

Vulnerability Capacity Assessment: Sinazongwe District

Location:	Sinazongwe District, on the northern bank of lake Kariba in the south of the country
Date:	2003
Sector focus:	Multi-hazard assessment, vulnerability and capacity assessment, focusing on natural hazards, health hazards, and landmines
Spatial focus:	District and community level

Bibliographical reference

Zambia Red Cross Society, *Vulnerability Capacity Assessment: Sinazongwe District, Zambia*. Lusaka: Zambia Red Cross Society (ZRCS), 2003.

Abstract

This is a very thorough and methodologically careful district profile, the first ever in this more remote and underdeveloped part of Zambia. The CRA team was composed of staff from the regional Red Cross delegation, ZRCS, as well as district and local government. Use of an integrated team sets this study apart from many others executed by various national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. The team also took three weeks, longer than many other VCAs.

Secondary information and data was carefully compiled and analyzed. Focus groups included 407 individuals in six sites that were systematically chosen to represent the north, south, center, east, and west of the district as well as a service center, a peri-urban settlement, an unplanned settlement, and rural settings. Semi-structured key informant interviews with service providers were also conducted. Service providers included government officials, some 13 of whom were interviewed, and NGOs.

Detailed results are provided and recommendations.

This study is essential reading for all interested in CRA, especially in least developed or “highly indebted poor country” (HIPC) circumstances. It is important because of its methodological rigor, the close links established with local government and other service providers, its concrete recommendations, and for some of its broader conclusions, especially about aid dependency and the need to more closely coordinate development activities by multiple NGOs and other stakeholders.

Technical description

Hazard/risk type: Drought and food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, disease,¹ air and water pollution (near the coal mine), flash floods, landmines.

Type of assessment: Multi-hazard assessment, vulnerability and capacity assessment, focusing on natural hazards, health hazards, and landmines.

CRA process

Direct observation; secondary data; key informant interviews; focus group discussions.

Methods used: Focus group discussion leaders were trained for two days. There was also careful preparation for the arrival of the discussion leaders in villages through the cooperation of senior chief and chief. Some use was made of tools such as seasonal activity calendars and other methods.

Was livelihood analysis part of the process? Not formally; however, the review of capacities included identification of various non-farm income activities such as digging of semi-precious stones, fishing in Lake Kariba or one of the district's dams stocked with fish, charcoal production, brick making, wood carving, tailoring, knitting, baking, weaving, basket making, carpentry, and working on road improvement as "food for asset" employment. The allocation of people's time by various activities was also part of the study. This district is the location of Zambia's only coal mine, but no reference was made to wage employment there or remittance of income from migrant household members who work elsewhere in Zambia (e.g. as workers on commercial farms or in industry or urban services) or southern Africa (e.g. South Africa).

Was external specialist knowledge introduced? The full economic potential of Lake Kariba was discussed in focus groups, as well as agronomic measures to reduce the impact of drought (small scale irrigation, drought resistant seeds).

Vulnerability analysis

Vulnerability was assessed in two ways: (1) identification of vulnerable groups of people; (2) assessment of the impacts of different hazards on the community as a whole. The study also went beyond describing hazards to an analysis of "factors fueling disasters", and also included concrete recommendations that amount to an "Agricultural revolution to banish food insecurity."

Capacity analysis

Resources available: *Financial resources:* the study was executed without major funding from donor. *Human resources:* a large team from the ZRCS and local government, supported by the IFRC regional delegate from Harare, Zimbabwe. *Local capacity:* an institutional assessment was included in this project in the form of a census of on-going NGO activities in the district. Eight agencies were found to be working in fields including: support of widows, care of orphans, distribution of drought resistant seed, agricultural credit, relief food distribution, HIV/AIDS prevention, small scale water resource development (small dams and wells), micro-irrigation, conservation farming techniques, construction of pit latrines, and distribution of mosquito nets. Zambia Red Cross Society branch capacity was also assessed, as well as that of local government departments including Sinazongwe District Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Department of Water and Sanitation and Health Education, and Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Limitations to capacity: Finance and material resources, time, all weather transportation.

Action planning and implementation

What actions were actually planned? 5-12 recommendations were listed under five headings: Drought/ food security, HIV/AIDS, Diseases, Community Empowerment, and ZRCS action.

What actions were actually carried out? The Red Cross National Society used the VCA report to develop a food security proposal for possible funding to the Swedish Red Cross. The report is also the basis for starting the DFID/ British Red Cross Society funded disaster risk reduction pilot project in Sinazongwe. This is a 3 year project starting September 2005 to April 2008. As regards the local government, the authors of the report hope that the DRR project will provide a basis for lobbying for the inclusion of some of the VCA recommendations in the local council annual plan of action and budgets.

Have these actions turned out to be sustainable? This depends largely on the macroeconomic performance of Zambia as a whole and on the continued consolidation of transparent and democratic governance.

