

Vulnerability Capacity Assessment Speyside Community, Tobago

Location: Speyside community, Tobago

Date: August, 2007

Sector focus: Multi-hazard risk reduction

Spatial focus: Island community

Bibliographical reference

Dr. Allan Bachan, *Community Risk Reduction (VCA): Empowering communities to take charge of their destiny*. Trinidad & Tobago Red Cross Society, Trinidad & Tobago (2007).

Abstract

Speyside, Tobago is a community of 1,000 inhabitants set in a seascape of a large bay and a rugged coastline whose economy relies on fishing and tourism. There have been historical accounts of hurricanes in Tobago and climate change is expected to affect the region's coastal lowlands by eliminating beaches as the sea levels rise. Tobago is the smaller of the two islands that make up the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

This publication of the Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) in Speyside community seeks to establish a baseline for better understanding of both the dynamics and the changes of risks and vulnerabilities. The project is part of a wider programme on youth development using sport as a community development transformational tool for Nurturing Child Friendly Communities through Sport for Development in Tobago, leading to the establishment of an Active Community Club (ACC). The project is managed by the main implementing partner: the Trinidad and Tobago Alliance for Sport and Physical Education (TTASPE), which provided coordination, technical assistance, monitoring and evaluation and worked closely with UNICEF and other UN agencies, Ministries and NGO partners, including: UNDP, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs, Tobago House of Assembly Division of Education, Youth & Sport (THA) and Trinidad & Tobago Red Cross Society (TTRCS).

Vulnerability and capacity assessment tools used in conducting this assessment include: direct observation, historical profile, historical visualization, seasonal calendar, social institutional network analysis, Venn diagram, livelihood analysis, community profile, transect walk, capacity resource map, hazard mapping, and focus group interviews. Although no specific end users are mentioned, this publication is a valuable addition to working with communities in a participatory manner which is the core of Community Based Development Programming (CBDP). The underlying objective of CBDP activities is to reduce vulnerability and increase capacity.

Technical description

Hazard/risk type: climate change, high wind/rain, hurricane, pollution, earthquakes, landslides, environmental degradation, economic insecurity, domestic violence, health issues (hypertension, diabetes, teen pregnancy, and HIV/AIDS)

Type of assessment: Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA) and actions for transformation

CRA process

Methods used: Direct observation, historical profile, historical visualization, seasonal calendar, social institutional network analysis, Venn diagram, livelihood analysis, community profile, transect walk, capacity resource map, hazard mapping, focus group interviews.

Was livelihood analysis used? Yes, livelihood was principally examined from economic perspectives examining diversity of employment opportunities.

Was external specialist knowledge introduced? TTRCS technical people in health and youth mobilization and telecoms also provided support.

Vulnerability analysis

TTRCS used the IFRC definition of vulnerability that states: "The characteristics of a person or group in terms of their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of a natural or man-made hazard." Those that are most vulnerable are in situations of greatest risk from situations that threaten their survival or their capacity to live with a minimum of social and economic security and dignity.

There were three parts of Speyside Community which made up the VCA: the first area includes the Government Housing Scheme Settlement along the sea coast and encompasses the hotels, guest houses, restaurants, dive Shops, the business community and tourist areas. The second area was Tophill/ Carpoe Village and the third was Lucyville Village on the southern side. There was notably little interaction between the three parts of the community as is visible in the Social Institutional Analysis of Speyside Community (page 40).

The five main vulnerabilities identified were:

- ◆ Environmental degradation
- ◆ High winds/ rain/ hurricane
- ◆ Social & health issues
- ◆ Unemployment & livelihood
- ◆ Youth issues

Capacity analysis

Capacity is defined in this VCA as the resources of individuals, households, communities, institutions and nations to resist the impact of a hazard.

