DARAJA

Bridging the Weather and Climate Information Gap

STORIES OF CHANGE:

Kampala

Uganda

RESURGENCE.

ACTOGETHER UGANDA

UNMA

WISER Weather and Climate Information Services

UK International Development

Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Summary

Following the success of DARAJA in Tanzania and Kenya during its first phase, the model has been replicated in Kampala, Uganda, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Baseline research identified **flooding, extreme heat**, and **strong winds** as the primary climate hazards affecting residents of informal settlements in Kampala. To enhance the resilience of these vulnerable communities, DARAJA is **improving access to, understanding, and use of weather and climate information in Bwaise, Kampala.** Since its launch in mid-2023, DARAJA has driven significant transformational change, including **institutional strengthening, community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, broader access to weather and climate information,** and **scaling beyond Bwaise.** These achievements highlight the value of the DARAJA model in strengthening the resilience within urban informal settlements—a vulnerable group that is frequently neglected in mainstream initiatives. The continued expansion of this model will not only benefit Uganda but also serve as an inspiration for other cities facing similar climate challenges.

Improving Weather Communication and Use

> **I use the daily forecast information I receive to inform my daily decisions such as accompanying school children to and from school if floods are anticipated.**
>
> *Participant, Participatory Action Research workshop (Kalimali, Bwaise)*

Prior to the DARAJA project, access to weather and climate information (WCI) in Kampala was limited and weather forecasts were often viewed with scepticism by local communities. However, through **targeted awareness campaigns** and the **establishment of effective communication channels including WhatsApp, community radios and Climate Champions**, the perception and usage of weather forecasts have significantly improved.

Through **co-production processes** and **Climate Cafés,** the dissemination of downscaled weather forecasts has **strengthened community trust,** turning initial scepticism into reliance. Now, community members actively use weather updates for daily decisions and long-term planning.

Today, community members actively seek and use WCI for decision-making, contributing to better preparedness and resilience against extreme weather events. These changes began to emerge in early 2024 when Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) started issuing downscaled (location-specific) forecasts in Bwaise.

Enhanced Community Preparedness & Engagement

DARAJA significantly enhanced community preparedness for climate disasters. The local partners observed that during the heavy floods in March 2025, Bwaise, our project area, **reported zero casualties**, while surrounding communities suffered losses. This life-saving outcome was made possible by our early warning system, combining timely WhatsApp forecasts with **community awareness from trained Climate Champions**. This aligns with one of the DARAJA's transformational change progress markers under replicability (expect to see): Target community members are able to interpret and use weather and climate information to inform daily decisions.

The introduction of **Climate Cafés** under the DARAJA project has been instrumental in bridging the gap between community members and UNMA. These informal gatherings provide **a space for dialogue, knowledge-sharing,** and **collaborative problem-solving,** further strengthening the community's ability to respond effectively to extreme weather events. Additionally, the project has led to the establishment of **environmental clubs in schools** and the **initiation of tree-planting programs**, fostering a culture of environmental consciousness among the younger generation.

Strengthened Stakeholder Collaboration

One of the most transformative aspects of the DARAJA co-production processes has been its ability to **bridge the gap between the government,** including UNMA & Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), **the local communities and other stakeholders** such as Red Cross and the Network of Climate Journalists Of Greater Horn of Africa (NECJOGA). Before the project's intervention, engagement between these stakeholders was minimal. However, the **co-production processes** and the **recent co-design of the Early Action Plan** have resulted in a stronger collaboration between the Ministry of Environment and local communities. These collaborations ensure that climate action plans are inclusive and cater to the needs of community members through locally led adaptation.

Building on ongoing collaborations and the momentum of the Early Action Plan, the DARAJA local partners in Kampala are participating in the process to **develop Uganda's national anticipatory action strategy**, particularly by strengthening partnership with the Ministry of Environment.

The local agencies, such as city authorities, have also greatly appreciated the DARAJA approach of **connecting with the end users of WCI** and **capacity building activities** such as the training of Climate Champions.

Institutional Impact & DARAJA Model Scaling

The effectiveness of the DARAJA model has also prompted ACTogether Uganda to **embed the model in its institutional programming** and **scale to other cities** such as Mbarara in 2024, with further scoping of other cities planned. This growth has been supported by organisations such as the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Cities Alliance. The DARAJA model's successful integration into ACTogether projects proves its **strong potential for replication and scaling**. This marks exciting progress toward DARAJA's transformational goals under replicability (love to see): seeing our approach become the foundation for new, enhanced initiatives tackling extreme weather across East Africa.

The implementation of DARAJA also led to **piloting Uganda's first Sub-National Climate Outlook Forum (SNCOF)**. This forum provided a **crucial learning platform for the UNMA, ACTogether, and local communities**. It emphasised the importance of incorporating end-user perspectives in climate information dissemination, ensuring that forecasts and climate services are **more accessible, location-specific** and **easy to understand.**

Improved Feedback Mechanisms

The project introduced a **structured feedback mechanism** mainly through **WhatsApp, Climate Champions and Climate Cafés**, allowing community members to provide input on the usability of weather information. Ongoing monitoring revealed that some community feedback focused on the **timing of forecast dissemination,** with a preference for receiving forecasts earlier in the evening, before people go to sleep. As a result, forecast communication has improved, with **better visualisation tools**, such as easy-to-understand icons and descriptions, now being used to cater to diverse audiences.

Looking Forward

Scaling Up

Building on ongoing collaborations and the momentum of the Early Action Plan, DARAJA's local partners in Kampala will continue contributing to the development of Uganda's national anticipatory action strategy while deepening their partnership with the Ministry of Environment.

Story Credits

Data Collector	Joseph Manzvera
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Supporting Evidence

DARAJA Kampala Endline Report