

UK Aid Match case study: Send a Cow on how to generate an organisational approach to climate change resilience

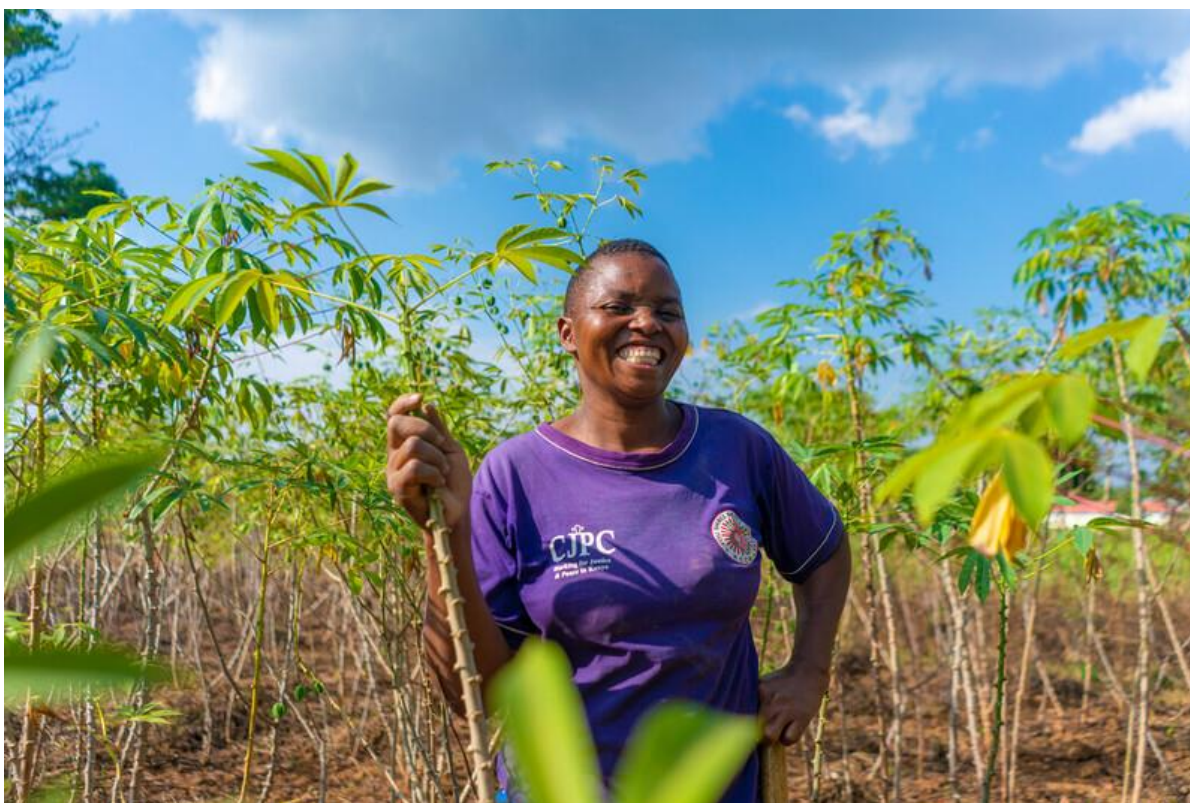


Photo caption: Caroline Mulango: participant in the UK Aid Match funded project 'Improving Nutrition for Women and Children in Western Kenya

About the grant holder

Send a Cow (SAC) is a charity working with smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through an integrated training approach, SAC ensures families have the skills they need to grow food and earn an income within the context of increasing climate change risks. SAC also support access to locally sourced seeds, tools, and livestock to support households in finding routes out of poverty. Its 'Improving Nutrition for Women and Children' project (funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through UK Aid Match), for example, aimed to generate nutritious foods for households and communities by transforming farms through an integrated food systems and livelihoods programme in Western Kenya. The final objective of the project was to directly improve the nutrition and health of 18,163 vulnerable men, women, and children through SAC's Acroecological Climate Positive Approaches (ACPA). These are climate sensitive agricultural trainings that ensure economic, environmental and health resilience and have been learned and honed over many years working with smallholders in East Africa.

SAC recognises that effectively building climate change resilience requires a holistic approach that must be integrated not only into individual projects from the start, but also into the whole approach of the organisation itself and how it develops its programming and day-to-day operations at central and country office level.

