

EVENT REPORT

World Desertification and Drought Day 2026

Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.

Sub-theme: Healthy Rangelands, Resilient Communities, Sustainable Future

Venue: African Nazarene University (ANU), Kajiado County | Date: 17 June 2026

Prepared for: KCCWG, SEAA-K, and Event Stakeholders & Partners



Group photo of participants at Africa Nazarene University during World Desertification and Drought Day 2026.

Introduction

The World Desertification and Drought Day (WDDD) 2026 event was held on 17 June 2026 at African Nazarene University (ANU), Kajiado County, under the theme “Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.” and the sub-theme “Healthy Rangelands, Resilient Communities, Sustainable Future.”

The event brought together students, environmental advocates, youth leaders and a broad cross-section of stakeholders to engage in dialogue on environmental conservation, sustainable resource management, and youth involvement in addressing climate and environmental challenges. It was convened by the Sustainable Energy Access Association Kenya (SEAA-K), supported by WWF Kenya in partnership with African Nazarene University, through its environmental club, WECANU, KIUESA and the Kenya Climate Change Working Group (KCCWG).

Beyond the on-ground proceedings, the day's discussions reaffirmed a shared conviction among participants: that a just and sustainable transition for Kenya's rangelands and climate future must be youth-led, community-anchored, and built on genuine partnership across institutions.

Event Snapshot

Event Date	17 June 2026
Venue	African Nazarene University (ANU), Kajiado County
Theme	Rangelands: Recognize. Respect. Restore.
Sub-theme	Healthy Rangelands, Resilient Communities, Sustainable Future
Hosted By	Sustainable Energy Access Association Kenya (SEAA-K), in partnership with African Nazarene University through its environmental club, WECANU.
Participants	Students, youth leaders, environmental advocates, and stakeholders

Programme Proceedings

The day's proceedings followed a structured programme combining welcoming remarks, thematic discussions, a youth panel, breakout sessions, and a closing plenary. A summary timeline is presented below, followed by a detailed account of each session.

TIME	SESSION
9:00 a.m.	Arrival and Registration
10:15 a.m.	Official Welcome
10:30 a.m.	Environmental Discussion Session
11:15 a.m.	Health Break and Networking
11:45 a.m.	Social Media Engagement Session
12:00 p.m.	Panel Discussion
12:30 – 1:00 p.m.	Group Discussions
1:30 p.m.	Presentation of Group Findings
2:00 p.m.	Group Photo and Departure

Arrival and Registration

Participants arrived at African Nazarene University and completed registration ahead of the day's proceedings.



Registration desk / arrival of participants

Official Welcome

The event commenced with welcoming remarks delivered by Mr. John Henry, a lecturer at African Nazarene University and Patron of WECANU. Mr. Henry provided a brief history of the university and underscored its institutional commitment to environmental sustainability and youth empowerment, setting the tone for the day's discussions.



Mr. John Henry delivering welcome remarks

Environmental Discussion Session

A discussion session led by Faridah Chemutai explored key environmental issues central to the day's theme. The session covered:

- Wetland restoration
- Pollution management
- Capacity building for environmental action
- Degradation of natural resources

Participants engaged actively, raising both the challenges facing these thematic areas and the opportunities available for community and youth-led intervention.



Faridah Chemutai leading the environmental discussion session

Health Break

Participants took a short break, providing an opportunity for informal networking among delegates.

Social Media Engagement Session

A dedicated session, facilitated by Jackline Nzisa and Faridah Chemutai, examined the role of social media in environmental advocacy. The discussion focused on how digital platforms can be used to create awareness and mobilize youth participation in conservation efforts, reflecting the live social media engagement Faridah carried out throughout the day across X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.



Social media engagement session in progress facilitated by Jackline Nzisa

Panel Discussion

A panel discussion on environmental conservation and youth involvement featured the following panelists:

Panelist	Organisation
Mike Juma	Chairman, KIUESA
Melanie Wangui	Africa Water Ambassadors and SPAC Network
Meshak Ombati	KITISESA
Bonventure Omondi	Kenyatta University

The panelists shared perspectives on environmental leadership, the practicalities of youth participation in conservation initiatives and strategies for translating youth energy into sustainable, measurable environmental impact.



