



IEC Material for Kisumu County – Sustainable Water & Waste Management

Improving services, protecting the environment, and empowering communities

Quick Snapshot



Demographics (respondents): Youth 59.9% (18–35); 28.7% (36–50); 11.4% (51+).



Gender: Women 42%, Men 58%. Women fetch 78% of household water (3.2 hrs/day vs 1.1 hrs for men); women hold 33% of community water committee seats; men occupy 65% of waste roles.



Water system: Built capacity 80,000 m³/day with 50% utilization (constraints: electricity cost, pollution, aging infrastructure). KIWASCO coverage 93% overall, with shortfalls in informal settlements; vendors charge KES 5–20 per 20L.



Sewerage & wastewater: Household sewer connection is 18–19%; 40% discharge via open ditches; 25% use septic tanks.



Household practices: 62% of households harvest rainwater. 49% do not treat drinking water (boiling 31%, chlorine 11%); only 2% use rainwater as main source. Recycling 39%, composting 20%; 72% do not consistently segregate waste.



Circular infrastructure & actors: Material Recovery Centres (MRCs) in Obunga, Manyatta, Kaswino; active CBOs/private sector including Gasia Poa and Kisumu Waste Actors Network (KIWAN).



Partnerships: KIWASCO with WWF & USAID on watershed protection and afforestation (e.g., Kajulu); CSO & utility education campaigns.



Community Voice:

“Distance, cost, and contamination are our biggest water concerns. We prefer rainwater harvesting and community tanks as solutions.”-

FGD participant, Kisumu

I) Situational Analysis – Key Statistics, Trends & Context

- Young population with a significant gendered burden of water collection; women are under-represented in decision making (33%).
- Despite proximity to Lake Victoria and installed capacity, production is under utilized and access is uneven in informal settlements; affordability issues push reliance on vendors.
- Water safety concerns persist where household treatment is low; uptake of Water Guard/filters is limited by awareness/affordability.
- Wastewater disposal is largely via open ditches/septic tanks; low sewer coverage heightens environmental and health risks, especially in flood prone areas.
- Solid waste collection is largely privatized (48%) and inconsistently delivered; the county relies on a single dumpsite (Kasese) with poor accessibility. Illegal dumping is linked to the absence of bins (74%), weak enforcement, and underfunding.

II) Challenges and Opportunities

Key Challenges

- Underutilized water production capacity (high electricity costs, aging infrastructure, pollution).
- Low sewer connection rates; unsafe wastewater disposal patterns.
- Inconsistent collection service; illegal dumping; limited collection points; difficult access to the dumpsite.
- Low adoption of water treatment (49% of households do not treat water).
- High water costs in informal settlements.
- Weak domestication/enforcement of the Sustainable Waste Management Act (2022); limited budgets (waste < KES 10M/year).
- Gender gaps: women shoulder water collection yet hold fewer committee seats (33%); men dominate waste roles (65%).
- CSO operational hurdles (e.g., multi layered NEMA licensing); weak inter agency coordination; minimal enforcement for landlords/unlicensed businesses.

Opportunities

A. Innovations

- KIWASCO Direct Meter Management (DMM) kiosks (token operated, 24 hour access, affordable).
- Material Recovery Centres (MRCs) in Obunga, Manyatta, Kaswino reduce landfill pressure and promote circularity.
- Community based initiatives: rainwater harvesting by 62% of households.

B. Partnerships

- KIWASCO with WWF & USAID for watershed protection & afforestation around sources (e.g., Kajulu).
- Private sector and CSOs actively engaged in waste management through community led clean ups and polluter pays measures.

C. Youth & Women Engagement

- High youth population (59.9%); energy and innovation for solutions.
- Women already engaged in collection and household level recycling.



Community Voice:

“Open burning and illegal dumping are common here. Youth want to see the 3Rs; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle promoted more strongly.” -

Youth participant, Kisumu

III) Policy Recommendations

Policy & Governance

- Fast track domestication and enforcement of the Sustainable Waste Management Act (2022) through county specific by laws.
- Institutionalize ward level planning committees with meaningful representation of women and youth.
- Strengthen enforcement of the polluter pays principle and penalties for illegal dumping.
- Reform conservancy fees; enforce planning rules to ensure sewer access in commercial buildings.
- Introduce electricity subsidies/special tariffs for water utilities.

Infrastructure & Services

- Expand sewerage networks to informal settlements.
- Improve access roads to the Kasese dumpsite and establish community transfer stations.
- Scale up rainwater harvesting and community tanks.
- Solarize water production systems (replicate the Malindi PPP model).

Community Engagement

- Support grassroots CBO/CSO co implementation through matching grants and reduced administrative barriers.
- Expand civic education on 3Rs and behaviour change via schools, CHPs, radio, and youth campaigns.
- Increase women and youth leadership in water committees and waste enterprises.

Financing & Sustainability

- Establish a Kisumu Environmental Trust Fund pooling county, private sector, and donor contributions.
- Mobilize climate adaptation funds, carbon credits, and plastic credit schemes.
- Provide targeted subsidies for water access in informal settlements.

Conclusion & Call to Action

Kisumu County faces interconnected challenges in water and waste management driven by rapid urbanization, weak enforcement, and underinvestment. Yet scalable innovations such as rainwater harvesting, community recovery centres, and token operated kiosks are already in place, and active communities provide a strong foundation for reform. With targeted investments, gender responsive programming, community partnerships, sustainable financing, and policy reforms aligned to Vision 2030 and the SDGs, Kisumu can move from environmental vulnerability to a model of sustainable urban resilience.

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