Were there any unanticipated additional benefits of the actions? Skill building and attitudinal change among local government officials and staff; closer coordination and inter-communication among service providers and between them as a group and local government.

Were there any unanticipated negative consequences of the actions? N.A.

Limitations on action/ sustainability of actions: See above and below.

Indicators

N.A.; however, FEWSNET has standard measures of food security and a monitoring system at the national and regional (SADC) level. On the other hand, even if future episodes of drought triggered food insecurity are avoided, it would be hard to attribute that happy outcome DIRECTLY to the CRA project described.

Contextual notes

Existence/ role of prior or contemporaneous conflict? This part of Zambia is in the extreme south, on the border with Zimbabwe. It suffered during the war of Zimbabwean independence, and land mines from the struggle in (1965-1980) still cause injuries and deaths in the border zone.

Role of displacement/ relocation? Some of the population of the district was displaced in the mid 1950s by the flooding of their ancestral homes by Lake Kariba, formed to the south, on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe by the damming of the Zambezi River. Longitudinal studies over 20 years following displacement of the Gwembe Tonga people found that their adjustment to a new farming and social environment was very difficult with many negative consequences to health and well being.²

Role of prior disaster & prior recovery attempts? This CRA was carried out during a serious drought that required some relief feeding. Everyone's attention was focused on the problem of drought, a fact that enhanced the response to the CRA.

Significant historical, geographic, economic, political, or cultural issues that influenced this instance of CRA and its consequences? This part of Zambia is isolated. It also contains a diversity of ethnic groups, in part because of earlier re-settlement of those displaced by the creation of Lake Kariba. The lake nearly 50 years after its creation brings scant benefits to the local people, and is the focus of "visioning" of a future for this district without food insecurity.

Strategic notes

How has this practice of CRA influenced change in policy and practice at the national level?
N.A.

How has this practice of CRA influenced change in policy and practice at local level? The district and local (chiefdomship) government was so integrally involved in the project with such “ownership” that it amounted to a district planning exercise, not simply one for the purposes of ZRCS programming.

How has this practice of CRA influenced the level of organization and solidarity in the locality where it was carried out? N.A. (unlikely given the short period of the study).

Less divided along class, gender, age, ethnic lines? N.A.; however, women were very specifically given voice in a very traditionally male dominated part of Zambia. This, in a small way, may have increased the integration of women into public life.

More divided along these lines? Unlikely, except in times when relief food was being distributed by the World Food Program and other agencies, some fears or suspicions of favoritism may have been inadvertently created by the choice of people to include in focus groups.

Are the people living in this area more able to speak out on issues that concern them? N.A.

Have new civil society organizations been created directly or indirectly because of this practice of CRA? A follow up workshop to discuss the findings was not convened due to financial constraints. The report was circulated to all stakeholders in Sinazongwe. However, creating a local civil society organization will be the first activity to be carried out under the DRR project mentioned above.

Lessons learned

- ♦ Resources for effective local disaster risk reduction may be “hiding in plain sight” (e.g. the proximity of lake Kariba)
- ♦ NGO partnership with local government can be very effective in disaster risk reduction.

Keywords

Drought, food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, health, civil society/ local government cooperation, development induced population displacement.

Resource person(s)

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¹ Malaria, cholera and dysentery, measles, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), TB, pneumonia, malnutrition.

² Elizabeth Colson, *The Social Consequences of Resettlement: The Impact of the Kariba Resettlement Upon the Gwembe Tonga* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971); Thayer Scudder, “The Human Ecology of Big Projects: River Basin Development and Resettlement,” in *Annual Review of Anthropology* (Palo Alto, Annual Reviews, Inc., 1973); Thayer Scudder, “Conservation vs. Development: River Basin Projects in Africa,” *Environment* 31 (1989), pp. 4-9 & 27-32.

Vulnerability Capacity Assessment: Sinazongwe District

Location: Sinazongwe District, on the northern bank of lake Kariba in the south of the country

Date of update: 22 March 2008

Background

An ambitious district level survey of vulnerability was conducted by the Zambia National Red Cross Society (ZNRCS) together with the district government. Mixed methods were used, including participatory CRA, and an effort was made to sample systematically the district. The resulting report could be the basis of a district wide development plan.

Update Time Frame, Mode of Follow Up & Confidence Level

Four years after the original ZNRCS vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) at district level, discussions and document collection were kindly provided by IFRC staff member Antony Spalton while on mission to Zambia. While he did not travel to the South of Zambia and specifically gather data in the earlier study area, he gained impressions of follow up (or lack of it) and provided documents. Given he was unable to travel to the study area, the follow up observations are only suggestive. We would also like to thank Leanne Rose for generous provision of background studies and contacts in Zambia.

