

This paper assesses the vulnerability of schools to floods in the Nyando River catchment (3,600 km²) in western Kenya and identifies measures needed to reduce this vulnerability. It surveys 130 schools in the lower reaches, where flooding is a recurrent phenomenon. Of the primary schools assessed, 40% were vulnerable, 48% were marginally vulnerable and 12% were not vulnerable. Of the secondary schools, 8% were vulnerable, 73% were marginally vulnerable and 19% were not vulnerable. Vulnerability to floods is due to a lack of funds, poor building standards, local topography, soil types and inadequate drainage. The Constituencies Development Fund (CDF), established in 2003, provides financial support to cover school construction and reconstruction costs; CDF Committees are expected to adopt school building standards. In an effort to promote safe and resilient construction and retrofitting to withstand floods, this paper presents vulnerability reduction strategies and recommendations for incorporating minimum standards in the on-going Primary School Infrastructure Programme Design.