Panel discussion with panelists on stage facilitated with Justine Kapanga.

Group Discussions

Participants were divided into groups to discuss three thematic areas:

1. The use of social media to create awareness on the Just Energy Transition
2. Effective communication strategies that build synergy across various thematic groups
3. Approaches to sustaining youth engagement in environmental conservation initiatives



Breakout group discussions

Building on the breakout sessions outlined above, four working groups examined complementary dimensions of youth engagement in the Just Energy Transition and rangeland restoration agenda. Their detailed deliberations and recommendations are presented below.

Group 1: Strategies for Increasing Youth Awareness and Participation in the Just Energy Transition

The group emphasized the need for innovative, inclusive and youth-centered approaches to increase awareness and meaningful participation in the Just Energy Transition (JET).

Key Recommendations

1. Leverage digital platforms and communication tools such as social media, digital campaigns, online discussions, digital posters and targeted advertisements to disseminate information and mobilize action. This includes sharing short videos, reels, infographics and success stories on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, X and WhatsApp and using digital storytelling to showcase youth-led climate and clean energy solutions.
2. Integrate indigenous knowledge and community experience through recognizing, documenting and integrating traditional environmental practices with modern renewable energy and conservation solutions to strengthen community ownership and ensure locally relevant solutions.
3. Use youth-friendly and accessible communication by simplifying climate and energy discussions by translating technical and policy language into understandable formats, including local languages and Sheng where appropriate, to make conversations more inclusive.
4. Strengthen collaboration and partnerships by building stronger ties with government institutions, civil society organizations, academic institutions and youth networks such as QS, SPAC Network and KIUESA to create opportunities for knowledge exchange, mentorship, advocacy and resource mobilization.
5. Promote youth-led edutainment and creative engagement by integrating climate awareness into sports, music, art and cultural activities, such as football tournaments carrying SDG messages and the use of art, spoken word and music as tools for climate communication.
6. Support environmental youth groups such as strengthening environmental clubs, community-based organizations (CBOs) and youth-led NGOs to enhance grassroots awareness, environmental stewardship and local action.
7. Increase youth representation and engage community leaders by including young people in decision-making spaces, technical committees and policy dialogues, while engaging chiefs, elders, religious leaders and other influential community members to strengthen trust and ownership.

Group 2: Moving Youth Engagement Beyond Participation to Action

The group highlighted that youth engagement should move from attendance and consultation toward leadership, innovation and implementation.

Key Recommendations

1. Transform ideas into practical action like supporting young people to implement their ideas through community projects, green enterprises and climate innovations that provide tangible solutions.
2. Contribute technical expertise and innovation by engaging youth with skills in renewable energy, technology, agriculture, engineering, environmental science, communication and entrepreneurship to actively contribute to solving climate and energy challenges.
3. Ensure meaningful inclusion in decision-making process representing youth in high-level panels, policy dialogues, technical working groups and planning processes where decisions on energy and environmental issues are made.

Example of a Community-Based Just Energy Transition Model

The group proposed a sustainable community hub that could include:

- Community gardens producing vegetables and improving food security
- Rainwater harvesting systems supporting irrigation and water conservation
- Solar-powered lighting and water pumps to improve access to clean energy
- Environmental murals and recycled art promoting climate awareness
- Mental health and wellness sessions strengthening community resilience
- Sports activities and community tournaments promoting inclusion, teamwork, and social cohesion

Group 3: Building Community Ownership and Integrated Solutions

The group emphasized that sustainable climate action requires communities to become active partners rather than passive beneficiaries. A successful Just Energy Transition should connect food security, clean energy, water conservation, environmental awareness, mental well-being and social cohesion.

Community Vision Statement

“One Community, Many Solutions: Growing Food, Conserving Water, Creating Art, Empowering Minds and Powering a Sustainable Future.”