Resources available: Tobago hosts a rich history with infrastructure dating back to 1786 that still exists today. *Education services:* there is a pre-school, primary school and secondary school which could serve as emergency shelters. *Community spaces:* a community football ground that can accommodate a helicopter and emergency evacuation vehicles. *Diversity of flora and fauna:* 5 of the 11 resident bird species on Tobago are endemic subspecies which are a potential resource for diversified livelihoods which could reduce economic insecurity.

Limitations to capacity: A noted project constraint/limitation during the VCA was working with a limited sample of the entire community stakeholders, however it was felt that most views were

captured through community interviews. The changes in the local weather during the VCA period also caused difficulties as the rain limited some of the field survey time during the training period.

Action planning and implementation

What actions were actually planned? While a number of actions were identified in the VCA, the publication notes that the information gathered and the specific actions identified do not constitute the final plan of action however they are still relevant and needed and could be utilized by other agencies and the THA for future developmental planning.

What actions were actually carried out? UNICEF set up youth groups, identified sports as an alternative activity and implemented a program in conjunction with the government.

Have these actions turned out to be sustainable? The program is now being used as a model for government to intervene in other communities.

Were there any unanticipated additional benefits of the actions? Yes. The buy in and support from the government as to the benefits of the VCA for guiding program development was not anticipated.

Were there any unanticipated negative consequences of the actions? The program has continued developing with the government support but TTRCS has not continued to be a part of the program and for the organization, which is a missed opportunity.

Limitations on action/sustainability of actions: Interest has been generated by the program but due to funding constraints TTRCS has not been able to meet the demand of other communities to do VCAs and subsequently implement programs.

Indicators

The plan of action links each activity to a measurable indicator. For example, the objective to improve health is associated with the activity: Community First Aid Training with the indicator number of certificates issued in the community.

Contextual notes

Existence/role of prior or contemporaneous conflict? Trinidad & Tobago have had multiple colonizers including the British, French, Dutch and gained independence as a Commonwealth in 1962 and later a Republic in 1976. The country has prospered due to sugar, cocoa, and oil, however the rate of violent crimes is on the rise due to drug trafficking and high poverty and low education levels.

Role of displacement/relocation. None

Role of prior disaster & prior recovery attempts? Hurricane Flora in 1963 and hurricane Ivan in 2004 caused considerable impact on the island. The former redefined the nature of the economy away from cash crops such as banana, cocoa and coconut plantations to tourism. Some agriculture remains but on a smaller scale as the demand for tourism and eco-tourism continues to rise.

Strategic notes

Less divided along class, gender, age, ethnic lines? The VCA exercise brought different groups together and increased their understanding of each other. The subsequent sports program has served to further this cohesion.

Are the people living in this area more able to speak out on issues that concern them Yes, they now have a more holistic perspective of the links and root causes of the issues identified during the VCA.

Have new civil society organizations been created directly or indirectly because of this practice of CRA? Youth groups are being better supported by the organization/decision making structure of the community and the youth are participating in the decision making with the village. For example, there is now a youth representative on the village council.

Lessons learned

- ◆ Working with communities can at time be challenging and frustrating, but in the end, it is a rewarding experience
- ◆ Defined roles and responsibilities for team members is critical
- ◆ At meetings, community members initially stayed with people they knew and remained in their comfort zone. Using dialogue and mixing people in different groups built diversity and strengthened the sense of community. This was critical in order to overcome problems and get team members to interact with people with whom they had never spoken.
- ◆ Learning is through experience, trial and error
- ◆ Less tangible life and community lessons were learnt such as respecting each other, strength in diversity, dialogue, the importance of listening to each other, working together to find solutions, and appreciating the value in differences of opinion. This lead to an increased appreciation and understanding of dependency on each other.

Keywords

Youth, environment, climate change, high wind/ rain, hurricane, pollution, earthquakes, landslides, environmental degradation, economic insecurity, domestic violence, health issues (hypertension, diabetes, and HIV / AIDS)

Resource person(s)

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