Sparks of Change: Small Grants for Grassroots Transformation

A SUPKEM REPORT ON SMALL GRANTS FOR COMMUNITY-LED ACTION IN GARISSA COUNTY

Statement of support

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Small grants are an effective mechanism for supporting community-led action in fragile contexts, particularly where mainstream financing fails to reach credible grassroots actors. Their value lies in flexibility, accessibility, and proximity to local realities.

This report documents the Small Grants Initiative implemented under the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) Capacities for Peace (C4P) programme, in partnership with the Life & Peace Institute (LPI), across eight sites in Garissa County. Twelve community-based organisations (CBOs) received modest grants, ranging from KES 60,000 to KES 150,000, paired with structured technical accompaniment. The initiative supported locally defined action on peacebuilding, climate adaptation, and inclusive engagement in a context shaped by recurrent climate shocks and fragile social cohesion.

The grants contributed to incremental but meaningful improvements in community practices and relationships. Women-led groups strengthened household resilience and civic participation through adaptive livelihood activities. Youth organisations facilitated intergenerational dialogue and arts-based advocacy, repositioning young people as contributors to peace and resilience. Interfaith actors reinforced social cohesion through joint messaging and dialogue, while water committees improved transparency and equity in resource management. For the first time in several wards, persons with disabilities were systematically identified and engaged in local resilience discussions.

These outcomes demonstrate that small, well-accompanied grants can reinforce social cohesion, expand inclusive participation, and strengthen local governance practices without overburdening community actors or systems. The initiative functioned as a catalytic intervention, reinforcing existing peace and resilience structures rather than attempting system-wide transformation.

The report recommends institutionalising continuous financial and monitoring support, embedding inclusion standards, and strengthening linkages with county systems to enable scale. The Garissa experience shows that when modest resources are paired with accompaniment and local legitimacy, community organisations can act as credible partners in advancing peace and climate resilience.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background Information

Peace, livelihoods, and climate shocks continue to shape the lives of communities in fragile environments such as Garissa. Recurrent droughts, floods, water scarcity, and environmental degradation have strained local livelihoods and intensified competition over limited resources, often fuelling tensions or violence. In response, grassroots organisations and interfaith networks have increasingly mobilised to address these realities, convening dialogues, promoting inclusion of vulnerable groups, and piloting practical environmental actions. These CBOs are firmly rooted in local contexts and have emerged as credible actors not only in prevention and resolution but also in championing climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods. They embody a growing worldwide movement of local actors who, often without recognition, are advancing climate adaptation, reforestation, sustainable production, and social justice.

Yet, despite their critical role, grassroots organisations are frequently excluded from mainstream financing. Funds from multilateral institutions, governments, and development banks seldom reach the community level. [1] Complex compliance requirements, invisibility, or even security constraints often leave the smallest and most credible actors out.[2] This is the gap that the small grants funds were created to fill. By channelling resources in accessible packages, usually between a few hundred and several thousand dollars, small grants enable local civil society groups to respond directly to community priorities. Unlike microcredit, which is issued to individuals as repayable loans, small grants are non-repayable resources provided to organisations to implement initiatives that strengthen collective resilience. They are demand-driven, grounded in local definitions of need, and catalytic.

Small grants are therefore more than financial transfers. They function as catalysts of local innovation, inclusivity, and collective ownership. They unlock communities' capacity to actively shape their futures, fostering trust, participation, and collaboration. By aligning resources with community-defined priorities, small grants contribute not only to tangible improvements in livelihoods and social cohesion but also to the strengthening of local organisational credibility and accountability.

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1   Scaling Climate Finance for Locally-led Adaptation: Lessons from the Global South (ORF, 2024).

2   NGO perspectives on the challenges and opportunities for real-world evaluation (2022); Locally LED Climate Action (World Bank, 2025).

Garissa Context

The Capacities for Peace (C4P) programme was implemented across eight sites in Garissa County in response to a fragile context shaped by recurrent droughts and floods, degraded livelihoods, and heightened competition over scarce natural resources. These pressures have strained social cohesion, weakened trust between communities and duty-bearers, and disproportionately affected women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

C4P sought to strengthen community resilience by advancing three interlinked objectives: reinforcing social cohesion, supporting climate adaptation in conflict-sensitive ways, and enabling meaningful engagement between grassroots actors and governance systems. Community-based organisations (CBOs) were central to this approach due to their local legitimacy and proximity to community realities. However, despite their relevance, such organisations remain largely excluded from mainstream development financing due to complex compliance requirements, limited visibility, and rigid funding modalities.

Within this context, the small grants mechanism was introduced as a strategic instrument to address structural financing barriers and enable locally led action. Drawing on the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) small-grants practice, the mechanism prioritised local ownership, flexible, demand-driven funding, and proportional accountability, paired with technical accompaniment in financial management, monitoring, and conflict-sensitive facilitation.

Through this approach, twelve CBOs were competitively selected from a pool of twenty-three applicants to implement community-defined initiatives addressing priorities such as water governance, post-flood recovery, interfaith dialogue, youth engagement, and disability inclusion. Beyond delivering near-term benefits, the grants strengthened organisational credibility and accountability, repositioning grassroots actors as credible partners in dialogue with duty-bearers. In doing so, the small grants functioned as catalytic inputs that reinforced social cohesion and climate-resilient peace, consistent with the broader objectives of the C4P programme.

SMALL GRANTS MANAGEMENT: A STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

The small grants initiative, implemented as one of the core delivery mechanisms under the *Capacities for Peace (C4P)* programme, was anchored in a transparent, step-by-step process that enabled credible grassroots organisations to access resources and deliver community-led action. Within this programme framework, SUPKEM led the administration and accompaniment of the grants, drawing on the Life & Peace Institute's (LPI) small-grants design and lessons from its Kenya programme to reflect global best practice while tailoring the approach to Garissa's specific conflict and climate context.

Step 1: Call for Proposals: The process began with a closed call for proposals issued to grassroots organisations across eight project sites, specifically targeting CBOs already engaged with SUPKEM in the Capacities for Peace program in the predetermined project areas. To ensure accessibility, the call was accompanied by clear guidelines and simplified application forms.

Step 2: Submission of Concept Notes: Interested organisations prepared and submitted short concept notes outlining their proposed interventions. These were intentionally brief, focusing on the problem statement, target community, and proposed activities, allowing emerging groups without strong proposal-writing skills to participate on a more equal footing.

Step 3: Eligibility Screening and Proposal Development: Concept notes were reviewed for eligibility against the programme's thematic priorities of peacebuilding, interfaith collaboration, livelihoods, inclusion, and climate resilience. Eligible proponents were then invited to develop full project proposals. At this stage, SUPKEM provided mentoring to strengthen proposals and, where needed, offered capacity support to help applicants refine objectives, budgets, and implementation plans.

Step 4: Technical Committee review: All proposals were submitted to a Technical Committee comprising representatives from SUPKEM

and guidance from LPI. The Committee reviewed proposals against agreed criteria, including organisational capacity, grassroots legitimacy, community reach, and alignment with programme objectives.

Step 5: Decision and Feedback: Based on the review, proposals were either approved or returned with recommendations for revision.