This model demonstrates how integrated local solutions can strengthen resilience, create opportunities for young people, and build stronger communities.

Group 4: Sustaining Long-Term Youth Engagement

The group discussed strategies to maintain youth involvement beyond one-off events and workshops.

Key Recommendations

1. Establish continuous online engagement platforms to sustain discussions, share opportunities and promote peer learning.
2. Ensure climate conversations continue beyond specific events through regular forums, mentorship sessions and community activities.
3. Utilize edutainment approaches, including social media trends, challenges, sports, music and creative arts, to make climate discussions more engaging.
4. Provide practical support and motivation, including transport facilitation where possible, to reduce barriers to participation.
5. Organize regular local follow-up activities that allow youth to implement ideas and monitor progress.
6. Provide learning resources and materials that support continued awareness and knowledge sharing.

Overall Conclusion of Group Discussions

The discussions reaffirmed that a successful Just Energy Transition must be youth-led, community-centered and inclusive. Young people should move beyond being participants in conversations to becoming innovators, implementers, technical contributors and decision-makers.

By combining digital advocacy, indigenous knowledge, partnerships, community action, creativity and continuous engagement, youth can play a transformative role in advancing climate resilience, conservation and an equitable energy future.

“Youth are not only the voices of the future; they are the partners and leaders shaping a just and sustainable transition today.”

Presentation of Group Findings

Each discussion group presented its findings and recommendations to the plenary, fostering knowledge sharing and collaborative learning among participants from different institutions and backgrounds.



Group representative presenting findings to plenary

Social Media Engagement Summary

In parallel to the on-ground proceedings, a live social media engagement was run on behalf of Faridah Chemutai and KCCWG across X, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram, allowing youth members and online audiences who could not attend in person to follow the dialogue in real time.

- Pre-event, arrival, and session-by-session updates were posted across all four platforms as the programme unfolded.
- An engagement question was put to youth followers during the panel discussion to gather real-time input from the online community.
- Faridah's participation including her facilitation of the Environmental Discussion Session and the Social Media Engagement Session was documented and shared live.
- Closing reflections summarizing the day's key outcomes were shared on all platforms at the conclusion of the event.

Consistent hashtags were used throughout to maximize reach and discoverability, including #WorldDesertificationandDroughtDay, #RecognizeRespectRestore, #InclusiveClimateAction and #JustEnergyTransition.



Screenshot collage of social media posts / live engagement

Key Outcomes and Recommendations

Across the discussion session, panel and breakout groups, the following consistent themes emerged that stakeholders may wish to carry forward:

- Restoration of rangelands and degraded natural resources requires sustained, community-anchored action rather than one-off interventions.
- Youth engagement in environmental conservation must move beyond participation toward genuine influence in decision-making and policy spaces.
- Digital and social media platforms are an effective, low-cost channel for raising awareness of the Just Energy Transition and mobilizing youth action.
- Stronger communication strategies are needed to build synergy across thematic groups working on related environmental and climate issues.
- Partnerships across institutions universities, civil society and youth-led organizations strengthen the reach and credibility of conservation efforts.
- Indigenous knowledge and traditional environmental practices should be documented and integrated alongside modern renewable energy and conservation solutions.
- Sustaining engagement requires continuous online platforms, regular follow-up activities and practical support such as transport facilitation, rather than one-off events.
- Community-based, integrated models linking food security, water conservation, clean energy, creativity and mental well-being, offer a replicable approach to building resilience.

Conclusion and Acknowledgements

The World Desertification and Drought Day 2026 event successfully provided a platform for learning, networking and collaboration among young environmental advocates and stakeholders. The day's discussions emphasized the importance of restoring rangelands, strengthening youth engagement, leveraging digital platforms for environmental awareness, and fostering partnerships to achieve sustainable environmental outcomes.

KCCWG extend their appreciation to SEAA-K, African Nazarene University, WECANU, the panelists and all participants whose contributions made the dialogue a success. The momentum generated today is intended to carry forward into continued advocacy and action on a just energy transition and rangeland restoration in Kenya.