



Academic Associates PeaceWorks

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Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-WA).

Introduction

Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW) is implementing a project with three partners, referred herein as consortium members, namely Fondazione Accademia Italiana della Marina Mercantile (FAIMM), Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF), and West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) with support from the European Union (EU). The title of the project is “Coping with Climate Change as a Cause of Conflict in Coastal Communities of West Africa (C7-WA). The aim of the project is to strengthen West African Coastal Communities’ resilience to cope with climate change and conflict by developing innovative tools related to conflict sensitive climate change (CC) adaptation and prevention of environmental crimes that exacerbate climate change impact on communities as well as monitoring of the impact of climate change as a driver of conflict.

To achieve this, the project intends to develop tools, based on innovative research and global best practices, which will be tested through the establishment of a Community Stakeholders Network, constituted with highly influential community stakeholders’ by AAPW. The CSNs will then be trained to deliver nature based innovative solutions to the climate change challenges in the region, through a large-scale capacity building program, targeting communities and local actors. Information about climate change and conflict will be used to update the ECOWAS regional framework for Conflict prevention and early warning.

While, the CSNs will be trained to advocate and mobilize resources to address the climate change challenges, the project will also finance climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions of the project targeted communities in the Niger Delta through a small-scale grant scheme. Thus, as part of the project, AAPW carried out community entry and stakeholders mapping as well as supported HOMEF one of the consortium partners to conduct a research. Findings of the research have been encapsulated in a report after validation by community representatives and copies made available for each community. Below are key points during the community entry and stakeholders mapping visit.

Agbakabiriyai, Etieama & Igbetaewoama Communities Climate Change Issues

- Conflict over harvesting of periwinkles with non-natives who disobey traditional laws on periwinkle conservation
- Low fish catch

- High rate of mangrove cutting for construction and energy for cooking and processing of fish
- Insecurity (piracy, kidnapping, sea robbery, etc.)
- Rise in sea level, sea surge, erosion and flood
- Oil spills, bunkering and artisanal refining
- Poor waste management
- Poor crop yield
- Lack of potable water
- High soil water content and salinity

Current Agbakabiriyai, Etieama & Igbetaowoama Communities Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies

- Fisherfolks in the area formed an association called Environmental Restoration and Survival Forum to monitor and report mangrove cutting and illegal fishing practices
- Community bye-law to arrest and hand over to police trespassers who harvest periwinkle in Nembe territory for sale
- Adopt multiple fishing methods with different types of fishing nets
- Local coastline embankment with chicoco mud girded with mangrove woods pinned with old canoes that are cut to form a barrier
- Planting of trees particularly coconuts
- Farming on high expanses of land in the forest

Questions for Discussion

1. As a community member, what adaptation and mitigation strategies would you recommend to each of the above issues if any?
2. What skills are available in the community that will be useful to the adaptation and mitigation strategies you have recommended?
3. What are the current adaptation and mitigation strategies in the community?
4. What can community members do collectively that are different or supportive to improve the current adaptation and mitigation practices?

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