Step 6: Grant Agreement and Disbursement: For those finally approved, organisations signed a grant agreement outlining deliverables, reporting obligations, and accountability measures. Grants were disbursed in tranches tied to successful implementation and timely submission of reports. This phased approach ensured funds were linked to demonstrated progress while maintaining cash flow for ongoing activities.

Integration with Capacity Strengthening and Oversight

The application process did not end with funding approval. SUPKEM embedded capacity strengthening into every stage. Grantees received training in financial management, conflict sensitivity, facilitation skills, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation. They were coached to maintain receipts, invoices, and attendance registers, and to ensure that narrative reports aligned with financial records.

Programme staff conducted regular field visits to provide mentoring, review documentation, and triangulate reports with observation and community feedback. Impact assessment combined output tracking (e.g., number of dialogues conducted) with outcome-level signals such as improved collaboration between elders and youth, women's participation in decision-making, and community adoption of small-scale climate adaptation practices.

Best Practices Emerging from the Small-Grants Initiative

Picking from LPI's small grant practice, emphasis was placed on key lessons from previous small grant initiatives. Several best practices were distilled from the application and grant management process design and implementation. These practices not only improved fairness and accessibility but also created a pathway for organisational learning and long-term sustainability, while ensuring that local organisations are better equipped to engage in peacebuilding and resilience work.

Transparent and predictable timelines for application outcomes: Grassroots organisations operate on limited resources and rely heavily on volunteers. Long or uncertain timelines can discourage participation or disrupt local planning. By establishing a clear timetable for application review, decision-making, and feedback, SUPKEM ensured transparency and predictability. CBOs and self-help groups could plan community mobilisation and coordinate dialogue forums with local authorities and faith leaders well in advance. This strengthened both participation and the quality of delivery.

A multi-stage, user-friendly application process: The process was structured in two stages: an initial short concept note, followed by a review of the concepts. This reduced the burden of lengthy proposal writing at the outset, saving time for both applicants and reviewers.

Integration of grants with capacity-building and coaching; Unlike conventional funding streams that often provide money without support, SUPKEM paired every disbursement with technical accompaniment. Grantees were trained and coached on financial reporting, activity documentation, and monitoring tools. SUPKEM staff visited regularly to review registers, receipts, and invoices, and to advise on aligning narratives with budgets. This accompaniment built organisational systems that outlasted the grant period, enabling CBOs to meet donor standards better and access new opportunities in the future.

Emphasis on inclusion and accessibility: Beyond technical processes, the small grants initiative deliberately encouraged applications from women-led, youth-led, and disability-focused organisations. This widened representation and ensured that vulnerable groups not only benefited from projects but also shaped them as leaders and decision-makers. In practice, this meant designing calls that explicitly welcomed such groups, simplifying application requirements for minor associations, and ensuring that selection panels gave weight to inclusivity as a criterion.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDED ORGANISATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

The small grants portfolio for the Capacities for Peace (C4P) programme brought together 12 CBOs representing women, youth, interfaith leaders, disability advocates, and water-user committees. Though modest in size, with grants ranging between KES 60,000 and KES 210,000, the interventions were catalytic. They combined livelihoods, peace dialogues, climate action, and inclusion measures with SUPKEM's coaching in finance, monitoring, and conflict-sensitive facilitation. Collectively, they demonstrate how community organisations, when resourced and trusted, can deliver results that address Garissa's urgent realities of floods, droughts, and strained social cohesion.

Relevance of Themes

Garissa has endured a cycle of climate shocks that repeatedly damage WASH infrastructure and constrain livelihoods. In 2024, OCHA reported that approximately 90% of those impacted by El Niño-related flooding were concentrated in Mandera, Garissa, Tana River, Wajir, Isiolo, and Meru counties, highlighting the urgent need for community-level water repair, hygiene interventions, and climate awareness. [3] County-level climate assessments underscore that drought and flooding are the leading climate hazards in regions like Garissa, and local adaptation responses now explicitly target these threats. For instance, Garissa County's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), based on its Participatory Climate Risk Assessment (PCRA), identifies "drought, floods, pests, and diseases" as primary climate vulnerabilities requiring urgent resilience-building measures. [4] In this context, small grants that fund social cohesion, women-led adaptations, youth dialogues, and water governance are not incidental - they are targeted risk reduction and social cohesion investments. Global small grants practice also shows that routing modest funds directly to CBOs unlocks community initiatives that larger mechanisms often miss.[5]

Women's Livelihoods and Social Cohesion

Women's groups in Garissa used small grants to transform their roles from passive recipients of aid into active agents of resilience and civic voice. Their projects created safe dialogue spaces, supported income opportunities, and opened avenues for women to engage meaningfully with governance structures. The initiatives also benefited from SUPKEM's financial coaching, which strengthened accountability systems through petty cash registers, receipt management, and structured budget reporting. Together, these interventions underscored the critical role women play in building both household resilience and wider social cohesion in fragile contexts. Examples are shown below.

RISE AND SHINE WOMEN GROUP

Rise and Shine Women's Group exemplifies the catalytic potential of small, well-structured grants, with each member contributing KES 5,000 to a salon. The Rise and Shine Women Group, one of the Township Ward's Small Grants recipients, supported at least five women dialogue participants in establishing small-scale businesses. This was through the provision of technical expertise and financial support through joint savings.

Through dialogue and experience-sharing, the group empowered women to advocate for economic independence and climate resilience by engaging county officials to streamline business registration and prevent extortion. This has enabled at least five women to start businesses, while fostering a supportive network that strengthens community cohesion and mental resilience. Beyond economic gains, the project

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3   Kenya: Heavy Rains and Flooding Update — Flash Update (7-19 June 2024)
4   Garissa County Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) 2023-2027
5   The GEF Small Grants Programme: 30+ Years of Thinking Globally, Acting Locally (GEF/UNDP, 2024).

built a strong support network, boosting community cohesion and mental resilience. Women became advocacy champions, gaining communication skills to inspire others, amplifying their voices, and fostering solidarity. Participants reported feeling less isolated and more empowered to tackle future climate-related challenges.

WANAAG WOMEN GROUP

Established in 2014 by ten women in Bour Algi, Wanaag Women Group emerged as a locally legitimate actor addressing climate-related resource tensions and women's leadership in Bula Argy. Under the *Capacities for Peace (C4P)* framework, the group focused on water governance, dialogue facilitation, and environmental stewardship as entry points for strengthening social cohesion.

With support from the small grants initiative, Wanaag facilitated dialogue between farmers, pastoralists, youth, and the Iftin Ward Member of the County Assembly (MCA) to address conflict linked to restricted waterways. As a result, three waterways were reopened, enabling pastoralists to access the river without encroaching on farmland and reducing recurring tensions over water use. These engagements strengthened collaboration between rights-holders and duty-bearers and established shared mechanisms for managing water scarcity.

The group also supported youth-led regulation of sand harvesting, promoting manual extraction in designated areas to reduce environmental degradation while creating income opportunities. In parallel, Wanaag partnered with the *Million Trees Initiative* to rehabilitate degraded land through reforestation, contributing to ecosystem recovery and reducing human-wildlife conflict.

