

Supporting Comprehensive Resilience Building in the Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts of Zimbabwe

Submission by: UNESCO

Submission date: Feb 2024

Country: Zimbabwe

Climate hazard: drought, tropical cyclone and flooding

Specific loss(es) or damage(s) experienced

Cyclone Idai, one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere, caused catastrophic damage in Chimanimani, Zimbabwe in March 2019. The storm brought strong winds and heavy rain, resulting in severe flooding that washed away homes, roads, and bridges. The mountainous area was hit hard, with landslides causing further destruction and making rescue operations difficult.

The loss of life was significant. At least 172 deaths were reported, more than 186 people were injured and 327 were missing, while over 270,000 people were affected across nine districts, particularly in Chimanimani and Chipinge. The disaster also had a profound impact on agriculture, a vital part of Zimbabwe's economy, with vast areas of crops destroyed. This led to a severe food shortage, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

Actions taken and/or planned to holistically manage losses relevant to comprehensive risk management

In response to the vulnerability of the district, UNESCO initiated a project "Comprehensive Resilience Building in the Chimanimani and Chipinge Districts" in early 2021 with the aim of reducing the community's susceptibility to natural disasters and enhancing water resource management in the face of climate change uncertainties. The project took an integrated approach, utilizing the Climate Risk Informed Decision Analysis (CRIDA) methodology to address water-related risks and vulnerabilities due to accelerated climate change impacts.

The initial phase of the project focused on mapping flood and landslide hazards, as well as assessing their impacts on crucial areas such as livelihoods, schools, and infrastructure. By identifying flood hazard zones and potential evacuation routes, the project aimed to strengthen emergency response capacities and mitigate the impact of future flood events. Additionally, landslides were thoroughly assessed, and the main drivers and risk hotspots were identified, leading to a list of potential actions to address these risks.

Recognizing the importance of considering climate change impacts in water resources planning, the project integrated CRIDA to develop a medium-to-long term water and environmental vulnerability assessment. Through stakeholder engagement and workshops, key issues and concerns were defined, and a climate stress test was conducted to evaluate the expected impacts of climate change on water resources. Since the CRIDA is a bottom-up approach, stakeholders were inclusively and actively involved through hands-on workshops to define key challenges and identify multiple risk drivers and community co-benefits. This helped identify and prioritize locally led adaptation actions, resulting in the development of an Adaptation Pathway for the district.

The success of this project highlights the utility of CRIDA as a powerful tool for identifying stakeholder-supported adaptation interventions. UNESCO and its partners were able to identify

and develop locally led, nature-based interventions that not only reduce disaster risk but also promote socio-economic development and livelihoods in the Chimanimani District.

Through comprehensive resilience building efforts driven by CRIDA, the Chimanimani District is better prepared to face future climate challenges. The lessons learned from this project can serve as a valuable guide for other regions seeking to enhance their resilience and adapt to a changing climate and to act as a model for resilience building through a loss and damage compensation.

Supporting link(s) with additional relevant information

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/recovery-resilience-zimbabwean-highlands>

<https://www.unesco.org/crida>

<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000384771>