



Kilifi County Government Leads the Way with Kenya's First County Clean Cooking Policy

County:	Kilifi County		
Sector/s:	Transport, Infrastructure and Energy	Sub-sector/Theme:	Energy
Keywords: (for search in the online platform)	Kilifi County, Clean cooking, County Energy Plans, Clean Cooking Energy Policy, Sustainable energy, SDG 7, Renewable Energy, Climate Action, Energy access, Institutional Clean Cooking, Energy-saving stoves, Biomass transition		
Target Audience:	County Governments, Learning Institutions		
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Introduction

Over 80% of households in Kilifi County, representing more than 250,000 households, depend on biomass fuels such as firewood and charcoal for cooking (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). This heavy reliance on traditional fuels contributes to household air pollution, environmental degradation through deforestation, and rising energy costs for families (Clean Cooking Association of Kenya, 2025). Despite national and global efforts to promote clean cooking technologies, adoption in the County has remained slow due to limited awareness, affordability challenges, and the absence of a coordinated policy framework to guide investment, coordination, and large-scale uptake of clean cooking solutions.

The lack of a structured policy framework has particularly constrained innovation, private sector participation, and sustained investment in alternative energy solutions, resulting in fragmented and uncoordinated interventions across the County.



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The problem particularly affects women and children, who are disproportionately exposed to smoke from traditional cooking methods and often spend considerable time collecting firewood. Prolonged exposure to indoor air pollution increases the risk of respiratory diseases and other health complications, while the time spent gathering fuel reduces opportunities for education and income-generating activities (World Health Organization; The Star, 2025).

Public institutions are also affected, as many schools and Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) centres rely heavily on firewood and traditional three-stone fires to prepare meals for learners. This has resulted in inefficient fuel use, excessive smoke emissions, and increased operational costs. These cooking methods also contribute to environmental pressure due to increased demand for wood fuel.

The lack of a clean cooking policy has limited structured transition pathways toward clean and sustainable cooking technologies, leaving households and institutions dependent on unsustainable and unhealthy cooking practices. This highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive County-level clean cooking policy to guide planning, investment, and implementation.

Implementation of the practice (Solution Path):

The solution was initiated through the development of the Kilifi County Clean Cooking Energy Policy in November 2024. The policy provides a structured framework to promote clean cooking solutions such as LPG and energy-saving stoves, reduce reliance on firewood, improve health by lowering exposure to harmful smoke, and protect the environment by reducing deforestation.

The policy development process was led by the County Government through the Directorate of Energy, with technical and financial support from the Clean Cooking Association of Kenya (CCAK) and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF)–Kenya under the Voices for Just Climate Action programme. The process involved broad stakeholder engagement, including public participation forums to ensure that community needs and priorities were incorporated.



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A key feature of the process was the early engagement of the County Assembly's Energy Committee prior to formal submission, which enhanced ownership and facilitated smooth review and approval. The policy was subsequently validated and approved by the County Executive Committee and the County Assembly by June 2025.

The Policy was officially launched during the *Clean Cooking Week* in September 2025, positioning Kilifi County as a national leader in the clean energy transition and the first County in Kenya to develop a Clean Cooking Energy Policy.



Figure 1: Launch of the Kilifi County Energy Plan during the 6th edition of the Clean Cooking Week held at Karisa Maitha Grounds in Kilifi County

To operationalize the policy, the County Government piloted the implementation of clean cooking technologies in selected institutions. Seven schools, i.e., Katana Ngala, Ndugumnani, Migodomani, Kawala, Jila, ACK Bishop Kalu, and Silala were each provided with two 100-litre institutional energy-saving stoves. This intervention improved cooking efficiency, reduced firewood consumption, and minimized smoke emissions, demonstrating the practical application of the policy at institutional level.



Figure 2: Improved Cookstoves installed at Katana Ngala Secondary School.

Building on these initial results, the County is scaling up the transition through a broader mix of clean cooking solutions tailored to different contexts. These include improved biomass stoves, liquefied petroleum gas, biogas systems for institutions, and emerging electric cooking technologies where electricity is available. Alongside these efforts, briquette production has been decentralized through youth polytechnics across all seven Sub-Counties, converting agricultural waste into alternative fuel while creating local economic opportunities.

Sustainability

To strengthen coordination and ensure effective implementation at the grassroots level, Kilifi County established a specialized Energy Directorate with technical officers deployed across all seven Sub-Counties. This decentralized structure ensures that clean cooking interventions are not only managed at the County headquarters but are continuously supported at the local level, enhancing monitoring, community engagement, and sustained uptake of the policy.

Results of the practice

The initiative represents the first County-level Clean Cooking Energy Policy in Kenya, integrating clean cooking with climate action, public health, and sustainable energy planning, while demonstrating institutional adoption through pilot school transitions.



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Early results include the establishment of a county policy framework, adoption of energy-saving cooking technologies in schools, strengthened stakeholder coordination, and reduced reliance on biomass fuels in pilot institutions.

At Katana Ngala Secondary School, for instance, the two 100-litre energy-saving cookers donated through a tripartite collaboration between the County Energy Directorate, the Clean Cooking Association of Kenya (CCAK), and WWF Kenya have significantly improved institutional cooking efficiency. The new equipment complements four existing cookers, enabling the school to better serve its growing population of over 1,340 students.

The transition to clean cooking has also generated cost savings, with the school now spending approximately KES 185,000 annually on cooking energy, down from KES 252,000 previously spent on firewood, a saving of about KES 67,000 per year. The additional cookers have reduced meal preparation time and improved kitchen workflow, allowing seamless service across the school's 20 streams.

The installation of a chimney and provision of protective gear for kitchen staff have further enhanced safety, improved health conditions, and increased dignity in the working environment.

Lessons learnt

1. The County has realized that policy coordination is key in scaling clean cooking interventions across sectors. Through the policy, the County was able to identify learning institutions that needed urgent interventions and was able to do so through collaboration with the private sector.
2. There is greater value in a multi-stakeholder partnership approach to support the adoption of institutional clean cooking technologies. The policy development and the pilot project implementation critical key support from partners such as WWF-Kenya and CCAK amidst limited budget allocation from the exchequer.
3. Financing barriers still limit access to clean cooking technologies, particularly at the household and institutional levels.
4. Public awareness and behavioural change education on clean cooking technologies need to be implemented across all learning institutions.
5. Monitoring and evaluation should be incorporated into the planning of institutional clean cooking programs to track progress and ensure effectiveness.

Recommendations

1. Institutionalize clean cooking within county energy, climate change, health, and environment planning frameworks to ensure coordinated implementation across County Departments.
2. Close collaboration between the Department of Energy and the County Assembly Committee responsible for Energy is critical to support development of policies at the County level.



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3. Strengthen public–private partnerships and stakeholder collaboration to support clean cooking market development and scaling.
4. Expand institutional clean cooking programmes in schools, health facilities, and other public institutions to demonstrate viable solutions.
5. Promote innovative financing mechanisms, subsidies, and investment partnerships to improve the affordability of clean cooking technologies.
6. Enhance community awareness, training, and behaviour-change initiatives to increase adoption and sustained use of clean cooking solutions.
7. Establish strong monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems to document progress, capture lessons, and inform future policy decisions.

Further reading/References:

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