Following the December 2023 floods, which exposed the fragility of household coping systems, Wanaag redirected its KES 210,000 grant toward recovery and advocacy. Investments in farmer-focused capacity strengthening (KES 33,000) enabled women to engage more confidently in discussions on resource allocation. At the same time, a structured dialogue meeting with the MCA (KES 26,500) marked the first direct engagement between many members and an elected leader. This shift repositioned

women from aid recipients to advocates influencing county priorities on flood recovery and agricultural rehabilitation.

At the household level, complementary activities such as kitchen gardens and poultry farming helped cushion families during periods of scarcity. Overall, the Wanaag experience demonstrates how modest, well-accompanied grants can link livelihood recovery with dialogue and governance engagement, enabling women to contribute meaningfully to climate adaptation and social cohesion.

UMOJA MLIMANI WOMEN GROUP

Through women-only forums, participants gained confidence and felt freer to engage in public discussions. Training sessions in mat-making, micro-enterprise start-up, and environmental conservation gave participants new income-generating options. The group established a tree nursery, encouraging household and community tree planting for environmental conservation. The group also benefited from SUPKEM's financial coaching, which introduced clearer accounting practices, including the use of petty cash registers and improved expense summaries. This reduced undocumented costs and sped up reporting, positioning Umoja Mlimani as a credible women-led organisation ready for future funding. By combining livelihoods with civic dialogue, the group helped women transition from passive recipients to visible actors in community development and decision-making.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

These three women's groups illustrate how the Capacities for Peace (C4P) approach translated climate adaptation and social cohesion objectives into tangible community outcomes. Rather than functioning as stand-alone economic empowerment interventions, the initiatives used livelihood activities as practical entry points to strengthen community resilience, deepen understanding of climate-related risks, and enable women to participate meaningfully in dialogue and collective action. By engaging women in adaptive practices such as diversified livelihoods, environmental stewardship, and post-shock recovery, the projects reinforced social cohesion. They created trusted spaces for engagement with policy actors and local duty-bearers.

In this sense, income-generating activities did not constitute an end in themselves. Still, they served as mechanisms through which women could stabilise households affected by climate shocks, reduce vulnerability-driven tensions, and gain the confidence and legitimacy to engage in broader civic and climate-resilience conversations. This alignment reflects C4P's core framing of resilient, socially cohesive communities, in which civil society actors are equipped not only to adapt to climate change but also to engage constructively with governance systems shaping their resilience pathways.

By enabling women to generate income, manage resources transparently, and participate in governance, the projects advanced both household resilience and collective cohesion. National frameworks, including Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan (2018-2022), explicitly recognise women, youth, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups as priority stakeholders in adaptation. The prioritisation of women-led groups within the Capacities for Peace (C4P) programme therefore resonated not only with local realities in Garissa, but also with national and global policy priorities that recognise women as central actors in peacebuilding, climate adaptation, and community resilience.

ILLUSTRATIVE RESULTS

- *Women-only dialogues empowered participants to engage more confidently and assertively in public spaces*

- *Training in mat-weaving, soap-making, beadwork, and small enterprise start-up, leading to tangible income gains.*

- *Waste management awareness that improved hygiene and neighbourhood dignity.*

- *Structured advocacy engagements with county leaders, ensuring women's concerns influenced policy and recovery planning.*

Youth Leadership, Intergenerational Dialogue, and Arts-Based Advocacy

The youth portfolio in Garissa demonstrated how small grants can reframe young people from marginalised actors into credible leaders of peace and climate resilience. Fourorganisations, Modika Youth Group, Galbet Youth Network, Generation Nomad, and Wadajir Initiative for Development, showed that when young people are resourced, their creativity and energy can drive social transformation across communities. Their interventions combined leadership training, intergenerational dialogue, and public art to make peace and resilience visible and relatable in everyday spaces. Examples include:

- **Modika Youth Group**: channelled its grant into structured mentoring and community dialogues designed to shift youth perceptions and roles in peacebuilding. Chiefs and Peace Committee members trained emerging youth leaders on coexistence, leadership ethics, and environmental stewardship. Facilitated dialogues created space for honest conversations on unemployment, migration, and interdependence in a climate-stressed environment. Programme documentation highlights six structured dialogues and the co-creation of community action plans that addressed pressing conflict drivers. Importantly, elders and administrators volunteered to mediate disputes identified during the sessions, signalling the bridging of generational divides. By embedding young people in structured

processes, Modika replaced marginalisation with responsibility and reshaped the social contract between youth and duty-bearers.

- **Generation Nomad Initiative:** adopted an arts-and-storytelling approach to peacebuilding and climate advocacy. The group used exhibitions, public murals, and mobile forums to reclaim public spaces such as markets and walls as civic classrooms. These initiatives reached large youth audiences with messages on climate responsibility, peaceful coexistence, and collective resilience. One of the most innovative aspects of the work was positioning young people not only as recipients of information but as creators of civic content. By designing and curating

ILLUSTRATIVE RESULTS

- *Six intergenerational dialogues were convened, with elders volunteering to mediate disputes raised during sessions.*

- *Youth peace ambassadors trained and action plans developed to address drivers of conflict such as unemployment and drug use.*

- *Awareness activities rolled out in mosques, markets, and learning centres to expand reach.*

- *Public murals, exhibitions, and mobile art campaigns mobilised more than 500 youth and transformed markets and streets into civic learning platforms.*

- *C4P was designed with consciousness around religion and Freedom of Religion or Belief (FORB)*

their own murals and exhibitions, youth began to see themselves as agents of change in Garissa's social and environmental landscape. The intervention also deepened accountability practices within the group, with structured reporting and financial documentation enabling them to align expenditure with activities. This approach is consistent with a growing body of Kenyan evidence showing that community radio and street art can strengthen cohesion, create space for dialogue, and engage marginalised youth. Recent studies in Kenya highlight how low-cost public murals and graffiti serve as powerful tools for youth-led civic engagement and social change. For example, one study of Nairobi graffiti initiatives found that young artists reclaim public spaces through urban creativity, fostering agency and civic participation even in contexts marked by limited resources.[6]

- **Wadajir Initiative for Development:** used public art as an accessible medium for civic engagement. With its grant, the group painted a highly visible mural at Soko Ngombe market and organised a mobile art and climate education campaign across Bashal and Bula Mzuri markets. More than 500 young people were reached through exhibitions, dialogues, and interactive sessions that combined climate literacy with calls for peaceful coexistence. This approach lowered barriers to participation, making peace and climate issues accessible to young people who are often excluded from formal dialogue spaces. By embedding civic education into art, Wathajir turned streets and markets into dynamic forums for collective learning and agency.

