

Kibera Cleanup & Waste Management Action – A Youth-Led Environmental Transformation Initiative

Introduction:

In July 2025, Saidika Organization with support from the Digital Opportunity Trust Kenya, mobilized youth climate champions and community members across peri-urban and informal settlements in Kibera. Using the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, community members were actively involved in identifying local climate-related challenges, co-designing solutions, and implementing projects that addressed environmental degradation, waste management, and urban ecosystem restoration.

The PAR methodology ensured inclusivity, accountability, and sustainability. Youth, women, grassroots organizations, and community leaders collaboratively identified pressing climate issues, proposed interventions, and mobilized resources. Importantly, even after DOT climate champions exited, projects continue to run under the leadership of the PAR working groups, demonstrating community ownership, resilience, and continuity

- **Purpose of the Project:**

To address waste mismanagement and delayed waste transportation from collection points in Kibera to Dandora waste site through a community-driven, youth-led initiative that unites 12+ local CBOs under one voice: the Kibera Primary Actors Consortium.

- **Why This Matters:**

Poor waste handling at the household level and delayed waste transportation from collection points in Kibera to Dandora dump site has led to public health risks, environmental degradation, and clogged drainage systems. This initiative empowers local youth to take ownership, reclaim their environment, and push for sustainable systems in waste management and recycling.

Project Overview – What We Did

- **Scope & Deliverables:**

We conducted a large-scale clean-up campaign across multiple zones of Kibera on 25th July 2025, bringing together 70+ youth volunteers from 12 CBOs.

Key Deliverables:

- I. Community Clean-Up Day (25/7/2025) – 3 zones cleared
- II. Formation of Kibera Primary Actors Consortium

- III. Strategic Plan for a community recycling hub
- IV. Capacity-building sessions (led by Saidika Organization)
- V. Engagement with local administration and community elder

- **Methodology & Approach:**

We applied the Participatory Action Research (PAR) model:

- I. Community-identified issues
- II. Collective planning and implementation
- III. Youth-led ownership of solutions.

- **Timeline & Milestones:**

- I. Week 1–2: Mobilization of youth and CBO alignment
- II. Week 3: Community sensitization and clean-up preparation.
- III. Week 4: Clean-up campaign, video capture, and strategic planning meeting.
- IV. Week 5: Post-clean-up evaluation and coming up with the sustainability plan.

Project Implementation – How We Did It

- **Key Activities:**

- I. Partnered with Saidika Organization for youth mobilization and training.
- II. Mobilized 42 + community members on the 1st two engagements sessions who went further and mobilized 70+ youths who showed up on the 25th of July 2025.
- III. Conducted 1 Mega Clean-Up on 25th of July 2025 across 3 hot spots. The community members came with their own tools like spades, rakes, gumboots, carts, wheelbarrows, gloves and overalls.
- IV. Formed the Kibera Primary Actors Consortium uniting all the 12 CBOs.
- V. Came-up with the sustainability plan starting by registering the consortium and constructing a waste sorting and recycling hub.

VI. Held a pledge and commitment ceremony with community members.

VII. Highlighted existing CBO efforts in sorting and recycling (e.g. Dama Org, Mtaa Safi, Leba One, Kibera Eco-Care, Golden Heart Youth Group, Rockers, Foundation of Hope, Kibera Local water Forum, Be Transformed to Transform, Saidika Organization, Youth Impact Center and Whispers Champion)

- **Challenges & Solutions:**

I. Limited resources/tools: Partnered with local 12+ CBOs and Digital Opportunity Trust - Kenya to get PPES for 70+ youths.

II. Coordination of 12 CBOs: Held joint planning meeting on date 21/7/2025 and divided roles.

III. Skepticism from some households: Door-to-door sensitization before campaign.

- **Achievements:**

I. Formation of Kibera Primary Actors Consortium.

II. Cleaned and cleared over 3 tonnes of waste in one day.

III. Created awareness in 500+ households.

IV. Documented via video and social media campaign.

V. Strengthened youth and CBO collaboration and visibility

Project Outcomes – What Happened; What We Learned

- **Completed Deliverables:**

1. July 19th- Community Engagement:

I. Community Education on Climate Change.

II. Identification of the existing climate challenges by the community members.

III. Equipment of the community members with PAR skills.



2. July 21st- Decide and Planning:

- I. Co-development of a doable climate change pilot project by community members.
- II. Selection of PAR working groups from each CBOs, each CBO contributed a maximum of 2 members as PAR working Group. Therefore, we had 20 PAR members from the 12 CBOs.
- III. Distribution of roles and mapping of available resources for the Clean-Campaign.



3. July 23rd – Coordination meeting on Clean-up campaign planning

- i. Identification of clean-up sites which we identified as Gatwekera, Olympic Kibera and Mtaa Safi.
- ii. Assigning roles and responsibilities to each group leaders for each group or zone.
- iii. Creating a time schedule and a check-in plan.

4. July 25th - Clean-Up Campaign:

- I. Clean-Up campaign in 3 zones: Gatwekera, Olympic Kibera and Mtaa Safi.
- II. Clean up activities, litter picking, cleaning drainages, sweeping streets/paths, loading collected waste into designated containers for proper disposal.
- III. Taking photos and videos for reports and also asking participants to share their feedback.
- IV. Planning of the final community meeting for evaluation and coming up with a sustainability plan.



5. 30th of July 2025 Evaluation and Sustainability Plan.

The community members reported that the pilot was 100% successful as indicated by.

- a) We had 42+ community members who showed on our 1st and 2nd sessions which exceeded our initial target of 36.
- b) We had PAR working group of 20 which exceeded our initial target of 5-9
- c) We had 70+ youths who showed up on 25th of July which exceeded our initial target of 50.
- d) We managed to clean 3 zones according to our initial target, that is Gatwekera, Olympic and Mtaa Safi.

The PAR working group and community members came up with the sustainability plan which is outlined as follows:

- a) Legal registration of the Kibera Primary Actors Consortium.
- b) Establish a waste sorting and recycling hub in the community.
- c) Launch monthly training on waste management.
- d) Hold clean-up drives twice a month.
- e) Sell the plastic waste to recycling companies in Kenya as revenue generating model and use organic waste to manufacture organic fertilizers for urban farming and charcoal making using briquettes which is already ongoing among CBOs such as Mtaa Safi and Dama organizations.





- **Impact & Benefits:**

- I. Empowered youth as environmental stewards.
- II. Cleaned 3 zones in Kibera.
- III. Increased the visibility and recognition of the existing CBOs within the community.
- IV. Built strong multi-CBO alliance for waste management
- V. Strengthened ties with local leaders and media visibility
- VI. Boosted community morale and pride

- **Lessons Learned:**

- I. Showing up is powerful; youth leadership grows from consistency
- II. Community ownership; long-term success.

III. Partnerships matter; combining strengths across organizations accelerates impact

- **Conclusion**

This project proved that youth-led climate action in informal settlements is not only possible — it's powerful.

Through collaboration, visibility, and action, the Kibera Primary Actors are laying the foundation for a sustainable waste management system rooted in local leadership. We now seek legal recognition, infrastructure support, and partnerships from government and funders to scale up.

The movement has begun. The youth have spoken. And Kibera is rising.