LANCET COUNTDOWN: TRACKING PROGRESS ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
In collaboration with Wellcome

A decade tracking progress on health and climate change

KENYA

LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE
DATA SHEET 2026

Health and Climate Change in Kenya

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change tracks the connections between health and climate change. In its tenth iteration, the 2026 Global Report shows that the health impacts of climate change have escalated, and frequently accelerated, in the decade since the Paris Agreement came into force.

This document draws on findings from the 2026 Lancet Countdown Global Report to present key insights for Kenya.

Increasing heat exposure is affecting vulnerable populations and workers in Kenya, contributing to heat-related mortality and reducing labour capacity, with substantial consequences for health and livelihoods.

Extreme drought has become substantially more widespread in Kenya, threatening water availability, food security and livelihoods, with consequences for health and wellbeing.

Widespread reliance on polluting household fuels and extremely limited electricity use in transport pose challenges to improving air quality and protecting health in Kenya.

Insufficient consumption of nutritious plant-based foods contributes to preventable mortality in Kenya. Improving access to affordable, diverse and nutritious diets can protect health while supporting more sustainable food systems.

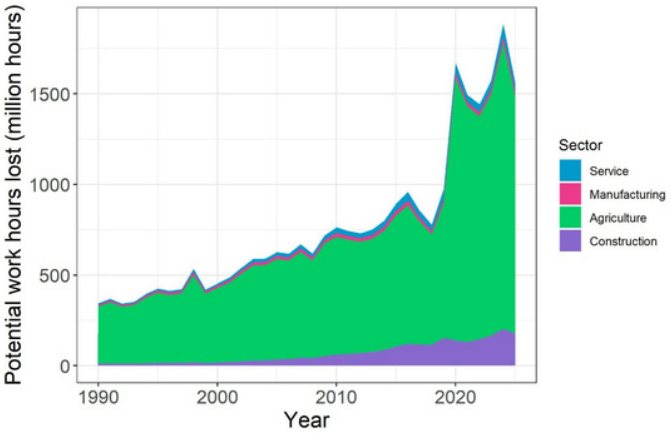
Heat and Health

Exposure to high temperatures increases the risk of heat-related illness and mortality. Vulnerable groups, including older adults, young children, pregnant women, and those with pre-existing conditions, face the greatest risks. Heat exposure also reduces people's capacity to work, with consequences for livelihoods and economic productivity.

99.6% of the heatwave days that people in Kenya were exposed to on average were directly attributable to climate change between 2021 and 2025. (Indicator 1.1.1)
Children under one year of age and adults over 65 in Kenya each experienced an average of approximately five heatwave days annually between 2021 and 2025, around four additional days per year compared with 1986–2005. (Indicator 1.1.1)

The average annual monetised value of heat-related mortality among people aged over 65 in Kenya was approximately US$478 million between 2021 and 2025, equivalent to approximately 27,500 average annual incomes. This was a 273% increase compared with 2000–2004. (Indicator 4.1.2)

Annual potential work hours lost, disaggregated by economic sector. Kenya, 1990 to 2025.



Heat exposure caused an average annual loss of 1.3 billion potential labour hours in Kenya between 2016 and 2025, 229% higher than the annual average in the 1990s. However, potential hours lost per worker increased by 50% over the same period, indicating that growth in the exposed workforce contributed to the increase in total losses. Agriculture accounted for approximately 83% of these losses. (Indicator 1.1.3)

Heat-related labour capacity reduction in Kenya caused an estimated potential earnings loss of US$545 million in 2025, equivalent to approximately 0.4% of national GDP. Agriculture accounted for 64% of these losses. (Indicator 4.1.3)

Drought

Extreme drought can threaten water availability, food security and livelihoods, increasing risks of malnutrition, dehydration and water-related disease.

An average of 59% of Kenya's land area experienced at least one month of extreme drought annually between 2021 and 2025, compared with 10% in 1981–1990. (Indicator 1.2.2)

LIVED EXPERIENCE

In Laikipia County, Sosian Ward, a severe drought in early 2023 caused water shortages, hunger, and poor sanitation. Later, sudden heavy rains led to flash floods, contaminating water sources and causing outbreaks of cholera and typhoid. Many people, especially children, pregnant women, and the elderly, suffered from dehydration, malnutrition, and diarrheal diseases.

Korir Kelvin, Kenya

Energy, Food Systems and Health

The use of polluting household fuels and fossil fuels in transport contributes to harmful air pollution, increasing the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. Despite renewable sources accounting for over two-thirds of electricity generation, electricity represented only 2.6% of household energy use and 0.0008% of road transport energy use in Kenya in 2023. Expanding renewable-powered electrification can reduce exposure to harmful air pollution and protect health.

In 2023, Kenya had virtually no electricity use in road transport (0.0008%). (Indicator 3.1.3)

Electricity accounted for only 2.6% of household energy use in Kenya in 2023. Although electricity's share increased relative to 2016, dependence on solid biofuels remained widespread, highlighting the need to expand access to clean, renewable household energy to reduce harmful air pollution. (Indicator 3.1.2)

In 2023, renewable sources accounted for 67.2% of Kenya's electricity generation, while low-carbon sources contributed 88.2%. The carbon intensity of the overall energy system declined by 1.1% compared with 2016, reaching 14.0 tCO_2/TJ. (Indicator 3.1.1)

Healthy Diets and Food Systems

Access to affordable, diverse and nutritious diets is essential for protecting health. In Kenya, insufficient consumption of nutritious plant-based foods contributes to preventable mortality. Improving dietary quality and food-system sustainability can deliver benefits for health while supporting more sustainable food systems.

In 2023, approximately 15,200 deaths in Kenya were associated with insufficient consumption of healthy plant-based foods, including fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts and seeds. A further 1,900 deaths were associated with excessive consumption of dairy, red meat and processed meat. Improving access to affordable, diverse and nutritious foods is an important public health priority. (Indicator 3.3.2)

Testimonials were collected by The Geneva Learning Foundation as part of efforts to elevate health worker voices and recognize their lived experiences as valuable evidence in climate and health policy.

Romanello M, Walawender M, Israelsson J et al. The 2026 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: A decade of escalating health harms and a decisive moment for all. The Lancet 2026; published online October 2026. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(26)01779-4