- **Galbet Youth Network:** positioned itself as a bridge between generations, using its small grant to convene structured dialogues and broaden youth participation in peace and resilience efforts. Six intergenerational dialogues brought together young people, elders, chiefs, and peace committee members to confront issues of unemployment, drug use, and social exclusion. These conversations produced five practical action plans targeting local conflict drivers, with responsibilities shared among youth ambassadors, administrators, and community volunteers. The network also organised four larger community forums that extended participation beyond its immediate membership. These forums drew in women, religious leaders,

and local administrators, ensuring that youth priorities were embedded in broader community conversations. By widening the circle of engagement, Galbet helped to normalise the idea that young people are legitimate actors in decision-making processes rather than marginal voices on the sidelines. A key achievement was the training of youth peace ambassadors who acted as multipliers, carrying messages of coexistence into schools, mosques, and neighbourhoods. These ambassadors became role models, linking informal peer groups to formal structures of peace and governance. Community policing units noted that such youth engagement reduced tensions around hot spots where drug use and petty crime were once prevalent. Equally important was the network's internal strengthening. Through SUPKEM's financial coaching, Galbet adopted budgeting templates, improved expenditure documentation, and aligned narrative reports with receipts and activity registers. This not only increased transparency but also elevated the organisation's credibility with external partners, making it audit-ready and eligible for future funding opportunities. In essence, Galbet Youth Network demonstrated that when youth groups are given structured support, they can generate both social and institutional dividends: reducing community tensions, equipping young leaders with tools for constructive engagement, and positioning themselves as trusted partners in governance and development.

BROADER SIGNIFICANCE

The youth interventions were not only creative but also evidence-driven. Recent Kenyan studies underscore that low-cost public murals, graffiti, and community radio provide powerful entry points for marginalised youth to engage in civic discourse. The Garissa experience confirmed these findings: youth-led art and dialogue generated trust, strengthened intergenerational bonds, and gave young people ownership of peace and climate resilience narratives.

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6   Mwangi, W. (2022). Street Art and the Reconfiguration of Civic Advocacy in Nairobi City. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364718601_Street_Art_and_the_Reconfiguration_of_Civic_Advocacy_in_Nairobi_City

Interfaith Outreach and Local Media for Peace

Interfaith outreach emerged as one of the most powerful trust-building mechanisms within the small grants portfolio. In Garissa's context—where faith institutions are deeply embedded in everyday life—religious leaders hold unmatched moral authority and convening power. The small grants initiative deliberately invested in interfaith collaboration to counter polarisation, prevent the spread of extremist narratives, and strengthen social cohesion at a time of heightened climate and livelihood stress.

Through joint sermons, interfaith roadshows, and coordinated radio programming, Muslim and Christian leaders modelled unity in visible and symbolic ways. The act of pastors and sheikhs travelling together to peace forums and sharing public platforms disrupted entrenched perceptions of division. These engagements transformed faith spaces into platforms for dialogue on peace, climate responsibility, and inclusion, ensuring that messages reached audiences that formal civic forums often miss.

Local radio amplified these efforts by extending dialogue beyond physical gatherings. Interactive talk shows enabled listeners to call in, raise concerns, and reflect collectively on issues of coexistence, water scarcity, youth unemployment, and climate shocks. Importantly, interfaith leaders followed up on issues raised on air by liaising with peace committees and county officials, creating feedback loops between community voice and governance response. This combination of moral leadership, mass communication, and follow-through positioned interfaith actors as credible brokers of peace and resilience.

THE GARISSA INTERFAITH NETWORK

The network emerged as a pivotal actor in bridging divides and fostering trust across religious lines. By positioning faith leaders as conveners and trusted messengers, the platform mobilised religious authority to create spaces where peace, resilience, and inclusion could be openly discussed. Pastors and Sheikhs not only co-led sermons in churches and mosques but also travelled together to peace meetings within Garissa, a visible marker of collaboration that communities interpreted as a

profound demonstration of unity. These acts of joint leadership challenged long-held suspicions and offered tangible evidence that reconciliation was both possible and desirable.

Indeed, the activities went beyond pulpit sermons. Interfaith roadshows brought together leaders from different denominations who delivered consistent messages of peaceful coexistence across diverse neighbourhoods. Community members encountered the same narrative of tolerance whether they listened in church, a mosque, a market, or a roadside forum. Local radio stations were also used strategically to extend the reach of these messages. Talk shows and interactive segments allowed listeners to call in, ask questions, and reflect on the principles of peace and climate stewardship, ensuring that the conversation extended beyond physical gatherings into households across the country.

STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

Kenyan scholarship and practice underscore the critical role of interfaith leadership in preventing violent extremism and de-escalating local tensions, especially when combined with inclusive dialogue. For example, a qualitative study of Kenyan communities revealed that lower levels of extremist activity were found in places where both Muslim-Muslim and Christian-Muslim associations were strong, suggesting that interfaith cohesion plays a foundational role in community resilience to radicalisation.[7] Community radio is also recognised as an effective peace medium for reaching youth and neighbourhoods with limited formal platforms, precisely the audiences interfaith teams seek. The results of Garissa's interfaith outreach were most evident in contributions to strengthened social cohesion at the community level. Sermons, roadshows, and radio programmes provided consistent and shared messaging across faith spaces, reinforcing a sense of collective identity and mutual responsibility in the face of climate and livelihood pressures. By creating regular opportunities for joint reflection and dialogue, these platforms helped reduce everyday mistrust and normalise collaboration across religious lines.

Interfaith leaders also played a bridging role by listening to concerns raised during broadcasts and community forums and, where appropriate, linking them with peace committees and county officials. This iterative cycle—convening dialogue, amplifying community voice, and facilitating referral to existing institutions—supported more inclusive engagement rather than substituting for formal governance processes. Community feedback consistently highlighted that seeing pastors and sheikhs work side by side increased confidence in dialogue processes and lent credibility to messages of tolerance, coexistence, and shared civic responsibility.

By combining symbolic demonstrations of unity with practical follow-through, the Garissa Interfaith Network demonstrated that faith-based platforms can be central pillars in building resilience, preventing extremism, and nurturing inclusive local governance.

ILLUSTRATIVE RESULTS

- Co-led sermons and roadshows by pastors and sheikhs, delivered across multiple neighbourhoods and worship spaces, led to peaceful co-existence.

- Radio programmes that amplified messages of peaceful coexistence, climate responsibility, and social cohesion, while engaging audiences directly.

- Structured follow-up with county actors when community issues were raised through broadcasts and forums, ensuring that messages were translated into concrete action.

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7   L. Van Metre (2016). *Community Resilience to Violent Extremism in Kenya (Peaceworks No. 122).* United States Institute of Peace.

Water Governance, Hygiene, and Accountability

In a context where water scarcity is both a livelihood and conflict issue, small grants supporting water governance proved strategically significant. Rather than focusing solely on infrastructure, community organisations prioritised transparency, dialogue, and accountability in water management. In particular, the introduction of clear rationing schedules and public financial records strengthened user trust and legitimised water fees. These governance-focused interventions reduced disputes over access and positioned community committees as credible partners for county water authorities.

DISABILITY INCLUSION IN CLIMATE AND PEACE WORK

Disability inclusion was elevated from a cross-cutting principle to a deliberate thematic focus, addressing a persistent blind spot in local resilience planning. Persons with disabilities—often disproportionately affected by floods, droughts, and service disruptions—have historically remained invisible in climate adaptation and peace processes. Through disability-led data collection, tailored climate education, and structured dialogue with duty-bearers, the initiative demonstrated how modest resources can unlock participation, recognition, and agency.

The experience aligns with national policy commitments and global guidance on disability-inclusive climate action, illustrating how small grants can operationalise these frameworks at the community level. By engaging persons with disabilities as contributors rather than beneficiaries, the programme strengthened both equity and the quality of resilience planning.

