



Internship Programme Activity Debrief November 2025



1st – 30th, November 2025

With Support from



Executive Summary

This report presents the activities undertaken by the first batch of interns sponsored by the Nile Civil Society for Climate Resilience (NCSCR) Project across Nile Basin countries during November 2025.

Seven interns from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Tanzania were recruited and deployed in their respective countries, while Egypt and Sudan joined the program in subsequent months.

The internship activities, coordinated through the National Discourse Forums (NDFs), focused on strengthening civil society participation, enhancing community engagement, and documenting indigenous and community-led approaches to climate change adaptation and water resource management. The activities combined institutional coordination, field visits, stakeholder engagement, and capacity-building initiatives.

Key engagements included supporting preparation of NDF Board Meetings, field visits with extensive community consultations, networking, training sessions, and collaborative activities with NDFs and partner organizations across the region.

Field activities involved diverse community members, with strong participation from women and youth, and focused on collecting both qualitative and quantitative data on water access, climate impacts, and adaptation strategies. Findings, for instance from South Sudan among other countries indicated that 80% of respondents experienced inadequate water supply, highlighting key challenges related to accessibility, quality, and quantity. In Rwanda, effective community-based solutions such as rainwater harvesting, climate-smart agriculture, and environmental conservation practices were documented.

Across all countries, communities demonstrated resilience through innovative coping mechanisms, including kitchen gardens, drought-resistant crops, and sustainable land management practices, despite challenges such as water scarcity, extreme temperatures, and limited resources.

Overall, the internship activities strengthened institutional coordination, enhanced stakeholder partnerships, and improved the visibility of NBD's work. Despite logistical constraints and accessibility challenges, the program successfully generated valuable data and contributed to advancing climate resilience and sustainable water resource management across the Nile Basin.

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List of Abbreviation

ABDR: Association Burundaise pour le Développement Rural

CSO: Civil Society Organization

DRC-NDF: DR Congo National Discourse Forum

ETH-NDF: Ethiopia National Discourse Forum

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

KII: Key Informant Interview

MUFEPRI: Mutual Association of Women for Savings and Credit

NBD: Nile Basin Discourse

NBI: Nile Basin Initiative

NBDFR: Nile Basin Discourse Forum Rwanda

NCSCR: Nile Civil Society for Climate Resilience

NDF: National Discourse Forum

PASCALE-B: Projet d'Appui à la Sécurité Alimentaire et à la Lutte contre la Pauvreté en
Afrique – Burundi

RHEPI: Rwandese Health Environment Project Initiative

TNDF: Tanzania Nile Discourse Forum

1. Introduction

The Nile Basin Discourse (NBD) is a regional network of civil society organizations (CSOs) from Nile Riparian countries, established in 2003 to strengthen civil society participation in Nile Basin development and water governance. NBD promotes inclusive dialogue, environmental conservation, and the sustainable management of transboundary water resources across the region.

Through its National Discourse Forums (NDFs), NBD operates at grassroots, national, and regional levels to foster collaboration, knowledge sharing, and community engagement on water and climate-related issues. The organization plays a critical role in linking grassroots community voices with policy processes and regional initiatives.

The Nile Civil Society for Climate Resilience (NCSCR) Project, implemented by NBD from March 2025, aims to enhance civil society participation in advancing cooperation on transboundary water management within the Nile Basin. The project contributes to equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient development through citizen-led data generation, knowledge sharing, and community engagement.

NBD runs an established Internship Program as part of its broader institutional capacity-building efforts. Within the framework of the NCSCR Project, the program receives support to further strengthen youth engagement and technical contributions to ongoing activities. Interns are deployed through NDFs, where they contribute to citizen science, stakeholder engagement, and the documentation of indigenous knowledge, while building practical skills in environmental management, communication, and project coordination.

This report highlights the activities undertaken by interns during their first month of engagement in November 2025 across multiple Nile Basin countries, with a focus on institutional coordination, field engagements, and community-based data collection aimed at strengthening climate resilience and water resource management.

2. Burundi – Bugume Hill, Mpanda Commune

2.1 Overview

In Burundi, the intern conducted a field activity in Bugume Hill in Mpanda Commune under the PASCALE-B Project implemented by ABDR.

The activity brought together beneficiaries, local leaders, and project stakeholders to assess progress in addressing soil erosion, land degradation, and climate change impacts. Through field observation and community engagement, the visit generated practical insights into sustainable land management and environmental conservation practices.

