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April 2026 Newsletter

Engaging local communities to tackle the impact of climate change on HIV in western Kenya - *Professor Monica Magadi*

Emerging global threats including climate change and foreign aid disruptions have negatively affected HIV programs in sub-Saharan Africa, threatening to set back global progress in fighting the HIV epidemic. Communities adversely affected by HIV are disproportionately impacted by climate change. Extreme weather events due to climate change, such as floods and drought, increase food insecurity, displace people living with HIV and destroy health facilities, therefore disrupting access and use of essential HIV prevention and treatment services. [ENGAGE](#) project, a collaboration between Keele University School of Medicine and the Tropical Institute of Community Health and Development in Kenya (TICH) and funded by Research England, explores the impact of climate change on HIV and engaged local stakeholders to identify community-led strategies for tackling climate change impact on HIV epidemic in a setting in western Kenya adversely affected by both HIV and climate change. The project is strategically positioned to contribute to Kenya's development blueprint, Vision 2030, which promotes resilience-building through community-led adaptations and the integration of scientific knowledge with indigenous practices to create solutions for climate change. Recent project activities in Kenya include:

- qualitative research with community representatives, including community health workers and people living with HIV (PLHIV) on views and experiences of climate change impact on HIV care/management and outcomes;
- stakeholder /community engagement and consensus workshop to identify community-led sustainable initiatives for tackling climate change impact on HIV in a setting disproportionately affected by both HIV and climate change; and

- capacity building workshop on proposal development to empower local experts to lead the design and development of local research to address the impact of climate change on health.

Qualitative research with people living with HIV and community representatives

Qualitative research involved individual in-depth interviews with 27 PLHIV, 18 focus group discussions with community representatives, including community health providers, and field observations in Nyando sub-county of Kisumu County, an area of high HIV prevalence and frequent extreme weather events such as floods, droughts, and heatwave. The research explored pathways through which climate change affected HIV prevention and treatment, particularly food insecurity, rising infectious diseases, displacement/migration, and weakened public health infrastructure. The findings highlight the extent to which PLHIV faced heightened risks, extreme weather events driving food and water insecurity, disrupting treatment adherence, and exposing communities to unsustainable coping practices.

Impact of climate change - field testimonials and observations

“From 2023 to 2026, there has been a lot of rain and flooding. ... some are still in the camps”. (Women FGD).

“I fear taking medication while at the camp because there is no privacy and I don’t want people to know my status.” (PLHIV)

“During food scarcity, ... be given food in exchange for sex ... this will mostly be done with women during food shortage.....” (Men FGD).

“It is not possible to take medicine on an empty stomach because these drugs are very strong...” (PLHIV).

Policy relevant briefs will be drafted from findings and shared with stakeholders to inform policy makers and stakeholders on strategies to enhance the health of PLHIV, reduce vulnerability to risky coping practices, and build climate-resilient health systems. Through active engagement of affected communities and local experts, the project aims to inform the development of sustainable community-led initiatives to mitigate climate change impact on HIV epidemic and improve resilience at the study setting and beyond.



1 - Women FGD in session



2 - Water insecurity – drought leading to rivers drying up and difficulties accessing water



3 - Water insecurity – drought leading to rivers drying up and difficulties accessing water



4 - Food/feed insecurity – crops failing and limited livestock feed due to drought



5 - Food/feed insecurity – crops failing and limited livestock feed due to drought



6 - Destruction of homes and livelihoods - frequent due to floods and extreme weather events



7 - Destruction of homes and livelihoods - frequent due to floods and extreme weather events



8 - Displacement due to floods necessitating move to camps/temporary accommodation with limited amenities



9 - Displacement due to floods necessitating move to camps/temporary accommodation with limited amenities

Stakeholder /community engagement and consensus workshop – 25 March 2026

The stakeholder/community engagement, validation and consensus workshop was convened at the study setting with the aim of exploring the interconnectedness of climate change and HIV and identifying effective community-based solutions, following the concluded qualitative research in Nyando. The workshop brought together a diverse group of key stakeholders, including health officials, NGOs/religious representatives, local HIV and climate change experts/researchers and community leaders/representatives. Participants stressed the importance of involving stakeholders, health assistants, camp managers, and broader community structures in tackling the challenges posed by climate change, which underscored the urgency of building consensus on community solutions and fostering collaboration to ensure sustainable HIV management in the face of environmental disruptions.



10 - ENGAGE co-principal investigators from Keele and TICH, facilitating the stakeholder/community consensus workshop at the study setting in western Kenya.



11 - ENGAGE co-principal investigators from Keele and TICH, facilitating the stakeholder/community consensus workshop at the study setting in western Kenya.



12 - ENGAGE co-principal investigators from Keele and TICH, facilitating the stakeholder/community consensus workshop at the study setting in western Kenya.