EMBEDDING CLIMATE SENSITIVITY IN PEACE STRUCTURES

Strengthening the interface between peace actors and climate governance emerged as another strategic contribution. Training county peace committee members on climate-conflict linkages expanded their role beyond dispute mediation to include advocacy for resilience-oriented responses. Symbolic and practical actions—such as tree planting involving senior county officials— reinforced the legitimacy of peace actors in climate discussions and signalled the convergence of peace and environmental agendas. This approach demonstrated that peace structures can act as drivers of inclusive, conflict-sensitive climate adaptation rather than passive responders.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AS A STRATEGIC OUTCOME

Across the portfolio, targeted financial management and reporting support produced consistent improvements in documentation, traceability, and audit readiness. These gains extend beyond compliance: strengthened financial literacy, enhanced organisational credibility, and a position for grassroots organisations to engage with larger and more complex funding mechanisms in the future. For donors, this represents a critical long-term dividend of small grants programming—the emergence of accountable, locally grounded partners capable of sustained participation in peace and resilience efforts.

CONTRIBUTION ANALYSIS

The small grants initiative contributed to observable, scale-appropriate changes across Garissa County that aligned with the programme's timeframe and objectives. Rather than driving system-wide transformation, the grants reinforced existing peace, governance, and resilience structures by strengthening community knowledge, practices, and organisational capacity related to climate adaptation, social cohesion, and inclusive engagement.

Across the portfolio, targeted activities, including peace committee training, intergenerational and interfaith dialogue, community-led adaptation practices, and strengthened financial accountability, contributed to improved confidence, collaboration, and participation among local actors. Women's groups enhanced household coping strategies through post-shock recovery dialogue; youth initiatives expanded civic spaces and intergenerational trust; water committees adopted clearer governance practices; and disability-focused actors gained recognition in local planning processes. Collectively, these changes represent incremental yet meaningful contributions toward resilient, socially cohesive communities.

LIVELIHOODS, AGENCY, AND HOUSEHOLD RESILIENCE

Women-led initiatives linked livelihood recovery with civic participation, using income-generating activities as entry points for strengthening resilience and voice. Reported improvements in household income and food security were accompanied by greater confidence among women to engage local leaders on flood recovery and resource allocation. These shifts illustrate how economic activity, when embedded in collective action, can support broader peace and resilience objectives.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND INTERGENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Youth engagement emerged as a substantial contribution to social cohesion. Structured mentoring, dialogue, and creative expression repositioned young people as peace ambassadors and dialogue leaders rather than marginalised actors. By creating visible roles for youth in community conversations, the initiative strengthened intergenerational trust and reinforced the principles of the Youth, Peace and Security agenda.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Environmental outcomes were achieved through integrating service delivery with governance reforms. Improvements in water access, hygiene practices, and transparent rationing reduced competition over scarce resources, while interfaith environmental actions reinforced shared stewardship. This combined approach demonstrated that effective climate adaptation requires both technical solutions and accountable governance.

SYNTHESIS

The initiatives' contributions demonstrate several strategic lessons of global relevance:

1. **Catalytic Resources Matter:** *Even modest grants can shift household economies, reshape conflict dynamics, and establish governance practices when paired with mentorship.*

2. **Inclusion Is Non-Negotiable:** *Integrating women, youth, and persons with disabilities is not only equitable but increases legitimacy and effectiveness of interventions.*

3. **Governance and Services Must Intersect:** *Combining infrastructure with rule-setting produces durable peace and resilience dividends.*

4. **Capacity Is as Valuable as Cash:** *The most enduring legacy is the emergence of audit-ready, credible CBOs now positioned to access larger funding streams.*

5. **Dialogue Is the Glue:** *Whether interfaith, intergenerational, or civic, consistent dialogue created trust - the intangible but indispensable ingredient of sustainable peace.*

INCLUSION AND EQUITY

Inclusion was embedded as a core design principle rather than an add-on. Disability-led data collection and advocacy brought persons with disabilities into resilience planning for the first time in several wards. At the same time, women and youth were consistently represented in dialogue and decision-making spaces. These practices translated equity commitments into practical, locally grounded action.

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AS A STRATEGIC OUTCOME

A significant contribution of the initiative was the strengthening of organisational capacity. Through proportionate financial coaching and reporting support, CBOs improved documentation, transparency, and audit readiness. These gains extend beyond compliance, positioning grassroots organisations as credible partners capable of engaging with larger funding mechanisms and sustained peace and resilience efforts.

POLICY AND DUTY-BEARER ENGAGEMENT

Although still in its early stages, policy engagement gained traction. Wanaag convened meetings with ward MCAs, women's rights were tabled in dialogue forums, and persons with disabilities mapping was presented to local authorities for consideration in budget planning. Several partners reported a qualitative shift in relationships with local leaders - from skepticism to trust. The strategic importance of this cannot be overstated. Policy influence at the local level is not about immediate budget allocations but about establishing pathways of access and recognition. By opening doors, small grants laid the groundwork for institutional collaboration that can mature in subsequent phases.

CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Despite the overall success of the small grants s, several challenges were encountered that underscore the realities of implementing small grants in fragile, climate-stressed contexts like Garissa.

- **Competition between groups:** Competition between women's associations or youth groups occasionally sparked jealousy, with excluded organisations questioning why others received grants. C4P mitigated this by incorporating more new organizations in the second phase of the process.
- **Limited timeframes for implementation:** Grantees noted that tight activity windows strained mobilisation.
- **Data and documentation gaps:** Several organisations struggled to track participants and document outcomes systematically. While financial reporting improved substantially, outcome data, such as the number of individuals adopting new practices, were sometimes weak. SUPKEM worked to mitigate this through continuous monitoring and evaluation.
- **Participation balance in inclusion spaces:** While women-to-women forums created safe spaces and confidence, they also led to occasional underrepresentation of men. This highlighted the need for balancing targeted empowerment with broader inclusion. Future cycles will explicitly design mixed-gender and intergenerational forums alongside targeted empowerment spaces.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Garissa small grants initiative generated practical insights into how catalytic resources, when paired with accompaniment, proportional accountability, and power-aware design, can strengthen the role of local civil society within peacebuilding and climate adaptation processes. These lessons closely align with Life & Peace Institute (LPI)'s small-grants learning, particularly the emphasis on simplicity, trust, and accompaniment, as articulated in How Can We Make This Easy?. Collectively, the lessons cut across capacity development, inclusion, financing, and programme design under the Capacities for Peace (C4P) framework.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT MUST BE CONTINUOUS, NOT EPISODIC.

One of the clearest lessons is that capacity strengthening is most effective when it is continuous rather than front-loaded. Accompaniment before, during, and after grant disbursement proved essential for embedding basic yet critical practices, such as receipt handling, expense categorisation, and linking narratives to financial reports. CBOs that initially struggled with documentation improved through repeated, low-pressure touchpoints rather than one-off training sessions.

This mirrors LPI's finding that "capacity grows through doing, reflection, and accompaniment," rather than through compliance-heavy training models. When financial literacy and monitoring skills were reinforced incrementally, they endured beyond the life of a single grant. Peer-to-peer learning among grantees, through shared templates and quarterly reflection sessions- further reinforced accountability and collective learning, consistent with LPI's emphasis on horizontal learning over top-down control.