2.2 Objectives

- To conduct a field visit to Bugume Hill to assess the progress of project implementation
- To engage beneficiaries, local leaders, and key stakeholders in the project area
- To observe and document soil conservation, reforestation, and land management practices, including community experiences, feedback, and observed changes
- To discuss environmental challenges in the area, including soil erosion, landslides, and unsustainable farming practices

2.3 Key Achievements

- Improved community knowledge on natural resource management and environmental protection
- Successful establishment of contour lines reinforced with grasses for erosion control
- Reforestation through planting of indigenous tree species
- Enhanced soil fertility and reduced dependence on chemical fertilizers
- Strengthened household resilience to climate change impacts

2.4 Key Challenges in the Community

- High vulnerability of the area to erosion and landslides, especially during rainy seasons
- Limited prior knowledge among community members on sustainable land management practices
- Ongoing environmental pressures such as slash-and-burn agriculture

2.5 Lessons Learned

- Active community participation is key to successful and sustainable interventions
- Continuous training and technical support are essential for behaviour change

- Simple, low-cost practices such as contour planting can significantly reduce environmental degradation

2.6 Recommendations to FCBN, ABDR, and Partners

- Strengthen technical support and regular monitoring of beneficiaries.
- Promote documentation and sharing of best practices.
- Ensure consistent follow-up to sustain implemented practices.
- Expand soil conservation and reforestation activities to other vulnerable areas.
- Continue capacity-building and awareness campaigns.
- Enhance the participation of women and youth to ensure inclusive and sustainable outcomes.



Field visit by partners and beneficiaries to the site where contour lines are being laid out on Bugume hill.



Field visit by partners and beneficiaries to the site where contour lines are being laid out on Bugume hill.



A field visit was conducted by the partners and beneficiaries to the Bugume Hill site, which has been reforested with eucalyptus trees.

3. DR Congo- North Kivu and Ituri provinces

3.1 Overview

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the intern conducted a field activity conducted in North Kivu and Ituri provinces. The area faces significant environmental degradation, resource exploitation, and prolonged conflict, affecting both ecosystems and community livelihoods.

The activities focused on strengthening engagement with DRC-NDF members, understanding local challenges, and identifying opportunities for climate adaptation, environmental governance, and community resilience. Through field visits, interviews, and community interactions, key insights were gathered to support sustainable solutions in the basin.

3.2 Objectives

- To conduct field visits and engage with DRC-NDF member organizations in Beni Territory
- To hold interviews with community leaders, including representatives from MUFEPRI
- To assess environmental, socio-economic, and climate-related challenges affecting local communities
- To document member-led initiatives in reforestation, agriculture, and community awareness
- To participate in awareness campaigns on environmental protection and gender-based violence
- To collect data on community activities, production outputs, and levels of participation

3.3 Key Achievements

- Strengthened engagement with local organizations working on climate resilience and environmental management
- Supported community-led reforestation through nurseries producing over 2,000 seedlings per season
- Expanded awareness on sustainable agriculture, reaching over 600 community members
- Promoted inclusive participation, with strong involvement of women and youth in farming and environmental activities
- Advanced community dialogue on gender-based violence and digital safety, reinforcing social protection

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- Documented agricultural outputs, including production of potatoes, lime, and carrots

3.4 Key Challenges in the Community

- Persistent insecurity and instability due to prolonged conflict in the region
- Limited infrastructure, including poor road access to farms and markets
- Lack of electricity affecting agricultural productivity and storage
- Ongoing environmental degradation driven by deforestation and illegal resource exploitation
- Social challenges, including gender inequality and exposure to gender-based violence

3.5 Lessons Learned

- Community-based organizations play a critical role in driving resilience and environmental protection
- Integrating gender and social inclusion strengthens the impact of environmental interventions
- Access to basic infrastructure (roads, energy) is essential for sustainable livelihoods
- Reforestation and agroforestry are practical, scalable solutions for climate adaptation
- Awareness campaigns are effective tools for both environmental and social change

3.6 Recommendations to NDF Member CSOs

- Strengthen the capacity of DRC NDF members through targeted technical support and skills development.
- Promote the use of digital tools for environmental monitoring to improve data collection and decision-making.
- Scale up reforestation initiatives and sustainable agriculture practices to enhance ecosystem restoration and livelihoods.
- Enhance regional collaboration to support coordinated environmental and development interventions.
- Support community resilience programs aimed at strengthening adaptation to environmental and socio-economic challenges.
- Mobilize partners and stakeholders to invest in peacebuilding, environmental governance, and sustainable development within the Congolese Nile Basin.