13 - Stakeholder /community consensus workshop in progress

The consensus/validation workshop concluded with participants agreeing on overall recommendations, ensuring collective commitment and shared responsibility toward addressing key issues and implementing community-based solutions:

- The need for disaster preparedness plans
- Climate smart agribusiness built on social capital
- Technology-enabled Community Health Promoter (CHP) system
- HIV prevention through behaviour change education, e.g.to address HIV stigma
- Affordable sustainable latrines and preventive methods for communicable diseases
- Camp-based testing and HIV care centres during extreme weather disasters.

Capacity building workshop on proposal development: 26-27 March 2026

The proposal development workshop was convened at TICH campus in Kisumu to build local researchers' capacity in grant writing, empowering them to lead the design and development of research to address local community problems. The workshop sessions, facilitated by Keele University and TICH, emphasized the importance of equitable partnership/collaboration, skills development, and knowledge translation for impactful and sustainable community-driven initiatives. A total of 33 participants, mainly early career researchers from academic and non-academic institutions in western Kenya, were actively engaged throughout the two-day workshop. Participants' expectations emphasized the desire to gain/strengthen their research skills to enable them to develop competitive grant applications, consistent with the overall aim of the capacity building workshop.



14 - Capacity building workshop organizers and facilitators from TICH and Keele



15 - Capacity building workshop participants

The workshop covered key elements of a scientific research proposal, from research problem/introduction, objectives to research methodology and potential impact. To effectively prepare for the workshop, participants had been asked to propose potential research ideas of interest, resulting in a list of proposal ideas which were grouped into five broad topics: HIV; reproductive health/abortion; mental health; communicable/infectious diseases; and non-communicable diseases, with climate change and digital/technology-enabled community-based initiatives as cross-cutting themes. These five topics formed the basis for small group discussions, encouraging active participation and enabling participants put into practice skills acquired.



16 - Capacity building workshop sessions in progress



17 - Capacity building workshop sessions in progress



18 - Capacity building workshop sessions in progress



19 - Capacity building workshop sessions in progress

The workshop evaluation showed high satisfaction among participants, with many appreciating the clarity, relevance, and facilitation of the sessions. Respondents highlighted gaining practical skills and the majority expressing confidence in applying these skills to their own research and grant applications. They also valued the interactive group work and networking opportunities. Furthermore, participants expressed interest in attending similar follow-up workshops, underscoring the perceived usefulness and impact of the training. Suggestions for improvement centred on extending the training timeline to allow deeper exploration of topics and more practical exercises. Additional comments reflected gratitude and enthusiasm, with participants describing the workshop as informative, engaging, and impactful. Overall, the feedback demonstrates that the workshop successfully built capacity in research proposal and grant writing, while also providing a strong foundation for future, more specialized training.

Keele in the Region and beyond: How can the
Institutes facilitate regional and wider development? - *Monday 11
May (10am-5pm) Venue: TBC*



Led by David Amigoni, KISI with Priya Paudyal IGHW, Thomas Torode ISF and Raphael Hirschi, DSI

Keele in the Region and Beyond is part of Keele Institutes' Digital Revolution Week. Today's showcase and networking event is led by Keele's Institute of Social Inclusion (KISI), and brings together representative work from KISI, ISF, IGHW and other university centres of research and impact focused on the Industrial Strategy and other priority areas. Our focus will be the way in

which research impacts the region and beyond through socially inclusive collaboration and co-production. All the institutes share common methods of collaborative, co-creative work and the day will explore the methodological parallels and impact goals between work in the region, and work that is unfolding beyond the region, including internationally. Participants will hear from researchers and collaborators about regional work, its successes and challenges. Our event is truly interdisciplinary. Participants will hear about regional opportunities in sustainability research, industrial collaboration, including work in the creative and cultural industries, health and wellbeing research, and socially inclusive forms of civic engagement. Participants will be able to network, ask questions, and extend their own thinking and practice.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS:

10am Arrival, tea, coffee

10.25am: Dr Thomas Torode (ISF) Welcome

10.30am Dr Sébastien Danneels (Sustainability & Energy Infrastructure Programme Manager) – “Regional development projects and aspirations”. Sebastian will provide an overview of local plans for driving sustainability, highlighting the opportunities available to exploit regional strengths.

10.50am Mr John Cloughley (E4 Structures) – “Local and global perspectives, priorities and partnerships for industrial projects”. John will provide a glimpse into his role as UKRI ambassador for circular economy, advanced manufacturing, and energy to waste projects.

11.15-11.45am coffee break

11.45-12.30 Building on the Industrial Strategy work of the morning, this session will focus on Creative Industries work, noting that Creative Industries are recognised among the IS8 (School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

Dr Manuella Blackburn, collaborative, socially inclusive work with musicians on sample pack products: **Prof Miro Spasov**, sound design, composition, and the local cultural context; **Dr Catherine Appleford** (recent PhD, MCC), ‘Contemporary gaming, the gothic, trauma, capitalism and sickness.’