INCLUSION REQUIRES INTENTIONAL DESIGN

While the initiative successfully engaged women, youth, persons with disabilities, and elders, a key lesson was that inclusion does not occur by default; it must be deliberately designed and actively facilitated. The modalities of engagement significantly shaped the quality of participation. Women-only forums created confidence and safety, while youth-led creative platforms lowered barriers to engagement. At the same time, disability inclusion, though powerfully demonstrated by Kamodanyar, remained uneven across the wider portfolio.

This reflects LPI's lesson that inclusive practice requires intentional choices about who is invited, how spaces are structured, and whose knowledge is valued. Gender- or identity-specific spaces proved effective when complemented by mixed forums that preserved social cohesion. Where this balance was achieved, participation widened, legitimacy deepened, and previously excluded actors entered resilience and peace conversations.

Strategically, future initiatives should formalise inclusion thresholds (for women and persons with disabilities), incorporate structured feedback loops, and respect traditional governance systems such as elders' councils. These measures align with LPI's emphasis on power awareness and legitimacy as foundations for meaningful participation. Applying principles akin to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) reinforces the lesson that communities must experience themselves as owners of initiatives, not passive recipients of donor processes.

BLENDING CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE WHILE INTRODUCING INNOVATION

Another lesson was the importance of integrating traditional knowledge with technical approaches. Elders' understanding of climate patterns, migration routes, and dispute-resolution mechanisms proved invaluable when embedded within C4P dialogues. Respecting these systems-built legitimacy, while introducing practices such as tree planting, water harvesting, and hygiene promotion, added technical value.

This hybrid approach echoes LPI's lesson that externally introduced solutions gain traction only when they resonate with local knowledge systems. Projects that balanced cultural continuity with innovation avoided perceptions of outside imposition and achieved stronger community buy-in.

THE SIZE OF GRANTS MATTERS FOR SCALE AND ABSORPTION

While grants ranging from KES 60,000-210,000 were catalytic, they also imposed limits. Several organisations demonstrated readiness to scale but were constrained by grant ceilings. LPI's small grants learning similarly highlights the importance of proportionality, matching grant size to organisational maturity and ambition.

A tiered grant model, where emerging CBOs begin with modest awards and graduate to larger allocations based on demonstrated accountability, would balance inclusivity with scale. This approach preserves access while enabling more profound impact where capacity exists.

FLEXIBILITY IN BUDGETING AND REPROGRAMMING IS ESSENTIAL

Rigid budget lines occasionally constrained responsiveness to emerging needs, such as increased demand for mobilisation, dialogue facilitation, or qualitative engagement. Allowing limited budget reallocation enabled innovation, including youth-led art exhibitions and expanded dialogue forums.

This reflects LPI's core lesson that adaptive management—when paired with trust and transparency—enhances relevance without undermining accountability. Small-grants frameworks should therefore institutionalise flexibility rather than treating it as an exception.

AUTONOMY ENHANCES OWNERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

CBOs valued the autonomy to design interventions grounded in their own realities. This autonomy fostered creativity, legitimacy, and downward accountability to communities. For example, Jarrirot prioritised governance of water rationing, while Wathajir invested in murals as a culturally resonant engagement tool.

Consistent with LPI's findings, the Garissa experience showed that when donor objectives provide direction rather than prescription, local actors are more likely to innovate responsibly and sustain outcomes. Under C4P, shared goals of peacebuilding and climate adaptation served as a compass, allowing contextual strategies to emerge organically.

SMALL GRANTS ARE CATALYTIC, NOT COMPREHENSIVE.

A final lesson is that small grants should be understood as catalytic entry points rather than solutions to systemic challenges. Their value lies in enabling agency, testing approaches, and opening pathways to policy engagement. For example, interfaith dialogues shifted narratives and relationships, but sustained institutional change requires longer-term engagement beyond the grant cycle.

This aligns directly with LPI's caution against overburdening small grants with unrealistic expectations. Linking CBOs to broader ecosystems, government programmes, INGOs, academia, and the media remains essential for sustainability and scale.

DATA AND MEL: GOOD STARTS, APPARENT GAPS

Progress in financial documentation was significant, yet outcome tracking remained uneven. While some organisations documented observable changes, others lacked systems for longitudinal follow-up. Addressing this gap requires continued mentoring and simple, proportionate monitoring tools.

In line with LPI's learning, investment in MEL should prioritise usability over complexity. Strengthening outcome harvesting and qualitative reflection is critical to translating community-level change into credible evidence for policy influence and scale.

Success Factors and Gaps

SUCCESS FACTORS INCLUDED:

- Targeted, context-aware design that met communities where they were.
- SUPKEM's close accompaniment and trust-building role.
- Practical finance and reporting training that turned informal groups into credible partners.
- Use of trusted community forums, faith spaces, markets, water points, and art exhibitions as message carriers.

GAPS WERE EQUALLY INSTRUCTIVE:

- Inconsistent outcome documentation across some projects.
- Lack of systematic beneficiary tracking.
- Incomplete mainstreaming of disability inclusion across all activities.

UNIQUENESS OF THE MODEL

Three elements define the uniqueness of this model:

1. **Dialogue backed by action -** Peacebuilding was not abstract; it was embodied in tree planting, mat-weaving, roadshows, and radio talk shows, ensuring that communities saw peace in practice.
2. **Grants paired with mentorship -** Resources were never given in isolation. SUPKEM ensured that financial and facilitation training accompanied every grant, leading to improvements in reporting and organisational confidence.
3. **Interfaith platforms as trust accelerators -** By placing pastors and sheikhs at the centre, the programme unlocked rapid legitimacy, bridging divides and enabling youth-elder trust.

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAY

The overarching lesson is that small grants programming works best when it combines continuous capacity development, intentional inclusion, respect for cultural systems, flexible financing, and linkages to wider networks. In Garissa, these elements converged to transform previously invisible grassroots organisations into credible actors shaping peace, livelihoods, and resilience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Key Findings

The Capacities for Peace small grants initiative affirmed that modest, well-curated resources, when actively accompanied by training and mentorship, can shift community systems and produce visible impact. The grants delivered better water access and fairer allocation, stronger women's enterprises and advocacy platforms, safer and more engaged youth spaces, and concrete inclusion measures for persons with disabilities.

The backbone of these results was the strengthening of CBOs' financial documentation and aligned reporting systems. By learning to handle receipts, categorise expenses, and link narrative to financial reports, CBOs not only enhanced credibility with donors but also deepened trust with their communities. This trust became the currency that enabled them to mobilise people, resolve conflicts, and sustain interventions beyond project timelines.

Several overarching insights emerged:

- **Community capacity is foundational:** Results were sustained because of the parallel investment in financial and facilitation training. Capacity development is not an add-on; it is the enabling environment for impact.
- **Patience is required:** Community-based approaches take time. Trust-building, inclusion, and intergenerational dialogue cannot be fast-tracked. Yet, when implemented thoughtfully, their dividends endure long after project closure.
- **Livelihoods and conservation are linked:** Women's enterprises and kitchen gardens not only reduced food insecurity but also reinforced sustainable land and water use, showing that socio-economic benefits can incentivise conservation goals.
- **Context matters:** Communities are not homogeneous. Project design must fit local realities, such as interfaith sermons in Garissa Township or water rationing committees in Jarrirot. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Strategic Recommendations for Future Grants

Drawing from implementation experience in Garissa and cross-portfolio analysis, several strategic recommendations emerge for donors and partners seeking to replicate or scale the small grants model.

