

East Africa

As the Earth warms, much of East Africa is experiencing increased variability in precipitation. This variability includes: increasingly unreliable rainy seasons, an unusual frequency of severe droughts, and significant flooding associated with more frequent downpours. These climatic changes interface with a highly diverse landscape of cultures, livelihoods, and ecosystems in East Africa. Vulnerable communities are confronting a nexus of population growth, increasingly irregular rainfall, and a range of manifestations (both good and bad) of East Africa's aspirations for prosperity.

Around 90% of Kenya's land area, and over 50% of Tanzania's, is arid or semi-arid. CJRF will focus the majority of its East Africa grantmaking in these "drylands," where climate justice issues are stark and where solutions developed will have relevance in neighboring countries. The drylands are typically areas with high poverty, rapidly growing populations, a diversity of indigenous groups, and poor infrastructure.



In this context, CJRF strategic supports communities to achieve three inter-linked objectives:

1. **Decision-making That Responds to Local Priorities**

Grand visions for national development and large infrastructure projects are beginning to garner investment in East Africa. *CJRF seeks to foster climate-resilient development and prevent lock-in of climate risk by helping to raise youth, indigenous, and women's voices in: large-scale infrastructure development projects; local and national climate and development policy-making; and the creation and implementation of national climate finance systems.*

2. **Climate-Resilient Land Management**

In East Africa's drylands, land degradation typically results from overuse or misuse of agricultural and grazing lands, or from mining, deforestation, and other extractive processes. Land degradation undermines community resilience and compounds existing vulnerabilities to flood and drought. Meanwhile, flood and drought themselves can compact and contaminate soil, exacerbate erosion, drain away nutrients, and undermine land productivity in several other ways. *CJRF seeks to foster climate-resilient land management by communities in arid and semi-arid areas through movements to secure fair and effective community land tenure and*

community-driven movements to share and replicate climate-resilient land management practices.

3. **Jobs and Livelihoods That Fit the Future**

Climate change has the potential to undermine East Africa’s development, or at least contribute to unequal distribution of development benefits. Many people already live “on the margin” in the region’s drylands and depend for their income and subsistence on highly climate-sensitive land and water resources. In this context, development faces significant challenges to generate satisfying work and sustainable livelihoods for growing populations. Climate justice demands that efforts to build East Africa’s economies also build long-term resilience, including for those who tend to get left behind. This is especially important for the region’s large population of youth, who are disproportionately impacted by unemployment. ***To this end, CJRF’s work in East Africa supports entrepreneurship and enterprise development, as well as modernization and revitalization of pastoralism.***

¹ We use this lay term here to refer to the more precisely defined “arid and semi-arid lands” (ASALs).