

Climate Games Camp (YLS) Project Report



Naivasha YMCA Camp | 20th – 22nd June 2025

Overview

The Climate Games Camp under the YLS Project was held at Naivasha YMCA from 20th to 22nd June 2025, hosting 30 young participants from Naivasha, Mai Mahiu and Nakuru. The camp aimed to build climate action skills among youth through interactive methods such as human-centered design, participatory games, environmental activities, and open dialogue.

The program was curated to blend theory, play, and practice, enabling youth to creatively engage with climate resilience, adaptation, and mitigation. Activities included stretching sessions, fellowship, and bonfire discussion.

Day 1

The camp kicked off with participants setting expectations and rules with Karatu Allan. The camp was officially opened by the Andrew Opiyo and this was followed by welcoming remarks from NPC Beatrice Thuita. Gregory led an interactive session introducing participants to the

mission, values, and programs of the YMCA. Lloyd from AAYMCA led the S2C (Subject to Citizen), and Human-Centered Design session to help members present reflect on problem-solving frameworks. An open discussion followed on the role of youth in S2C and climate change to get a better distinction and understanding of adaptation, resilience, and mitigation.

Testing of Climate Cards Game

Kassandra from YMCA Mombasa introduced and tested the Climate Cards game with participants. The session was hands-on, with participants engaging in gameplay and providing feedback. Key areas of improvement suggested and comments included:

- Simplifying language by using local dialect
- Participants found the game to be simple and easy to understand
- The need for the developer to look into how the game can create climate solutions after or during playing
- The game promotes teamwork which create room for discussion and debate
- Translate to local language e.g. Swahili and Sheng



Beatrice Thuita (NPC)

Day 2

Testing and Review of JIHAMI Climate Game

The second day was dedicated largely to testing the JIHAMI game, a chess-inspired climate action game. The participants were fully engaged, and rich discussions emerged around gameplay, rules, and learning outcomes.



Allan and Makaveli playing JIHAMI

JIHAMI Game Overview

Divided into 3 zones

Chess-inspired moves

- 2 Bishops – move diagonally
- 2 Knights – moves 7 or L
- Queen – can move diagonally, vertically, and horizontally
- King – cannot move to other regions unless they solve a problem in the current region

Red and green zones

- Red zones are the hazards or roadblocks. Must adapt before passing
- Greens zones are the solutions to the climate related problems. Safe zone for planning
- Red zone requires players to pass through a green zone first to solve a climate related problem in a region

Gameplay and Learning Recommendations

Clarify game rules distinct from standard chess. While the JIHAMI game draws inspiration from chess, participants found it essential to clearly differentiate its rules from the traditional game. The current resemblance to chess led to confusion, especially around piece movement and the win condition (checkmate). They recommended:

- Providing a simplified rulebook outlining how each piece operates within a climate context.
- Clearly stating that the objective is not to “checkmate” an opponent, but rather to solve climate challenges in a strategic way.
- Using customized game pieces or visuals that reflect climate themes instead of standard chess icons to reduce confusion.

This clarity would make it easier for new players to understand, reduce frustration, and highlight the game’s unique educational purpose.

Make the game solution-oriented before becoming competitive. Participants strongly advocated for structuring the game so that the primary focus is learning and problem-solving, rather than just winning. Before introducing a competitive element, players should first:

- Collaborate to identify and solve real-world climate problems within the game
- Engage in teamwork or group missions that promote shared learning
- Earn achievements based on creative solutions and climate understanding

Only after this foundation of learning should the game shift toward a competitive mode, perhaps in a second round or advanced version. This tiered approach ensures that learning comes first, and competition enhances rather than overshadows it.

Address key player questions like:

- What happens when a player lands in a red zone?

- How to accommodate players without prior climate knowledge?

Provide broader climate questions to generate discussions and ideas. Participants highlighted the need for the game to promote open-ended problem solving. Instead of one “correct” answer, gameplay should allow for multiple pathways to success, reflecting the real-world complexity of climate issues. For example, when addressing a flooding scenario, players could choose between planting mangroves, constructing better drainage, or launching a community awareness campaign—each offering different benefits. This variety would encourage critical thinking, and dialogue around diverse climate solutions.

Add a point system to increase competition and encourage learning, points for finding a solution and points for winning against your opponent’s pieces.

Simplify the language and ensuring correct spelling, participants flagged some game text as complex or having spelling errors, which could hinder understanding, especially for non-English players. The recommendation is to use plain language, avoid jargon, and proofread all materials to enhance comprehension and professionalism. For future since the game has attracted the international space to consider translating to international languages.

Considering the diverse locations where youth might engage with the game (schools, community centers, outdoor settings), participants suggested making the game more compact, and easy to carry. Options include:

- Laminated foldable boards
- Lightweight recyclable materials

This would ensure greater accessibility, ease of transport, and lower production costs—important factors for widespread community outreach.

Participants raised concerns about the use of wooden boards in the game prototypes. As climate champions, they felt that using wood could contradict the message of sustainability and environmental responsibility, especially considering deforestation's contribution to climate change. They recommended exploring alternative eco-friendly and recyclable materials for future iterations of the game.

Participants emphasized the importance of making the game accessible to players with little or no prior knowledge of climate change. They recommended integrating community awareness and outreach efforts alongside the game rollout to ensure that learning is inclusive and builds foundational climate literacy. This could include simplified guides, facilitated game sessions, or introductory community workshops in Nakuru, Gilgil, Naivasha and Mai Mahiu.

The feedback gathered from testing the Climate Card and JIHAMI game will be critical in refining the tools and making them more impactful and accessible. The camp fostered critical thinking, teamwork, and creativity, reaffirming youth as key agents of climate resilience.

Next steps and way Forward

Following the success of the Climate Games Camp, the next steps will focus on refining the JIHAMI game and Climate Card game based on participant feedback.

1. This includes simplifying the rules, clarifying learning objectives, and adapting visuals to better reflect climate themes.
2. Develop a facilitator's guide and simplified learning materials will be developed to support wider use, especially among those with limited climate knowledge.
3. Efforts will be made to translate the content into local languages and produce the games in portable, eco-friendly formats.
4. Outreach activities such as school and community game days will be organized to promote climate literacy.
5. Additionally, a youth climate action network will be established to keep participants engaged, share ideas, and provide ongoing support.
6. Train peer facilitators among the youth, and organize follow-up camps in other regions.

These actions aim to ensure the games are scaled up, accessible, and continue to spark climate action beyond the camp.

Prepared by Teresiah Wambui Kaberia

Research Assistant Climate Games Project, AAYMCA

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