INSTITUTIONALISE FINANCE AND MEL CAPACITY FROM THE OUTSET

Finance and monitoring systems should not evolve by chance but be built deliberately from the start. Future cycles should make pre-award and early post-award coaching mandatory, focusing on receipts, registers, activity-cost linkages, and outcome harvesting. This will prevent retrospective corrections and raise reporting quality from day one. A light, shared MEL toolkit, comprising participants' IDs, attendance standards, photographic evidence protocols, and one-page outcome summaries, should be provided to all grantees. Quarterly peer-review clinics, where CBOs critique and learn from each other's documentation, would further entrench accountability and continuous learning.

EXPAND AND SYSTEMATISE INTERFAITH AND INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUES

Interfaith and intergenerational conversations proved transformative in diffusing tensions and addressing climate-linked risks. These should be converted from ad hoc sessions into regular ward-level dialogue platforms embedded in county peace action plans. By tying dialogue outputs to formal community action plans, conversations can translate into sustained commitments and policy uptake.

DEEPEN CLIMATE-PEACE LINKAGES

Community-designed micro-resilience actions, tree nurseries, water harvesting, or locally negotiated by-laws, should be embedded as follow-up commitments to dialogue sessions. Quarterly tracking of adoption rates will help measure behavioural change, consolidating Garissa's leadership in operationalising the climate-security agenda.

REQUIRE DISABILITY-INCLUSIVE DESIGN

Disability inclusion should move from optional to standard practice. Every proposal should undergo a design review to ensure accessibility in mobility, communication, and participation. Lessons from Kamordanyar show how modest adaptations (advocacy for adaptive equipment) can transform dignity and safety for persons with disabilities during climate shocks. By mandating inclusive design, donors not only address equity but also meet global commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals.

SCALE WHAT WORKS AND REPLICATE SUCCESS MODELS

Several models from Garissa are replicable: Jarrirot's transparent water rationing system, Rise and Shine, Wadhajir's youth-led art exhibitions, and interfaith roadshows that model trust among others. These proven practices should be deliberately scaled across wards, institutionalised into county planning, and supported with co-financing from local governments. Replication should prioritise cross-sector diffusion and integration into sector strategies (peace, WASH, livelihoods, climate adaptation).

DE-RISK IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH STAGED DISBURSEMENTS AND TRANSPARENT MOBILISATION

To reduce financial and delivery risks, grants should be disbursed in tranches tied to milestones. Early publicity of grant awards and clear timetables for fund release will strengthen mobilisation and planning, reducing last-minute strain. In addition, reserving "inclusion seats" in dialogues for competing groups can mitigate jealousy and ensure broader legitimacy.

SUSTAIN ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY GAINS

A simple accreditation pathway should be developed for CBOs that demonstrate consistent compliance, transparency, and delivery. Accreditation would enable these organisations to access larger donor pools, rewarding accountability and encouraging peer groups to adopt higher standards. Beyond finance, capacity gains should include advocacy, policy engagement, and negotiation skills so that CBOs can interface effectively with government duty-bearers.

ELEVATE CREATIVE AND YOUTH-LED PLATFORMS

Arts, murals, and market-based civic education should be recognised as legitimate tools of peacebuilding and resilience. Youth groups should receive technical coaching to strengthen content, expand reach, and link creative outputs to governance processes. By mainstreaming these methods, future programmes can capture the imagination of young people and make peace and climate messages visible in everyday spaces.

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

The next phase of small grants programming must be both systematic and adaptive. Systematic in embedding finance, MEL, and inclusion standards across all grants, and adaptive in allowing CBOs autonomy to design context-specific solutions. By institutionalising what worked in Garissa and scaling the most promising models, donors can transform small grants programming from catalytic pilots into sustained engines of local peace, resilience, and inclusive development.

Replication and Scale

The portfolio offers replicable micro-models that can inform county, national, and even regional practice. The table below highlights key strategic areas to consider when scaling.

Organisation	Model/Approach	Potential for Scale
Jarrirot Water Management Committee	Transparent rationing schedules and public revenue - expenditure reporting.	It can be adopted by other Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs) to reduce disputes, legitimise water fees, and improve service accountability.
Garissa Water and Environmental Organisation (GWEO)	Advocacy for infrastructure repair combined with hygiene education.	A replicable WASH model that ensures expanded access to water by safeguarding it through behaviour change, reducing contamination risks.
Rise and Shine Women Group	Training in soap-making and beadwork.	Demonstrates how pooled resources and small grants can create dignified income spaces and rapid household income gains.
Wanaag Women Group	Food security initiatives (kitchen gardens, poultry) combined with post-flood advocacy.	Shows how women's livelihoods can transition into governance influence; scalable to other disaster-affected wards.
Umoja Mlimani Women Group	Women-only civic forums coupled with training in mat-making, micro-enterprise, and waste management.	Replicable safe-space model for building women's skills and confidence to enter public forums and local governance.
Modika Youth Group	Leadership mentoring by chiefs and structured dialogues with elders.	Practical model for embedding youth in peace and security frameworks across wards facing climate and social stress.

Organisation	Model/Approach	Potential for Scale
Galbet Youth Network	Intergenerational dialogues, youth peace ambassador training, and community action plans.	Offers a replicable template for tackling conflict drivers like unemployment and drug abuse through structured youth-elder partnerships.
Generation Nomad Initiative	Public art, exhibitions, and mobile civic forums.	Low-cost, scalable approach for reclaiming public spaces as civic classrooms; adaptable to both rural and urban contexts.
Wathajir Initiative for Development	Murals, mobile art campaigns, and market-based civic education.	Replicable arts-based advocacy model for reaching large youth audiences and seeding dialogue in informal community spaces.
Garissa Interfaith Network	Joint sermons, interfaith roadshows, and community radio broadcasts.	Scalable model for fostering trust across religious divides and preventing extremist exploitation, especially in high-risk countries.
Garissa Peace and Reconciliation Organisation (GPRO)	Climate-conflict training for peace committees and symbolic tree planting.	Replicable model for embedding climate-conflict awareness into peace infrastructures in other ASAL counties.
Kamordanyar Disable Group	Disability mapping, adaptive equipment, and inclusive infrastructure advocacy.	Provides a clear template for mainstreaming disability in resilience programming; can be scaled by integrating inclusion reviews into county planning.

Strategic Pathways for Scale

Replication will require more than copying activities; it should involve embedding tested approaches into county plans and linking them to national strategies. Jarrirot's water governance practices, for example, can inform county water policy. Women's enterprises and advocacy platforms resonate with Kenya's WPS agenda. Youth dialogues and arts-led civics align with the global YPS agenda. Disability inclusion advances Kenya's Disability Act and global commitments on inclusive adaptation.

By scaling these micro-models, county governments can co-finance grassroots solutions, development partners can invest in tested approaches, and national frameworks can integrate community-led action into sectoral strategies. The Garissa experience proves that small grants can seed innovations that are not only replicable but capable of reshaping governance and resilience at scale.

