

CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION

ANALYSIS OF KNOWLEDGE GAPS AND THEIR IMPACT ON IMPLEMENTED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECTS - A CASE STUDY IN ZIMBABWE

BACKGROUND

Climate change poses a serious threat to community livelihoods, Rushinga community in Mashonaland Central Province of Zimbabwe included. Implementing adaptation strategies are crucial to secure sustainable communities' livelihoods and climate change resilience. Climate change knowledge gaps are a key factor that influence perceptions and attitudes towards climate change adaptation projects. Knowledge gaps to climate change is the main reason for projects unsustainability. Addressing the knowledge gaps beyond academia is necessary for enhancing understanding and engagement. Addressing the knowledge gaps on climate change will, result in many successful and sustainable climate change adaptation projects. A community needs to be re-framed as a site where climate change; its impacts, mitigation and adaptation measures are understood and transformed, instead of it being just a place where projects are rolled out.

DESCRIPTION

This study used a qualitative approach to identify and explore the knowledge gaps to climate change adaptation and assess their impact on climate change adaptation projects after a developmental partner exits the area using Ward 2 of Rushinga as a case study. The data required for this research was obtained from a series of individual interviews (n=75), focus group discussions (n = 31) and semi-structured interviews with key informants (n = 11). 79% of the respondents were women while 21% were men. All the participants in the study believed that climate change is happening, whether it be due to human forces (50.7%), natural forces (38.7%), or a combination of both (10.7%).

The majority of respondents (66.3%) felt that climate change poses either a 'very big' or 'big' threat to their community. The concern towards the impacts to the community were much higher (90.8%) as compared to that towards personal level (33.4%) for the extremely and very concerned. The majority of participants (59.1 %) perceived that the development partners are responsible for a making the climate change adaptation projects sustainable. 20.9 % of the participants perceived that this is the role of the government, see Fig. 1.

Using Ward 2 of Rushinga in Zimbabwe, it was concluded that climate change knowledge gaps exist which negatively impact on the sustainability of climate change adaptation projects.



Figure 1. Perceived responsibilities to make climate change adaptation projects in the communities sustainable

IMPACT

The project's findings impacted greatly on the implementing organizations' view of the meaning of a community. After the project was concluded and results presented to other implementing partners in Rushinga district climate change awareness campaigns and education workshops were now being done prior to climate change projects; be it adaptation or mitigation.

LESSONS LEARNED

The involvement of community-based government stakeholders to administer individual questionnaires as well as leading focus group discussions is a very important aspect in projects like this. The stakeholders are well versed with the local languages of the area. In addition, the community to be interviewed already have trust and are free to discuss important issues with them. Furthermore, there is a need for strengthened climate change education in the community when implementing a project to ensure its sustainability.

Country: Zimbabwe

Sector: Other (knowledge gaps identification)

Key words: Agriculture, awareness rising, project sustainability

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