

INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND SANITATION STUDIES (IESS)
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COASTAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO CLIMATE AND DIARRHOEA (C2R-CD) PROJECT
Summary Report on Community Entry Activities
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1.0 Introduction

The 4-day (6 – 9) community entry visit was to introduce the project to the officials of the Assemblies and leaders of the study communities and ask for their support in the course of the research. The community entry also forms part of stakeholder engagement activities in line with the transdisciplinary research approach of the project emphasising the need to engage and involve all relevant stakeholders. In all, four Assemblies and five communities were visited across Volta, Greater Accra and Central regions. At the Assemblies, a presentation on the project was made, mainly to audience made up of Coordinating Directors, Planners, District Health, Budget and National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO) Officers. These presentations were followed interactions and discussions on the C2R-CD, the role the Assemblies and potential benefits from the research. The opportunity was also used during this interaction to highlight the importance of transdisciplinary research, the role of research in providing evidence-based support for the developmental agenda of the Assemblies as well as its potential to bring to focus the issues within the jurisdictions of the Assemblies to public attention. Highlights are presented below:

2.1 Anloga District Assembly – Volta Region

Dr. Dzidzo Yirenya-Tawiah led the presentations following the introduction of participants. She indicated that though diarrhoea has been with us for some time climate change poses additional threat, with Africa being at greater risk indicating that there is limited knowledge on the causes of diarrhoea and how low-lying coastal ecosystems influence its epidemiology. Therefore, the C2R-CD project would predict diarrhoea evolution and provide information for resilience and preparedness in mitigating the impacts of diarrhoea using the Assemblies and communities as strategic partners. There were discussions on criteria for the selection of research communities, implications of municipal waste management on diarrhoea incidence and management as well as issues regarding the top-down approach to policy crafting leading solutions that do not reflect the situations on the ground. The Assembly also provided an indication of the most suitable day(s) for community engagement activities.



Figure 1: Dr. Ted Annan addressing the Anloga community during the community entry.

2.2 Keta Municipal Assembly (KeMA) –Volta Region

The meeting was moderated by Mr. John Ntibrey, the Municipal Planning Officer and attended by a large number of Assembly officials including the Coordinating Director. A lively discussion followed the project overview presentations, see highlights below:

Why was Anyarko selected but not any other coastal community? Anyarko is nearly submerged in water but no source of good drinking water; increased flooding, potential danger & limited livelihoods.

What has the project got for communities in terms of policies (legacy)?: The project would work with the Assemblies and the communities to inform policy making decisions on physical planning and its implications for diarrhoea resilience.

What would be the project's benefits to the communities (e.g. potable water)?: Knowledge generated from the research would provide information to community members for advocacy. Benefits are information to feed stakeholders with potential interest in providing or putting in place investments into the provision of such amenities.



Figure 2: Community entry by C2R-CD members in Keta Township (Keta Municipality).

2.3 Anyanui Community – Anloga District

Groups represented at the meeting include Youths, farmers, mangrove planters, fishermen, fishmongers, traders and Traditional leadership. They noted that Anyanui is a small community but has a very vibrant market that attracts traders from across the country. Produce and items found in the market include straw woven products (mats, baskets etc.), vegetables, fish, clams, oysters, salt etc. Challenges such as limited rainfall and worm infestation, resistance of pests and diseases to chemical control, declining fisheries, declining crop productivity were raised for discussion. The increased presence of mosquitoes especially at dawn is a challenge (diseases) and there is the need to discuss with the nurses to provide more education about how this happens. Additionally, limited land makes it difficult for the construction of needed facilities such as toilets, drinking water etc.



Figure 3: Community interaction with Project PI in Anyanui

2.4 Atiteti Community – Anloga District

Declining fisheries - trawling in the continental shelf and trash fishing - are major issues in addition to illegal fishing activities e.g., use of light. Erosion is on the increase due to the impacts of the sea defense constructions, especially the recent ones in Ada. The major worry of the community has to do with the intensified erosion near the Volta estuary, close to the Fuveme community where there is a sand bar separating the other arms of the lower Volta from the sea. They explained that the sand bar is near breaching and already, the sea waves are able to overtop into the river end. They fear that if the sand bar should be breached (this can happen in a matter of days if nothing is done), the entire Fuveme, Anyanui and Dzita would be submerged as a result. The women also called for support to restore their livelihoods that were disrupted following the Covid-19 pandemic



Figure 4: Dr. Dzidzo Yirenya-Tawiah addressing the Atiteti Community.

2.5 Anyarko Community – Keta Municipal

Need to put together a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or a Code of Conduct to guide the research activities and also indicate the commitments of the community and the research team in conducting the research in a manner that does not bring disrepute to any of the parties. Consider churches in the creation of awareness about the project ahead of the community durbar.



Figure 5: Project members interacting with health personnel in Anyarko (Keta Municipality)

2.6 Gomoa West District Assembly – Central Region

The need to keep the Assembly involved so that even as the research progresses, some immediate actions can be taken on some aspects of the problems. There was the suggestion to include the Fisheries department as stakeholders of interest – Department of Agric and the Coastal Development Authority as well should be considered as stakeholders.



Figure 6: An image of the project members during community entry in the Gomoa West District Assembly.

2.7 Mumford Community – Gomoa West District

A very important fishing community, 12 of the 36 National Best Fisherman awards have gone to indigenes of Mumford. The community is highly self-sufficient, they provided many of the infrastructure for the community by themselves. The criteria for selecting study communities was further explained and one representative suggested that community engagement activities should include education on diarrhoea.



Figure 7: An assembly member of the Mumford community addressing the C2R-CD project members.

2.8 Ablekuma West District Assembly – Greater Accra Region

The need for Assemblies to collaborate on research activities such as the C2R-CD was reiterated as they serve as an avenue to provide evidence (data and information) for decision making and advocacy to attract external support for the Assembly to undertake developmental programmes within their jurisdiction in the face of limited government resources. A focal person was appointed to support the research team in its activities within the Assembly.



Figure 8: Stakeholder engagement plan in Ablekuma West District Assembly.

2. 9 Opetekwei Community - Ablekuma West District

The representatives noted the absence of community centres as one of the challenges facing the community. There were calls for the District Assemblies to revisit the Town Council/Sanitary Task Force to help improve sanitation in the communities.



Figure 9: Stakeholder engagement during community entry in Opetekwei (Ablekuma West District).

3.0 Recommendations

- Practicalize the transdisciplinary research process – for example consider drafting questionnaires with communities’ participation/approval of language use etc.
- Involve qualified community members and District Assembly officials in research activities e.g. data collection etc. as a means of satisfying part of the ‘immediate benefit’ needs of communities and stakeholders.
- In addressing the governance and policy analysis objectives of the project, consider adopting the Transformative Scenario Planning (TSP) approach of engagement with all stakeholders to find out what recommendations would work for policy and governance for diarrhoea resilience and management and what the roles of each stakeholder would be