What is SAC's approach to building climate change resilience at an organisational level?

SAC has two main approaches to building climate change resilience at an organisational level. The first approach is to reinforce the integration of the Agroecological Climate Positive Approaches into all project design. In SAC's case, they use this approach to link agricultural training to livelihood generation, household and community empowerment, with nutrition and climate change resilience. The second approach involves reducing the organisation's carbon footprint and increasing carbon capture. This includes calculating a carbon scorecard for all SAC UK and country office activities and plans to develop an income stream from carbon offsetting activities through its programmes in the future.

How does SAC implement its approach to climate change resilience at an organisational level?

SAC has been working with an organisation called Climate Stewards to estimate its carbon footprint and develop an offsetting plan. An independent evaluation found that SAC produced 316 tonnes of CO₂ in 2017-18 and that 50% of the carbon emissions was attributed to flights and 11% to energy usage. Based on this evaluation, SAC is working to reduce the number of flights taken per year, and in 2019 switched the UK office to a renewable energy provider. As an organisation, SAC encourages public transport use amongst its employees and recycles waste. An internal 'Green Team' has been established and is currently working together to update the organisation's Environmental Policy.

The total carbon footprint of the organisation is neutral with the CO₂ produced by the organisation's operations balanced by carbon capture from the trees being planted through its country programmes in Africa. SAC is now designing a carbon offsetting income stream with Climate Stewards to enable other organisations to offset their carbon footprint through SAC programmes.

SAC revised its Country Strategies in 2020, placing a greater emphasis on climate sensitive practices at country office level. These include installation of solar roof panels, rainwater collection, low emission vehicles, and working towards paperless offices. The strategies require climate sensitive measures to be integrated into all project planning, objectives, targets, and budgets.

At the project level, SAC encourages assessment of climate risks and intentional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) planning at both household and community level to prepare people for shocks, including environmental, health and economic shocks. DRR planning is conducted via

a survey, results from which are used to formulate action plans and policies to ensure that communities have strategies to mitigate future climate change-related challenges and build climate resilience. The ownership of the survey and subsequent action plan is held by community members that work together within a DRR Committee structure. Mitigation strategies are selected on SAC's organisational principle of investing in low cost and low resource-intensive technologies that have multiple uses.

What are SAC's top tips for organisations rethinking their approach to climate change resilience?

- **SAC's carbon offsetting approach:** SAC has adopted three rules of integrating carbon offsetting capabilities in their project activities:
 - Permanence - in order to ensure sustainability, planted trees will be monitored for 10 years to ensure carbon storage.
 - No leakage - ensuring that no negative externalities occur causing carbon to be let off into the atmosphere elsewhere as a result.
 - Additionality - tree planting is genuinely additional and was not part of a pre-planned budget or project. Therefore, the tree planting can be verified to be achieving carbon reductions specifically through purchased carbon credits. Additionality is a key concept in carbon offsetting that aims to verify the quality of carbon credits. In 2020, SAC started a pilot carbon crediting opportunity in an Ethiopia based project, where fruit trees will be planted.

- **Planning for climate change builds community resilience:** DRR surveys help SAC teams and communities to conduct community situational assessments on new projects, allowing them to integrate climate resilience into the project design. Community situational assessments go beyond needs assessments to understand a community's starting context, what resources already exist, and which gaps or elements can be strengthened. SAC believes that construction of community DRR committees in communities has been crucial to project success.

- **Intersectionality:** A key learning for SAC project teams has been the intersectional nature of gender and climate change, especially around how and why women are disproportionately affected by climate change. SAC's Research and Impact Team is constructing an index to capture incidences of intersections between gender and climate change in future evaluations which can be useful for other organisations rethinking their approach to climate change programming.

External resources

- [Building Resilience](#) report explores how SAC's approach to climate resilience activities enables vulnerable families to bounce back from challenges they face, particularly the effects of climate change.
- This [research report for Building Resilience](#) written by the Natural Resources Institute at the University of Greenwich provides further information on the contribution of Send a Cow towards strengthening the resilience of farmers in the face of climate shocks and increasingly unreliable weather patterns.
- [Climate Stewards](#) helped SAC evaluate their organisational carbon audit and provided advice about designing a carbon offsetting income stream.