

Stories of Impact

A series highlighting achievements in disaster risk management

Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Niger



REGION: AFRICA
FOCUS: PREPAREDNESS
COUNTRY: NIGER



RESULTS:

- Community-based participatory risk analysis was developed with support from 23 observatories (community-led observing structures which report to regional governments).
- The capacities of 46 community early warning, contingency planning, and emergency response systems were developed to streamline communication between sectors and administrative levels, allowing for locally-informed and targeted responses.
- With support from GFDRR and the World Bank, community members were trained in disaster risk reduction to enhance the inclusion of climate change adaptation and disaster risk management within 10 municipal development plans.
- Over 4,100 households benefited from community micro-project activities, such as agro-forestry and the provision of small livestock and improved seeds. They also benefited from guidance for the prediction of drought impact on crops. These activities are practical and community driven to assist in better dealing with climate variability.

In Niger, 80% of the population rely on agriculture and pastoralism; livelihoods are highly dependent on seasonal rainfall. The unequal spatial-temporal distribution of water resources is a major driver of vulnerability, in addition to drought, flooding, locust infestation, storms, and wild fires. Drought conditions during crucial stages in the growing season, as well as the long-term effects of repeated shocks from drought on soil quality, are key determinants of low agricultural productivity and crop failure, low livestock productivity, and food shortages.

Lack of disaster risk management capacity at the local level hampers the resilience of communities in Niger. To help mitigate risks related to natural hazards, the World Bank and the African Caribbean Pacific-European Union Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program (ACP-EU NDRR), an initiative of the ACP Group funded by the EU and managed by the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), have financed a \$1 million disaster risk reduction project in Niger. The goal of this community-based Disaster Risk Management and Urban Development Project is to train local communities in early warning systems, as well as to build capacity to respond rapidly when faced with natural hazards.



GFDRR
Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery



WORLD BANK GROUP

ACP-EU Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Program

An initiative of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group, funded by the European Union and managed by GFDRR

CONTEXT:

Early warning systems, contingency and emergency management plans, and response mechanisms are some of the most cost-effective measures to save lives and protect livelihoods in Niger. The loss of life due to drought has decreased significantly over the last five decades from tens of thousands to barely perceptible levels because of enhanced drought forecasting and early warning systems. However, vulnerabilities to natural disaster and climate risk in Niger remain and there is ongoing need to develop resilience capacity, particularly at the community level.

APPROACH:

As a capacity and resilience building initiative, the Oxfam-implemented project first worked to understand existing local coping mechanisms for disasters for potential systemization and leveraged investments. Along with providing technical support, advanced seminars and guidance for documentation and information gathering, the project also:

- conducted extensive communal interviews, along with focused capacity assessments that revealed inefficiencies and critical needs in dozens of existing weather monitoring stations;
- improved the functioning of five sub-regional committees to help streamline communication between local and other levels to better incorporate locally-informed and targeted responses;
- trained thousands of community members in disaster risk reduction, and reactivated 10 municipal-level monitoring observatories along with 20 community early warning systems.

NEXT STEPS:

The project will continue to be scaled up, ultimately training more than 7,000 people and supplying a population of over 1.2 million with updated monitoring systems, risk reduction training programs, and further capacity building in 2015. These fundamental measures will help enable other disaster risk reduction and humanitarian efforts throughout Niger.

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*ALL MONETARY VALUES IN USD

"We conducted an exchange trip regarding the community-based vulnerability monitoring in the villages of the municipality of Tajae and have understood the importance of this work for our people. We will give the best of ourselves to ensure our observatory is run smoothly."

– Mayor Falmey Districti



LESSONS LEARNED:

Inter-organizational communication is essential for effective disaster risk mitigation. Often, top-down approaches to disaster risk reduction can overlook existing knowledge and resources of local communities. The project made streamlined communication between various organizational levels a priority, putting in place feedback mechanisms to better incorporate communal strengths in policy and capacity building efforts. This led to the development of a disaster risk reduction action plan for 46 communities and supported the update of development plans in six out of ten municipalities involved.

Outdated equipment can create information and communication bottlenecks. World Bank teams found that inadequate or outdated hardware and capacity in existing monitoring stations throughout the region were preventing easy access to previous disaster and management records, slowing project efforts and constraining the effectiveness of existing systems. This prompted an overhaul of 23 offices to modernize monitoring equipment and digitize records, enhancing communication between sites and rendering disaster risk data more readily available.