Lunch 12.30-1.30

Prof David Amigoni, Prof Priya Paudyal: This afternoon’s showcase will focus on socially inclusive co-production as an engine of regional collaboration and, indeed, international development, which illustrates the importance of bi-directional learning that characterizes Keele’s research and knowledge exchange. The showcase builds on KISI’s October 2025 event;

[Impact of Keele's research showcased to MPs and community leaders - Keele University](#)

1.30-2.00 **Dr Tolu Olarewaju** (Keele Business School) Supportive Networks for Place-Based Business Resilience in Tamworth: supporting GEM SMEs through co-creation

2.-2.30 **Dr Jane Krishnadas and Dr Fabienne Emmerich** (School of Law) CLOCK and related projects: legal outreach towards a 'living lab' supporting social justice.

2.30-3.00 **Dr Tom Kingstone** (School of Medicine) COMPAS, older people and mental health: a major new regional project funded by NIHR

3-3.30 Tea, coffee

3.30-4.00 **Prof Monica Magadi** (School of Medicine) Harnessing routinely collected data for timely healthcare decisions in LMICs amidst pandemics (AUTOMATE)

4.00-4.30 **Keynote: Prof Saeed Farooq** (School of Medicine, Institute of Global Health and Wellbeing) Bi-directional practices: Socially inclusive mental health work between Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India and the Midlands (*TBC*)

"Spotlight on"...Dr Szu Shen Wong

Hello! I'm Szu but you might know me better as 'Szustainability'. I'm a pharmacist by training (hospital pre-reg). After completing a biophysics PhD with Novo Nordisk (Denmark) and the University of Nottingham (UK), I decided on a career in academia in the UK and ended up here at Keele as a Lecturer in Pharmaceutical Science. I'm also the Faculty of Medicine and Health Science's Sustainability Lead following my tenure as one of the Deputy Directors for the Institute for Sustainable Futures. I'm also the custodian of the Campus' Walled Garden Allotments and one of the staff custodians of the Keele Campus Garden Project. Pharmacy is not my only interest, and I have published in a variety of subjects ranging from [biophysics](#), [cosmetics](#) to [history of art](#). I'm a recipient of the Clarivate Web of Science 'Most Cited Researcher Award' in the field of Pharmacology and Toxicology in 2020 for my work on 'The Concise Guide to Pharmacology'.

I don't stick to the traditional academic journal publications route and have done podcasts ([Science Vs.](#)), radio (BBC Radio Stoke), TV (ITV West Midlands news, [BBC2](#)), [blog](#) and [The Conversation](#)! I enjoy doing transdisciplinary work the best and had the most fun working on my '[cosmetics unwrapped](#)' grant and got to work alongside museum keepers and a classicist.. and the usual chemist! I currently work closely with NGOs, charities to deliver meaningful transdisciplinary projects. Sustainable healthcare is my current big focus in all areas of education, research and practice. My research and practice interests are in Planetary Health and One Health. I'm currently leading a QR Policy Support Project working towards advancing the One Health agenda in South and South East Asia. I'm also about to launch a series of One Health

research cafés to increase our competitiveness to secure grants in this area. If you'd like to join me, please sign up to the Network [here](#). I'm heavily involved in Education for Sustainable Development and mentor students working on the Planetary Health Report Cards. I'm very passionate about supporting students to initiate/ participate in student-led sustainability initiatives. I'm on campus at some point everyday Mon-Fri, most weeks. Happy to have a chat/walking meeting!



Upcoming Funding Deadlines

- [Eleventh GACD Funding Call: Multisectoral Approaches](#)
- [Tackling bacterial and fungal antimicrobial resistance in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia](#)

New IGHW website and call for publications

Our new website is now live! Please take a look [HERE](#)

We have seven key research themes for which we would like to invite you to share your publications underneath. The themes are:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Infectious Diseases
- Maternal, Child and Adolescence Health
- Climate and Health
- Non-communicable Diseases

- Primary Care
- Health Policy and Systems

Please forward your publications to: IGHW@keele.ac.uk

About the Institute for Global Health and Wellbeing

The Institute for Global Health and Wellbeing is one of Keele University's flagship institutes. Our aim is to address global health disparities and improve the health and well-being of the most vulnerable populations in resource poor settings. We conduct high quality interdisciplinary and innovative research in number of global health areas including mental health, infectious diseases, primary care, maternal child and adolescent health, non-communicable diseases, and climate and health. Our current research projects are supported by funding from GCRF, AHRC, MRC and NIHR. We are currently working on a number of global health projects with interdisciplinary teams in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Ethiopia, Malawi and India.

If you would like to stay connected with the IGHW community and activities, please complete this brief [FORM](#)

Please visit the Institute webpage [here](#) for further details.

Contact Us

Email us at: IGHW@keele.ac.uk

Visit us on the web at [HERE](#)

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