Figure 1: DENISE MUVUYA , vice president of MUFEPRIMA



Figure 2: Awareness-raising on combating gender-based violence in the Beni territory, in the Isale metropolitan area, on November 25, international day for the elimination of violence against women and the start of 16 days of activism



4. Ethiopia - November Inception & Planning Activities

4.1 Overview

In Ethiopia, the intern focused on the successful completion of inception, planning, and administrative preparations for the NCSCR field phase under the Ethiopian National Discourse Forum (ETH-NDF).

The activities involved onboarding, strategic alignment, document finalization, and site selection for the upcoming field research. A key highlight was the identification and mitigation of a security risk at the initially proposed field site (Sululta Woreda), prompting the recommendation of safer and more suitable alternatives within the river basin catchment.

4.2 Objectives

- To conduct onboarding and induction sessions on the Ethiopia Nile Discourse Forum (ETH-NDF), Nile Basin Discourse (NBD), and Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) frameworks
- To participate in the Strategic Inception Meeting to define the research scope and address logistical constraints
- To develop and finalize key planning documents, including the budget and six-month work plan
- To conduct field site assessments and identify suitable locations aligned with the river basin mandate
- To assess and mitigate security risks in Sululta Woreda
- To propose alternative field sites, including Gefersa Reservoir and Legedadi Dam
- To participate in the NBI/NBD Digital Platforms Webinar on data and innovation
- To initiate the development of research tools, including FGDs and KIs, and prepare administrative support documents

4.3 Key Achievements

- Successful completion and approval of all foundational planning and administrative deliverables
- Clear alignment of research focus toward a community-based climate resilience case study
- Identification and mitigation of field security risks, ensuring safe project implementation
- Development of a flexible and adaptable fieldwork plan
- Strengthened understanding of regional digital platforms for water resource management and climate data
- Established coordination with ETH-NDF team and key stakeholders

4.4 Lessons Learned

- Flexibility and rapid risk mitigation are critical in field planning
- Early-stage planning and strong coordination improve implementation efficiency
- Security considerations must be prioritized in site selection
- Access to reliable data and digital platforms enhances research quality
- Community-focused approaches are essential for climate resilience research

4.5 Next Action

The next phase will focus on securing final approval for a safe and mandate-compliant field site (Gefersa or Legedadi), followed by updating administrative documents and finalizing research tools.

Fieldwork preparation will proceed with logistical arrangements, stakeholder engagement, and the launch of the first field visit in December. Continued use of regional data platforms and stakeholder collaboration will support effective implementation of the NCSCR case study.

5. Kenya - Stakeholder Engagement in Kisumu County

5.1 Overview

In Kisumu County, Kenya, the intern focused on stakeholder engagement in drought-prone areas including Kapuothe, Nanga, Ombaka, and Riat under the NCSCR Project implemented by the intern.

The initiative aimed to assess the impacts of climate change particularly drought, extreme temperatures, and flooding on vulnerable communities. Through field visits and community engagement, the activity generated insights into local challenges, adaptation strategies, and opportunities for strengthening climate resilience.

5.2 Objectives

- To conduct field visits in drought-affected areas within Kisumu County
- To engage grassroots communities, including women and youth, in gathering real-time data
- To collect information on the impacts of drought on water resources, health, and livelihoods
- To hold discussions on climate change, water management, and adaptation strategies
- To document community-led interventions such as water harvesting and drought-resistant farming practices
- To assess the socio-economic and environmental challenges affecting the communities

5.3 Key Achievements

- Enhanced understanding of drought impacts on livelihoods, food security, and water resources
- Captured community perspectives and local knowledge on climate adaptation
- Identified practical community-led interventions such as water tanks, wells, and drought-resistant crops
- Strengthened engagement of women and youth in climate resilience discussions
- Generated valuable data to support planning and policy recommendations

5.4 Key Challenges in the Community

- Extreme weather conditions (heat and drought) limiting field engagement
- Poor road infrastructure affecting access to remote areas
- Limited availability of detailed data on water sources and drought impacts

5.5 Lessons Learned

- Community engagement is essential for understanding real climate impacts and solutions
- Women and youth are key actors in water management and climate resilience
- Local, low-cost interventions (e.g., rainwater harvesting, drought-resistant crops) are effective adaptation strategies
- Improved data collection systems are necessary for better planning and response

5.6 Recommendations to NDF Member CSOs

- Strengthen community-based drought mitigation strategies through improved water infrastructure development.
- Enhance capacity building and awareness campaigns on drought resilience and climate adaptation.
- Improve coordination among stakeholders to ensure more effective and aligned interventions.
- Promote increased investment in sustainable water management systems to support long-term resilience.
- Ensure greater inclusion of women and youth in implementation processes.
- Scale up successful local interventions to expand impact across communities.