Sustainability

Original integrated ZNRCS/district government study team does not seem to have been maintained. While ZNRCS still has a presence in Sinazongwe District, one recommendation of a later study (2006) was that its presence be strengthened and that its corps of volunteers in the district be developed. This all implies that as of 3-4 years after the original VCA, the local (village) level contacts and respondents had not maintained their focus on the actions identified in the original action study.

Actions implemented

12 recommendations were listed under five headings: Drought/ food security, HIV/AIDS, Diseases, Community Empowerment, and ZRCS action. While some routine activity in all these areas have continued, as the next section suggests, chronic food insecurity, and human and animal disease prevalence continue. In 2006 emergency food aid was again required. Accessibility of the district to the rest of the country has not improved. The 2003 VCA was not followed up by village based action plans and sustained bottom up mobilization. At the macro level, lake Kariba – whose creation 50

years ago flooded the lower parts of Sinazongwe, displacing thousands of persons – remains under-utilized as a key development resource in the district.

The 2003 VCA report says this about the erosion of local confidence and emergence of dependency relations because of years of repeated, development-induced displacements.

“Despite all the capacities identified in the various communities in the district, very few people sustain themselves through these capacities and resources, as most of the community members seem to be very dependent on relief assistance. It was observed that the communities generally have no perception on how all their capacities could be significantly utilised by themselves in mitigating disasters. They are so used to receiving relief assistance that now there is noticeable dependency on external assistance, which has destroyed community initiatives and is affecting developmental programmes.

“... It is noteworthy that Sinazongwe people were displaced three times and promised good things, which were never fulfilled (construction of Kariba Dam, Nkandambwe coal mine and Buchi Farm). They have depended on external assistance from the time they were displaced. So they feel that government owes them!

“Through timelines and discussions the communities identified their own coping mechanisms, which they employed during various disaster situations. They were very much aware of what can be done but need a mindset shift from waiting for aid to looking at sustainable poverty alleviation initiatives through self-reliance. This will need the concerted effects of all stakeholders to motivate and empower them. The study showed awareness on the need to capitalize on both human and material resources available in the community.”

Welfare/security results

The 2006 VCA study summarized vulnerability in Sinazongwe as follows:

“Overall, the main issues that expose these communities to vulnerability include: poor crop production; poor access to production technologies; inadequate boreholes for safe water; inadequate schools and inadequate health facilities. Livestock is a common resource in the survey areas. Poor access to veterinary services, drugs and poor animal husbandry skills continues to constrain its effective utilization as a food and income source. Livestock disease is the major risk in this area and efforts of risk reduction are supposed to be focused in this area.” The 2006 study cites the Gwembe Tonga Project's finding that this region of Zambia has suffered food shortages during 13 of the preceding 24 years. With 70% of the population poor (defined in terms of cattle ownership and access to resources for fishing and farming), clearly little had happened over the three years since the original 2003 VCA to improve welfare and reduce vulnerability. The continuing effects of development-induced displacement of the Tonga people from the valley of the Zambezi River are being felt 3-4 generations later. [...] Due to displacement of the Tonga people by the lake, they now live and cultivate on marginal infertile land on the edges of the valley...” (2006 VCA study, p. 6).

Replication of method/approach

One positive thing that can be said about follow up in Zambia is that the use of participatory community based vulnerability and capacity assessment has become well established. The 2006 study conducted by a team of Zambian consultants went well beyond the technical scope of the original, extending the use of VCA and other supporting methods (GIS, in particular) to Sheheke District in the West, as well as working again in Sinazongwe District in the South.

Lessons learned/open questions

1. While cooperation with local government was very impressive in the original study, the lack of capacity of both local government and the National Society did not allow follow up in such a

remote part of the country despite the potential that the embryo of a district development plan had been produced. Other immediate priorities intervened in the years since 2003 including flooding, food insecurity, demands of HIV-AIDS, and industrial unrest (rioting at some Chinese owned mines). Considerable administrative capacity is required to deal with such immediate needs while also pursuing a longer term development strategy. In addition, political will from the central government is required as well as resources. Neither seems yet to be sufficient in the case of Sinazongwe District. In the original 2003 VCA report district government capacity is described as severely limited by resource constraints: "Funding is inadequate hence there is no road maintenance system in place, machinery, safe water points, transport for service delivery, personnel and accommodation for staff." By 2006 the situation does not seem to have improved substantially. The lesson: political will to generate and/ or transfer resources is necessary. This is a top-down constraint to be overcome.

2. The principle bottom-up constraint yet to be confronted is the psychology of dependency. The problem of development-induced displacement and a dependency syndrome is a deep and pervasive one, and it is not easily, and perhaps only slowly overcome. Given that climate change adaptation measures taken by the national government could take large scale form (such as more dams) and foreign investment is being actively sought after (e.g. Chinese mining), such displacements are likely to take place in the future, so it is important to anticipate and try to prevent such adverse social consequences.

Keywords

Development-induced displacement, dependency psychology, local government resources and capacity, under-utilized water resources, animal disease, food security, flood, drought.

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