SUPKEM and LPI's small grants initiative in Garissa County has demonstrated that catalytic resources, when thoughtfully paired with capacity strengthening and interfaith dialogue, can ignite profound grassroots transformation. The programme has not only enhanced organisational credibility and strengthened peace infrastructures, but also fostered meaningful inclusion of women, youth, and persons with disabilities while advancing small yet powerful climate actions.

What began as modest allocations to community-based organisations has evolved into a credible pathway for long-term collaboration, enabling groups once overlooked to emerge as trusted actors in climate adaptation, governance, peacebuilding, and resilience. These initiatives have shown that when communities are empowered with both resources and skills, they can move beyond dependency to agency, shaping solutions, influencing policy, and sustaining gains beyond the project cycle.

The legacy of this initiative lies not just in activities delivered, but in the systems strengthened: grassroots organisations now equipped with financial literacy, transparent reporting, and facilitation skills that will outlast any single grant. For donors and partners, the Garissa experience offers compelling evidence that small grants, when well-designed and actively accompanied, are not peripheral; they are central to building sustainable peace, equity, and resilience in fragile contexts.

LIST OF ANNEXES

Annex 1: Detailed Profiles of Funded Organisations

Organisation	Mandate	Governance	Focus Areas	Partnerships
Rise and Shine Women Group`	Empower women economically through cooperative enterprises, savings schemes, and advocacy for women's rights.	Elected a 7-member committee with leadership rotation.	Table banking, micro-enterprise training, and women's civic participation.	County gender officers, local market associations.
Wanaag Women Group	Strengthen women's resilience and food security in Bour Algi.	10 founding members, rotating chair, quarterly financial reviews.	Kitchen gardens, poultry, post-flood recovery, policy advocacy.	Iftin Ward, MCA, county agricultural officers.
Umoja Mlimani Women Group	Create safe spaces for women's dialogue and promote livelihoods.	Community-based women's leadership committee.	Women-only civic forums, mat-making, small enterprises, waste management.	Local women leaders, market associations, and SUPKEM finance coaches.
Modika Youth Group	Mobilise youth for peace, intergenerational dialogue, and climate resilience.	Youth-led committee with chiefs and peace committee advisors.	Youth mentoring, leadership training, structured dialogues, and climate awareness.	Community policing units, local chiefs, county government, and schools.
Galbet Youth Network	Engage youth in peacebuilding, civic education, and resilience.	Elected youth council with elder/administrator advisors.	Intergenerational dialogues, youth ambassador training, and conflict action plans.	Chiefs, peace committees, county youth officers.
Generation Nomad Initiative	Use creative arts and storytelling to amplify youth voices in peace and climate action.	Youth-run initiative with rotating coordination team and artist advisors.	Murals, exhibitions, street art, mobile dialogues, civic storytelling.	Schools, markets, youth-serving NGOs.

Organisation	Mandate	Governance	Focus Areas	Partnerships
Garissa Peace and Reconciliation Organisation (GPRO)	Reinforce peace infrastructures and integrate climate issues into peacebuilding.	NGO board with mediators and trainers.	Peace committee training, climate-conflict linkages, symbolic advocacy.	County Commissioner's office.
Garissa Interfaith Network	Build cohesion across faith lines and prevent violent extremism.	Council of Muslim and Christian leaders, rotating convenorship.	Joint sermons, interfaith roadshows, community radio shows.	Local FM stations, mosques, churches, and county peace actors.
Garissa Water and Environmental Organisation (GWEO)	Improve safe access to water and environmental stewardship.	Water-user committee with roles for revenue collection and maintenance.	Hygiene education, WASH training, and community water storage.	Garissa County WASH department.
Jarrirot Water Management Committee	Manage equitable water access and reduce water-related conflicts.	A democratically elected board accountable to the community.	Rationing schedules, transparent revenue reporting, and user sensitisation.	SUPKEM finance coaches, county water department.
Wathajir Initiative for Development	Harness creative arts for youth mobilisation on climate and cohesion.	Youth-led with rotating leadership and artist advisors.	Murals, exhibitions, art-driven dialogues, and youth climate education.	Markets, schools, youth clubs, NGOs.
Kamordanyar Disable Group	Champion rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs).	PWD-led committee with inclusive decision-making forums.	Disability mapping, adaptive equipment, mobility infrastructure, and inclusive climate education.	Disability officers, faith institutions, disaster-response units.

Annex 2: Monitoring and Evaluation Tools

SUPKEM developed and shared a suite of simple but effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools to strengthen accountability and traceability.

No.	Tool	Description	Key Features
1	Attendance Registers	Standardised sheets are used to capture participants in all activities.	Records name, gender, age, and group affiliation; ensures disaggregation for women, youth, and PWDs.
2	Expense Documentation Templates	Tools for financial accountability and tracking of expenditures.	Petty cash registers; budget vs. actual templates; receipt and invoice filing with serial numbers for audits.
3	Narrative-Financial Alignment Guidance	Ensures each reported activity is directly linked to the corresponding expenditure.	One-page linkage sheet; requires narratives (e.g., youth dialogue) to match petty cash, receipts, and attendance sheets.
4	Activity Verification Protocols	Validates that the activities reported took place.	Field photos with participant lists; community leader or supervisor sign-off; spot checks by SUPKEM field officers.
5	Outcome Harvesting Notes	Captures qualitative evidence of change alongside quantitative data.	Reflection templates for CBOs; documents observed shifts (e.g., reduced water disputes, new income sources).

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Annex 3: Financial Summary and Grant Allocations

The table below illustrates grant allocations and expenditure focus by the 12 local organizations.

No	Name of CBOs	Net Grant Amount
1	Modika Youth Group	210,000
2	Garissa Interfaith Network	150,000
3	Jarirot Water Management Committee	210,000
4	Umoja Mlimani Women Group	150,000
5	Galbet Youth Network	150,000
6	Wanag Women Group	210,000
7	Wadhajir Initiative for Development	210,000
8	Generation Nomad	150,000
9	Kamordanyar Disable Group	60,000
10	Rise and Shine Women Group	60,000
11	Garissa Water and Environmental Organization	60,000
12	Garissa Peace and Reconciliation Organization	60,000
TOTAL		1,680,000

Annex 4: Testimonies and Success Stories

The most potent evidence of impact came from the voices of community members:

- **From the water point in Jarrirot:**
  "Before the rationing, fights would break out almost daily when the water ran low. Now everyone knows their time. Even children can fetch without fear."
- **From a youth at a Wathajir art exhibition:**
  "I had never seen climate change painted on our walls. It made me realise it is our problem, not just something for schools and officials."
- **From a woman in the Rise and Shine salon:**
  "I no longer wait for my husband to bring money. The salon gave me income, and with it, respect. I can now pay school fees without begging."
- **From a PWD in Kamordanyar:**
  "During floods, I used to stay home because the ground was impassable. The raised walkway means I can reach the market again."
- **From an elder after interfaith dialogues**
  "When pastors and sheikhs travelled together for a peace meeting, it showed us that unity is possible. It gave us courage to talk openly with our youth."

These testimonies underscore the transformative power of small grants: not just in building structures or training groups, but in shifting perceptions, building dignity, and renewing trust between citizens, leaders, and institutions.