognized as a right, not a privilege.

What I learned is that Water injustice is about systems that fail the vulnerable.

🔥 My call to action:

Join hands for water justice.

Demand stronger policies that protect our rivers, lakes and communities. @KeNAWRUA

@KEWASNET

@WaterJusticeFund

@KenyaRainwaterAssociation

@KiagazaCleanWaterProject

@NyanzaGulfEcosystemAssociation

@WasPA Kenya @turninggreenorg @waterislife