Figure 3: photo of stunted growth of maize due to drought in Kapuotho region



Figure 4: photo of unoccupied evacuation center abandoned by community members due to drought as they migrate to other places in search of water and food

6. Rwanda - Board Coordination & Field Engagement

6.1 Overview

In Rwanda, the intern focused on institutional coordination and field engagement under the NCSCR Project, led by the Nile Basin Discourse Forum Rwanda (NBDFR).

The activities included providing support to the NBDF Board Meeting in Kigali and conducting a field visit to RHEPI in Kabuga, Eastern Province. These engagements aimed to strengthen governance, enhance stakeholder collaboration, and document community-led climate adaptation and water management practices.

6.2 Objectives

- To provide administrative and logistical support to the NBDF Board Meeting in Kigali
- To coordinate communication with Board Members and support meeting preparation
- To facilitate documentation, note-taking, and attendance tracking
- To conduct a field visit to RHEPI in Kabuga in collaboration with NBD
- To participate in project briefings and conduct a key informant interview
- To collect qualitative data on water management, agriculture, and environmental practices
- To document observations through notes and photography

6.3 Key Achievements

- Strengthened coordination and decision-making processes among NBDF Board Members
- Defined clear institutional action points for outreach, research, and partnerships
- Established potential collaboration between NBDF and RHEPI
- Documented practical community-led solutions in water management and climate-smart agriculture
- Collected qualitative data to support NCSCR research outputs
- Identified scalable models for climate resilience and environmental management

6.4 Lessons Learned

- Strong institutional coordination enhances effectiveness of climate and water governance initiatives
- Community-based organizations play a vital role in implementing practical adaptation solutions
- Combining field engagement with stakeholder dialogue strengthens research and outcomes

- Documentation of indigenous knowledge is essential for scaling climate resilience practices

6.5 Recommendations to NDF Member CSOs

- Strengthen collaboration between NDF and key partners such as RHEPI to enhance coordinated implementation of activities.
- Conduct regular follow-up field visits to monitor progress and support community-level interventions.
- Expand documentation of grassroots practices to capture local knowledge and inform future programming.

Enhance community sensitization efforts on climate adaptation and resilience strategies.



Figure 5: NBDR Board Members participating in the Second Rwanda Conference



Figure 6: Key informant interview with Mr. James Rubakisibo, Country CEO of RHEPI.



Figure 7: Climate-smart kitchen garden crops observed at RHEPI, including leafy vegetables and root crops that enhance household food security and climate resilience

7. South Sudan - Juba County

7.1 Overview

In Juba County, Central Equatoria State, the intern focused on community engagement and data collection on water resource management and climate adaptation under the NCSCR Project.

Activities were conducted in Gudele 1 and Luri Payam, engaging community members particularly women to understand the impacts of water scarcity, extreme temperatures, and climate variability. The exercise generated valuable insights into local coping mechanisms, indigenous practices, and community priorities for strengthening resilience.

7.2 Objectives

- To conduct field visits and facilitate Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members in Gudele 1 and Luri Payam
- To carry out interviews and administer questionnaires to collect data on water access, quality, and availability
- To observe local farming practices along drying streams and assess community adaptation strategies
- To conduct virtual interviews to capture broader insights on climate and flood-related challenges
- To participate in community awareness training on climate change mitigation
- To engage in regional knowledge-sharing platforms, including Nile Basin Discourse Forum (NBD) and Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) digital sessions

7.3 Key Achievements

- Engaged over 20 community members, with strong participation from women
- Collected data highlighting critical water challenges: 80% reported inadequate water supply
- Identified key issues related to water accessibility, quality, and quantity
- Documented innovative local practices such as vegetable farming along drying streams
- Strengthened community awareness through climate change and leadership training sessions
- Supported mobilization of over 50 participants for training activities

7.4 Key Challenges in the Community

- Limited access to water resources and inadequate storage facilities
- Logistical constraints, including poor road access and delayed funding

7.5 Lessons Learned

- Community engagement is essential for effective climate resilience interventions
- Women play a critical role in water resource management and household adaptation
- Practical, locally driven solutions enhance adoption and sustainability
- Use of local knowledge and culturally relevant approaches strengthens impact
- Partnerships and coordination improve outreach and resource mobilization

7.6 Recommendations to NDF Member CSOs

- Strengthen community resilience by promoting sustainable water management practices, including rainwater harvesting and storage.

