

**Emergency Architecture
& Human Rights**

Master Class on Climate Change and Poverty

Study Case

Organization name: Engineers Without Borders, Denmark

Project title: Climate Resiliency

Country: Sierra Leone

Project Description

The project will focus on building climate adaptive capacity within communities to reduce vulnerability to future natural hazards and reduce the risk that they develop into disasters. The project will build upon the existing community structures and the established stakeholder relationships and introduces a bottom up community driven approach to risk reduction.

Activities will evolve around raising awareness of climate change induced challenges through the mobilisation and training of Community Resilience Committees (CRC) and local climate adaptation intervention groups. The activities will include identification of strategic stakeholders, capacity building trainings on the use of low-tech climate adaptation interventions and development of preparedness plans combined with coordination and knowledge sharing between communities and with external actors.

Activities will focus on a participatory approach to identification, planning and implementation of local community driven mitigation and adaptation interventions. The project is addressing the nexus between climate risks and poverty.

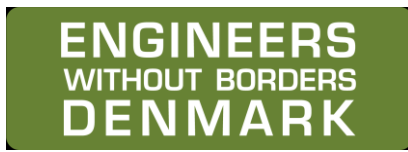
Initial problems and background (connection with climate change)

In August 2017, a devastating mudslide followed by several flash floods occurred in Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown, claiming more than 1000 lives and displacing over 5000 people. Heavy rainfall, saturated soils, intensified and uncontrolled urban settlements, triggered multiple cascading events, leading to the disaster.

Communities have little or no experience in preparing for and responding to events such as irregular rainfall causing floods, droughts and heat waves. Communities have continued to fail in implementing comprehensive and timely, precautionary actions towards the effects of climate related hazards. It is the combination of their exposure to the climate related risks and their lack of knowledge, effective organisation, financial resources, experience and skills that make them extremely vulnerable.

Goal and objectives of the intervention

This project aims to develop community resilience in the suburban areas through self-organisation, with attention to knowledge sharing and learning; collaboration; social networks; leadership; and simple technical adaptation interventions. To secure sustainability, activities are based on participatory approaches with emphasis put on community mobilisation and awareness raising, while increasing partner capacity concerning climate risks.



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Overall objective: Build resilience of the poor population and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events. To work towards this development objective, the project has the immediate objective of: Raising community awareness of the local effects of climate change and enhance community capacity to plan and implement community-based climate adaptation interventions.

Potential risks and challenges

Multiple risks and challenges are present on various levels: A precondition for the project is successful, will amongst other things rely on the ability of partners to raise awareness, mobilize the local communities and thereby facilitate the capacity building, while all activities rely on local support and their willingness to spend time and resources on implementation of climate adaptation interventions. Climate change can be viewed as an abstract matter and awareness may not be readily attained as assumed.

Through the realisation of these risks, the key processes of the project will be continuously monitored and be subject to regular EWB-DK/ WHI /NSP evaluation, followed by any necessary adjustment of actions. The project is dependent on consistent and timely parallel processes. Capacity building of NSP as well as the communities is an essential part of the successful project completion.

The main risks therefore relate to:

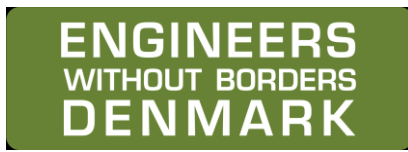
- No belief in climate change
- Lack of community participation
- Lack of long-term community commitment
- Lack of community interests - understanding the urgency
- Project parallel processes and implementation
- Insufficient partner capabilities
- Weak partnership

Partnership:

The partnership is formalized between four consortium partners:

Engineers Without Borders, Denmark (EWB-DK) will be the international lead organisation responsible for project management, finance and administration, facilitation of the partnership's cooperation, project monitoring and coordination of the final evaluation. EWB-DK will contribute with knowledge on disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation and, in close collaboration with WHI, provide technical- and organisational capacity development of NSP.

World Hope International (WHI) will be the local lead organisation responsible for the day-to-day project management and funds administration. WHI will, in collaboration with NSP, lead the direct community contact i.e. facilitation of meetings, risk assessment etc. and lead the capacity building of NSP. WHI will lead the local partnership development on the ground, facilitation of Community Resilience Committees, management of community-based mitigation and adaptation interventions and engage with local stakeholders and authorities.



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National Skill Pool (NSP) will be responsible for community mobilisation and citizen engagement in the communities of Kaningo and Pottor. NSP will participate in consortium cooperation, bridging between the community and WHI, formation of Community Resilience Committees, participate in preparation and implementation of baseline study, midterm review and final evaluation and participate in project- and financial management training.

University College Copenhagen (UCC) responsibilities will include support in capacity building of EWB-DK's project group members and local consortium partners NSP and WHI. UCC will also provide critical review of the implementation process.

Target groups

The project will work on small-scale community interventions devoting special attention to gender equality and active involvement of vulnerable community groups, such as the poor, unemployed youth, people living with disabilities and children. This project will target a smaller geographical area of the communities Pottor and Kaningo in suburban Freetown with a maximum of 50-75 households (approx. 200-450 inhabitants of a selected risk area in each community). The interventions will be led by local Climate Resilience Committees (CRC) for each area, consisting of members from within the broader community and implemented by members of the community organised in different climate adaptation interventions (sub) groups.

Kaningo and Pottor are poor communities suffering from high average unemployment rates of approximately 60%, out of which around 70% has no technical knowledge nor skills. However, the communities differ with respect to socio-economic composition e.g. housing conditions, occupational status and field. Furthermore, the two communities' organisational setup and culture differs, as Kaningo has more well-functioning community groups compared to Pottor. An important consideration during the project planning and implementation will be to look at their similarities as well as their differences and ensure that activities and interventions are relevant for each of them.

Additionally, awareness, knowledge and skills of the partner organisations will be strengthening through this project.

Strategy and expected results of the intervention

Participatory local community-based assessments

A local community-based participatory assessment of risk, capacity and vulnerability will be conducted in Kaningo and Pottor, along with a community driven SWOT analysis.

The participatory assessment intends to map current vulnerability to natural hazards, knowledge and awareness of past, present and future natural hazards and disasters in the communities, as well as current/existing mobilisation resources and adaptation capabilities. Work locally with understanding the consequences, the possibilities to design and implement climate adaptation interventions and response structures, all in relation to floods and heat waves.

Local community-based planning

The main element in the engagement at community level is the participatory planning for improved preparedness and mitigation. As a result of the initial assessment, both communities will be enrolled in an inclusive process identifying to what extent the community can gather resources and organise around capacity building and mitigating efforts. The communities will have to perform an inclusive process of prioritizing small mitigation and adaptation interventions.

Strategic service delivery in form of community managed adaptation interventions

It is envisioned that the interventions prioritised by the communities will be a combination of organisational (e.g. development of evacuation plans, emergency response training) and technical (e.g. drainage channel trenching, slope stabilisation, promoting tree planting, plastic trash collecting), focusing on the effects of heavy rainfall as one of the main climate hazards. The adaptation interventions are seen as a motivational factor to organise the communities and a way to create a joint success in community-based mobilisation.

Capacity building

Capacity of both community members and local partners. An important strategy in this project will consist of capacity building in relation to climate change adaptation interventions and disaster risk management. Organisational ability, knowledge, and predefined skills will be increased through trainings. Trainings will be defined once the assessments have been conducted but are likely to relate to areas such as community management skills training; disaster preparedness, response and contingency planning training.

Photos