- Support capacity building in climate-smart agriculture to enhance community adaptation to climate change.
- Encourage the adoption of drought-tolerant crops to improve food security.
- Foster collaboration with local leaders and partners to ensure effective and coordinated interventions.
- Improve community access to reliable and sustainable water sources.
- Promote and integrate indigenous knowledge and local adaptation practices into project activities.



Figure 8: Bentiu , Rubkona country mothers received relief items and going back in flooded areas. Credit Lat Khor - virtually respondent



Figure 9: Mrs. Abau planting vegetable along Kapuri stream drying faster due to high temperatures (Water conservation)



Figure 10: Community FGD in Gudele on locally water resource management (WRM)



Figure 11: KII interview of Ms. Ondoa in Gumbo shirkat in accompany of NBDF Coordinator



Figure 12: The stream drying up, competition over space along the stream to survive, the cans at hand were donated by World vision way back and it stopped



Figure 13: morning and evening routinely she collects water using watering can continue vegetable growing and covering with grass as well to conserve the water scarcity pressure



Figure 14: Mama Susan Babirye kenya in her backyard home, kitchen garden that dried up.

8. Tanzania - Engagement & Orientation

8.1 Overview

In Tanzania, the activity focused on engagement, induction, and collaboration the Tanzania Nile Discourse Forum (TNDF) under the NCSCR Project.

The activities aimed to familiarize the intern with TNDF leadership, strengthen institutional coordination, and support organizational operations. Engagements were conducted at the TNDF office and partner organizations, providing exposure to civil society networks, governance structures, and stakeholder collaboration within the Nile Basin.

8.2 Objectives

- To participate in induction and orientation sessions at the Tanzania Nile Discourse Forum (TNDF) office
- To engage with TNDF leadership, including the Chairperson, Secretary General, and Programme Coordinator
- To visit TNDF member organizations in Ilemela and Nyamagana Districts
- To support the preparation of meeting logistics, including venue setup and documentation
- To facilitate attendance tracking during meetings and training sessions
- To engage in networking and knowledge sharing with TNDF members and stakeholders

8.3 Key Achievements

- Gained a clear understanding of TNDF structure, operations, and governance
- Strengthened professional relationships with TNDF leadership and members
- Expanded exposure to civil society organizations working on environment and youth engagement
- Successfully supported TNDF meetings and training logistics
- Improved communication and stakeholder engagement skills

8.4 Lessons Learned

- Effective coordination and teamwork are essential for smooth organizational operations
- Exposure to leadership structures enhances understanding of governance and institutional processes
- Networking with civil society organizations broadens knowledge and collaboration opportunities
- Practical involvement in meeting coordination strengthens organizational and communication skills

8.5 Next Action

Future activities will focus on increased engagement in field-based data collection and community interactions.

Efforts will also prioritize strengthening collaboration with TNDF member organizations, enhancing participation in climate resilience initiatives, and applying gained communication and coordination skills to support grassroots engagement and data-driven dialogue.

9. Conclusion

Although the level of field activities conducted by interns during this period was limited, the November 2025 activities under the NCSCR Internship Program made a significant contribution to strengthening civil society engagement, enhancing community participation, and documenting indigenous climate adaptation practices across the Nile Basin. The period also served as a critical foundation for future field engagements, as interns gained valuable knowledge, skills, and practical insights to guide subsequent activities.

Through coordinated efforts across multiple countries, the internship facilitated valuable data collection, stakeholder collaboration, and institutional engagement. Field activities revealed critical challenges such as water scarcity, climate variability, and limited access to resources, while also highlighting the resilience and innovation of local communities in adapting to these challenges.

The program successfully strengthened partnerships between NBD, National Discourse Forums, and civil society organizations, thereby reinforcing the role of civil society in advancing transboundary water cooperation and climate resilience. Despite operational challenges, the internship achieved meaningful outcomes in terms of knowledge generation, capacity building, and increased visibility of NBD initiatives.

Moving forward, there is a need to scale up community engagement, improve water management systems, and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders. Continued documentation of indigenous knowledge and promotion of locally driven solutions will be essential in supporting sustainable development and climate resilience across the Nile Basin.